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Illegal Migration and Gender-Based Violence: Evidence From Nigerian Women and Girls in Italy

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Abstract

ENGLISH

Recently, cross-border mobilities have continued to increase, and people now move quickly from one place to the other due to technological advancements in transportation, either through the sea, land, or air. Nigeria has also enjoyed these advancements as a significant number of her citizens can be found in various places in the World, from Europe to America, Asia, the Middle East, etc. As such, migration in and from Nigeria to other countries, either within Africa or inter-continental, makes up a considerable part of the citizens' social, economic, and political life. This research focused on migration from Nigeria to Europe for Nigerian women and girls involved in cross-border movements from Africa. In particular, this work revolves around Italy as the leading country of destination. It seeks to disentangle the linkages between "irregular/illegal immigration" and "Gender-Based Violence of Nigerian females." In particular, it focuses on how such a migration pattern often leads to various forms of abuse before, during, and after the migratory journeys. The research method employed for this study was the phenomenological research approach using semi-structured interviews and the Vignette Techniques. This method allowed understanding through the bottom-up approach of how this violence occurs and what kind of protection these women and girls are given from both the professional and non-professional perspectives. This study carried out fieldwork within five regions in Italy namely Emilia-Romagna, Lazio, Lombardy, Marche, and Piedmont regions, spanning between July 2020 and June 2022. Data collected and analysed qualitatively showed that while Nigerian females migrate with the intent of getting better life opportunities as well as helping their families back at home, the reality of such movement is different as they begin to face various challenges and abuse from the moment the migration process begin till they arrive in Italy with Libya regarded as the last country of transit where many forms of abuse occurs and also continuing in Italy when they settle down. On the other hand, analysis from professionals revealed that even though GBV is inherent in such journeys, most girls and women from Nigerian origin are granted protection mainly on the basis of victim of trafficking and not because of GBV.

ITALIANO

Di recente, i movimenti transfrontalieri hanno continuato ad aumentare e le persone ora si spostano rapidamente da un luogo all'altro a causa dei progressi tecnologici nei trasporti, via mare, terra o aria. Anche la Nigeria ha goduto di questi progressi poiché un numero significativo dei suoi cittadini può essere trovato in vari luoghi del mondo, dall'Europa all'America, all'Asia, al Medio

Oriente, ecc. In quanto tale, la migrazione all'interno della Nigeria o dalla Nigeria verso altri Paesi, sia all'interno dell'Africa o intercontinentale, costituisce una parte considerevole della vita sociale, economica e politica dei cittadini. Questa ricerca si è concentrata sulla migrazione dalla Nigeria all'Europa per le donne e le ragazze nigeriane coinvolte nei movimenti transfrontalieri dall'Africa. In particolare, questo lavoro ruota attorno all'Italia come primo Paese di destinazione. Cerca di districare i collegamenti tra "immigrazione irregolare/illegale" e "violenza di genere delle donne nigeriane". In particolare, si concentra su come un tale modello migratorio porti spesso a varie forme di abuso prima, durante e dopo i viaggi migratori. Il metodo di ricerca impiegato per questo studio è stato la ricerca fenomenologica, utilizzando interviste semi-strutturate e la tecnica della vignettatura. Questo metodo ha permesso di comprendere, attraverso l'approccio dal basso verso l'alto, come si verifica questa violenza e che tipo di protezione viene data a queste donne e ragazze sia dal punto di vista professionale che non professionale. Questo studio è stato condotto sul campo in cinque diverse regioni italiane, vale a dire Emilia-Romagna, Lazio, Lombardia, Marche e Piemonte, in un periodo compreso tra luglio 2020 e giugno 2022. I dati raccolti e analizzati qualitativamente hanno mostrato che le femmine nigeriane migrano con la speranza di migliorare la loro qualità di vita per poter aiutare le loro famiglie e un giorno poi tornare a casa, la realtà che poi affrontano è radicalmente diversa poiché iniziano ad affrontare varie sfide e abusi nel momento stesso in cui inizia il processo migratorio fino all'arrivo in Italia; la Libia è considerata l'ultimo Paese di transito ed è un luogo dove molte forme di abuso si verificano, continuando a subirle poi anche in Italia quando vi si stabiliscono. D'altra parte, l'analisi dei professionisti ha rivelato che, sebbene la violenza di genere sia inerente a tali viaggi, alla maggior parte delle ragazze e donne di origine nigeriana viene concessa protezione principalmente sulla base di ciò che subiscono durante il tragitto e non a causa della violenza di genere.

Dedication

This project is dedicated to God, the giver of my Life and Strength. And to my Dad, D. A. Golah-Ebue, your zest for education has finally paid off. I hope you are smiling where you are. I miss you every day.

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Key terms and definition

Some recurrent terms used in this study are clarified below

Irregular or Illegal migration

A movement that occurs outside the controlling rules of sending, transiting, and receiving nations is called irregular/Illegal/undocumented migration (IOM, 2011: p.54; UNDP, 2019; IOM, 2019). Thus, it is regarded as crossing borders (entering or leaving the country) with no consent from the authorities. In addition, undocumented migration is described as the practice of legally crossing a border by using fake papers or legal documents in a deceptive way, as well as by using fictitious marriages, imposters, or relatives (Schrover, Van der Leum, Lucassen and Quispel, 2008). Similarly, "1- Entering the country with no lawful authorization, either via clandestine entry mode or with the fraudulent documents; 2- Entry with the authorization but the overstaying which authorization; 3- Misusing deliberately the asylum scheme" (Kuschminder, et. al., 2015) are the three most common ways that people become irregular (p. 10). Studies suggests that many undocumented migrants stem from those who entered legally but eventually overstayed their official permit and visas (De Haas, 2008; Collyer and De Haas, 2012) as such having irregular status at certain point in time, of note here is that the transition from regular to irregular status also takes place vice-versa depending on the situation of the migrants (Castles, De Haas, and Miller, 2014; Ardittis and Laczko, 2017; Vespe, Natale and Pappalardo, 2017).

In my work I used the term irregular/undocumented migration/migrants to regard to migrants with irregular status at various point in their migratory process and when they get to their destination.

Gender-Based Violence

Generally, Gender-based violence is described as violence perpetuated on a person or group of people based on their gender (Kangas, Haider and Fraser, 2014; UN High Commissioner for Refugees, 2015). Plethora research denotes that this violence occurs to all, i.e., men, boys, women, and girls, of note here is that boys and men can also be the survivors of GBV. However, the extent to which men and boys are violated has received little research over time (Kangas, et al., 2014; UNHCR, 2020a). Scholars have explained that women and girls are disproportionately affected by this kind of violence hence the term Violence Against Women [VAW] is used most times (Kumar, 2021; Brennan, 2013). In recent times, GBV has continued to be expanded upon with scholars calling for the strict discussion on male-female perpetrators of violence to be less emphasized as women can also be perpetrators of violence sometimes thus showing that female-female/female-male violence

also takes place among and in the same social affinities (O’Toole, et al 2007; Shaw 2017) (A detailed aspect of GBV is discussed in chapter two below).

Unless explicitly stated otherwise in my work, I use GBV and VAW interchangeably to refer to all the forms of discrimination and violence against women and girls within unequal power relations either between genders or among genders.

Human Trafficking

Is a transnational crime that is defined in Article 3 of the “Additional Protocol to the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Human Trafficking, in particular Trafficking Involving Women and Children” (2000). Thus, “human trafficking shall mean:

(a) the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs.

(b) The consent of a victim of trafficking in persons to the intended exploitation set forth in subparagraph (a) of this article shall be irrelevant where any of the means set forth in subparagraph (a) have been used;

(c) The recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of a child for the purpose of exploitation shall be considered “trafficking in persons” even if this does not involve any of the means set forth in subparagraph (a) of this article; (Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, 2000: Art 3; IOM, 2017a: p. 5).

Worthy to note here is that Human trafficking can be either internal or international. When It is internal HT occurs within the confers of a country whereas when it is international, it occurs outside the confers of a country and involves crossing international borders (Adesina, 2014). Furthermore, human trafficking has been noted to be a gendered form of violence with about 60%, 17% and 10% accounting for women, girls and boys victims of Human Trafficking respectively, thus, females represent a high number for victims of Human Trafficking (UNODC, 2012; see also Esposito, et. al., 2016).

Migrant

Generally a migrant is “any person who lives temporarily or permanently in a country where he or she was not born and has acquired some significant social ties to this country”. (UN DESA 1998: p.10; UN, DESA 2015). As such, migrants are described as people who move to another country for more than three months. This can be for short term- that is staying in a country for less than a year or long-term- which is staying for over a year. Despite the length of stay, of note here is that the country of destination becomes the country of habitual residence (Tsapenko, 2018).

Mixed migration

Mixed migration is defined as “cross-border movements of people including, refugees fleeing persecution and conflict, victims of trafficking and people seeking better lives and opportunities” (Nissling and Murphy-Teixidor, 2020: p.175). Thus, mixed migration encompass all forms of movement that occurs across borders mainly international borders which comprises of both refugees, asylum seekers, economic and social migrants as well as others who make such cross-border mobility. It has been noted that the reasons for embarking on such mixed flows are multi-faceted and most times these migrants are exposed/faced with various forms of violence, human rights violations and vulnerabilities along the migratory routes (UNDP, 2019; UNHCR, 2018: p.19). Furthermore, most of these movements occur in irregular manners and often make use of smugglers along the way to get to their destined countries (Murphy-Teixidor, Bonfiglio, and Leigh, 2020).

Road work: Is generally referred to as prostitution from the Nigerian traffickers, and the migrant women and girls as they are mainly used for easy reference on the kind of work they do.

Connection man/pusher man: Is generally referred to as the person/s the traffickers make contact with to help facilitate the trips for Nigerian women and girls who are trafficked on the air, land and sea borders. This person or persons usually start from Nigeria but with more visibility on the way when they are in Niger and from Niger through the Sahara desert and from there to Libya, with Libya usually the last time they are seen to organise the trips for the girls and women on boats to Europe through the Mediterranean sea, although sometimes they are also used for secondary movement around Europe, but this accounts for a small fraction of their services.

Arabo/Arabos: Is referred to as the Libyans and others from North Africa who are not blacks

Oga/Madam: Is referred to as the traffickers who mainly source and recruits the women and girls into trafficking for sexual exploitation but under the guise of lucrative job opportunities abroad. “Oga” means the men recruiters while “madam” means the female recruiters.

Introduction

Today, the world boasts of over 270 million migrants living outside their countries of origin and birthplace (IOM, 2021). Hence migration has been described as an irreversible state of the art.

Europe for a long time has also witnessed these transformations in relation to the way and manner migration trends takes place within and outside the continent with the establishment of the European Union such movement from one country to the other increased and as such migration from outside the EU increased as well. Over the past three decades there have been tremendous flows into the EU from third countries nationals as a result of the advancement in technology, various wars and conflicts, natural disasters among others which accounts for the increase in such cross border mobilities both regularly and irregularly with a majority of such flows coming through the land and sea borders (De Haas, 2014; Pitzalis, 2018; Semprebon, 2021; De Leo, Cotrufo and Gozzoli, 2022).

Nigeria holds a triple crown of origin-transit-destination country in relation to how cross border mobilities is done within the African continent and across the world with a majority of the citizens found in most continents ranging from Europe, North America, Asia and the MENA regions whereby the flows into such places have occurred in most forms regularly however there has also been some irregular movements alongside. Of note is that migration in Africa have largely remained within the continent with Africa also hosting a huge number of the world's Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) (UNHCR, 2020b; Adepoju, 2016; De Haas, 2006; Idrissa, 2019) as such migration within and between Africa makes up a vital aspect of the socio-political spheres. However despite migration occurring within the continent, there are still those that take place and form outside the continent with some of them involving undocumented routes in such cross-border mobilities along mixed flows from Africa passing through mainly from North Africa with Libya as the last country of exit from the continent to Europe with Italy and Malta as the first point of contact during such migratory journeys (Avallone, 2021; McMahan and Sigona, 2016; degli Uberti, 2019) as such the placement of Africa and in particular North Africa will continue to remain vital in migration studies around Europe and the world.

The ease within the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) among her member states which allows for a free flow of goods and services as well as free movement of people between the various countries opened the leeway for mass flows of migrants from member states as well as those who come from outside the regional states such as the Africans from other regions from the East, South, North, Central Africa among others including those from the Arab world such as Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iraq, Iran etc to get access to these synchronized borders within the regional

bloc thus migrants, refugees and asylum seekers who passed through the ECOWAS borders especially from Niger in a week accounted for over 3000 people in 2013 and during the height of the migration crisis in Europe in 2015/2016 this number increased to over 100,000 people crossing the Niger border unto Europe through the Sahara desert and Libyan routes (Tinti and Wescott, 2016) which leads them into various destination countries when they arrive at Europe in Italy or Malta's borders. Along such mixed flows various forms of abuse and violence take place as a result of migrants vulnerabilities in such undocumented migration as such it has been found that migrant women and girls are among the most vulnerable population in such situations (Degani and De Stefani, 2020; Bartolo, 2017; Plambech, 2016; Okoli and Idemudia, 2020) whereby on their arrival to Europe some of them are seen with little children, pregnant and various symptoms of GBV carried out on them.

As such my project focused on the cross-border mobilities of Nigerian women and girls on their voyage to Europe, particularly Italy. It explored the various migratory routes they embarked on during such journeys to uncap the linkages between migration patterns and Gender-Based Violence (GBV).

By so doing, I seek to underscore the numerous ways gender dynamics intersect with their daily lives and situation that spur migration in the first place from Nigeria to Europe. This is of utmost importance as many existing research have mainly focused on Human Trafficking of Nigerian females and mostly sex trafficking/sex workers (Degani, and De Stefani, 2020; Eghafona, 2020; Plambech, 2016) leaving out other forms of violence and GBV in their analyses. In contrast, other forms of violence are also experienced during such movements alongside Human trafficking. Thus, the rationale for this research. I further explored from a professional angle how the situation of violence is handled and what form of protection the women and girls are given when they arrive in Italy using the vignette research technique. As such, I portray these relationships that account for violence and what kind of responses are given to them when they report such cases in Italy.

Statement of Problem

The ease of migration due to technological advancements has prompted quicker movements across nations worldwide. While many cross-border mobilities occur within the regular confine of law due to these advancements, other forms of movements outside the recognized confine of law have also increased. The rate of undocumented migrants, trafficking in persons, refugees, and asylum seekers has risen recently (Mberu and Pongou, 2010; Bardak, 2017; Idrissa, 2019). Females have been noted to constitute about half of the population of those who move, as well as Nigerian females

who have been reported to feature prominently in such cross-border mobilities (Eurostat, 2019). The thrust of my dissertation falls on this. It explores how violence takes shape in the transition line, especially by investigating Nigerian women and girls who used such migratory journeys into Europe and Italy.

Various scholars have focused on female migration from Nigeria, with a large amount of research on Human trafficking and sex slavery (Plambech, 2016; Tessitore and Margherita, 2019; Okoli and Idemudia, 2020). However, research on Gender-Based Violence concerning Nigerian women has mainly remained untheorized, hence the thrust of my research. This is of utmost importance because Gender-based violence encompasses Human trafficking and sex slavery. As such, my research focuses on disentangling these other forms of GBV [such as Domestic Violence, Assault, Rape as well as institutional violence] (Kangas, et. al., 2014; Swart, 2015) as they intersect in the daily lives of migrants before, during and after migration with a focus on undocumented migration of Nigerian females residing in Italy.

Purpose of Study

The study focuses on identifying the various ways gender-based violence exists in the lives of Nigerian migrants who traverse through irregular means and finally arrive in Europe. In particular, the research outlines the different factors that account for such violence occurring and how this further shape the lives of these women and girls starting from the origin country to the destination country in Italy.

The study also seeks to understand why females migrate despite the risks involved and provide solutions to address the scourge of Gender-Based violence for Nigerian girls and women migrants in Italy. Moreso, the study focuses on shedding more light on the way Gender-based violence is perceived and received in the various reception and protection centres when these women and girls have arrived in Italy seeking protection from the Italian government with the views gotten from professionals in the protection system through the vignettes.

Research Questions

Although gender-based violence is not new among female migrants, this paper seeks to address the issues associated with gender-based violence among Nigerian girls and women who embarked on tortuous journeys and are in various shelter homes under protection. Thus, this dissertation anchors itself to the following research questions.

1. Why do Nigerian girls and women engage in irregular migration to Europe despite the risks?
2. What kind of discourses frames different violence types, focusing on gender-based violence of irregular Nigerian female migrants?
3. To examine the consequences of the different kinds of violence (gender-based violence) and the other framing discourses of gender-based violence?
4. How can the causes and challenges associated with the illegal migration of Nigerian girls and women be addressed?
5. How is the institutional treatment and perception of Gender-Based Violence in migrant reception centers/system? (Embedded in the vignette for the professionals)

Significance of the Study

The study enunciates how gender dynamics of migration creates vulnerabilities as it explores the relationship between irregular migration and Gender violence. The study reveals that while violence is not new as much research have linked irregular migration with violence, the aspect of Gender-based violence that Nigerian women and girls face on their way to Europe has not been fully explored.

The research also proffers solution on how gender-based violence can be mitigated both from professional perspective and the perspectives from the women and girls interviewed thus arriving at a bottom-up policy approach.

Its importance is derived from the fact that even in human trafficking/sex labour for Nigerian women and girls, there are other forms of violence which occurs at the same time, either purposely for example when it occurs within the home or unconsciously by laws put in place that may inhibit them from achieving their full potential and protection from such issues to occur. As such, this project shed light on the asymmetries of power relations and how it contributes to what women are expose to/with on their migration journey, thus a shift from the usual sex slavery narrative and sex trafficking narrative to a more wider aspect of gender violence which have received little research.

Overview of Chapters

This dissertation comprises of five chapters. Following the introduction above, Chapter one covers extant literature on gender, migration, and the various forms it entails. It further explores other historical and current migration trends from Africa and Nigeria, as well as the feminization of migration which also explain the rationale for the increase in female migration. Furthermore, the various transit routes these migrants use to traverse to Europe from Nigeria are defined as well as the situation they face during such movements. Chapter two covers the methodology used to carry out

the study and its research questions. Chapters three and four entails the analysis chapters splitting them into two where chapter three covers the migration journey before, during, and after the process, and chapter four covers their situation in Italy and how they are taken care of from an institutional angle, and finally Chapter five which is the last entails the summary of all the findings in the work, conclusion, recommendation, and suggestions for further research.

Chapter One: Literature Review

This chapter contains all the aspects covered during the literature review. Starting from the overview of gender-based violence and its forms, the impact of gender-based violence, as well as gender based violence and its linkages to migration, migration trends in Africa and Nigeria and the reception system in Italy and the various policies and bodies on Migration from Africa and Europe. The chapter is divided into eight sections dealing on the various topics and sub-themes enumerated below. Furthermore, the various theories identified in this chapter were used to explain why such migration occurs in the first place from Nigeria to Europe.

1.1. SECTION ONE: OVERVIEW OF VIOLENCE /GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

1. 1.1 The Concept of Violence

The notion of violence has passed through various epochs which has also witnessed transformations from these times to present day thus there have been no age of civilization that violence have not occurred. During the early times up to the 18th Century violence was described from a militarist approach popularly referenced to Charles Tilly's Dictum of "Wars made State and State made Wars" (cited in Wimmer, 2013: p.4) which accounted for the strong linkages with civil wars, dispute over material resources and goods as well as feudal states, religious wars and crimes, hanging and beheading in public squares of offenders and enemies of the kingdoms, chiefdom, feudal lords etc (Wimmer, 2013; Butt, and Shareef, 2013; Boddy 1982; Hayes 1975; Otterbein, 1999). As such, violence during those times involved a lot of brutality and chaos within and outside the societies, villages and kingdoms which continued until state modernism was birthed.

Going to the modern era, classical social scholars such as Marx, Durkheim, and Weber were among the dominant scholars during the twentieth century and their positions in states brutality and violence was different from earlier works, they focused more on education, industrialisation, bureaucracy, status and class divisions as well as transformation in cultural and religious values etc as the more vital issues facing the society at that time (Malešević', 2010) which have continued to be a great influence in sociology and other academic fields. As such violence in modern time, has been less militarist in the eye of the public, however various scholars such as Collins, (2008), Malešević', (2013), and Wimmer, Cederman and Min, (2009), have successfully argued that violence in the twentieth centuries till date, have witnessed more occurrence and deaths than the earlier time, as a recorded number of over 450 attacks and over 110 million death were accounted for during these centuries (see also Malešević', 2010; Eckhardt, 1992; Malešević', 2013), as well as violence shifting from primordial ways to more sophisticated mode as a result of advancement in technology and

emergence of statehood and its legitimization of violence which have taken violence away from the public eye and has made it more institutionalised in the system that have also invariably made it to be legitimate in the eyes of the people or citizens of the countries to which they belong (Malešević, 2013) as they now justify such forms of violence. For example, the dropping of the nuclear bomb in Hiroshima, the killing of terrorist leaders, bombing and invasion of other territories and states in the name of protecting the interest of the state and people have reduced the outright dislike for violence from the public as the people are affirmative towards such actions in the guise of being safe afterwards (Popov, 2000; Malešević and Uzelac, 1997).

Furthermore, the shift from pre-modern to modern statehood with the emergence of clear and distinct territories paved the leeway for violence to thrive at an unprecedented way that was never witnessed before as wars shifted from physical to more ideological form of power tussle where physical violence and altercation is always mostly avoided and dealt with before it blows out of proportion (Collins, 1974; Bauman, 1989; Lindemann and Wimmer, 2018; Collins, 2008).

Moreso, this shift from physical to ideological form of violence have further been manifested even in inter-personal relations which scholars deem to not have changed in the way it occurs since time immemorial, it has only reduced in terms of the visualization and public witnessing unlike how it was done in the pre-modern world (Malešević, 2006; Collins, 2008; Malešević, 2012). Seemingly violence now includes other forms such as emotional, economic, physical, domestic, human trafficking, etc among others which have now taken centre stage in many analysis of today howbeit, having more gendered forms of analysis than was done at the earlier times (Singh and Choudhury, 2012; Arinze-Umobi, 2008; Krause, 2015). Thus, violence today connotes all forms of abuse that inflicts pain either consciously or unconsciously to individuals irrespective of their gender, sex, status, etc (Singh and Choudhury, 2012). It is further regarded as an “act of human inflictions, deprivations and discrimination resulting in or likely to result in unlawful physical, sexual and psychological harm, suffering or deprivation” (UN, 1993 cited in Uzuegbunam, 2013: p. 185).

From the above, violence is any harmful practice carried out on someone, this can be directly or indirectly for instance indirect violence can be seen in the way some group experience violence in everyday life deem subtle (see Embrick, Domínguez, and Karsak 2017; Piccinelli, 2019; Douds, and Hout, 2020) among others. Also violence consists of various types ranging from physical, psychological, social, political, gender-based, among others. Violence has also been noted to be a major health issue since 2002 with various efforts put in place to address this phenomenon (Krug, Dahlberg, et al., 2002).

1. 1.2 The concept of Gender

Gender as a concept came into use during the late 1970s and early 1980s among scholars who were mainly feminist social scientist (Barlow, 2015). Bringing in gender into analysis was done in order to describe women's social as well as their historical differences from their male counterparts (Scott, 1986).

The 1990s brought with it more expansion of the phenomenon of gender and as such gender was denoted to mean cultural practices that make sexual natures of all kinds appear to be fundamental, heterosexual, and unchanging (Barlow, 2015). Thus, Gender is defined as “the social, behavioural and cultural attributes, expectations and norms associated with being a woman or a man”. As such gender can be viewed as socially constructed norms and ideologies which determine the behaviour and actions of men and women” (World Development Report, 2012: p. 4). Others such as Tastsoglou, Petrinioti and Karagiannopoulou, (2021), in their work explained Gender as a relational power concept which is maintained and reproduced by materialist conditions and discursive practices including the exercise or threat of violence (p. 2).

A vital point of note is that gender has varying degree in terms of representation and positions in the society. Thus, the gender relations between men and women differs in various ways ranging from economic, social, political among others. For instance, women have been known to have/hold control over few political and economic resources which ranges from traditional authority, employment, land etc. (Kangas, et al., 2014).

Generally, the concept of gender is sociological and ascribed while sex is biological and given or assigned (UNFPA, 2020). Despite this constructed view on gender, the ways and manner of living between men and women are affected as it shapes the way interaction entails. As such these constructions do not only underline the structural and institutional inequalities but it shows how they are being reproduced on a constant basis through discursive practices (Butler, 1990; Tastsoglou, et. al., 2021).

However, there have been clamour for a shift in the way gender is construed both in and out of academia, as some advocates that gender should not be only analysed from the male-female and masculinity-femininity binaries alone as sometimes power relations can be within the same binary (O'Toole, et. al., 2007; Shaw 2017). While others have asserted that in gender discussions, looking at only one aspect of a person's makeup does not allow for the full comprehension of the person's situation.

One area which has also been used to expand on the discussion about gender is intersectionality. Intersectionality is a term coined by Kimberle Crenshaw in 1989 which focused on the overlapping categories of discrimination such as race, gender and class, that affects black women

at that time, thus according to her, you cannot separate from the fact that they are black, women and marginalised at the same time in the United States (Lutz, 2022; Davis, 2020; Piccinelli, 2019). This term has travelled around the globe as it is referenced as a ground-breaking input to come from black female community at that time due to the fact that they were discriminated and relegated to the background.

Ever since then Intersectionality has been embedded in Gender and feminism studies, as well as to other disciplines as a result of its interconnectedness (Davis, 2020; Piccinelli, 2019; Anthias, 2012). As such, intersectionality “seeks to address the many realities, individual diversity, and societal relations of power that women face daily” (Phoenix, 2006:187). Similarly, intersectionality is used to show that social division interrelate in the production of social relations in peoples’ lives for example, “gender is seen as inflected by other social divisions such as ‘race’ and class, and they are seen as mutually constitutive” (Brah and Phoenix, 2004; Collins, 1990). As such, it shows the division amongst women and the other social categories by the processes of racialization and class, as well as the disadvantages that follows (Anthias, 2012).

Despite the landmark that came with intersectionality, some researchers, including Lutz (2001), Staunæs, (2003), and Buitelaar, (2006), disagreed on the number of categories of analysis that intersectionality should include and whether or not it should be employed just for theorizing identity (Davis, 2008:79). Likewise, MacCall (2005:1780) offers several helpful theoretical frameworks for investigating identities that span numerous, interrelated dimensions. For instance, she claims that the concept of intersectionality is an intra-category method of dealing with complexity. She argues that research that just looks at black women's experiences in relation to race or gender misses important context. She asserted that there should be a way of investigating the competing forces that form women's everyday lives that are similar to an intra-categorical approach.

Howbeit the various views and strand from intersectionality scholars above, one thing is certain intersectionality is an essential tool in gender analysis as it helps to enunciate how structures of power interact to produce distinct social inequalities that affects groups and individuals differently (Cho, 2013; Davis, 2020; Anthias, 2021; Lutz, 2022).

1. 1.3 Historical Perspective of Violence and Gender-Based Violence

At various times, GBV and its forms of practice change as societies evolved, while in some societies GBV is more prevalent, in others, it has recorded a lower occurrence degree when put in comparison. Historically, violence against women has been linked to the gendered ascribed roles,

where the men were placed in superior positions above the women, as such the women were seen as properties to be used as deemed fit by their owners (Lerner, 1986; Asher-Greve, 1998; Alcoff, 2012). From the early premodern era, violence against women were not usually seen as a public affair and as such when such violence occurs it was to be treated as a family issue. Also, after the conquest from wars fought, most of the survivals were taken as slaves, wives and labourers for the victorious sides and women were regarded as the soft victims of wars who were later taken to become wives, bear children or used according to the pleasing of the Master/Masters (Collins, 2008). Men were given hegemonic roles as the head of the family and women were to be submissive to their husbands. This created the asymmetric power division from that period onward.

Likewise, the development of modern states also gave rise to varied forms of patriarchy which later became sub-merged and reenforced one another to continue their hegemonic power structure (Shanley, 1989; Fox, 2002; Collins, 2008; Males'evic', 2006; Males'evic', 2010). For instance, there were already laws in Western countries as early as the 11th and 12th centuries whereby patriarchy was upheld, and women were subordinates in society. A clear example of this was the common law being practiced where the women were treated as objects of their husbands to be used as he thought (Fox, 2002).

Thus, the modern era didn't change anything that was already practiced in the early times as the power division and structure still took place, for instance the aspect of physical abuse and beating. During this time the laws allowed men to beat their wives if she is found wanting and also use it as a measure to correct her to maintain the asymmetry of power relations as well as putting her in check. Thus, an errand wife was beaten back into submission after she has erred. This was widely practiced among western societies for example in the UK, the US as well as countries in Europe, although not limited to the West alone (Calvert, 1974; Shanley, 1989; Alokun, 2013).

Women were also disenfranchised as can be seen from their omission from voting as well as holding political offices or running for positions. This was a huge discrimination at that time on the bases of gender, and gender roles, including norms that place women to be subordinate to men, also women were not given the freedom to even own their properties at that time (Fletcher, 1995). Thus, limiting their access to any form of stability in relation to becoming independent. Fox (2002), described this thus "patriarchy dominated the economic relationship of the couple... The common law allowed a husband to legally control his wife's real property, as well as her personal property acquired during the marriage, such as clothes, jewellery, or wages... The wife, on the other hand, had no right to veto over her husband's decisions, including those related to her property, nor could she

with impunity verbally argue with him; if she tried, she would be regarded as a “scold” and punished” (p. 19).

Nevertheless, despite these forms of violence being practiced at that time, their application varied across countries, communities, and cities. During the 17th century, the Puritans among others rejected the law that gave men the right to inflict physical harm on their wives. Thus in 1641, the Massachusetts Puritans became the first to pass a law against wife beating in the world. They further urged the men to settle such disputes using persuasion and not physical violence (Fletcher, 1995; Offen, 2000). This later became a great influence on other countries as they also passed laws concerning the wife battery of men to women. For instance, countries like the UK, the United States, and Switzerland all passed laws to stop such violence, Howbeit it took decades later for them to achieve it. In the US, the declaration was passed in 1870 at various courts across the country to remove and abolish the common law which gave the husband right to physically chastise an errant wife. Likewise, in the UK this law to abolish wife beating was passed a century later (Calvert, 1974; Alokam, 2013). Thus, GBV which was handled as a trivial issue came into the limelight (Golah-Ebue, 2021). In the same vein, the CEDAW declaration in 1993 also explained violence as the historical manifestation of uneven power relations between men and women which further led to the discrimination alongside the subordination of the women by their male counterparts thereby acting as a catalyst against their advancement fully in various areas of their lives (CEDAW, 1993).

However, the dawn of the late 19th century and the 20th century witnessed changes that exposed the struggles and issues women were facing in relation to violence and other forms of discrimination. Starting from the establishment of the 1947 UN Command about the Status of Women which was done to address the various matters women were faced with as a result of their status, it was thus charged with the aim to increase women's status, irrespective of nationality, religion, language, or race, as well as to create “equality with men in all fields of human enterprise, and to eliminate all discrimination against women in the provision of statutory law, in legal maxims or rules, or interpretations of customary law” (Penn and Nardos, 2003: p. 3). According to Penn and Nardos (2003), despite this great feat in the emergence of the commission at such a time, it failed to align its goals regarding the elimination of physical and sexual violence against girls and women. However, the Commission played a huge role in shaping the Common Declaration of Human Rights in 1948, which incorporated these needs and x-rayed the inherent equality of men and women (Swart, 2015).

From here henceforth, GBV/VAW became an important issue to be addressed. Moreso, during the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s various feminist movements sprang up which were focused mainly on outlining the violence against women and how they are discriminated upon in relation to their pay,

job, position in the society, among other things. As such there have been various researches which have linked these movements to second wave and third wave feminist movements (Roth, 2003; Bergoffen, 2012).

The second wave feminist movement was concerned in exposing the plight of women and also how to include women in various sectors in the countries as well as speaking out on the Gender violence they faced (Buechler, 1990; Carden, 1974; Evans, 1979; Marx Ferree and Hess, 1985; Freeman, 1975; Hole and Levine, 1971; Marx Ferree and Hess, 2000). This helped to take women's issues upfront to the state level for the first time and thereafter policies were made to include some of the issues raised for example, the Equal Pay Act initiated in 1961 and was passed into law in the US under President Kennedy in 1963 (Bergoffen, 2012) was a vital step in advancing women's struggles at that time. Thus the second wave feminist movement such as the National Organization for Women (Harris, 2000) was very active during the 1960s/1970s and they continued to fight for the inclusion of women in various sectors of the economic, political and social spheres (Roth, 2003). However, they were deemed to be more of white feminist as they assumed and subsumed all women to be having the same issues and needs like them. This sparked public backlash from the other women who were not Whites as they saw the disparity in the issues and situation they found themselves, in relation to their economic survival that concerned the black community, racism and other social issues (Roth, 2004).

The third wave feminism have been attributed to black feminist movements which sprang up in the late 1970s and 1980s. They consisted of women of colour, from various countries. Their focus was to highlight the various forms of violence they faced alongside being women for example the inclusion of race, class and gender was paramount in their struggle as they advocated for their rights (Roth, 1999, 2004; Bergoffen, 2012). According to them, their socio-economic situation was different from what the second wave feminist were advocating for, they were under-privileged women, wives, mothers and all other subordinate roles they had during that time. This period also saw the rise of the term intersectionality (already explained above) being used as a strong tool for pushing forward the call for women's rights which was more inclusive than the earlier movement before it (Anderson-Bricker, 1999; Baxandall, 2001; Blackwell, 2002; Gray White, 1999; Ward, 2003). Although, there have been other researches done to show that the black feminist movement did not come up after the second wave of feminism but it was established at the same time, only that the black women were not going to meetings organised by the white feminist because they were not of the same vision (Roth, 2003) instead, the Black Women's Liberation Group (BWLG) of Mount Vernon/New Rochelle, New York (Baxandall, 2001; Polatnik, 1996; Roth, 2004) and the Third World Women's Alliance (Anderson-Bricker, 1999; Blackwell, 2002; Springer, 2001; Ward, 2003) were already established,

holding their own meetings with the values and visions primarily for women of colour both within and outside America such as Africa, Asia, Middle East among others (Davis, 2008).

However, the nature and type of feminist movement borne at that time, one thing was sure, women were disadvantaged and were facing various forms of violence and there was need for them to be protected and given various opportunities to thrive outside violent situations. As such, these movements coincided with and brought about various awareness programmes and international conferences which gave rise to different tools and international laws concerning the status of women and gender based violence (Machado, 2010). In addition, the term gender-based violence (GBV) became part of international discourse as a way of emphasizing the structural nature of violence against women, a phenomenon that was subsequently identified as a form of human rights abuse (EIGE, 2019; Hossain and McAlpine, 2017).

Till date, one of the most prominent documents used in addressing GBV/VAW has been the United States Commission on Elimination of the Discriminations against Women (United Nations, CEDAW, 1992). In it, GBV was defined as “the violence that is directed against a woman because she is a woman or that affects women disproportionately” (Article 6). Furthermore, it was seen as “a form of discrimination that seriously inhibits women’s ability to enjoy rights and freedoms on a basis of equality with men” (Article 1) (United Nations, CEDAW Committee, 1992). As such, in 1993 the CEDAW expanded the meaning and definition of GBV to incorporate “any act of gender-based violence that results in or is likely to result in physical, sexual, or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty; whether occurring in public or private life” (United States, General Assembly, 1993). To date, this description is widely used in gender analysis of violence as it touches upon various aspects of violence that were earlier neglected in the discourse of GBV. Thus, it is generally known as the first international human rights instrument to address exclusively VAW and it has been further incorporated into academia as many researches on VAW, gender and sexuality among others continue to use this definition in various disciplines (Penn and Nardos, 2003; Swart, 2015, Bosch, Ferrer, Navarro and Ferreiro, 2010).

GBV has also been analysed from its division into two phases/categories whereby on the one hand GBV is stated to be interpersonal and on the other hand, it is categorized as structural or institutional violence. Whereby **Interpersonal violence** means all forms of violence carried out against a person by another individual. This type of violence includes but is not limited to social, economic, sexual, as well as psychological violence among others (Kangas, et al., 2014; Swart, 2015). And **Structural or institutional violence** connotes any form of structural inequalities put in place as well as institutional discrimination that places and maintains a person in subordinate positions whether ideological or physical, to other persons' families, communities, or households (Manjoo

2011). It should be noted that this division of GBV is mainly hegemonic and most times, it places men's masculinities above other gender identities including women and girls. (Duncan, Sommarin, et al., 2013; Rico, 1997; UNFPA, 2020; Levinson, 1989; Heise, et al., 2002; Bosch, et al., Ferreiro, 2010). For example, some societies allow men to beat their wives in the name of chastising them into the laid down culture in the society to which they belong, although there is a varying degree to what extent this happens across cultures (See Jejeebhoy, 1998; UNODC, 2018; Golah-Ebue, 2021¹).

Another discourse on GBV is that it is no respecter of persons as it affects everyone despite their socio-economic status, it *'is most often used to stress the universality of male-female inequality and its role as a common denominator in the underlying causes of all types of violence against girls and women. And since it's motivated by a desire to punish people viewed as violating gender norms, GBV also encompasses "the violence done against women, girls, men, and boys with varied gender identities and sexual orientations, as well as non-binary persons.'* (OHCHR, 2011b: p.5; 2011c; 2020). Moreso, GBV is widely regarded as a violation of a person's rights that affects a person's well-being at any given time, invariably vulnerable persons such as asylum seekers, refugees, stateless persons, and IDPs are at heightened risk of GBV irrespective of their age, gender and other differences put in place (UNHCR, 2020; Tastsoglou, et. al., 2021). Apart from the fact that women and girls are affected disproportionately, the Istanbul Convention also states that some women experience multiple and interlocking forms of violence at the same time hence intersectionality of violence is paramount when analysing GBV (Council of Europe, 2014).

Of note here is that GBV takes various forms ranging from Forced marriages, Intimate or Domestic Partner Violence, Rape, Female Genital Mutilation, Infanticide, Honour Killing, Human Trafficking, Sexual violence, Physical, Psychological, as well as other discriminating norms, values, rules, and laws put in place that limits girls and women rights and their accessibility to the services, protections and their human rights (Gender-Based Violence Information Management System [GBVIMS], 2006; CERF, 2010; Rico, 1997; Heise, et. al., 2002). An example of figures given recently for the prevalence of some of these violence revealed alarming rates of violence against women, over 700 million women all over the world were married off as children that were below 18 years and one in three of these women got married before an age of fifteen years (UNICEF, 2014; UNFPA, 2020). In addition to this, it was reported that more than 200 million African girls and

¹ This practice is enshrined in the Penal Code 51(D) in Nigeria, and it is still practiced till date. This is gotten from an earlier publication made by the researcher on Domestic violence and Internal displacement of Nigerian females. Some texts used are similar to what was published in some aspect of gender and domestic violence. See Golah-Ebue, A. H. (2021). *Women on the Run: Domestic Violence and Internal Displacement of Nigerian Females*. In M. Sette (ed.). *Narratives of Displacement*. Biblion Edizione srl Milano.

women had become subjected to female genital mutilation (FGM) in 29 different African nations (WHO, 2020).

Nevertheless, there have been global efforts to reduce GBV against women, and these efforts have resulted in the creation of various policies. The Convention on Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women of 1979; The UN General Assembly of 1993; Fourth World Conference on Women: Action for Development, Equality and Peace, held in Beijing, China, in 1995; The Declaration on Gender and Development on the Prevention and Eradication of Violence against women and Children of 1997; as well the Domestic Abuse Bill of 2006 are all examples of such policies (Mukanangana, et. al. 2014; Patr6-Hern6ndez, 2017; Garcia-Moreno, et. al., 2013; Eckermann, 2006).

However, despite these landmarks concerning the awareness and involvement of various international organizations, as well as laws passed to stem VAW/GBV over the years, the prevalence of violence is still felt to date. For example, between 1990 and early 2000, the US recorded over 4.8 million cases of domestic violence and intimate partner abuse including rape experienced by women and girls (Tjaden, 2000). Other parts of the world also record various sorts of GBV experienced by girls and women. An example of this is the research carried out in Uganda in 2003, where it was reported that women who resided in rural areas have experienced more forms of abuse than their female counterparts in the cities, also it was reported that one out of three women have experienced domestic violence (Koenig, et. al., 2003). This also collaborates with findings done by the World Bank, WHO and other scholars, which conveyed that one out of three women and/or have encountered GBV in their lifetime (World Bank, 2019; WHO 2005; Omi, 2006; Patr6-Hern6ndez, 2017). Also, UNODC (2018), research showed that in 2017 alone, 87,000 women were killed by intention and more than 50% of them were murdered by their intimate partners and family members.

From the above, it is obvious that GBV is most prevalent in all societies and it's a harmful practice carried out on the bases of sex through the use of asymmetry power relations, which further create the leeway for GBV to thrive. Women have continued to be affected disproportionately in this form. Various efforts have been put in place to address this form of violence however, these have not been successful in stemming the scourge of GBV globally (Heise et al., 1999; WHO, 2013; Bosch, et. al, 2010).

1. 1.4 Forms of Gender-Based Violence

1. Female Infanticide

This form of GBV is carried out on females, in particular, it encompasses all actions performed to reduce the number of female children in society. It ranges from the abortion of female

foetuses to the outright killing of female babies (Kangas, et al., 2014). It is a practice that is performed in the Asian continent, especially in India and China where many girls have gone missing (ActionAid and IDRC, 2008). This extreme form of GBV has led to the increase in male children who are of eligible age to get married in these countries, as a result of the scarcity of young female children, brides are sought internationally and this has further led to high rate of women being trafficked into the continent to become wives (Kangas, et al., 2014). Of note here is that this killing of females is a result of both internal and external pressures upon the parents of such children to give birth to male heirs that will continue the family lineage. Also, some families view the female children as a problem to them, most especially in cases where dowries are required as part of the nuptial practices between the groom and bride families (UNODC, 2018). The practice of femicide is greatly influenced by various factors ranging from social, political, cultural, etc. It is deep-rooted in discrimination of one sex against another and the preference of males over females in these countries (Mahalingam, and Wachman, 2012).

2. Harmful Traditional/Cultural Practices

2a. Female Genital Mutilation or Cutting (FGM)

FGM entails all the procedures which involve partial or total removal of the external parts of female genital organ or other injury to females for cultural, religious or some other non-therapeutic purposes (Ibekwe, et. al., 2012; WHO 2007; Ismail, Abbas, et. al., 2017). FGM is made up of three types which ranges from the **Sunna** usually called the first and simplest (i.e. partial or complete removal of the clitoris); to the **Excision** which involves the removal of the clitoris and the labia minora and the third one is called the **Infibulation**- this is referred to the hardest of them all and the most dangerous form which is often the most common form of FGM, it involves the total removal of the clitoris, the labia minora and the labia majora and is usually followed by the sewing together of the vulva which allows for a small opening to be left in order to allow urine and menstrual flow of the girls and women (Swart, 2015; Obiora, Maree and Nkosi-Mafutha, 2020; WHO, 2020). In some cases defibulation is carried out on these females before any sexual intercourse can occur due to the little space that was left opened during infibulation. Like the foregoing, FGM has been described by medical experts as a destructive, invasive procedure done surgically on females usually before puberty. This practice usually leaves the victims with reduced or no sexual feeling/orgasm later in life, in some cases they have painful intercourse, complications during child delivery, infections and even death among others (WREP 2006; Swart, 2015; Ismail, Abbas, et. al., 2017).

This practice has been in place for many decades and is still practiced in almost all parts of the world, its practice and application differs according to the region it is being carried out. For

instance, FGM is practiced in Africa, the Middle East, Indonesia and Malaysia, also some migrants in Europe, United States, Australia and in some parts of Asia (UNICEF 2013; WHO, 2020; Penn and Nardos, 2003). Africa as well as Asia continents holds the highest record of FGM practice where by 30 African countries ranging from the West, East, North and South, practice such, thus from Senegal to Ethiopia to Egypt to Tanzania and in Asia, India also holds a strong record of FGM (Ahmadi 2013; Ismail, Abbas, et. al., 2017; WHO, 2020).

Various awareness programmes have been launched generally concerning the dangers of FGM which have been very helpful in addressing FGM. Although the practice of FGM has reduced, women and girls are still made to undergo the procedure and they even submit themselves in some cases in order for them not to be ostracised from their communities and other social events as well as them meeting the requirements needed for them to get married and also access to jobs in their societies (Asaad, 1980; Swart, 2015; Arebi, 2007; Obiora, et.al., 2020).

2b. Forced Marriage

This is another aspect of harmful practice that still exists to date. This refers to all kinds of marriages conducted with no agreement of both participants involved, this could take the form of physical, psychological, and emotional coercion (API GBV, 2017; Anitha and Gill, 2011; Chantler and McCarry, 2020). There are various types of forced marriage; these are **Child marriages**- which involve the joining of partners where one or both partners are under the age of 18; and **Arranged marriages**- Here there is a formation of the contract or alliance between the two families who champion the selection of a partner for their adult children (Chantler, 2012; Tew, 2012; Tahir, 2021). Other scholars writing on Forced marriage have argued that the gender binary shouldn't be followed strictly as there are some points of intersectionality (Crenshaw, 1991) in such places where forced marriages occurs, thus cultural perspective as well as race, class, gender and poverty, disability, among others are factors to be considered in the phenomenon of forced marriages (Clawson and Fyson, 2017; Chantler, 2012). It has also been argued that men are also forced to marry the partners set for them, however women and girls have been noted to be affected disproportionately in this phenomenon (Enright, 2009; Malhotra, 1997; Villacampa and Torres, 2021). For instance, research by Khanum, (2008), showed that 34 percent of women are globally forced into marriages. Likewise in Afghanistan, 57 percent of girls were forced to engage in marriages before attaining the age of sixteen (Yakin, 2006), Also studies carried out in Yemen and Sudan revealed that between 32% and 34% of girls were forced into early marriages respectively (UNICEF, 2011). Also Zimbabwe was found to have one of highest number of forced marriages for children with an estimated 55% prevalence rate (UNFPA, 2011). Although other regions in the world have records for high prevalence

rate of forced marriages especially for child bride such as, South Asia (44%), sub-Saharan Africa (18%), East Asia and the Pacific (12%), Latin America and Caribbean (9%), the Middle East and North Africa (5%) among others; However, India is recorded to hold the highest number of child marriages in the world with an estimated 15.6 million girls married before the age of 18 in the country (UNICEF, 2022; Feser, 2017; UNHCR, 2021; Statista, 2022).

Moreso, forced marriage can also lead to increase exposure to abuses such as marital rape, coerced sexual initiation, interrupted education, domestic violence by their partners, femicide, etc. (Mukanangana, et al, 2014; Kangas, et al., 2014). Reasons given for such marriages vary, some of which are Cultural and religious traditions, as well as to protect the family heritage, and honor, boost wealth accumulation and guard young women against incestuous acts carried out by male family members, friends, or other members of the extended family (Chantler and McCarry, 2020; Villacampa and Torres, 2021). The International Labour Organization in 2017 declared forced marriages a form of modern slavery (API GBV, 2017). Recently, the number of women and girls who have been forced into early marriages before the age of 18 was reported to be over 700 million worldwide, of which 1 in 3 of these women was married off before the age of 15 (UNFPA, 2020).

2c. Femicide

This is another form of GBV which has been in existence for a long time. Although it is difficult to get data on this aspect of GBV. The first conception of femicide was done by Dana Russell in the 1970s to differentiate the killing of women and girls from that of men in homicide deaths (Russell, 2001; Caputi and Russell, 1990). From then on, various stands have been taken to discuss and diffuse the term femicide, while some scholars view it as the intentional killing of women because they are women (Ellis and DeKeseredy, 1996; Mouzos, 1999), others view it as the outright killing of women without the need of intent involved (Russell, 2001; Campbell, 2008), some also view it as cultural norms that allows for these killing to take place (Freeman, 1972; Radford, 1992; Bathia, 2005; Corradi, et al., 2016) whereby patriarchy is embedded as a strong force behind such killings (Taylor and Jasinski, 2011; Simone and Boiano, 2018). Although others have also showed from their research whereby killing of females also occurs by females too (Glass, et al., 2004; Muftić and Baumann, 2012). and lastly, it has been argued that women also kill males too (Daly and Wilson, 1988; Garcia-Moreno, et al., 2012) as such calling for the shift from the gender perspective on femicide. Despite this, other researches have shown that women and girls are affected by femicide more than their male counterparts and in most cases the cause of death is done by the opposite sex (Bloom, 2008; Sorrentino, et al., 2020). Howbeit these variations in definition, femicide is conceived as an extreme form of violence that results to the death of females either by people they know or those that are strangers (Dawson and Carrigan, 2020; Dugan, et al. 2003; Dino, 2022). It is thus regarded

as the killing of women because they are women/females, these killings can be done intentionally or otherwise.

Femicide has also be divided into various subgroups such as **Intimate femicide/Intimate partner femicide-** this involves the killing of females/women and girls by their partners/husbands, or former partners/ex-husbands in such intimate relationships (Garcia-Moreno, et al., 2012; Dawson and Carrigan, 2020; Dino, 2022). As such this form of femicide is widely regarded as the most common one to occur globally. Other studies have also shown that females can still be perpetrators of femicide to their male partners as well as those in same-sex relationships (Glass, et al., 2004; Muftić and Baumann, 2012). However most of the studies on femicide reported this form of violence mainly done by the men as most of the women may be killed for various reasons such as jealousy, control, women's efforts to end a relationship, among others while on the other hand, women killings are perceived to be done as a result of defence mechanism against their attacker which is usually their spouse or partner/ex-spouse or partner (Daly and Wilson, 1988; Johnson and Hotton, 2003; Hotton, 2001; Dino, 2022). Howbeit these killings of women have been reported to occur in lower rates compared to the one from their male counterparts. For example, studies carried out by WHO and the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine in 2013 showed that over 35% of women killed globally were done by an intimate partner while on the other hand, it was reported that killing of men by an intimate partner made up 5% of the murders (Stöckl, Devries, et al., 2013). Also, intimate partner violence has been linked strongly to intimate partner femicide as many of the deaths that emanates from femicide are as a result of intimate partner violence (Campbell, Webster, et al., 2003; Campbell, et al., 2007; Elisha, et al., 2009; Dino, 2022).

Non-Intimate femicide- is regarded as the killing of females by strangers and/or people they do not have any intimate relations with, this could range from racists attacks, gun shooting specifically to women, human trafficking, to sexual abuse by forced raped leading to eventual killing of the women, among others (Garcia-Moreno, et al., 2012; Etherington and Baker, 2015; Sarmiento, et al., 2014). For instance, in 2006 records concerning two mass shootings which occurred in the USA showed the gunmen killing specifically young girls and female teachers at the schools (Herbert, 2006). Also in 2008, it was reported that over 700 women were killed in Guatemala and many of the murders occurred after the women were sexually abused and tortured (HRW, 2010). According to scholars, this form of femicide occurs at a lower rate than intimate femicide (Dawson, and Carrigan, 2020; Sorrentino, et. al., 2020) however, the underlining factor is that women and girls are killed eventually at the end.

Also **Honor killing** is another form of femicide. This involves the killing of girls or women by a male or other family members which can also consist of female members of the family as a way of protecting the family's name or prestige in the society, thus such acts of violence are done as a response to an actual or assumed transgression (Russell, 2001; Khafagy, 2005; Dawson, and Carrigan, 2020), studies have shown that these killings do happen for various reasons which are strongly linked to the power asymmetry of girls and women (Radford, 1992; Corradi, et al., 2016). For example, women and girls can become killed for declining marriages, being rape victims, wearing clothes that their male members of the family think are improper, covering incest, committing adultery, low dowry, becoming pregnant outside marriage or before marriage, etc (Patel and Gadit, 2008; Penn and Nardos, 2003, Khafagy, 2005; Faqir, 2001; UNODC, 2018). For instance in 1997 over 250 women were killed to avenge or protect the family honor in one province area in Pakistan (Bahun-Radunovic and Rajan, 2008). Likewise in 2006 over 7,000 dowry-related deaths were reported in India and others estimating over 25,000 dowry-related deaths occurring every year in the country (PATH, 2009). Generally it is estimated that over 5000 women and girls are killed under the guise of honor in the world, although the figures may be more depending on the availability of data (UN News, 2010; Garcia-Moreno, et al., 2012; UNODC, 2018). Although honor killing occurs in almost all the continents of the world such as Europe, Africa, North America, South America, Asia, Oceania, among others however, majority of the cases occurs in the Middle East and Asia (Nasrullah, et al., 2009; Dino, 2022; Khafagy, 2005; Corradi, et. al., 2016).

Furthermore, reports given in 2017 concerning Honor killing and Femicide worldwide were estimated to be 87,000 women killed intentionally, with about 57% of these killings carried out by intimate partners and/or family members (UNODC, 2018).

3. Domestic Violence/Intimate Partner Violence

Domestic Violence commonly interchanged with intimate partner violence is defined as an abuse that is melted out by a person in other to control and assert their power over their partner in an intimate relationship (Brennan, 2013). This form of abuse affects all genders from men, women, girls, and boys however, girls and women have been noted to become affected disproportionately and are usually at the receiving end of this violence (Kangas, et al., 2014; Tomasdottir, et al., 2016). A vital point here is that DV surpasses just violence between partners, it also entails any forms of violence which are perpetuated in the home which can be among family members, friends, relatives as well as children (Michalski, 2005). Thus, DV has been dubbed to be “the most widespread kind of violence that is committed against women throughout the globe. There “is virtually no place where it is not a

significant problem, and women of no race, class or age are exempt from its reach” (Seager, 2009: p. 29).

Also important is the fact that DV prevalence occurs in difference ways, while some places have recorded huge numbers of Domestic Violence, others have been lower. The report by WHO (2013), revealed that 35 percent of women across the universe have experienced at slightest one form of violence between sexual violence and intimate partner violence, and up to 70 percent in some national studies carried out by the UN (see UN Women, 2012; World Health Organization, 2013). Another variation in prevalence level recorded has been among countries in Canada, Australia, Israel, the United States, and South Africa, where intimate partner violence was responsible for about 40 percent to 70 percent of female murder sufferers (Krug, 2002).

Domestic Violence may occur in diverse forms such as assault, beating, physical, and emotional abuse, economic abuse, sexual assault, threats, psychological abuse, and stalking among others (Kumar, 2021). Furthermore, Domestic Violence can be perpetrated with other forms of abuse simultaneously, for instance, research carried out by Heise, et al., (2002), highlighted that physical violence within intimate relations is most often followed by psychological abuses and in some cases sexual abuse too. Moreso, it is vital to point out that girls and women can also be perpetrators of violence. However, theirs accounts for a small proportion of victims (UNICEF, 2000; Heise, et al., 2002; Ellsberg, and Heise, 2005).

Some negative repercussions of Domestic violence furthermore place victims at risk both physically, mentally, and psychologically among others. Thus, some of these consequences identified range from depression, abortion, and risk of sexually transmitted diseases, and in some cases, it leads to death/murder of victims (Kangas, et.al., 2014; Kirkengen, 2010; Tur-Prats, 2015). Seemingly, about 38% of women are killed globally by their intimate partners (World Bank, 2019).

4. Sexual Violence

This is defined as “any sexual act, attempt to obtain a sexual act, unwanted sexual comments or advances, or acts to traffic, or otherwise directed against a person’s sexuality using coercion, by any person regardless of their relationship to the victim, in any setting, including but not limited to home and work”. (Garcia-Moreno, Guedes and Knerr, 2012: p. 2; WHO; 2014). Sexual violence has been further described as violence carried out “by and against both men and women. It is a strategy used to assert power over the victim and to cause long-term suffering for the victim by turning an

experience that should be associated with pleasure into one associated with harm” (Kangas, et al., 2014: p. 46).

Worth noting is that sexual violence can be carried out by a person’s spouse or a stranger. For example, the study carried out by Mukanangana, et al. (2014), on GBV and its effects on Women’s Reproductive Health in Zimbabwe, revealed that 31% of the respondents had experienced rape at least once by a stranger. This was further buttressed by a young female respondent who revealed her experience.

“I was raped two times before I got married... the two men who raped me were strangers and they are currently serving their sentences... It just needs some guts to report otherwise there could be many women out there who have not reported the abuse.”
(p. 117).

As such, studies indicate that most rape occurs in intimate partner relationships with such violence occurring alongside other forms of violence (Dartnall and Jewkes, 2013). Likewise, non-consensual sex has been noted to occur in many intimate partners as well as family ties relationships for example between spouses, family members, and acquaintances among others (Swart, 2015).

As a further consequence of the rape discussion, it is projected that one in every five women will, at some point in her lifetime, be the victim of rape or attempted rape (UNFPA, 2005). In line with the above, cases of rape occur more frequently and are at times even lower than the numbers reported, this has been linked to stigmatization around rape, however every year, women and girls continue to be prone to rape events. For example, over 700,000 cases of rape were reported to have occurred in the US and in South Africa, this is even alarming as it was indicated that every 83 seconds a woman is raped in various communities (Seager, 2009: p. 58)

Alongside the above analysis, Rape and sexual violence have been increasing even in humanitarian settings. Sexual violence has also been found to be prevalent in refugee and displaced people camps (Segura and Zavella, 2007; Leatherman, 2011). Studies indicate that the prevalence of sexual violence in Tanzania, Libya, and Uganda accounted for 26%, 49%, and 64% respectively. Hence signalling a continuum of violence even in places meant and/or perceived to be safe (Nduna and Goodyear 1997; Swiss, et. al., 1998; Krause, 2015). To an extent, sexual violence has been described as part of a strategy in violent conflicts with severe consequences for victims afterward such as physical disability, shame, the risk of diseases as well as stigmatization among others (Kangas, et al., 2014).

Nevertheless, a striking aspect of sexual violence is that it occurs even in relationships and households made up of same-sex partners or bi-sexual and all other forms of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans/Transgender, Queer-LGBTQ⁺ relationships. Thus, GBV violence is not restricted to the male oppression of females but also to even female oppression of females and male oppression of males (API GBV, 2017).

5. Human Trafficking (HT)

HT is a transnational crime that is defined in Article 3 of the trafficking Protocol of 2000, already noted in chapter one (see key terms and definition, p.2 above) which can briefly be explained as all forms of “recruiting, harbouring, transporting, providing, or obtaining a person for compelled labour or commercial sex acts through the use of force, fraud, or coercion”. This definition given by the Trafficking Protocol of 2000, consists of three major elements that pertains to human trafficking globally. These elements are called **the Act**- which entails what was done, **the Means**- entails the way it was done, although this does not count when it comes to trafficking of children and the final element which is **the Purpose**- entails why it was done (Trafficking Protocol 2000; Ikeora, 2016; Semprebon, 2020).

Human trafficking is made up of various types ranging from forced marriage, forced labour, begging, factory work, Domestic servitude, organ harvesting, sexual exploitation and prostitution, among others. Forced labour and sexual exploitation are one of the two most discussed forms of human trafficking, while on the one hand forced labour entails all forms of work and services that is exacted “from any person under the menace of any penalty and for which the said person has not offered himself [or herself] voluntarily” (Forced Labour Convention 1930 (No. 29): Article 2(1)). Of which this menace of penalty includes but not limited to threats of physical violence against a worker or relatives, physical confinement and denial of rights (ILO, 2005: p.5). On the other hand, human trafficking for sexual exploitation has taken a higher realm in the discussion of human trafficking with a major focus on international human trafficking (Degani, and De Stefani, 2020; Ohonba and Agbotean-Eghafona, 2019; UNODC 2009). Women and girls have been reported to make up a higher percentage of those that are trafficked for sexual exploitation and prostitution, and as such exposing a gendered aspect of human trafficking with women and girls accounting for 80% of those that are trafficked internationally and about 70% of these women and girls accounted for those trafficked for sexual exploitation globally (ILO, 2012; Piper, 2005; USDOS, 2011; Ikeora, 2016; Zimmerman and Stöckl, 2012). This means that females are at higher risks of being victims of human trafficking worldwide. On the other side, men and boys are also trafficked too however most of the reports on male forms of trafficking have been geared towards forced labour this does not take away the fact

that there may be some men who are victims of sexual exploitation however their number accounts for a little proportion of such persons globally (Cann, Jack and Christopher, 2010; Abiodun, Akinlade and Oladejo, 2021).

Some reasons given for the prevalence of trafficking on the one hand, are high demand for sexual services and cheap labour, wealth creation especially on the side of the traffickers motivated by greed among others while on the other hand, poverty and the quest for good life, gender inequality, cultural practices and norms, insecurity etc. create the condition for individuals to be pushed into situation where they end up being exploited by traffickers (Kangas, et al., 2014; Cann, et al, 2010; Bales, 1999; Annan, 2001; Eghafona, 2020; Toney-Butler and Mittel, 2022). As such Human trafficking has been denoted to be driven by organised gangs of traffickers, who ruthlessly exploit their victims for the easy profit they hope to gain (Annan, 2001; Eghafona, 2020). Puzzlingly, the perpetrators of trafficking entails both men and women, with women being found to play higher role and/or hold higher positions in trafficking operations in some regions for example, Eastern Europe, Central Asia, and Nigeria (Kangas, et al., 2014; Okojie, et. al., 2003; Esposito, et. al., 2016; Semprebon and Abe, 2021).

Of note here is that various efforts have been made to tackle the scourge of Human trafficking with the various laws and protocols enacted globally, it has also been placed as a criminal activity, as well as human rights violation, these have not been successful thus far (see UNTOC and its Protocols 2003; ILO, 2012; Piper 2005; USDOS, 2011; Zimmerman, and Stöckl, 2012), as such some scholars have suggested that because of the underground nature of the way the operation is done as well as the various tactics employed by traffickers on victims of human trafficking have all contributed to the reason why the phenomenon of trafficking still persist to date (Ikeora, 2016; Millett-Barrett, 2019). Moreso, due to the clandestine nature of human trafficking it is difficult to get the exact figure of those that are trafficked yearly but it has been estimated that over 600,000 to 2 million people are trafficked illegally across the world yearly (Albanese, 2008; Esposito, et. al., 2016) and as at 2012 the figures given for those trafficked was about 20.9 to 27 million people (US Department of State, 2012; Bickford, 2012; ILO, 2012) however this figure has doubled within the last 10 years to an estimated 40.3 million people with women and girls accounting for a majority of these people trafficked worldwide (Bryant and Landman, 2020; Igoeye, 2018; ANSA, 2021; IOM, 2017). Furthermore, Human trafficking has been dubbed to be among the most lucrative transnational crime accounting for about 150 billion dollars every year, which is only rivalled by drug and firearm trafficking in the world (UNHCR, 2000; Goodey, 2008; ILO, 2014; FATF, 2018).

1. 2 SECTION TWO: AFRICA THE CONTINENT ON THE RUN?

1. 2.1. Migration Trends in Africa:

This section covers migration pattern as it relates to Africa. It is made up of the general aspects of the various regions.

1. 2.1.i. Pre-colonial Africa

Studies have revealed that prior to colonialism, Africa was already involved in some form of migration between the regions even though it was not territorially divided, the movement occurred between and within trans-Sahara Africa to the Sahel and North Africa, for example, there existed movement of people from present-day Mauritania to Mali as well as Senegal, etc. (Godde, 2020). Most of these movements were among communities moving together from one location to another, some were done to flee from internal wars, some for business, and others as a way to seek refuge from hardship (Idrissa, 2019; Skinner and Mikell, 2010; Kohnert, 2007). Moreso, nomadic movements were much more common during this time as cattle shepherds and farmers were already involved in moving from place to place to get products and feed for their farms and livestock (Black, 2020). As such, migration is exemplified as a way of securing people's lives and livelihoods (Bakewell, 2020). Invariably, migration during this period was mainly done as a result of communal living (Skinner and Mikell, 2010; Kohnert, 2007).

Worthy to note during this phase, is that intercultural marriages were another way to enhance migration from one place to another since many marriages are trans-local at the end of the ceremonies. Women tend to move to their husbands' places of residence to start a new life, thus becoming migrants at some point in their lives (Skinner and Mikell, 2010).

1. 2.1. ii. Colonial Era

The next stage is the colonial phase which started in the 19th Century, marking the beginning of Africa's migration to other parts of the world, as suggested by scholars' colonialism brought with it migration, due to the fact that prior to colonialism, Africa did not have drawn out territories to mark national borders which have been associated with the concept of migration (Idrissa, 2019; Cohen, 1987; Castles, et al., 2014).

During the colonial time, Africa was embedded in a supra-structure system whereby authority came from the colonial masters down to the local citizens with some intermediaries in-between (Heldring and Robinson, 2013). The colonial period brought about the transatlantic slave trade whereby many African youths and able-bodied men and women were taken from the continent to further the economic and development aspects of the West; Countries such as the United Kingdom,

France, Italy, Belgium, and Spain among others were among the front runners of this time (Emmer and Lucassen, 2012). Likewise, during this period the colonial masters continued to move people across borders within their colonies, to manage their capital and administrative routines, thus for example many workers both skilled and unskilled were transferred between interior and exterior areas, with many skilled workers being moved to the interior areas and the unskilled moved to the coastal areas (Idrissa, 2019).

The use of force and hut taxes were part of some of the measures initiated during this phase to coerce, torture, and get the Africans to do the work that needed to be done. This period also coincided with economic exploitation from Africa to the West, as various natural resources were discovered (Emmer and Lucassen, 2012). This method became normalized all through Africa, with the colonialists' exporting goods and services from Africa to Europe, which were also used in enhancing development abroad in Europe and other parts of the world (Oyeniyi, 2013). Thus, eventually, Africa became dependent on the international economy for them to survive. With this established line of dependence, the colonial masters were able to move to another method to attract workers: they moved from forced labour to remunerations, which played a crucial role in attracting workers to the colony. As such, the discovery of gold and diamond led to an abundance of mining jobs in Central and Southern African States. Furthermore, the transition to wage labour in West Africa was facilitated by involvement in the palm oil industry and in rubber tapping which ran between the 1830s-1880s and 1880s-1910 respectively (Skinner and Mikell, 2010; Emmer and Lucassen, 2012).

With time the colonial economies became monetized, and this led to the increment in wages. This also paved a way for Africans to enhance their traditional status quo and get education as well as access to western and foreign goods which further created a change in the rural economies. Thus, many of the citizens began entering into the production of cash crops and as a result, movement among the various regions in Africa was enhanced. An example was the mass migration flow witnessed in Nigeria and Ghana from Northern Migrants with Islamic backgrounds coming to work as laborers on their cocoa and coffee farms at that time (Skinner and Mikell, 2010). This period also created a shift in migration, from communal to more individualistic forms of movements, which was not practiced before, as stated earlier in the pre-colonial phase, many movements were done as groups, families, and mainly for business purposes (Idrissa, 2019; Skinner and Mikell, 2010; Kohnert, 2007), however, movements for full fledged relocation without these communal setting was rare, hence with colonialism and with the new structures put in place, especially with the frequent change of locations for skilled and unskilled workers practiced by the colonialists, many of these workers started moving on their own and thus the emergence of individualistic migration. As succinctly put "*Individuals also*

moved voluntarily, taking advantage of the colonial system, particularly from the Sahel towards the Gulf of Guinea. This migration pattern, known as "circular migration," saw individuals moving back and forth between their original communities and their new homes; some people eventually returned home, while others stayed in the area that would later become their new nation. However, the vast majority of them maintained ties to their native communities." (Idrissa, 2019: p. 9).

1. 2.1.iii. Post-Colonial Era

Migration witnessed an increase during this period also, as the newly independent States continued to encourage the movement of people as well as goods and services. ECOWAS was among the first regional blocs to eventually launch the free movement of people, goods, and services among her 15 member States: this has further made migration easier and faster for West Africans (ECOWAS Treaty, Chapter. I, Art. 2, and 2; see also Chapter. IV, Art. 27). The economic boom witnessed in the 1970s further brought about the increment of migration and jobs for African citizens from West, South, East and Northern Africa. For example, because of the economic boom in oil witnessed in Libya, the then President Qaddafi made an open-door policy that invited foreigners from outside North Africa to work and live comfortably in the country. This opportunity was seized mostly by West Africans, as they accounted for about 100,000 migrants living and working in Libya from that time till the first decade of the 2000s (De Haas, 2008). In West Africa, Nigeria and Ghana enjoyed such increases as the positions for expatriates became vacant with the decolonization process. These vacancies were filled up by citizens and migrants with the requisite knowledge and skills (Idrissa, 2019).

Despite these landmarks, many African states were faced with imminent crises shortly after Independence between the late 1960s and early 1970s, ranging from militia insurgents, corruption, bad leadership, communal clash, civil wars as well as military coups across Africa, almost all occurring at the same period. These further plummeted the African economic and political power and position in the world as many African states could not withstand the pressure of such crises (De Haas, 2014; Adepoju, 2006; Idrissa, 2019). Furthermore, the African economies were more dependent on imports of goods and services mainly from the West as they were not stable and strong enough in terms of production and ICT. Thus, even though Africa was independent politically, economically it was still dependent on the West for its socio-economic survival which is often termed neo-colonialism (which also leads to questionable concern about the independence of African states) (Emmer and Lucassen, 2012; Heldring and Robinson, 2013).

Furthermore, the various Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAP) launched across Africa during the 80s did not help in fostering stronger economies. In short, the introduction of the SAP

made African states more weakened and indebted to the Bretton Woods institutions of the West, leading to more economic crises. For example, in Nigeria, the SAP brought about the devaluation of the currency as well as its purchasing power in both national and international foreign exchange (De Haas, 2008; Rodrigues and Bjarnesen, 2020). The rate of unemployment also increased during this time, and it has continued to increase to date.

All these accounted for the mass exodus of many Africans from their countries of origin to the outside world of Europe, America, Asia, etc. where they foresaw a better future for themselves and their families, as the government back home could not provide for their basic social, psychological and physical needs. To date, Africa is still grappling with these issues (Adepoju, 2012; Adepoju, 2008; Rodrigues and Bjarnesen, 2020).

1. 2.2. Contemporary Migration Trends

Africa since Independence has been involved in various migration flows from her regions to other parts of the world. While some of these movements have been regular, others have been irregular. The nature of African migration is a complex one shaped by different social, political, and economic factors.

Africa migration over time has been influenced by various factors, situations as well as colonial and decolonial processes which have continued to play a key role in migration determinants from Africa. One vital aspect of migration after post-colonialism is that African citizens were able to move to Europe and other parts of the world easily as a result of their social ties to former colonies. A result of this stemmed from the fact that during the World Wars, Africans played a huge role in the military makeup of their colonial masters, many of them were taken from Africa to join the army (Mafukidze, 2006; Rodney, 1972) and as such were able to migrate even though it was not from their will at first, however after the second world war, some of the African migrants stayed behind and started building their lives in Europe, America and various parts of the universe. Thus, after the War, this migration trend continued as they had already mapped out different avenues for outward mobility from Africa to Europe and elsewhere. Figures given for African migrants in Europe between 1950 to 1970 were over 250,000 to about 1 million, with French Speaking North Africans making up the bulk of this number. For example, Algeria, Morocco, and Tunisia were among the prominent migrants residing in Europe at that time, with Algeria accounting for a higher percentage of migrants (Emmer, 2007; Malka, 2018).

Also, during this migration boom from Africa to Europe, France enjoyed the benefits of migration as many of these migrants were contributing to the economy, thus migrants were among one the frontiers in agricultural development as they were involved with various innovations

involving the use of new fertilizers and machinery in the agricultural sector as well as boosting the fishing economy with their engagement in ports services in the Mediterranean (Bertagna and Maccari-Clayton, 2007). As such, integration of African migrants was easily accomplished during this period as they were fully active in the places where they resided (Bertagna and Maccari-Clayton, 2007). For example, about 100,000 Algerians were already residing in France and working during this period (Idemudia and Boehnke, 2020). Also, of note is, that Algerians migrated to other countries such as Spain, Germany and Italy as a way of expanding their horizon as they saw opportunities more in Europe (Malka, 2018). Aside from France, migrants were also present in other parts of Europe, this was because of the bilateral labour agreement made between some European Countries such as Germany, Belgium, France, The Netherland, and Sweden as well as North African countries such as Algeria, Morocco, and Tunisia (Bardak, 2017). Thus, marking the spread of migrants to other countries where there were no formal colonial ties.

Some factors that greatly influenced the migration pattern to Europe during this period were also related to the fact that Europe had better opportunities in terms of jobs, schools, a good health system, as well a better pension scheme (Adepoju, 2011; Appleyard, 1995). As described by Bardak, (2017), “In the 1960s, geographical and historical connections, colonial legacies, and the need for labour in Europe's heavy industries all contributed to an influx of significant numbers of low-skilled and unskilled immigrants from the area...” (p. 39).

Aside from job opportunities, many movements were further done for migrants to be with their families as some of them had family members already settled there. Thus, migration was not only for labour and/or education reasons but also for family reunification (Emmer and Lucassen, 2012). Furthermore, such increase in migration has also been attributed to the rise of upper-middle class citizens after independence as well as from the economic boom Africa witnessed sometime in the 1970s and 1980s whereby modernization played a key role in migration tendencies within and outside Africa (De Haas, 2011; De, Haas, 2014; Flahaux and De Haas, 2016).

1. 2.3 Undocumented migration from Africa to Europe: A brief discourse

Despite the analysis above, migration patterns became different during the 1970s, when Europe began to restrict movement into her territories by introducing stay permits and visas from third countries including Africa. For example, the British, French, Dutch, and Spanish governments imposed compulsory requirements such as residence permits from nationals entering their country who were not holders of their passports. This move as suggested by scholars was made in relation to the fear that migrants could cause an increase in unemployment and housing shortages across the

countries (Hatton and Williamson, 2005; Bardak, 2017). Thus, migration after the 1970s shifted as Europe began implementing these restrictive policies and movement into her territories. However, some form of migration through family reunification was more explored afterward (Emmer and Lucassen, 2012).

Also, worthy to note, is that many African states had started experiencing some internal crises which also accounted for changes in their migration pattern. For example, Africa was experiencing a shortage in employment, civil wars, violation of human rights, poor governance, corruption, kidnapping and the struggle for material and social resources was high which was also evident in their downturn economies, among others (Bardak, 2017). These further made Africans explore other means of migration to get to Europe and other parts of the world (Schmid, 2016). The above statement collaborates with a survey carried out by UNDP (2019), on African migration: out of 1,100 Africans surveyed, about 36% listed various reasons such as conflict, war, maltreatment from government, violent extremism or gang violence, and terrorism as their primary motivation for migrating, with most of them seeking asylum. Thus, the depleting economic situation and constantly rising standard of living of most households with little funds to back up the needs of the family creates one of the major reasons for cross-border Africa migration (Adepoju, 2003; Bilger, et. al., 2005; and De Bruijn, et. al., 2001).

Seemingly, scholars such as Adepoju (2008), De Haas (2008), and Schmid (2016), among others have linked migration with conflicts, which many countries in Africa are still battling with presently. For example, the period between the late 1990s and early 2000s saw a lot of violent conflicts in Africa, which eventually displaced a lot of its citizens and as such at the end of the year 2005, around 18% of African migrants were classified as refugees, and women and children made up roughly half of said 16.7 million cross-border immigrants (IOM, 2005). Also, between 2003 to 2012, a total number of 12 coups happened among Central, Eastern, and Western African countries such as Guinea, Cote d'Ivoire, Mauritania, Guinea Bissau, Madagascar and Niger (Vines, 2013; Sturman, 2008; Eriksson, 2010).

Following these situations in Africa, migration became fussed with various factors combining into what is today called mixed migration flows. Whereby economic migrants, asylum seekers as well as refugees, and those fleeing for other reasons are found together during cross-border mobilities to enter Europe, America, Australia, and Asia among others (UNHCR, 2018). Thus, irregular migration from Africa became a formidable aspect that received huge discussion from the European governments. Of note here is that undocumented migration from the early 2000s was not seen as a problem in Europe because their occurrence was in small numbers as well as the politicization of the

issue as such movement were not the focal points of discussion publicly as at that time (Idrissa, 2019). However, the dawn of the next decade after 2000 saw higher numbers of migrants moving from Africa to Europe irregularly. Despite, the increase in undocumented migration, studies have shown that regular migration to Europe occurs more generally when compared to irregular or mixed migration (IOM, 2020; Adepoju, 2016; De Haas, 2008).

Furthermore, international migration from Africa to Europe has also been on the rise due to the fact that migrants move along colonial ties (Adepoju, 2017; Adepoju, 2008). Although this is changing as seen by migrants from Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA), who have been described to be more flexible in terms of migrating to other places without prior history (UNODC, 2006; Villa and Corradi, 2020), as such, this can also be attributed to what Vertovec called super-diversity which focused on the various multiplications that shape migration movements and patterns from immigrants with or without former colonial ties to other parts of the world taking into account factors such as gender, race, family ties, age, labour opportunities among others as major determining factors of where, how and with whom people migrate to and live (Vertovec, 2007; Vertovec, 2014). For instance, the African migrant stock in the EU augmented from 4.5 million in 2005 to 10.3 million by the end of 2019, summing up to more than twice the figure it was in the space of five years (Helbling and Leblang, 2019; UN DESA, 2019). As such, Africans make up about 3.1% of migrants in the world and about 2% of immigrants in the EU (Villa and Corradi, 2020; UN DESA, 2019). When broken down according to states in the EU, France pulled the highest place where migrants move; this is due to the close relationship it has with its former colonies. Some reasons given for this difference have been linked to colonial ties and transfer cost, alongside diaspora connections in destination countries, thus most migrants from Africa to Europe settle mainly within France (274,538), Portugal, Spain, Germany (154,546), England (249,720), and Italy (137,780). The figures given for France and England portray them as the highest countries of residence for Africans (Kohnert, 2007) while high migration to Germany has been linked to higher pay and opportunities as well as Germany's opening of her border at some points in time to allow migrants in, this happened in 2015 where about 800,000 migrants and refugees were allowed to cross into Germany by the former Chancellor Angela Merkel, (Emmer and Lucassen, 2012; Shubert, Schmidt and Smith-Spark, 2018; Sanderson, 2021). Also, about two-thirds of these migrants come from Northern Africa, mainly from Algeria, Morocco, and Tunisia, while SSA makes up the rest, with a majority from Nigeria, Ghana, and Senegal (UN, 2006; DTM, 2017; UNDP, 2019). Recent data on migration reports over 280 million people make up international migrants with Europe and North America having huge percentages of such migrants with 8.8% and 13.5% respectively, while over 25.4 million Africans live outside their place of birth and origin (UN DESA, 2020).

Furthermore, the proximity of North African states makes it easy for migration to Europe to take place, thereby migrants from North Africa make up the bulk of Africans in the EU. However, there has been a substantial increase of migrants from the SSA, ranging from 22% in 1960, to 36% in 1990, and in 2019 it was pegged at 46% (Villa and Corradi, 2020).

1. 2.4. Feminization of Migration

The gendered aspect of migration over time has been brought to the limelight in migration research, although this aspect of migration has witnessed a huge debate in both academic and policy ventures (Lutz and Amelina, 2021; Phizacklea, 1983; Anthias and Lazaridis, 2000). Thus the invisibility of women during migration was critically argued against by scholars in the early times starting mainly around the 1980s (Halliday, 1994; DeLaet, 1999; Hebenstreit, 1988; Lutz, 1991; Morokvašić, 1984). Although women migrate at almost the same rate to that of men, it was mainly the men that were taken into account during migration data and studies (DeLaet, 1999; Degani and Di Stefani, 2021) thereby relegating women's participation in such movements as negligible (Zlotnik, 2003). Of note here is that generally, both men and women have constantly turned to international as well as internal migration to increase their economic opportunities (Kangas, et al., 2014; Caritas International, 2012).

Prior to this time, most migration research especially during the 1960s and 1970s assumed that most migrants were male who were working migrants while the females were portrayed as mainly wives, receivers, and dependents who moved with their husbands anywhere they go (Morrison and Lichter, 1988; Kofman, 2003; Cooke and Bailey, 1999; Caritas International, 2012). However, in the 1960s women already accounted for about 47 out of every 100 migrants living outside their place of birth (Zlotnik, 2003) and ever since this figure has continued to increase, for example, women made up about 48% of migrants in the early 2000 whereby the figures given for female migrants were almost at par with male migrants which was pegged at 85 million for the females in comparison with 90 million for the males (United Nations, 2002). One reason given for such increase in female migration was that of globalization and its inherent ability to propel people's movement from one place to the other as well as jobs opportunities offered to female migrants in host countries where they find themselves (Cooke and Bailey, 1996; Korteweg and Yurdakul, 2015). Also, scholars argued that the feminization of migration should not only be looked at from the economic perspective alone when talking about women's movement but that the various aspects that makes the difference between gender should be taken into account (Amelina, 2017; Amelina and Lutz, 2019; Boyle, Cooke, Halfacree and Smith, 2001) because for women sometimes the reason they move differs from that of the men. For example, such things as gender, race, class, cultural relations, family ties among

others are some features that determine the way women migrate to countries of destination. As such, embedding an intersectional approach as a vital step in the feminization of migration (Collins, 1990; Lutz, 2001; Cooke and Bailey, 1996; Simon and Brettell, 1986).

As such, it is not the fact that females are now moving more than before that creates this change in migration alone; the fact that women are moving more independently, seeking jobs, and not waiting and moving alongside their spouses, as well as the changing composition of the family structure which has seen some women taking up expenses and becoming the main provider of the family (for example single mothers), is what causes such change (Benería, Deere and Kabeer, 2012; Boyle, et al., 2001; Degani and De Stefani, 2020; Cooke and Bailey, 1999). For instance, more females now search for better opportunities outside their countries of origin and residence, as well as migrating from rural to urban areas for jobs, as some of them have transitioned to become breadwinners of their families (Caritas International, 2012; Adepoju, 2005; Phipps, 2017; Swart, 2015). Thus, out of the 191 million migrant registries obtained in 2005, women accounted for about 94.5 million. Also, in the 2018 international migrant stock according to the United Nations, women made up 48.4% of international migrants with an estimate of over 124 million migrants out of their countries of origin (Alam, Baeur, et al., 2019; Eurostat, 2019; FIDH, 2007), seemingly, In relation to the EU, as of 2018 records showed that female migrants living in the EU accounted for 49.9%, which means that female migration is just slightly below their male counterparts (Eurostat 2019; Degani and Stefani, 2020).

In addition to the above, other reasons given by scholars for the feminization of migration is the opening up and massive recruitment of women in some specific areas and jobs such as domestic work, nursing, teaching, and other professions deemed to be more for and dominated by women (Hermann, 2017; see also, Marchetti and Salih, 2017; Anthias and Lazaridis, 2000). A good example of this was the situation in Italy in 2015 whereby nearly 800,000 caretakers from other countries were hired by a variety of Italian households, mostly to help the elderly (Hermanin, 2017), with an estimated 80,000 females being employed irregularly (Fondazione Leone Moressa, 2017). Thus, the increased commodification of care work globally which is deemed to be more for females also acts as a catalyst for female migration (Benería, et al., 2012; Kangas, et al., 2014), which also show how women are actively involved in their transnational destinies in the places they live. For example, the opening up of borders for family reunification has also been linked to this aspect as some migrant women use the opportunity to educate themselves in the host countries thereby increasing their chances of employment and stable life (Zlotnik, 2003; Lutz and Amelina, 2021).

Like the foregoing, Africa has also been affected by these changes in migration patterns as many women and girls now migrate independently for better life and livelihood (Ohonba and Agbontaen-Eghafona, 2019). The economic boom witnessed in Africa during the early 1970s and 1980s added to the increase in such migration within and outside Africa with women also participating as many of them were also engaged with buying and selling of goods and services (De Haas, 2014; Flahaux and De Haas, 2016). Moreso, studies carried out in Sub-Sahara Africa in the early 1990s showed that females accounted for almost half of the number of migrants as at that time, this was also strongly linked to the increase in the number of refugees in the continent (Zlotnik, 2003). As such there have been a growing trend in the number of females that migrate from Africa internationally ever since for instance, female migrants in Sub-Sahara Africa made up 47% of all migrants thus accounting for almost half of the migrants from that region in the year 2000 (United Nations, 2002). This has continued to date.

Although most migration from Africa occurs within the continent (IOM, 2020; Adepoju, 2016), there have also been an increase of irregular migration from Africa to Europe and other parts of the world. West African females have been counted to be among the dominant features in undocumented migration from Africa to Europe with most of them travelling because of economic opportunities in the West and other socio, cultural and political reasons (Idemudia and Boehnke, 2020; Abiodun, et al., 2021; Adeleye, 2017). This sometimes creates the leeway for many of them to be exploited in various forms, ranging from sexual violence, assaults, human trafficking, and slave labour (Benería, Diana Deere and Kabeer, 2012). The increasing number of African females, including Nigerian females, can be seen in their arrivals to Europe either by sea, air, or land. For instance, the number of Nigerian females who entered Italy through the Mediterranean seas between 2014 and 2019 increased from 1,500 to over 11,000, thus accounting for more than a 50% increase within a short period (Human Rights Watch, 2019; IOM, 2017a). Likewise, a study carried out by UNDP reported that women made up 50% of those who arrived on European shores as of 2019 (UNDP, 2019). In addition, throughout the last decade, immigrants have been responsible for 47 percent of the rise in the labour force in the U. S. and 70 percent of the increase in Europe (HRW, 2019).

1.3 SECTION THREE: MIGRATION-THE NIGERIA EXPERIENCE

1. 3.1. Nigeria at a glance

Nigeria as a nation came into existence in 1914 when the British government joined the northern and southern protectorates together and thereafter named it Nigeria. Prior to that time, there was already existence of the British presence since 1861/1891. However, from 1914 to 1960 Nigeria

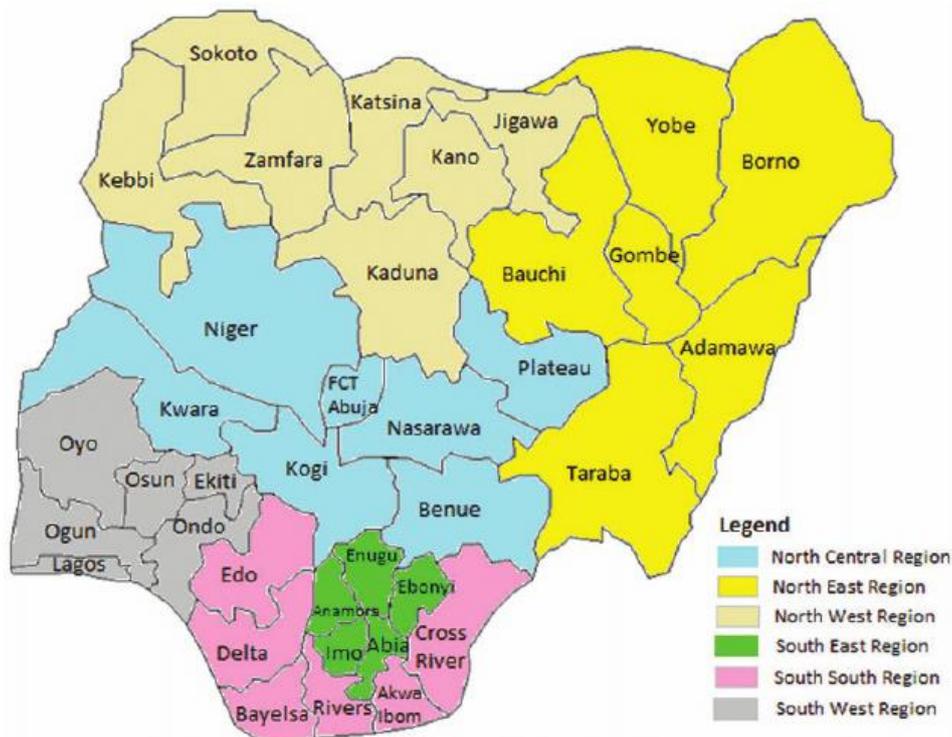
was under British colonial rule until it was granted independence on October 1st, 1960 (Ojo, 2014; DTM, 2017).

Present-day Nigeria is comprised of more than 250 ethnic groups, with Hausa-Fulani (North), Yoruba (Southwest), as well as Igbo (Southeast) accounting for the three most dominant ethnic groups in Nigeria holding 29%, 21%, and 21% respectively (CIA, 2017; Ojo, 2014). The official Language in Nigeria is English, alongside Hausa, Yoruba, and Igbo but these are rarely spoken or used officially as English is the main language of instruction in both schools and official government activities (Alaye, 2019).

Nigeria is a federation made up of 36 States with its capital city in Abuja and Lagos as its economic epic-centre (De Haas, 2006). Nigeria has a population of over 214 million persons and has been dubbed the most populous black nation in the world, as well as it being the most populous country in ECOWAS regional bloc (National Population Commission, 2022; Owusu, 2013; World Bank, 2014).

Nigeria is also a country consisting of a youth bulge with labour supply exceeding demand and most unemployed people within this stratum (about 61%) are between the age of 15 and 44 years (Adepoju, 2016; Agyeman and Setrana, 2014). This has also created the leeway for some of the youths to find greener pastures elsewhere through migration (MHub, 2015; Adepoju, 2005; De Haas, 2008).

Figure 1.3.1: Map of Nigeria



Source: https://www.researchgate.net/figure/Map-of-Nigeria-showing-the-36-states-and-Federal-Capital-Territory-FCT-Abuja_fig1_260023562 [accessed 15 December 2021].

1. 3.2 Migration in Nigeria

1. 3.2.i. Pre-colonial Era

Migration during this period took shape mainly in business and trade activities, as well as the slave trade which was later exploited during the colonial era (Adejumoke, Ikwuyatum and Abejide, 2008; Mberu and Pongou, 2010). Of importance is that pre-colonial Nigeria had no territorial boundaries officially, instead they had more cultural boundaries which were related to languages, customs, and various ethno-national identities, however, these were shared among the various nationalities at that time. Moreover, intergroup marriages, trades, religion, etc were some of the activities that enhanced the movements of people during this period (Oyeniya, 2010). An example of this was the nomads and cattle farmers who were mainly northern people in charge of taking care of herd farms. This allowed them to move to various villages and cities and occasionally out of the regions, to provide for their live stocks and also sell some of them to the local people who resided in those areas (Swindell, 1984; Agyeman and Setrana, 2014).

Another way migration occurred during this era, was through the development of various kingdoms ranging from the Sokoto Caliphate in the North to the Oyo Empire in the South-West as well as other parts of the Southern regions. Thus, migration was enhanced during this time as some people who were captured as slaves both within and outside the regions were used to build these empires and kingdoms. This also translated to the establishment of some trade routes outside pre-colonial Nigeria to North Africa as well as West African cities, for example, the Kumansi Ashanti kingdom in modern-day Ghana (Lovejoy, 1980).

1. 3.2. ii. Colonial Era

The 19th century marked the beginning of the colonial period in Nigeria, whereby Nigeria was placed under the British Empire with a supra-structure form of government established. The colonial rule which lasted from 1861/1891-1960 (DTM, 2017), had a lot of impact in terms of the way migration was done in Nigeria afterward. This period saw the creation of national and international borders by the colonial masters in Nigeria and other parts of Africa. This affected gravely movements within the country as many groups and ethnicities were separated as a result of this territorialization (Agyeman and Setrana, 2014; DTM, 2017).

With the establishment of the colonial rule, the migration pattern in Nigeria changed as many abled bodied men and women were exported as slaves to the outside world of Europe, in particular

to the United Kingdom and her other territories around the world (Lovejoy, 1978; Oyeniyi, 2013). More so, these slaves were captured forcibly and sent to the coastal regions of Calabar and Badagry where most of the transatlantic trade occurred and the voyage to Europe was embarked on (Lovejoy, 1978). As such, once they arrive in Europe, they were taken to work in various areas most especially in plantations and mines under the British empire and were also circulated to other colonies outside the British Empire (DTM, 2017). This marked the beginning of labour migration from Nigeria to Europe and other parts of the world even though they were not travelling voluntarily of their own free will.

Another important feature in Nigerian migration during this time was the increase in mass movements from one region to another which were not often practiced before colonialism. For instance, the development of various areas which later became mega cities and headquarters during the colonial administration fostered a lot of rural-urban/urban-rural migration (Agyeman and Setrana, 2014). This happened as a result of the various developmental projects carried out by the colonialists then, for example, the construction of roads, railways, the building of schools, and new market structures, saw a spike in employment opportunities in various cities and regions, in places such as Kaduna, Kano, and Sokoto in Northern Nigeria, as well as Ibadan, Lagos, Port-Harcourt and Enugu in the Southern parts of Nigeria (Agyeman and Setrana, 2014), which fostered mass movement of people to work on these sites. Also, the discovery of other natural resources like cocoa, palm front, timber, etc. further created a surge for labour migrants in these areas (Skinner and Mikell, 2010; Emmer and Lucassen, 2012; Oyeniyi, 2013). A point to note here is that products from these natural resources were sent abroad and used for the development of the British empire at that time (Emmer and Lucassen, 2013).

Another migration pattern that erupted from colonialism, was movement from Nigeria to other international borders in West, Central, Eastern, and Northern Africa. For example, Nigerian migrants were found in cote D'Ivoire, Benin, Sudan, and Ghana (DTM, 2017). They were mainly labour migrants from Nigeria who worked in various sites. For instance, Nigerian railway workers were recruited by colonial masters to build the railways and some roads in both Ghana and Benin (Afolayan, 1998; Afolayan, et. al., 2008). This further helped in making some of the workers settle down in the countries after the projects were completed, thereby fostering out-migration within Africa (Agyeman and Setrana, 2014).

1. 3.2.iii. Post-colonial/Current Migration

The 1960s came with a different mode of migration as Nigeria became independent from the colonial British Empire. Before independence, most movements from Nigeria occurred mainly within

the African continent and in particular, West Africa (De Haas, 2006; Idrissa, 2019). However, this changed after Independence whereby flows were made from Africa to Europe, especially to the United Kingdom, as well as the United States and Canada (De Haas, 2006; Idrissa, 2019). Of note here is that migration to these places occurred in smaller numbers because it was largely composed of skilled elites moving abroad for business, work, and study purposes (Mberu and Pongou, 2010).

Large-scale out-migration started with the internal crisis Nigeria witnessed shortly after independence. This spanned from the power tussle between the south and the north and eventually resulted in the Biafra civil war of 1967-1970, whereby many Igbo people fled Nigeria in a bid to get safety from the war and travelled to other neighbouring countries as well as outside Africa to Europe and America (Idrissa, 2019; Afolayan, et. al., 2008; Adepoju and van der Wiel, 2010). This huge migration trend continued even after the war, as many Nigerians continue to move out of the country as a consequence of displacement (Afolayan, et. al., 2008).

Also, the already established relationships among regions due to colonialism were explored by Nigerians who moved to other neighbouring countries within and outside West Africa. In particular, many Nigerians were living and working in Ghana during the late 1960s, but this changed when massive deportation of Nigerian citizens was made from Ghana as a result of their downward economy at that time (Skinner, 1963; Peil, 1974; Agyeman and Setrana, 2014). Despite this, Nigeria was able to bounce back with the oil boom in 1973, thus changing the migration pattern of Nigeria as a country of immigration. This is because with the oil boom the Nigerian economy became more stabilized and various jobs were created which also attracted several African migrants to Nigeria (Peil, 1974). Thus, emigration during the early 1970s decreased drastically.

The decrease in emigration was short-lived when in the early 1980s, Nigeria experienced an economic shock as a result of the unstable oil price at that time, this resulted in the depletion of the economy in Nigeria and the loss of jobs and opportunities that were established during the oil boom earlier, thus the Nigeria government deported over 2 million West African migrants as they could no longer cater for them (De Haas and Flahaux, 2016; Afolayan, 1988; DTM, 2017; Brown, 1989; Gravil, 1983; Onwuka, 1982). Moreso, the adverse effect of this decline, led to the re-emergence of out-migration of Nigerians to other parts of Africa and outside Africa (Oyeniyi, 2013; De Haas, 2006), to get better opportunities to sustain themselves and their families as this was no longer available in the country. During this period also, the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) was launched to help stabilize the socio-economic situation however this created more harm than good as the SAP program failed woefully and diminished the little progress made before it (the SAP led to the devaluation of the Nigerian currency, reduced wages for professionals and loss of jobs as well as

deteriorating work conditions), thereby making Nigeria more indebted to the Bretton Woods organizations of World Bank as well as the International Monetary Funds (Potts, 1995; Greenberg, 1997; Oyeniya, 2013).

The depleting economy as well as the political crisis and insecurity experienced during the 1980s fueled outmigration from Nigeria at an alarming rate. Before this time, many migration journeys from Nigeria were done mainly for unskilled labor and business activities around neighboring West African states (Idrissa, 2019), while skilled migrants made up of professionals, engineers, and medical doctors among others, moved to other regions of Africa including North Africa and the others moved abroad to Europe, North America, Asia, and the Middle East. Among countries in Europe; Germany, France, Italy, the Netherlands, and Belgium were the top countries of destinations (Afolayan, et al., 2008; Hagopian, et al., 2005). It is important to state that these forms of migration were mostly regular. However, this changed in the 1990s and early 2000s whereby young Nigerians began to seek greener pastures outside the country as the situation in Nigeria continued to worsen, as such many unskilled migrants moved to Sub-Sahara Africa, Europe, North America, Asia, and the MENA regions engaging in irregular migration (Idrissa, 2019; Mberu and Pongou, 2010). Furthermore, this period gave rise to a new phenomenon whereby Nigerian women seeking to better their lives and that of their families started travelling abroad to engage in the buying and selling of goods and services such as shoes, gold, clothes among others and eventually prostitution in the host countries mainly Italy as it was difficult for them to get work permit with their status (Maliki and Ngban, 2006; Dave-Odigie, 2008; Okojie, 2009; Afaha, 2013; Kara, 2009; Abiodun, et al., 2021). The lucrative nature of prostitution prompted them to expand and started taking their relatives to join them (Dave-Odigie, 2008; Ohonba and Agbontaen-Eghafona, 2019) this birthed a new migratory market which saw the recruitment and smuggling of young women and girls from rural/urban areas in Southern Nigeria (especially Edo state), into some countries in Europe (such as Italy, Spain, Germany, Holland, Norway etc), the Middle East and other neighboring African states for forced labour mainly consisting of sex labour (Carling, 2006; De Haas, 2006; Campani, 2000; Dave-Odigie, 2008; Aghatise, 2002; Braimah, 2013). These migration pattern is still evident till date in Nigeria (Idrissa, 2019) which has seen its rise to a more organized form of business under human trafficking with the recruiters mainly former prostitutes who are popularly called maman/madam benefitting handsomely from exploiting the trafficked girls and women (Ohonba and Agbontaen-Eghafona, 2019; Semprebon and Abe, 2021; Abiodun, et al., 2021).

Furthermore, outmigration of Nigerian citizens have been and continue to be fuelled by various internal conflicts (SIHMA, 2014). Nigeria has experienced various forms of violent conflicts which have gravely affected the living conditions as well as the economic lives of the citizens, these

have further increased the quest for migration outside the country. Shortly after independence, Nigeria was engrossed in the Biafran civil war in 1967 which also brought about for the first time ever the displacement of many Nigerians within and outside the continent, the various military coups experienced in the country up till 1999 further destabilized the state of affairs for the people as well as development in various regions, the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) which saw the attacks on crude oil production during this period also affected the economy negatively as well as the recurrent Boko Haram Crisis which started in 2002-date against the state (SIHMA, 2014; Schimd, 2016; Adepoju, 2017; Agbiboa, 2020) just to mention a few. Have all had adverse effect in the economic, social and political spheres of Nigeria. These also translate to large scale migration from the country to other parts of Africa as well as Europe, North America, Asia and the Middle East. Moreso, the growth experienced in the Nigerian economy during the oil boom was not equally distributed across the country which further created a polarization in Nigeria whereby some groups benefited more and others didn't benefit which was mainly seen in the difference between the rural and urban areas of Nigeria, with the rural areas exhibiting poorer developmental structures with little opportunities for the disadvantaged groups and the urban having more advanced economic opportunities and development. As such, socio-economic inequality and imbalance in Nigeria as well as the socio-economic, political opportunities outside the country became a strong factor that led to the mass out migration at that time (Adeleye, 2017; Semprebon and Abe, 2021; Okojie, 2009; Lo Iacono, 2014; Martti and Kauko, 2006). Thus, "with increased degradation of living standards due to a combination of economic and security issues in Nigeria, the applications for asylum in other African states as well as in Europe and North Africa have subsequently increased from the late 1990s onwards" (Mberu and Pongou, [online] 2010; Lo Iacono, 2014). All these have contributed to the manner at which Nigeria migration trends are linked mainly to criminal activities as well as victimization as a result of the number of detected cases for trafficking in persons, forced prostitution, money laundering and identity theft during cross-border mobility (SIHMA, 2014; De Haas, 2006; Agyeman and Setrana, 2014). This pattern of migration still exist in Nigeria till date, but studies have recently shown a decrease in such manner of migration. For example, the number of Nigerians who crossed into the European Union to seek for asylum were more than 46,000 in 2016 and more than 37,000 in 2017, and Nigeria accounted for the first country of origin in the Sahel and Lake Chad region in 2017 (IDMC, 2021; Malakooti, 2020). However, these figures reduced drastically to 1,500 in the first months of 2018, this is because of the stringent policies adopted by the EU in the externalization of her borders to fight irregular migration in Niger and Libya which are the main transit routes for Nigerian migrants to Europe (Idrissa, 2019).

From the above, it is obvious that the migration pattern in Nigeria has passed through a series of events that have shaped the way and manner it is today. Even though most Africa and Nigeria migration happen within the sub-regional levels and are more intra-Africa in nature (Idrissa, 2019; Adepoju, 2006). The aspect of irregular migration has been the focus of discussion in the media as well as the way policies are drafted concerning irregular cross-border mobilities into Europe from third-countries nationals (including Nigeria). These various policies include but are not limited to, the externalization of European borders to transit countries, push back and interceptions of migrants at the sea, funding origin, and transit countries in relation for them cooperating in stemming migrants from their countries, etc (IDMC, 2021; DTM, 2017; Bardak, 2017). These restrictive policies and laws on the one hand have been successful in reducing migrant flows from Africa particularly through Libya as can be seen in the figures given above on the drastic reduction of asylum seekers from Nigeria and other countries, on the other hand, it has led to migrants vulnerabilities which among other factors place them in desperate attempts to embark on a risky voyage through the Mediterranean sea in a bid to gain entry into the European Borders (Parish, 2017; Freedman and Jamal, 2008). As such, these policies further create the leeway for smugglers, traffickers, and others involved in the migration journey to thrive as they find other ways and routes for migrants that cross into Europe. Studies suggest that this pattern will continue as long as these measures are continually reinforced (Malakooti, 2020; Malakooti, 2019; IOM, 2020).

1.4 SECTION FOUR: GENDER, VIOLENCE, AND MIGRATION: AN INTERPLAY FOR NIGERIAN FEMALES

1. 4.1 Situation in Africa before leaving: Focus on Nigerian women and girls

In Africa as well as Nigeria, some situations sparks mass migration flows of females from Africa to other places abroad. This section covers some common reasons for such movements.

Access to Education

Various practices put in place in Africa today have hindered women and girls when it comes to social, economic, political, psychological, and educational opportunities. Women in Africa have been left out in the development of educational systems and this has created a huge gap in the rates when it comes to access, retention, as well as completion of schooling for girls and boys (Doroba, 2018). Africa is home to more than half of the world's children who are of primary school age yet are not enrolled in school, and this is especially true for girls, who are 56% more likely than boys to never get the chance to enrol in school (Doroba, 2018; El-Zanaty and Way, 2000). This was also made evident from the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) data which reported that of the 262 million

youth and children globally out of school in 2016, 130 million of them were from Africa, citing issues like war, poverty, and the cultural stereotypes being the major reasons for this disparity (UIS, 2016). This goes to undermine their right to education as well as opportunities for future jobs and employment (HRW, 2017). This is further described below:

“It was an unspoken rule in the house that school was out of the question for me. My father said I should focus instead on learning how to care for the house and prepare myself for marriage. I always knew my father was wrong and I longed to attend school and get educated”. (Carole, female: UNDP, 2019: p.51).

Harmful Cultural Practices

In Africa, early marriages and teenage pregnancies are still rampant in many contexts and these also act as a disqualification for women and girls' access to school and other opportunities in the labour market. For instance, research carried out in Sub-Sahara Africa, which Nigeria is a part of, showed that about 40% of the girls marry earlier before the age of eighteen, and fifteen out of the 20 countries with the highest rates of child marriages in the world are found in Africa (HRW, 2017). Another research carried out in Malawi between 2010 and 2013; reported that between 27,612 girls in primary school and 4,953 girls in the secondary institutes dropped out of school because of early marriages (HRW, 2017 [online]²; Loaiza and Liang, 2013). Some countries in Africa take it to the extreme by conducting pregnancy tests in school on the girls, and if found wanting, the girls are expelled from the school. This is a policy practiced in Tanzania. To further buttress this point, the story of a 19-year-old girl who was expelled from school in the Northern part of Tanzania explains it better:

“Teachers found out I was pregnant... I found out that no student is allowed to stay in school if they are pregnant... I didn't have the information [sexual education] about pregnancies and what would happen.” (HRW, 2017: p. 1)

Lack of proper information has led to many girls falling victims of sexual affairs at very young ages. In most African schools sexuality and reproduction are often not added in the national school curriculum and in places where they are included most teacher are unwilling to teach them, and some out right refuse to teach them, thus this create a lacuna in the type of education females are exposed to. Thereby leading many of them to lack the requisite knowledge needed to make informed decisions about their sexuality, family planning and reproductive health. It has also been reported that 80% of women from the ages of 15 to 24 who have been diagnosed with HIV live in sub-Sahara Africa, with girls between the ages of 15-19 being five times more likely to be infected with HIV than their male

² For more information see: Human Rights Watch [HRW] (2017). Africa: Make Girls' Access to Education a Reality. End Exclusion from School for Married, Pregnant Students. HRW [Online] 16 June. Available at: <https://www.hrw.org/news/2017/06/16/africa-make-girls-access-education-reality#> [Accessed 5 March 2021].

counterparts (UNAIDS, 2009; UNAIDS, 2011; UNFPA, 2016). As such other harmful cultural practices such as placing men and boys above women and girls, for instance, in many societies in Nigeria females cannot inherent properties and in some cases they can't even purchase them without approval from their partners and family members. Thus, unequal position, limited access to education and employment opportunities, as well as the asymmetrical positions in the family structure, with little say in decision making affairs further spark the desire for women and girls to migrate out of the country (Ogonor and Osunde, 2007; Makama, 2013; Bako and Syed, 2018).

Position of power

Some places in Africa are still patriarchal societies, where gender roles and functions are defined, whereby the male is given superior positions and functions while the females are seen as inferior and relegated to the background (Kalunta-Crumpton and Onyeozili, 2011; Zoli, 2019). Although there are variations across Africa by which power and positions are practiced (see WEF-Global Gender Gap Report, 2020). For example, in November 2021, A Nigerian man declared his interest to run for the position of Women Leader in the state of Kano, Northern Nigeria. This is worthy of note because this is an exclusive position that is reserved for women to contest, shockingly, a man is being allowed to do so. And when asked why, he responded thus "...Some people are asking me why a man will contest for women leader position and the answer I give them is that God destined men to guide the affairs of women. So, it is not a bad thing for me to want to lead women..." (Sahara Reporters [online], 2021)³.

Economic reason

In Africa there exists widespread poverty, degradation, disease and high rate of unemployment, especially for the younger generations who make up the youth bulge (Kohnert, 2007). Females are part of these situations which hamper their growth both socially and economically. For example, high unemployment rates have led many females to take upon themselves the responsibility to carter and provide for their families, which invariably influences out migration of females in Africa (Caritas International, 2012). As far back as 2005, women in Africa accounted for 47.45% of the 17 million immigrants in Africa. This has further translated to cross-border mobility as seen in the migration flow of females from Cape Verde to Italy which was pegged at 85% (Caritas International, 2012). Furthermore, some scholars have placed dire economic situations in Africa as part of the push

³ See: Sahara Reporters (2021). Kano Man Vows to Contest for APC Party's National Women Leader Position. Sahara Reporters [Online] 09 November. Available at:<http://saharareporters.com/2021/11/09/kano-man-vows-contest-apc-partys-national-women-leader-position> [Accessed 18December 2021].

factors that influences migration as well as the voyage through the Mediterranean sea (Altai and IOM, 2015; MHub, 2015). Thus, in Africa, an increasing number of women are migrating primarily for economic reasons, in particular looking for income opportunities abroad (MMC, 2018; UNCTAD, 2018; Awumbila, Benneh, et. al., 2014).

Institutional violence

This type of violence as explained in this work earlier takes the shape of violence from a structural perspective whereby institutions places and maintain a person's subordinate position whether physical or ideological (Manjoo, 2011). Africa has been immersed in this form of violence and it takes different shapes in its manifestation. Explaining the Nigerian situation again, the patriarchal system is deep-rooted even in the law and constitution, this is the case where it is written that women cannot give citizenship to a foreigner when they get married, but the men can give their foreign spouse citizenship. Although the constitution claims to give equal rights and opportunities to every citizen irrespective of gender, however, this aspect of the law has continued to plague Nigerian women and girls who eventually get married to foreigners.

Section 26 (1) outlines the provisions for attaining Nigerian citizenship through registration. "Subject to the provisions of section 28 of this Constitution, a person to whom the provisions of this section apply may be registered as a citizen of Nigeria if the President is satisfied that...

Paragraph 2 the provisions of this section shall apply to-

- (a) any woman who is or has been married to a citizen of Nigeria or
- (b) every person of full age and capacity born outside Nigeria any of whose grandparents is a citizen of Nigeria." (Chapter 3 of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, which was adopted in 1999, outlines citizenship)

Nothing is written for the women regarding their foreign partners. This itself is limiting to women.

Domestic Violence

Domestic violence in Nigeria has recorded its prevalence level, for instance, the percentage given for the prevalence of Domestic violence against women around the South-West and South-South zones was 86% and 70% respectively (NOI, 2018), this indicates women and girls are at high risk. As has been discussed in this work earlier, Domestic violence can occur between intimate partners and/or family members, and friends among others. In Nigeria, Domestic violence is seldom seen as a public issue and as such, it is treated more as a family problem, and the women are told to

be more obedient and submissive to their spouses (Udobang, 2018). This also translates to the way and manner the women and girls are treated when they report such cases. The responses from the society, the government, and the family further indicates that women and girls should keep silent (Golah-Ebue, 2021; Alonge, 2018; Udobang, 2018). For example, under the Nigerian Penal Code Act, Section 51(D), men are allowed the right to chastise an errant wife (See Bazza, 2009; Kalunta-Crumpton and Onyeozili, 2011). Also power relation has been discussed in an intersectional manner whereby scholars argue that such forms of violence are not linear in their occurrence instead class, race, gender, disability among others are vital aspects that should be fussed in such discussions (Crenshaw, 1989; Lutz, 2011; Collins, 2008), in relation to Nigeria, aside from the fact that patriarchy holds a strong place in the society, other factors such as the socialization and upholding cultural norms also fuels domestic violence which can be seen in some cases whereby women are also agent of such violence in the homes.

Gender-Based Violence

Africa till date is a strong patriarchal society where gender roles and functions are strictly adhered to, whereby the male are given superior positions and function while the females are seen as inferior and relegated to the background (Kalunta-Crumpton and Onyeozili, 2011; Eghafona, 2020). These differences in gender roles also give room for violence to occur from one gender against the other. Thus *“Gender differences become [...] gender inequality: being a woman means having less power, fewer resources, and more difficulty to access education and employment. Being a woman is attributed to an inferior status, a lack, non-value”* (Zoli, 2019). More so, many women flee their homes as an escape from situation of Gender-based violence, as well as conflicts in emergency situations (Spijkerboer, 2000; Alam, Bauer, Delille, Djouadi, et al., 2019). Also, other reasons given for the mass migration of females from Africa to Europe are violent conflicts and insecurity in the home country (HRW, 2017).

The feminization of migration

This has been linked also to the reason women migrate out of Nigeria. There is an increasing number of female immigrants who leave Nigeria independently without prior family members in Europe (Kastner, 2010) which was mainly attributed to the early movers during the 1970s and 1980s (Lo Iacono, 2014; Okojie, et al., 2003; Dave-Odigie, 2008). From the 1990s onwards this trends and pattern also changed as some of them moved along ethnic ties and other familiar relations within and outside Africa with some of them escaping violent conflict, the slow economic growth which also contributed to the feminization of poverty, as well as other socio-economic factors (Ohonba and

Agbontaen-Eghafona, 2019; Maliki and Ngban, 2006; Okojie, 2009). The nature and form the trip take differ according to those involved, while some of these movements occurs in regular routes, others take place through other routes which can be undocumented (De Haas, 2006; Carling, 2006; Flahaux and De Haas, 2016). Notwithstanding the mode of migration, women and girls from Nigeria have continued to be on the move to their destination countries abroad. For example, the number of Nigerian females who crossed the Mediterranean seas between 2014-2019 increased from 1,500 to 11,000 respectively (IOM, 2017; HRW, 2019), of which Edo state has been noted to be a place where many female migrants originate from and eventually make their trip to Europe (Adesina, 2006; DTM, 2017; Plambech, 2017; Abiodun, et al., 2021). This shows that women are on the run from many of these situations that affect them disproportionately in Nigeria.

1.5. SECTION FIVE: HUMAN TRAFFICKING AND NIGERIAN WOMEN AND GIRLS

1.5.1. History and procedure of Human Trafficking in Nigeria

Among the most lucrative sorts of human rights abuse is the trafficking of people for sexual reasons. According to estimates, 71% of the 40 million human trafficking victims are females and Nigeria is regarded amongst the nations where sex trafficking has the most victims (Abiodun, et. al, 2021; Bryant and Landman, 2020; Igoye, 2018; IOM, 2017) whereby the vast majority of Nigerian women who leave their families to pursue better opportunities but instead fall prey to a highly sophisticated and organized network of human trafficking and sexual slavery.

In the 1980s, many Nigerian women, hoping to better their economic situation, began migrating to Europe. Due to the difficulty of obtaining legal employment in Europe, many of these women journeyed using forged passports and ended up working as prostitutes in major cities throughout the continent (Semprebon and Abe, 2021; Ohonba and Agbotanean-Eghafona, 2019). Many Nigerian families hid the truth from their extended family members while saving and borrowing money to bring further children to Europe, because of this, a new human trafficking industry emerged, in which traffickers assist prospective victims in reaching Europe so that they may be sold to other traffickers there. These women sometimes have hefty travel bills when they arrive and may be compelled to work in the sex industry to pay them off.

Roughly 10,000 Nigerian women enter Italy annually across the Mediterranean Sea, having crossed from Libya. Despite representing a small percentage of the human trafficking victims, the experiences of these women are very similar (Olubukola, 2020). A "Madam" plays a

vital part in the recruiting process by directly addressing potential victims, often women experiencing adversity in their lives, such as marital abuse or severe financial difficulties. Whether she's a hairdresser, a housekeeper, or a waitress, the madam is always portrayed as a robust and reliable businesswoman with connections in Europe. Of note here is that men who are also called "Oga" still recruits women and girls to be trafficked however most of the time in relation to Nigerian trafficking syndicates the women called the madam/s are at the fore of engaging in these activities where they also employ boys and men to facilitates some aspects of the trips for their victims (Carling, 2006; Eghafona, 2020).

The Madam arranges transportation, obtains necessary documentation, and sends them on a lengthy surface journey and trek from Niger over the Sahara and on to Libya. Few know that they have been sold, and even fewer can fathom the horrors that await them (Abiodun, et. al., 2021; Okojie, et. al., 2003). The Nigerian traffickers transport them to Libya through an incredibly perilous voyage via the Sahara. Although Libya is the penultimate stop before eventually crossing the Mediterranean to Europe, most trafficked women regard the months spent in Libya towns as the most horrible experience of the complete voyage. Terrifying circumstances in Libya detention facilities, sexual abuse, brutality, and the persistent risk of street gangs dubbed Asma boys are a daily ritual for migrants who want to cross the Mediterranean (Alagbe, 2021; Kamal, 2017; Esposito, et. al., 2016; Eghafona, 2018).

Those who make it to Europe, most often Italy, are frequently transported to one of the numerous reception centers run by Italian non-governmental organizations. The Nigerian mafia network has its workers everywhere, so all they have to do is make a call after arriving at their designated spot and getting their orders from a boat. As such, every trafficked woman ends up in Europe with a massive bill for the boat ride and the knowledge that her traffickers will eventually find her (van der Watt and Kruger, 2020; Kleeman, 2011; Ohonba and Agbotanean-Eghafona, 2019). The trafficker/s also controls their documents, identities, and family histories. Moreso, a "juju" ritual is yet another very efficient kind of manipulation. Most women who go to Europe do so with the spiritual vow that they will pay the full fee and never expose their traffickers. If they try to escape, they will be killed; if they tell the authorities the truth, they will also be killed. Although this age-old tradition may seem mundane to European ways of thinking, it has proven to be a much stronger manipulating arm to Nigerian women than violence and threats (Gbadamosi, 2006; Millet-Barret, 2019; Ikeora, 2016; Baarda, 2016).

Most women and girls, however, conform and fearfully withhold any identifying information that would be useful in responding to an inquiry or making full payment. Sometimes even after paying the total price, they are still used as commodities in the sex trade even though they have proper documentation, adapting to European society and the workforce might be difficult. Whether in Europe or upon their return to Nigeria, freed women often find new affluence and respect as Madams. Trafficking of Human and other forms of contemporary slavery generally have a similar trait in which former victims are coerced into participating in organized crime (Abiodun, et. al, 2021; Ajagun, 2012). The Nigerian sex trafficking net is extremely difficult to prosecute even though the phenomenon is quite well known and has been studied, some of the factors that accounts for its continuation includes, a sophisticated organization, the use of traditional spiritual beliefs, and the recruitment of victims under deceit and false job promises. However, these are not the only important factors (Eghafona, 2020; Ajagun, 2012; Adepelumi, 2015).

1.5.2. Drivers of women and girls trafficking in Nigeria

Edo, a state in the center-south of Nigeria, is a major hub for human trafficking (Carling, 2017; Okojie, et. al., 2003; Dave-Odigie, 2008). Some studies have suggested that the local legacy of slavery, the plight of women historically, and the value placed on wealth and other goods are all contributing causes to this spatial concentration (Aghatise, 2002; Ohonba and Agbontaen-Eghafona, 2019; Semprebon and Abe, 2021; Plambech, 2017).

Even though the original migration was coincidental, once networks, infrastructure, and expectations have been built, subsequent migratory flows tend to rise. Grand residences constructed with remittances attest to the prosperity of many former female expatriates who settled in Europe. Consequently, many people believe that finding work in another country is their greatest chance of financial independence (Carling, 2017; Afaha, 2013; Eghafona, 2020; Kangas, et al., 2014). The desire to provide a better life for one's loved ones in Nigeria is a driving factor in emigration, both within and outside of trafficking networks.

Abject poverty is a primary driver of trafficking in Nigeria, and this is a problem for many women even before migration occurs (Lo Iacono, 2014; Adeleye, 2017; Millett-Barrett, 2019). If they are unable to support themselves and their families in other ways, women who are widowed, divorced, orphaned, or living alone may turn to prostitution. There's also bad government, corruption and the poor economy which have crumbled both the socio-political spheres in Nigeria and as such led to many people including women and girls into seeking for better opportunities outside the country which often than none leads them to go through traffickers under the guise of a madam/oga with the

promise of employment and opportunities abroad, which has led to the problem of prostitution among women (Agbu, 2003; IBA, 2016; Press, 2017; MHub, 2015). In addition to these factors, the lack of financial aid and other educational opportunities for low-income students are also key situations of these females in Nigeria before migration takes place (Doroba, 2018; Ikeora, 2016; UIS, 2016).

The customary practice of giving impoverished children to wealthier relatives in Nigeria might put them at risk of being trafficked. Some parents may sell their children, and they often do so not merely for financial gain but also in the hopes that their offspring will be able to escape the crushing poverty that permeates the region and start a new life somewhere else (Okeshola and Adenugba, 2018; Abiodun, et. al., 2021; Olufunke, 2016). Girls and Women in Nigeria are mainly vulnerable to trafficking because of the widespread belief that leaving their home country would provide them with better employment and personal fulfilment opportunities. The reality, however, is that they are sold into prostitution and domestic slavery in these other countries (Adepelumi, 2015; Okeshola and Adenugba, 2018).

Moreso, the insecurity in the country as well as the Boko Haram, the Fulani-herders disaster, cultism, MEND crisis, armed banditry among others continue to act as push factors for migration and human trafficking in Nigeria (Idrissa, 2019; Dodo, 2012; Egbeyemi, 2021; Agbiboa, 2020). Seemingly, a World Bank study estimated that about 1.8 billion people live in countries exposed to or mired in violent conflict and have become trafficked outside their place of birth (Iyanda and Nwogwugwu, 2016; World Bank, 2022). Thus the incessant violent clash and insecurity drives migration as many people become displaced during such process and others flee from such violence (Adepoju, 2008; De Haas, 2008; Schmid, 2016).

Furthermore, because of the poor ability and/or dedication of law enforcement and immigration authorities to manage borders, many young Nigerians are also members of numerous worldwide organized crime syndicates and networks. Moreover, the judicial system is inadequate, 90% of Nigeria's borders are unprotected, government officials are thoroughly corrupt, among others (Iyanda and Nwogwugwu, 2016; Tinti and Wescott, 2016). Nigeria lacks a comprehensive law against human trafficking, and the administration has no motivation to implement or enforce existing anti-trafficking directives, Acts, or penalties, thereby lacking the political will to enforce these laws and punishments to offenders and traffickers caught in line of Human trafficking in Nigeria (see Sawadogo, 2012; Okeshola and Adenugba, 2018; HRW, 2019; Semprebon, 2020).

1.5.3. Combatting Human Trafficking in Nigeria

Since the early 2000s the Nigerian government has been engaged in various activities, laws, schemes and protocols to fight against human trafficking both within and outside the country. Some of the government's initiatives in Nigeria and the surrounding area that aim to tackle the scourge of human trafficking are as follows; Notably, Nigeria joined the ranks of the countries that have signed the Trafficking Protocols since it entered into effect on December 25, 2004, under the sponsorships of the United States in Palermo, Italy. Human trafficking is a serious crime, and the purpose of this Protocol is to deter future occurrences, prohibit the practice, and punish those responsible.

The National Agencies for the Prevention of the Trafficking in Individuals' Public Information Unit, in collaboration with the Develop Unit for the African Growth, and the government of Italy are just two of the many groups working to reduce and counteract the rising tide of human trafficking in Nigeria through their respective programs.

To its credit, Nigeria has not slowed down in its efforts to safeguard victims of trafficking since 2009. Security agencies such as the Nigeria Customs Services, Nigeria Police, Nigeria Immigration Service, as well as National Agency for Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP) have been given more authority by the federal government and by some individual states. They have used various methods to identify victims (typically young girls or women) who are alleged to travel with people other than their families. Data released via the National Agency for Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP) shows that 1,108 victims were recognized and given help at one of its national shelters since the measures were implemented (Abiodun, et al., 2021; Campana, 2016). Multiple governmental agencies so far have taken trafficked victims to the National Agency for Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP) for assistance as well as other forms of protection; A total of 624 instances of trafficking for commercial sexual slavery and 328 cases of trafficking for labour exploitation have been documented so far. There have been 465 referrals made by the Nigeria Immigration Services, 277 by the Nigeria Police, 192 by the Social Services Agency, and 77 by the State Security Service (Abiodun, et. al, 2021; NAPTIP, 2009).

Upon arrival returnees are met by housing workers who evaluates victims' needs and offered food, clothes, recreational activities, shelter, and teaching on various skills, including vocational trainings, psychiatric treatment was reserved for the most severe cases. Seventy survivors who found refuge at shelters run through the National Agency for Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons benefited from government-funded vocational training programs. Similarly, the NAPTIP calculated that the government had spent \$666,000 on shelters between 1999 and 2009 (Abiodun, et al, 2021). In addition, the Trafficking in Peoples Administration Act and Law Enforcement of 2003 mandated a

variety of services for victims of human trafficking and ensured that they would be given equal protection under the law. Further, the rule made it such that no victim of trafficking could be held for a crime they could have committed while in trafficking.

To this day, efforts have been made at the federal and state levels to move victim housing facilities away from prisons housing human trafficking criminals, making it much more difficult for traffickers to have undue influence on their victims. They are allowed to remain in official shelters for up to seven weeks (Kara, 2009). All of the successful cases brought to trial by National Agencies for the Prohibition of the Trafficking in Persons have relied heavily on testimony from victims, who have been encouraged by government officials to continue providing the information necessary to aid the prosecution and investigation of traffickers (Abiodun, et al., 2021; Semprebon and Abe, 2021).

It was also found in Campana, (2016), that human trafficking victims have admitted to suitable avenues for seeking reparation, including civil cases against traffickers and the Victims' Trust Funds established in 2009 to distribute assets seized from the traffickers to the victims. The Trust Funds Committee meets almost four times each year under the direction of the Minister of Justice as well Attorney General of the Federation. A limited legal option of deporting foreign victims to countries with poor living conditions has been made available by the government.

To educate the public on the severity of the problem of human trafficking, NAPTIP has been using a variety of tactics, including conferences, seminars, and media campaigns. In addition, the Agency routinely investigates the causes, evolution, and trends of human smuggling in Nigeria. The organization has also taken part in efforts to aid victims' rehabilitation and readmission to regular life. Moreso, in 2013, Nigeria created the National Referral System for Assistance and Protection to Trafficked People, which codified standards for the assistance and protection of victims of trafficking by immigration officials, law enforcement, as well as service providers (Semprebon and Abe, 2021; Olubukola, 2020).

NAPTIP, the Framework For supporting the Prohibition of Human Trafficking is in charge of conducting investigations into human trafficking, monitoring borders, and prosecuting criminal cases. Between December 2004 and December 2014, Nigeria had the highest number of successful anti-trafficking cases in Africa, with 258 convictions (Abiodun, et. al, 2021; Olufunke, 2016). A total of 603 occurrences of human trafficking and associated problems were confirmed by the agency in 2014. Actually, NAPTIP conducted 509 investigations, carried out 56 cases, and successfully prosecuted and convicted 30 traffickers. The findings from Campana, (2016) reported that there were 130 cases of human trafficking and associated problems received through the National Agency for Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP) in the first three months of 2015.

1.5.4. The various bodies in charge of tackling Human trafficking in Nigeria

The issue of trafficking of humans is a pressing one that affects every country on earth of which Nigeria is not an exception; this ugliness permeates most of Africa. Human trafficking is a degrading activity that has been met with efforts on both the local and international levels in acknowledging the idea that it is both a violation of a person's rights and a crime that is against all laws (Bales, 1999; Newtons, 2008). With this goal in mind, the Nigerian government has negotiated a number of international treaties, protocols, and conventions to which it has agreed to adhere. The Child Rights Law of 2003/2005 and the Trafficking in Peoples (Prevention) Law Administration and Enforcement Act of 2003/2005 were both passed to supplement the pre-existing laws of several states in Nigeria that addresses the matter of trafficking in persons (Semprebon and Abe, 2021; Abiodun, et. al., 2021). Human trafficking in Nigerian is addressed by a number of different organizations, some of which are included below.

The 2003 Administration Act and Law Enforcement prohibition of human trafficking.

The Federal Government of Nigeria has made clear its commitment to address the issue of human trafficking by passing the Trafficking in Persons (Prevention) Administration Act and Law Enforcement in July 2003 (Trafficking Act). This law established the National Agency to Monitor and Combat Human Trafficking (NAPTIP). This group was placed in charge of carrying out the special taskforce on human trafficking's duties, including enforcing laws against trafficking in people, rehabilitating and counselling trafficking victims, and coordinating these efforts. This statute was revised in December 2005 and 2015 under the Trafficking in People (Prohibition) Statute Administration and Enforcement (Amendment) Act. The updated Act includes 65 new provisions and two new appendices. Because it is a federal legislation, it applies to all 36 states in Nigeria as well as the Federal Capital of Abuja (FCT).

Powers, Functions, and Administration. The Act also established several departments within the agency, such as Investigation, public enlightenment, legal, Rehabilitation, and counselling as well as other necessary entities, such as task forces and technical committees, to allow the agency to carry out its activities efficiently. Also, the agency has the authority to launch new training initiatives, create new training programs, or enhance existing training programs for its law enforcement officers and other workers. Such initiatives track the whereabouts of both perpetrators and victims, as well as disseminate information about relevant laws and provide solutions to the problems of detecting and combating crime, thwarting traffickers' tactics, and closing down their channels.

Infractions of the Act. The new Act maintains the same list of crimes as the original. Some of these offenses have been expanded to include conduct that was not previously illegal, such as using children in hazardous jobs or running a brothel, while others have been added (NAPTIP, 2015). Recruiting, transporting, purchasing, selling, transferring, receiving, or harbouring a person for the aim of holding or placing the person in forced or else bonded labour or slavery-like situations, whether or not the person is in voluntary servitude (sexual, domestic, or reproductive), is denoted as "trafficking" in Section 64 of the Act.

This definition of trafficking does not go into sufficient detail to cover all of the methods and goals that are outlined in Article of the United Nations Procedure to Prevent, Punish, and Suppress the Human smuggling of People, especially girls and Women, Supplementing UN Conventions Against the Transnational Planned Crime, 2000 (Human smuggling Protocol), which Nigeria is a party to. This definition of trafficking does not go into sufficient detail. Although the Act recognizes that a person can be recruited, bought, managed to sell, received, forced to labour, and transported, it failed to take into account the fact that these actions can be managed and accomplished not only through deception, coercion, or debt slavery, but also through fraud, and most importantly through the abuse of one person's power over another person or of a victim's situation of vulnerability, which is commonly found among families who live in poverty and those caught in the crossfire. Exploration payments made or received by one party in exchange for the cooperation of another party who has discretionary authority are not taken into account (Abiodun, et. al, 2021). In Nigeria, this is the most common method used to recruit youngsters for exploitation. The term "trafficking" under the Act does not recognize the reality that a person may be the victim of trafficking to extract organs or execute ritual murders, both of which are frequent activities in Nigeria. The liability imposed by the trafficking Protocol is stricter than that imposed under the definition. No one of the measures listed in Article 3(a) need be employed in any way during the recruitment, transit, transfer, sheltering, or receiving of a child for purposes of the trafficking Protocol; the child is nonetheless regarded to have been trafficked. In any case, such responsibility is not imposed by the definition. In addition, the aspect of the victim's permission for planned exploitation is not included anywhere in the definition, even though the trafficking protocol deems such consent to be irrelevant if any of the methods listed in Article 3(a) have been employed in the process.

The cultural norms of placing children from lower-income homes with families seen as more financially secure may be related to the gaps in the Nigerian definition of trafficking. It's tempting to interpret them as tacit approval of Nigeria's traditional norms on child rearing and community building as well as an explicit rejection of prostitution. The law established 23 new crimes relating to

human trafficking. For Sections 11 through 28, "procurement," "export," and "import" refer to the acquisition, export, and import of a minor for the specific purpose of consensual or forced defilement, sensuality, prostitution, pornographic material, or other activities of a sexually explicit within or outside Nigeria; for such purposes of drug trafficking; or the purposes of participation in armed conflict. Other crimes include running a brothel, harbouring a prostituted minor, arranging a trip abroad for prostitution, holding anyone in captivity with the intent to defile, kidnapping minors for guardianship, kidnapping adults for culpable homicide, and buying and selling people as slaves or for forced labour.

It's important to note that not all of these crimes are related to trafficking. Unless they are committed with the intent to traffic people, the acts of running a brothel, arranging tours, blocking the agency's functions, kidnapping, abducting, etc., are not trafficking offenses in and of themselves. Penalties under the Act can range from monetary fines to imprisonment either with or without the option of fines, to the forfeiture of a person's passport upon conviction, to the seizure or the forfeiture of assets, to the freezing of bank accounts, to the repatriation or deportation of an alien offender, and the liability for remuneration to the victims in legal litigation. Individual traffickers or management personnel of corporate entities face penalties between N50,000 and N200,000 and jail sentences between twelve months (for the attempts) and 2 years to life sentences, depending on the severity of the offense (NAPTIP, 2020; Semprebon and Abe, 2021). Any Nigerian citizen or permanent resident who commits a crime abroad may be prosecuted and have their assets seized upon their return to Nigeria for "putting the reputation of Nigeria to disgrace.". According to the Act, foreign nationals who commit crimes while in Nigeria are subject to a sentence of imprisonment and eventual expulsion (NAPTIP, 2020).

Commercial carriers, travel agencies, airlines, and travel agents (either the corporate frames or individuals employed by such bodies) who knowingly abet, aid, promote, or facilitate the trafficking and exploitation of the persons are criminally liable under related matters and subject to imprisonment and monetary penalties. Perhaps most notably, Section 31 of the Act states that "any airline firm should promote by all conceivable means, public knowledge of guiding ideologies of this Act" through in-flight tickets, magazines, jackets, internet units, as well film on lengthy flights.

When it comes to combating human trafficking, there is no more potent weapon than the knowledge that can be raised via public education. Corporate responsibility is reaffirmed in Section 31 as an obligation shared by all legal entities operating in Nigeria. Comprehensive compensation provisions for victims of trafficking are included in the new version of the Act. All money from the

sale of traffickers' assets and properties must be put into a trust fund for victims of trafficking, as outlined in Section 54(3). All assets of a person guilty of an offense under this Conduct that are demonstrated to be obtained or gained through such an unlawful act and that already are the subjects of the interim order must become forfeited to the Sufferers of Trafficking Trust Funds, as provided for in Section 36 of the Act. When an individual is arrested for a violation of the Act, the National Agencies for the Prevention of Traffic in Peoples (NAPTIP) is authorized to locate and seize any and all assets and properties obtained by the individual as a direct result of the violation, and to then seek and obtain an interim attachment order from the court. This authority is found in Section 41 of the Act. What's notable about this provision is that it doesn't depend on the trafficker's financial stability to compensate the victim. The Victims of Trafficking Trust Fund guarantees that victims will always get the compensation they are owed, regardless of the trafficker's ability to pay.

Protection of Victims. Because of their association with criminal groups and activities, victims of trafficking are usually detained or deported because they are considered a danger to internal security. The Trafficking in Persons Procedure not only recognizes these challenges and the stigmatization of conducts comprising trafficking in persons' offenses but also requires that the domestic law of each signatory state to the Trafficking in Persons Procedure seek to protect the privacy and identity of individuals who are trafficked. Moreover, the statement of purpose for the Trafficking in Persons Protocol emphasizes the need of providing assistance and protection to victims of such trafficking while also upholding their human rights.

When it comes to protecting the identities and bodies of victims of trafficking, the Nigerian human anti-trafficking legislation, the Trafficking in Persons (Prohibition) Law Enforcement and Administration Act of 2003 (as amended), goes above and beyond. A victim of a crime is also protected by the law from the trial for any crimes they may conduct as the direct outcome of being a victim. Human trafficking victims often go unreported, therefore the issue of how to locate them arises (Ajagun, 2012). The TIPLEA does not address this issue, despite the fact that without knowing who the victims are, it is impossible to provide them with adequate protection and, simultaneously, to gather enough information about the traffickers to end the cycle of victimization.

It is the responsibility of the agency, as granted by law, to guarantee, among other things, that the detection, investigation, collecting, and interpretation of indications in relation to the trafficking in people cases are undertaken in a way that minimizes intrusion to the individual history of a trafficked person, and which the individuality of a trafficked individual is safeguarded against intimidation, threat, and retribution by traffickers and their accomplices, including reprisal by

individuals in positions of authority (actions should become done to rehabilitate trafficked person and when the circumstances so warrant, trafficked individuals should not be arrested, imprisoned or be prosecuted for crimes linked to being the victim of human trafficking, holding of the fake travel, valid travel or the other papers).

The agency has created safe homes and operational rules for the administration of all the cases, with special references to the treatment of victims of crime, in light of this. In a nation as large as Nigeria, which is categorized into thirty-six states plus the State Capital Territory of Abuja, these shelters simply cannot meet the needs of victims of human trafficking. Family members of a trafficking victim are likewise afforded protection under the Act (Abiodun, et. al., 2021; Semprebon and Abe, 2021). This is done to safeguard the trafficking victim from any potential harm that could come from testifying against the trafficker, such as retaliation, intimidation, or other types of coercion.

1.6 SECTION SIX: MIGRATORY ROUTES IN AFRICA

1. 6.1 Transit Migration

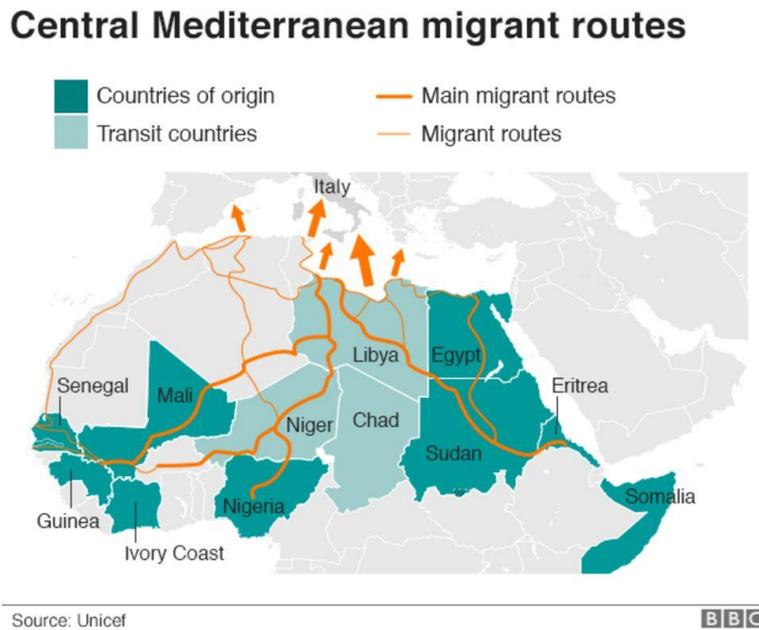
This session draws on the various migration routes Africans including Nigerians use to embark on their migratory journeys to Europe. As a result of the stringent measures and policies put in place by the EU (Freedman, 2012; Tastsoglou, et al., 2021), Legal channels of migration are very limited. Hence, many Nigerian females who cannot afford legal ways of entry tend to make use of irregular routes to reach their migration dreams and goals.

There is no linear way from which the migration journey begins for African migrants. Instead, migration across the central Mediterranean sea should be seen as a makeup of multiple and diverse locations within and beyond the African continent (McMahon and Sigona, 2016). The research carried out by the MEDMIG project of 2016 identified over 36 different countries migrants traversed before they reach Italy or Malta, with 68 different combinations of routes through them. The report divided the various routes into four categories; however, this project adopts 2 of the routes for its analysis as most of the females are of Nigerian origin thus, the West African and North African routes are paramount.

1. The North African route- This span from Morocco, Tunisia, Libya, or Egypt, consisting of only one leg (trip) by boat across the Mediterranean sea to Europe.

2. The West African route- Stems from countries of the West and sub-Saharan Africa and is usually fraught with extremely fragmented and prolonged/lengthy trajectories with multiple stops along the way (McMahon and Sigona, 2016).

Figure 1.6.1: Map for Transit through the Central Mediterranean routes



Source: BBC NEWSCAST (2017) <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-41884354> [Accessed 05 June 2021].

[N.B- The map above shows the different linkages between the West African routes which Nigerians employ. As can be seen, migrants pass through Niger to Libya with their end destination to Europe with Italy being the first country of contact].

Transit Through Niger

1. 6.2. On the road #1- From Niger to the Sahara Desert

The migration pattern especially from the country of origin usually starts at nearby locations and places where it is deemed easy for movement, rest, and easy facilitation for onward movement (McMahon and Sigona, 2016). As such the Sahel region of Africa and Libya are the main entry points, most especially for sub-Saharan Africans. The region contains cities such as Agadez in Niger and Sabha in Libya.

The ECOWAS free movement policy among her 15 member states makes movement easy for SSA migrants. Nigeria and Niger are part of the ECOWAS regional bloc, hence movement between these states is easy. Agadez in Niger is host to many migrants whose focus of migration is Europe

bound; thus, it is the core transit point for those migrants who come from Ethiopia, Nigeria, Gambia, and Sudan among others (McMahon and Sigona, 2016). It is the last state between the Mediterranean Sea and Libya and it carries the dreams and hopes of the future of these migrants whose vision is to get a good job, send money back home to their families and live a better life abroad. However, the route to Agadez has also made many migrants' plans change and sometimes become adjusted according to their destination and conditions along the way (Press, 2017). Agadez has also been described as a smuggling hub in the Sahara Desert which further hosts individuals that enslave migrants as a form of employment (Kah, 2019).

Seemingly, Agadez is an economic hub of its own as it hosts thousands of migrants, and traders, as well as goods and services, being passed through its borders because of the free ECOWAS policy. It is also the first place many migrants are caught up in what is popularly called “*modern-day slavery*” by middlepersons and smugglers who place them in connection/ing houses (Idrissa, 2019). The connection house is where migrants are kept and used to work among other things, sometimes the females are sent out to work on the street and the money is taken from them depending on who is in charge of their journeys, sometimes they are also abandoned in the place if the person involved in their movement does not act on time in terms of money for onward movement (Graham-Harrison, 2017). According to Tinti and Wescott (2016), over 3000 migrants passed through Agadez per week with smugglers taking them to Libya in 2013 alone and this figure increased to over 170,000 migrants moving along the Niger-Libya route in 2016 (p. 2).

In Niger, the mode of operations for cross-border migrants and their mobility changes from the moment they enter the country. Many migrants have given various accounts of what goes on in Niger. The migration journey in Niger usually entails migrants being carried from one location to the other sometimes mainly through the use of smugglers and their links to those who make the journey possible, for example, the police officers, military personnel, border checkpoint officers, connection house owners, among others (Press, 2017; Hamood, 2006).

Migrants are transported in crowded buses and trucks which are often met by the people who will eventually become in charge of the migratory process for the newly arrived migrants (McMahon and Sigona, 2016). Some of the migrants usually have the name of somebody to encounter already within Agadez while others do not have, hence they start the process of finding a link to get such persons so they can continue their journey. This is further explained below:

“From the moment they arrive, they begin calculating, judging whom they can trust, where to go, and with whom. Amid the swirl of dust and heat, newcomers are quickly led to one

of the countless connection houses, where they await transportation for 1500 miles north to Tripoli, capital of Libya” (Press, 2017: p.12-13).

In most cases, prostitution is part of this movement, as many of the girls and women smuggled are put in such situations as they await the next step in their journey (Press, 2017). Also, in some cases, those smuggled whose payments have been done before leaving may not have to do prostitution but have to wait till they get feedback on what to do next. While in other instances, those smuggled are made to do sex work where they live often in crowded places and neighbourhoods to pay or earn the fare for their onward travel, which involves passing through the Sahara Desert to the city of Tripoli and its environs in Libya, where many of the crossing to Europe through the Mediterranean Sea take place (Kah, 2019; McMahon and Sigona, 2016).

Of note here is that sometimes these stops could be for a short period ranging from some days to weeks and months, while other times they take longer, ranging from months to years, all dependent on the nature of the migration process and the people in charge of handling the process, for example, the time it takes to get a job, find the vehicle to use and arrangement for passing the border among other. Some migrants during this period also experience kidnapping along their transition from Niger. This is made manifest after which they are told to pay the ransom from their family members who are called upon through the phone. Those who fail to pay up are sold to other people to get the money (Kah, 2019). It is still not known for sure the persons involved in this act, as there are a lot of mixtures of personnel during this period, from the military to the smugglers, to arm militia, etc. A vital point here is that most times bribes are used to pass through the armed guards at the border (McMahon and Sigona, 2016; MMC, 2018).

Also, oftentimes the migrants are charged twice for the same journey as they pass through the Sahara Desert. Before leaving Niger, some of the migrants paid huge sums of money to the connection persons or smugglers to enable them to secure a place in the buses or trucks that will be used to take them from Niger to Libya (Kamal, 2017). However, during the journey, the migrants are told to pay again or even pay more money by the driver/s of their vehicle before they can continue with the journey. Failure to do so will lead to them being abandoned in the desert and in some cases, the drivers will dump them and zoom off. This was evident in the case of an interviewee (reported in Kamal, 2017: 1) who revealed what they went through at the hands of their driver during their movement in the Sahara Desert. According to him:

“...when his pick-up reached Sabha in South-western Libya, the driver insisted that he hadn't been paid by the trafficker and that he was transporting the migrant to a

parking area where the young man witnessed slave marketing going on...” (Male, Nigerian).

IOM staff in Niger also released a statement that sub-Saharan migrants are being bought and sold with the support of Nigerians and Ghanaians who is working for them (Kamal, 2017; IOM, 2017).

The Sahara Desert is also a place where many migrants' hopes and dreams are squashed as they are left dead too. This is because of the harsh conditions of the environment as there is no water, food, or clothes given to the migrants. Many migrants gave accounts of the dead bodies they saw and met on their tortuous journey to Europe. Sometimes they die as a result of falling from the moving vehicle as the drivers of these vehicles do not stop if anybody falls off while in transit (McMahon and Sigona, 2016).

Of note here is that from Niger through the Sahara desert is fraught with a lot of hiccups and dangers along the way, as many migrants are put at high risk without regard for their safety. Those who survive these harsh situations in Niger and the Sahara Desert are the migrants who eventually get to Libya to continue the final part of their journey to Europe. However, in some cases, they stay behind depending on their financial resources, physical conditions, and opportunities to cross to Europe through the sea.

Transit Through Libya

1. 6.3. On the road #2- From the Sahara Desert to Libya

Libya as stated earlier is usually and mainly the last point for migrants in Africa before they get to Europe and other parts of the world. Thus, migrants who made it through the Sahara Desert can be found in Libya waiting for the final movement to take place.

As far back as 2006, estimates given concerning migrants who pass through the Maghreb region were between 60,000 to 120,000 migrants with Sub-Sahara Africans accounting for over 60% of these figures, it was also noted that many of these migrants (about 70%) move onward toward Libya and the remaining move to Algeria (EC, 2004; Simon, 2006). Recent findings have estimated about 653,800 migrants living in Libya as of 2020 and 64% of these migrants come from Sub-Sahara Africa (IOM-DTM, 2021).

In Libya, many migrants also face challenges and sometimes worse situations than what was experienced in Niger and the Sahara Desert, as many of them become irregular in Libya. This makes

their journey more complicated: many of them cannot sign a lease for a house, they do not know the language, they are denied access to medical care and health facilities, and sometimes they are moved between places without their consent or knowledge, no access to schools and other services that are beneficial to regular or legal residents (Runde, Yayboke and Gallego, 2019; Idrissa, 2019; DTM, 2017)

Some other times, migrants are detained and locked up in secluded places where they witness various forms of exploitation and modern-day slavery including torture. As such “the detained migrants often end up in inhumane and overcrowded conditions. Severe human rights violations, such as torture, death, exploitive and forced labor, and sexual violence, have become everyday experiences for transit migrants in Libya. Government officials, the security forces, and militia groups have all been found to be responsible for the abuses” (Vammen, Plambech, et al., 2021: p.9). An example of this as described by an interviewee (reported in Alagbe, 2021 [online]⁴) who explained her experience in Libya below:

“We were first taken to an underground prison in Tripoli. From there, we were taken to a deportation camp. We were there for three months, eating bad food and drinking dirty water. The prison officials dehumanised us.” (Oreoluwa, Nigerian woman).

This is also corroborated by accounts given by people who are first responders (such as medical doctors, psychologists, therapists among others) to migrants when they come in contact with them. For example account given by an Italian medical doctor Pietro Bartolo who works on the border in Lampedusa and is also a MEP in Europe, explains his experience with them as thus:

“...in Libya, people are detained in horror camps where they are raped, tortured and killed... From my workplace, the Lampedusa clinic, their fate is clear to see. They are tortured daily, atrociously, for years on end. Those brought to us, by helicopter or motorboat, are close to death, with burns, serious injuries from blows, electric currents applied to the head or genitals, gunshot wounds, and razor-blade cuts. They are almost always dehydrated, in a state of hypothermia, especially the pregnant women and children and so underfed they are on the brink of collapse. They bring to mind the suffering of a concentration camp... Not exactly the refugee centres with

⁴See: Alagbe, J. (2021). Rescued Nigerian migrants recount horrible experiences in Libya, survival struggles at home. *Punch Nigeria*. [Online], 21 February. Available at: <https://punchng.com/rescued-nigerian-migrants-recount-horrible-experiences-in-libya-survival-struggles-at-home/> [Accessed 02 August 2022].

sports pitches and recreation facilities some people want us to believe.” (Bartolo, 2018 [online]⁵)

Thus, some official international bodies and organizations such as the IOM and UNHCR have both described the situation as inhumane and degrading (Hermanin, 2017).

In Libya, cases of rape and sexual abuse were reported by female migrants. Sometimes they are gang raped. Other times they are beaten and raped simultaneously (Hermanin, 2017). In addition to this, most times the women are not able to leave their areas of residence thereby experiencing domestic violence in varied forms and occurring at the same time (McMahon and Sigona, 2016). As explained below:

“...They took us to a very isolated place, and we lived in a stable for a month, where there were also animals. We couldn't leave. On the farm, other women had also arrived from Nigeria. The men who were supposed to watch us raped us many times...” (Nigerian woman, McMahon, and Sigona, 2016: p.11).

Similar to the situation in Niger, some migrants also stay for either a short period or for a longer period, which can be between a few days, weeks, and sometimes years. There is no exact time frame for which the last transit between Africa and Europe will take place. Some of the migrants are forced to work in Libya, which also counts for their long stay either months or years. Alongside their work they are still tortured, some are kidnapped, and their families are asked for payment of ransom; the money paid as salary is meagre most times when compared to the standard of living (IOM, 2020). Also during this period migrants most especially black migrants in Libya experience severe racialization and criminalization during their stay which is also linked to forced work and inhumane activities carried out on them, as the blacks are treated worse than others, and the women are considered to be more inferior than men as such they are exposed to various forms of violence and one prominent outcome of this are women who arrive pregnant or with little children when they are intercepted or rescued on the sea (Bartolo, 2017). An example of this was explained by a female migrant:

“We were more than thirty Nigerian girls in this house and we were all forced into prostitution while we were waiting to be sent to Italy. I was there for four months, with an average of five clients a day. Prices were fixed: one and a half dinar with the use of the

⁵Bartolo, P. (2018). I'm a doctor in Lampedusa: We can't let these migrant deaths go on. *The Guardian* [Online], 11th July. Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2018/jul/11/pietro-bartolo-lampedusa-doctor-migrant-deaths-mediterranean-slaughter-innocents> [Accessed 30 July 2022].

condom (brought by the client) and two dinars without. We gave all the money we got to H. He was also the one who brought the clients to us and told us what to do. We couldn't refuse to have unprotected intercourse. If we did, we were badly kicked and beaten with chains and several other objects. Violence was on our daily agenda, anyway.” (Esposito, et al., 2016: p.10).

This further makes transit through Libya not only difficult but much longer than expected. The response below explains this better:

“In Tripoli, they take you out to work; they pay the police. They take you to a house for one or two weeks; then back to prison. People pay to get your work. A lot of people died. They give you a small portion of bread... I worked in a garden, but they didn't pay me. I was in Libya for two years; in prison for three months. If you don't have money, they lock you up” (Moussa 2016; Press, 2017: p.19).

Eventually, the trip to Europe is arranged for the migrants through the Mediterranean Sea (Although there are other ways migrants' entry into Europe are of fraudulent means also. For example, using fake documents, and visa and overstaying their visa when it has expired (Adepoju, 2006; De Haas, 2014). However, for journeys through the sea, most times these trips are done using wooden or rubber boats popularly called *lapalapa* by migrants, which are fully packed with hundreds of people more than the capacity of the boat (Press, 2017). They set out on such risky journeys with little or no food, little fuel, and without any form of safety measures given to the migrants. Sometimes these migrants are forced into these rubber boats against their will. A migrant who shared his experience on when they were taken to the place where they will board their ship said:

“I got scared when I saw the boat. It looked rickety. I and some fellow migrants told the agents we were not going to Europe again, but they said it was too late... They even brought out guns to force us to enter the boats. They said there were new migrants coming and they had no space for us. They also said if we returned, we would inform the new migrants of how they mistreated us. They couldn't afford to let that happen... So we entered...” (Imagbehian; in Alagbe, 2021 [online]⁶)

Along this last trip, many people die on the sea due to the crude method of transportation, the boat sinking, and eventually because they were not rescued on time by the coast guards from Europe

⁶For this and other stories see: Alagbe, J. (2021). Rescued Nigerian migrants recount horrible experiences in Libya, survival struggles at home. *Punch Nigeria*. [Online], 21 February. Available at: <https://punchng.com/rescued-nigerian-migrants-recount-horrible-experiences-in-libya-survival-struggles-at-home/> [Accessed 02 August 2022].

or others doing their business such as fishing on the sea. The case of over 26 Nigerian girls who died on the sea and were taken to the city of Salerno in Italy between 3rd and 4th November 2017 gives an idea of the situation (Haworth, 2019). Furthermore, a survival from this trip revealed the situation as thus:

“...Outside the town of Tripoli on November 2, 2017, were about 400 people there to catch three boats at the same time... It was very chaotic. More than 130 people were loaded onto each inflatable dinghy, women, and children in the center and men around the rim... The boats left at 11 p.m., leaving at night to minimize the risk of detection by the Libyan Coast Guard, and soon lost sight of one another.... After three hours, big waves came over the side and the boat started filling up with water... Everyone started screaming... The next thing he knew he was in the cold fighting to stay alive...”
(Osazuwa, in Haworth, 2019: p.11).

They were eventually rescued by a Spanish warship Cantabria which was able to rescue 375 migrants and also pulled out the 26 Nigerian female dead bodies from the sea (BBC NEWS, 2017; Haworth, 2019).

Generally, since the early 2000s more than 30,000 deaths have been recorded on migrants, refugees and asylum seekers attempting to enter the EU borders (Kayser-Bril, Ottaviani, Gruhnwald, et al, 2016). When broken down according to specific routes employed by such mixed flows, various reports released by IOM showed that almost 18,000 scores of deaths have been recorded to have occurred in the Mediterranean Sea since the migration crisis in 2015, with 3,139 and 2,299 deaths in 2017 and 2018 respectively. It was also noted that over 1.7 million who are undocumented migrants have been in Europe since that time (IOM, 2017; IOM, 2020; Haworth, 2019).

From the above, it is evident that Libya, even though it is the last place before migrants' dreams can be achieved by entering Europe and other parts of the world, is the worst place to find oneself during the migration journey. Several accounts have been given of this dangerous situation, some of which have been listed above. The dangerousness of the journey has also been linked with the various restrictive policies enacted by Europe for example, the externalization of borders to third countries, difficulty in obtaining visa/restrictive visa policies, funding origin countries to block borders and push back migrants, detention of migrants, etc concerning flows from Libya (Arbogast, 2016; Juárez, Honkaniemi, et al., 2019; Carrera, 2007; Arbogast, Capodanno, Clochard, et al., 2012; Freedman, 2012; Tastsoglou, et al, 2021), thus on the one hand flows have been reduced drastically from these places to Europe but on the other hand it has increased migrants vulnerabilities as they

pass through Libya as many of them are placed in precarious situations which can be seen from the risky journeys they embark on (IDMC, 2021; DTM, 2017; Bardak, 2017) especially on the rubber boats where their safety is not taken into consideration as the persons that organise such trips for them do not bother to invest in quality boats or real drivers that will take them to their destination country in Europe owing to the fact that they will be arrested once they come in contact with the authorities in Europe, migrants being exposed to various forms of violence, no access to quality health care, they face ill-treatment, constant racism faced by migrants most especially sub-Saharan migrants which are mainly blacks, among others, as such these policies further create the leeway for smugglers, traffickers, and others involved in the migration journey to thrive as they find other ways and routes for migrants to cross into Europe (Hamood, 2006; Arbogast, 2016; Paoletti, 2011; Tastsoglou, et al, 2021). Studies suggests that this pattern will continue as long as these measures are continually reinforced (Malakooti, 2020; Malakooti, 2019; IOM, 2020). However, Libya is not the only way to cross to Europe, but it has been the most widely used by migrants both from Africa, the Middle East, and Asia. Sometimes, due to these difficulties and abuse experienced in Libya, some migrants now turn to other routes to complete their migration journey, passing through Turkey and Tunisia. For instance, in 2020 migrants who crossed through Tunisia accounted for about 47% of arrivals in Italy (MMC, 2020).

1. 7. SECTION SEVEN: GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE AND NIGERIAN FEMALE ASYLUM SEEKERS IN ITALY

1.7.1 Overview of asylum seekers and reception in Europe/Italy

Asylum seekers, refugees and irregular migrants have been increasing over the past three decades with the various wars, conflicts, natural disasters among others that have taken place all over the world. Europe has also witnessed these changes in movement and influx of migrants into the continent with a majority of these flows coming into Europe through the sea and land borders (Pitzalis, 2018; Semprebon, 2021). In the last 15 years, flows from the sea borders have witnessed dramatic increase with Italy being the first country of contact for such people from the Mediterranean sea, thus Italy's position in the EU has made it to become a vital state in relation to receiving such mixed flows into her territory as such, Italy plays a double role of both a transit and a destination country (De Leo, et. al., 2022; Campesi, 2011; Sisti, Di Napoli, et. al., 2021; Marchetti, 2012). During the early 1990s and 2000s it was recorded that Italy was mainly a transit country for such migrants, asylum seekers and refugees to pass through to other countries of Northern Europe; for example, Germany and Sweden (Semprebon and Pelacani, 2020; De Leo, et. al., 2022), however with the Arab

Spring in 2011 as well as the resurgence of violent conflicts in Afghanistan, Syria, Iraq, Bangladesh, Palestine, Sudan among others, the flows of such mixed migration increased thus transforming Italy from a transit country to a destination country including those coming from Africa with particular increase in the number of those from sub-Saharan Africa entering and staying in Italy eventually (Costantini, et. al., 2016; degli Uberti, 2019; Pitzalis, 2018; Avallone, 2021).

Over time, these flows birthed the social protection and welfare systems in the EU whereby various measures were adopted to cope with the diverse group of migrants, refugees and asylum seekers mainly regarded as non-EU residents in the different territories they find themselves (Semprebon and Pelacani, 2020; degli Uberti, 2019), as earlier noted, most times Italy is the first point of entry, thus the Italian government had to bear the brunt as such from the early 2000s the Italian government initiated and passed into law different social and reception policies (For instance, the Law 189/2002) to cope with the constant flows of such persons into Italy (Avallone, 2021; Semprebon, 2021; Marchetti and Palumbo, 2021). The Arab spring of 2011 made Italy to further strengthen and enlarge the policies, assistance and protection given to asylum seekers, refugees and migrants coming from third countries especially those coming through the Mediterranean sea, this invariably opened the establishment of a dual process of protection which was called the ordinary protection system/measure and the emergency or extraordinary protection system/measure (Legislative Decree 142/2015) mainly used for those migrants and refugees that entered Italy during the height of the Arab spring and the “migration/refugee crisis” in 2015/2016 where over one million people crossed into Europe (Campesi, 2011; Marchetti, 2014; Pitzalis, 2018; Vianelli, 2014).

It is important to note that most of the Internally Displaced Persons [IDPs], refugees and asylum seekers are spread in various places in the world with a significant number of them hosted in Low and middle-income countries; for example, according to UNHCR estimates, over 75% of International refugees are hosted in developing countries (UNHCR, 2020b). However, some still find their way across various continents to get to Europe, where they seek for international and political protection. For Instance, the number of refugees and asylum seekers who were being hosted in Italy as at 2020 was estimated to be over 50,000 asylum seekers and 128,000 refugees (UNHCR, 2020c; Avallone, 2021; UNHCR, 2021).

1.7.2 Various protections laws and system for Asylum seekers, Refugees and victims of Trafficking in Italy

As already noted above, the Italian system of reception and protection for asylum seekers, migrants and refugees consists of two systems, namely the ordinary and the extraordinary.

The ordinary system was born in the late 1990s and early 2000s when inflow of migrants and refugees from Kosovo, Albanians and other parts of Europe took a strong hold in the Italian system as such the need to create a more consolidated form of asylum application as well as reception and protection for these people spurred the creation of the first system of reception which is widely known as the ordinary system (Hein, 2010; Marchetti, 2014; Pitzalis, 2018). Here the Government together with the UNHCR, NGOs and the National Association of Italian Municipalities [ANCI] signed a Memorandum of Understanding to create the Ordinary system in 2001 in order to implement the National Asylum Programme [NPA], however the following year this programme was later changed to the Sistema di protezione per richiedenti asilo e rifugiati– Protection system for asylum seekers and refugees [SPRAR] as it was deemed to improve the reception and integration system for such persons. Thus transforming the NPA to SPRAR and was stipulated under Law 189 of July 30, 2002, also known as the Bossi-Fini Law (Semprebon and Pelacani, 2020; Avallone, 2021; Marchetti, 2012). After this, over time the reception system in Italy has continue to expand in scope and the involvement of local authorities (Marchetti, 2014; Semprebon, 2021; Pitzalis, 2020). The SPRAR system was used for many years without interruption however in 2008 the Reception Centres for Asylum seekers (CARA) was established to augment the SPRAR system, the CARA was mainly used for those migrants that had no legalization on the national territory when they arrive in Italy but over time this CARA was infused with other forms of reception as asylum applications increased (Altin and Sandò, 2017; Pitzalis, 2018).

Following the Arab Spring of 2011, the large numbers of migrants, asylum seekers and refugees crossing the European borders especially through Italy prompted the Italian government through the Ministry of Interior to set in motion the Emergency North Africa Program which was used to establish the second mode of reception called the extra-ordinary reception centres [CAS] (Pitzalis, 2020; degli Uberti, 2019; Semprebon and Pelacani, 2020). This was done in order to address the shortages experienced in the SPRAR system whereby the places were filled up and they couldn't take in more of these mixed migrants thus the CAS was created to absorb the flows (Avallone, 2021; Cantaro, 2013; Marchetti, 2014; Pinelli, 2017). This system was further modified and embedded into the Italian reception system in 2014 and it became codified with decree 142/2015 as more flows were still continuous despite all efforts put in place to address the crisis especially in Libya (Marchetti, 2012; De Leo, et. al., 2022). Thus this system also paved the way for more expansion of the protection system as it was thought to host around 50,000 people and it also brought more actors into the field such as the Prefectures, the civil Protection Department, the regional administrations and the autonomous provinces, NGOs, as well as the local authorities including those belonging to the national system, as well as the outsourcing of the services to private individuals and entities to take

care of (Pitzalis, 2018; Avallone, 2021; Caroselli and Semprebon, 2021). Of note here, is that the Prefectures are now the ones in charge of the CAS as well as the outsourcing of the management procedure for the protection system/structures (Semprebon, 2021; Campesi, 2015; Pinelli, 2018).

With time, the system of protection practiced in Italy consisted of the two parallel system with the CAS later absorbed into the ordinary system. According to reports from scholars and SPRAR data bank, the CAS has accounted for more migrants, asylum seekers and refugees being hosted in their facilities than that of the SPRAR; for example, estimates given for migrants hosted in the CAS in 2016 was pegged at 73% whereas the one given for SPRAR was 18.7% (SPRAR, 2017; Semprebon and Pelacani, 2021; Pitzalis, 2020) thereby indicating that even though SPRAR is the main system recognised for the reception of migrants, asylum seekers and refugees in Italy, it is the CAS that usually takes a majority of these people eventually, this may also be linked to the fact that the SPRAR system is still plagued with insufficient spaces that prompted the CAS to come up in the first place.

Moreso, it should be noted that these two systems of operation were further strengthened and expanded following the resurgence of flows from the Mediterranean route in 2015/2016 migration crisis which saw mass exodus of people from Asia, Middle East and Africa with Sub-Sahara Africans taking a higher proportion of migrants and refugees among these mixed flows from Africa during the period (Pitzalis, 2020; Marchetti, 2014; Ohonba and Agbontaen-Eghafona, 2019). According to Mentzelopoulou and Luyten, (2018), embedded under these levels, is the zero-level whereby there is no specific legislation on it, but it is duly followed and carried out in places regarded as hotspot centres which is also known as identification centres, it consists of the cooperation between the Ministry of Interior and the European Commission whereby the initiation and adoption of a Standard Operating Procedure for these hotspots have been enunciated. Although on the other hand, some of these measures have been adjudged by scholars to be more of a control mechanism than actual care and assistance (see Pitzalis, 2020; Pinelli, 2018; Semprebon and Pelacani, 2021; Albertini and Semprebon, 2018) among others.

The double parallel system continued to be followed and implemented in Italy even though the CAS was hosting more refugees than the SPRAR, However, in 2018 this changed as the government at that time were more focused on securitization policies, as such in October 2018 the then Minister of Interior Matteo Salvini initiated and passed the Security Decree n. 113/2018 law which placed asylum seekers and those under humanitarian protection status in disproportionate and vulnerable positions that made sure they were excluded from getting access to the reception system of the SPRAR which was changed to System of Protection of Refugees and Unaccompanied Minors [SIPROIMI] allowing for only refugees and minors to be at the receiving end of the social protection

centres, programmes and activities in Italy (De Leo, et. al., 2022; Avallone, 2021). This law was highly publicized as discriminatory and also taking out the rights of asylum seekers in the territory. It created a lot of negative outcomes and asylum seekers were left stranded during this period which lasted until October of 2020. For instance, the law made sure that those in the system could not renew their papers without a residence which in most cases for asylum seekers and beneficiaries of humanitarian protection status is very difficult as they are not yet fully settled in the country and sometimes they do not have jobs to enable them earn tangible funds to rent a place of their own, also it was estimated that over 70,000 asylum seekers were to be stranded in Italy once their permit expired as they do not have the requirements to meet up with the new demands made from the Salvini's law (Villa, 2018; Gargiulo, 2020). Moreover, the law excluded asylum seekers from basic health care and social benefits as well as reducing their funding in the budgets given daily drastically from 35 euros to 20 euros which has been noted to be grossly insufficient by actors who are working in the reception system (Battaglia, 2019; Gargiulo, 2020).

Seemingly, the reduction and stringent measures of the Salvini's law made a lot of municipalities and organizations unable to participate in the calls for tenders to manage the reception centres across the country. This further led to the reduction of the quality and quantity of things and services provided to them (Semperebon and Pelacani, 2020; Semperebon, 2021; Marchetti and Palumbo, 2021). Thus, the "strong reduction of the budget led to the reduction of services offered, with a significant cut above all of those dedicated to strengthening of the integration of the people welcomed: Italian language courses, support counselling, accompaniment to health services, legal assistance, mediation cultural, job orientation and support in finding training courses" (Pitzalis, 2020: p.69). Furthermore, the brutality of the law led to an increase in the number of asylum applications rejected thereby increasing the number of irregular migrants in the territory and without any permit of stay invariably making all the years of work they had put into the protection process go to waste without any hope for possible integration leading them to become more socially marginalised and excluded (Fabini, et. al., 2019).

Despite the Security law being practiced for over 2 years in Italy, In 2020 the Salvini's law was abolished and the reintroduction of the protection for humanitarian bases called special protection was put back in the system as well as the introduction of the Reception and Integration System [SAI] for migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers, this SAI replaced the SIPROIMI formerly SPRAR system (Degani and De Stefani, 2020; Avallone, 2021).

Of note here is that these various reception centres outlined above are also used for victims of trafficking and severe exploitation. However, they have their own laws which is often used for them

when they want to apply for protection either as asylum seekers, refugees or under humanitarian now special protection status. As such, there are two laws used in Italy regarding the protection of victims of trafficking and severe exploitation. The first law 228/2003 which entails various measures against trafficking in human beings and is codified in the Italian criminal code as Article 601, stipulates the protection of victims of trafficking for a short term period between three to six months in an assistance programme (Article 13). While the second one used majorly is Article 18 of the legislative Decree 286/1998 of the Italian Immigration Law. This law provides a longer term for social protection and assistance to victims of trafficking and GBV in Italy as such it entails programmes for social protection which consists of medical and psychological assistance, accommodation, job placement, trainings, language school, as well as access to other facilities and measures which leads eventually to achieving a successful social integration and inclusion (see Orfano and Bufo, 2010; Caneppele and Mancuso, 2013; Esposito, et. al., 2016).

Furthermore, these long term programmes provides the victims/survivors the possibility of obtaining a resident permit for a period of six months which can also be renewed for one year afterwards or after expiration. Of note here is that the resident permit can also be converted into a work, study or family permit.

Several scholars have noted that the social protection programmes are very effective in encouraging many women and girls who are victims of trafficking leave and come out from their traffickers especially those who were trafficked for sexual exploitation (Degani and De Stefani, 2020; US TIP, 2021). For example, between 2016 and 2017, 1,172 and 1,050 victims of trafficking especially trafficking for sexual exploitation were assisted respectively, about 90% of these persons were women and the remaining 10% were minors (GRETA, 2019: para 8), of note here is that Nigerian women and girls accounted for about 60% of the total number of victims assisted during these periods.

1.7.3 How the protection system works in Italy

Presently, the Italian system of reception and protection works in two phases.

The first phase is geared towards the identification phase which functions mainly from the hotspot centres to the first line centres. Here when migrants, asylum seekers and refugees enters Italy through the various borders/ports of entry, they are taken to the hotspot centres where they are given medical checks and assistance as well as the process of identification which enables those in charge to be able to carry out status determination procedures and place them accordingly. Also, the process can be done in the centres for first medical aid and reception- *Centri di Primo Soccorso e Accoglienza* [CPSA] (Semprebon and Pelacani, 2020; Semprebon, 2021; Esposito, et. al., 2016).

While the second phase entails all the procedures that guarantees the migrants access to social assistance and services at the reception centres. Here, those migrants who disclose their intention to apply for international protection are carried and placed in the centres of first reception also known as *Centri di Prima Accoglienza* [CPAs]. Thus, after the successful identification procedures have been carried out by the officials and actors in these centres, the system for application of the status (International protection, asylum or refugee) is began and they are guided in following the procedure to the end. Of note here is that the migrants can also be placed in other reception centres such as the CAS, when places are filled up in the first reception centre. And this form of spreading takes place through an already laid down procedure of quotas in all the regions taking into account the number of asylum seekers, international protection status holders, refugees, as well as the population of the regions. Moreso, the distribution take account of the access to funding from the national social policy of the region before these migrants are transferred there in order to avoid overcrowding and insufficient funds for taking care of them. When there are still shortages experienced, they are then transferred to the SPRAR structures which is currently called the SAI as explained in the previous section above (Degani and De Stefani, 2020; Semprebon, 2021; Bona and Marchetti, 2017).

Afterwards, the migrants are further placed in the second-line reception centres (*second Accoglienza*) where the process for social assistance and integration according to Article 18 are fully carried out, they are given various trainings, access to facilities and activities that will enable them to become self-dependent after their application have been successful, it is vital for them to complete the programmes for them to obtain the residence permit and long-term assistance. Moreso, these programmes are managed and financed by the DEO through annual calls which are given to certified NGOs and associations selected as the winners of the calls. Thus, the programmes in these projects include vocational trainings, psycho-social follow-up, legal advice, vocational trainings, language classes, long-term accommodation, application for permit of stay, among others (Palumbo, 2015; Caneppele and Mancuso, 2013; Degani, 2019; Orfano and Bufo, 2010).

Of note here is that the application for the permit of stay can be done in two ways. The first one is called **the Judicial path**- this entails the application for the permit of stay for victims of violence, exploitation, trafficking and severe dangers in Italy by the Public Prosecutor who does the filing for such documents on those victims that come forward in denouncing their traffickers which leads to legal criminal proceedings against their traffickers, as such their situation will be analysed and they will be granted a permit of stay for 6 months which can also be increased for up to a year depending on the time the investigation and proceeding will end. While the second way of getting the permit is through **the social path**- which involves the process of applying for a resident permit by

victims of violence, exploitation, trafficking and those in severe danger in Italy through the use of social workers, NGOs, anti-trafficking agencies, among others. Here the victims are given protection based on the rights of victims to be kept safe where they can begin transition from their traffickers to a normal life in Italy. After the victim have been identified as such, they are placed under the social services in which the workers, head of antitrafficking units are the ones that will send in their application for the resident permit which lasts for 6 months and can be renewed for up to one year afterwards. The social worker or person in charge of the victims case will file various documents to the Territorial Commission on behalf of the victims so that the permit can be given (Lo Conte, 2016; Degani and Perini, 2019; On the Road, 2002).

On the other hand, those whose applications are unsuccessful are taken to other centres where they are to be expelled out of the country and taken to their origin countries thereby removing any form of access for them to the protection system and social protection programmes. Likewise, some migrants are further removed from the access of these social services if they refuse to complete the programmes, voluntarily leave the programme without any tangible reason or run away (Palumbo, 2015; Esposito, et. al., 2016; Semprebon and Pelacani, 2020). This has been viewed as a fragmentation in the reception system as it also creates room for precariousness of such persons especially when the true situation has not been fully explored. Moreso, the practice of the reception system in Italy still remains uneven and distribution sometimes fragmented as some regions do not comply to some of the arrangements of the tenders (See Pitzalis, 2020; Bona and Marchetti, 2017; Semprebon and Pelacani, 2020; Palumbo, 2015) among others.

In all, over 22, 000 people have been hosted and assisted in the various reception centres in Italy since 2000, it should be noted that following the Arab spring and the 2015/2016 migration crisis witnessed in Europe, there have been a rise in the number of women who apply for international protection and are hosted in the reception centres especially women from Sub-Sahara Africa (Nigeria) who are identified as victims of trafficking (Degani and De Stefani, 2020; GRETA, 2019; Degani, 2019).

1. 8. SECTION EIGHT: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS

This section covers the various theories used to explain migration trends from Nigeria to Europe, starting with the dependency and underdevelopment theory and then linking it with the state fragility theory and eventually the theory of aspirations and capability in order to x-ray the situation in Nigeria that spurs present-day migration.

1.8.1 Dependency and Underdevelopment theory

Over the years various scholars have come up with different theories and paradigm to explain the North-South divide in economic and political terms. One of such theories which have been dominant in social sciences is the dependency and underdevelopment theory.

This theory emerged in the late 1950s and 1960s as well as the 1970s and it was guided on the premise about what acts as causal effects for underdevelopment of poorer countries or third world countries. Some of the prominent proponents of this theory are Dos Santos, Samir-Amin, Cardoso, Prebisch, Frank, Sunkel, Fanon, Ake, Rodney, among others (Ferraro, 2008; Tausch, 2011).

The main thrust of this theory is that the economic prosperity and development of the developed countries does not translate to the same type of development of the poorer countries such as those regarded as third world countries or nations. As such, the postulates of the theory linked the various exploitation of capitalism of third world countries and how these exploitations enhanced development of the first world countries (Farny, 2016; Ferraro, 2008; Tausch, 2011). Hence, leading them to become the centre of the centre while the others fall within the periphery and semi-periphery. Of note here is that dependency theory was founded on the ground to refute the modernization theory which stated that all countries pass through the same linear way for development without taking account of other factors that affect development for the different countries (Matunhu, 2011; Herath, 2008).

To these scholars, dependency is defined as “a situation in which the economy of certain countries is conditioned by the development and expansion of another economy to which the former is subjected” (Dos Santos, 1970: p. 231). Also Sunkel (1969), defined Dependency to be the “economic development of a state in terms of the external influences--political, economic, and cultural--on national development policies”. (p. 23). As such, nations are regarded as dependent when they do not have total control over all aspect of the country in terms of the political, social, economic and even cultural spheres. Thus, dependency can be regarded as both a bilateral and multilateral relations of power between two or more countries. Noteworthy is the fact that these power relations are usually asymmetrical and unequal in most cases with the dominant power holder from the developed Global North countries like the United States of America, Europe, etc, and lesser power from developing or third world countries such as Latin America, Africa, Asia. Although some parts of Latin America, Asia, and Africa are upgrading to semi-periphery countries at the moment. This notwithstanding, the relations of power remain unequal (Santos, 1979: p. 23; Alaye, 2019; Randall, 2004).

The dependency theory uses the classification of world systems as opined by Wallerstein to explain the conditions of third world/developing countries. This they referred to as the center and periphery. Whereby the center is the developed countries of the Global North, whose development was made from their interaction and dominance with the developing countries regarded as the periphery countries (Alaye, 2019; Sekhri, 2009; Kay, 2011; Ferraro, 2008). To them, the developing countries will continue to remain dependent on the Centre because of the way they were initiated into the world's economic system. The proponents of the concept further state that; the third world countries were introduced as lower economies which were mainly producers of raw materials which they export to these developed countries and the developed countries sell them back as finished goods for the third world countries. As such removing any form of competition since the third world countries cannot produce the finished goods. Hence, they will continue to remain at the lower end of the spectrum (Alaye, 2019; Tausch, 2011).

Also, this relationship can be used to explain colonialism and its effect on third-world countries whereby the colonial masters developed the countries of the West from the exploitation of their colonies by sending the raw materials abroad and using them to develop the countries abroad thereby making the colonies underdeveloped and dependent on the import of the finished products from their colonial masters (Webster, 1989; Rodney, 1972; 2005). Thus, this trend followed them even after independence because many of these colonies couldn't function without the help of their former colonial masters in relation to the production of raw materials and goods to finished products. They did not have the equipment and facilities to pursue these developmental processes as the colonial masters did not bother to lay any foundation in their colonies (Randall, 2004, p. 42; Nkrumah, 1974). For example, products such as palm oil front, rubber, timber, cocoa, diamonds, etc were all discovered in Africa however, they were exported abroad and the Africans were exploited by the colonial masters who used the proceeds to develop other parts of the western countries forgetting about developing Africa (Skinner and Mikell, 2010; Emmer and Lucassen, 2012; Oyenyi, 2013).

Another vital point noted was that these economic policies by the periphery countries are tailored mostly to fall in line with the countries of the Global North and/or their colonial masters for them to continue these subordinate relations of power and see that the foreign product is better than what is obtainable in their own country. Thereby reinforcing colonialism although in another form. That is neo-colonialism which is economic colonialism from former colonial masters (Alaye, 2019; Galthung, 1971; Lenin, 1978). Of note here is that these forms of dependence are also evident even in countries without colonial ties, for example, the shift of Latin America from their colonial masters of Spain and Portugal to dependence on the US is a clear example of the dynamics of dependency

theory (Randall, 2004). Also in line with the above, some scholarly works on care workers have furthermore established the shift from colonial master to other countries without former ties. For example, the demand for migrant care workers in various countries of the advanced world has illustrated this point as various scholars such as Hondageneu-Sotelo (2001), writing on care workers from Southern and Central America to North America, Gamburd (2000), and Parreñas (2001), writing on care workers from Asia to the Americas and Europe among others, documenting these shifts and movements have linked the demand from the North and South relationships. As such the notion of care chain have become dominant in such discussions as it portrays the international transfer of caregiving from third world countries to Advanced countries (Lopez, 2012; Yeates, 2012; Parreñas, 2012) with mainly women and girls at the helm of providing such work force to these countries thus creating the shift not only on stealing raw materials but also taking up vibrant population from the developing countries to enter into the workforce of the developed countries thereby reinforcing a global dependence on periphery countries on remittances sent to them from advanced countries (Mission, 1998; Parreñas, 2010; Yeates, 2012) and also invariably leads to stealing love whereby migrant workers provide care and other nocturnal activities in the host country and leaving back their home to be taken care of by their partners and/or family members such as sisters, aunts, grandmothers etc. (Parreñas, 2010; Parreñas, 2005).

Moving to Nigeria, even though the British colonial rule officially ended in 1960 by granting independence to Nigeria, it was not economically free. This is still what is happening to date. The colonial heritage continued in neo-colonial form, whereby Nigeria continues to export her raw materials and produces to the colonial masters as well as the US and other parts of Europe (Oyeniya, 2013; Adeyeri and Adejuwon, 2012; Babawale, 2007). This made Nigeria to be entrenched in the world system but at a peripheral level whereby the relations between other advanced countries are unequal and the rules and regulations are dictated to the Nigerian government (Falola, 2007; Aghahowa and Ukpebor, 1999, Babawale, 2007; Adeyeri and Adejuwon, 2012). For example, the Oil boom witnessed in Nigeria in the early 1970s was a result of the international market price at that time (Sekhri, 2009; Farny, 2016), however, Nigeria does not process it into finished products such as fuel, kerosene, gas, etc. The raw material is exported, and the finished product is imported at an exorbitant rate to the Nigerian government which furthermore affects gravely the citizens (Falola, 2007; Babawale, 2007; Adeyeri and Adejuwon, 2012; Haung, 1995; Jack, Nwocha and Boroh, 2016). This is also important to note because the oil prices also fell in the 1980s which also had an adverse effect on the Nigerian economy as the decline that was witnessed then has continued to increase to date. Nigeria has not recovered from that instability in the oil sector to date. This has also spread to other parts of the economy as Nigeria is 80% dependent on the revenue gotten from oil to drive the

economy which is still at a low price today (Alaye, 2019). This was also the period where the SAP was introduced to help float the economy from the shock of the oil decline however SAP failed woefully in Nigeria as it first devalued the currency, with high-interest rates, jobs were cut short and many of the program enlisted to kick off the SAP did not meet the target as such Nigeria became more indebted to the Bretton woods institutions of World Bank and IMF (Potts, 1995; Greenberg, 1997; Oyeniya, 2013). Thus, the market price from the world system invariably affected the Nigerian economy directly as it fostered a hike in all commodities both at home and abroad. Like the foregoing, the Nigerian situation is furthermore amplified by the fact that external and internal debts have continued to increase over the past four decades, there is no indication that it will slow down from the figures given for past and current debts. For example, between the 1980s and 2000s Nigeria's debt totalled about \$28.3 billion, this included late interest of over \$5 billion (Adesola, 2009: p.2; Aborisade and Mundt, 1999). Also, recent figures given for Nigeria's external debt reported a whopping amount of \$92.75 billion (which translates to 38 trillion naira) as of September 2021 and this also indicates an over 18% increase in debt figures when compared to the prior year (Debt Management Office Nigeria, 2021; Ohuocha, 2021). Shockingly, the Nigerian senate approved further borrowing in November 2021 from China and other foreign lenders to the sum of \$16.23 billion (Ohuocha, 2021). The implication of this is that Nigeria will continue to pay back these loans for many years to come which invariably translates to Nigeria not breaking out of its peripheral position as most of the revenue gotten from oil export and other products would be used to pay back these loans. In other words, "Nigeria as a borrower does not possess the economic leverage for a favourable balance of payment because 50% of its export earnings are used to service external debts" (Alaye, 2019: p.17).

As such, third-world countries may continue to remain in this peripheral level even if they can break out of it into the semi-periphery level, they will still be paying back debts and exporting some raw materials which hamper growth in all ramifications (Randall, 2004). Tausch, (2011), described this thus: "...Their comparative price level will be very low, and their currencies will participate unequally in the "international currency markets". Periphery and semi-periphery countries will be characterized by huge debt burdens and chronic current account deficits..." (p. 469).

Furthermore, dependence as has been noted earlier translates to other aspects of a nation's makeup such as political, social, and cultural. In the case of Nigeria, this is evident from the colonial heritage and post-colonial era whereby the Nigerian state inherited the characteristics of the Colonial British masters, which are still present to date as some of the laws and practices being done were drawn from the colonial state (Emeh, 2013; Fayomi, 2008). This further translated to the way politics

is done presently and as such powers are concentrated at the top and spread down to the local people with mismanagement of public funds and corruption as well, which has also had an adverse effect on the state stability as Nigeria today is a fragile state with the government not being able to provide for the citizens as well as not functioning in reality to the characteristics that make up democracy generally (Owolabi, 2019; Nnadozie, 2006). This is further explained below using the state fragility theory.

As such, these forms of dependency has created an unstable economy in Nigeria, which also acts as reinforcing agents that makes migration thrive from Nigeria to other parts of the world as many people move to seek better socio-economic and political lives. Women and girls have also been noted to be on these trends, although the aspect of women and migration has been argued to consist of different factors or elements such as family ties, race, gender, employment in the host communities etc. Scholars have also demonstrated that women tend to move for vary reasons that are different for men as such when talking about gender and migration these intersecting phenomenon should be taken into account in order to explain why such forms of migration occurs in the first place (Crenshaw, 1989; Maliki and Ngban, 2006; Okojie, 2009; Zlotnik, 2003; Amelina and Lutz, 2019) especially pertaining to female migration. Linking it to Nigerian females various reason accounts for women migration which ranges from family ties, cultural beliefs, oppression in the home country as well as relegating women and girls to the background, the feminization of poverty which is exacerbated by uneven development or uneven opportunities especially when it comes to females as well as low educational opportunities are some of the reasons that influence female migration from Nigeria to other parts of the world with Europe mainly the continent where many sub-Sahara migrants can be found. Also the insecurity in the country fuels migration as some women run away for fear of insecurity in their hometown and places of residence. Other social influence such as that of those that had migrated earlier coming back and showcasing wealth also acts a source for outmigration especially when the family of such persons already starts to be uplifted in the society they live in as a result of the new found wealth gotten from remittances sent from their children abroad (Ohonba and Agbontaen-Eghafona, 2019; Olubukola, 2020) this also creates a new social status whereby families are lifted up from the poor background and lower social status to a upper one where they begin to command rules and regulations in the society they belong (Semprebon and Abe, 2021; Eghafona, 2020).

Moreover, the demand for care and sex work influences such migration from Nigeria to other parts of the world. These have also exposed many women to trafficking as they seek for better opportunities which makes them easily vulnerable to traffickers under the guise of lucrative employment abroad. Seemingly, the inequality between the North and South has continued to act as

reasons for out migration between the periphery and advanced countries. As people will always look for ways to better their socio-economic situations outside their countries (Adeleye, 2017; Lo Iacono, 2014).

1.8.2 The State Fragility Theory

There is no general consensus on the fragility of a state, instead some markers are used to adjudge if a state is fragile or not (Schmid, 2016; Boege, et. al, 2008; Vallings and Torres, 2005). This section deals on this premise, linking it with the nature of the Nigerian state.

States are considered fragile when their government cannot deliver the core functions to its people, including the poor (Vallings and Torres, 2005). As such, state fragility depends on weak capacity or/ lack of political will to provide services and to sustain development partnership with the international community. Moreso, a fragile state has weak capacity to carry out basic functions of governing a population and its territory and lacks the ability to develop mutually constructive and reinforcing relations with society. As a consequence, trust and mutual obligations between the state and its citizens become weak (Mcloughlin, 2012). In fragile states, authority flows from a limited number of social groups or interests reflecting an exclusive political settlement that represents a narrowly based coalition or sets of interests. Rather than resolve conflicts among a broad range of social groups, conflicts and differences are often used as justification for strong repressive institutions and limited forum for debate or discussion.

According to the World Bank's estimate, 26% of the world's seven billion people live in fragile States, where one third of all people surviving on less than 1.25 USD per day live, half of the world's children die before the age of five and one-third maternal deaths occur (World Bank, 2009). Proponents of this theory, Carment, Prest and Samy (2011), posited that the 20 most fragile states are located in Sub-Saharan Africa, among which Nigeria is ranked 25th of 197 countries in the global fragility ranking of 2011 and as at 2021 through 2022 Nigeria ranked 14th and 16th position out of 179 countries in the world, indicating a decline deeper into fragility, as such Nigeria has continued to remained among the top 20 most fragile States in the world from 2007 till date (see also, Carment, Prest and Samy, 2008; This Day, 2021; World Bank, 2022; FSI, 2022). Of note here is that fragile states take different forms: while some fail to provide basic amenities such as primary schooling, health care or water supply and sanitation to a sufficient degree, others are drowning in civil war or criminal violence, while some others are unable to extend their reach over all parts of their territory, etc. (Boege, et. al, 2008; Vallings and Torres, 2005; Mcloughlin, 2012; Harsch, 2020).

Nigeria has been plunged into various incessant crises since her independence in 1960. This has further weakened the State's capability to attend to her citizens and its military force in her territory (De Haas, 2008). This has also translated to the way the ordinary citizens and masses live daily. Thus, the inability of the Nigerian state to cater for its citizens in terms of provision of basic man's needs and protection and the lack of monopoly of the use of force have all endangered the lives of people, including women and girls, thus exposing them to various forms of insecurity and dangers in their daily lives. These conflicts range from the Boko Haram insurgent crisis in the north to the Fulani-herders clashes in the Central to high rate of kidnapping, arm robbery and eventually death of citizens in the Southern regions of the country (Agbiboa, 2020; Idrissa, 2019; SHIMA, 2014).

Aside from the fact that state is fragile, the colonial heritage in Nigeria also contributed to the way the state is governed. This can be traced back to the introduction of some principles and laws that introduced differences in the way gender is taken. Kalunta-Crumption and Onyeozili, (2011), and Uchendu, (1965), traced gender disparity to the arrival of the colonial masters as there were no strict differences before colonial rule. Moreso, the Penal Code 51 (D) in Nigeria allows the man to chastise an errand wife as he deem fit. This put women in a disadvantage position in the country and further spurs migration. This has further made women and girls to be susceptible in the society as they are considered second citizens with many of them being placed in receiving positions in the family and country at large.

Furthermore, insecurity, civil wars, ethnic clashes, insurgency have been strongly linked to migration, scholars such as Schmid, (2016), Adepoju, (2006; 2014); De Haas, (2014), have posited how state instability in relation to various conflicts in the state, create the need to flee out of the country especially when the conflict is ongoing for a long time. Nigeria has witnessed these variations in conflict, starting with the civil war of 1967 which lasted for 3 years, saw the killing of the Igbos in the Southern Part of Nigeria this also brought for the first time mass displacement of Nigerian citizens to other neighbouring countries as well as mass migration from Nigeria to other parts of the world (Idrissa, 2019; Afolayan, et- al., 2008; Adepoju and van der Wiel, 2010). This has continued till date with other clashes, conflicts, and killings occurring in the country. For example the Boko Haram insurgent conflict which is still ongoing in Nigeria has claimed over 20,000 lives since its inception in 2002, Kidnapped more than 400 women and girls and displaced more than 3 million people in Nigeria and neighbouring countries such as Cameroun, Niger and Chad (Schmid, 2016; World Bank, 2016; UNHCR, 2016; UNHCR, 2020; Adeyanju, 2020; Campbell, 2014).

Moreso, women and girls have also been noted to be on these trends, as such the feminization of migration has taken a strong hold in out migration (Lutz and Amelina, 2021; Kangas, et al., 2014)

although the aspect of women and migration has been argued to consist of different factors and elements such as family ties, race, gender, employment in the host communities etc. (Collins, 1990; Lutz, 2001; Crenshaw, 1991) Scholars have also demonstrated that women tend to move for vary reasons that are different for men as such when talking about gender and migration these intersecting phenomenon should be taken into account in order to explain why such forms of migration occurs in the first place especially pertaining to female migration (Amelina, 2017; Amelina and Lutz, 2019; Boyle, Cooke, Halfacree and Smith, 2001). Linking it to Nigerian females various reason accounts for women migration which ranges from family ties, cultural beliefs, inequality in the home country as well as relegating women and girls to the background, the feminization of poverty which is exacerbated by uneven opportunities especially when it comes to the female child or females as well as low educational opportunities are some of the reasons that influence female migration from Nigeria to other parts of the world (Adeleye, 2017, Lo Iacono, 2014; Loaiza and Liang, 2013; Zoli, 2019; Udobang, 2018). Furthermore, the demand for certain kind of works deemed to be more for females also influence migration patterns for example women are seen to be more fitted for care work and other nurturing forms of services which plays a huge role in migration (Hondageneu-Sotelo, 2001; Lopez, 2012; Yeates, 2012; Parreñas, 2010). There is also high demand for sex work outside Nigeria which can also lead some women to fall prey to trafficking under deceit that they are going for care work, hairdresser, waiters, etc (Ikeora, 2016; Okojie, 2009; Carling, 2006). Also, the shifting family structure whereby women become bread winners in the family plays a role in female migration especially when there has been a loss of the father figure/husband/partner, loss of job, or when there are single mothers taking the helm of family affairs and survival, the zeal to migrate becomes high in such situations (Ohonba and Agbontaen-Eghafona, 2019; Okojie, et al., 2003; Braimah, 2013).

Thus, economic decline couple with other social-political factors such as insecurity, violence, kidnapping, ritual killings, inequality in home country as well as the inequality between the North and South among others have continue to act as motivations for Nigerian citizens including women and girls who are affected disproportionately to migrate abroad where they see better opportunities for themselves and their families (Adeleye, 2017). In other words, “with increased degradation of living standards due to a combination of economic and security issues in Nigeria the applications for asylum in other African states as well as in Europe and North Africa have subsequently increased from the late 1990s onwards” (Mberu and Pongou [online] 2010). For example, in 2016 alone, over 20,000 Nigerians including women and girls crossed the Mediterranean sea into Europe and in a single trip on 1st May 2021, over 750 African migrants including Nigerians were intercepted at the sea and were brought into the Italian shores (The Conversation, 2020; Besser, 2021). Hence, migration is seen as a gateway to escape the dire socio-economic and political situations in Nigeria. This is

clearly an illustration that migration is an irreversible phenomenon that has come to stay, and people will always be on the move and find ways to cross borders either regularly or irregularly.

Alongside these two theories discussed above, other factors have been attributed to why migration pattern takes form and shape in relation to micro theories such as **theory of aspirations and capability**. As such, these can also be used to explain hand in hand why international migration takes place as well as relating it to migration from Nigeria to Italy.

The theory of aspirations generally deals with the desire for people to migrate on the one hand and their capabilities to migrate on the other hand. Whereby aspirations is linked with the fact that various factors influences peoples' decision to migrate and sometimes, people do not make up their minds to migrate if their needs can be met locally, although there are still those who wants to migrate at all cost because to them migration outside their place of birth and origin is seen as the way out of their social, political and economic as well as structural situations in their origin countries (Clemens, 2022; Detlefsen, Heidland and Schneiderheinze, 2022). Whereas there are those who have the desire to migrate but do not have the resources to migrate thus they are regarded as involuntary non-migrants whereby these factors affects their decision and pattern of migration and why some become immobile at some points in their lives (Carling, 2001; La Ferrara, 2019; Ray, 2006).

Moreso, in the theory of aspirations and capability, such social-economic-political factors make up the macro reasons why people migrate. While the micro level make up the individual characteristics that creates differentiation between people in their ability to overcome any barrier/barriers to migration. As such factors such as gender, age, family migratory history, social status, family ties, situation in origin country, educational attainment and personality traits are vital in understanding how individual's migrate as well as their social networks including the means to migrate are to be considered in the analysis, in order to determine how migration patterns takes shape and those who are left behind as some of these social structures impede and at the same time influences some people to migrate from their origin country to other parts of the world (Carling, 2001; Faist, 1997; Massey, et. al., 1998; Detlefsen, et. al., 2022).

In relation to Nigerian women and girls, this aspect of aspirations and capability theory is paramount as it shows how migration patterns and decision works for these women and girls. Sometimes they are made up of different social-political-economic reasons mixed together which on the one hand are difficult to separate for some people for example, those who are taken as the sacrificial lambs of their families to lift them out of poverty on the other hand, some of the women and girls take their lives into their hands where they decide to migrate for better lives and opportunities on their own without influence from families or relatives (Ohonba and Agbontaen-

Eghafona, 2019; Semprebon and Abe, 2021; Eghafona, 2020). Thus, despite their social exclusion/relegation in the society to which they belong, Nigerian females are still seen among those who take their migration journeys into their hands and try every means to achieve them. Of note here is that the feminization of migration also play a role why some of these females move from one country to the other as sometimes the social networks gathered help to augment the migration pattern taken in the end (Adeleye, 2017, Lo Iacono, 2014; Udobang, 2018; Okojie, et al., 2003; Braimah, 2013).

As such when talking about Nigerian female migration all these various aspects of migration aspirations and capabilities as well as the instability in Nigeria in relation to insecurity, inability of the government to provide jobs and opportunities as well as basic amenities for the citizens, family background, education, among others all intersects together and play vital roles on what spur migration from Nigeria to Europe as well as human trafficking as many of the women and girls look for ways to achieve their migration dreams and aspirations through various means which sometimes leads them to the hands of the traffickers who make such trips for them to become a reality even though at the moment they do not know they are going to be trafficked which invariably solves the capability part of the aspirations theory as they actualize their migration dreams howbeit under the guise of lucrative jobs offered to them from the traffickers.

Conclusions

This chapter has covered all the aspect relating to gender, migration as well as the reception system in Italy detailing the way and manner these interplays in international migration with a focus of uncapping diverse trends in the literatures and at the same time exploring the phenomenon of human trafficking and migration from Nigeria to Europe in particular references were made to the way females move from Nigeria through undocumented migration following the West-African routes discussed above. Also the various theories were used in explaining further the situations and reasons that spur out-migration from Nigeria to Europe/Italy and to a large extent other parts of the world.

Chapter Two: Research Methodology

In this chapter I discuss all the process, methods and procedures I employed in carrying out the collection of data for the research study. Here I begin with the research approach used which was the phenomenological approach and I explained the main tenet of the approach and its usefulness in applying it to my research study in order to answer my research questions. Afterwards, I discuss the procedures such as the research participants who's stories made up the bane of the research work as well as the sampling strategies used in getting participants for the work which consisted of Nigerian migrant women and girls on the one hand and various professionals who work in relation to asylum seekers, victims of trafficking and refugees on the other hand. The various ethical considerations used were also included in the discussion as well as the data gathering, analysis, validity instruments among others make up this chapter.

2.1. Research Approach

This study made use of the qualitative research design in the organization, implementation, and analysis of the work. This approach was used mainly because of the sensitive nature of the research, and it is also the best way to garner information from respondents, as it provides the avenue for an in-depth investigation of the issue. Furthermore, the use of qualitative research was also strengthened by the view that such an approach is more likely to present an understanding from the respondents point of view and also invariably acts as a medium to give them voice in the research process (Wengraf, 2013; Silverman, 2004; Knapik, 2006). Thus, the phenomenological qualitative approach was employed in addressing the research questions for the study.

2.2. The Phenomenological approach

As noted by scholars is one of the widely used techniques in the field of qualitative academic research (Creswell, 2013; Dale and Volpe, 2019). It's main focus is on unlocking from an in-depth perspective the origin, as well as the present state of a phenomenon using stories from participants, and experiences as it occurred, to generate themes that will be analyzed to answer the study carried out (Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009; Vagle, 2016; van Manen, 2016). This approach is vital to my research as I seek to underscore the linkages between irregular migration and gender-based violence among Nigerian girls and women who moved and are currently residing in Italy howbeit in Protection shelters across the regions listed above. Furthermore, according to phenomenologists, there exist some commonalities in human experience that are investigated to understand the commonality as well as the essence (Dale and Volpe, 2019). This is of utmost importance to my research as Gender-based violence occurs to people with diverse backgrounds and statuses, yet their experience intersects at

some point in their lives which can be before, during, and after their migration journeys. Thus, mapping out the common traits and phenomena of Nigerian women and girls is a core aspect of my research questions.

Like the foregoing, Edmund Husserl founder of the descriptive phenomenological school, stated that “We may find a set of insights that go across all of the different observations of a particular phenomenon.” (Mayoh and Onwuegbuzie, 2013: p.6). He further emphasized that these experiences can be explained using the descriptive approach to the themes generated. On the other hand, Heidegger, a foremost proponent of phenomenology and founder of the interpretative school in phenomenology research, goes further to state that such research should not only be descriptive but also interpretative of the lived experience as well as the researcher’s experience incorporated into it (Mills and Birks, 2014). However the method employed in social research, phenomenology's central tenet is that it seeks to shed light on phenomena based on the perspectives of those who have lived through them, and it does so by using inductive, qualitative techniques including interviews, conversations, and participant observation (Lester, 1999: p.1).

2.3. Research Design

The qualitative research design was employed for the study and was made up of two categories. The first aspect involved the use of semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions for Nigerian migrant women and girls in the various facilities, NGOs, and protection centres in four regions in Italy (Emilia-Romagna, Lazio, Marche, and Piedmont regions). These were conducted both on-site and online depending on the situation of Covid-19 at the time of the scheduled interview.

Secondly, the research made use of the Vignette technique. This involved the use of well-crafted stories about situations and conditions of violence that women and girls go through. As suggested by scholars such as Barberis, (2010), Hughes and Huby, (2004), and Jenkins, et. al., (2010), this allows for a wider prospect of responses from the interviewees who may not feel comfortable talking directly about cases they have experienced in their organizations. Thus, the vignette was used for interviews with professionals who are in charge of handling cases of Nigerian women and girls in the various centres across five regions in Italy (Emilia-Romagna, Lazio, Lombardy, Marche, and Piedmont regions). As such, social workers, Heads of NGOs, Cultural mediators, and those working in the anti-trafficking unit were all interviewed using the vignette. This approach was vital to the research as it provided a different perspective on the reality of things from a professional angle, on the institution perception of violence, and how cases of violence are handled in Italy concerning migrant women and girls with a focus on Nigerian females. The interviews were also conducted on-site and online depending on the covid-19 situation as of the scheduled date.

Moreso, these techniques were vital for my research as in phenomenological studies, the use of interviews especially semi-structured and open-ended interviews are vital in garnering enormous information on the phenomena under investigation as well as allowing the participants to express themselves profoundly during the interview as suggested by scholars (Kvale and Brinkman, 2009; Marshall and Rossman, 2010).

2.4. Research participants

The study consisted of Nigerian women and girls who are residing in Italy and were in various shelter houses and protection systems in the various locations identified above. They were gotten from the purposive sampling technique as it is central to phenomenological research (see Padilla-Díaz, 2015; Noon, 2018). As “purposive sampling is characterized by the incorporation of specific criteria met by the participants at the moment of selection” (Padilla-Díaz, 2015: p.104) was fit for my research. The study also made use of the snowballing technique (Dale and Volpe, 2019; Noy, 2008; Parker, Scott and Geddes, 2019) in order to get more participants for the research through communication informally with the interviewees.

As such the criteria used by the researcher for selecting the participants were as follows: they are of Nigerian origin, they are in the shelter and protection system in Italy, they are females, they all passed through irregular routes during their journey to Europe/Italy, These were paramount as it is relevant to my research questions which aimed to outline the various forms of violence women and girls faced from their journey to Italy as a result of being victims of trafficking and also to ensure that they had all left their traffickers and are safe to be able to share their stories as they were under protection in Italy. Thus those who did not fall under this spectrum were not interviewed for the study. There was no age limit relating to the sample used as most of the participants were already above 18 years when the study was conducted. Moreso, the study did not use other women and girls who had left the system before the research as they did not fall within the scope of the research.

On the part of the professionals the same sampling techniques was used, however their case was different as they were more on the institutional side, thus their role and functions in the various organizations were paramount in the selection process, they all had to be engaged in one way or the other with migrant women and girls, they must have handled cases of Nigerian women and girls as well, they must have had at least 5 years’ experience in the course of their work as this was to ensure that the participants had sufficient acquaintance and practical working experience with the Nigerian women and girls under study, they were all adults, they all had knowledge of the Italian reception system and the various forms of protection given to migrant women and girls, in particular to Nigerian women and girls victims of trafficking in the various organizations contacted.

As such all the participants of the study whether they were the Nigerian girls and women, or the professionals all met the criteria listed above and had direct relations to my research purpose, thus, they were used and were very instrumental in actualizing the study goals and aims.

2.5 Participant recruitment

The study was carried out in five regions in Italy (Emilia-Romagna, Lazio, Lombardy, Marche, and Piedmont regions) which were mainly gotten through the purposive and snowballing techniques described above. Before, the start of the fieldwork properly, some contacts were made with the help of my supervisor. I was able to interact one on one with some of the practitioners who were later interviewed for the research.

The recruitment process was done mainly through the exchange of emails and messages from the contacts earlier made as well as new contacts gotten during the process.

For Nigerian migrant women and girls, most of them were accessed through professionals in the shelter houses, NGOs, and protection places where they were residing. Thus, I contacted the organizations through email, explaining my research and distributing my contact to them for those interested to reach out to me. The contacts made were able to speak to the women and girls about my project and those who gave consent contacted me through their representatives and we fixed the date and time for the interviews. At first, many contacts were made from the informal interactions I had earlier with the organisers of various shelter houses, NGOs heads and those working in the protection system in Italy, I did not have direct contact with the girls because of the sensitive nature of my work, as such I had to result to any number of girls and women that agreed to be interviewed after they have been presented with my work from the people in their shelter houses, Also some that had agreed earlier to be interviewed after speaking to their representatives, when it was time for the interview they refused as such, I had to make more contacts again to get more participants for the research hence this created delay in various forms and months before the completion of the interview process.

The first set of interviews were done one on one, on-site and the later ones were done online. The online interview was rarely agreed on because of the sensitive nature of the work, however, due to the ever-mutating covid-19 pandemic, the latter interviews have been conducted online. Consent was also gotten from the girls and women before any interview was held and they were assured of their anonymity during the research process.

The professionals such as social workers, anti-trafficking unit members, psychologists as well as heads of departments, and NGOs, were gotten mainly through informal contacts made earlier as well as those made after interviewing some of them. There was also some organizations and workers

that did not agree to participate after all arrangements were made with the various discussions and meetings held to explain my work and introduce myself to the team as such, I had to contact more professionals through the use of informal references which later yielded gain as they agreed. The professionals were a bit flexible in terms of allowing interviews online. Thus, when after we have agreed on a fixed date for an interview to take place and the covid-19 restriction measures were still enforced, they generally agree to do it online through Zoom, Teams, and/or Skype. This was the method used for many of the interviews done for professionals as they were engaged with working under the covid-19 situation.

This was done because since the beginning of steam engine, the use of ICT has become relevant in the world. As such there has been growing and expanding aspects of ICT in everyday live as well as the research process. Over time especially in the last 20 years, ICT and social media such as Skype, Facebook, Google meet, Microsoft teams, WhatsApp, Mails, telephone calls, among others have been increasingly employed in social research as an advantage to compliment other sources of data gatherings, processing, analysing and interpretation (Michael, 2010; Salmons, 2012; Carignani and Burchi, 2022). In my own research I made use of ICT such as Zoom, Skype mainly for the interviews and Google meet, mails and telephone calls for pre-interview stage and informal discussions.

The use of Skype and Zoom for the interviews was done in order to record the interviews and go back to them for the translation so as not to miss any information that have been said if it was not recorded. It was also used because they offered free options for making and recording the calls unlike the other ones where there was a fee attached to using them for recording. As suggested by scholars, the researcher should always look for the most easy, stress free options as well as the areas conversant especially for the respondents when conducting online interviews (Salmons, 2010; Carignani and Burchi, 2022; Janghorban, et al., 2014).

Thus the interviews were done both as video calling and/or calling without videos depending on the choice of the respondents. However, most of the interviews done online were mainly video calls. This was very vital as it gave both the interviewees and the interviewer the advantages of exchanging both verbal and non-verbal discussions and expressions during the interview process. (Salmons, 2012; James and Busher, 2012).

In the end, I employed both the physical on site interviewing and the online interviewing methods in gathering data for my research because of the disruptions caused by the Covid-19 pandemic as the research was birthed in the thick of the virus which caused various lockdowns during

the period, as such I had to shift to the online and also made various adjustments for the timing of the interviews as many of the professionals were also working during the pandemic.

Likewise for the migrant women, I had to also resolve to online as I was not allowed into the premises of the various places they were residing due to the pandemic at that time.

In all, the use of ICT in my research helped me to continue with the study howbeit I had to change a lot of dates for the interviews which resulted in long periods of break doing the fieldwork despite this, I forged ahead until I could get as many respondents for the work. Thus, the snowballing and purposive technique helped in garnering more respondents, especially on the professional side who were a bit flexible in participating virtually in the research work.

2.6. Participant profile

The study consists of 17 interviews conducted with Nigerian female migrants in the regions identified above with the majority of the women and girls originating from Edo State, there was also representation from Delta and Imo states as well, but these account for a small number. Since the study is focused on exploring the experiences of women and girls mainly, men and boys were not interviewed for the research. Also, most of the girls, were within the age bracket of 20-35 years of age making them above the minimum age I had earlier marked before the research, hence I had to change my research age bracket during the fieldwork. Thus, I left the age open to allow for any age disparity that would have arisen from the research.

Table 2.6.i: Participant Distribution (Nigerian women and girls)

NAME OF REGION	PSEUDONYMS OF PARTICIPANTS	AGE	GENDER	STATE OF ORIGIN	PLACE OF RESIDENCE BEFORE LEAVING
Emilia-Romagna	Osas	20	Female	Edo	Rural area
	Abiéyuwa	25	Female	Edo	Rural area
	Ginika	25	Female	Delta	Rural area
	Ngozi	27	Female	Imo	Urban area
	Nosa	28	Female	Edo	Rural area
	Efosa	27	Female	Edo	Urban area

	Ede	28	Female	Edo	Rural area
Lazio	Ezinne	28	Female	Anambra	Urban area
Marche	Adesuwa	22	Female	Edo	Urban area
	Etinosa	20	Female	Edo	Rural area
	Funmi	23	Female	Lagos	Urban area
Piemonte	Obehi	31	Female	Edo	Urban area
	Osato	22	Female	Edo	Urban area
	Ivie	24	Female	Edo	Urban area
	Onome	20	Female	Delta	Urban area
	Itohan	25	Female	Edo	Rural area
	Isoken	25	Female	Edo	Rural area

The table above shows the various characteristics of the Nigerian women and girls interviewed for the research work. A breakdown of the places of origin is as follows: Edo state (12), Delta state (2), Anambra state (1), Imo state (1), and Lagos state (1). Rural area- signifies village while Urban area- signifies city. The names of the participants were changed and assigned pseudonyms in accordance to guaranteeing their privacy as agreed before the interviews took place.

On the side of the professionals, 19 interviews were conducted with various categories of workers. Some have been working for over 18 years in their organizations and have changed positions and job labels during those periods, thus those at the senior level in their organizations have had experience with working with females from different perspectives, this proved to be useful for the research as it created more richer information on how things were and how they have evolved for the same situation or issue being treated. The interviews for professionals did not consist of females alone this time. Thus, both men and women were interviewed with various degrees of responses concerning the procedure and protection system in Italy. In relation to gender balancing for the professionals, the number of men to women was far apart, from the 19 interviews conducted, the men consisted of 4 while the women consisted of 15 thus indicating that there is a huge disparity among both genders. Although the reasons for this gap are uncertain it may be linked it the fact that care work, social work, and domestic work, among others are highly regarded as places where females take the lead in such job settings (Hermanin, 2017; Marchetti and Salih, 2017; Parreñas, 2010). Moreso, the interview conducted with the professional from Spain was removed as it did not fall within the research area.

Initially Spain was going to be included for the fieldwork and a comparative studies was planned however this was not possible again as I couldn't travel to Spain for the research period due to the Covid-19 pandemic and getting contacts was a bit difficult as well. Thus, 18 interviews carried out in Italy were used in the final analysis.

Table 2.6.ii: Participant Distribution (Professionals in Italy)

NAME OF REGION	PSEUDONYMS OF PARTICIPANTS	WORKING EXPEREINCE	GENDER	POSITION	FUNCTIONS OF PARTICIPANTS
Emilia-Romagna	Josephine	25 years	Female	Founder of an anti-trafficking NGO and Shelter house	She hosts the girls and women in her shelter house and has also been called upon to do interviews with them.
	Giulia	12 years	Female	Anti-trafficking Operator	She speaks to the girls to find the right programme for them. She also reconstructs their stories during the interviews
	Joy	7 years	Female	Cultural Mediator	She interprets all the information to the girls and women in English and Nigerian pidgin English. She also books their health check-ups too
	Elena	10 years	Female	Social Operator	She meets the girls and ascertain their situation during the interviews and also apply for asylum paper for them too
	Bella	7 years	Female	Social Operator	She works as a first line person who interview the girls and send them to the

					Commission for papers
	Gemma	15 years	Female	Social Operator	A senior social operator that is the head in the centre where they help the girls with applying for their papers
	Angela	7 years	Female	Social Operator	She is a first line operator who interviews the women and girls and send them to the commission to apply for their papers
	Rosa	8 years	Female	Social Worker	She works in the shelter house where the women and girls stay helping them in their daily needs and assistance
Lazio	Grace	5 years	Female	Cultural Mediator	She does the interviews with the women in English and Nigerian Pidgin English and also provide help for them in the shelter house
Lombardy	Paola	18 years	Female	Anti-trafficking Operator	She is the one that identifies the girls as victims of trafficking after their stories have been reconstructed
	Anthony	40 years	Male	Founder of an anti-trafficking NGO	He accommodates the girls in his shelter house and does interviews with them and also prepare them to apply for their papers
	Luca	20 years	Male	Social Worker	He interviews the women and girls to help them apply

Marche					for their papers. He was formerly involved in going to the street to bring the girls to the organization
	Ella	6 years	Female	Cultural Mediator	She interprets all the information to the girls and women in English and Nigerian pidgin English and reports back to the social workers in the organization
	Luisa	8 years	Female	Psychologist and Social worker	She meets with the girls and provide therapy sessions for the girls after the interviews
	Aurora	10 years	Female	Social Worker	She is the first person that talks with the girls in the organization and help reconstruct their stories
	Enzo	13 years	Male	Social Worker	He usually goes to the street to get girls to come to their organization where they provide psycho-social assistance to them
	Felix	25 years	Male	Anti-trafficking operator and Cultural Mediator	He interviews them in Italian, English and Nigerian Pidgin English and also help them in applying for their papers
	Olivia	50 years	Female	Founder of an anti-trafficking NGO	She hosts the women and girls in her shelter house and also organize integration

					activities, she also does interviews with the girls sometimes
Spain	Ana	10 years	Female	Anti-trafficking worker	She is a social worker who meets and interviews the women and girls

The table above shows the various characteristics of the Professionals interviewed for the research work. A breakdown of the type of work and functions is as follows: Social Workers (9), Founders of anti-trafficking NGOs and Shelter house (3), Anti-trafficking Operators (4), and Cultural Mediators (3). The names of the participants were changed and assigned pseudonyms in accordance to guaranteeing their privacy as agreed before the interviews took place.

Of note here is that in phenomenology, there is not fixed number for sample size to be used instead scholars have advocated for some range for carrying out such studies, as such even though the sample may seem small, using phenomenology study between 3 to 15 people (Creswell, 2013) are enough to carry out proper research analysis as it dig deep into the experiences of the participants of the study and at the same time giving them voice in the research process. According to Clarke (2010), 3 samples from participants is usually enough to carry out an Undergraduate and a Masters' study while for Doctorate degree between 4 to 10 persons is ideal for carrying out the study. Seemingly, between 1 to 12 participants are the average number of people to be used in a research (Coyle, 2014). Thus my research sample size for both the migrant women and girls (17) and the professionals (19) surpassed what was reiterated by the scholars of the phenomenological paradigm, thereby making my sample size to be relevant and useful for the research study and analysis carried out in the next two chapters of four and five below.

2.7. Ethical considerations

The research complied with the core principles guiding social research in carrying out the study. I was successful in obtaining participants' informed permission for the research. Before participating in any of the interviews, I explained the purpose and scope of the study to the participants. They were also informed about the duration of the interview which lasted between 40 minutes to 60 minutes and in some cases 90 minutes (This is especially for professional interviews). They were informed about and consented to my management plan such as recording the interviews, using pseudonyms as well as producing transcripts of the interviews which will be used for the research purpose identified. They were also informed about their choice to withdraw from the research if they deem fit (during the process of the fieldwork, no withdrawal was requested).

2.7.i Informed consent

Informed consent from study participants is required legally and ethically whenever human subjects are used. Consent is the process by which a research participant expresses their willingness to take part in an experiment and recognizes the importance of that experiment to the advancement of scientific knowledge and the betterment of society (Smith and Flowers, et. al., 2009). Before conducting any kind of experiment involving human subjects, written informed consent must be obtained from each individual involved. Participants must be made aware of their rights in the study, the study's rationale and methods, the potential benefits and risks of participation, the study's anticipated length of time, and the extent to which their demographic information and personal identification will be kept private. Informed consent was examined in this study. A researcher, a sponsor, and an IRB all have responsibilities to safeguard the rights and well-being of human study participants. Participants benefited from gaining an understanding of what constitutes informed consent and the proper protocol for obtaining it.

The person giving consent must be of legal age, have the ability to make their own decisions without coercion, and have sufficient information to make an informed decision. In order to make an informed decision about whether or not to participate in experiments, the subject must be aware of the nature, purpose, and duration of the experiments, as well as the means through which they will be conducted, any hazards, inconveniences, and potential effects on the person or health (Smith, et. al., 2009; Noon, 2018). Subjects of research studies are asked to sign a consent form attesting that they have been informed of the following: the nature of the study, the identity of the researchers conducting it, and the reasons for conducting the study. Not only does this provide contact information for a researcher, but it also includes contact information for the institutional review board (IRB) at the university, whom participants can speak to and get information from if they have any issues with the study procedure.

There are insider/outsider dynamics at play in any qualitative research project, and researchers must be aware of them. Being self-aware means accepting ambiguity and the necessity of expanding one's perspective to include that of those with whom one disagrees. In any research endeavour, there is always the possibility that the researcher will use the unequal power dynamic between themselves and the people they are studying to impose their worldview on the participants. The issue of power and the nature of power relations in international studies becomes more apparent in light of these dangers. The idea that research participants should be given more authority to make their own decisions prompts thought and reflection on the role that action plays in qualitative research, which is particularly useful when conducting cross-cultural studies where power imbalances make some

methods more effective than others. "...accepting responsibility for unequal power relations that may exist between the researcher and the participants in the research; shows appreciation for, and is able to work with, differences; picks approaches that give agency to the 'researched' individuals and provide space for nuance and complexity to emerge; issues and reshapes unfair power dynamics".

As earlier written I followed the due procedure for obtaining informed consents from the participants before any interviews was done.

2.7.ii. Privacy and confidentiality

Privacy and confidentiality has to do with the way participants data and information are stored and used during the research process. As such researchers should take care that their data collection, analysis, and reporting does not jeopardize the anonymity of the respondents if acquiring the information anonymously is not possible. Confidentiality policies are carefully followed to ensure the safety of research participants. The confidentiality convention is followed so that everyone's privacy is safeguarded, and the integrity of the research process is maintained.

Procedural ethics refers to the process of requesting permission to conduct research and addressing concerns about confidentiality not only during the planning stage of research i.e. writing proposals and obtaining approval from ethics review boards, but also during the subsequent three stages of the research process i.e. collecting data, cleaning data, and disseminating research results. Thus, during the fieldwork process, participants were verbally informed throughout the data collection process of the safeguards in place to protect their privacy. Before any interviews were conducted, participants were given a verbal explanation of how their information would be protected and given the opportunity to consent to this. Statements on consent forms, such as "all identifying characteristics, such as occupation, city, among others, will be changed", are some common examples of such guarantees used. Confidentiality agreements are frequently presented at the very start of the data collection process in the research world. In order to gain respondents' trust and obtain their informed consent, an upfront discussion about privacy precautions is necessary.

Second, security is always taken into account while cleaning data. Scientists "scrub" data sets by deleting personal details. Asserting that a data collection is "clean" implies that it does not include any information that may be used to track down the individuals who contributed to it. In order to protect the respondents' anonymity, I utilized just their states of origin and altered their names before conducting the interview. When working with sets of qualitative data, such as interview transcripts, researchers often utilize the find and replace capability of word processing systems to change specific names and places.

Furthermore, the research participants were informed about and consented to my management plan such as recording the interviews, using pseudonyms as well as producing transcripts of the interviews which will be used for the research purpose identified. Thus the transcripts were coded with the assigned pseudonyms and information needed to re-identify them were stored in an encrypted USB drive which was kept safely. They were also informed about their choice to withdraw from the research if they deem fit (during the process of the fieldwork, no withdrawal was requested).

2.8. Data Collection

The data collection procedure in phenomenological research is usually geared towards minimum structure and obtaining the maximum result from the participant's narratives of their lived experiences. This invariable provides the participants the freedom to express themselves and narrates their stories and experiences without the strict guidance of a structured approach. Although, this approach is not without constraints in relation to the amount of time it consumes as well as allowing the respondents to flow without interruption for clarifications of some points.

I made use of the semi-structured interview for my research as it is one of the best approaches to use in the phenomenological study (Padilla-Díaz, 2015: p.104). Thus, questions were asked to the respondents who were allowed to answer as they deem fit from the flow of the question. In some interviews, I didn't ask further questions until after the respondent had finished talking, while in some others I had to clarify their statements in order to fully understand and explore some areas that were not fully explained. This also helped in getting clear responses and answers for the research project.

Also, aside from the use of semi-structured interviews in the data gathering process, other ways to elicit responses and experience from respondents as suggested by Lester (1999), are the "use of empathy, and building "rapport" mostly when it involves cases that the participants have been personally affected" (p.2). This was particularly vital for my work as my research involved sensitive areas of the migrant's lives, hence before any interview was conducted, I try to establish some form of informal rapport with the respondents to make them comfortable and take the edge off. Also, during the interviews, I was empathetic in most cases as the stories were mostly personal, and in some cases, we took breaks to allow the respondents to gather their thoughts together and also lighten the mood of the atmosphere, in cases where the respondents will say something funny during the interview. Thus, these little informal notion of communication helped to create a more comfortable environment for them as they shared their stories and experiences during the interviews.

On the other hand, in relation to the professionals, the interviews were a bit more interactive between the researcher and the respondents. As such, even though there were questions to be

answered after the reading of the vignettes, during the process of reading and answering, the researcher was actively involved as this helped in the easy flow of responses.

2.9. Instrument and procedure

As noted earlier, the study employed semi-structured interviews with Nigerian women and girls and the vignette for professionals.

The interviews were conducted across the five regions at agreed locations between the researcher and the participants. For the interviews with Nigerian migrant women, most of them were done within their places of residence as they were still within the protection system such as shelter houses. As such after due interactions with the people in charge of these places, they allowed for the interviews to take place within a quiet area in their facility where no other person was around. The later part of some interviews conducted was done online as the covid-19 situation continued to worsen. Thus, the women were given Tabs from their heads to access the online platform used such as Skype as some of them did not use Skype in their daily routine.

Using the semi-structured interview guide, I questioned the participant's relating to their lives before, during, and after the migration process. I started with a general remark about how they were that day and their appearance and for a few minutes, we talk about these. This helped to create a relaxed atmosphere before sliding into the interview properly. Many of them talked about how they were happy where they were, some talked about their hair, the environment they were in, and how things are good in Italy.

After which I began with the interview questions starting with their lives in Nigeria and how they decided to leave Nigeria, etc. Of note here is that all the interviews were conducted in English and Nigerian Pidgin English (It's a form of English that originated during the colonial era and transatlantic slave period, it was widely used as a form of communication between traders of foreign origin and those in the coastal regions of today mainly Delta State and Edo State, as well as Calabar State, Rivers State among others in Nigeria, but has now spread to other parts of the country (Carons and Onyioha, 2012; Olatunji, 2001). It is widely spoken informally among citizens resulting to about 75 million speakers in Nigeria (BBC NEWS, 2016; Kane, 2015) and has been included in the oxford dictionary with some of the vocabulary having similar structure to English. For example How you dey? = How are you?). It is also widely used sometimes in academic research when it involves participants of Nigerian origin (see Ohonba and Agbontaen-Eghafona, 2019; Ikeora, 2016; Okeshola and Adenugba, 2018; Esposito, et al., 2016).

For the interviews with the Professionals, the situation was a bit different. Before commencing the interviews, I had several interactions and discussions with them and in some cases heads of the anti-trafficking unit for them to understand my project and get full details about it before considering taking part in the research. Also, this was done to allow for their workers to take part in the interviews since some of them are working in different areas in the units. After these interactions which took place mainly through the exchange of emails, calls, and text messages, we proceeded to fix the time, dates, and places for interviews. The interviews were conducted in two formats, on-site and online with many of them occurring online due to the covid-19 pandemic.

Most of the interviews conducted involved the use of interpreters during the process as some of the participants did not speak English. When interpreters are involved, the interviews take more time to finish because of the translations. Thus, interviews conducted were between 50 minutes to 60 minutes without interpreters, and with interpreters, it was between 1 hour 30 minutes to 2 hours and 3 hours in one case (This was a joint interview with 3 colleagues).

In all, the fieldwork took place from July 2020 to June 2022 in the various regions identified previously. Although the period showed almost 2 years, but the interviews were not conducted fully within the 2 years' time frame. There were series of disruptions during the fieldwork because of the Corona virus and the various restriction imposed in Italy and all over the world, as well as the accessibility of respondents as it was a sensitive work not everyone was willing to participate at the time contact was made hence new strategies and discussion had to be employed to get more respondents to participate in the work. Also because some of the professionals were still working during the pandemic, it was a bit difficult to schedule some time frame for the interviews with them which also contributed to the breaks and delay in finalizing the fieldwork.

2.10. Risks and precautions

There was a lot of time and energy spent on trying to build normal and trustworthy relationships with individual immigrants. To ease the burden on the respondents, who are sometimes placed in precarious circumstances as a result of the researcher's inquiries, I believe the researcher must make concessions about the breadth and depth of data and information she or he hopes to gather in the field. These concessions are essential if qualitative research is to retain a robust ethical component. I learned to speak with the participants in a casual, conversational tone, and always explaining the study's true goals. I also avoided asking probing questions or bringing up touchy subjects if I sensed that my interviewee was feeling rushed or uncomfortable.

Conducting qualitative research on migration often requires taking on some weighty ethical and research-policy views. These primarily concern participants' rights to provide and receive information, to maintain anonymity and secrecy, and to be protected from harm. Those perspectives, as were previously shown and in the context of this study, were crucial in facilitating the full completion of qualitative research. As such I also informed the participants before any interviews was done that they could refuse to answer any questions asked including the ones that could cause them any discomfort and distress. During the interviews none of the participants showed any serious sign of distress as a result of answering the questions however when there were some that got them very emotional in relation to them crying, sighing and/or breathing heavily, I usually initiated a short break in-between to allow them to gather their selves and thoughts together before we proceed.

While on the part of the professionals, the use of interpreters was very helpful in the building of trustworthy relations with the participants, and the gathering of useful and rich data from the field, as they made communication smoother for both me and the respondents.

2.11. Data analysis

In order to answer the research questions of the study, I inductively analysed my data using the phenomenology approach which gave room to the participants for detailed telling of their stories and how they became trafficked from Nigeria to Italy, with a focus on detailing the various forms of Gender-Based Violence they faced before, during, and after the migration journey.

As have been noted above, this approach allows the researcher to begin the analysis from reading of the raw data to the development of the understanding of a particular phenomenon as they occur (Thomas, 2006). Thus this approach was employed as I was able to get a deep perspective from the participants responses. Thus I began with the raw data from which various themes emerged and developed with some having similarities and differences in their experiences and situations, thus identifying these variations and patterns from the data was key in explaining and creating a full picture of the various forms of violence they experience during trafficking.

As such, I coded the data manually, manual coding allowed me to fully emersed myself in the stories of the participants, whereas software coding would have kept me at a distance. Before beginning the coding process, I made a copy of the original file containing the de-identified transcripts for each participant on an encrypted USB flash drive. Once I had done that, I re-read each participant's transcripts until I fully grasped their stories and the experiences they were trying to get across. Next, I extracted quotes from each transcript that addressed the questions from the research as they related to trafficking in and from Nigeria in some way. I gave each group of text chunks descriptive names based on a phrase or word that appears various times in the texts or a phrase or word that does not

appear multiple times but describes the content of the text as a whole. Then, I went through all the transcripts and categorized the responses into thematic clusters, ignoring the participants' ethnic backgrounds and state of origin. These data types are the overarching themes that were emerged in the analysis.

At some time, there were some overlapping texts which were evident in some of the patterns that emerged thus I placed all of them under those themes which they seemed relevant. After a thorough reading and re-reading of the stories and grasping their viewpoints, I grouped those that had similar situations together. And placed the others against each other to understand their varied perspectives of the same phenomenon.

In relation to the professionals, the same process was used as well, their responses were manually coded and I read and re-read all the transcripts with the aim of building the themes from them as they responded on the various types of protection and care that are given to women and girls who have the same characteristics with those that were described in the vignettes used. As such both the similarities and differences in the responses as well as the pattern used by the professionals were all embedded in the analysis phase which was used in the overall research findings and interpretation.

Furthermore, just as it is keen on phenomenological studies, the general development of a model of understanding from the participants perspectives is key in unearthing the causes and pattern of a given phenomenon (Smith, et al., 2009; Vagle, 2016), thus employing this approach enabled me to situate the patterns, trends, similarities and differences that make up the situations of migrant women and girls on their voyage to Italy as well as the various ways they are safeguarded in Italy from the professional side. This also showed how some factors spur migration and invariably trafficking of the girls and women to occur in the first place.

2.12. Trustworthiness of Findings

The methodology, procedures, and analysis of this study were all based on the qualitative research methodology. The study was conducted in this manner because of its inherent sensitivity, but also because it is the most effective method for collecting data from respondents and allowing for a thorough examination of the topic.

To evaluate the reliability of qualitative studies, Ang, et al., (2016), suggest four criteria: credibility, dependability, conformability, and transferability. The researcher made sure that the people who took part in the studies were properly identified and characterized so that the findings could be trusted. Data dependability is how well information holds up over time and in varying environments. The term "conformability" is used to describe the likelihood of agreement between two or more unrelated parties on the data's veracity, applicability, or significance. The capacity to

extrapolate is what is meant by "transferability." It is predicated on the assumption that one's results may be extrapolated to a broader population or another context. For the last criterion, "authenticity," it's important to see that researchers depict a variety of realities in a balanced and reliable way.

Thus during my study I made use of these techniques in ensuring that the results of the findings are validated. I made use of the three of these techniques such as the thick description, clarifying researcher position and dependability. As such, the validation process of dependability as noted by Creswell (2013), involves providing detailed description of the themes or codes that allows readers to determine the transferability of the findings to a similar structured settings. Thus rich interconnected details produce thick descriptions (Stake, 2010). In relation to my work, the presentation of themes used was in line with the validation process addressed above as my findings were crafted from the raw data and stories shared by my participants on their experiences from their journeys at the different times and places they underwent. Moreso, in some cases I used one participant's experience and situation to portray some other participants experience which were similar and those that had varying experienced was also illustrated in order to grasps the differences in situations and contexts.

Also for the professionals, this was done as well, as such I used the responses and experiences that were also similar to the others as well as the differences in opinions and responses. This provided an enhanced validity for my study as I made used of these vary reinforcing responses and the disparities that emanated from the responses and situations discussed.

In the end, all that was done during this process consisted of the stories and responses gotten from the participants whether it was used for corroborating, exchanging or challenging were all embedded in the validation strategies employed.

2.13. Positionality and reflectivity

Before commencing the study, I was not a total stranger to the phenomenon of trafficking of women and girls from Nigeria especially from Edo state, being a Nigerian woman who is well educated and was fortunate to school in the region where a majority of the women and girls victims of trafficking hails from (Benin-city, Edo state) gave me some form of information on the notion of trafficking even though I have never studied the phenomenon before. I was intrigued by the television and media reports concerning these migrants or victims as they are regularly called, this sparked my quest to study this work as many women and girls shown on the media came back heavily pregnant and some with children as well. Thus, I had some preconceived notion about what they might have gone through however I did not have any first-hand experience in research concerning it. Thus this

helped me to bracket my preconceived notions gotten from the media headlines to make my finding credible, I based my analysis only from the data gotten from the stories and responses from the participants hence using them to highlight the commonalities and differences within and between their stories and situations. This was also paramount as qualitative researchers can only analyse objectively their participants stories if they suspend their preconceived notions about the research study (Padilla-Diaz, 2015).

As a result of my use of the phenomenological method, which proved to be an effective choice when I set out to investigate the connections between gender-based violence and irregular migration from the points of view of the respondents, I was able to cast aside my own preconceived notions regarding the nature of the problem. Thus, the research methodology employed allowed me to study my participant as they shared and developed their stories independently and without influence from my preconceived assumptions and also during the process of analysis I emerged myself in reflectivity in order to remove outside influences in the interpretation. Moreso, I cross-examined each participant responses with the other participants by so doing I made sure I was not consciously and/or unconsciously applying my own opinion in interpreting the various responses given.

And more specifically on the professional side, since I had no prior knowledge regarding this topic before beginning the fieldwork, the professionals who provided insight into the functioning of the protection systems for victims of human trafficking were of great assistance in gaining an understanding of how the process is carried out in Europe, and more specifically in Italy. As a result, this helped to guarantee that the data were completely submerged from the replies that were acquired from the participants, and the researcher was opened up to newer information as well as conflicting viewpoints that were not previously known.

2.14. Other researchers roles

My research involved employing various strategies in garnering the information needed for the study. In order to get the stories and responses needed in linking gender-based violence with irregular migration I had to depend on the research participants to share their stories for the present study. Thus I had to build trust with the participants which I had no prior relations with. First I had to establish some form of relations with the representatives of the Nigerian migrant women and girls in Italy this I did by being open about my research work and also telling them of the vital role the women and girls hold in the research as their perspectives are being used in the analysis as such this made it easy for them to refer me to the women and girls in their shelters and organizations. Afterwards, I was able to meet the girls one on one and I had to start afresh building trust and confidence with them. As such, I also explained my work to them, with the purpose and aims of the study, I made them

aware their responses are what will be used in the study, and this further created more openness and confidence in them as it created a platform for them to be able to express themselves during the interviews. Thus the use of semi-structured interviews helped in creating a balance in terms of power relations during the fieldwork process. Although on the one hand, being a Nigerian woman just like them might have also played a role in making them feel free and relax to share their stories with me as many of them were surprised to learn that I was doing the research for my Doctoral degree as at the time we met, because from their point of view they were used to seeing Nigerians come in during the time of interviews for other non-Nigerian researchers and they usually act in most cases as cultural mediators thus, I perceive that this factor played a role in establishing a more free relationship between the women and girls at the various shelters. Although in a very few case, they also thought I was coming to join them to get protection at the shelter they lived in until I was introduced properly to them, and this was also a surprise to them. Although being a Nigerian woman may have also affected the way some of the response were given as some of them may become shy to think that they would not be able to tell me some aspects of their stories and some may feel I may understand them too much as such they refused to participate in the interviews. Howbeit the reason for their participation or no participations, the ones I eventually interviewed were most often open to sharing their experience of course the extent to which my nationality and personality influenced it will and/or remains unknown.

Also during the interviews, I applied both verbal and non-verbal communications which furthermore acted as a spur for them to flow easily during the interviews as such I nodded, smiled and affirmed to some of the things they asked me during the exchange and when it was also positive feedback. However in order not to encourage derogatory or negative behaviours I maintained neutrality in other instances where it would seem leading to an awkward situation. Thus, this helped to stir the conversation back to the research study.

At most times before any question was asked, I usually ask them about their day, how they find their living in Italy which usually spark joyful responses and a level of calmness and trust before we slide to the interviews this helped for easy transition to the research study. I was also careful in asking the questions as well as follow-up questions to some responses concerning some events they had passed through in order not to traumatise or retraumatise the participants.

On the part of the professionals, there was a bit of more flexibility probably because it dealt with garnering responses from the vignette. I had to still make use of the same technique described above, since I had no prior knowledge and contact about Italy and the way the system works, I had to establish contacts and trusts from the professionals, thus I had to build trust by having both formal and informal interactions with them, I explained my research to them and also told them about the

purpose and aims, and also made them aware of their role as their responses are vital and will enable the researcher to have a robust perspective on the way the system works in Italy. During the interviews the discussions flowed easily and involved a lot of detailed responses as many of them had worked on similar cases pertaining to the questions asked by the researcher. Thus this helped in making the interviews to be more relaxed without tension. Also the use of semi-structured interview gave the professionals the freedom to express themselves during the answering process and discussion phase.

Another vital aspect was that of the interpreters and cultural mediators which were very helpful in making the research a smooth one during the interviews. Some of them were of Nigerian origin and it made it easier for the researcher to understand and even ask some questions in another way in case the interpretation may erode some aspects that needed to be there. Thus, interpreters also added to making the research interesting and lively.

2.15. Limitations of the study

Although attempts were made to seek participants from a broad range of strategies in order to have rich data for analyses and findings, this was not possible due to various reasons. Firstly, the process of getting the participants were rigorous and lengthy, and in all the cases the Nigerian women and girls participants were gotten through discussions from the heads of the organizations and shelter houses where they were staying. This process was not an easy one as I had to wait for the feedback from the girls which took a lot of time and in some cases some of the girls rejected to be interviewed after all arrangements were made. As such this hindered the number of participants that would have been included in the work as well as affecting the time frame for the fieldwork process as it made it longer with various breaks in-between. I believed this was also inherent because I didn't have direct contacts with the girls, probably if I had, it may have been different.

The corona virus also made it difficult to access participants for the interviews as the research was birthed during the period when there were various restrictions and lockdowns imposed in Italy. This further created another disruption in the fieldwork process as I couldn't do any interviews during these periods ranging from 2020 to 2022, as such there were a lot of breaks and resumptions done in the process of the fieldwork. And there was no way of meeting the participants one on one during the study. Hence I had to resort to using online tools in doing some of the interviews which were a bit limiting as the advantage of onsite face to face interviews were not explored as such I couldn't observe fully the environment as well as the full body language and other non-verbal aspects of communication during such interviews. Moreso, there were some disruptions during the online interviews as sometimes there were network issues which resulted in uneven communication and

responses as well as ending the interviews abruptly. This caused some of the interviews to be rescheduled again hence taking more time to complete.

Conclusions

This chapter have enlisted the various steps taken by the researcher in order to understand and explore GBV and migration using the phenomenological approach with semi-structured interviews conducted with 17 Nigerian women and girls and 18 professionals working in the protection system in Italy. I analysed the data that emerged from all the participants in line with phenomenology, reading and re-reading the data, building the patterns and themes and discussion. All through the process I engaged in activities that fostered trust between me and all the participants of the study and at the same time I employed bracketing activities to neutralize any prior bias and preconceptions as well as employing various research strategies that are consistent with achieving qualitative research validity for the present study.

Chapter Three: Findings and Discussion

Introduction

In this chapter, the various experiences of the participants which are migrants Nigerian women and girls in Italy are explored. It shows how participants express their traverse across both continents with particular reference made from their journeys starting from Nigeria to Italy. As already noted in chapter one, the literature review revealed some complexities that make up such journeys from Africa to Europe. Using the phenomenology approach, the lived experiences of each participants were explored which furthermore led to the emergence of various themes that were related to answering the research questions for the study (Smith, et al., 2009; Vagle, 2016; van Manen, 2016).

Moreso, through the application of this approach I was able to rigorously analyse their lived experience in order to identify the universal structure of the phenomenon under study. As such, phenomenological themes are not generalizations, but they are geared as strands that forms a larger meaning of the phenomenon (Vagle, 2014; Thomas, 2006; van Manen, 2016). Thus, the findings of the research are not meant to indicate a general rule that must be present in all research studies carried out on Nigerian women and girls but rather can be used as common features that exist in some cases related to such sensitive research when done in the same manner using the same instruments.

Also during the process of the data analysis and interpretation, bracketing was done at all times which helped to erode the researcher preconceived notion of the research study (Vagle, 2014; Noon, 2018). As such, the themes generated and reported by all the participants described the phenomenon in such a way that can be replicated and recognised by anyone experiencing the same phenomenon (Vagle, 2014; Creswell, 2013). Thus, I unveil the specific forms and nature of the participants situations in Nigeria and how these also spur migration to take place in the first instance as well as the various experiences of violence they faced as a result of such movements from Nigeria. Furthermore, through phenomenological method I grew to know the participants on a personal level, and I also came to understand their lived experience and meaning beyond my preconceptions and their views about migration and gender violence and how they intersect during such movements as well as their exposure to trafficking alongside.

In all, I was always engaging in reflectivity and continuous listening of the data as well as re-reading of the transcripts and summary alongside member checking the elements of the phenomenon and the themes. The finalised themes used were a result of various interwoven narratives of shared experiences by the migrant women and girls. The themes are shared among the various research questions, and they are discussed and analysed sequentially from research question one to four using the stories of the participants to provide a detailed explanation of the phenomenon.

The following research questions served as the foundation for this dissertation.

1. Why do Nigerian girls and women engage in irregular migration to Europe despite the risks?
2. What kind of discourses frame different kinds of violence with a focus on gender-based violence of Nigerian irregular female migrants?
3. To examine the consequences of the different kinds of violence (gender-based violence) and of the different framing discourses of gender-based violence
4. How can the causes and challenges associated with the illegal migration of Nigerian girls and women be addressed?

Research question 1: Why do Nigerian girls and women engage in irregular migration to Europe despite the risks?

Theme 1: Poverty and Struggle

One of the prominent themes that emerged from the participants stories concerning their life in Nigeria and how it spurred their decision to migrate was that of struggle and poverty. Almost all of them had similar situations in their background whereby the struggle for daily survival was prominent in their lives and that of their families, many of them were from families where poverty was inherent. While a few had various intersecting reasons on why they left Nigeria for example stories from people that had already left Nigeria before. Some of these responses are detailed below:

[...] My life in Nigeria was somehow, it was not so hard, and it was not so easy. Things were a bit difficult for me and it was not easy to cope with especially with the people around me. The condition was really terrible, it was a struggle to eat daily and even earn any better money from daily hustle (Osas- 20 years).

My situation in Nigeria is not good at all, we hardly feed, all these let me just say poverty, this hardship of things, even from my school, I wasn't able to finish school [...] Life in Nigeria was hmmm somehow bad. You know that Nigeria is not an easy country to live [...] In my family there was no good way of living, there was nothing really for us to survive on. I made the decision to leave Nigeria to have a better future, to have a better opportunity (Isoken- 25 years).

Also, Adesuwa a 22 year-old participant, who is the eldest of five children and was born in Lagos state, but she grew up in Benin city had similar situation with both accounts described above. She explained that after finishing school, she began to work and sell potato starch at the market in Benin City, together with her mother. Her father worked in the transport sector and, despite the fact that they were 3 working in the family, the money earned was not enough to maintain the entire family.

Like the foregoing, Itohan recounting her life in Nigeria and how everything was difficult for her especially since her parents separated when she was very little divulged the following:

[...] I was two months when my mother and my father divorced, they left each other and from that time my mother took me to go and live with my grandmother [...] My mom usually come to pay me, and my grandmother visit from time to time, any time she comes I always cry that I want to follow her but she refused me all the time, saying that I can't follow her to where she is because she stays in the city while me and my grandmother stay in the village [...] I stayed with my grandmother; the little work she was doing she used the money to put me in primary school but the days I go to school were usually lower than the days I stay at home. That was how we were managing our lives together, till I was 10 years old when my grandmother fell sick, and there was no longer money to continue my schooling, so I stopped going to school totally and started taking care of my grandmother [...] We remained like this till 2015 when my grandmother fell into stroke [that is she had stroke attack] and from there her condition became worse, she couldn't even talk again, I was the one that started bathing her on the bed, cleaning after her, feeding her and taking care of all her needs. However on Christmas day in 2015 that is 25 December 2015, my grandmother passed away [...] After 3 months of my grandmother's burial, the children returned back to the city where they were living, they left me alone in the village to stay and fend for myself [...] It's because I don't have anybody to keep me, no one to put me for school. It's because she died that's why I come here [...] I have a mother, but she don't take me as her own daughter that is why. Because if I say let me stay in Nigeria I will stay in the village that I stayed and the struggle was not easy so that is why I decided to come here, because I don't have anybody even my grandmother is not alive again to take care of me the way she do before, that is why I left Nigeria (Itohan- 25 years).

Moreso, other reasons such as stories from those that had left before and those who came back to Nigeria was cited as part of what made a few of the participant to leave in addition to the hardship they were facing at that time. A participant explained this situation as follows:

[...] I lost my dad and my mom, so it was now remaining I and my younger brother, and we went to live with my Aunty, that is my mom's sister afterwards. So we stayed with her, her husband and their children [...] So when me and my younger brother went to stay with them, I stopped going to school, I was not able to go to school again even my brother stopped going to school too like me. We started selling bread on the street and the stress was too much. So I started thinking of travelling out of Nigeria just to make the stress reduce a bit [...] So one day near our house, a lady and her child both returned back to Nigeria from abroad, I think they came for visit, you know how they behave around these people in Nigeria, everybody wants to be near them as they are seen as abroad people. So

me too I went to greet the woman and her child. So I was now saying, that so these kind of abroad people still exist here too, and she said yes, that would I like to travel too to abroad? I said yes [...] So I was very happy, and I told her yes I'm very interested and ready to go (Osato- 22 years).

Indeed the battle for daily survival have continue to be a problem in Nigeria whereby many of the citizen are within the lower echelons of the society, Although wealth creation is immanent in the country it is not felt by a majority of the country as a result of uneven distribution of wealth gotten from export of crude oil, agricultural value chain, natural resources, among others. As such Nigeria is regarded as a country with almost half of the citizens among the poorest in the world, this is due to the fact that many of the citizens live below the poverty line of US\$1.26/1.90 a day (Vallings and Torres, 2005; This Day, 2021; World Bank, 2022). According to scholars noted in chapter one such as Adeleye, (2017), Mberu and Pongou, (2010), Lo Iacono, (2014), and Millett-Barrett, (2019), poverty has been linked to be a strong motivating factor for many citizens especially the youths including women and girls to look for greener pasture outside the country, as such this also acts as a leeway which exposes them to trafficking in Nigeria and also from Nigeria to other parts of the world with Europe and the MENA regions cited as some of the regions where they are mainly and/or easily moved around to. Indeed the poverty level recorded by the Nigeria National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) a national platform which documents the poverty rate as well as living conditions, unemployment, access to socio-economic opportunities, among others in Nigeria by the federal government and other partner agencies reported that the poverty rate of Nigerian citizens has continue to be on the rise for many years, a clear example of this is the figures given for the rate of poverty in Nigeria from 2018 to 2022 over 130 million people constituting 63% of Nigerians have drifted into poverty and in 2020 it was estimated that over 49 million people of which 23 million of these people accounting for almost half of the percentage of this figure being in Sub-Sahara Africa including Nigeria were pushed into poverty as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic (Mahler, et. al., 2020; NBS, 2022). These adverse effects have remained even after the heighten form of the pandemic has reduced and has continue to act as a push factor for why people leave Nigeria including women and girls. In other words despite the decline experienced in Nigeria during the covid period which resulted in -1.92% in 2020 of GDP growth, in 2021 Nigeria was able to recover the economic growth to +3.40% (NBS, 2022; Emejo, 2022) as at early 2022 however the growth in the GDP and economy did not avert the increase in poverty and living standard in the country as it was reported that 4 in 10 Nigerians are all multidimensionally poor with the rural areas accounting for over 70% (105.98 million) of the poorest people living in Nigeria and the urban areas accounting for about 42% (16.97 million) of

those who are poor (Vishwanath and Lain, 2022; NBS, 2022), as such, over half of the population in Nigeria are living below the poverty line of US\$1.90 per day.

Also unemployment has been documented as a major cause of migration and human trafficking. There are limited job opportunities for the citizens in Nigeria and where they are available, the process of getting the jobs are rigorous, which also includes getting a degree before attaining a well-paying job and/or formal jobs in Nigeria (Hynes, et. al., 2018). This has already discriminated a lot of people from applying for the jobs as Nigeria is noted to be among the countries whereby dropout rates are very high and/or even access to educate is low. When it comes to women and girls, Sub-Sahara Africa has been adjudged the region with the highest number of out of school children with women and girls accounting for over 50% of these dropout rates (Doroba, 2018; UIS, 2016). This is also evident in my research findings whereby many of the girls and women interviewed fell within this spectrum as most of them didn't complete secondary schooling nor even went to higher institutions before they left Nigeria. Unemployment is also gendered as many women and girls are often times placed and/or occupy positions that are lower than their male counterparts and mainly work in informal structures in the economy where the pay is minimal when compared to what the males are earning (Nnorom and Adegbesan, 2018; HRW, 2017). And although, unemployment is not only related to women and girls alone, but they are caught at the lower echelon of the stratum as they are involved in informal sectors, agriculture and farming as well as domestic work most of the time. Also, many of the jobs are gotten from the third sectors which is outside of the government (federal government and state parastatals) which further drives women to become prone to trafficking as they seek for better opportunities outside the country. Nigeria further consists of the youth bulge whereby the working and active population consist of the youths which are between the age of 14- 44 years (Adepoju, 2016; Agyeman and Setrana, 2014), as such supply for labour outweighs the demands for labour with little opportunities for job placement in the country. For instance, during the last quarter of 2020 about 33.3% of Nigerians were unemployed and about 56.1% of Nigerian youths were within the range of underemployed and unemployed people in Nigeria (NBS, 2021; Owoeye, 2021) thus recording an increase from the previous years, such as in 2018 unemployment rate was 23.1% with the youth unemployment rate given as 43.3% whereas in 2016 13.9% of unemployment was reported with youth unemployment accounting for about 25% (Ikuteyijo, 2020; NBS, 2019; Nnorom and Adegbesan, 2018) although the corona virus was still part of the reason why the figure saw an increase in 2020, it none the less show how unemployment continue to rise in Nigeria as have been noted that many of the youths who are among the people are of the working age did not work or they work for less than 20 hours a week thus indicating their unemployment status as they didn't fall within 20/40 hours a week regular timing and as such showing that jobs and opportunities are very scarce with

formal jobs and opportunities not enough in the country and this furthermore sparks the desire for people to migrate (MHub, 2015; De Haas, 2008; NBS, 2021; Nnorom, 2021; HRW, 2019) and has continue to push the youths to look for jobs and gainful employments outside the shores of the country as have also been noted by the responses from the participants above which can sometimes be done through undocumented migration and trafficking, with women and girls holding higher figures for those who are vulnerable to trafficking from Nigeria to Italy/Europe.

Cultural practices and norms are also a dominant feature that has been attributed to the reason why women and girls leave Nigeria and subsequently fall prey to human trafficking. This is because in Nigeria the culture is still highly patriarchal in nature and the men and boys are given superior roles whereas the women are relegated to the background, as such they are to be seen and not heard. For instance gender inequality and disparity can be seen in the access to education for boys and girls in the various regions in Nigeria whereby girls have a 56% drop out rate/out of school rate in Western Africa making Nigeria to have one of the highest rate (Doroba, 2018; Eghafona; 2020; Ogonor and Osunde, 2007; Toney-Butler and Mittel, 2022) as such the family prefer to train the boys than the girls because according to them the girls will go and get married, change their surnames and begin another lineage with her husband's people whereas the boys will continue the family lineage when they get married (Udobang, 2018; Alonge, 2018). Thus the culture place women at vulnerable positions which leaves them with little or nothing to fend for themselves for example, a lot of cultures in Nigeria do not allow women to inherent properties, when women experience violence they are told to keep silent and bear within the family, women are also made to marry early in the society where they belong which cuts off their potential for self-growth in such structural asymmetry power relations (Golah-Ebue, 2021; Kalunta-Crumpton and Onyeozili, 2011; Osezua, 2016). These precarious situation places women and girls in tough decision process and eventually leading them to leave Nigeria for better opportunities outside the country where they see themselves as having more choice, voice and where they will be heard. This has also been documented by scholars such as Eghafona, (2020), Semprebon, (2020) Olubukola, (2020) among others which showed in their reason how women in lower economic and social- status have been spurred to migrate in order to experience better access and opportunities for self and societal growth as shown in Ohonba, and Agbontaen-Eghafona (2019), study where women and girls who had migrated and sent money back home witnessed change in their social status as they became the new breadwinners of their families, they were given more voice and freedom to operate within the society which they were marginalised before. Many women and girls sought to get to this level as well, for example some of the participants of the study indicated how they were not given opportunities to go to school, they couldn't make any decision on their own, they had to be hustling and sometimes the decision to leave Nigeria was not

even theirs to begin with but a family member for example, in Itohan's situation described above, it was her mother who came and brought a lady to her, telling her that she will leave the country through the help of the woman. This also begs the question, what is the role of female family members on the decision for their female children or relatives to leave Nigeria. More research concerning this area would be needed to uncap the linkages and relationship between such parties as this would also create a shift in gender studies and analysis as women can also be accomplices to family patriarchal structure in Nigeria and elsewhere. Moreso, gender is used as a tool in ascertaining if a family will be successful or not as the girls are pushed into migrating out of the country, some of the girls become the sacrificial lambs as noted by Semprebon and Abe (2021), whereby their migration journey will determine if a family will be lifted out of poverty or pushed into poverty deeply if the trip is not successful.

Moreso, the practice of sending young children to go and live with other relatives and foster parents in Nigeria has also placed them to being exposed to trafficking. Women and girls who are sent to go and live with their relatives have been noted to fall prey to trafficking as some of them flee terrible situations at the places where they were staying. For example, a respondent Obehi said that when she was living with her uncle and his wife, they maltreated her badly, they didn't give her any care and love, they didn't give her money, buy clothes for her or even support her in any way, this acted as a motivating factor on why she chose to leave the country and also was exposed to trafficking as all she wanted was a good life devoid of such suffering from her relations. Although as documented by scholars, the motives sometimes for these parents sending their children (including women and girls) to go and live with their well to do relatives was because they want their children to live a better life by becoming an extended part of that family where they will be taken care of and invariably be lifted out of their poor situation (Adepelumi, 2015; Abiodun, et. al., 2021; Olufunke, 2016; Okeshola and Adenugba, 2018) thus breaking the poverty line in the family but this is not always the case as many of the women and girls which I interviewed revealed they were not treated well by their relatives who they were staying with before they left. Also in some cases women and girls who go and stay with a relative or family friend do not have a choice as they were orphans thus, since they no longer have any parent again, they had to go and live with a relative who will begin taking care of them as part of their family howbeit the nature of care is not guaranteed to be good at all times. This was the case of Osato above, where she and her brother had to go and live with her aunty after the death of their parents, however on getting there, they were not treated as one family instead they were maltreated, stopped going to school and they began to sell things for the aunty all through the time she was there before she eventually left. This goes to show how such exchange of children can be detrimental in some cases and how it further exposes them to being trafficked as they seek for other

ways to have a better living condition as such they become desperate to leave their terrible situation by any means thereby falling easily to trafficking syndicates who offer them a way out of the country.

Another motivating factor that spur migration of women and girls was linked to others who had travelled abroad, and they came back home for visits during the holidays, festive periods, burials, wedding ceremonies as well as other events. These sets of people acts as great influence in their families and societies where they come from. The affluence of wealth showcased by them makes people including women and girls to believe that there is money outside Nigeria, This was also corroborated by the research carried out by Ohonba and Agbontaen-Eghafona, (2019), Eghafona (2020), Okojie et. al., (2003) and Abiodun, et. al., (2021), where they all reported that human trafficking and the quest for travel outside Nigeria is strongly linked to people who had moved out of the country and they came back. Thus, women and girls who see such affluence of others who had left most especially females like them acts as a spur for them to migrate because to them these women were able to lift their families off poverty through their travel abroad, they were able to build houses for their families, buy cars, send their siblings and relatives to school etc. as such they also want the same thing for themselves and families. This makes them decide to move out the country irrespective of any dangers it will cause. This was also documented in the responses gotten from the participants of this study as some of them cited the influence of those abroad as a reason for them leaving. For instance, Osato said she was inspired to leave by a lady who came back to visit Nigeria with her child, and she was the one that went to meet them from which she was intrigued about the way they had so much money which invariably made her decide to leave as she was already tired of the situation she was living at home with her aunt who was maltreating her and wasn't taking care of her and her sibling.

It has been well documented that the socio-economic imbalance between the Global North and Global South has acted as a spur for out migration from Nigeria to other parts of the world (Semprebon and Abe, 2021; Ellis and Akpala, 2011; Lo Iacono, 2014; Oluniyi, 2012). Right from the 1980s the decline in the Nigerian economy coupled with the opening of various jobs in other countries in the Global North where the call was made for foreigners to take up such positions made a lot of Nigerians migrate out of the country as these jobs were high paying ones such as Doctors, Nurses, and also students in places like Europe, the MENA region especially Saudi Arabia, America among others (Dave-Odigie, 2008; Okojie, 2009; Afaha, 2013; Afolayan, et. al., 2008). This saw the beginning of first movers syndrome for women and girls who left and came back wealthy which made the others to begin envisaging their own time too. This made it easy for young girls and women to be exposed to trafficking as they end up pilling after these first movers to relocate abroad. The

advancement in technology and the continuous creation of new jobs especially in the Global North has continue to attract people to leave Nigeria as they see these forms of movement as a great way out of poverty and other socio-economic and political reasons. Thus, the difference in both categorization of world systems and economies propel people to migrate which also includes women and girls (see, Idemudia and Boehnke, 2020; Galthung, 1971; Adeleye, 2017; Parreñas, 2010; Randall, 2004). For example the responses gotten from this study also highlighted the opportunities in destination countries as the reason why they migrated or moved out of the country. Thus, this has and will continue to spur migration from Nigeria to Europe and elsewhere. Furthermore, strongly linked to this aspect is seeking for better life and livelihood for oneself and that of the family (Kangas, et al., 2014; Annan, 2001; IDMC, 2021; Musikilu, 2008). It has been noted that many women and girls always have that desire to migrate because of better livelihood for themselves and their families, thus they seek for such opportunities elsewhere which is usually Europe, the MENA regions, Asia and the US among others. Likewise in my research findings all of the women and girls reported that they left Nigeria in order for them to have a better life and that of their family too as they were tired of the suffering and challenges they experienced in Nigeria. Thus, these leads them to becoming victims of trafficking as women and girls become desperate and are not concerned on how the process will be but how they can arrive in their destined countries as such poverty, socio-economic disparity and inequality have continued to make women and girls leave Nigeria.

One important thing to note here is that these reasons are not linear in nature in regard to the way it makes women and girls leave Nigeria but rather they intersect in various aspects of the women and girls lives depending on their situation before the migration takes place for example if they are living with their parents or relatives, if they are the eldest children, if they are school dropouts and/or didn't go to school, if they already had an internship before or were working etc. All these various reason acts simultaneously to spur their decision to migrate in the first place and as such, it should be noted that women migrate for various intersecting reasons which are predominantly different from men as already documented in the literature review in chapter one. Nigerian women and girls are not short of these multiplication of reasons and circumstances regarding their decision to leave the country. Thus, these also makes them fall prey to human trafficking as they become desperate to change their socio-economic, cultural, political, etc situations in Nigeria as well as them not having any idea about how to go about such travels or journeys thus they turn to traffickers/recruiters for help in organising their migration journeys in cases where they were the ones that went to meet the madam/oga whereas a majority of the girls interviewed generally were met by the madam/oga, who offered the trip as a way out of their dwindling situation in Nigeria.

Theme 2: Conflict and Insecurity

Conflict and insecurity was another major theme that emerged from the participants during the interview with them. As such a significant number of participants said that they didn't feel safe enough while they were in Nigeria, they lived in constant fear as a result of the various clashes and conflicts that were happening close to them and away from them. As such participants expressed their conditions at home as having similar situation to what has been shared in theme 1 above, they went further to add that the environment and insecurity also added to the reason why they decided to leave Nigeria to find better life for them and their families. A participant shared the following:

I grew up in Edo State, I'm an Igbo girl but we live in Edo state. Life was not sweet then at all, my parents and siblings we tried our best but it's not easy because while I was in Nigeria the suffering, the stress everything, It was terrible [...] A house that eight people are living in one room and it's face me-I-face you [that is a ghetto] there is how it is. My parents and I with my siblings mixed all together. My dad is trying his best with the farm work he is doing likewise my mom too and I was supporting them with Santana business [Selling fufu-it's a local cuisine that is used to eat soup in Nigeria] that was what I was doing to support likewise my elder sister. So we are even trying to feed three times in a day, it's a very big problem to feed three times a day, so those life and the environment were part of the things we were battling with [...] And that period and that environment for me is bad, the shooting, kidnapping and all sorts of things [...] (Ngozi- 27 years).

My life in Nigeria before was not easy, I was living with my Aunt, but it was very difficult because I did not go to school and I was not given any opportunity to go to school, I see my mates going to school and making a name for themselves but me I only stayed with my Aunt and took care of her children and also sell things for her in her shop, so it was not easy [...] I have parents, but they were not staying in the place, I grew up in the village because my parents did not really have much then, so I grew up with my Aunt and her children since I was little [...] The environment is somehow, the place was not too safe [...] I said I can't continue like this seeing my mates going to school and me going to the shop to sell things for her (Ginika- 25 years).

My life in Nigeria was a bit complicated, difficult and you know the way Nigeria is there is a lot of problems. It's hard living without no parents, staying alone, trying to feed yourself and others, your siblings. It was really difficult and hard when I was in Nigeria. So because my life was not really good, was not stable so I have to decide to go and look for a better life somewhere else. Number one: I don't have parents, I carter for myself, I do everything for myself. Nigeria is really difficult to stay in if you don't have people [...] And the environment also was part of why I left. Number one: kidnap, two- arm robbers, cult cases-they kill people and fight up and down. Everybody is afraid. The fear of the environment and social violence around is part of why I left (Abiéyuwa- 25 years)

My life in Nigeria was, it was not too good. I was an hairdresser, so I was staying with my uncle in Edo state. It was too rough for me, because I don't have any, the love of the father. I have a father, but I don't have his love. My parents are no longer together, and I was staying with my uncle, he was maltreating me, and he was not helpful to me. They

[her uncle and his wife] were not giving me food, money to go to work, he was not buying me clothes. So I decided to leave because of the suffering and the insecurity in the environment (Obehi- 31 years).

Insecurity and violent conflicts have been linked to the reason why people migrate including women and children. As already noted by scholars in chapter one (Idrissa, 2019; Dodo, 2012; Caretta, 2015), incessant violent clash and insecurity drives migration as many people become displaced during such process and others flee from such violence. This was also noted to be part of the reasons why women and girls from Nigeria leave the country for abroad, for example, as can be seen from the responses of Abiéyuwa and Ngozi above, where they described that apart from the struggle of daily lives and poverty, environmental and social insecurity such as rape, arm-robbery, cult clashes, kidnapping, Boko Haram, farmers-herders clash among others were part of the reason they decided to leave Nigeria as they didn't feel safe in the environment, society and places where they lived. Thus, the fear for their lives and that of their family was a motivating factor that made them take the decision to leave Nigeria in order for them to get better security in the country of destination. Other scholars writing on insecurity and migrations such as Adepoju, (2008), De Haas (2008), and Schmid, (2016), among others, documented these linkages as a prominent factor and determinant of migration whether regular or irregular migration. For instance, the Biafra war, Boko Haram crisis and the MEND have all contributed to out-migration of Nigerian citizens including women and girls and in recent time Boko Haram have fuelled the displacement of over 3 million people from its inception and radicalization in 2009 till date (Adepoju and van der Wiel, 2010; Idrissa, 2019; Agbibo, 2020; SIHMA, 2014; UNHCR, 2020). Moreso, Cultism and its associated dangers (e.g. communal clashes, killings, initiation and recruitment ceremonies, burials among others) is very visible in Southern Nigeria including Edo, Ekiti, Delta, Lagos, Ogun, Osun States (Egbeyemi, 2021; Akinlotan and Adedagun, 2022) just to mention a few, where it seems the government do not have the strong hold on curtailing these fraternities. For example, *from my personal observation while I was living in Edo State there is usually a day marked out for the celebration of the Neo-Black Movement aka "Black Axe" cultist group which is done on July 7th every year popularly called the 7/7 Day and in those days members of the public are warned to stay clear of the environment and of the activities that ensues in such a day (sometimes killings takes place), thus the state is fully aware of these activities* (For more information see; CIRBC, 2012; Osaghae, Ikelegbe, et. al., 2011; Egbeyemi, 2021). These conflicts have also been attributed to the fragility of the Nigerian State whereby the state do not have the monopoly of the use of force as well as safety for the citizens who do it on their own thus the various conflicts and clashes that have been in existence and are still existing creates an unsafe environment for citizens including women and girls in the country which further spur their desire to

migrate as such these invariably creates the leeway for these women and girls to be exposed to trafficking as they seek for any measure or means to leave the country for better lives and security without taking into account the mode of transportation.

Theme 3- Deceit on the work from madam/oga

As the stories from below shows, one of the reason why many of the women and girls choose to leave Nigeria was because of the nature of the job promised to them. All the participants interviewed disclosed that the persons' who helped them to organise their trips from Nigeria to Italy told them that they were going to do various jobs that would enable them earn better in Italy than what they were getting in Nigeria and this also acted as a motivating factor on why they left.

One of the most stated form of employment that the participants revealed was that of babysitter job. For example, Itohan's recollection of how she was promised a high paying job as a baby sister divulged the following:

[...] I'm not the one who do the arrangement, it's my mother and the person who bring me here, you know family. I don't know her before because I live in the village when my mother called and told me that there's someone that she know that want to take me to abroad [...] She said that the person said I will help her for babysitter, that is why I said okay if it's so, no problem (Itohan- 25 years)

[...] Like for me, I was approached by someone who told me I was coming to do babysitter work here in Italy and I will be able to pay her back when I get to Italy [...] I didn't know anyone before that does this type of movement until I was approached by the lady. Since I was already tired of the hardship at home, I accepted the offer, and she did all the arrangement for me to leave Nigeria (Osas- 20 years)

While Osato's situation was a little different, but the job promised was also the same. According to her, she was the one who went to meet the lady and her child in Nigeria since they newly came back from abroad to visit Nigeria. She went to greet them and from there she was asked if she would like to go abroad and she said yes. After which she said:

[...] So I asked her some questions too, I then asked her that if I came abroad, what kind of work will I be doing there, she told me that it is babysitter work, that I will be helping her to carry her children over there. So I was very happy [...] From that time, the woman started processing my paper (Osato- 22 years)

Still on the aspect of job promised, the second most quoted job by the participants interviewed was that of Tailoring. Some of them revealed that they were met at the places where they were learning how to sew and make clothes when the persons' told them about taking them abroad for them to continue the tailoring there and earn better. For example Ngozi explained her experience:

The person that brought me down to this place, then I was learning tailoring, I was still going to my tailoring school, it was my teacher's friend that brought me down to this place. And when she brought me down to this place she told me that I can continue my skills with my tailoring school here and I will be working and be doing fine, and I can help my family because of the way she saw things around me and I said okay no problem and that's how I came to Italy (Ngozi- 27 years)

The way I left was that the person where I was learning my tailoring work, there was a client that told me that there is opportunity for me to leave Nigeria, he said that he want to bring me here, that his daughter is here, that if I come here I will have a good life, continue with my tailoring work, all these kind of promise, he promised me that I would get a good life here, so that was how we started the process (Isoken- 25 years)

While for Onome- a 20-year participant, the person told her that she will be working at the bar and also sell other things and clothes too. According to the person, clothes are very common to sell in Italy and she will get her money fast. As a result Onome agreed to it.

Likewise for Etinosa who was offered hospitality after she ran away from being forced to work after the death of her father at a tender age. A compatriot offered to accommodate her after seeing what she was going through and after a short time, the compatriot brought the offer to her to travel to Europe where her sister was staying. According to her:

She [Etinosa] would stay in her sister's house in Europe, helping her with the management of the children and with the chores of her shop. Etinosa without the prospect of a peaceful return to her family and without the possibility of living independently in Nigeria, accepts her proposal [...] (Etinosa- 20 years).

While making hair popularly called hairdresser also featured as one of the jobs promised to the participants. An example of this is described below:

I was working as a hairdresser when a man came that he will help me to Europe [...] He told me that he had a store in Italy where I can work as a Hairdresser. It's how and why I agreed to come. After I agreed, the man did all the process for me to come to Italy (Obehi- 31 years).

The nature of work promised to the women and girls have continued to act as a motivating factor why many of them choose to leave or decide to leave Nigeria. While the various jobs told to them varies according to the person who is in charge of arranging their journeys for them, there seems to be a striking similarity in all the types of jobs offered such as babysitter, hairdresser, tailoring, waitress except a very few like selling clothes, working in the bar or bartender, working in the shop etc which was uncapped during the interview with the Nigerian women and girls in Italy.

Going from the literature review it was revealed that many of these girls and women are lured into prospective job markets abroad which are not available in the home country Nigeria and where they are available they pay them lower (Kuschminder and Triandafyllidou, 2020; Okeshola and Adenugba, 2018; Bello and Olutola, 2020). As such the promise that they will earn better for doing the same kind of job is a strong reinforcing factor for the women and girls agreeing for the journey and to go abroad. For example, Osato was promised a well-paying job as a babysitter in Italy, being an orphan and coming from a background where she was forced to stop schooling and start selling bread in the local market in Nigeria, she quickly grabbed the babysitter job opportunity as she was eager to start a change in her life and that of her younger brother. Osato is just one of many girls who were promised babysitter jobs as a means for getting out of poverty and climbing the social ladder through the promise of gainful employment abroad. Likewise for the other jobs which was not so popular like selling in the shops abroad, bartender, selling clothes among others. These were promised to the women and girls as lucrative business abroad and thus they will earn well and start sending money back home to help sustain their family in Nigeria and also live a comfortable life abroad. With this information many of the women and girls easily agreed to leave Nigeria to pursue these great opportunities for the jobs. For example, in Onome's situation above, she was promised a job at the bar as well as selling clothes as the Madam told her they are fast paying jobs in no time she would have enough money, on hearing that Onome happily agreed to travel.

Moreso, some scholars such as Ajagun, (2012), Okojie, (2009) and Adepelumi, (2015) noted that these promises are not only told to the women and girls alone but also to their family members and relatives who further makes the decision to allow their daughters and sisters to travel abroad as they are gifted valued things such as money, precious gifts and ornaments as a way to entice them and show them what they will enjoy once their daughter/sister relative is released to go abroad and start working. As such these drives the family members or relatives who are the guardians of the women and girls to pressure them to follow the madam/oga under the guise of such lucrative job abroad in order for them to enjoy life afterwards. Thus this has strongly been linked to not only traffickers and/or recruiters being the boss or being called the boss but also the role of the family in aiding and abetting such trafficking process. As such, the family plays a huge role in determining the girls and women travel abroad even if they do not want to go on their own. For example, in Itohan's story, her mother was the one that brought the idea for her to leave and she was the one that brought the lady that will organise her trip for her, telling her that she was going to do babysitter job as well in Italy which turned out to be a false job eventually when she arrived.

One vital aspect in all was that the journeys was organised for them by the recruiters i.e. the madam/oga who brought up the proposal of the well-paying jobs abroad this was the case for all but one of the participants in the study, the one participant [that is Osato] that was different was because she was the one who went to meet the madam when she came back for visit and that was where she asked questions about the job and going abroad. Furthermore, all the participants acknowledged that after they had agreed for the job promised to them that was when the process of the journeys began as they were not involved in doing any arrangement for the trips as many of them didn't even know, didn't have any idea about passport and its usefulness or anything regarding papers/legal papers that would be used for their journeys. This has also been widely attested to by other researchers on their studies on trafficking from Nigeria as well (see Esposito, et. al., 2016; Carling, 2006; Serughetti, 2018).

The promise of a well-paying job is not entirely linear as it has also been reported that some of the women and girls are promised access to higher education along the jobs too. This even gives them double assurance of getting the chance to go to school for those that had not been enrolled before or completing their education for those that had been enrolled before but had to stop because of one reason or the other. Thus the idea of going to school and also earning money from work at the same time has been regarded to be an influence on why women and girls migrate/choose to migrate. For example, Ginika revealed in her interview how she was promised to be taken to school as well as working as a babysitter when she gets to Europe, coming from a background where she was not allowed to go to school, this was a great news to her as she was happy to leave Nigeria to enjoy the opportunity of going to school. This acted as a motivating factor for why she agreed to leave Nigeria. Scholars such as Kuschminder and Triandafyllidou, (2020), and Abiodun, et. al., (2021), have also documented these linkages in the migration journey. This invariably creates the leeway for women and girls to be trafficked as they agree to such proposed education and job opportunities without knowing fully the nature of what they will be required to do later on when they start the journey fully.

In addition to the promise of well-paying jobs, It should be noted that the deceit attached to the job is a strong factor as many of the girls are interested in the remittances that will be accrued from doing such jobs, Thus the deceit on the job has and continue to have a huge impact on why women and girls decide to leave Nigeria as they seek better opportunities abroad and believe that these low skilled jobs can offer them the chance of achieving it as they are told of how good a pay it generates (Akor, 2011; Ohonba and Agbontaen-Eghafona, 2019; Newton, 2008; Okojie, 2009). Furthermore, remittances is strongly linked to this aspect as Nigeria has been reported to be among the country with one of the highest receivers of remittances in the world, for example, in 2015 Nigeria

received US\$34.8 billion, likewise in 2021, remittances flows to sub-Sahara Africa was pegged at US\$45 billion and with over 60% going to Nigeria (Ibekwe, 2015; World Bank, 2021) that was received during the same period. Thereby indicating Nigeria as the highest receiver of remittances in the region. Likewise, remittances acts as a leeway of maintaining the family and floating the economy from the shocks of recession, covid-19 pandemic as well as inflation, thus remittances has been reported to surpass ODA and Foreign Direct Investment [FDI] in Nigeria for the past decade (Afaha, 2013; Dustmann and Kirchkamp, 2002; Edoun, et. al., 2015; Maunganidze and Abebe, 2020). This goes to show how great of an impact remittances has as well as its effects on the daily lives of citizens which also help to foster the continuity of daily survival of the families back at home.

From studies carried out by Ohonba and Agbotean-Eghafona, (2019), Eghafona, (2018) and Okojie, et. al., (2003), remittances have been used to send siblings to school, build homes, buy cars, family daily upkeep, open stores and businesses in Nigeria as well as used for other investments that accounts for the family continuity and also social status change as those who received such monies are highly regarded in the society where they come from and as such it has lifted a lot of people from extreme poverty to middle class and upper class citizens and this has also given a rise to social class and status of the remaining family member back at home. It has also acted a way of empowering women and changing their status from lower position of power to a much higher one and even decision makers at some time as the women and girls who are abroad send money back home are revered and seen as family saviours as such they are given more voice to speak, power and/or position to actively participate in some decision process concerning the family at a personal level and the society at large.

One interesting part revealed during this theme was that on the aspect of those who also lure the women and girls into trafficking from strangers in the guise of helping them. Thus not only direct family members and blood relations are involved in persuading them to leave Nigeria but also total strangers can be an instrument through which the trafficking is done this was the case of Etinosa where she was taken in by a stranger who accommodated her when she was stranded despite the fact that she had a step-mother and other family members, the woman was the one who persuaded her to leave with the offer of a better job abroad thus throwing light on the aspect of the decision to leave and it's linkages to those outside immediate family and close relatives, as most research and even some participants of the study showed otherwise in terms of decision making process of leaving Nigeria. This would be interesting to study more to unravel how prominent this trend is in relation to human trafficking in Nigeria.

To sum up, deceit on the type of job is a driving force to why women and girls as well as their legal guardians decide/agree for such movements outside Nigeria and this trend will likely continue as long as poverty, insecurity, unemployment among others are still evident in Nigeria which makes them vulnerable to trafficking as the trip is always organised by someone else and they do not have idea about the process concerning the trip, as such they are not aware that they are being and/or going to be trafficked or smuggled along the line of the journey.

Theme 4: Corruption and Porous Borders

The ease of crossing the border from one country to another in Africa and especially the ECOWAS region was highlighted among a significant number of respondents for the study. According to them their movement from Nigeria was not so difficult as it seemed like a normal passage when they were on their way. They further said that they witnessed bribery and corruption by the border police, soldiers and other immigration workers as well as other forms of illicit crossings taking place during their journeys.

According to Ivie- a 23 year-old participant:

[...] Once you get to that Kano, Agadez is like very close. Even that very day they asked us for passports, yes they asked us to cross to Agadez. The place is like this, Kano- Agadez, they ask for passport, when you don't have passport, then you pay 2000 naira [about 5 euros]⁷, then you pass.

Another participant witnessing the same thing during her journey from Benin-City said that she and another female left Benin City in March 2017 by bus. They reached Kano and there they called a phone number, provided by their madam before departure. The connection man answers the number, a Nigerian and a collaborator of the woman. They travelled with him to Agadez where they stay for a few days as guests of a woman. They leave without being escorted by the connection man and, by means of a Hilux, they crossed the desert, where they stayed for 3 days and where they are stopped by the police. *“The driver of the vehicle, with the money given by the connection man, pays the soldiers who allow them to continue their journey”* (Funmi- 23 years).

Likewise for Etinosa a 20 year-old participants during her journey in 2016, she was entrusted to a connection man Daniel who organized the trip by land from Kaduna to Sabha, Libya, crossing the Niger border. *“The crossing flows smoothly, with the driver paying for passengers at each check point”*.

⁷See <https://www.xe.com/currencyconverter/convert/?Amount=2000&From=NGN&To=EUR> [Accessed 10 October 2022]. Although the exchange rate given is the one for 2022, as at the time the journey was made in 2016 the exchange rate could have been higher than 5 euros as the naira had not depreciated to what it was in 2022.

Corruption and porous borders are two sides of the same coin, one cannot do without the other. In Nigeria corruption is pervasive and it spans across all government agencies and also down to normal ordinary living in the country as corruption is highly practiced widely either directly or indirectly. As such significant issues with corruption and poor governance may be seen across Nigeria. It received a ranking of 144 out of 180 countries on Transparency International's 2018 Bribery Perceptions Index. This index rates the nation according to the perceived degree of corruption in the public sectors in each country. According to a study that was published in 2017 by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, in Nigeria, the great majority of instances of bribery are started either indirectly or directly by public officials, and about seventy percent of all bribes are given before a service is performed. According to the report, bribery is the third most pressing issue in Nigeria, with a yearly cost of over \$1.1 billion and a focus on law enforcement and the judicial system (UNODC, 2017).

Like the foregoing, payment or bribery (also called greasing the elbow) before services are done is like a normal in Nigeria as many citizens sees it as a way of getting the work done fast/effectively because of the bureaucratic nature of things slowing everything down. However when it comes to human trafficking, corruption and porous borders has been attributed to facilitating the organised crime as many of these movements are transnational in nature thus the ease with the flows of migrants, refugees and asylum seekers among such countries has been highly alarming (Ondieki, 2017; NAPTIP, 2009). Corruption aids the often-successful attempts of traffickers to avoid punishment and being caught in the act of trafficking and smuggling. For example there are various ways such bribery and corruption takes shapes ranging from a police officer asking for money to ignore a child in a brothel, an immigration official accepting money to provide a forged passport, a judge dismissing a trafficking case in exchange for a cut of the traffickers' profits, a law enforcement official deporting a trafficking victim to prevent testimony against a criminal defendant, and a government official accepting money to fraudulently provide residency permits for foreign workers (Esposito, et. al., 2016; Agbu, 2003; IBA, 2016; Press, 2017), such events take place on a daily basis all around.

Crossings from Nigeria to other parts of Africa especially West Africa has been made easy through the implementation of the ECOWAS free trade and movement protocols which exist and is practiced among the 15 member countries however, crossings require a valid document such as passport or residency permit paper for short terms stays such as tourism or for long term stay for example economic migration for more than 90 days among others (ECOWAS Treaty, Chapter. I, Art. 2, and 2; see also Chapter. IV, Art. 27; Idrissa, 2019). It has been noted that during cross-border

mobilities from Nigeria to Niger (mainly Agadez) human trafficking has been done smoothly through bribery and corruption as many of these movements occurs after some money has been paid to those in charge of the borders these ranges from border police, immigration officers, surveillance teams, soldiers among others, (Abiodun, et. al., 2019; Esposito, et. al., 2016; HRW, 2019) and in some cases the money is as low as 5 euros per crossing which seems so little but when multiplied by the number of people crossing per day it becomes a huge figure at the end. For example, in Ivie's response above, she explained how they were able to cross from Kano, Nigeria to Agadez, Niger without any valid document and/or passport with as little as 2000 naira which is less than 5 euros. Thus, human traffickers take advantage of Nigeria's expansive and permeable borders to traffic women and girls when entering or existing the country along the ECOWAS region as well as outside the region when they are crossing from Niger to the Sahara desert and eventually Libya. This has been shown by scholars to be a dominant occurrence during the migration journey especially of undocumented migration from Nigeria to Europe passing through the West African and North Africa routes already documented in Chapter one and which comprises of transit mainly through Niger and Tripoli, with a variety of other nationalities travelling alongside them as well (McMahon and Sigona, 2016; BBC, 2017; see section 1.6: Migratory routes in Africa). Although other routes and countries of transits and destinations are still employed in such journeys for example transport through and to North Africa, the MENA region with Saudi Arabia and UAE as top places of destination, as well as Russia and other countries in Europe apart from Italy and Spain for instance women and girls are transported to Germany, Austria, Netherlands, Belgium, France among others (Semprebon and Abe, 2021; Okojie, et. al., 2003; Okojie, 2009) to be exploited for sex as well as those who use air travels to enter Europe, however these were not employed by my research participants of the study thus, I maintained the previous routes described in my chapter one as mainly the ones employed for undocumented migration by land and sea as it is what almost all my participants reported to have used to enter Europe, it is worth mentioning that there were some secondary movements along the European borders as disclosed by some of the participants of the study as they had varied fragmented journeys before they eventually settled in Italy as such countries such as France and Belgium were cited as some of the countries they traversed during the migration process. For example, Ginika said that she had to go to France after she landed and stayed in Italy for a few months because she was trying to escape from doing the prostitution work, but she was later forced to return back to Italy where the madam was residing as it was still prostitution work that she met in France and also her papers were rejected in France because she didn't tell the full story of her trafficking and smuggling situations when she went to the Commission. This is just an example of what some of the girls and women passed through. Semprebon and Abe, (2021), in their study carried out concerning this aspect noted

that a lot of such movement occurs within the EU however very few researches have been done to actually x-ray such patterns of movements within the bloc. As such secondary movement is a key aspect of human trafficking that needs more research to be done in order to show how they intersect in the lives of women and girls who are trafficked from Nigeria to Europe as well as linking the various destination countries of traffickers and how they operate within fragmented journeys in the EU.

The proliferation of arms, goods and people can be seen from the figures given on the number of people who cross Niger border heading to Libya and eventually Europe. For example the number of migrants, refugees and asylum seekers noted to have passed the Niger border in 2013 was about 3000 persons a week and this figure increased to over 170,000 people during the height of the migration crisis in 2016 (Tinti and Wescott, 2016) however in recent times these have all reduced drastically as a result of the externalization policy of the EU in Niger and Nigerian borders among others for instance, in 2020 it was reported that over 600 people crossed the Niger border daily this was also due to the fact of the corona virus pandemic and the various restrictions put in place for lockdown procedures at that time (IOM, 2020). In all whether the number of flows are 600, 3000, 100,000 or more, one thing is certain, the money taken as bribe end up becoming very high in a day when multiplied by the number of people passing through the Niger region. For example using the figure of 2000 naira as stated by Ivie above, if we multiply it by 3000 people the amount will result to 6 million naira which is about 10,000 euros a day collected in bribe. This is very big as it is considered free money outside of their salary and in some cases, it is even bigger than the salaries they are paid at the end of the month thereby reinforcing why bribery and corruption as well as the porosity of border management continuum.

Furthermore, the lack of political will and persecutions in Nigeria has continue to make the journey happen within the region as many of the traffickers are allowed to carry on their business freely, and even when they are caught, the cases are dropped after the traffickers have sorted out the judge or police officials involved of the case as well as the weak capacity of the law enforcement agencies to adequately carry out the punishments stipulated in the trafficking Protocol and the NAPTIP laws on human trafficking. Moreso, it has well been documented that the lenient punishment accorded to traffickers when they are caught still contributes to why trafficking still persists till date as in most cases they are given few years jail terms or they are asked to pay meagre sums of money as fines and bail without any other repercussions on them (see Semprebon, 2020; Semprebon and Abe, 2021; Sawadogo, 2012). When such a trafficker is freed, they end up going back and continuing the recruiting of persons from Nigeria to Europe without any hinderance as to them if they get caught again, they will just easily pay the fine and be out and freed once again. As such, the inadequate

legislation for traffickers and the porous borders have continued and will continue to spur trafficking from Nigerian with women and girls being vulnerable to such recruiters, as put by the 2018 US TIP Report on the chapter on Nigeria “*Corruption was so widespread and persistent that it touched all levels of the security services and government, and it hampered the capacity to hold people accountable for trafficking charges.*” (p. 328).

Theme 5: No awareness about the journey

Almost all the participants interviewed stated that they had no prior knowledge about how the journey was going to be and what it entails for such journey to occur as such this made it easy for them to take the decision to leave Nigeria with the hope of getting to Europe in order for them to start a better life. As some of the stories below show, this pattern is very common when it comes to them discussing about the journey with the persons’ that helped them to organise their trips.

According to Abiéyuwa, her madam never told her of any dangers about the journey. In her own words:

[...] No. They will not tell you, like my madam told me that 3 days I’m in Europe, where I am going to that’s what she told me. I was very happy about it only for me to reach Niger, problem started, and I cannot go back home anymore. Some will tell you once we start 2 days we are there, there is no problem because if they tell you the danger, you will not like to go. Yes, you cannot go back because If you reach there you are already in halfway [...]

When I asked further on why they cannot go back, she responded:

Because the person will not want you to go back. If you tell the person that you want to go back home, the person will tell you No, e never reach [that is- you have not arrived]. They will say just bear it; you will soon reach now. Because Niger is like Nigeria, so you don’t really know how Agadez and the other road will be, so you will agree to bear it and continue the journey (Abiéyuwa- 25 years)

[...] No, I was not aware of any danger. They just make things up, said there was nothing on the road, they just lied about everything especially about the situation in Libya as many people back home do not know how Libya is too, you understand. (Isoken- 25 years)

These responses above echoes a significant number of the responses gotten from all the participants about their awareness concerning the journey. All but one said they were not aware.

On the other hand, explaining that she was told somethings relating to the journey and she still went ahead with it was a response gotten from Ngozi. However according to her, they lied about the risks pertaining to the journey:

[...] Definitely they told us those things, they told me those things, there’s risk o but they will not harm you; there’s danger but it will not affect you, all those things are lies. Those things happens but let me just say grace speak for me, many things happened more than

the arm robbery, more than the kidnapping, more than those people that use to rape women, many things happened on the way, but I thank God that those things did not come closer to me (Ngozi- 27 years).

Lack of awareness and/or proper information about what the journey entails continue to influence women and girls decisions to migrate. Many of the women and girls I interviewed noted that they were not told about how dangerous the journey was and the risks involved in going through such means. This was a strong point that was echoed during the interviews. It thus means that aside from the girls being deceived about the nature of the type of jobs they will be doing when they move out of the country, it also means that they are deceived about the nature of the journey. Many studies conducted on human trafficking and particularly sex trafficking from Nigeria to Europe have focused mainly on the aspect on the deceit on the jobs promised to the girls and women (Kuschminder and Triandafyllidou, 2020; Bello and Olutola, 2020; Ajagun, 2012) leaving out an important aspect of the way the journey will be conducted and the things they will see on the way. This calls for more research to be done in exposing in detail the real nature of moving through the land borders of Agadez, the Sahara desert as well as Libya.

Since the ECOWAS free movement of goods and persons protocol allows for easy movements among her countries (IOM, 2019; Hamood, 2006; ECOWAS Treaty, Chapter. I, Art. 2, and 2; see also Chapter. IV, Art. 27), this also contributes to what make the girls and women continue their journey because it usually seems that all parts of the journey will be like what they experienced when they were crossing from Nigeria to Niger. According to Abiéyuwa above, during her migration journey her madam told her that she was going to be in Europe within 3 days which made her very happy as she was eager to start the new life which will give her opportunity to take care of her family, she said their crossing from Kano to Niger went smoothly and she thought that was how the whole process will be for the duration of the journey, only for her to end up spending almost a year on the road before she eventually crossed into Italy. This is just one of a majority of the responses gotten during the interviews. Thus, since many of them think that the journey is just to enter a bus and *viola* they are in Europe plus the way Europe and the journey was described as being fast and taking only a few days to arrive, many girls and women quickly agree to the terms trusting that it will go as it has been said.

It is only during the time they leave Nigeria and are in Niger that the reality concerning the journey dawn on them and by that time it is already too late to turn back as they are most times stranded and left to fend for themselves, in most cases they are transferred to a connection man to help organise their trips however in some other case they are abandoned by their madam/oga and as

such they have to look for other ways to sort themselves out (for more details, see Carling, 2006; Okeshola and Adenugba, 2018; Hamood, 2006; Graham-Harrison, 2017). This is very vital as it indicates why Nigerian girls and women continue to embark on such tortuous journeys. It is evident that not being aware of the risks and dangers about the journey plays a role in spurring out migration of Nigerian women and girls as they don't have any experience concerning the journey which makes it easy for them to decide to leave. Even the one that admitted she was told about some of the risks (that is Ngozi) indicated it was played down to her how severe it was thus indicating the lie about the journey facilitates decisions to leave Nigeria despite the risks involved. On the other hand, probably if they are made aware of the risks involved during the journey, it may deter them from embarking on it in the first place, but this would require more research to be carried out on this aspect.

From the above, it is obvious that there are various reasons that spur migration from Nigeria to Europe, these reasons are explained above which should be noted that they are all intersecting for the individuals involved depending on their situation before the migration process starts. Thus one person can experience all of the above at the same time before and during the migration process which furthermore lure them to continue the migration process as they are all cumulative in experiencing these things described above. These have all played to why women and girls leave Nigeria despite the risks and dangers of the journey especially for those that travel on the road as have been divulged from the findings of this study above

Research question 2: What kind of discourses frame different kinds of violence with a focus on gender-based violence of Nigerian irregular female migrants?

Theme 1: Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse was noted to be a predominant aspect that make up the journeys of the migrant women and girls from Nigeria in Italy. Almost all of them experienced it at different parts of their journeys while one participant reported that she was abused in Nigeria before she left, the others disclosed that they experienced it during their journeys some during the movement from Niger to the Sahara desert, while others during their movement to Libya they experienced it, with Libya cited as the place where most of them experienced various forms of sexual abuse mainly from the Arab men which they usually call "*Arabo/Arabos*" and a few experienced from the persons' that organised their trips for them which they popularly called "pusher man/connection man". As such, they expressed their pain and sadness when these were occurring.

Etinosa explaining the violence she experienced in Nigeria before she left, disclosed that after the death of her sick father, she was sold by her step-mother to another household which the step-

mother told her that she had contracted a huge debt in paying for the bills of her late father when he was alive, as such in order for her to repay the debt Etinosa had to go and work with the other lady and stay in the house to pay up the loan she [the stepmother] accrued. While she [Etinosa] was staying there, she had to carry out domestic chores and also take care of the children in the house as well. Alongside, the head of the house was also abusing her sexually as described below:

[...] While staying in this family, she [Etinosa] actually performs the agreed tasks but she is unable to go out alone, let alone contact her family; moreover, she is often physically harassed by the head of the family [that is the husband to the woman], who rapes her and rapes her multiple times (Etinosa- 20 years).

The above scenario depicts a rare situation of most of the respondents as many of them said they had their first-hand experience from the time they were crossing from Nigeria to Niger and the Sahara desert. Recounting what she had experience during her trip from Niger to the Sahara desert, a participant revealed how she was abused sexually multiple times during her journey:

It is a Sunday evening in August when she [Adesuwa] aboard a Hilux full of people, enters the desert. Here they meet some Libyans who, stealing money from those who owned it, carry out physical and sexual violence against those without it. She too [Adesuwa] is raped because the money given to her by her Madam about 500 naira was not enough. The journey into the desert, says Adesuwa was characterized by numerous violence not only by the Libyans, but also by the pick-up drivers themselves (Adesuwa- 22 years)

While the crossing from Niger through the desert as expressed in the above gives them a first-hand experience, their situation from the Sahara desert to Libya and when they got to Libya was usually described as more dangerous and severe as almost all of them had their own personal experience and were abused sexually. Thus, they revealed that Libya is usually the last place before they move into Europe, but it is also the place where they experienced heightened forms of violence especially sexual violence and abuse. Below some of the stories from the migrants women are described:

They treat badly, for example, rape girls, sometimes when girls are sleeping they will just wake them to come and do one work, so where we are sleeping we don't have rest of mind. It was the hardest period when we were in Libya, because that country is full of corruption, and we were not safe you understand, nobody was safe there, I was just praying God should just guide me to get to where I'm going because there all these raping was too much and also all these Arabs when they use eye to see black its problem you understand [...] We reached Libya, then in Libya there we stayed for some months. So we stayed for some months because from Sabha, we went to Tripoli, Yes. So in Tripoli it was quite scary as the place is very dangerous, it was there they raped all those women and many bad things they do there. That moving from Sabha to Tripoli is really desert, then you will get to

Tripoli, then from Tripoli to Sabratha again, That one is not dessert, it's just normal motor all these it's not easy. From Tripoli to Sabratha I was raped there (Isoken- 25 years).

Another respondent who had similar experience after a long trip to Libya, disclosed that she was forced to have sexual intercourse by the connection man/pusher man who was in charge of organizing her trip. She divulged the following:

[...] I didn't work when I was there [that is- Libya], I did not do anything. The only thing that happened is that it was the pusher man (that is- the person that will take them to cross to Europe) that came and said that I should go to his house with him. The other girls there told me that that's how the man does, that he carries girls to his house and sleep with them. So when I arrived there, the person that was in charge of my journey did not pay, so the man was trying to sleep with me before he push me to Europe. At first I was refusing to go to his place because I didn't want to sleep with him, but the other girls told me that if I don't go even if my madam send money to the man to push me to Europe that he will not push me because I refused to sleep with him. They said most of them there, they did not push them too because they refused to sleep with the man. So with that, I followed him to his house, and he slept with me (Ginika- 25 years).

[...] What happened in Libya was this, it was not even Arab that raped me. I got that rape because when you force someone, like this person was my connection man, the person that owns the camp Ghana man, he forced to sleep with me, that was what happened. I didn't do anything, like he was asking me out then, as in even he's not even asking you out, "*he go just say one two make una come my room*" [that is- he will just select one or two girls and tell them to go to his room without asking], he will not even ask you out, to say he likes you or what, it's just to come his room. He will send some guys go and call these girls for me, anyone that refuse him is gone (Ivie- 24 years).

One of the most dominant form of GBV experienced by migrant women and girls on their voyage from Nigeria to Italy is sexual abuse/violence. This form of violence has been noted to occur at different stages of the migration journey especially for undocumented migrants. West African migrants and Nigerian females have been documented to be at higher risk of experiencing such form of violence as already noted in chapter one (see among others: Degani and Perini, 2019; Alagbe, 2021; Bartolo, 2018). This was also evident from my research participants/findings whereby a significant number of them admitted having been abused sexually during their journeys from Nigeria.

Although sexual abuse can occur at any point in the migration process for example the case of Etinosa who described how she was abused sexually in Nigeria before she left, however, a majority of the respondents noted that they began experiencing their own from the moment they left Nigeria. This has also been corroborated by scholars who have written on human trafficking and sex work or

prostitution (Hermanin, 2017; Esposito, et. al., 2016). As such, women are at higher risk of being raped and abused during their journey.

The situation is even made worse when they get to Libya as the reality of their irregular status becomes evident in the way they are treated, managed and kept before the trip is organised to Europe/Italy. Libya after Gaddafi has been thrown and remained in chaos ever since, the instability in the country coupled with the various forms of arm conflicts and rebel groups recklessly operating at the helm of affairs in Libya creates the conditions of vulnerability for migrant women and girls especially those who are undocumented (Runde, et. al., 2019; DTM, 2017) as they do not have rights and access to things that regular/legal migrants have. Moreso, the blacks face severe forms of racialization and discrimination when they are in Libya (Vammen, Plambech, et al., 2021; McMahon and Sigona, 2016; Bartolo, 2017) as such this increase the risks in their lives and circumstances in Libya as anything that happens to them is nobody's business. Many migrants dubbed it as a no man's land as it is regarded as "*you are on your own*". Stories from my research participants showed how these affected them as they were females, and they didn't have any upper hand in the affairs of what was going on during their journeys. Starting with GBV experienced from Niger the situation of Adesuwa above depicts what they go through during such movement whereas in Libya it becomes worse as the "*Arabs*" or "*Arabos*" as they are popularly called mistreat and abused them severally until they get tired of them and/or until they like to stop, with the women and girls being relegated to the background.

Moreso, apart from the Arabs some black Africans who are the people mainly organising the trips and smuggling of the migrants also abuse women and girls (Esposito, et. al., 2016; Millett-Barrett, 2019). This can be seen from the stories gotten from Ginika and Ivie on how the connection men raped them before they did anything concerning their journey. As such, women and girls are not only prone to experiencing violence from the foreigners who are regarded as Arabs and/or Libyans but also experience abuse from people they were linked up with such as the connection men who are mainly black Africans but yet they abuse them carelessly with impunity. When the women and girls try to refuse they are threatened and even beaten sometimes in order for them to cooperate and/or for them to be silenced and the men have their way with them.

It should be noted that women who furthermore refuses to give in to these demands from the men, are left behind to suffer their own fate and this has made many of them become stranded and left in Libya with no hope for crossing into Europe, which can translate into weeks, months and years. For example, in the story of Ginika some of the girls and women she met in the place she was kept told her that they were in Libya for some years because they refused to sleep with the connection men

as such they were abandoned there. Thus, sexual abuse is traumatic for the migrant women and girls as most of them are forced against their will to engage in such activities and if they don't do it they are left behind to suffer and be in more pain by being stranded in Libya which can take up to years depending on how they manage to cope in the country.

This creates fear and distress for them during the journey which has been characterised as the most dangerous route in the history of migration as the Central Mediterranean sea has claimed over 30,000 undocumented migrants, refugees and asylum seekers lives since the early 2000s (Kayser-Bril, et. al., 2016; IOM, 2019). Thus, when women and girls from Nigeria are trafficked through the land and sea borders there is an 80% chance that they will experience this form of GBV whether they like it or not, whether they are confined to various spaces or not, whether they cover up from head to toe or not. This is because of the lawlessness and violence carried out with impunity without recourse or repercussion of such abuse in the various transit countries starting mainly from Niger through the Sahara desert and Libya as have been corroborated from the responses described above. This shows how Nigerian women and girls are exposed to precarious situation and conditions which further leads them to being abused sexually with some becoming pregnant alongside such GBV carried out on them, this aspect will be discussed in a later theme in research question three.

It should also be noted that this form of GBV is and/or can be perpetuated by various people who fall within several stratum of the society ranging from armed gangs, unofficial personnel, familiar people, strangers as well as official personnel consisting of officers of the law such as immigration personnel, border police, army, and all other official cross-border personnel/workers during such movements (Vammen, Plambech, et. al., 2021; Alagbe, 2021).

Theme 2: Forced Labour and Prostitution

All the participants of this study indicated that they were forced into prostitution once they had arrived Europe. According to them this is where the reality of them being trafficked for forced labour and prostitution takes a formidable shape, they all recounted how they were deceived into thinking they were coming to work as hairdressers, tailors, sellers of clothes as well as domestic babysitters, only for them to reach Europe and they were told that was not the work they were going to do but rather they had to engage in prostitution which they popularly refer to as “road work” in order to pay back the money they owed their madams’/ogas who brought them to Italy. While a significant number indicated that when they arrived in Italy for the first few weeks they were made to relax and treated well after a while, their madam/oga told them they had to start the work so they can begin making money and pay the debt they had accrued after recruiting, transporting, transferring and housing them. This was a recurrent part of their stories with some experiencing various forms of violence such as

shouting, beating, constant quarrelling and threat alongside the period they were under their madam/oga. Also, they all said that they were compelled to work for extended shifts and periods which consisted of very little breaks and in some cases no breaks at all. They further said that they were still forced to work even when they were sick as their recruiters were only concerned about them bringing in money whether they were sick or not, whether the weather was good or terrible and whether it was winter or very hot in summer, they had to go and source for clients on the streets and in some cases the clients were brought to where they were staying with their madams'/ogas', for them to have the sexual intercourse. After which they indicated that all the money being paid was collected by their madams'/ogas who seldom give them very little money to survive on. Below are the experiences of the participants on how they were forced into prostitution once in Italy:

Itohan describing her situation of when she landed in Italy in 2016, explained how her madam gave her a nice reception when she got to her place after staying with her for 3 months where her madam fed her, made her hair and also bought her beautiful clothes. According to her she was treated very well, and she was happy about it because she was promised to be taken to school and also work as a babysitter, however after three months of enjoying such nice treatment from her madam, the situation changed as the madam told her one night that she had to start working so she can begin the payment:

[...] So she [her madam] made a fine style for me and took care of me for like 2 to 3 months we were living peacefully. Then one night she came and gave me some skimpy clothes and told me to wear them and also follow her to one place that night, "*I con tell am say no, say day don dark, where we dey go? na she con say no, say I go must follow her go, say weda if me no follow her go the place how me wan take pay the money wen she take bring me come here*"- Original text in Nigerian Pidgin English) [Translated text in English- I said no that it was already dark, where are we going?. She said I must follow her that if I did not follow her, how will I pay her the money she used to bring me to Italy]. I then told her that in Nigeria I was not told that I will come to Italy to pay money, that I was told I was coming to help her carry baby so that she will in turn put me in school. She said no I must follow her, then I decided to dress up and go with her because she was shouting too much already. So I followed her and she took me to the road and told me to stand there and start the work (Itohan- 25 years)

The same experience was said by Ivie who landed in Italy with another Nigerian lady as well and was taken to her madam's place where she started asking her madam about her trip because her madam told her and the other girl that she was taking them to Czech Republic to go and assist her with some things she was doing there, but she was given a rude shock when she was told that was not going to happen as divulged below:

So after then, we were staying with her. So we were like "*ah sister, you say na Czech republic we dey go, she say ehn she was just beating around the bush*"- original text in

Nigerian Pidgin English) [Translated text in English- So we were like, Sister (in this context means Aunty) you told us that we are going to Czech Republic not Italy. She couldn't give us any tangible response; she was just beating around the bush]. The next thing she put some sexy wears, like all these shoes, we were like, what are we going to do with these things? She said we should not ask her all those questions; she was just mad at us. She found different position spaces for us, like the other girl was going to another place, me I was in another side, she told us the law that we have to be paying 50/50 euros every week for feeding money, we have to be paying in where we are working my own was 150 euros the other girl's own was 200 euros that one will be every month. We had to be paying for house rent 150 euros and "*these were outside balancing money o*"- Original text in Nigerian Pidgin English) [Translated text in English- these were without the money they will pay her for bringing them to Italy] we were just like shocked (Ivie- 24 years)

Likewise for Osato who experienced a similar situation but had other things involved in her situation. She was taken to different countries within Europe in order to force her to engage in prostitution which she refused vehemently. At first she was taken to France from Italy when she refused doing the road work, then she was transferred to Belgium where the madam still continued disturbing her to do the prostitution work, she refused also there as she said she was never told that was the work she was going to do when she reached Europe. She also revealed that she was a virgin during that period which also made her to continue refusing however when her madam became aware of it she paid someone to have sex with her so that she must get used to having sex and for her to start making money from it so she can pay her madam. After which she became traumatised and still refused doing the work, but the madam made sure she was brought back to Italy where she forced her to engage in prostitution work. She recounted her situation in Italy as thus:

When I reached her house in Italy, this woman beat me, she beat me and put me outside in cold time in November, you know that November is cold time, she then filled up the bathtub with cold water and she put me inside, and she locked the door. I was crying, crying so much, so I said that I want to eat, I want to eat, she said I will be there until I give her the money that she used to bring me from Nigeria to this place. And she left [...] So after my Madame came home that day, I knelt down in front of her and said that okay I will do the work don't worry. I will do the work. She said okay. I then started going to the work, I was working bringing her money. Even when they raped me inside the bush, I told her, she said it's not her business, she's looking for her money. It's not her business (Osato- 22 years)

Forced labour and prostitution aside being part of human trafficking is also a strong form of GBV carried out on the people who are subjected under it. While much research have depicted forced labour to occur mostly for men and boys as they made to work with little pay and/or without pay, terrible work conditions and awful contracts (Carchedi, 2013; ILO, 2012; Cann, et. al., 2010) etc. others, have focused on prostitution as mainly for women who are forced into sex work under the guise of the trafficker (Palumbo and Scieurba, 2014; Zimmerman and Stöckl, 2012). However in this

study both are combined and used to portray the GBV Nigerian women and girls face as a result of forced labour and prostitution this is because all the respondents interviewed recounted on how they were forced into working against their will and it was not the kind of work they had hoped to do in the first place and the work eventually became sex work where they had to prostitute themselves to get money which was given to and/or taken by their madam/oga during the time they were under them. As such, forced labour and prostitution is another strong form of GBV that always exist in the lives of a majority of those that are trafficked from Nigeria to Europe when it comes to women and girls (Ajagun, 2012; Onyejekwe, 2005; US State Department, 2016; USDOS, 2011; US TIP, 2019). They are made to undergo a lot of demeaning things as a result of this. The power dynamics during this process is alarming as the madam/oga wields higher power than the women and girls who were trafficked from Nigeria to Italy. For example, between 2015 and 2017, of the total victims of trafficking recorded in the EU, over 60% of them were reported to be victims for sexual exploitation and for forced labour it was 15% that was recorded with Nigerian women and girls holding a significant percentage (74%) of the total number of victims by country of origin (EU Commission, 2018; EU Commission, 2020). This is also in line with the IOM report on human trafficking and Nigeria where it was documented that of the Nigerian women and girls intercepted at the sea and brought into Italy from Libya, 80% of them are/likely to be trafficking for sexual exploitation in Italy (IOM, 2017a; see also Zimmerman and Stöckl, 2012; Degani and De Stefani, 2020).

Also during the process of forced labour and prostitution, the documents of the girls and women are seized and confiscated and in many cases the madam/oga do not even allow the women and girls to tell the real story of how they came to Italy (Ogwu, 2002; Newton, 2008; Olubukola, 2020) in order for them not to report them and secondly not to have the right type of papers or protection in Italy and also for them to continue to be under them so they can work and pay them the money.

Many of the participants of this research disclosed how they were deceived concerning the work they were going to do in Italy as already addressed in the research question one above, the type of work promised to the girls were domestic babysitter, hairdresser, tailoring, bartender or work in bar, selling of clothes, among others, these women and girls agree to such work with the hope of getting paid well and better than what they get in Nigeria and as such they were very happy to leave in the first place until when they arrived in Italy and this was not the case. They were all forced to engage in sex work/prostitution as a way of paying back the money that the madam/oga used to bring them to Italy, according to some of the stories from the girls, the madam/oga even told them that there is no other work to do in Italy that it is only sex work that is available in Italy so they must do it

whether they liked it or not and the process of which they were made to do it was bizarre as all but one of them had various violent experience.

It usually starts with them having a nice and warm welcome when they get to Italy for a few weeks and in some case a few months, after which their madam/oga turns on them and tell them it's time to do the work which at first they agree thinking it is babysitter, hairdressing, tailoring and all the others mentioned above but however they are told it is not those ones, but it is prostitution work. Their responses were all the same with them refusing to do the work at first and this makes their traffickers resort to and use other tactics like shouting, beating, insulting and threatening the girls and their families in some cases in order for them to do the work. The girls after such violent exchanges eventually accepts to do the work as they do not have any other options again, first they don't know the country, they don't know the language, they do not have any relatives or family members, they do not have the papers or legal permit of stay yet, they are all alone with no money etc. all these makes it very difficult for them to refuse and as such they agree to the work even though it is against their will this invariably exposes them to GBV under the hands of their traffickers.

Afterwards the working conditions is also another issue, they are made to work long hours and shifts, they do not have the luxury of time to relax or even take break from work as the traffickers are only interested in the women and girls making money and bringing it to them (Eghafona, 2018; Palumbo, 2015). Seemingly, all the money made are collected by the traffickers without the girls and women having any say about how much to be given as disclosed in their stories. The madam/oga decides if they will give the girls and women anything to survive on which is rarely the case and when they do give them the money is meagre and they can barely survive on it. For example in Itohan's story she emphasised how the madam was collecting all her money without giving her anything to use to take care of herself. Moreso, the girls do not have rights to their bodies which is already a gendered violence during the process for sex work and prostitution. They are made to sell their bodies for monetary and other in-kinds gains which is transferred to the madam/oga afterwards. In one of the girls' situation [Osato], she was first of all forced to have sex with a man who disvirgined her against her will in order for her to be prepared for the sex work this already showed GBV she experienced firstly before the work started. Their bodies are dictated what to do, how to do and when to do it without them having any say on it, even when they fall sick or are tired, the madam/oga do not listen to them but instead they are made to continue the work and bring money to their recruiter. This was a reoccurring aspect in all their stories shared.

Apart from that aspect, the girls and women are also charged various exorbitant amounts of money that they have to pay alongside the money requested for their journeys from Nigeria to Italy

(Ajagun, 2012; OSCE, 2009; Ikeora, 2016), for example they are asked to pay money for the places where they stand on the street to do prostitution, they are asked to pay money for feeding weekly, they are asked to pay for rent monthly, they are asked to pay for the utilities they consume such as light, water, gas, among others. All these money asked are not even asked with the hope of a negotiation on how they will pay it but the madam/oga collects them as they are collecting the money for the organization of the trip to Italy. To illustrate this very well, Ivie said she was asked to pay 150 euros for standing position money, 50 euros for feeding weekly, 200 euros for rent, another 50 euros for utility which makes up 450 euros she has to pay first or which is deducted first from all the money she worked from the road work before the remaining one which is usually about 25,000 to 30,000 euros for the trip will be deducted. So if for instance they earn 1,500 euros a month on sex work 500 euros is already gone for the maintenance expenses before the madam/oga will deduct the money for the trip. In many of their stories they are not given anything at the end of all the deductions while in few cases they are given 20 euros, 50 euros to use for themselves after all the deductions have been made. Thus forced labour and prostitution reinforces GBV to occur to Nigerian women and girls who are vulnerable in the destination country they arrive as well as the asymmetry power relations that take place during such violent scenarios.

Furthermore, the girls and women are forced to source for customers on the street and in other cases the customers are brought to the house by the madam/oga where they are living for the girls to engage in sexual activities to them (Degani and Perini, 2019; On the Road, 2002). As such, they do not have anywhere to escape to as even in their places of residences they are forced to work against their will. For example this happened to Etinosa whereby the madam brought the clients to the house for her to continue the work, thus she didn't have any space or time to rest as the madam was the one selecting when the customers will come, thus taking away any form of liberty she may have had while at home.

In all, forced labour and prostitution is a gendered form of violence which has severe and dire consequences on the persons undergoing it. In the case of Nigerian women and girls who are trafficked from Nigeria to Italy, this is evident in the way they are made to do the work, firstly they are forced to do the work with terrible working conditions, secondly they are forced to sell their bodies for money which is not what they were promised they would do in the first place when they were at home, thirdly they are extorted during the process as they are charged huge amounts of money as maintenance fee/money which is outside the money they are made to pay for bringing them to Europe, and also they do not have time to even rest as such they are forced to work in rain or shine, winter or summer, health and sickness, sometimes till death do they part (although this aspect was

not part of my research findings as all my participants were alive but some of the responses gotten from them indicated that they witnessed some girls and women who were killed as a result of their work), and when they refuse or argue with their madam/oga, they get into trouble as they are threatened, beaten, abused verbally and psychologically among other things. The stories shared above portray how these types of violence takes shape, place and form. Although it has some variations in the applicability in all the respondents situation, it is obvious that they all pass through such and experience such form of GBV during the course of their stay/coming to Italy in the first 3 to 4 years or the first few years before they left their madams/ogas.

Theme 3: Domestic Violence

This form of violence was also reported by the participants of the research as many of them said they experienced maltreatment and abuse from the people who brought them to Italy. One vital aspect participants mentioned here is that it is the recruiters that are mainly perpetrators of this type of violence, and they said that their madams/ogas treated them badly in various ways when they were staying with them before they left.

Although some also said they experienced domestic violence before they left Nigeria especially for those who were staying with a relative or with a family friend before they left Nigeria. While this is not indicative of all the experience by the participants of the interview, it is worth mentioning that domestic violence can happen before, during and after their migration process with a majority citing when they had arrived in Italy as the main place where they had such episodes. Their responses are detailed below:

Ginika a 25-year old participant recounted how she was maltreated by her aunty whom she went to live with in Nigeria before she left. She was deprived of going to school and was made to sell for her aunty while the children were enjoying all the benefits in the house. She also expressed having injuries as a result of the violence she experienced at the hand of her aunty which furthermore sparked her decision to leave Nigeria:

[...] There are some marks on my body, she [her Aunty] was the one that gave them to me [...] she has an engine where we grind garri in her house, so sometimes if I am tired during working and I say it, she will say why am I tired that I should continue doing the work. So she doesn't allow me rest enough [...] Her own children were very young then. She has three children and the eldest is about 12 years old. She's very stubborn and sometimes the things she refuses to do in the house, the mom will say I should do them, so it was as if I was the only one in the house doing all the work.

After passing through the perilous journey from Libya to Italy, when she arrived she was also met with domestic violence when she was in Europe. She further explained that the girls her madam made

her to stay with during that period further maltreated her in the place they were residing, and she eventually ran away after some time due to the violence as explained below:

[...] The girl I was staying with then, She maltreated me in various ways, and I had to bear it because I did not have anybody there. The girl was always shouting on me, abusing me and insulting me in her place. I did not really like to do the work then [prostitution] and sometimes I did not want to go to the work, but she didn't agree, she was saying I need to pay my house rent and the bills so I must go to work. She didn't treat me in a good way [...] I didn't have anywhere else to go, so I have to bear it and stay.

While Ivie a 24 year-old participant disclosed that she was staying in the kitchen when she arrived in Europe and her madam was not treating her well, she was always insulting her and shouting on her as well as asking her to also pay for staying in the kitchen where she had no bed, no privacy, and no space to call her own.

Like the above described, for Onome her situation was a bit different as she was still a minor then when she arrived in Italy and her madam used to take advantage of that and beats her, shouts on her and maltreats her in different ways as she was very little then without anybody to turn to. She explains it as:

[...] Maybe there are a lot of girls that is more bigger than me, those ones will not take anything that she's doing to them, they just want to fight her back but me I didn't fight her, so I had a lot of that experience. She even beat me trice [...] There was a day I had a call, I had to talk with my mom, you know when I'm speaking my tribe, she's an Edo woman, she was thinking I was talking to my mom about going out and I don't want to pay, she just had to come and collect the phone from me and asked what am I saying? I told her, I didn't even say anything about you before I know she just started beating me (Onome- 20 years).

Domestic violence has been dubbed to be one of the prominent forms of GBV and most victims of DV has been strongly linked to women and girls who are affected disproportionately in such violence (Kangas, et al., 2014; Tomasdottir, et. al., 2016). Migrant women and girls also experience such form of GBV as well with a majority of the victims expressing severe consequences of this form of violence on them. The present research also shows that Nigerian women and girls who were trafficked and brought into Italy suffered DV as a result of their movement. Although, it is important to note that this form of violence can occur in the home country as well as during the migration process and after migration process when they arrived in the destination country. Responses from the women and girls interviewed showed how this form of violence occurred, while many of them reported that they had their experience when they arrived in Italy others reported they had their experience in Nigeria.

A puzzling aspect regarding Nigerian women and girls migrants on their account of DV was the fact that some of the respondents revealed they were maltreated, threatened, shouted on and beaten when they were in Nigeria but in their case it was done by a relative/relatives who they were staying with. Although, this aspect is linear as it involved a few samples it can be concluded that most women and girls who stay with their relatives are prone to experiencing such form of violence by the people they are staying with. Thus, it would be interesting to get a richer research on this aspect for those that stayed with their relatives before coming abroad in order to find out if there is a linkage between staying with relatives and experiencing DV/GBV.

Moreso, something that was still new was on the aspect of the perpetrator of the domestic violence, while much research have portrayed that women and girls may be beaten and restricted in the destination country (Ajagun, 2012; Abiodun, et. al., 2021; Massari, 2009), there is not much focus on how the women and girls experience domestic violence instead they usually focus on the sexual violence and abuse (Okoli and Idemudia, 2020; Degani and De Stefani, 2020; Okojie, et. al, 2003; Tessitore and Margherita, 2019) as GBV that women and girls suffer. In this study, almost all the girls revealed that they experienced this form of violence from their madam/oga when they had arrived, while on the other hand, a participant [Ginika] said she was maltreated not by her madam but by the person she was sent to stay with by her madam as such showing that domestic violence can shift base in relation to power asymmetry from madam and the girls to girls on girls violence. Although this response was gotten from just one person, it would be great to have much research on this aspect in order to find out the nuance of this violence and also proffer appropriate warnings and solution to them.

While domestic violence is usually interchanged with intimate partner violence (see Brennan, 2013; Michalski, 2005), in this research this was not the case as the women and girls who experienced it were not in intimate relations with their madam/oga and in the case of the girl who maltreated her fellow girl they were not in intimate partner relationship, as such it can be concluded that DV which is a part of GBV is also gendered in relation to how it occurs and/or carried out by the people who organise the journey for the women and girls and are mainly women called madam, although in a few of the responses they were brought in by men but a majority of the responses showed that it was women that brought them to Italy with a few connections from men who works with the women during their transit from Nigeria to Niger and Libya.

The findings of my research work shows that Nigerian women and girls who are trafficked and/or undocumented migrants are exposed to experiencing domestic violence as a result of the way they came in through Europe as the situation they live in are terrible and they are faced with all sorts of

abuse in the homes they reside. Of note here is that domestic violence can be experienced during the journey but since transit migration is usually for a short time, they really did not classify it as a place they stayed and in most cases they were moved from one place to another.

Theme 4: Physical Abuse and threat

All the participants of the study said they had experienced physical abuse and threat at different times during their journey. Some had their experience during the trip from Agadez to the Sahara desert, others when they were in Libya, while all of them experienced it when they landed in Italy with some explaining they also experienced it when they were working as such their clients were also violent towards them. As described in their stories below:

Etinosa a 20-year old participant detailing her experience of what she went through explained that once they reached Libya she was kept in a ghetto where she was treated badly and was beaten, lynched with electric cables and was forced to have sex severally with strangers which also caused heavy bleeding too.

Also having a similar situation like the above narrative is Funmi a 23 year-old participant who said that after arriving in an Hilux in Sabratha 2017, 3 days into their stay they were raided and arrested for no reason. She was taken along with 8 other people where they were placed in a prison for about a month. She said that during that period she was beaten very often and given little food to eat.

These stories are some examples of what the women and girls expressed they go through during their journey to Libya and when they arrive in Libya. A majority of the participants had similar experience with some of them saying they were beaten and flogged as well by the Arabs and other bandits when they were on their way and on arrival in Libya.

While on the other hand, experiences of physical abuse and threat when they had crossed into Italy was also a prominent features in their narratives with some disclosing their madam/oga as the persons who did it to them. For example, Adesuwa recounting her experience said she was not only threatened and beaten but her mother too was threatened in Nigeria as well when she found out that it was not what they told her that her daughter was made to do in Italy:

[...] Adesuwa's mother goes to her Madam's sister in Nigeria saying that those agreements were not made, but the woman threatens her and communicates the episode to Adesuwa's Madam in Italy. The Madam at that point angry, takes Adesuwa by the neck almost to kill her, she was holding so tightly, and she beats her too [...] Following the madam's threats, her mother moved to another village in Nigeria, so she would be safe at that moment (Adesuwa- 22 years).

Some of the girls and women interviewed had similar situations where their family members were also threatened too aside from them, and this made them to continue the work as they were scared for their lives and that of their families. For example, Osato a 22-year old participant had the same experience where the madam was always threatening to kill her younger brother if she didn't do the prostitution work and at a point she sent people to go and beat her aunty in Nigeria so that she was forced to agree to do the work.

Furthermore, other participants said that they not only experience physical abuse and threat from their madams/ogas in Italy but also from their clients during the period they were working as such they had to look for different ways to escape so as not to lose their lives as a result of doing prostitution. As explained by Obehi:

[...] There was one day a man use a gun to threaten me. He said I should give him back him money, I told him no, so he now brought out a gun and use it to threaten me. So I told the man that he should turn back, when he did, I ran away.

She continued by sharing another experience of a client who beat her as well during the work
Hmm, its only one man that beat me. We were arguing about money, so the man said he did not through, so I should return back his money I said no, he started beating me, I ran away to the road, so the man drove his motor, he wanted to jam me at the express road, so I jump to the other side, so that's how he left, he didn't come back again (Obehi- 31 years)

Just like the above scenario, others noted that after experiencing the violence by their clients and they go home to tell their madams/ogas about what happened to them, the responses they usually get is that they should continue their work as they are only interested in getting their money. For example, Ivie describing her situation concerning what she went through in the hands of some of her clients depicts the following:

They harassed me a lot, even one wanted to stab me, that day God really saved me a lot, after that I don't really know what touched his heart and he dropped the knife, he just threw me close to cemetery, he dropped me close to cemetery that very day.

She continued with another case that happened

Even the other one that happened to me in the place I was working before, Moroccan guy beat me, when I mean beat me, he beat me like mad. He said he wants to sleep with me without condom and I told him no, that was when that beating happened. The guy was coming to that road every day because of me when I see him I run away, I had to stop going to that place to work. I told my madam, she just said I need to continue doing my work, she said that I don't have choice, that I must go and work (Ivie- 24 years).

Physical abuse and threat are forms of GBV which is widely inherent in human trafficking especially trafficking for forced labour and prostitution. Almost everyone who falls under trafficking has experienced it. Physical abuse and threat are very sever forms of GBV which often leaves the victims in a dire state of shock, fear and in some cases to death (Olubukola, 2020; Iyanda and

Nwogwugwu, 2016; Tur-Prats, 2015). All the participants of the study disclosed that they had all experienced these at various point of their journey with most of them citing Libya and/or when they had gotten to Italy as the place they had their first-hand experience.

One area that was revealed during the research is that this form of abuse is carried out by both people they know like their madams/ogas for example the case of Adesuwa illustrate how this is done and the way her madam treated her badly when she was still with her and by people they don't know that is those that were total strangers to them for example the connection men, bandits, Libyans, clients etc. the case by Etinosa which showed how she was lynched and beaten severally and severely when she was in Libya by people she didn't know gives a clear picture of how it is done. Women and girls are at disadvantaged position during the trip as they are most times confined to places where they are not allowed to move, shouted upon, beaten and threatened during and after their migration journeys.

Another vital aspect was that these threat and abuse are not only carried out on them but also on their family or relatives (see also, Ikeora, 2016; Adeleye, 2017). This can be seen in the case of Adesuwa where the madam threatened her mother and she had to relocate and also for Osato where the madam was always threatening to kill her brother.

In the course of forcing the women and girls into doing prostitution, the madams/oga also employ the use of physical abuse and threat to get the Nigerian women and girls to act according to their instruction as indicated in theme 3 above, this goes to show that physical abuse and threat is inherent in trafficking of women and girls from Nigeria. These are used as a way of exerting power and force on the girls to comply with whatever they are told to do whether it is against their desire or not, they must engage in it or do them if not they will face dire consequences that may even lead to death. For example, Ngozi narrated in her story how the connection men beat and killed some girls during their journey or when they were in Libya/Agadez as a way of letting them know that they will receive the same treatment if they do not cooperate and do what he says, likewise for Nosa who said the same thing happened to them during her trip from Niger to Libya. As such, the public killing of migrant women and girls is used as a sign to teach the others, lessons to obey their commands and demands if not they will be done the same thing. This is also corroborated with the findings of WHO (2013) and UNHCR, (2020a) although not on the aspect of migrant women and girls but on a general basis where it was reported that over 70% of women and girls experience physical abuse and threat in their lifetime and about 50% of these people meet their death during the process of experiencing GBV in particular physical violence (see also, World Bank, 2019; Omi, 2006; Dino, 2022; Patr6-Hern6ndez, 2017).

Thus, the respondents of the study above gives an insight to what and how GBV with reference to physical violence and threat are carried out on migrant women and girls from Nigeria. It leaves them devastated and lost, tired and with lots of injury and marks on their bodies after such violence have taken place.

Moreso, the family and relatives are not exempted from it as they are also threatened and faced with such GBV back home in Nigeria if their child or relative is not cooperating in abroad, this makes not only the lives of the migrants women and girls to be at risks but that of their family and relatives to be at risks and sometimes they had to relocate to another city in the country to become safe from such violence by the madams/ogas.

As such, when women and girls move from Nigeria to Italy they are exposed to various patterns of physical abuse and threats which takes diverse shapes, of note here is that they can occur separately or simultaneously during and after their journeys.

Theme 5: Oath Taking and Ritual

Oath taking and Ritual are a form of voodoo practice whereby people are subjected to some kind of magic rites which involves swearing an oath of allegiance to the person/person's in charge of their journey. This form of abuse usually sees asymmetry power relations at its height as the girls and women are forced to take these oaths and perform rituals that are usually against their religious beliefs as expressed by the participants of the study. All of them said that they were made to undergo various voodoo practices which they usually call "*swear*" or "*juju*" before their madam/oga started the process for their journey. They explained that the things they were made to do was very scary for them and they had to go through it whether they liked it or not, thus force and threat was a great aspect of this practice carried out on them. According to the participants of this study, it also involved the removal of some things from their body such as pubic hairs, clothes, some piece of jewellerys, bathing in the river, eating unknown elements and raw entrails of animals among others. At the end they were told to say some incantations that were harmful to them should they fail to uphold the agreement made with their madam/oga.

According to Nosa before she left Nigeria, she was taken to a place where they did the swear and some things were removed from her body during the process:

The place was the typical juju place with red and white clothes tied all over the place, various statues, kolanuts, alcohol and some personal things like bra, pant etc. When I got there, they put something on my head and tied it around my head, they gave me kolanut and something to drink as well and they told me some things to say here like I will not forget them when I arrive to Europe and some other things I can't remember, they then

gave me something else to eat after saying all the things they asked me to say. When we were done, we went to the River, there they bathed me (Nosa- 28 years)

Ngozi a 27-year old participant recollecting her situation which was similar to the above, said that in her case her madam told her that she had to swear so that she will not put her [the Madam] in problem, that she will not run away and that she will not do bad thing to her [the madam]. As such she was taken to do the swear in Edo State before she left Nigeria.

While the above depicts what all the girls said they went through with just a slight difference in the things that were done and the places they did it, others also expressed how it was against their religious beliefs and when they voiced out their thoughts about it, they were told they must continue with the ritual if not they and their families will be harmed. For example, Efosa divulged this experience as thus:

[...] Then she [the madam] said she will do all the arrangement and afterwards I will travel out of the country. She also said that I must go and swear first before she will start the process. So me being a Christian I thought it was the Bible we were going to use to do the swear so I agreed but when we got to the place I saw it was not so, I started saying no I will not do it but the juju man and my madam said so long as I have entered the place I must do the swear if not I will run mad and my family will also be affected, so I had to do the swear and they collected things from my body like hair, a piece of my clothe and some other things (Efosa- 27 years).

One vital aspect that was also said was the fact that along this oath taking they are told that they will pay back huge sums of money ranging from 25,000 euros to 40,000 euros which as at the time of the oath taking they really did not know how big the money was as they are in Nigeria and do not have an idea concerning the exchange rate.

For example, in Adesuwa's experience she was told to pay back 25,000 euros when she arrives Europe and according to the madam she had been scammed before by other girls who she had sent to Europe so in order for her [the madam] to get her money back this time she [Adesuwa] must take the oath where she must commit to pay the money the madam will spend for the trip which is the 25,000 euros. At the shrine, the native doctor gives her marks on her body, then made her to take a shower with dirty water; subsequently she is made to wear a white robe. Afterwards the native doctor guts a hen, making her to eat the entrails mixed with gin. At that point Adesuwa repeats what the native doctor says: *"If you go to Europe and you don't pay you will die, if you rob Mama Victory you will die, if you run away you will die"*.

Oath taking and ritual is a form of GBV asserted on women and girls that are trafficked from Nigeria as exemplified from the responses shown above. This form of violence is noted to be one of the strongest which Nigerian women and girls experienced during their migration journey from

Nigeria to Italy. As noted by Ikeora, (2016), Gbadamosi, (2006), Esposito, et. al., (2016), Baarda, (2016), and Degani and Ghanem, (2019), oath taking and ritual has been strongly linked to human trafficking especially of Nigerian women and girls before their migration journey and in some cases after the migration journey has taken place. This was also evident from the responses gotten for the study as shown above, the case of Nosa clearly illustrates this where she was forced to do the ritual before she left Nigeria.

It has also been noted that this form of abuse are done before the migration journey is started as many of the traffickers do not attempt to organise the trip before the oath is done. This was a recurrent aspect that was said by all the participants of the study as they all mentioned that they were not involved in the process of their trip, hence their madam/oga was the one who did all the organization for the trip for them and in all the cases they had to do the swearing rites before anything concerning the journey was initiated [that is the process for their journey] and after which they started their migration journey from Nigeria. Although, other researchers such as Millett-Barrett, (2019), Ikeora, (2016), and Degani and Perini, (2019), also reported that this oath taking and ritual practice are done when the migrants arrive in their destination countries, for instance, it has been documented that there are some juju places/ritual settings in Turin in Italy where the girls are carried to go and swear again or reinstate the first swear and/or taken for the first time to go and swear. This was not evident from my research as all but one of the participants revealed they all did their swearing once in Nigeria before they left. However, the only participant who mentioned that she [Itohan] was taken to a place in Italy when she had arrived, said it was done some years later after the Oba of Benin Declaration/Swear that women and girls should stop paying traffickers money, in her case her madam took her to the shrine so she can go and swear again to block the one that the Oba did, this she revealed was that the woman still wanted her to continue paying her the money for the trip and other up-keep money. Thus, it would be interesting to find out how many women and girls are made to undergo this kind of swear in Italy when they had arrived as this would help to understand the phenomenon of juju practice and destination countries and how these can be stopped by the law enforcement agencies as well as arresting those involved in it.

Moreso, oath taking and ritual rites are gendered in the sense that in all the reports concerning the swear, it has been mainly women and girls who have been found to undergo this practice before departure. For example, my study found out that it was only the girls who were made to do this, when asked if there were men and boys in the shrine places when they went for the swear, all the participant said there were no men and boys when they went for the swear, this is puzzling as men and boys are also trafficked but the extent to which they are subjected to this form of violence is not widely known

because of the few research on sex trafficking relating to boys and men as they are regarded to be trafficked more on the bases of forced labour as noted by scholars (see Piper, 2005; ILO, 2012; Asongu and Usman, 2020; Cann, et. al., 2010; Abiodun, et. al., 2021). This goes to point out that oath taking and swearing are more on the women and girls because of the type of trafficking they fall under although not much evidence is there to show this. It may also be because of the lucrative nature of sex trafficking as there is high demand for them in the destination countries of which Italy is ranked first among such countries of impact/entrance especially for undocumented migration from Nigeria.

It has also been documented that some of the women and girls are aware of the fact that they would be taken out of Nigeria for prostitution while others are not aware as such they call that the term victim should be revised as some women are not victims of trafficking but smuggling because they were aware and willingly agreed to it, for instance Semprebon and Abe, (2021), Kleeman, (2011), and Ikeora, (2016), all asserted to this point of differentiations however in my research this was not the case as all the participants disclosed that they were not aware of the kind of job that they were going to do when they eventually get to Italy as such the second aspect of their research does not apply to my study as they were all trafficked for sexual exploitation without any evident idea of it, they revealed that they were told they were coming to work as hair dressers, domestic babysitters, tailors, bartenders, sellers at shops among others (see research question one, theme three above), so for them the idea of these simple jobs with high pay made them agree to undergo the swear even though some of them didn't want to do it in the first place but was eventually made to do it if not they would not be sent abroad by the recruiters.

In this same manner, the procedures and process that the oath taking and ritual entails is dehumanising and demeaning against the women and girls and their bodies, the right to their body and decision is taken and striped away as they are forced to undergo the ritual whether they like it or not, whether they believe in the rites or not. The things required to do the process ranges from the collection of their pubic hairs, pants, or lingers, bra, fingernails, toenails, clothes, jewellerys, pictures among others. These things are used as evidence and taken to seal the bond of agreement between them and their traffickers (madam/oga) in order for them to pay back the money used for their trips. This was a recurrent phrase during the interviews and also among scholars such as Degani and Perini, (2019), Gbadamosi, (2006), Ikeora, (2014), and Olubukola, (2020), where they reported in their studies these things being done to the women and girls trafficked from Nigeria to Europe. As such oath taking can be said to be an inherent part of human trafficking pertaining to Nigerian women and girls. Also, in some of the research conducted by these scholars, they revealed that some of the personal items are taken by the madam/oga as a backup plan or a way of making the girls and women

know they are bonded by the swear and cannot easily be broken as these items are sealed to them and their fate as such, it creates more fear among the girls because such personal items are held and used against them, thus making them to comply to whatever they are told. Although my research participants didn't mention that their madam/oga took any of their personal items from them during the oath process, they rather said that the juju man/juju priest was the one that collected such things during the process thus confirming that these things are taken from them, but it was not by their traffickers as at the time of the swear.

Furthermore, the oath taking and ritual is used to serve two purposes for the traffickers (madam/oga), thus it is like using one stone to kill two birds. On the one hand the women and girls are forced to undertake the oath ritual which is used as a binding pact to secure the recruiters in the sense that they will be paid back the money used to organise and send the girls and women for the trips abroad thus they are told to pay back certain amount of money ranging from 25,000 euros to 40,000 euros when they get to Italy as such this acts as a reassurance for the traffickers in getting huge pay out checks/moneys at the end of a successful trip to Italy. On the other hand, it is used as a form of protection for the traffickers as it serves to secure them from any repercussion and consequence should the women and girls be caught by immigration and police officers during their line of work thus the traffickers get to escape any form of punishment for trafficking the girls and women as well as the exploitation and terrible work conditions employed by them on the girls and women. Therefore, the oath taking does not only violate the rights of women and girls it also acts as a way of keeping them in bondage and allegiance to their traffickers who exploit them in various ways as they deem fit. This is also in line with the research carried out by Millett-Barrett, (2019), Bales, (2000), and Alpes, (2008) as they also revealed in their studies how the oath is used to put the women and girls in bondage. Seemingly, the women and girls also agree to pay back such sums of money because they really don't know the real amount of the money asked and how long it would take for them to pay back the money. Moreso, this oath taking and ritual has been disclosed to also act as a disadvantage for proper investigation into the trafficking business as well as the catching of traffickers as the girls and women are not willing to cooperate with the law enforcement agencies, officers and officials in reporting their traffickers because of the fear of the consequences of the oath they had done. As such scholars have unveiled in their research as well as NAPTIP officers where they reported the slow or low responses for tackling trafficking related crimes as they have little to no evidence to use against the persons who involve in such crime (Agazue, 2013; Eghafona, 2020; Mojeed, 2008; NAPTIP, 2009; NAPTIP, 2020). Thus, oath taking and ritual frustrate the efforts of governments and other agencies in battling the scourge of human trafficking of Nigerian women and girls in Italy.

It is important to note that the fear emanates from the aspect of the repercussions and threats told to the women and girls, during the process of the swearing rites that they would face if they should go against the agreement and bond. Things such as they will go mad, their families will go mad, they will die, fall sick or contract terrible sickness and disease, among others are some of the things they are told that will happen to them if they go against their madam/oga and if they don't pay back the money and if they go and report the madam/oga. For example, in Ngozi's case she disclosed that she was told to say "*she will not run away, she will not put her madam in trouble, and she will pay the money*" during the ritual process as such this instil fear on them and makes them un-willing to cooperate with law enforcement agencies when they are caught or get in contact with them. This has not only blocked them (the law enforcement officers, agencies etc) from getting a hold of the traffickers and fighting human trafficking down, it has also made the girls and women unable to get the needed assistance/help that would make them leave such trafficking situations and be put in appropriate social and security programmes/systems in the various places they find themselves, in some cases the victims have been noted to feign forgetting some parts of their stories and/or changing their stories on how they got to Italy in order to abide by the pact of the oath taken (see Eghafona, 2020; Okojie, et. al., 2003; Semprebon and Abe, 2021; Desmond, 2009; EASO, 2021).

A different perspective reported in relation to the oath taking and ritual, was in the case of a respondent [Ivie] where she described that during the time she was with the madam she ran away one period and went to stay with another girl in Italy but when she was out of the madam's house, all the money she was working and getting she couldn't see any tangible thing she used them to do, she couldn't even see money to pay her rent and up-keep as she was working, and at a time she returned back to the madam surprisingly she started seeing money to give the madam. She said that she was not understanding how it happened, but she linked it to the swear she did because according to her that swear was very strong and she had to undergo various kind of swears before she could eventually come to Italy. It may be interesting to see if this is truly possible that the oath taking and ritual affects them when they run away not in the way of severe term like running mad but in relation to how they are coping after they run away from the madam. For example research on those that left their traffickers before the Oba's swear in 2018 and/after the Oba's swear.

Research question 3: To examine the consequences of the different kinds of violence (gender-based violence) and the different framing discourses of gender-based violence

Theme 1- Pregnancy and Abortion

One prominent consequences of GBV is that of unwanted pregnancy which migrant women and girls are exposed to as a result of incessant rape and sexual abuse as disclosed by the participants of the study. Responses gotten from the Nigerian women and girls interviewed revealed how many of them were raped and abused sexually during and after their journey. Most of them cited Libya as the place where they experienced heightened form of these abuses, and some were pregnant before they got to Italy as such when they arrived in Italy they had to undergo abortion to remove the pregnancies. Some others were also raped and abused sexually when they had arrived in Italy although they didn't say whether they became pregnant from such abuses.

A significant number of those that were pregnant said they were all made to undergo abortion whether they wanted it or not because their madam/oga told them that they had to do it before they could start the prostitution work as such, pregnancies is not only a consequence but also abortion as they had to do it without any say on their part if they wanted otherwise.

For example, Ivie explaining her experience disclosed how the man who raped her didn't care when she told him she was pregnant rather he was threatening to leave her behind in Libya if she made a fuss about it:

After he raped me [...] I missed my period that month, I was like I noticed myself that yes I'm not okay. I told him, he told me that if I misbehave that he will leave me in Libya, in that place. So I was scared, "*he say I go call your madam, I go leave you for here*"- original text in Nigerian Pidgin English) [Translated text in English- He said he will call my madam, that he will leave me behind], so you know I had to keep quiet. He didn't even bother to tell me anything. He say that's your headache. "*He said if I like I push you na you know, if I no like I no push you, you go dey here*"- original text in Nigerian pidgin English) [Translated text in English- He said if he likes he will send her to Europe, if he doesn't like he leaves her in Libya, and she will be there). So I had to call my madam and I told her, so she said okay no problem, the most important thing they will call the guy and tell him to push me. (Ivie- 24 years)

On arrival to Italy, after staying 3 days in the Camp in Sicily she called her madam who made the arrangements for her to leave the camp and took her to another city where she was given some drugs to terminate the pregnancy.

On the one hand, the above depicts what many of the girls described as their experience during their journeys with a slight difference for example, some of them did not know the person/persons' that raped and sexually abused them. On the other hand, the process of abortion takes another form.

As explained by another participant of the study, in her own case she was scared of what the madam will do if she found out she was pregnant. Thus according to her she [Etinosa] states that at the beginning of her prostitution activity, fearing she became pregnant during one of the rapes she suffered during the journey in Libya and being afraid if she reveal it to her madame, she asked for help from other compatriots on the street, who helped equipped her with abortion drugs, after which she had severe pain and consistent blood loss of which she was later discovered by her madam who kept her at home until the end of the bleeding, without giving her the necessary health care she needed.

Women and girls who are trafficked and are undocumented have been described to be exposed to various forms of violence and GBV as a result of their migration process, sexual abuse and rape have accounted for a major type of GBV faced by such migrants. Nigerian women and girls have not been left out of these forms of abuse as they have been noted to be among those who are highly susceptible to experience such form of violence as already documented by scholars such as Degani and De Stefani, (2020), Perrin, et. al., (2019), McMahon and Sigona, (2016), and Alagbe, (2021), and the responses gotten from my research study shown in research question two above. One consequences of sexual abuse and rape is that women and girls often end up getting pregnant during their migration journey and in some cases they arrive in Italy with the pregnancies or have already given birth to the children. In my research almost all of participant interviewed said they were raped during their migration journey although not all of them were pregnant, however some of them became pregnant after such abuse had taken place.

One of such places cited by the women and girls of the study where such abuse is dominant is Libya, according to them they experienced multiple forms of this abuse as they were forced to engage in sexual activities multiple times where they were staying before they eventually got to Italy. This is also evident in the findings of Poltorak, (2018), McMahon and Sigona, (2016), and Hermanin, (2017), where they reported women and girls arriving in Europe were raped severally and also pregnant and/or with children. Moreso, Bartolo (2018), one of the first responders of migrants and refugees in Italy, furthermore, reported such instances occurring over time whereby women and girls arrived in Sicily with pregnancies and little children with sub-Sahara Africans (including Nigerians) among a majority of the women and girls arriving with such pregnancies and children.

Moreso, pregnancy is not only a consequences of sexual abuse and rape but also abortion is part of it too especially when it comes to women and girls who were trafficked for sexual exploitation to Europe from Africa/Nigeria. Many of the participants who were exposed to sexual abuse and rape reported that they all had to undergo abortion once they had arrived in Italy as the madam/oga

arranged it for them to do it in order for them to start working so that they can start paying back the money spent on them for the journey. Thus they couldn't reject or accept the pregnancies as they had no choice or say on what to do next. As can be gleaned from Ivie's response above, her madam gave her drugs to take to terminate the pregnancies, in other cases the mode of termination are different such as kicking on the stomach, taking them to remove the pregnancies through D and C especially when the pregnancy has passed the first trimester and drinking other mixtures of things that are not drugs (HRW, 2019) etc. These were done in order for the girls to begin the sex work as pregnancies is seen as an obstacle of getting enough work done and customers during the work as some may not be interested in sleeping with pregnant women, some scholars such as Gerard and Pickering, (2012); Anani, (2013), Freedman, (2016), and Tastsoglou, et. al., (2021), have written on transactional sex being employed by migrants during their journey to get somethings done for them such as food, arrangement for their trips to Europe as well as how (pregnancy or being pregnant) is used as an advantage for migrant women and girls when they land in Europe as they are seen as vulnerable and are among the first persons they attend to in Europe however in the case of my research, this does not apply as many of the women and girls are made to undergo abortion so that they can begin the work as exemplified in the research carried out by Barbara, et. al., (2017), on Somali migrants where their study showed that out of 8 pregnant Somalian women they encountered 7 of them came in for abortion of which they were all trafficked. Thus, pregnancy during trafficking is a negative consequence of GBV that Nigerian women and girls face as they are subjected to abortion once they arrive in Italy.

On the other hand, the fear of the madam/oga while they have arrived in Italy also drive some women and girls to do the abortion themselves as they ask others outside to assist them to terminate the pregnancy. This can be because of the fear of repercussions should the madma/oga find out, some may fear being beaten, flogged, shouted upon etc. This was evident in one of my study participant [Etinosa] as seen above where she had to ask her fellow colleagues on the street for help to terminate the pregnancy as she was scared of what her madam would do to her. In another research carried out by HRW (2019), and Esposito, et. al., (2016), they revealed in their studies how the women and girls were beaten, kicked and forced to have abortion when their madam/oga found out about it because it was going to be a problem for them from continuing the work and bringing money. In some cases, the girls and women are given contraceptive to take to block any chance of pregnancy during the journey and after they had arrived, however it may not be efficient enough as some of them still become pregnant from the abuse experienced during the journey and from clients abuse too as some of the client may refuse using condom to have sex which leads some of the girls and women to become pregnant as suggested by other research (see Esposito, et. al., 2016; Vammen, et. al., 2021).

As gleaned from the findings of my study above (see research question two, theme one), those involved in such violent acts can be people they know such as the connection man or by those they don't know such as criminal gangs, Arabs, as well as officials of the law such as border police, army, immigration officers, detention officers etc. For instance, Barbara, et. al., (2017), documented in their research on the eight Somali women and girls, all reported being raped by the same man during their trip from Africa to Italy. However when they become pregnant during the process, they are left to carter for themselves alone and are not given any kind of support, in some cases sexual abuse and rape which leads to pregnancies can have extreme consequences as some may die during childbirth as a result of the lack of care and/or assistance given, for example, Abiéyuwa explaining her experience from one of her friend who was pregnant from being raped and sexually abused in Libya said that *“there are no medical personnel there in Libya, nobody will treat you [...] There is no hospital in Libya for irregular migrants, even women that give birth are not taken to the hospital. They will born there alone[sic].* At this point she gives a story of one Nigerian female migrant who gave birth in Libya. *“Ms Z was heavily pregnant while in the connection house in Libya and finally it was time to give birth to the baby. It was our fellow migrant women that helped her to give birth to the child peacefully. However, after 3 days of birth, Ms Z died due to lack of medical check-up and treatment”.* Thus, pregnancies reinforces vulnerability and have some negative consequences which may lead to severe/extreme forms such as death as explained above.

Theme 2: Psychological trauma and Depression

Psychological trauma and depression was a vital aspect that came up during the interviews with the participants as they acknowledged to have experienced them during various stages of their journeys which was strongly linked to the violence they experience. They all said they were trying to forget what they went through and sometimes the thoughts keeps coming up. As such they mentioned that they went through different kind of mental depression and also feared for their lives during the period they were exposed to various forms of violence.

For example Osato describing what she passed through in the hands of her madam as a result of how the madam paid someone to have forced sex with her so that she must do the sex work. According to her after the man had his way with her she became traumatised, and she couldn't get herself back to normal functioning again as she was still suffering from the forced sexual intercourse she had undergone. She explains it below:

So after everything I started crying and I told her that I am not going to do this work again, she said she will kill my brother in Nigeria if I don't take time and started threatening me again [...] I was crying so much because for many days I didn't get myself from you

understand. So I was like crying every day by day, crying, crying, crying. In my head things was not okay again, I was just like a ghost [...] (Osato- 22 years)

While for others that did not have the above experience, they mentioned how all that they went through from beating, rape, shooting, kidnapping and forced sex work among others led to them being traumatised and also depressed as they struggled to get into their routine and was thinking they wouldn't make it to see another day because of what they were going through. For example, Isoken explaining her own situation revealed how she was beaten, raped and she also escaped gun shots during the journey, to her she was scared if she would survive. She was struggling mentally to distract her brain, it made her to start thinking too much which eventually made her depressed. The person she was staying with also did not bother to give her the help she needed:

[...] I was now telling him then that I need psychologist. He was saying why did I need psychologist?. I know reason why I need. I just need someone to talk to, but he never gave me any psychologist or point me to the place where I can get one. It was a struggle (Isoken- 25 years).

Psychological trauma and depression has been deduced to be a great consequence of GBV and migration, many victims of trafficking experience them and as such makes them to be unbalanced mentally. Nigerian women and girls also experience these during their migration journey as they are exposed to various forms of GBV along the way and when they eventually arrive in Italy. As can be gleaned from the responses given above. These makes them not to be able to function well as they become trapped in mental prison, thus many become depressed, loss of interest in going out, meeting people, going to work as well as doing their daily activities. Scholars writing on it has also corroborated this fact as victims of trafficking exhibit severe forms of psychological trauma and depression, some of them become incoherent in their speeches, they have nightmares, they lose track of time and are usually uncoordinated (Ayodele, 2017; Ohonba and Agbontaen-Eghafona, 2019; Ikhidero, 2013; Anyagbenam, et. al., 2015). Thus, the movement of women and girls through undocumented migration process from Nigeria to Italy cause them to experience various forms of psychological trauma which eventually leads them to depression at various stages of their migration journey as a result of the different violence and abuse they face during the journey. The present study also witnessed this as was given by the responses from the women and girls interviewed.

Moreso, the dangerousness of the journey and the complications that comes with it further exposed them to mental and psychological trauma as they are made to undergo crude methods of transportation which puts them at risks during such journeys (Bardak, 2017; Hamood, 2006; Eghafona, 2020; Arbogast, 2016). Some of the responses gotten from the women and girls

interviewed showed how they were affected psychologically and some of them thought they would die from the trip especially when they got to Libya and saw the sea. For example, Itohan indicated that she thought she was going to die when she saw the sea, *“I was thinking I was going to die because even the river, when I see the river, when I wake up and I see the river, I will say oh God, Iye. Yes o I was thinking I’m going to die, I was thinking I will not survive the journey”*. Another one [Ginika] said she was just praying always that she makes the journey, that she doesn’t want to die on the road like that; in her words *“When I was in the camp in Libya I was still scared too because of the stories we were hearing. In my mind I was praying that God please my life cannot end like this, I was praying for forgiveness of sins from God that period so that I can cross over without losing my life”*. Thus, the findings from my study indicates that when women and girls are trafficked from Nigeria to Italy, they are more often than none, prone to psychological trauma and depression as they are placed at risks during the journey, experience various forms of violence, are shot at, abused incessantly and furthermore fear for their lives during and after the migration journey.

Also, the working and living conditions of the women and girls when they arrive in Italy further places them in depression as they become trapped with no way to escape, they are undocumented, they don’t know the language, they don’t have any relatives there and they can’t access some things that citizens and regular migrants can in Italy, as such they have to stay with their madams and do whatever they are told to do in order to survive. These among others puts them in depression as they realise they do not have right to anything concerning their lives and bodies during and after their journeys.

Theme 3: Sickness and Diseases

Many of the participants interviewed explained that they were sick during their journey, although it was not expressively linked to their experience of violence per say but they said as a result of the restriction in movement, exposure to cold, terrible living conditions and the heat in the Sahara desert all contributed to why they fell sick during and after their journeys. While the others fell sick when they were doing the prostitution work in Italy. Some of the responses below portrays their situation:

Isoken a 25-year old participant fell sick during her journey in the desert, she was not able to move during the period without help from the people that were travelling with her. She explained the experience as thus:

I was sick when we were in the desert, very very sick. I was just praying in that moment that there should not be anything that they will say that everybody should run, just like in war front where everybody will be running for their life. I was just praying that it should not be, I should not be in that stage at that moment because I cannot move, I don’t even

have the strength, because I was very very sick that time, I couldn't even eat that time. So whenever they are going then, there was a group of some boys that were just carrying me on the back. There was nobody to treat us when we were sick. Everybody was on their own.

Like the above, another participant recounting her experience of falling sick in Libya with similarity in relation to her not being able to move but with a slight difference in the sickness she had, divulged the following:

There was nobody [no medical personnel] to treat us there. After some time in Libya, I was having this sickness “*Shabani*” and that *Shabani* was I mean the bad sickness in Libya, it killed anyhow, so I was very, very scared, no treatment, no medicine, I was not taking anything at all, so they said I should be staying inside the sun, all your body will just be stiff, it will swell. Staying one place, and the cold was part of the cause of the sickness, like when you are having that thing there, they can't be able to push you because it will be very very risky [...] So you have to be looking for sun, so that the sun will melt it. All your face you can't even open your mouth, you can't even walk. The guy we were all together, the guy died because of the *Shabani* [...] It was the girl that we left together that was even the one helping me because it was so serious, I can't even take my shower properly, I can't even eat, nothing (Ivie- 24 years).

On the other hand, participants also fall sick as a result of GBV experienced in Italy and in some cases from their clients during the period they were doing the prostitution work. For example, one participant revealed how she fell sick after her client had beaten her the previous night during her working period. According to Ede after refusing to sleep with a client without protection [Condom], her client gave her serious beating that when she managed to escape and went back home she fell very sick and thought she would die however the madam was not interested in treating her rather she just wanted her to continue the work and bring back money. In her words:

[...] I almost died that period, I fell very sick that time but she didn't care, she just wanted her money by force. All she was interested in was that I keep bringing her money whether I am sick or not (Ede- 28 years).

The above description depicts various experiences of what women and girls go through as a result of GBV and undocumented migration. The complexities and dangerous journeys that Nigerian women and girls go through as well as the various forms of GBV experienced during and after their migration causes them to fall sick and in some cases contract diseases which can be terminal for instance HIV/AIDS, STI's, among others. Scholars researching on trafficking of women and girls have also found the same results in their findings, for example, Eghafona, (2020), Millett-Barrett, (2019), and Ikeora, (2016), among others, have all linked human trafficking of women and girls to sickness and diseases. In a case cited in Ikeora, (2016), the man who trafficked the girls from Nigeria

to Europe had HIV and he went ahead to rape the girls without condom as such spreading HIV through rape (p. 5-6). This clearly shows how women and girls experiencing GBV are prone to contracting diseases as a dire consequence of such abuse. Although in my research, none of the participants admitted if they had any diseases from such experience during the course of their journey or when they were doing the prostitution work, but it is still possible that some may have had it but didn't want to say because of stigmatization or were being shy/scared about it.

Moreso, trafficked women falling sick can happen at any time of the journey depending on how the journey is going, the environment, the conditions of stay, the weather, and the type of violence they experienced, while some may fall sick as a result of the beating they experienced, others may fall sick because of the bad water and food given to them. For example, Nosa revealed in her story how they [the connection men] were giving them the sea water to drink everyday with little food once a day and this eventually made her to fall sick and at a point it affected her menstrual cycle as she didn't see her period for over 6 months even after she had crossed to Italy, the madam thought she was pregnant but when taken to the doctor that was not the case. She had to undergo some treatment before she could get her cycle back which according to her doesn't flow normally again.

Another thing is that women and girls falling sick can also be as a result of violence faced by their clients as depicted in Ede's situation above, as such the trafficked women and girls bear the consequences of GBV at different point in their journey as well as when they have arrived and these sicknesses and diseases can come from multiple forms of abuse and perpetrators ranging from armed gangs, law enforcement officials, connection men, madams/ogas, as well as clients when they have arrived Europe. While in some cases the client will refuse to sleep with the girls with condoms and this makes them prone to contracting diseases as a result of the prostitution work they are doing (see Esposito, et. al., 2016; Eghafona, 2009; Okojie, et. al., 2003; HRW, 2019).

Research Question 4: How can the causes and challenges associated with the illegal migration of Nigerian girls and women be addressed?

Theme 1: Government to provide Jobs, Opportunities and Infrastructures

When asked the various ways Government can act to help address the issue of undocumented migration and trafficking from Nigeria to Italy, All the respondents indicated different areas they think the government can improve on that will assist in stopping this type of movement from Nigeria. While most reiterated on the government to provide jobs, and opportunities for the youths especially as they are the ones who fall prey to these types of movements. Others suggested that the government

should build infrastructures such as roads, schools, provide electricity, among others as these will invariably give chance for development which will distract people from going abroad to seek better life for themselves and their families. Some of the responses below echoes these varied points:

Yes, the Government can do anything to stop it, if the government give them work, he can stop it, without work I don't think he can stop it. Yes, because who is working now will not have chance to do another thing or someone that his mother is working, his father is working will not see chance to tell his child that you need to go to Europe to go and do that kind of stupid job, you understand (Itohan-25 years).

Nigerian government can stop it if they provide jobs for the youths. They should give the youth space to do something in the society like the Italian government does. They should fight corruption and bribery and stop oppression of the rich against the poor, if they do this, life will be good, and the youths can dominate the society which will create a difference in the country later on (Ezinne- 28 years).

If the government can provide work for the youths, give them free education, this can help them to be more active in the country and forget about leaving Nigeria. In the end, it's just for the Nigerian government to prevent these people from leaving by providing them with opportunities of having a good life that this matter will be solved (Osas- 20 years)

For me, they [the government] have to provide jobs for them [the youths], they have to provide jobs. Because when someone is working, you are receiving good salary, you won't leave your country, like you are okay. So for me, employment will discourage people from moving abroad because some people go to school and at the end they don't have work and they need to take care of their family, how can they do that without work? It is not possible (Nosa- 28 years)

While the above describes what majority had to say concerning the government providing jobs and opportunities. Others also added that they should also provide other things apart from jobs, as depicted in some of the responses below:

[...] Nigeria is not good in terms of opportunities for living and there are a lot of people who are looking for better life and opportunities outside the country. If the government can really work in the country for example, fix the roads, provide sufficient power supply, provide scholarships for people to go to school and provide all other facilities and job opportunities especially for the youths in Nigeria, it will help reduce it. This will also make the youths to leave fraudulent acts like Yahoo and focus on building a sustainable life in Nigeria (Ginika- 25 years).

But to just say what I feel can be done is that the government should give good life to citizens, good road, good light everything. Because now everything is expensive and cost so high. Even the air we breathe is by the grace of God. The rate of poverty in Nigeria is

too much you understand. I believe it's the poverty that cause all these type of movements in the first place. This is why these people see chance to be doing human trafficking and be using humans as machines and slaves for their own benefit. So the government should just provide good opportunities and infrastructures for the citizens in Nigeria, I believe this will help a lot (Efosa- 27 years).

Stemming undocumented migration from Nigeria to Italy has not been successful over the years because of various reasons that have been addressed in research question one such as poverty, insecurity, unemployment, inequality among others which have been noted to be predominant in Nigeria and as such these drives migration out of Nigeria either regularly or irregularly. Thus it is not surprising that the same is called for the solutions suggested by the respondents of the study.

The findings from the study indicates that the provision of jobs, employment, opportunities for growth and development as well as the provision of basic and fundamental infrastructures are key in curbing undocumented migration from Nigeria to Italy. These have also been documented by other scholars who have carried out research on Nigeria and human trafficking, in their study they also suggested that the government should provide jobs and opportunities in the country as these will reduce the drive for out migration through undocumented means (see Iyanda and Nwogwugwu, 2016; Olubukola, 2020; Manbe, 2016; Adepoju and van der Wiel, 2010). Thus this study is in line with other research as it suggests these to foster such reduction in undocumented migration and invariably trafficking from Nigeria to Europe. Because when such jobs and opportunities are available in Nigeria, the zeal to migrate desperately will be cut off, as already documented in chapter one, the early 1960s and 1970s saw a reduced form of out migration of Nigerian youths including women and girls because that period the economy was booming, there were jobs available for the youths so much so that Nigeria was an employer of foreigners which made up a large percentage of workers during that time before the economy depreciated (see chapter one: 1.3 section three: Migration the Nigeria experience-1. 3.2.iii. Post-colonial/Current Migration). As such, once the government can provide jobs and various opportunities for the youths these will make them not to be so focused on journeys abroad which can lead them to trafficking syndicates.

Moreso, Nigeria can achieve this height by diversifying the economy, at present the main economy stay in Nigeria is that of oil and few agricultural and natural resources exports which are done mainly in raw forms/products and they are imported back in finished goods which are sold at exorbitant prices to the country, this further plunges the economy and spending power of the citizens at lower rates as money gotten is used to buy mainly daily perishable things and goods for survival. Whereas there was a time agriculture was the main economy stay in Nigeria and this helped to build the economy as well as create jobs for the old and young in the society. Thus, this study advocates

for the re-evaluation of the Nigerian economic survival and a shift in the way and manner it is done, whereby agriculture, technology/ICT as well as other natural resources in Nigeria should be explored and developed fully to maximum capacity whereby Nigeria will shift from her periphery level of value chain and exportation to a more centre level where they operate at the finished line. As such, there should be developmental structures and companies as well as industries that would facilitate such mechanized form of production that will not only provide for the citizen but to the world economy at large.

Moreso, even the oil that is being extracted and exported should be more refined, that is there should be development of the right infrastructures and facilities that would shift Nigeria oil export from raw form to more processed and finished products such as gas, fuel, kerosene among others which will create a change in the level of Nigeria value chain in world economy thereby creating a more powerful and balanced position for Nigeria in the international communities relating to economic growth. These would help spur more opportunities for the youths and those that are within the working brackets as well as give them jobs that will be beneficial to them and their families and at the same time it will take their minds off travelling abroad for greener pastures and exposing themselves to risks especially the women and girls to trafficking mechanisms along such journeys.

Access to schools and free/reduced cost of education is also key in stemming human trafficking from Nigeria to Italy as a trained mind will hardly fall prey to trafficking. For example, most of the women and girls interviewed in the study had only gone to primary and secondary schools, some did not even finish their secondary schools before they left for Europe. This also acts as a reason why some of them fall prey to trafficking as they do not know or understand that they are being trafficked as most of them didn't go to school, they easily believe all that the traffickers said to them and as they are in the village, and they don't have idea about trafficking which leaves them to become easily cajoled by the traffickers when they approach them in the village. Moreso, Education also provide people with ammunition and hope that they can access some job markets in the country as both the public and private sectors takes into consideration the certificates of the kind and/or level of education gotten before many jobs are given in Nigeria, Thus access to education and finishing schooling can also act as a leeway to reduce trafficking from Nigeria to Italy when such certificates are used to secure jobs in the country that would help to keep one afloat.

Theme 2: Support Women and provide laws on Violence Against Women

During the interview, participants were asked about how GBV can be addressed in Nigeria. Some of the participants established their views on that aspect and they said the government can address

GBV issues in Nigeria if they make laws against VAW and girls and also support the women and girls to become independent too. According to the participants:

The Nigerian government should make laws against women violence. They should also arrest any man that does this violence to the girl child and women in Nigeria, the man should be put in prison for like two months and be given the same treatment he did to the girl or woman he committed the violence on. This will make them see how bad violence is and force them to stop doing it (Osas-20 years).

[...] Maybe they might put a law that anybody that behave strange or that use to beat the wife or any woman any time, that they will go to prison something like that, at least that will reduce a lot of things because so many people are scared to go to prison (Onome- 20 years).

Like the above, others further added that when cases of rape, sexual abuse and other forms of GBV like beating, threat, etc are reported, the law enforcement agencies should attend to them and give out the appropriate punishment to the perpetrators of such violence. For example Abiéyuwa explains this as thus:

Police number one, when you call Nigerian police now, and say “*them don rape me o*”- original text in Nigerian Pidgin English)[Translated text in English- That is the person has been raped], If the person that did the crime, have money, they talk the matter one way and the matter will close without anything done to the criminal. Just recently, a young girl was raped almost to the point of death, and she reported the case to the police, all the police said was, what was she looking for in the bush? Imagine that kind of question [...] For me, when there is any violence and they [women and girls] go to report it to the police, that matter should be looked into very well and justice should be served. The person that committed the offense should be punished according to the law irrespective of their social status in the society [...] (Abiéyuwa- 25 years).

She also went further to say that the women should be supported. “*Give them hope, they can give them some amount of money to assist the women too*”.

Indeed supporting women and girls to become independent is vital for the curbing of GBV and human trafficking in Nigeria. As many women and girls are the victims of such violence, they should be given more opportunities to help them establish themselves and contribute meaningfully to the economy and society at large. As such, women and girls should be given various empowerment schemes and programmes that would help them transit and transfer their energy and time into skills that would be beneficial to them in relation to gaining employment, owning their own business, engaging in agricultural activities as well as assisting the family in sustaining stability in the economy whereby the men are seen as the major bread winners/providers of the family. This would make the girls and women to be engaged and focused on building various aspects of their socio-economic

spheres and not to be lured into going abroad to look for better lives for themselves and their families as they are already gainfully employed and providing for their families.

There are already various GBV laws enacted in Nigeria, many of the women and girls may not have been aware about them that is why they kept saying laws should be made against violence against women as can be gleaned from their responses above. However the government should strengthen the application of such laws already passed in Nigeria against the culprits/perpetrators as this would help create the needed political force and awareness that VAW is prohibited as such just as Abiéyuwa responded the laws should be implemented in such a way that it doesn't favour anybody over the next when this is done it will create more awareness and fear among those who have been oppressing the women and girls in Nigeria and foster a better, equal and sane society. Seemingly, there should be more awareness at the grassroot level about the various GBV laws passed in Nigeria such as the Child Right Act of 2003, The National Gender Policy of 2006, The Prevention Against Domestic Violence Law of 2007 (Shockingly, this law was only passed in Lagos since its inception), The Gender-Based Violence (Prohibition) Law initiated in 2007 and signed into law in 2013; and The Violence Against Persons Prohibition Act (VAPP) of 2015 (This act was done to ensure that all states in the federation i.e. the 36 states and the FCT have a national legislation prohibiting violence against women, puzzlingly, the act is only applicable in the FCT as other states have not passed neither have they embedded it in their state laws), among others (Ciroma, 2006; Umoru, 2017; CEDAW, 2017; LawNigeria, 2020; Arowolo, 2020). These would help women and girls know their rights especially for those residing in the rural areas and are able to report any form of abuse they encounter and/or even when they are forced to migrate against their wishes or desires in the places where they reside this will invariably stem the scourge of human trafficking and GBV of Nigerian women and girls who are among the most susceptible to be lured into undocumented migration in the guise of gaining better lives abroad particularly to Italy and Europe generally.

Another reason for their lack of awareness concerning these laws may be attributed to their lack of access to information and also to the fact that some of them had already entered Italy when some of the laws were passed and as such they would not have known about them if they don't have access to the news on tv or through the internet this may likely be their situation, as all of them said that they had little access to tv and internet during the period they were with their traffickers thus accounting for such disparity in the first place. In most cases even when they were given phones by their madams/ogas for communication bases the phones were those without internet and access to Wi-Fi thus establishing their little knowledge and access about things that have occurred in Nigeria and in certain situation in Italy unless if they are told by other people when they are outside from their

madams/ogas place. For instance, during the line of their work, they have other informal communications with the other people they stand with and from there they get some form of update about situation at home and even in Italy that they are not aware of. For example, this happened to many of them during the period the Oba made the Declaration/Swear on 9th March 2018 (see Millett-Barrett, 2019; Freeman, 2018; Eghafona, 2020) where he released trafficked people (especially women and girls) from their traffickers by neutralizing the oaths they had taken with his own declaration and swear from juju charms that dates back to over 800 years when they were last seen and also to stop paying their traffickers any debt they owed as a result of taking them abroad especially those in Europe, in majority of the respondents they revealed that their traffickers didn't let them know that the Oba had made such Declaration and Swear concerning debt payment, it was through their fellow colleagues during the line of their work that they got wind of the latest update from Nigeria and this helped many of them to escape from their traffickers during that period. Although in few cases their madams/ogas told them about the swear however they still insisted that the women and girls stay behind and continue the payment and in one case, the girl [Itohan] was taken to a shrine in Italy to redo another swear that will counter the Oba's Declaration so that she [the madam] will continue receiving payment from her. *From my personal observation when I was in Nigeria, I personally witnessed this Swear when it happened in 2018 and I must say the effect was felt all over Edo state, as the weather and air changed from day to night immediately and there was heavy shaking in the ground, mystic air, strong wind and a lot of things that were destroyed during the process of the Oba's Declaration and Swearing taking place. Without a doubt, it was obvious that something was going on in the State, but it was not until the next day that the news of the Oba's Declaration/Swear was known to be what had happened the previous day. The effects were already taking shape quickly as at the next few days some people were already dying in some parts of the state, this made some of the people involved to go back to the Oba to beg for him to reverse the swear because of the fear that it would affect more of their people however till I left, there was no update on any reversal concerning the swear this was just one part that I witnessed, however the full impact of the swear is still yet to be ascertained.*

They should furthermore be given opportunity to go to school as Nigeria is still among the countries whereby patriarchy is still held in high esteem with the men regarded as more vital than the women and girls, thus some families prefer to send their male children to school than their female children (see Research Question One: Theme One above) thereby creating an imbalance in the educational sector which later translate to the economic sectors as the men will get the more paying/higher paying jobs as they have the certificate than the women who didn't have the certificate and mostly are found in the lower sectors of the work force. Thus, when women and girls go to school,

they become more engaged and useful to the society as they contribute to the socio-economic development of the country as well as political aspects as they bring in a different perspective to such sectors that may not have been there as a result of their marginalized roles which places them at the background most times.

Theme 3: Block the Borders

During the interview, two of the participants also mentioned that the government should block the borders as a way of addressing undocumented migration and human trafficking. According to them, if these borders are closed there will be no chance for people to leave Nigeria and pass through the perilous journey. According to the participants:

For me the government should block the borders, yes. Because anything that make them to block because without Kano you can't go to Desert. They have to block all these borders like Kano border, Abuja, they have to block it. It's that Kano especially because once you get to that Kano, Agadez is like very close. So if they block it, it will help to stop people from leaving (Ivie- 24 years).

The borders should be blocked, that is the only way it will stop. If they can do it, it will make many people stay in the country and figure out how to survive not going through this dangerous journey (Ede- 28 years).

On the one hand blocking of borders can act as a way of curbing undocumented migration and trafficking as employed by the EU with their externalization policies with third countries outside the EU such as Morocco, Libya, Tunisia, Turkey, Niger, Nigeria, among others. This can be seen from the resultant effects it has had over the years as the number of migrants, refugees and asylum seekers have reduced drastically from these third countries borders into the EU (Barslund, et. al., 2019; Freedman, 2012; Tastsoglou, et. al., 2021; Arbogast, 2016), however these policies have not been fruitful in addressing the issues pertaining to undocumented migration, smuggling and human trafficking.

In short, blocking borders have not resulted to good outcomes as it further increases the vulnerabilities that migrants, asylum seekers and refugees face on their way including those that are trafficked from Nigeria to Italy/Europe, as the traffickers look for other measures and routes to get these people (including women and girls) by all means into Europe as can be seen from the consistent numbers of flows on those crossing the European borders every year. For instance the number of those that arrived in Italy through the Mediterranean sea between 2016 to 2019 showed a steady decrease on the one hand ranging from 181,436 in 2016 to 119,369 in 2017 to 23,370 in 2018 and

11,471 in 2019 respectively (Italian Ministry of Interior 2020; WHO, 2016; Viola, et. al., 2018) whereas, on the other hand the risks and dangerousness of the journey increased exponentially for undocumented migrants, asylum seekers and refugees especially during their stay in Libya where many migrants face inhumane treatment and detention under unsafe conditions and environments (Juárez, et. al., 2019; Adepoju, and van der Wiel, 2010; Arbogast, et. al., 2012; IDMC, 2021). Moreso, the research carried out by Czaika and Hobolth, (2016), showed that a 10% increase in restrictive policies on borders control leads to a 4% increase in irregular migration into 29 European countries. Thus blocking borders will not proffer the right solution in addressing trafficking, GBV and undocumented migration from Nigeria to Italy. For example, the figures of Nigerian women and girls who were intercepted on the sea and eventually made their way to Italy during and after the heightened period of the migration crisis increased steadily from 1,500 in 2014 to 5,000 in 2015 to 11,009 in 2016 respectively of which 80% of them were estimated by IOM to be potential victims of trafficking for sexual exploitation (IOM, 2017a; HRW, 2019) and all these were done during the time externalization policies were already put in place by the EU and the third countries, thus indicating that migration cannot be stopped as it is an irreversible trend that has come to stay.

Rather what should be advocated should be less stricter visa regimes and policies; and more safer, easier visas and legal pathways for migration should be encouraged and implemented as these would foster legal ways of migrating and safer means too and thereby invariably removing the precariousness and GBV that migrants face (especially women and girls who are the most vulnerable) in such movements. Moreso, it would stem the scourge of trafficking when the opportunity to migrate will no longer depend on anybody or traffickers but on the migrants themselves as they have all the options available for them to choose from as such they can make informed decisions on whether or not they want to migrate and/or whether or not the mode of migration they choose

Furthermore, Europe needs migrants especially the youths as Europe is an ageing population with over 20% of the population in the EU above 65 years as well as estimates given projecting a serious decline in the work-age population within 30 years and especially now that the UK has left the bloc with over 60 million people gone from the EU, there is need to fill up the spaces left by the Brexit as well as the death encountered by the Covid-19 pandemic which Europe and the EU suffered a lot especially Italy which is regarded as one of the countries with the highest number of ageing population (22.8%) in the regional bloc (see Eurostat, 2020; Istat, 2021; UNDESA, 2013; IOM, 2017b). Therefore, encouraging exchange of migrants will help fill up these spaces and vacancies that are already manifesting and will manifest later on in the future if the current declining birth-rate continues at the pace it is showing now. Moreso, migrants come along with their own skills, ambitions

and cultures, these should be integrated in such a way that they produce positive outcome for learning and exchange of ideas and culture which will make the countries richer in diverse activities, perspectives and opportunities other than what they are used to. Thus, the migrants becomes a positive impact in the societies and countries they settle in.

Thus, I disagree with the responses given above as blocking borders only make the traffickers and smugglers employ more dangerous and unsafe measures and routes to get their victims and/or other people across borders as exemplified by this present study and the studies cited above as well as in chapter one. Moreso, it would be difficult to block the borders as the ECOWAS pact is mainly about the free movement of goods, services and people around her 15 member States which are done most times legally and this help to foster integration among the group of citizens in these various countries which has also proven to be of advantage to them as some of them leave their countries to get jobs in other countries freely which would have been difficult to do in the first place if there was no ECOWAS bloc in place (see for example, Chapter one: Section two: Africa the continent on the run?: Migration trends in Africa/Nigeria- Post-Colonial era). Instead proper monitoring of the borders with incorruptible border polices and immigration officers should be encouraged and implemented and those caught in the act of trafficking and smuggling should be punished appropriately according to the laws pertaining to such crimes.

Conclusion

This chapter has analysed and discussed all the responses gotten for the research in answering the research questions. As such it underscored the main bane of the dissertation as it dissects all the aspect that leads to trafficking as well as the various forms of GBV, the consequences and the solutions to fighting the scourge of GBV, trafficking and undocumented migration from Nigeria to Italy.

Chapter Four: Findings and Discussion II

Introduction

This is the second chapter of the data analysis for this study. In this chapter, the various experiences of the participants which are the professionals such as Social workers, Legal guardians, Heads of reception centers, NGOs, Anti-trafficking workers and Heads of Anti-trafficking unit etc in Italy at the various regions noted in chapter two are explored using the vignette which were made up of two stories. It shows how participants express their experience in handling both cases which were related to the reception system in Italy and how protection is given to such women and girls when they seek help from professionals and the various organizations in Italy. Thus just like the previous chapter, I made use of the phenomenology approach, to uncap the experiences of each participants in relation to the vignette which were explored and furthermore led to the emergence of various themes that were related to answering the questions for the vignette which embedded the last research question on the institutional treatment and perception of Gender-Based Violence in migrant reception centers/system and at large the research questions of the study (Smith, et al., 2009; Vagle, 2016; van Manen, 2016).

More so, during the process of the data analysis and interpretation, bracketing was done at all times which helped to erode the researcher preconceived notion of the research study (Vagle, 2014; Noon, 2018). As such, the themes generated and reported by all the participants described the phenomenon in such a way that can be replicated and recognised by anyone experiencing/handling the same situation (Vagle, 2014; Creswell, 2013). Thus, I unveil the specific forms and nature of the protection system and how women and girls who have the same characteristics with those that were described in the vignettes are attended to in Italy. Furthermore, through phenomenology method I grew to know the participants on a personal level and I also came to understand their experience, involvement and meaning beyond my preconceptions. As such employing this approach enabled me to situate the patterns, trends, similarities and differences that make up the situations of migrant women and girls on their voyage to Italy as well as the various ways they are safeguarded in Italy from the professional side.

In all, I was always engaging in reflectivity and continuous listening of the data as well as re-reading of the transcripts and summary alongside member checking the elements of the phenomenon and the themes. The finalised themes used were a result of various interwoven narratives of shared experiences by the professionals on the vignette which consisted of two stories; the first one Ms A. a 20-year-old single girl and the second one Ms B. a 35-year-old mother (housewife) with 3 children.

At the end of each story, the professionals were asked seven questions that were identical across both cases (the vignettes are attached in the appendices).

Thus, Four themes namely; Identification, Who gets What, When and How, Reasons and Determination were generated and the themes are shared among the various questions, and they are discussed and analysed using the responses of the participants to provide a detailed explanation of the phenomenon. The following are the vignette and the questions that make up the study.

MS. A lived with her parents in a small flat in Nigeria, she is the first of 7 children in her family. Her father is a retired civil servant, and her mother is a petty trader. Due to the recession faced in the country, MS. A has been unable to get a job both in the public and private work sectors. She started her own small-scale business but was unable to maintain it due to low funds and maintenance of her family, as she supports her family from the proceeds she gets from the business. As a result, MS. A made the decision to relocate to look for a better job to help sustain her family. She fled out of the country having no valid passport and enough money to apply for a visa, she went through irregular routes. During this journey, she was made to stop by temporarily in a city, where she was beaten, given little food, forced to work to raise more money to continue the trip and she finally arrived in Italy. (see appendices for the complete story)

MS. B is a married woman. She has 3 children (6, 4 and 2 years old) and they lived in an urban area in Nigeria. She worked in the civil service commission until 3 years ago when her husband came up with the idea of her leaving her job in order to carter fully for the family. Several months after, He returns home late from work, often times he is drunk and when she tries to talk to him about this, he abuses her verbally and hits her physically, uses force on her for sex. In the last one year, he gave her a beating which landed her in the hospital for 3 days with fractures all over her body, After this incident, MS B fled out of the country with the children, and they landed in Italy (see appendices for the complete story)

Questions

- 1) Did it happen that you take charge of a case like this?
- 2) Is this a case that is easy or hard to cope with compared to other type of cases?
- 3) If you have experienced a case like this, could you tell me what were the main issues?
- 4) How does the procedure for taking care of this person works?
- 5) What are the reasons to protect this person? Is it because of victim of violence, human trafficking, Gender-Based Violence, etc?
- 6) Do you think this story is real?
- 7) What are the tool used by you and your organization to explore if this story is real or not?

Theme 1: Identification

One of the first things that was discussed during the interviews with the professionals was on the aspect of identification for both Ms. A and Ms. B stories. According to the professionals this was a very vital aspect in relations to the way women and girls are identified as victims in Italy when they are sent to their organizations from other people/authority or when they come willingly to them in Italy. Responses from the professionals regarding Ms. A story showed a varied but yet similar pattern in the process of identification of such person with similar characteristics of Ms A.

All the professionals said that for Ms A, the process of identification entails critically examining her story and taking it piece by piece in order to fully bring out all the other hidden things that may have been omitted in the first meeting as they noted that the women and girls in such situation may be scared to say all that they went through as such, it takes some time for them to establish a strong bond which in turn helps the lady to open up eventually and say the true story and things she experienced. Also other markers used as mentioned by the professionals on such person to identify them as victims are the mode of leaving Nigeria that is through a sponsor which can be a madam/oga, they usually don't have passport, they usually are made to pass through borders mostly without papers/documents, they are most often than none abused on the way which range from physical abuse, sexual abuse, threat, among others. Then they also check for her situation in Italy in relation to living conditions, what form of work she was doing before they met her, does she have debt to pay, did she do any oath before leaving Nigeria. These are some of the major factors that make up trafficked peoples' profiles. Thus according to the professionals when they discover some of these elements they usually identify the women and girls as victims of trafficking and they find a programme that will be viable for them and place them under the protection system in Italy. Of note here is that all the professionals said they had all handled cases and issues related to that of Ms A story, as such their different answers on it gave a robust knowledge on the phenomenon as can be gleaned from their responses below:

[...] Generally, the stories of the women who arrive at the project can be partly overlaid with the story of Ms A. So elements such as a difficult economic situation at home, the decision to start with the project to earn and help their family and finally the trip to Libya which often takes place in stages, characterized by events of exploitation and violence and sometimes the need to earn the money to be able to continue to Europe. So we can say that we have had to deal with similar cases. Our role as operators is to reconstruct the facts together with the woman, try to bring out the network of people involved in the planning and implementation of her trip, certainly connected with someone who is waiting for them in Italy to exploit them [...]. One of the problems that can occur is the fact that the woman tells a false or partial story, this can sometimes preclude her from entering a path of protection. Very often, when a woman does not tell the truth about her story, she has

motivations related to her situation of exploitation that relies on fear and submission. (Giulia- an anti-trafficking operator with over 12 years' experience).

So from my experience, Ms. A story in that regard to social workers, let's say it's not so usual because it was when she said that she during the journey to come to Italy she stopped by temporary in place. she was forced to work to raise more money but there is not a reference to sexual exploitation, but as far as I'm aware, anytime they tell the story to our Social worker as what happened to them, they include that part. During the journey, it's very often to be exploited to sexual requests. Because I mean, when we talk about men, it's very rare that they have passed through sexual violence but when we talk about women is like always, this happens to them all the time [...] It happens that many of the girls, the women we talk with they tell the same story, always the same story, the strange fact that very often is that they happen to be in Nigeria/Libya and then suddenly, someone, maybe an old woman, and maybe an old man, someone decides to help this person to come to Italy for nothing, because he's a nice person, normally, someone just give me an apple, because this person is a very good person, this part of the story so almost always like that. Then after a while talk with the person maybe some other truths comes out but at the beginning, there are sometimes that we noticed, not just we, everybody noticed that they have some sort of schematic stories to tell. And we were told that the exploiters tell them to tell the story [...] So we met cases like this, apart from the fact that very often it comes out that they're being abused along the way [...] (Luca- a senior social worker with over 20 years' experience)

[...] It is a story that is common, I have had a lot of cases like this before. [...] we have heard a lot of stories that is more difficult to answer because maybe some of them they will have to be forcing them to do prostitution before they get to Italy, but this person did not do all those things [...] My own part is to is to talk to the person first to understand the story then I will make contact to the people that will take care of this person (Aurora- a social worker with 10 years' experience)

Paola a social worker with over 18-years' experience working with asylum seekers and victims of human trafficking, gave response explaining with personal details on how the identification is done from examining the story and situation of such person:

Okay, so about the situation of Lady A okay, it's common that the girls are from poor families, that they have many brothers and sisters Yes, this is correct but most of time (let's call Ms. A, Beauty), it's Beauty that received the proposal to leave the country, it's not Beauty that decide to leave the country to help the family, so it's always happened that while Beauty is making an internship or is just learning to make hair or she's learning to be a tailor, she caught up with a lady who proposed her to leave the country, so the decision is from outside it's not from inside and then she takes time to decide if she wants to leave or not the country [...] And the person/the madame just say don't worry I will manage everything, I will just give you the date when you have to leave, this is enough, you don't have to be worried about anything [...] And in the last five years, 99% of the girls who enter Italy were victim of human trafficking, they make the pass through Libya, and they didn't enter by plane. So maybe before 2016 we were working with girls who entered in Europe through Paris, they go from Abuja to Paris and then from Paris to Torino by train, so this was the route, the classical route, but now we work with girls that all of them enter

through the desert from Nigeria, Niger and the desert, Libya and then Sicily [...] So all of the girls in Libya began to work as prostitutes in the Connection Houses and they were forced to do this job, they had no alternative, they can't go back to Nigeria. So they realize they're like in a prison, they have no choice, If they don't work they can't go on with the journey [...] So this is what happen to the girls that for us are victims of human trafficking, so when the girls tell me this story, I identify her as victim of human trafficking and I try to understand if she's in danger here in Italy, if she's in danger, I propose her to join our program, that is not easy, because Beauty will need maybe two years. So, when she enter in a program is made of different steps, the first step is a shelter with severe rules [...].

On the other hand, responses in relation to the process of identification for Ms. B story showed different views from the professionals as some (7) revealed they had not had a case similar to Ms. B story while the remaining ones (11) had handled such cases that have some characteristics of Ms. B story. As such the responses portrayed was still a robust one as more than half of the total respondents had dealt with similar cases of Ms B before.

According to the professionals for Ms B, it is the same process that is done, however since her situation is a bit different from that of Ms A, the process is slightly different, in her case apart from looking at the elements that make up the part of trafficking, other aspects such as smuggling is still looked into, and they go back to the origin country to get more information concerning the violence she experienced in the hands of her husband as it is used to verify her story and with it she can be identified either as a victim of trafficking; Gender-Based Violence/domestic violence or all of them /or both of them, depending on the evidence gotten from the origin country on her situation and status before she left; as well as her situation during and after her journey. Some of these responses are detailed below:

Yes I have heard about a story like this before [...]. It is not a trafficking case but violence against women. So trafficking is not in this particular one [...] If I saw a case like this, I will have to let the person know that she doesn't have protection scheme but try for political asylum and make them know the real things that she is passing through (Luisa- a psychologist and social worker with 8 years' experience)

We have had a similar case like this before relating to a south African woman [...] The organization don't just listen to the first story. we dig deeper, we ask this woman how did she get money to fly down to Italy?. Probably there is something that she is not telling us, who supported her to come here?. The woman might have been trafficked and if it is true that is when we usually step in to take actions (Gemma- a social operator with 15 years' experience)

In like manner, Enzo- a social worker with over 13 years' experience responded that:

[...] inside the story is that we have to look at the case if the person [Ms. B.] is trafficked or not before the person got to Italy and even after arrival in Italy if the person is still being trafficked. So we have to indicate it.

[...] In this case it is very difficult to accept that it's a violent case. Because in Italy the law is against violence on women, so if the woman goes to the Commission, they will need to ask more information and maybe go to Nigeria since the woman said she had gone to the hospital before when the husband beats her, they will need to ask in the hospital if this woman really came to the hospital several times because her husband beats her. We will have to look for evidence to know if the story is true, from there we can help the person [...] We have been working with women who most times are fighting against violence or human trafficking, even the girls that are coming from Libya and all that, they have been abused on the way before they get to Italy, so maybe the person will be scared and afraid of the violence that the husband has done to her so we have to go very slow with the person, we have to understand the person's feelings and to know where the person is coming from. (Aurora- a social worker with over 10 years' experience)

It is important to note that in Italy, there are various bodies in charge of the identification process of victims of trafficking for migrants from third countries as well as those from other EU countries. As identified earlier in this chapter, various professionals such as social workers, legal guardians, heads of anti-trafficking units, anti-trafficking workers, mediators, psychologists etc were all consulted and participated in this study of which they also said their jobs included identifying victims of human trafficking in Italy. This is also in line the various laws put in place in Italy whereby the various bodies and workers who are required to participate in such process are laid down in them which includes but not limited to immigration officials, social workers, prosecutors, judges, prison staff, asylum officers, labour inspectors, trade unions, staff working in detention centres, international organisations, Non-governmental organizations, law enforcement officers, diplomatic and consular staffs etc. (see Department for Equal Opportunities [DEO], 2016; 2017) Thus, my research participants were all important figures in the identification process for victims of trafficking. As have also been documented by other studies carried out by scholars such as Degani and Perini, (2019), Baye, (2012), and Esposito, et. al., (2016), where they noted these professionals to be heavily involved in identifying victims of trafficking from Nigeria. Of note here is that the professionals used in my research are regarded as people who are mainly associated with the social path of the reception and integration process in Italy whereby such activities performed by them do not need the approval of the public prosecutor/s for them to carry out their duties, but they are required to communicate their findings and reports to them in order to proceed for the proper integration of the victims of human trafficking they identify. Whereas the other form of identifying victims is going through the legal path which entails the prosecutor to be involved in the identification process of victims of trafficking in Italy which usually leads to the prosecution of traffickers/exploiters by the victims of

trafficking (Degani and De Stefani, 2020; Giammarinaro, 2012; Palumbo, 2015). Whatever means is used the most important thing is that the victims are identified properly and are given the appropriate assistance and care they need.

Indeed, the process of identification begins with the evaluation of the migrant women and girls stories which entails carrying out interviews with them in order to ascertain their situation during and after their migration journey and their various circumstances when they had arrived and living in Italy before they met the professionals in the associations. Accordingly, the interviews consist of dissecting the stories piece by piece and critically analysing the various elements that gives rise to human trafficking and/or that shows elements of trafficking and exploitation involved (Gargano, 2010; Gargano, et. al., 2011; Pitzalis, 2020). Thus, various indicators are used to ascertain victims of human trafficking in Italy as stipulated in the National Action Plan and National Referral Mechanism as well as those stipulated in the various Italian laws and UNHCR guidelines and ILO guidelines which all accounts for the indicators used to identify victims of trafficking in Italy.

As such, the first and foremost element during the interview stage is that of severe exploitation. Likewise, one of the most important elements of this process is the identification of potential danger or already established danger that is if the person is exposed to any situation of risk or on-going risk in the present state which is Italy from the story given in relation to both Ms A and Ms B stories as well as those with similar characteristics of such stories in Italy. Moreso, another element that is used to identify victims of human trafficking is those that face risk of being in severe danger if returned to their country of origin as well as those who face revictimization which is also linked to them belonging to a particular social group or syndicates, those at the risk of GBV including re-trafficking. For example, the Territorial Commission and courts in Italy have granted victims of HT permits of stays in Italy when these indicators or elements made parts of their situations and stories, of which many of the women were from Nigeria (see Tribunale di Roma, Decreto, 06.11.2019 and Tribunale di Venezia, Decreto, 23.10.2019 cited in Degani and De Stefani, 2020; Nambiar and Scarabello, 2021; GRETA, 2019; Strauss, 2012). Thus according to the Article 18 of the Italian law on trafficking, the existence of situation of violence or serious exploitation as well as the presence of danger to personal safety during attempts or initiations to escape from criminal gangs and syndicates or from statements made during preliminary or actual investigations or at trail of such syndicates of such organised gangs accounts for the identification of victims of trafficking as such the existence of a concrete, serious and current danger in Italy and/or when returned to the origin country. Thus when women and girls with the characteristics of Ms. A and Ms. B stories relates these elements in their interviews they are identified as victims of trafficking. Of not here is that in Italy, Nigerian women and girls who have been identified as victims of trafficking all mainly consisted of sexual exploitation

and servitude as indicated from reports and researches carried out (Outshoorn 2012; Degani and Perini, 2019; On the Road, 2002; Palumbo, 2015).

While in some cases the physical violence and sexual violence has been taken into accounts more in relation to the identification of victims of violence as documented by Giammarinaro, (2012), Castelli, (2013), Nicodemi, (2017), and also from the response of Luca professional above. However, other forms of violence and exploitation such as threats, coercion, abuse, abduction, fraud, deceit abuse of power, etc are other vital aspects that make up the means of which trafficking is carried out as outlined in the Protocol of trafficking in Human beings of 2003 and which are very present in Nigerian women and girls stories during the identification process as gleaned from the responses of the professionals above and from other researches (see Degani and Perini, 2019; Nambiar and Scarabello, 2021; Semprebon, 2020). However these are not viewed in relation to GBV that the women and girls suffer instead they are strictly seen with the lens of victims of trafficking. Moreso, in my research the professionals were well aware of the ritual and voodoo practices that Nigerian women and girls are forced to do before leaving Nigeria however the extent to which it affects them especially psychologically was not in the picture, the use of threat and violence on them and/or their families during and after migration, as can also be gleaned from my findings in chapter three mainly from research question two where various forms of violence and GBV are employed by the traffickers on the women and girls.

Moreso, as already confirmed by the responses gotten from Ms. A story, for instance, the response from the professional Giulia which explained the situation that makes Ms. A to be prone to such exploitation such as poverty, taking care of the family, sole earner or provider, many family members to take care of among others, These are some of the factors that make women and girls easily fall prey to trafficking as they seek better lives for their families and themselves. Especially in a country where there is not much hope for gainful employment as already noted in Theme 1 in chapter three, whereby these various intersecting factors play a major role in making women and girls vulnerable to trafficking from Nigeria to Italy. As such just as professional responses show above, these accounts for parts of the reason why they are trafficked, and these backgrounds always show up in their stories as these invariably influence their decision to leave howbeit sometimes they are deceived on what to expect when they reach Italy. Thus this part of the indicator is very important as it shows how the background situation of migrant women and girls especially from Nigeria influence them to become victims of severe exploitation and human trafficking which make up a part of the element of trafficking. Thus, when such stories are told to them [the professionals], they identify the women and girls as victims of trafficking as well as the research carried out by Nambiar and Scarabello, (2021), where they documented two female migrants stories which have similar bearing

to the element of trafficking discussed in this paragraph as such, Nigerian women and girls who are mainly from poor and lower echelon of economic-social background and struggle with their daily survival make up majority of the victims identified by the professionals in Italy as exemplified from the stories above especially that of MS A thereby reinforcing the linkage with the aspect of the theory used in chapter one whereby the socio-economic decline in Nigeria which has continued to be at the periphery level in the world systems as well as the inability of the government to provide basic amenities and opportunities for the citizens spur out migration from the country to other parts of the world with women and girls highly susceptible to human trafficking from Nigeria to Europe.

Although from the Stories of Ms. A and Ms. B there was no reference to trafficking for sexual exploitation purposes, but according to the professionals, in almost all the women and girls they had interviewed they all had experienced trafficking for sexual exploitation which accounts for over 99% of victims who entered Italy within the last 5 years from Nigeria as Paola noted above. This is also evident in various research carried out on Nigerian women and girls who were trafficked from Nigeria to Italy from the early 1990s till date (see *On the Road*, 2002; Degani and De Stefani, 2020; UNODC, 2014; GRETA, 2019; Semprebon and Abe, 2021; Pitzalis, 2018). For instance, in 2017, over 87% of those identified as victims of severe forms of sexual exploitation in Italy were Nigerian women and girls (SIRIT, 2017). As such, the professionals explained that this element make up a vital part of the identification process and is gotten sometimes at a later stage when confidence and trust has been established with the women and girls during their interviews which is usually after the first encounter. Thus, according to them and in line with other research and guidelines by the UNHCR, women and girls who often come into Italy with undocumented routes and/or who are undocumented in Italy as can be seen from Ms A and Ms B stories above, exhibit such indicators that are related to human trafficking. While many of them regard Ms. A as a victim of human trafficking especially for sexual exploitation and prostitution, for that of Ms B story, they regard her situation as leaning more into smuggling and GBV and to an extent human trafficking howbeit more details are needed to fully ascertain her situation to identify if she is all of the above or for human trafficking alone.

Thus, the theme of identification is strongly linked to my research questions one and two of the dissertation as well as on the findings discussed in chapter three for both research questions as it expand on it from the perspectives of the professionals, as they all said the situation of both cases at the origin country, as well as the various forms of violence they experience including the mode of their transportation to Italy which consisted of undocumented means are all parts of the indicators that are used to identify victims of human trafficking as well as smuggling, and Gender-Based Violence before, during and after the migration journey although the professionals lean more on the aspect of human trafficking rather than victims of GBV.

As can be gleaned from the above responses by the professionals, the women and girls must show from their stories how they were in danger from their situation during and after their migration journey as a result of them being trafficked. Thus just like Paola stated in her response to Ms A story and Luca too, the women and girls always have various forms of abuse carried out on them during and after their migration journey, as such many of them are exposed to physical violence, sexual abuse, rape, oath taking and ritual among others. This was also present in my findings in chapter three research question two which dealt on the various forms of violence and abuse Nigerian women and girls face on their way and after their migration journey as a result of the terrible conditions they experienced. Thus, this aspect of my study is very interesting as it exposes a shift in GBV that is not just focused on Male/female binary in violent situations but also on female/female binary in violent situation, as it has been noted by scholars (GRETA, 2019; Palumbo, 2015; Giammarinaro, 2018; Caneppele and Mancuso, 2013; Ikeora, 2016; Millet-Barret, 2019) that many of the Nigerian syndicates of human trafficking are organised by women who were earlier trafficked from Nigeria to Italy however the aspect of GBV was not researched in their studies.

Also, the telling of false stories during the interview process is used as an indicator of trafficking as this tactics is employed through the use of manipulation and threats on the victims of trafficking. Thus as explained by Giulia professional above, when women and girls tell false stories during the interview stage and/or interaction with them as social workers, they usually identify the person as a victim of human trafficking as they are markers of abuse and severe exploitation. Moreso, this also falls in line with the definition of HT and guidelines of the UNHCR whereby force and the existence of threat are major indicators of trafficking which victims face as a result of exploitation and human trafficking these have been linked with Nigerian women and girls experiences from the responses gotten above from the professionals as well as the chapter three research question two.

Furthermore, the process of identification for Ms. B as a victim of trafficking can be hindered with the fact that GBV as a reason for migration and which may lead to risks along the journey is not easy to identify by the professionals and other bodies during the process of identification (see UNHCR, UNFPA, WRC, 2016; Freedman, 2016; Nambiar and Scarabello, 2021), because they require a lot of evidence to ascertain what truly Ms B and the children passed through. As can be seen from the responses of Gemma and Aurora professionals above, it is obvious that a woman with Ms B characteristics will have a lot of stress/difficulty in getting the needed help required for her in Italy as they [professionals] most times do not take the fact that she left Nigeria with all the children likely from the responses of the professionals. Moreso, they view her case more in regard to smuggling than trafficking (because to them she had the time to organise her trip before leaving Nigeria), unless according to them she [Ms. B] reports things that will link her situation to that of trafficking which

they say most times comes out after a long while and may be difficult to get. Despite this fact, the process of identification is the same with that of Ms. A with some more information required to ascertain if Ms. B and her children fall within trafficking, Smuggling, GBV or all of the above. Little research on this aspect of GBV, undocumented migration and Nigerian women with children have been done so far, thus it would be interesting to get more research on this area in order to understand the phenomenon and how the process works for such persons.

Theme 2: Who gets What, When and How

This aspect touches on the assistance and protection programmes in Italy and how it works for migrant women and girls with a focus on the stories of Ms. A and Ms. B. The responses from the professionals during the interview also indicated similar pattern in regard to how the process and procedures for taking care of people with similar characteristics of the stories read. All the participants in relation to Ms A story said that they had worked on a case like that with a lot of overlapping responses on how they are protected in Italy. As such the procedures for taking care of such persons were broken down into two aspects, with the first aspect usually called first “*accoglienza*” (that is hospitality) involves meeting the women and girls when they land in Italy which is usually in the southern part of the country mainly Sicily, from there various guidelines are applied such as taking their data (that is their name, place of birth, country of origin, age etc) as well as carrying out various test on them in order to give them the necessary treatment regarding their wellbeing and health, also psychological treatment is given to them to help them to be stable and focus on the next step of integration. Thereafter they are taken to the second stage which is called the second “*accoglienza*” here they are sent to various regions in Italy and are placed under the protection system mainly in shelter houses where they begin fully various steps in achieving integration into the society and country at large. The responses below shows how the procedures are done:

The procedure is this, when they land they are taken from the sea to Sicily to the first town closest to the place where they landed and most of the time it's Sicily. Then from Sicily, they put them in different groups according to the regions that agree to accept them, you know Italy has 20 regions. They send them to the region and the regions already have an agreement with the communes in Italy and some of them already have some organizations that register with the region, they register first with the “*prefecture*” that is the police because the agreement is done with the prefecture not with the commune and then they look to settle with the communes that agrees. Then they stay there, the organizations rents apartments or a house and place them 2/2 in a room or more depending on the space in the house. Some commune don't want many people in a room, but some want even up to 50 people at a time [...]. Some of the organizations have Italian chef that cooks for the girls, some other communes they ask the people what they like and they buy the things in bulk and give the girls to cook for themselves together, while some other communes buy in bulk and share the food stuff among the girls, so they all have their own cut from the food stuffs and cook for themselves. The commune also give them 2.50 euros a day and that makes it

75 euros in a month and they can use it any way they like, and some of the girls send it out to their families [...]. They also make the “*Soggiorno*” [that is permit of stay], they have a lawyer that will represent them in the “*Prefecture*” because she has to write the reason why she is a refugee and keep to that. If they consider your reasons genuine then they give you your document but If they don’t consider your story genuine or your case genuine, they will deny you and this causes delay. (Olivia- a retired teacher and founder of an anti-trafficking organization with over 50 years’ experience]

While the above description echoes a majority of all the responses regarding Ms A and the way protection is given. Others highlighted a slightly different way the procedures works. As such, Ms A can also be given protection after going to the Territorial Commission, or Police and from there she will be assigned or sent to one of the anti-trafficking organizations and/or NGOs who will do the follow up interactions to assist in placing her into a programme and shelter house. For example, Luca a senior social worker with over 20 years’ experience explains it as thus:

[...] It depends by how the person come to us. Because it can happen that the police call us during the night to say, okay we have made an operation. And we have a woman, and we need someone to go with her because we don’t speak English. So, in this case, we always go into the police, carry out the health assessment needs of the person, the risk assessment to find out if she is in danger in this very moment, that if she's got some physical problems that you have to take care of immediately, maybe going to the hospital or whatever. And then normally, we try and get a place in our shelters in our emergency shelters. We take this person in the shelter, we protect them. This is one way to come in contact with us [...]. There is another way to come in contact with us that is going through the Commission first. They interview the person, They think, okay, she's Nigerian, she's probably victims of trafficking, okay, she is sent to us to the anti-trafficking agency. And then the person come to us, or we go where the person is, because sometimes she maybe asked for us maybe in a shelter for refugees. Yes. So the CAS for example, the Center for Emergency Sheltering have the international protection system, which is another system and drafting system is one thing, the protection system is another thing. So sometimes these people are in this emergency shelter.

On the other hand, responses in relation to the protection system and how it works for Ms. B showed a similar pattern to that of Ms. A discussed above, but with some differences in the way it is done for women and children. Thus the professionals that had dealt with such similar situation disclosed that women and children are also placed within the first and second accoglienza as described above, however in their situation, some other aspects are included such as placing them in accommodations that are suitable for people with children, enrolling the children to school in order for the mother to have time for other things in her life, stirring the woman to learn the language thus placing her in language school so she can easily communicate and integrate into the society as well as helping her develop a skill which invariably act as a leeway for her to becoming independent at the end and thus makes it easy for integration on a broader scale. One unique aspect highlighted was

the fact that the woman will be paid monthly more money for upkeep of the children and all her expenses will be taken care of, her documents and that of the children will be treated faster as well.

The following responses elaborates on how it is done:

So if such a woman should come to our Association [...] We will give her accommodation, but I will not be the one to pick her on the streets. She has to go to S.A.I. (System of Accommodation and Integration) So, if they bring her to our Association, it means we have a space for her and her three children. So, we would do all that is needed in the sense that giving her a comfortable place of resident and feeding and everything [...] as at today a lady with three children is given 880 euros every month that exclude medical expenses, how to maintain the house is not her problem the bills are paid by the association you know, so they just live free [...] so first and foremost is to make sure the children are registered at school so that she can be involved in other things like going to language school. And after some time, we will allow her to have a skill in one thing or the other, maybe as a sewing mistress; any area of her interest, the Association will do it's best to make sure she is rightly placed and there will be supervision. That's what we do (Josephine- founder of an anti-trafficking organization and shelter house with over 25 years' experience)

The Italian government will put them in camp immediately, and depending on the story they gave to the Commission they will give them document sometimes faster. So with that document they can go outside and work. There was a lady I know that came to Italy from Libya, she gave birth to the child in Libya and she crossed to Italy with the child, Italian government put them in the camp and after that they gave her and the child 2 years documents each and the child started going to school and she too started working after some time. So this one is just a friend's case [...] it's just the same thing with the single girls, maybe the pocket money that they will give to the ones that don't have children will be lesser money than those with children because they will give them more money to take care of the children [...] Also they are more controlled/monitored when compared to those that don't have children because they have to check that the women are taking care of the children according to the standard in Italy (Ella- a cultural mediator with 6 years' experience)

While for others who also had similar responses to the process above, they also included that the accommodation given is not just any one that they find, but one that is more protected to guard the woman and children against the husband or anyone knowing where they stay, as well as the involvement of a minor tribunal where the case will be judged in order to secure the placement and proper care of the children and mother eventually. For example, Anthony a founder of an anti-trafficking organization with over 40 years' experience divulge it as thus:

When they come to this country (Italy) with every difficulties they had on the road and maybe some of them stayed months on the road before arriving to Europe, they are being welcomed in one way because there is what we call taking care of ("*prendersi cura*"-taking care of a vulnerable) because they would like to protect that is giving the woman to a protection house, where if eventually the husband is looking for them, it wouldn't be easy for him to locate them, so we call it "*casa protetta*" [Protected house]. With these ones,

there be will tribunal of minors involved, where the tribunal of minors of the region where they are staying will assign the family to an organization or “*assistenza sociale*” [social assistance] that will find an organization that will follow them up for feeding, taking care of them, doing everything they need till the child gets to 18 years [...] When a mom gets a fixed job, they will tell her to quit and get her own shelter, so that she can start living a normal life. From there we might have obtained staying permit for them. Thus, the procedure is communicating the situation to the tribunal of minor, that will take a provision for it in operating what we call “*providimento*”. Take a provision for them and assign their situation to *assistenza sociale*, the *assistenza sociale* will find out a communita i.e. a foster home for them. So, it’s possible for them to assign it to any of the communita like we have minors homes, that is home for minors, then they will assign them there together with the mom and will start taking care of them till they are able to be autonomous.

Like the foregoing, the Italian protection system entails various approaches to it just as the professionals have explained above. Indeed after the women and girls have been identified as victims of trafficking and/or Gender-based violence as explained in the first theme, the process for social integration and protection begins in order for them to become fully independent and stable in the society. Thus, the process for giving protection for both women described in Ms A and Ms B stories are stipulated in various Italian laws which deal on such issues. However, it should be noted that they are both entitled to similar forms of protection with just a slight difference in the way Ms B and the children are taken care of in Italy.

There are basically two major legal framework used in ascertaining protection for people with similar characteristics of that of Ms A and Ms B. The first law 228/2003 which entails various measures against trafficking in human beings and is codified in the Italian criminal code as Article 601, stipulates the protection of victims of trafficking for a short term period between three to six months in an assistance programme (Article 13). While the second one used majorly is Article 18 of the legislative Decree 286/1998 of the Italian Immigration Law. This law provides a longer term for social protection and assistance to victims of trafficking and GBV in Italy as such it entails programmes for social protection which consists of medical and psychological assistance, accommodation, job placement, trainings, language school, as well as access to other facilities and measures which leads eventually to achieving a successful social integration and inclusion (see Orfano and Bufo, 2010; Caneppele and Mancuso, 2013; Pitzalis, 2018; Esposito, et. al., 2016; Semprebon, 2021). Furthermore, these long term programmes provides the victims/survivors the possibility of obtaining a resident permit for a period of six months which can also be renewed for one year afterwards or after expiration. Of note here is that the resident permit can also be converted into a work, study or family permit.

These provisions and laws are widely used in guaranteeing victims/survivors protection in Italy as can be seen from the responses above, thus the procedure explained by the professionals falls

within the stipulated laws. As such the professionals in my research revealed they all participated in making sure the migrant women and girls who come into their associations were given the various supports such as accommodation, enrolling them in language schools, taking time to find out what they are interested in so they can be registered in various areas for skill acquisition, helping them in finding a job or job placement as well as providing counselling and medical services for them. As noted in chapter one, the social protection programmes are very effective in encouraging many women and girls or victims of trafficking leave and come out from their traffickers especially those who were trafficked for sexual exploitation (prostitution). This was also paramount in my research findings in chapter three which revealed that all the women and girls interviewed were trafficked for sexual exploitation from Nigeria to Italy. Although the stories of Ms A and Ms B do not portray this aspect as they are not reality per se but according to the professionals they also fall within the spectrum of those trafficked from the way their stories are detailed in the vignette because to them in the end, these aspects of trafficking and smuggling will eventually be brought to light after various interactions and discussions have taken place regarding their situation before, during and after the migration journey, specifically during the identification phase explained above. For instance, between 2000 and 2012, over 65,000 victims of severe exploitation and trafficking benefitted from the protection system in Italy generally and more specifically through the social path mainly consisting of organizations and professionals handling their cases (Presidenza del Consiglio dei Ministri, 2013). Likewise between 2016 and 2017, 1,172 and 1,050 victims of trafficking especially trafficking for sexual exploitation were assisted respectively, about 90% of these persons were women and the remaining 10% were minors (GRETA, 2019: para.8), of note here is that Nigerian women and girls accounted for about 60% of the total number of victims assisted during these periods.

Furthermore, as noted in theme one above, application for the permit of stay can be done in two ways. The first one is called **the Judicial path**- this entails the application for the permit of stay for victims of violence, exploitation, trafficking and severe dangers in Italy by the Public Prosecutor who does the filing for such documents on those victims that come forward in denouncing their traffickers which leads to legal criminal proceedings against their traffickers, as such their situation will be analysed and they will be granted a permit of stay for 6 months which can also be increased for up to a year depending on the time the investigation and proceeding will end. While the second way of getting the permit is through **the social path** which involves the process of applying for a resident permit by victims of violence, exploitation, trafficking and those in severe danger in Italy through the use of social workers, NGOs, anti-trafficking agencies, among others. Here the victims are given protection based on the rights of victims to be kept safe where they can begin transition from their traffickers to a normal life in Italy. After the victim have been identified as such, they are

placed under the social services in which the workers, head of antitrafficking units are the ones that will send in their application for the resident permit which lasts for 6 months and can be renewed for up to one year afterwards. The social worker or person in charge of the victims case will file various documents to the Territorial Commission on behalf of the victims so that the permit can be given (Lo Conte, 2016; Degani and Perini, 2019; Semprebon and Pelacani, 2020; On the Road, 2002). These various path were also highlighted by the findings of the study whereby the professionals also explained these various ways of meeting women and girls detailed in Ms. A and Ms. B cases. For instance, the responses given by Luca and Anthony above, outlined these aspect of women and girls getting their permit through the social and legal paths, however most of the cases they have handled consisted of going through the social path for the victims, as almost all the cases they had dealt with, the women and girls came to them personally or indirectly through referrals from their friends when they had all escaped from their madams/ogas in Italy. In all, it should be noted that the permit of stay cannot be filed by individuals or the victims of trafficking, violence and exploitation on their own, rather they must use one of the two paths identified above or they can start with one and end up with the other one or can be transferred to the other one for the completion of the process.

Like the foregoing, linking it to my research work in chapter three, all the Nigerian women and girls participants involved all used the social path in getting access to the reception system in Italy as such they revealed that they entered the reception system through the help of friends who stirred them to meet some of the social workers and go to the organizations where such services are rendered to migrants and survivors. Thus confirming the present findings from the professionals as they all said the same things as detailed above. Furthermore, one vital aspect of this social path is the fact that victims are protected in Italy and are given the opportunity to obtain the permit of stay without going through criminal proceedings by the Public Prosecutor office, this invariably guarantee their rights and safety from those who would have hurt them should they have engaged in the judicial path. Also, it means victims can become regularised in Italy without going through ousting their traffickers and long court battles in Italy.

Apart from the fact that I accessed my research participants who were Nigerian women and girls from the professionals I used in this study as well, I also observed that in the various shelter houses I went to for the interviews, it was made up of mainly Nigerian women and girls both those that were single, those that had children and those that were pregnant. Thus, confirming the researches that have been carried out by other scholars such as Nambiar and Scarabello, (2021), On the Road, (2002), GRETA, (2019), Kastner, (2007), and US TIP, (2021), where their studies also reported that Nigerian women and girls made up over 80% of those that are in the protection system/shelter houses

in Italy. Thus, it can be said that this nuance will continue to be the same. Even though human trafficking and/sex trafficking is not pertaining to Nigeria (women and girls) alone, they have been noted to consist of a higher percentage in Europe and with Italy having the highest number of these figures when done in comparison with other EU countries. Thus, it is very evident that Ms A and Ms B and those with similar characteristics of the stories will more often than none be accommodated/or placed in the protection system when they are sent to the various organizations that handle such cases in Italy as they fall within the profile of former victims/survivors that have been assisted before. However, the procedure given for Ms B entails more further steps as the case involves children which consists of a different form of accommodation given as well as enrolling them to schools and the involvement of tribunal of minors in the selection process of protection programmes. Moreso, the women with children in the various shelters I saw and made further inquiry during the interview stage revealed that they didn't travel with the children from Nigeria rather they got pregnant when they were in Italy and it was part of the reason they asked for protection in order for them to leave the road work (prostitution) they were doing and begin a better life to be able to earn legally and provide for their children as well as giving them a better future. Thus, confirming what majority of the professionals said about handling cases of women with children where they revealed that it was very strange that Ms B could leave Nigeria with all the children because according to them, women who had children in Nigeria usually leave them behind for a relative or close family member to take care of them while they travel abroad and send back funds to their relatives for the continuous caring for their children, this was also evident in the research carried out by other scholars where it was noted that Nigerian women and girls leave their children behind and even if they arrive in Italy with any child or children, those children were as a result of GBV faced during their migration journey and not from their origin country (see Kastner, 2010; Alagbe, 2021; Semprebon 2020; Bartolo, 2018; Ohonba and Agbontaen-Eghafona, 2019). Thus in the story of Ms. B, it is not the case of Nigerian women to run away from the country with children, however when they arrive in Italy with children they are placed under the protection system which is adequate for their situation after due process of identification is done.

It is important to note here that all the professionals of this study fell under the second *accoglienza* in Italy, where they begin the process to personal freedom and stability for such women and girls which invariably leads to integration as the end goal of the programme. Thus, these projects provide for “*empowerment strategies aimed at victims’ social and labour inclusion, and include long-term accommodation, vocational and training courses, language classes, access to social services, legal advice and psychological follow-up*” (Palumbo, 2015: p.56). Moreso, these trainings done are to assist the people who fall within the stories described in Ms. A and Ms. B situations to get stability

as such they are assisted in the job market after a skill is learnt, the professionals proposes internships for them in various organizations in line with their interest, they hunt for jobs for them in the public and private sectors, which can also be within volunteers organizations, production cooperatives, social cooperatives among others (On the Road, 2002; Matthews, et. al., 2014). Indeed this aspect of the social services offered is very vital as the end goal is actualization to full transition into the labour market as regular workers and also for the women to be able to fend for themselves and that of their family especially in the case for Ms. B with children.

Another interesting aspect regarding the protection given to women and girls in line with the Stories described in Ms. A and Ms. B vignettes, is that the duration of stay under these projects is between six months to 18 months as stipulated in Article 13, Law 228/2003 and Article 18, and Article 18-bis. Thus, this gives the women and girls in such situation some time to fully participate in the programmes and adjust to the environment as well as having their daily needs met for a long time without worrying about how to survive in an unfamiliar environment where they do not have any family member. In addition, this also allows them to transit steadily to integrate into the society as they are given the opportunities to learn skills, the language, get familiar with other people and learn how to do things for themselves without any pressure from outside. This has been lauded as a vital aspect of the reception given to migrants and victims of exploitation and trafficking in Italy both from the professionals. Although on the one hand, some researchers have argued that the timing is a bit short as those in such situations are required to do a lot of things during the time frame, on the other hand, it has been received positively by those who attend to such cases as they revealed that the time frame given earlier was even shorter, that is between three to six months and maximum of one year but now it has been extended to 15 months which gives more time for adjusting and transiting into normal life. Of note here is that as at May 2016, the various provisions made under Article 13 which focused on short term programme between three to six months and the Article 18 provision which entails longer term programme of between six months and one year, have both been culminated into one, called single programme for the emergence, assistance and social integration of victims of trafficking and exploitation. The resultant effect of this unification is that organizations carrying out projects for the protection of victims of violence and trafficking do not need to apply or seek for separate funding for both Article 13 and Article 18 projects; Moreover, the funding of these projects were increased from the 12 months which were previously in place to that of 15 months. This has been deemed more effective and stabilized the way migrants are kept in and at the various reception centres in Italy (GRETA, 2019; Degani and Perini, 2019; Semprebon and Pelacani, 2020).

The above have given a clear picture of how the process for taking care of the people works for both Ms. A and Ms. B stories. It is obvious that in Italy, the Italian government and all those involved are very generous in the way such women and girls are protected and assisted when they are identified as victims of severe exploitation and trafficking. However on the flip side, it often happens that even though the women and girls have been given all the assistance to enable them to become fully independent and integrated into the society, the reality is a bit different towards the end. For example, Onome in my own personal research and observation at the shelter house where the interview was conducted for writing the chapter three, she revealed that she had already done four various courses and certifications in Italy, just so she could get a job and begin her independent life afterwards, however this was not the case as she was not able to find any tangible job with all the certificates she got during the teaching-learning process of the social assistance system. This is just one example of many girls that were in the same predicament in the various places where they were being protected in Italy. Some scholars have linked it to the declining economy of the country, whereby there are few opportunities available for blue-collar jobs (Palumbo, 2015; US TIP, 2021; Awad, 2009; Viola, et. al., 2018), this was also in line with what some of the professionals said during the interviews with them, whereby they acknowledge that in the end, most times the jobs available to the women and girls are low-skilled jobs which generates low income for them such as cleaning, housekeeper, taking care of the elderly, children and disabled, among others (see Andrijasevic, 2010; Castelli, 2013; Caneppele and Mancuso, 2013) which also puts them in vulnerable situation at times, as the women and girls victims usually make them know that they would earn better when they go on the street for road work. For instance, Luca revealed that during his interaction with some of the girls in his organization concerning their job, sometimes the girls and women ask them “*how much you wan pay me? [original text in Nigerian Pidgin English; Translated text in English meaning- how much will you pay me?]*.” Thus, this aspect should be revisited in the law and some portions of employment should be made available to victims of such circumstances, as this would help discourage them from returning to the streets for prostitution and/or becoming re-trafficked by going back to their sponsors.

Theme 3: Motive

When inquired about the reasons why women and girls are protected in relation to the stories of Ms. A and Ms. B, the responses from the participants showed varied similar and interesting answers to them. A significant number of participants responded that Ms. A is a victim of Human trafficking with some also agreeing that Ms. A is also a victim of violence and GBV. However, the most often and first cited reason on the story is that of victim of human trafficking. All the participant had

experience in working on cases of Ms. A as such their responses fell in line with the above statements.

Some of these responses are detailed below:

The reason in our case is because they [Ms A] are a victim of human trafficking. And if they are in danger in the shelter where they are, we are connected with all the other organization through our job in Italy, in every region there are many projects for victims of human trafficking so if they are in danger there [...] we ask another organization to take care of Beauty [Ms. A] we do of course our best to protect them (Paola- an anti-trafficking worker with over 18 years' experience).

Well, it depends on each person's situation, there are people that leave Nigeria for violence, if they are activist, they have problem with the government or some political activists. Then there are people most especially for trafficking especially the girls, these are the ones that are being given a full protection on their arrival so far they declare more or less and give information on how they left and who brought them and how they were trafficked. (Anthony- a founder of an anti-trafficking organization with over 40 years' experience)

For some other professionals still on Ms. A story, they responded that while the reason is for Human trafficking mainly other aspects are also important in the reason for giving protection to such person as such to them not only because of human trafficking but also because of victim of violence as well as GBV. For example, Enzo- a social worker with over 13 years' experience responded:

For me, it is based on the two element, because one they [Ms. A] are victim of violence and the other for victim of human trafficking. Both are various forms of violence; one is against the law of violating somebody and the other one is against the law of trafficking. So it is the two elements that we are working with.

Yes, because they are a victim of violence, of human trafficking, of gender based violence, but also because often this person they don't have the idea of what's happening to their life. So the most important reason to protect them is because sometimes they don't know to be victim of violence or victim of human trafficking. And also because they have the right to have a good future, and a loan for them is not possible (Joy- a cultural mediator with 7 years' experience)

[...] The reason mainly is for human trafficking but also because we don't know exactly what happened. And we don't have the different record to see single type of violence, because many of them have experienced all kinds of violence. Maybe It doesn't come out in the very first moment, and almost all of them are being abused and in different ways. So almost all of them have been victims of violence, like they've been beaten, they've been threatened. And then the fact of the gender based violence, I think that it doesn't matter because either if you are recruited to be exploited in a sexual business, or if you are recruited to be struggling in every kind of deal anyway, there is always gender based violence, let's say as a woman, you are supposed to follow my orders or whatever they are. So I think there is always an element of gender based violence inside what they experienced (Luca- a senior social worker with over 20 years' experience).

On the other hand, responses in relation to the reasons for protecting women with children from Ms. B story showed different views from the professionals. From the participants who had handled cases similar to that of Ms. B, they responded more in tune to victim of family violence and GBV while some others also pointed out that smuggling and trafficking are still part of the reason because of the way the trip was organised for her and the children to enter Italy. Thus, according to them, Ms. B story is a cumulation of the various forms of violence including human trafficking as can be gleaned from their responses below:

We can say that Ms B is a victim of domestic violence, as far as we know she needs immediate protection. Our service, however, is located in Italy where women come after having experienced many other forms of violence during the trip and during their stay in Italy (Giulia- a social worker with 12 years' experience)

If I am the one that will take this person to Commission or if I am the one that will follow this person there, I am going to say that the person is not trafficked, the person is being victim of violence, but we can still ask for document that will give them international protection because we are going to tell them that this person cannot go back to Nigeria because of the husband that is violent so that the person will not be killed in Nigeria. So we will ask for the document that is international protection but not trafficking because the person did not go through the area of trafficking the way other persons go through it [...]. In all, this person is not trafficked because she had time to arrange her journey and prepare herself to leave Nigeria (Aurora- a social worker with over 10 years' experience)

[Ms B] is a victim of domestic violence. They have the law in Italy to protect the woman and the children. As the thing is affecting the woman it is affecting the children too. The woman may be suffering it physically, the children will be suffering it psychologically too. So you have to work with the children too aside working with the mother. They have therapy for the children too so that they don't think it is a normal thing to grow up with [...] (Grace- a mediatrice with 5 years' experience)

Others adding to the above reasons given said that Ms. B can also be protected because of smuggling and human trafficking too. Rosa a social worker with 8 years' experience explained this as follows:

From this story of this woman with three children, her case is victim of violence. And then also it depends if she's brought here by a Madame or if it's a victim of trafficking. Because if she's a victim of trafficking there's violence; trafficking involves violence [...] So she's both that.

This is a case that exhibit two ways of Human trafficking- the first one is smuggling whereby the person went to the smugglers to bring them to Italy and work and the second one is trafficking- here they get a deal with the person, and they are on their own. So we

will dig deeper to know why the person is in Italy [...] The reason is because she is a victim, but it depends on the process through which she came into Italy (Angela- a social operator with 7 years' experience)

Indeed, the responses above gives a broad view on the various reasons to protect the women and children in both Ms. A and Ms. B stories as well as those who fall under such situation. Drawing from the first theme on Identification above, it has been established that Ms. A story is more in line with people who fall under trafficking and more specifically trafficking for sexual exploitation. This has further been corroborated with the professional responses on the reason why Ms. A will be protected in Italy. According to them based on the story and through the identification process, she has all the indicators and elements of trafficking into Italy as such this make up a big part of the reason why she will be/is protected when she comes in contact with their organizations. Thus, people who have the same characteristics as those explained in the vignette of Ms. A above will all be protected for the same reason.

Although, it was also established from the responses that Ms. A could also be a victims of GBV as a result of her migration journey and situation in Italy however the reason why she will be granted protection is most likely to fall under trafficking for sexual exploitation based on the way her situation is described in the vignette thus when women and girls come into Italy through such means they are given protection on the bases of victims of trafficking for sexual exploitation (see Degani and De Stefani, 2020; Palumbo, 2015; US TIP, 2019; On the Road, 2002). This is evident from the laws and provisions laid down in Italy such as Article 601 and Article 18 which clearly states the various elements that make up trafficking profile, as such the story of Ms. A shows that she was trafficked because it also consists of such things such as someone organising her trip for her, she was forced to work during the journey, she was abused as well during the journey and she used fake passport and ID during the trip on top of that she entered the country as an undocumented migrant. From these analogies she is most definitely part of the people who are trafficked into Italy for forced labour and sexual exploitation. Thus these findings is also in relation to my findings in chapter three where all the Nigerian women and girls participant of the study had similar characteristics of that of Ms. A and they were all trafficked for sexual exploitation from Nigeria to Italy. Although, in Ms A story it was not totally revealed if she experienced other forms of GBV during the trip but according to the professionals of this study, it would have eventually been revealed as a result of their continuous interaction with her during the course of her stay with them and her participation in the social assistance programme in Italy.

Moreso, it has been noted that Nigerian women and girls who crossed through the sea mainly from Libya to arrive in Italy consists of about 80% of those that will and/or are trafficked for sexual exploitation and prostitution and according to Paola in the last 5 years 99% of the girls who had crossed into Italy from Libya were all trafficked for prostitution. Thus confirming other researches that had reported similar findings from their study (see IOM, 2017a; Zimmerman and Stöckl, 2012; EU Commission, 2020). Accordingly, Ms. A being a Nigerian is mostly definitely part of the 99% of women because she has all the elements and characteristics that are inherent in victims of trafficking profiles and more specifically trafficking for sexual exploitation.

In relation to Ms. B and her children, the reason for protecting them is also similar to that of Ms. A as explained above. However, in this case the reason also includes others such as smuggling and family violence as well as Gender-Based Violence. In Italy family violence and domestic violence/GBV are taken very seriously as they do not joke with violence especially when children are involved in such situations. Thus according to the professionals Ms. B situation is closely linked to GBV and a small set to trafficking. In her case, the way she was able to organise her trip is a telling point in the reason she will/or is protected because for people that are trafficked they do not normally have the time to organise their trip or even be the ones to plan the trips for them and their children to leave Nigeria, as such to the professionals Ms B scenario is hardly one of trafficking because to them she was the one that went to meet syndicates to help her plan the trip thus she is more in line of those that are smuggled and not trafficked unless during the identification phase she mentions or reveals she was trafficked eventually by someone, if not she was smuggled and not trafficked a clear example can be seen from Angela's response above where the professional responded that Ms. B and her children were smuggled, while a few believed she was trafficked and smuggled as well (see Rosa's response above). This is very vital in evaluating her situation because if she was smuggled, the reason for protection will be different from those that were trafficked as explained in Ms. A situation. Thus, the reasons for protecting Ms. B and her children are intersecting, depending on what she eventually reveals during the identification phase. The laws guiding violence, Gender-based violence and trafficking in Italy all intersect in some point because Ms. B story can be recognised as falling within them when her situation is critically looked into. Thus she is entitled to be protected under the 1951 Refugees Convention as a result of the GBV she faced before leaving Nigeria her country of origin, because according to the law GBV is also a reason for migration as such Ms. B story encapsulate this aspect of the law (see Article 1A(2), of the 1951 Convention on the Status of Refugees; The Italian law- D.Lgs 24/2014 Antitrafficking reform Act 2014; CEDAW, 1981) thus making the reason for protection under GBV a valid point from the professionals as well as studies done on these area that have covered this aspect too, although very few research have been linked to migration and GBV

from Nigerian women and girls in Italy. This could be linked to the fact that many of the victims found in Italy as a result of trafficking or smuggling are those that are not married and/or those that were brought into Italy when they were very young and not married, thus this part of GBV for family violence is not inherent in their situation when they are being identified in Italy.

Furthermore, it was also revealed that women and girls from Nigeria rarely leave the country with their children birthed before migration has occurred. To the professional this aspect of Ms. B story was a bit strange and rare for them to fathom, as such they responded that in such situation the woman or girl will leave the children behind and travel alone to abroad (Italy) when she has arrived and stayed for some time before she will make arrangement for her children to join her. For instance a study carried out by Nambiar and Scarabello, (2021), had similar findings in their research in the case of a lady who was also applying for asylum and international protection under domestic violence and trafficking that she experienced in the hands of her husband clearly drives home this point. Thus, it is safe to say that the situation of Ms. B even though she would be given protection under various reasons ranging from GBV, smuggling and/or trafficking, in most cases the children are not taken from Nigeria to Italy, instead what occurs is that women and girls who arrive in Italy with children are mainly those that were abused sexually and/or raped during their journeys from Nigeria to Italy and in most cases in Libya where they experienced heightened forms of sexual abuse (Kastner, 2010; Esposito, et. al., 2016; Bartolo, 2018; Giammarinaro, 2018).

In all, the reasons for protection for both cases are similar in nature, while that of Ms. A leans more into human trafficking for sexual exploitation according to the professionals and scholarly works done on such cases, that of Ms B and her children are more in tune to that of Gender-Based Violence, Smuggling and eventually trafficking as described above. Of note here is that during the process of identification and interview stage, the real situations and reasons will be explored and from there they will be able to apply for social assistance and protection based on the various reasons, which will lead to getting protection based on either one or more of the following such as document under humanitarian reasons, refugees subsidiary protection and refugee status, asylum or international protection.

Moreso, she [Ms. B] and the children are classified as those that are vulnerable when they arrive and as such are quickly attended to when compared to the single girls because of the children involved. According to the Italian law Ms B and her children are entitled to be protected as a result of GBV and family violence as they have anti-violence centres across the country (see D.Lgs 24/2014 Antitrafficking reform Act 2014, Art. 1; Consiglio dei Ministri, DPO 2017, 27; Article 1 of the 1951 Convention on the Status of Refugees) which is mainly for those who reside in Italy but also for those

who are migrants as well. Thus confirming the response given by Giulia above, where the professional responded that their anti-violence centres in Italy supports such women who pass through violence especially those that already live in Italy as well as for migrant women and girls who arrive in Italy, as such the case of Ms. B with children has been done in their organization over time, however, the aspect of the children being brought from Nigeria along their mother for such journey was not part of the discussion as this was not seen as a common feature of the Nigerian women and girls they had handled in the organization.

Theme 4: Determination

When asked how they can tell when a story is real or false, all the professionals had similar things to say in determining the difference pertaining to situations described in Ms. A and Ms. B stories. As well as the tools used in getting the truth from such stories when they handle the cases. In response to Ms. A story, there was polarizing responses regarding if it was true or not. Some of the participants indicated that they believed the story was true 100% because they have had similar cases dealt with that had the characteristics in Ms. A story. While the remaining others said they believed the story was 50% true with some facts missing in the story as they indicated that since they had dealt with cases similar to it, thus they could tell that some things were missing which made the story not to be completely true. Also they responded that some of the tools used in determining the truth or lie in such cases similar to Ms. A are the element of time, building trust and relations with Ms. A, using the guideline prescribed by UNHCR on identifying victims of human trafficking, making exchange with other colleagues who have handled such cases as well, employing the use of cultural mediators who assists in making the girls relax and open up and also because they understand the culture it usually helps to get the real context of the story and the situation of the country since most of them are from there and many more strategies identified in their responses below.

For example, Ella a cultural mediator with 6 years' experience responded in line that the story was true:

Yes, most stories are real because of the body language movements, most times you will see fear in their eyes, because it's somebody's that is afraid you can't pretend it. I normally say yes because I passed through the same situation. So most times I use my own story to see some similarities between the people I talk with, I will not tell them but in my mind I use it to ascertain if it is true sometimes [...] So sometimes I use myself as example to them and tell them my story so they can open up and it helps them to relax and open up to say the truth. Most times I don't normally know how they conclude the issue because I just do the interpretation, I will let them know my mind that this person is saying the truth, or this person's they have a lot to say but is afraid to talk. We just have to be patient with the person, we just have to be closer to them because sometimes you will see them the first time they will be afraid to tell their story, so we usually see them like three times and build

relationship of trust with them. That way they begin to open up gradually and finally tell the truth of what happened to them [...]. And we also tell them that if they lie in the Commission they will not be given their papers as the commission also goes to verify their story, so it helps them to be truthful especially when we have made some relations with them for a while.

Yes the story is real [Ms A] [...] the only thing that we can do is build a good relation with the women. So for us it's very important for example, our *mediatore* (mediator) who is a Nigerian woman that can enter when in a relation and understand also some aspects of the cultural story that maybe it's not clear to us [...] So, for us is this; the relationship with the woman and to have a "*mediatore culturale*" (that is cultural mediators) and its necessary at time because in our case for example many things happen, many things come out after time not immediately, so it's necessary to have patience and have the possibility to carry them with time. (Elena- a social operator with over 10 years' experience)

It's a real story. It's a true story. We help them by giving them good information on how to come out. So they will be given time to evaluate and come back with the truth. (Felix- an anti-trafficking operator with 25 years' experience)

Others responded that the story was 50% real as some aspects are missing in the makeup of the situation and trip concerning Ms. A story as well as them elaborating on the tools used:

The story let's say 50% is not real. The tools is that I'm Nigerian, I know our culture and I've been here for years. And then we as human beings feel that even if somebody is wrong he needs help, we shouldn't abandon the person [...] It becomes a favour to the commune. (Olivia- a retired teacher and founder of an anti-trafficking organization with over 50 years' experience]

Yes. It's real half Maybe, it's not completely real. I explained you why earlier because somethings are not common. The tools it's the experience and we follow UNHCR instruction to identify victims, we make many trainings, we participate to many webinars now courses and we try to be always updated about new laws and legislation. And we make many exchanges between the different organizations, and we make many exchanges in our organization. (Paola- an anti-trafficking worker with over 18 years' experience)

It is 50/50, I believe the story on the one side because the lady left Nigeria because of the suffering and all that part is real but the other part of leaving and entering Europe by herself, I don't believe it. In most cases that I have been through for all these years, most times when I see the story that looks similar to the one I have heard before, I will put them together and compare the two together and find out if the person is saying the truth or not. Because it is very difficult to know if the person is saying the truth or not. But in my office here, my boss is very good at knowing if the person is saying the truth or not, mainly looking at the person eye to eye, you will know, in some cases the person will not be able to look at you although there are some people that have boldness to lie even looking at you eye to eye. Apart from that, the way the person is behaving also will show if they are saying the truth from their body language (Luisa- a psychologist and social worker with over 8 years' experience).

In relation to Ms B story, whether they believe the story is true or false as well as the tools used in determining such truth from lie for women with children, showed a variety of views as some of them also said they believed the story to be true 100% and others said they believed its 50% true however there were more on the side of 50% true for Ms B. This was partly linked to the fact that she left with all the children as a significant number of the respondents said it was not likely that it could happen that she left Nigeria with all the children or even any child in the first place, this they attributed to their experience on the field as they disclosed that women fleeing such situations usually leave their children behind with other family members to help them take care of before they will join them in the new country, also they said most of the women who come in with children do so when they get pregnant on their way before they come in Europe or they just gave birth when they arrived in Europe but not coming with so many little children given birth to many years before their departure. On the side of the tools, it was also the same as identified above however some new areas were added such as also making connection with the children through psychologist who can get more information concerning the situation at home before they left, going back to Nigeria to get medical and health reports from the doctors concerning hospitalization and treatment she sought when she was in Nigeria concerning the violence from her husband, as well as also allowing the element of time to bring out the real story later on. For example, Luisa a psychologist and a social worker with 8 years' experiences divulged the following:

Yes I can say the story is real. If we have to go further apart from violence and we find out maybe there is still trafficking, so I believe the two because I have seen something like this before. It is like what I said before, apart from me talking with the person, the person's mannerism and body language will make us know the truth or not. Then we also compare the story with others that we have to help get the real story in the end. [...] Another way is that I am going to talk to other people around me, maybe Nigerian people that have passed through this situation before, maybe somebody that is really Nigerian that have lived in Nigeria before and they know the things that are happening there, and some other organizations too to confirm the case to them. So we do a lot of round verification before we go back to the person and say we accept the story or not.

Yes I think it is real. Any person that is under 18 years according to the law in Italy you can't do interview with them unless in the presence of their mother. If it is allowed you will get the full picture from the child, but it is not allowed in Italy. So we will go with the story of the mother (Grace- a cultural mediator with 5 years' experience).

[...] Yes the story is real. We try to build a relation with her to trust each other, the presence of cultural mediator and I think that in this case, the help of a psychologist is important because of the psychologist and also an educator that they can see the behaviour of the children, the story of the children, the life of the children, talk about the violence, talk about the things that they saw in the story of their mother. So I think that building relation with

the mother and also with the children is very important (Elena- a social operator with over 10 years' experience).

On the other hand, some of the professionals also indicated that the story was not 100% true as discussed above. As such they mentioned some areas that were missing in the story and how they also use to know what is true from lie in such situations relating to Ms. B. Some of these responses are detailed below:

In the case of these people that have children it's 50/50, it's not just all that is real because most of them they have stayed in Italy for long and given birth then they will come and ask for help as if they are fresh in Italy. Like for example we have a case in our organization where the woman is not my age, she's older than me but she reduced her age so much and the body language she was giving was not like someone that came newly to Italy, because she gave birth, she came to our organization to seek help. It was later, that she revealed the truth. So sometimes we normally have this doubt about women with children especially when they are older (Ella- is a cultural mediator with 6 years' experience).

[...] Looking at the situation of the woman, it can be true in the sense that the motive for which she departed the country but the story is incomplete. Her buying four tickets, books flights, gets visa and hotel etc. it means she has somebody that was involved in helping her leave Nigeria. If she also came through Libya, who was her contact? How did she get that kind of money to transport, if it is a huge amount of money, where did it come from? Who is behind it and how did she and her children come here. To bring the children across the ocean to Italy is a bit questionable. If it is through air, it's a bit believable. Many migrant leave their children behind with their family members. With the help of the Mediator, translator, we listen to the woman telling her story with a person from the same place of the woman in order to get the full story and any suspicious thing in the story. We will ask the woman some questions and then we can actually decide if the story is true or false with the written transcript of the woman (Bella- a social operator with 7 years' experience).

Well in the Nigeria context, yes it could be real some ladies are facing such situation [...] one of the tools is to make sure we are not going to ask her to repeat her story all the time, but we give space of time then after some time we ask some questions. And then we ask not all, just a little thing out of the statement she has made to find out, if she is telling the truth, she will repeat the same thing (Josephine- founder of an anti-trafficking organization and shelter house with over 25 years' experience).

Certainly, the vignette stories of Ms. A and Ms. B were adjudged on different ways pertaining to the realness or falseness of the situations described in the stories. Accordingly, there were polarising stance on both sides, while the case of Ms. A was seen in some responses as 100% true based on the details in the story, others viewed it as 50% true citing the missing areas and the manner at which Ms. A travelled and entered the destination country. These were also greatly linked to the way Ms A is identified as a victim of trafficking as explained in theme 1 above. As such, Ms. A story

has more than 50% true facts in it however, they will need more digging into the story to get the true picture of the events that happened to Ms. A eventually. Thus women and girls with the same characteristics of those explained in Ms. A story above, are more likely to be believed more than 50% when they come in contact with various professionals that handles their cases as their stories often overlap with what was described, howbeit there are more details to be uncapped during the identification phase which often leads to the full story afterwards.

Like the above, Ms. B story was also placed on different percentages regarding the realness of the story. However in her case, most of the professionals were on the side of 50% true, linking it to some of the missing details in her story as well as the way the trip was organised. Thus indicating that the aspect of human trafficking alone for Ms. B situation does not hold strong among professionals that handle such cases, as they view it to be more on smuggling related situation. Moreover, children are rarely brought from Nigeria to Italy through undocumented migration by Nigerian women and girls as exemplified from the responses above as well as researches done on that aspect.

Furthermore, the various tools employed in assembling the stories plays a vital role in determining if a story is true or false. One of such tools according to the professionals is the sharing of information among themselves and other organizations that work in the same line with them relating to migrants and trafficking of migrants in their regions. For example, as Paola responded the professionals share the various experience and cases they have handled with their colleagues within and outside the organizations and these exchanges helps them to understand and identify true story from fiction, because as have been earlier documented in this study, many of the Nigerian women and girls have similar situations and stories when it comes to their reason, manner and condition of their lives and journeys from Nigeria to Italy. Thus they are able to discern these facts from fiction through these exchanges. This is also part of the stipulated ways laid down in the guidelines for identifying victims of trafficking and exploitation as well as violence and Gender-based violence (UNHCR, 2019; DEO, 2017). As such, the sharing of good practices as well as cooperation between anti-trafficking agencies and professionals has become a well-established pattern in Italy which leads to most cases of those identified as victims of trafficking for labour and/or sexual exploitation to be given protection and assistance in the various regions of the country (Nicodemi 2017; Santoro, 2018; Palumbo, 2015), these have all assisted in the expanding of programmes for the prevention of trafficking. A clear example of this was the establishment of the guidelines document on the early identification of victims of trafficking between the UNHCR and the National Commission on Refugees, that was done in Italy in 2016 facilitated cooperation nationally between both bodies as

well as the workers in such organizations thus enhancing cross-referral programmes and platforms. (Ministero dell'interno -Commissione nazionale per il diritto d'asilo and UNHCR 2021). Likewise, as revealed in the study carried out by Semprebon, et. al., (2021), also reported similar findings relating to cooperation and sharing of good practices and information among anti-trafficking operators in reception centres for victims of trafficking, asylum seekers and refugees as well as the Territorial Commissions in Veneto region in Italy. Thus, cooperation and sharing of information is a vital tool that helps in identifying if a story is true or false in both Ms. A and Ms. B stories as well as those that have similar characteristics described in their stories above.

Another vital tool that enables professionals to know whether Ms. A and Ms. B stories are true or false is the use of the trainings they have gotten over time. Since the professionals of the study fall under people and organizations that are part of those responsible for identifying victims of trafficking and exploitation in Italy, they are required to be trained regularly on the various ways in carrying out early identification as well as steering the migrants or survivors/victims towards paths that will be favourable for them to escape such violent, dangerous and exploitative situations (GRETA, 2019; On the Road, 2002; Pitzalis, 2020; Lo Conte, 2016; Semprebon and Pelacani, 2020; US TIP, 2021). Indeed professionals are trained according to the UNHCR standard procedures for screening trafficking victims among asylum seekers and refugees both at the arrival phase and the reception centres. Of note here is that these trainings of the professionals are done in order to improve their skills and knowledge on the phenomenon and sometimes even lead to the conviction of the exploiters and traffickers by the victims under their care when it involves criminal proceedings. Moreover, these trainings takes various forms ranging from courses, seminars, conferences, summer schools, simulations, among others. These have all been vital in acting as a way of determining the true nature of stories narrated to professionals as they apply what they learn from them into the real life scenarios during their interactions and interview phase with victims of trafficking as well as those with the same characteristics of Ms. A and Ms. B explained above. For instance, the “Combating Human Trafficking along Migration Routes” simulation-based training organised by both the Italian government and the OSCE at Vicenza, in January 2018, was done in order to improve various professionals abilities on investigating and prosecuting human trafficking offences as well as swift identification of victims of trafficking along the migration routes. The conference was attended by over 50 professionals ranging from 20 social workers, 12 criminal investigators, 4 cultural mediators, 4 lawyers, 4 judges, among others (GRETA, 2019:43, p.13). Thus, these training equips them with the latest information concerning situations relating to such story and if there have been changes in the way the situations are, as such they are able to apply them during the identification phase in order

to discern when a story is true or false as well as the use of the guidelines written by the UNHCR in 2016 often updated periodically.

Moreso, the use of cultural mediators during the interview and identification process acts as a way for professionals to get the truth from the lie. This is very important because the cultural mediators are most often citizens of the same country as that of the victims of trafficking. The cultural mediators acts as a bridge between the professionals and the victims as they are able to navigate with them [in this case Ms. A and Ms. B] during the process of identification, thus what may not be so clear to some of the professionals who are Italians and others not from the same country of the victims, as a result of language barrier, mannerism, cultural differences, among others, will be clear to the cultural mediator who interprets to such professionals and colleagues these differences, and these also help in making the professionals determine the truthfulness of the stories. For instance, in the present study Grace and Ella who are both cultural mediators, said how they were able to assist women and girls interviewed in their organizations to come out and say the truth about what they passed through before, during and after their migration journey and/or their trafficking situation, this they did by talking with the girls in the language they understand (mostly Nigerian Pidgin English, English, Edo Dialect, Igbo Dialect), letting them know that they are in a safe place and should be free to speak and say whatever is on their mind, they were able to share stories of people they know that had come out of trafficking to make the girls know that they too can come out without anything happening to them etc. these helped the girls to relax and eventually say their true story. Thus the professionals as well as other research studies carried out (On the Road, 2002; Degani and De Stefani, 2020) have all highlighted the importance of cultural mediators in fostering girls and women with similar situation to the stories of that of Ms. A and Ms. B to open up and say the true event of their life and experience when they come in contact with anti-trafficking organizations/people that handle their cases in Italy. In addition, just have been discussed in the paragraph above, training of professionals do not only include people like the social workers, law enforcement agencies, lawyers, judges, police, anti-trafficking units etc but also include significantly cultural mediators, who help in facilitating smoothly the interview and identification process of such persons [Ms. A and Ms. B] during the interview and other formal and/or informal interactions between the victims of trafficking and professionals who take up such cases in Italy.

Seemingly, the building of trust among the professionals and the victims further enables professionals in getting the truth of the situation later. Accordingly, at first it may be a bit difficult for victims to open up completely regarding their situation as a result they [the professionals] do not take whatever is said in the first meeting alone to agree that it is the true story. Whereas what they do

is this, they continue to build trust through various informal interactions and meetings with the victims or Ms. A and Ms. B over time, as such they are able to make friendship with them which will lead them to become more relax and gradually open up eventually. Thus, consistently building interactions often leads to the establishment of trust between the professionals and Ms. A. and Ms. B which makes them feel safe and relax, from there they begin to open up and say the real situation of their stories (Palumbo, 2015; On the road, 2002). This means that in essence such persons cannot be rushed to say their real story, but they are given the freedom to choose and decide when to tell their true story as a result of the friendliness shown to them during the informal interactions which often lasts for some months and in some cases years, depending on the nature of the individual.

Another way through which victims stories are determined to be true or false is through the element of time. This according to the professionals is done in such a way that the victims will be asked some certain questions or aspects in relation to their stories shared at the beginning of the identification phase, thus they are to ascertain if the statement said is consistent with what was shared by the victims during the first periods of their meeting for the interview. As such, the women in Ms. A and Ms. B stories described above are given ample time in between such questionings, it can be between few weeks or months and in some cases years in order to determine that the story or their situation match at all times. For example, Josephine disclosed that some aspects of the story told earlier will be asked to such women and girls after some time so as to know if they answer the same thing, these help them to know that the story is valid and true because if it was a story that was forged earlier, it is usually difficult for the person to tell the same thing again rather there will be changes to the story and in some cases they will add new information to it. Thus, the element of time is a very important tool that is employed (UNHCR, 2021; GRETA, 2019) in assessing the situations of Ms. A and Ms. B stories and/or people with the same characteristics of both stories as it helps to give a clear fact about their situation before, during and after their migration journeys. Furthermore, not all aspects of their stories and situations are asked in order not to expose them to revictimization, as sometimes retelling the full story may become traumatic for them which leads them to more vulnerability during such process. This is noted as seeking the credibility of the story in order to ascertain the eligibility for protection of such person or persons when they come in contact with the professionals and/or go to the Territorial Commission for their application/s. Of note here is that it is usually carried out in either of two forms namely, through the direct answering of questions relating to some specific aspects of the story or through free re-narration of the story from beginning to the end or to present day (Nambiar and Scarabello, 2021; US TIP, 2021; Odofin, et. al., 2013). Moreso, in relation to the element of time, there is the recovery and reflection period given to victims of trafficking and severe exploitation which also translate to such persons described in Ms. A and Ms. B stories above, here

they are given some time to go and think about their situation and come back with the truth to assist them get the needed protection and social assistance services in Italy. According to the professionals, this helps the persons to decide to finally say the real story to them who are assigned to their case or the public prosecutors if they are taking the legal path. As such the reflection period also play a vital role in the tools used for getting the real situation from victims in both Ms. A and Ms. B stories. Also, during the reflection period everything concerning their documentation or expulsion from the territory is suspended thus giving the victims guarantee of safety during such period, however if they do not want to go ahead with saying the truth after, they are not forced to, but the downside is that they will not be able to get the needed help and assistance or protection in Italy as most times, they are prepared to be sent back to their origin country [Nigeria] (See Esposito, et. al., 2016; Gargano, et. al., 2011).

Just as was highlighted by the professionals, the mannerism of such persons during the interview and identification process also counts in determining if a story is true or false. Indeed the body language of people who fall under the same category of Ms. A and Ms. B are very necessary to watch and take into consideration, as it shows how various things experienced are expressed and the emotions that comes with such experience, as the women and girls are narrating their situation to the professionals. Although there are some instances whereby some of these victims or women and girls might not show any emotional expression as a result of suppressed trauma or not being able to process such things they had passed through, however a majority of the responses indicated that the mannerism, movements, body language, twitching of eyes, facial expressions, movement of hands and bodies etc all counts when assessing the situation of women and girls with Ms. A and Ms. B stories, as these helps to understand and show how severe what they have experienced is inherent in them. Thus, on the one hand this is a very significant aspect pertaining to victims of trafficking and GBV, as it creates the leeway for the reading of body language which contributes to helping professionals in getting more details that could help victims to be identified better on the other hand, it creates the classification of emotions based on what people display during the interview, which may act as a disadvantage to those who are not able to express their emotions or themselves coherently during the interview phase to be seen as unbelievable. Thus, some other way should be used to avoid using emotions or seeing emotionless people suffer and be found wanting because they didn't fit into the checklist for body mannerism. Despite this, taking in informal body language and manner has proven to be very useful and important in getting the true picture of things.

The process of determining the truth from the lie in both cases of Ms A and Ms B are practically the same and they can be combined with the various points discussed above. While various professionals employ the different strategies according to the situation of the women and children in

the stories as well as those that have similar aspects of the stories in their situation, the aspect for Ms B and her children are taken into a further evaluation process. For instance, apart from getting the story from the mother alone in this case, the children are taken into the evaluation process, as such they are asked some questions relating to the situation at home and how their father and mother were living before they moved out to another country, the responses from the children often show the real picture and situation at home that the woman may be afraid or shy to speak about. For example, according to Grace, one way of vetting the story of Ms. B and those in similar situation of Ms. B is to carry the children along during the interview process, according to the professional one way to do this is through therapy for the children which can be done in various ways, as such *“for children one way to do the therapy is to give them paper to draw and from what they draw you will know what they are thinking, some children will draw sun, some will draw zig zag while a case of a little boy they gave him paper to draw and colour, he drew a sinking boat on the paper and that was how the teacher knew that something was wrong”*. Thus, involving the children during the vetting process not only help in knowing fully the truth about the story or the conditions of things as they occurred at home, but it also gives room for a well detailed situation of events as the children just say what they saw through singing, drawing, recreational activities as well as mood swings.

Finally, going back to the country of origin to get evidence on the GBV faced by Ms. B in the hands of her husband is used a way for verifying the story to be true or false, this is done through the collection of medical reports, asking people around that stayed within their vicinity, going to the villages or villages of the victims or her husband, these are some of the procedures used to get the real facts of what Ms. B went through, as such once the Commission is able to get concrete evidence matching what entails the story of Ms. B, it is deemed that the story is real and the process for identifying a feasible protection path and assistance path is began for her and the children (Nicodemi, 2017; Bianchini, 2011; US TIP, 2021). However, this aspect is a bit tricky as revealed in the theme 3 above, as many of the women and girls from Nigeria who arrive in Italy with children are mainly those that got pregnant during their journey and not from when they were in Nigeria. Thus this aspect needs further research to ascertain the real situation and/or if there has been a change to the way undocumented migration is carried out on girls and women from Nigeria to Italy who have children when they arrive and are received at the reception centres across the country. Accordingly, medical reports, word of mouth as well as witnesses to the GBV experienced by Ms. B play an important role in portraying the story to be real or false in such a case or cases with similar characteristics.

Conclusions

This chapter covered the second aspect of this study, which was on the professional side with a focus on answering the research questions through the use of vignette from Ms. A and Ms. B stories detailed above. It also covered from an institutional framework how GBV is perceived within the protection system and how the system of reception and protection works for women and girls who are victims of trafficking in Italy with a focus of the vignette stories shared. The link between chapter three and this chapter was also explored and analysed.

Chapter Five: Conclusions and Recommendations

The goal of this research was to uncap the linkages between undocumented migration and gender-based violence that Nigerian women and girls face on their voyage from Nigeria to Italy as well as the various forms of protection they get when they arrive in Italy using two stories with the vignette technique to get such programmes from the professional side of view. In this chapter I reinstate the research questions that drove my study as well as summary of the key findings, recommendations, and future research were also given as a result of the final outcome of my findings.

5.1. Summary

This study addressed the various research questions in the participants own words as well as using literature from chapter one to analyse and discuss my fieldwork findings. Using the phenomenological approach, through the use of semi-structured interviews I inductively explored the situations of Nigerian migrant women starting from the time they were in Nigeria to when they were on the road and finally when they arrived in Italy, marking out their various similarities and differences in what they had experienced. The research also made use of the professionals responses which gave a richer perspective on what women and girls victims of trafficking from Nigeria also go through and how they are given various forms of protection in Italy using two stories described in the vignette technique used.

As such, the findings of the research are in two folds. While on the one hand, the first fold consists of that of the migrant women and girls, the second aspect consists of the professionals who had handled cases similar to what was read to them from the vignettes. Thus all the responses from both groups of respondents revealed similar and intersecting reports of the situations and conditions of Nigerian migrant women and girls who were trafficked into Italy. While much research before now have focused mainly on the aspect of sexual violence and trafficking when it comes to Nigerian women and girls (see chapter one above; Degani and De Stefani, 2020; Semprebon and Abe, 2021; Ohonba and Agbotanean-Eghafona, 2019) among others, this research was focused on uncapping other forms of GBV that Nigerian women and girls victims of trafficking faced before, during and after their migration journeys.

Thus, the research employed the use of 36 respondents in total with 17 of them being the Nigerian migrant women and girls while the remaining 19 were the professionals who occupied various positions in relation to assisting victims of human trafficking in Italy thus the professionals ranged from social workers, heads of anti-trafficking units, founders of anti-trafficking organizations, NGOs, cultural mediators, legal guardian of the migrant women and girls in Italy which spanned

across five regions in the country ranging from Emilia-Romagna; Lazio; Lombardy; Marche and Piemonte (see chapter two above).

The chapter one of the study covered the various aspects of GBV and migration/undocumented migration from Nigeria to Italy. While majority of the researches done earlier focused on the sexual abuse that Nigerian women and girls face as a result of human trafficking, this present research expands this aspect by highlighting the other forms of GBV they are exposed to as a result of trafficking. Moreover, other studies rarely make use of the phenomenological approach in analysing the data for Nigerian migrant women trafficked for sexual exploitation. While it is noted that sexual exploitation is not the only form of trafficking, when comparing Nigeria to other countries in the EU the figures for victims of sexual trafficking were the highest from women and girls of Nigerian origin as documented in chapter one and also in chapter three. Thus, the relevance for this research.

Hence I explored the stories of the Nigerian women and girls as well as the professionals in such a way that they will answer my research questions for the study and also give voices to the experiences of these women and girls, including shedding light on the various situations of the women and girls, the leading factors that spark such migration to take place in the first place which invariably puts them in precarious situations along their migratory routes and after when they have arrived.

Furthermore, the aspect of the professionals was done to give a clearer understanding of how from an institutional point of view GBV is perceived and viewed and the various protection services and assistance offered to Nigerian migrant women and girls who were victims of trafficking and/or GBV from Nigeria to Italy, this was paramount as all my Nigerian women and girls research participants had all left their traffickers aka madams/ogas as at the time of my research thus, the professionals responses gave a robust view on how the protection system works in Italy which was very vital in supplanting and getting a full picture of the present realities of the Nigerian women and girls in Italy and how it intersects with their living conditions when they leave their madams/ogas. Thus, the professionals helped in vetting many of the situations that make up their conditions when and/or after they have left their traffickers in Italy.

Various essential themes emanated from the research questions during the interview phase with the participants and these themes already discussed in chapters three and four above gave a clearer picture of the nature of GBV and migration of Nigerian women and girls as such, the themes through constant reflection, member checking, constant playing of the conversations led to the major findings that led to the answering of the research questions of the study.

The theoretical frameworks such as the dependency and underdevelopment, the state fragility theory, intersectionality and the theory of aspirations and capability, the UN definition of human trafficking as well as other studies in the literature review chapter were used to analyse the results of this research. While the research have five questions that were used as the bane of the study. The research questions are as follows:

1. Why do Nigerian girls and women engage in irregular migration to Europe despite the risks?
2. What kind of discourses frame different kinds of violence with a focus on gender-based violence of Nigerian irregular female migrants?
3. To examine the consequences of the different kinds of violence (gender-based violence) and of the different framing discourses of gender-based violence
4. How can the causes and challenges associated with the illegal migration of Nigerian girls and women be addressed?
5. How is the institutional treatment and perception of Gender-Based Violence in migrant reception centers/system? (Embedded in the vignette for the professionals)

5.1.2. The key findings are summarized below:

The findings of the first research question showed that Nigerian women and girls decides to leave Nigeria for various intersecting reasons which depends on the state of their situation at home before the migration process is began. Poverty, struggle, unemployment, insecurity are cited as major reasons why many of them chose to leave Nigeria in the first place, many of them coming from a situation of struggle and hardship in their daily lives created the zeal for them to seek for opportunities outside the shores of the country, as they all wanted to better their lives and that of their families as such migration out of the country was seen as a way out to get the money quickly and lift their families out of poverty at the same time. Moreso, the environment and the various forms of insecurity, threats and killings furthermore sparked their desire to leave Nigeria as most of them were scared for their lives as well as the high rate of unemployment in the country which have continued to be on the rise have further sparked out migration of Nigerian citizens out of the country as such women and girls who are more often at the lower echelon in the society with fewer opportunities to earn a living to sustain themselves and their families are most often caught up in the trap of trafficking syndicates

who offer them lucrative job offers abroad which also acts as and has continued to influence the reason why most of them leave Nigeria.

Moreso, the findings on this research question revealed that the type of job offered to them was a reoccurring factor that influenced their decision to leave Nigeria. Most times the jobs promised to them ranged from hairdressers, domestic babysitters, sales girls as well as tailoring made up majority of what they were told they would engage in when they got to Italy, which they are made to understand would pay them more than what they are earning in Nigeria for doing the same kind of work, when they [the women and girls] put these into consideration it makes them to decide to leave easily as they are eager to start such light work according to them without knowing fully the details concerning the work. As such showing that Nigerian girls and women are lured into trafficking under the guise of the traffickers helping them to secure lucrative jobs abroad.

The findings also showed that lack of awareness and information about the journey plays a major factor on why women and girls from Nigeria continue to embark on such tortuous journeys. This aspect of the findings is paramount as other researches done on the reason for moving out of Nigeria focus more on the deceit of jobs (Kuschminder and Triandafyllidou, 2020; Bello and Olutola, 2020; Ajagun, 2012) and not about the way the journey will be thus, my findings on this aspect adds to the existing literature on the reason why women and girls still fall to trafficking and embark on the journey. As such, the findings shows that aside from the girls being deceived about the type of job they would be doing when they move out of the country, they are also deceived about the nature of the journey they would undertake to get to Italy. It is only when they have left Nigeria that the true picture of the journey becomes clear to them and by then it is too late to turn back as they are most times stranded and left to fend for themselves, in most cases they are transferred to a connection man to help organise their trips however in some other scenario they are abandoned by their madam/oga and as such they have to look for other ways to sort themselves out which invariably leads them with no choice than to continue the journey to Italy. Thus this aspect will continue to influence women and girls embarking on the journey as long as the nature of the journey is not told to them. Although there was a very limited report on the aspect of those who were aware of the journey but in that case, they admitted that what they were told was lies and not the true picture of what the journey entails thus reiterating the findings that lack of awareness of the journey has continued to spur trafficking from Nigeria to Italy with women and girls caught at the crossroads.

An interesting aspect of the findings in research question one is that gender is used as a way out of poverty as in their case the girls and women even though they are relegated to the background in the society in many areas of their lives on the one hand, on the other hand they are used to lift their

families out of poverty when they are made to go through the madam/oga who will take them abroad. Thus having female children plays an advantage to these families as they are pushed into becoming the sacrificial lambs that are used to change the family's status in the society whereby some of them are moved from lower-economic class to middle-class and sometimes upper class citizens in the society where they come from/belong whereby remittances are used to float the household maintenance and expenses as such this has continued to spur women and girls moving from Nigeria to Italy.

Moreso, the findings in research question one showed that the influence from others also make women and girls migrate out of Nigeria. The study showed that women and girls often are lured to moving out of the country from those who stay abroad and return back to the country for various festivities such as weddings, burials, birthday celebrations as well as holiday back at home, when such persons return back their affluence of wealth is also a motivating factor that influences women and girls decision to leave the country as they also want the same high class life for themselves and their families as they see everybody abroad as having good money and made it to the top, as such this continues to push them into the hands of traffickers with the hope of getting the jobs that they are told to earn better and begin the transformation they see from these people who return home.

The findings furthermore showed that women and girls also flee from the homes they are staying in as a result of maltreatment they suffered in the hands of their relatives. This aspect was novel to the research as other researches done on relatives mainly showcase them as those who make decisions for the women and girls to leave Nigeria as have been documented in chapter one above, whereas as my study participants showed in their situation, staying with their relatives gave them the reason to leave the country as they were not properly cared for by them thus linking the reason why women and girls from Nigeria still embark on such journey from Nigeria to Italy. Although the aspect of maltreatment from immediate family members may have also occurred to the other participants of the study but this was not unravelled during the course of the research as such the aspect of relatives influencing on the decision to leave Nigeria from my study contributes to knowledge and expands on the factors that influence out migration from Nigeria to Europe and elsewhere. This invariably makes women and girls vulnerable to trafficking out of Nigeria as they become desperate to flee from harm from the home in order to get better life opportunities abroad.

Furthermore, the findings showed that corruption and porous borders are also great factors on why women and girls continue to embark on tortuous journeys from Nigeria. The ease associated with the ECOWAS regions in West Africa has created the leeway for traffickers to move their victims around the continent and into Europe. As such this present research unravelled that this aspect is

exploited by the traffickers who most times engage in bribery and all sorts of payments to ensure that the women and girls are allowed to cross the borders in the regional bloc. The government officials, border police, immigration officers, army, among others have been noted to be among such persons who are involved in this fraudulent act as such maintaining the continuum of crossings from West Africa to the Sahara Desert then to Libya which is the last place before they are taken into Europe. This corruption was so pervasive that women and girls witnessed it during the time they were crossing from Nigeria to Niger as well as Libya as they didn't travel with any document during the time they were on the road. Thus affirming what other researchers have done on this aspect of migration movement noted in chapter one above.

Thus, it is evident that there is no one linear reason on why Nigerian girls and women leave Nigeria and/or choose to migrate but rather it is made up of various intersecting reasons at the same time during the period before the journey process is started. As such drawing from the literature as well as the theoretical frameworks discussed in chapter one where it has been documented that the state at which Nigeria is, in relation to the economic decline, political as well as social insecurities acts as major motivating factors for citizens including women and girls to move outside the country to look for better life and opportunities. As such it is evident that this migration pattern will continue to hold as long as Nigeria is still in such state of affairs. Thus, the findings indicates that the major forces for people leaving Nigeria to other countries abroad more specifically Italy were economic in nature with safety and security being the socio-political factors that stir out migration from the country.

The findings of the second research question, indicates that Nigerian girls and women are among one of the groups who are prone to face various heightened forms of GBV which affects them disproportionately as they moved from Nigeria to Italy and when they have eventually arrived and settled in Italy. The findings showed that sexual violence and abuse is one of the most persistent form of GBV that Nigerian women and girls are exposed to. This occurred to all of them during the course of their journey and in line of their work. Although the findings on sexual violence is not new as it has been well documented and researched over a long time by scholars discussed in chapter one and three of this dissertation, however sexual violence is used and seen mainly in relations to victims of human trafficking and not on the gendered aspect of violence. Of note is that sexual abuse and violence can occur at the various points of their journey. An interesting part of sexual abuse discovered in this present study was that it occurred in Nigeria before such movement was done, this is vital as it shows that the abuse can take shape and form from any moment before the journey is began and not just when they have started their journey. Thus in some cases, women and girls

experience sexual abuse and violence at the home country which can range from their family members, strangers, friends, relatives, among others. Although this aspect was reported by a few of the participants, but it is however important to note that it can be either separated from their migration journey or be part of their migration journey as some women and girls also experience sexual abuse from the connection men who their madam/oga hires to facilitate their journey before they leave. Another important thing is that the experience of sexual abuse at the home country still acts as part of the reason why women and girls seek to leave the country where they feel they do not have many rights to fight back against such violence.

Moreso, the findings further showed that sexual abuse is also witnessed on their movement from Nigeria to the Sahara desert, from the Sahara desert to Libya and from Libya to Italy. Thus indicating that sexual abuse occurs from various stages of the migration process-before-during and after migration. Libya was noted to be the place where most heightened form of sexual abuse occurs to Nigerian migrant women and girls as they are used for the pleasure of the men there. Also, in Libya they begin to experience their fate as undocumented migrants where they are badly treated and discriminated upon, they are also confined and kept in unsavoury places which are most times overcrowded and in these scenarios various forms of sexual abuse takes form and shape.

Still on the findings of sexual abuse, the study further showed that those who carried out sexual abuse on the women and girls are composed of different people with the Arabs and armed gang men mostly the ones to do them and also the black men who are mainly connection men that organise their trip for them, thereby showing that Nigerian women and girls do not have any safe space when they are on their way as even the Africans who are supposed to take care of them still abuse and molest them in the process of the journey, thus reinforcing power dynamics in GBV of migrant women and girls. It was also evident from the findings that sexual abuse do not stop in these transit countries as the women and girls also face it when they arrive and are settled in Italy however in most cases this was done to them by their customers and sometimes strangers on the way thus showing how GBV takes different shapes in the lives of the migrant women. This proves that sexual violence as a form of GBV is widespread and predominant in the lives of Nigerian migrant women and girls who are undocumented and trafficked into Italy. As such the present study contributes to existing knowledge from the findings discussed above, in all the cases of sexual abuse it was carried out by men who were mainly at the helm of power and who were mainly in control of the situation of the migrant women and in the cases where it was their customers that did it, they were mainly in control of the work environment thereby reinforcing the notion of asymmetry of power relations in GBV. As such, this work has shown that when talking about sexual abuse and violence as a form of GBV that migrant girls and women face from Nigeria, it is always done by men on them thus in these

scenarios the gender binary of violence is maintained as my research showed that there were no females involved in their sexual relations and no females sexually abused them thus this aspect reinstates the gendered aspect of sexual violence whereby women are affected disproportionately in GBV relations. This is vital as not so much research have been done on looking at this binary on GBV on Nigerian women and girls who are trafficked and were former victims of trafficking in Italy.

The findings for research question two also showed forced labour and prostitution as another form of GBV that Nigerian women and girls face as a result of them being trafficked to Italy. This form of abuse starts with deceit on the type of work they were told they would engage in as depicted in the findings of research question one which ranged from domestic house help, babysitter, Tailor, hairdresser, etc with no idea about the true picture of the work they all agree to it and the journey is began for them. However when they arrived in Europe/Italy that is where the real reality of the kind and nature of the work is made known to them. As evident from my research it usually starts from a gentle and warm reception by their traffickers who make them feel comfortable for some weeks before anything concerning the work is told to them. Then afterwards they are told they are to engage in sex work usually called road work in order for them to pay back the money used to bring them to Italy, this is often followed by some altercations between the traffickers and the women and girls which leads to various forms of abuse ranging from threat, force, beating, kicking, verbal and psychological abuse in order to make the girls and women do the work. As such the findings shows that after these series of violence is carried out on them they oblige to do the work as they do not have any choice. During the process of them going to the road work they are often abused by their traffickers, they do not own their lives and bodies as they are used to do anything the traffickers want.

A vital aspect of my findings on this aspect of GBV is that it is done on the women and girls by the madams who are also females from Nigeria thus this brings to light the question of gender binary in relation to perpetrators of violence and receivers of violence. This part of the finding is vital as it shows a shift from the way GBV is conceived and analysed whereby women and girls are seen as receivers of violence from their male counterparts whereas as my study shows the giver/perpetrator of violence during forced labour and prostitution is usually the females who are their traffickers. Although there were some aspect whereby males were the traffickers, but this accounted for a small number of sample thus reiterating that forced labour and prostitution is a gendered aspect of GBV as the main perpetrators of such violence are the women who are the traffickers that organised the trips for the women and girls from Nigeria into Italy.

The findings also showed that they are made to work under terrible conditions after they have been forced into the work and these are done also by the madams which also shows a shift in relation

to the literature on forced labour where it has been linked to men and boys mainly however in relation to trafficking for Nigerian women this shows that they are in line with forced labour as well as being exploited under sexual trafficking thus showing that this aspect of trafficking has rarely been discussed in other literatures before now. Thus, my research shows that there is need for more focus on the gendered aspect of forced labour and prostitution, as yes as have been widely research on the one hand Nigerian women and girls make up a huge percentage of those who are victims of trafficking in the world and are among the first five countries of origin for victims of trafficking in the EU, on the other hand, they experience GBV as a result of the trafficking, thus they are forced against their will to engage in prostitution, they are forced to work under terrible conditions with little breaks and in some cases no break at all, they work from morning till night and even when they are sick they are forced to continue the work without any regard for treatment from their traffickers, they are most times not given any money at all and even when they are given it is very little which is not enough to carter for their needs and that of their families as well as being beaten, kicked, shouted at, maltreated, given unsavoury places to live in, among others during the line of their work when they were with their traffickers. These accounts for various forms of GBV they are exposed to as a result of trafficking which is not often research as that from other literature work. Moreso, this study shows that the traffickers who are mainly women are the ones in charge during this situation of forced labour and prostitution and they are most often the ones who carry out these GBV on the women and girls thus calling for a shift in the way and manner GBV is defined and seen when it comes to migration studied especially for women and girls of Nigerian origin. Thus the study calls for an expansion on the way gender binary is treated when it comes to GBV relating to females who are trafficked from Nigeria to Europe/Italy as it shows females to be a major perpetrator of this form of violence as such when it comes to prostitution and forced labour it is safe to say women who are at the helm of affairs are the ones who are violent towards their fellow females thus showing a shift in the binary of violence whereby asymmetry of power relations takes shape and form within the same gender binary and this time the females who have been noted to be at the receiving end are still the ones carrying out violence on their fellow females. This has been rarely looked at through this lens of GBV when it comes to Nigerian female victims of trafficking from other literatures used in chapter one and three above.

Still on the findings on research question two, domestic violence was another form of GBV that migrant Nigerian women and girls face as a result of trafficking. Of note is that this form of GBV can be experienced at various time frame of their migration process thus before-during-and after the migration journey, however most of the evidence show that DV occurs very much when they are in Italy. Although the findings showed that some women and girls experienced DV at home before the migration process began, this was mainly linked to those who were staying with their relatives at

home as such the findings shows a disparity in relation to those who experience domestic violence in the home country although it may be possible that others also experienced it, but this was not unravelled in my research.

The findings also revealed that majority of these violence were done to them by their madams in Italy, although very few of them were trafficked by men into Italy, they reported not to have experienced such violence from their male traffickers rather the ones that had female traffickers reported experiencing more in relation to domestic violence thus indicating there is a nuance of this aspect of GBV which shows that the female traffickers are deemed to carry out domestic violence on their victims more than the men. Thus bringing to light a different perspective of GBV and human trafficking of Nigerian women and girls. This shows a contrast in other literatures where it has been documented that women and girls are beaten and restricted in the destination country (Ajagun, 2012; Abiodun, et. al., 2021) but were more focused on the sexual violence and abuse that they face (Okoli and Idemudia, 2020; Degani and De Stefani, 2020; Okojie, et. al, 2003; Tessitore and Margherita, 2019) thereby disregarding the analysis of DV in their researches, my study showed that Nigerian women and girls also experienced domestic violence from their traffickers when they are in Italy. Thus, my findings elaborated on domestic violence for migrant women and girls which is not often the case when such studies are done, just as noted in the key terms above, many migrants are considered to be resident when they have lived up to a year in a place other than their place of birth as such in relation to my study these women can be regarded as residents in the various places they lived as in most of their situation, they all lived more than a year with their traffickers therefore they are to be considered resident (even though they were undocumented that period) as such the various forms of violence they experienced during the course of their stay falls under domestic violence in my research as they revealed to live in terrible situations, where they were threatened, beaten, burnt, flogged, maltreated and given little food during the course of their stay. Thereby showing that DV is an inherent form of GBV of human trafficking when it comes to Nigerian women and girls.

Furthermore, while other researches have mainly linked domestic violence to intimate partner violence as documented in chapter one, the findings of my study disagree on this aspect, as my study showed that the women and girls who experienced domestic violence were not in intimate relations with their madam/oga and in a rare situation where the DV was carried out by a fellow girl, they were not in intimate partner relationship, as such it can be concluded that DV which is a part of GBV is also gendered in relation to how it occurs and/or carried out by the people who organise the journey for the women and girls and are mainly women called madam/s, thus contributing to existing literature on the expansion of GBV in relation to migration relating to Nigerian women and girls as in almost all the situation they face DV by women who are females like them. Thus this aspect of my research

is vital for both academic and non-academic institutions when talking about GBV that migrants face. As such through the lens of GBV migrants who are trafficked into Italy for sexual exploitation are most often going to experience DV during the time they will be with their traffickers. This is vital as most research do not take account of the GBV of DV that Nigerian women and girls face as a result of their trafficking situation in Italy. This research has expanded on it. And it also shows how gender can or is also the perpetrator of violence in trafficking situations and in most cases the receivers are also women who are vulnerable in the places they reside thus affirming that asymmetry power relations plays a key role in maintaining structural violence howbeit now it is on female to female relations of power.

The findings on research question two also indicates that physical abuse and threat are among the forms of GBV Nigerian women and girls experience when they are trafficked to Italy. This aspect of GBV was very prevalent in their lives as they all experienced it during the course of their journey and when they had arrived in Italy. The findings also showed that physical abuse and threat can take place before-during and after their migration process with Libya and Italy cited as the places where they take place mainly. Physical abuse and threat are also carried out not just on the migrant women and girls also but also on their family members and relatives back at home, thus unravelling that GBV is also spread from the women and girls who are victims of trafficking to their family members especially when they refuse to engage in the sex work and/or continue doing the work. This is of importance as it showed that the women and girls are not only scared for their lives, they are also scared for the lives of their families and relatives back home should they refuse to do what their traffickers say to them. Just like has been documented from my previous findings above on the perpetrators of GBV on Nigerian migrant girls and women, it also exposed that women are still part of the perpetrators of this form of abuse on the victims who are still made up of women.

One interesting aspect revealed in this finding is that in relation to physical abuse and threat, it is done by both men and women on the migrant girls and women, and it can also be broken down in various ways. Firstly, the violence is carried out by people who they know and those who they don't know. When looking at it from this aspect this study shows that there is usually a separation of perpetrators of violence according to the places where they move and stay. On the one hand, during their migration journey it can be concluded that men and boys are the perpetrators of violence as the madams usually employ other people to facilitate their journey for them which is usually called the connection men, and in the course of their movement sometimes the connection men abuse them physically too as well as the Arabs who are mainly males abuse them physically too by beating, flogging, and also lynching them in some cases they are not given food for some days as well, all

these they experience before they eventually get to Italy and on the other hand, it can be concluded that the madams who are mainly the people that organise their trip are the perpetrators of violence when they arrive to Italy, as all the time they stay with these madams during the first 3 to 4 years of their arrival in Italy. Although some had male traffickers, but they didn't report experiencing violence from them. Thus my study contributes to the existing literature on violence and GBV for migrant women and girls trafficked from Nigeria as it shows and dissects how GBV is carried out on these women and girls and how through their movement they are exposed to these GBV which has been broken down among both male and female genders, showing that not only are they violated but also the gender that violates them can be differentiated alongside their journeys. Although when they get to Italy in some cases they experience violence in the hands of their customers who are mainly men however this aspect is only felt when they go to work, and it does not happen to them in all cases. Thus, showing that the perpetrator of GBV shifts also according to space, place and time along their trajectories of life. Thereby contributing and expanding this scarce area of research on GBV relating to Nigerian migrant women and girls.

Lastly on the findings for research question two, Oath taking and ritual was found to be another severe form of GBV that migrant Nigerian women and girls face as a result of their trafficking from Nigeria to Italy. While Oath taking and ritual is not new as it has been widely researched by scholars, it is however not looked at as a form of GBV that Nigerian girls and women face instead they are discussed along the line of sexual trafficking for Nigerian women. My study expanded on this aspect as it showed that Oath Taking and ritual is a form of GBV that Nigerian women and girls who are trafficked and/or victims of trafficking experience as a result of undocumented migration to Italy. Oath taking and ritual are a form of voodoo practice whereby people are subjected to some kind of magic rites which involves swearing an oath of allegiance to the person/person's in charge of their journey. The findings of this study showed that all Nigerian women and girls go through this oath taking and ritual ceremony before their migration journey is started as well as before anything is even done regarding the process for the journey by the traffickers as it is seen as an agreement for the women and girls to do whatever is told to them during the period of their journey and when they would have arrived in Italy thus the first asymmetry of power relations is carried out on them. As in many cases they are forced to do the oath against their will without any say on the procedure.

Although some studies have also documented that oath taking and ritual is done in the destination country when migrants have arrived, my study refutes this claim as all the women and girls did their oath and ritual rites in Nigeria before their journey was started. One vital aspect of this kind of abuse is that it is less physical and more psychological as the effects of this violence is not

seen physically but rather it is used as mental turmoil for the Nigerian women and girls. The study also revealed that this form of violence is gendered as it was pertaining to only women and girls alone in all depictions from the migrant women and girls thus showing that this form of violence is done on the females alone leaving out the boys and men who are also trafficked, but they are not made to undergo oath taking. It may be linked to the fact of the lucrative nature of the prostitution work and how the madams/oga already know they would collect huge sums of money as compensation for taking the girls and women abroad as they are made to pay back large sums of money for the trip organised for them as noted in chapter four above.

Moreso, the findings also showed the process through which the oath and ritual is done is dehumanising and demeaning against the women and girls and their bodies, the right to their bodies and decision is taken and striped away as they are forced to undergo the ritual whether they like it or not, whether they believe in the rites or not, at the same time various personal and precious items are taken from them which consists of the collection of their pubic hairs, pants/lingeries, bra, fingernails, toenails, clothes, jewellerys, pictures, among others. Of which these things are used as evidence and taken to seal the bond of agreement between them and their traffickers in order for them to pay back the money used for their trips.

As such the findings of the research shows that the oath taking is used to serve two purpose whereby on the one hand it is used as a way that the traffickers get their money back which is usually inflated to around 25,000 to 40,000 euros after the trip is successful and on the other hand it serves to secure the traffickers against any formal investigation on them especially when the girls and women are caught during the line of work (sex work on the road). Thereby escaping any form of punishment should they be caught this has continued to be used to exploit these women and girls and place them in terrible work conditions and at the same time reinforcing GBV on the girls and women as they are not only violated but are kept under bondage and allegiance to their traffickers who are mainly women as well therefore maintaining asymmetry power relations that fosters continuum of GBV of these girls and women. As such the study further expanded on the aspect of oath taking as it showed it to be more gendered than earlier explained from other research, thus oath taking is still a form of GBV that Nigerian women and girls experience, as in all the cases they are made to undergo it before their migration process is started and they all indicated that there were no boys and men in the various places and time they went to do the oath taking ceremonies. It also showed that GBV is carried out on them during the process because they are forced to do it and are threatened if they disobey the oath that they have taken which also span to their families as well, especially when they become stubborn about engaging in the sex work when they arrive in Italy. Thus, the use of Oath here signifies heighten form of GBV as it takes the form of psychological violence on the women and girls which is not seen

physically but its effects have more damaging outcomes when compared to the others. Thus my study contributes to this gap in literature whereby Oath taking, and ritual is rarely used to examine GBV that Nigerian women and girls face as a result of Human trafficking rather they are supplanted into the factors that make up human trafficking on researches on sexual violence eluding the fact that GBV also occurs in the process of human trafficking which my findings has showed.

Thus, the findings in research question two generally indicate that even though sexual violence is one of the most common form of GBV Nigerian women and girls face, the others are also inherent in the migration journey as such they are prone to face all these abuse as far as they are trafficked from Nigeria to Italy through undocumented routes. Moreover, my study indicates that all the participant of the study were victims of human trafficking and GBV from their experiences of being deceived about the work, forced into prostitution against their will, they were exploited and also faced threat to their lives, physical abuse, sexual abuse, psychological abuse among others which also accounted for their precarious living in Italy. This is vital as it shows a disconnect from the literatures where they noted that some of the girls trafficked knew they were being trafficked for sexual exploitation in Italy, However, my findings disagree with this fact as all my participant indicated otherwise as such they were victims of trafficking which invariably exposed them to various GBV as a result of being trafficked this is paramount as they are rarely seen as victims of GBV but rather only as victims of human trafficking which most often is sex trafficking thereby invariably removing other forms of abuse they faced as a result of this thus showing a disconnect in migration research for Nigerian women as they are not only victims of human trafficking but also of GBV which is experienced in severe forms from their traffickers and even their customers to some extent which even puts them in more vulnerability showing that they do not have any safe space and place in all the period they were engaged in the sex work. Although a few had their own experience of GBV at home, but it was very few and even when it occurred it was reported to be from those who were staying with their relative when they were in Nigeria before any migration journey was began. Thus the findings of this research question show proof that a majority of Nigerian girls and women have been subjected to human rights and GBV abuses that have been committed against them during their migration journey and it also showed that these forms of GBV can occur separately or simultaneously during and after their journeys however, evidence shows that most of the time the various GBV occurs simultaneously at the different stages of migration.

In addition, the findings from research question three revealed that all the women and girls had experienced various consequences of violence as a result of the GBV they experienced, while some were not linked directly to GBV such as sickness, others where strongly linked to GBV such as pregnancies and abortion, psychological trauma and depression as well as diseases contracted. The

findings further showed that unwanted pregnancies were as a result of the incessant rape and sexual abuse they had been exposed to during and after their migration journey with Libya cited as the place where many forms of abuse takes place as have been reported in the findings gotten from research question two above, thus showing how GBV pave the leeway for pregnancy to occur. Moreso, the findings showed that pregnancy is not only a consequences of sexual abuse and rape but also abortion is part of it too especially when it comes to women and girls who were trafficked for sexual exploitation to Europe from Nigeria as they are made to undergo abortion immediately they arrive in Italy which was revealed to be done in order for them to begin the sex work, as such pregnancy is seen as an obstacle to their traffickers in relation to them doing the sex work. Moreso, the fear of repercussion from the madam/oga also drives Nigerian women and girls into getting abortion as the findings revealed that in order to avoid being further abused by their traffickers the women and girls once they find out they are pregnant, they look for ways to get abortion in order for their traffickers not to find out and do harm to them, although in some cases they are still found out because once the procedure is done they bleed sometimes and are weak as such their madam/oga get wind of it, however when such a situation happens they are kept secluded in the place of residence without proper care/treatment given to them.

Although earlier studies documented in chapter one and four by Gerard and Pickering, (2013), Garcia-Moreno, Guedes and Knerr, (2012), Freedman, (2016), and Tastsoglou, et. al., (2021) revealed that pregnancies and transactional sex were used as a way of getting things done for migrant women and girls from other places on their trip to Europe, the findings from my study showed a different approach to the way and manner pregnancy is received by the Nigerian women and girls traffickers as in all scenarios they are made to undergo the abortion procedures whether they want to or not thus reinforcing GBV and its asymmetry of power relations whereby the traffickers are superior to the migrant women and girls who bear such consequences during such situations.

The findings further indicated that the psychological consequence was far more than the others as it was the most difficult one to see and express by them, in some cases it led to their break-down and even thinking if they would ever make it to see another day because of what they passed through, while it also indicated that they were not given any form of help regarding it when they were with their traffickers. Thus, women and girls who are trafficked are most likely to experience such consequences as a result of trafficking, the dangerousness involved in the journey and GBV they encounter during and after the migration process. In the same manner the findings showed that the working and living conditions that the women and girls are made to adhere to under duress further places them in depression as they become trapped, stranded as well as undocumented with no family

members in the country, no language skill, they cannot access things like regular migrants do in Italy as well hiding under plain sight all accounts for them falling under depression. Moreover, they become aware that they do not have any right to anything concerning their lives and their bodies during and after the migration process further places them under psychological trauma.

Still on the findings from research question three, my study showed that girls and women suffer from varying degree of sicknesses, health issues, diseases among others. The findings indicates that Nigerian women and girls who have experienced GBV during the migration process are prone to experience these consequences which most times leaves them imbalanced, shaken and also traumatised.

Although there was no direct link in my findings to the women and girls contracting such sickness and disease such as HIV/AIDS, STIs etc. it may be possible that some had them but refused to talk because they were shy or stigmatized however, they were a lot of evident on other forms such as being sick, having issues with their health, in some cases the maltreatment as well as the unsavoury places and food they were given affected their health to the extent that their body couldn't function well again, the findings also showed that some were permanently injured from all the GBV that they faced whereby they had marks on their bodies, some had injuries that have lasted for some years and in other cases they experienced swelling of the body parts during and after their journey. These showed how the various forms of GBV they faced played out in damaging effects in relation to the consequences being felt by them later on.

Finally, the findings of research question four, indicates that the provision of jobs, employment, opportunities for growth and development as well as the provision of basic and fundamental infrastructures are key in curbing undocumented migration from Nigeria to Italy. As such the findings shows that when such jobs and opportunities for growth are made available in Nigeria the zeal to migrate desperately will be reduced and people will be more focused on improving their living standard from within as exemplified from the events of the early 1960s and 1970s when Nigeria was at its best in relation to economic stability to the extent that they employed foreigners from outside Nigeria in the job market as such out migration during that period saw a reduction in its occurrence. seemingly, the findings indicates that diversification of the economy from dependence on oil to other agricultural and natural resources products as well as the development and advancement of ICT in Nigeria will also create a shift in the way and manner the socio-political sphere and position of Nigeria is, in Africa as well as the Global value chain networks which invariably leads to more space for employment, development and growth of the Nigerian economy at the same time creating the leeway for the youths and other citizens to be involved in taking up these

new opportunities and spaces in the country, these would furthermore deter people from leaving the country including women and girls who have been noted to be among the most vulnerable to trafficking from Nigeria to Italy. Moreover, the findings also showed that access to free/reduced cost of education is paramount in stemming the scourge of trafficking in Nigeria as a trained mind will hardly fall prey to trafficking this is very vital as in most cases the women and girls who make up victims of trafficking are those who are rarely educated and in situation where they manage to go to school they end up at the secondary school level which is not enough to determine full exposure to knowledge and critical thinking for such persons.

Moreso, the findings from the study revealed that women and girls should be supported to become independent through various empowerment schemes and programmes geared towards self-actualization leading them to contribute meaningfully to the economy and society to which they belong as well as laws on VAW such as the Child Right Act, the National Gender Policy, the Prevention Against Domestic Violence Law, the Violence Against Persons Prohibition Act (VAPP) laws among others should be strengthened and implemented fully and the culprits punished accordingly to the laws as these will deter women and girls from traffickers who lure them into leaving Nigeria through such dangerous means.

Although, a small fraction of the findings indicated that the borders should be blocked as a way out of stemming undocumented migration even though on the one hand this has helped to decrease the number of migrants, asylum seekers and refugees entering into Europe as can be seen from chapters one and three above however, I disagree with this aspect as from the literature review of chapter one showed that such move do not address the issues relating to undocumented migration instead it creates the leeway for migrants to be fully immersed in more vulnerable situations as traffickers and smugglers find other ways and routes to beat the stipulated borders laws as such leading to more dangerousness as well as GBV for migrants especially women and girls who are deemed more vulnerable under such situations. Instead I advocate for more legal ways and less stricter visa policies to be implemented as these would play vital roles in stemming undocumented migration and trafficking from Nigeria to Europe/Italy.

For the professionals

Furthermore, the second part of the findings which made up chapter four was on the professional side, with a focus on answering the research questions as well as unveiling the protection

system and programmes for migrants through the vignette from Ms. A and Ms. B stories detailed above.

The findings revealed that the professionals have all handled cases relating to the stories of both situations however, Ms. A was the one that was more common according to the findings unlike the one for Ms. B and the children. The various themes such as Identification, Who gets What, When and How, Motive and Determination were all used to uncap the protection system in Italy and the services granted to such people with the stories of Ms. A and Ms. B.

The findings on the theme of identification in chapter four, showed that the professionals are all dominant figures in relation to the way and manner the identification process is done for migrant women and girls who fall within the cases of Ms A and Ms B stories. As such the findings showed that there are various elements that make up the profiles of those who are trafficked and victims of human trafficking in Italy with a strong reference made to Nigerian women and girls who fall under such spectrum. As such according to the professionals the women must show from their stories that they have suffered and/or suffer severe exploitation in relation to the way they came into Italy and the way they were living in Italy before they got contact with them, also there must be evidence of potential danger/already established danger that the person is exposed to or will be exposed to ongoing danger as a result of their state of affairs in Italy as well as showing that they would face severe danger if they are returned back to their origin country and those who will be exposed to revictimization as a result of them belonging to a particular social group or syndicates, those who are at the risk of GBV and re-trafficking. Thus when such elements are found in the stories of Ms A and Ms B and those who hold similar characteristics with such stories, they are identified as victims of trafficking and more specifically for sexual exploitation.

As such the findings from the professionals linked this aspect of identification for Nigerian women and girls relating to the factors they consider in identifying them as victims of human trafficking, thus, the findings indicated that they look into the stories and take them piece by piece where they bring out various elements such as their economic background which accounts mostly for the reason why they leave, the family structure, which position they occupy, what kind of work were they doing before they left Nigeria, how the person was able to leave Nigeria, did she get help, was the trip organised for her, does she have debt to pay, did she take any oath before coming to Italy, was she exposed to any violence on the way, was she sexually abused, threatened, physically beaten, among others. According to the findings once these aspects are found in the stories of Nigerian migrant women and girls who come into their organization at the process of the interviews and discussions with them, they eventually label them as victims of human trafficking as they portray the

elements of trafficking profile as described in the UN Trafficking Protocol of 2000, the National Action Plan and National Referral Mechanism, as well as those stipulated in the various Italian laws and UNHCR guidelines and ILO guidelines. Thus, this aspect to them apply mostly to Ms A and those who bear the same situation once they have been identified by them. Whereas the findings indicated that for Ms B, the process of identification is still the same as the woman with children would be interviewed and the story dissected in order to bring out the various elements that make up the victims profile for her situation which is mainly geared towards GBV however it is difficult for them to prove this in her situation as according to the findings they do not take her strongly as a victim of trafficking but rather into smuggling and family violence. As such the findings showed that the process of verification for Ms B is very stressful as the procedure requires a lot to be done including going back to the origin country to get evidence of violence before she would be given any form of protection which can also make her more exposed to violence or danger in Italy especially if the husband/relatives gets wind of where she and the children are.

One vital aspect that this study revealed from the findings is that these women and girls are looked at and identified through a particular lens which focus on identifying them as victims of human trafficking for sexual exploitation thereby removing the other forms of violence they may have faced as a result of their journey and situation in Italy before they got contact with the women and girls as well as the children. Thus, this study shows a gap in this aspect of identification as in most cases people who come into Italy with the characteristics of those described in Ms A and Ms B stories do not only face violence that are related to human trafficking alone but also face other forms of GBV which is not taken explicitly into consideration in the identification process as the professionals from the findings showed that they are more focused on the elements which leads to sexual abuse and exploitation under human trafficking.

Moreso, the process for identification for Ms B according to the findings shows that it is very difficult and rigorous for her and the children to be given protection as there are a lot of verifications that must go on which also span to getting evidence from the origin country before she can even be considered to start filing the process for her to get protection in Italy and even when such filing is done the GBV she faced is not taken into full force during such a process rather they focus on applying for political protection for her which is a general protection on the bases of fear of persecution and not on GBV faced only.

The findings thus show that when such cases of women and girls are looked into by the professionals the aspect of GBV is not brought to the fore during the identification process even though it is an inherent part of those that are victims of trafficking as the findings of chapter three

showed. Of note is that they are aware of some of these various forms of violence as can be seen in the markers used to identify them however they do not channel the modalities of GBV into the identification process save for sexual and physical abuse. Thus my study contributes to fill up this gap as have been discussed in chapter four and in the summary above on the Nigerian women and girls victims of trafficking that GBV is an inherent part of trafficking for Nigerian women and girls which takes shape, form and place before, during and after their migration journeys. Thus both Ms A and Ms B can be victims of both human trafficking and GBV at the same time and as such when they are being identified in the protection system, these aspect should be taken on par with the elements of trafficking used generally.

Thus the findings on the theme of identification is in line with my findings of chapter three above as well as in the summary of this chapter above as it shows the various elements that make up trafficking profile of those in Ms A and Ms B stories as well as those with the same characteristics as it indicated that women and girls who come into the various associations of the professionals with the characteristics described in the vignette are given protection and assistance in Italy. It further showed the situation of such persons intersecting with what was detailed with the summary above. As such, unemployment, situation of hardship, poverty, seeking for good life for themselves and families among others were cited by the professionals as some of the reasons the women and girls they had interviewed stated for their leaving Nigeria. Thus, it is evident that Nigerian women and girls constitute a bane of the reception system in Italy, as they are found to be among the nationality with the highest number of people trafficked for sexual exploitation in Italy.

The findings on the theme regarding Who gets What, When and How showed a similar pattern in relation to the way the protection system works for both Ms A and Ms B during the course of their stay. As such the findings showed that after a successful identification process has been done for both women in the cases, they are then transferred to the various places which are suitable for their situation taking into consideration the differences in their circumstances as well as their needs. Thus the findings indicated that for single women and girls as well as women with children, who are within the characteristics of Ms A and Ms B and have been identified as victims of trafficking they are taken into the reception centres (CAS) and placed in facilities where they are accommodated and taken care of during the duration of stay permitted in the project they enter eventually. Accordingly, the professionals and those in charge of their situation come together with them to make a plan regarding the type of social assistance programme they would go through till the end which is geared towards self-independence at the end of project.

The findings further showed that all that is required to take care of these women and girls are given to them according to the stipulated laws which are found in the Articles 601, 18 and 18-bis whereby the rights and access to protection and welfare packages are guaranteed for such persons. As such they are given various social assistance ranging from enrolment into language school, monthly stipend to take care of themselves and their children, registration into skill acquisition courses, placing them in internship as well as finding jobs for them, providing counselling and medical services. The findings also revealed that for women with children or those who were within the area of Ms B story who had children, they are assisted faster so as to help the mother get involved into the activities that would make them become independent as such the children are placed into schools quickly and the mothers given access to the language and skill acquisition courses on time. One unique aspect indicated in this aspect was that in the case of those with children more money is paid to them monthly for the upkeep of the children and all her expenses will be taken care of, her documents and that of the children will be treated faster as well.

Thus on the one hand the findings showed that these programmes and services given to women and girls with both characteristics of that of Ms A and Ms B have been very effective in spurring them into better and stable life outside the protection system as it's the aims and objectives of the projects. On the other hand this study uncapped some discrepancies in relation to the way the protection system is done as such sometime even the system that is supposed to protect victims takes up the role of the oppressor knowingly or unknowingly.

From the findings my study unveiled that these programmes sometimes do not meet the objectives they were designed for in some cases especially when the women and girls have gone through all the requirements and activities stipulated in the programme, they still do not become self-sufficient and reliant as the skills acquired cannot be used to secure any tangible jobs for them after the completion of the programme. This aspect was also part of my research findings in chapter three although it was not fully covered as the analysis was based on uncapping the various forms of GBV women and girls face however many of my participants from the Nigerian women and girls used for the study were waiting to get jobs after they had completed their trainings in the various programmes they enrolled for. As such this is a downside of the reception and protection system as it does not take into account the true reality of things that are needed by the victims to enable them transit to better work opportunities in the society rather they end up doing low skilled jobs with little pay which can lure some of them to go back into prostitution and in some extreme cases become re-trafficked by going back to their traffickers.

Furthermore as the findings showed, the women and girls who are victims of trafficking are taken to secured places where they are sheltered discretely with severe rules especially for those with children, while this serves on the one hand as a way of guaranteeing their safety and for them to become free from their traffickers, on the other hand it plays out as a restrictive measure as the women and girls with their children are kept at the places for a long time usually some months without contact to others and even when they are allowed out they are escorted with other people at close heels, they are not given any cell phone or smart phones during that period, among others. Even though the findings shows that the government sees it as a positive side of the reception centres, My study disagree with this aspect as it thus becomes detention centres with a little bit of freedom however the women and girls are dictated on what to do and they must secure permission before going anywhere. Thus showing how the institution violates the rights of migrants in the reception system. Moreover, this also affects the women and girls negatively especially when they are made to stay on their own without adjusting properly to the society and in some cases they become disconnected with the realities of the environment which makes them unable to settle down and become fully integrated.

Moreso, the findings showed that during the process of the identification to the reception phase as well as when they apply for protection status in Italy they are made to tell and retell their stories over and over again and in some cases the process is done all over again when they are rejected, and they have to appeal to the Territorial Commission again. Thus they have to go through the painful details of their situation all the time in order to get the needed assistance and help as well as their papers in check which often leads to revictimization of such persons thereby showing how institutional violence takes form and shape in the lives of these victims who are supposed to be protected by the system.

Seemingly, this theme of who get what, when and how is also paramount to my chapter three whereby all the participants of the study were in various reception centres/shelters as at the time the study was carried out and they were at various stages of receiving social assistance and protection services and some of them also witnessed the downside of the reception system as they were waiting to reapply for their rejected application, some were waiting to get jobs, some had just entered the programme after a long time under their traffickers etc. As such the findings of this theme holds sway in the way and manner reception and protection services are given to Ms A and Ms B as well as those who have the same characteristics of them including Nigerian women and girls.

Moreso, the reason to protect the women and girls in both stories differs according to the findings on motive. As such the findings indicates that for Ms A and those with the same characteristics of the story, they are most often looked at as victims of trafficking for sexual

exploitation as the identification process shows that the markers of human trafficking is very much present in the situation that make up the story thus when the professionals and all those in charge meet up such persons they are all protected under the reason for human trafficking especially women and girls who come from Nigeria through such means and have similar profiles. Thus, the findings on the reason to protect Ms A and those with similar scenario further matches my research findings in chapter three as well as the summary given above where it showed that Nigerian women and girls are 99% among those who are protected under the reason for being victims of trafficking when they come into Italy through such undocumented journeys and after passing through the identification process where their stories on their lives before, during and after the migration process has been fully explored, dissected and reconstructed to showcase all that they experienced in their life up till the time of the reception phase. As such the findings reiterates the fact that Nigerians make up a majority of the people who are found in the reception centres even though human trafficking is not pertaining to Nigeria alone, however Nigeria holds one of the top 5 spots in countries of origin for victims of trafficking in the EU as well as in Italy.

The findings also showed a lacuna in relation to the way and manner victims of trafficking profiles are treated in Italy, as such women and girls who show such traits as that of Ms A above are mainly seen as victims of human trafficking thereby excluding other forms of violence they may have experienced as a result of them being trafficked. My study showed in chapter three that in all the cases of Nigerian women and girls who come into Italy and are undocumented and trafficked, they all experienced varying degree of GBV ranging from sexual abuse, domestic violence, physical abuse and threat, oath taking and ritual as well as forced labour and prostitution etc which also take place in their trajectories of life however when they are being examined, the focus is always mainly on trafficking for sexual exploitation thereby leaving out these other forms of abuse they faced which fall under the spectrum of GBV as have been detailed in the previous chapters thus my study contributes and shed more light to the fact that even though Nigerian women and girls are given protection on the bases of victims of human trafficking, the aspect of them being victims of GBV which is inherent in human trafficking should be explicitly joined to such processes as they experience all these forms at the same time of them being trafficked thus GBV and human trafficking intersect in their trajectories and should not be separated when dealing with such cases.

The findings further showed that in relation to Ms B and those with the same characteristics of such story, the reason given for protection is varied and leans more in line of family violence and smuggling although a few aspects of the findings showed that the reason can also be for human trafficking however this was tied down to what the true picture of her trajectory reveals eventually.

Thus indicating that the situation of Ms B is more complicated when compared to Ms. A which was easily agreed to be of human trafficking. Although the reason for such variety was mainly linked to the fact that she left the country with all the children which was revealed to be strange especially when taking into account that she's a Nigerian as the findings showed that it is very rare and strange for women and girls to leave the country with their children rather the common trend is that they leave the children behind with family members/relatives to carter for with the money they send back home as remittances. As such this also was found in the findings gotten from chapter three where all the Nigerian women and girls who had children and were pregnant admitted having gotten them when they were in Italy.

Seemingly, just as was explained in Ms A situation above, even though Ms B fled the country as a result of GBV faced in the origin country and is seeking for help under GBV the findings shows that it is usually difficult for her to get protection under such label as it requires a lot of things to be done and verifications for them to ascertain that she is a victim of GBV. However when her case is looked into for protection she is often placed within victims of trafficking and/or those seeking for international protection, thus the lens of GBV is not used most times in examining her case for protection, as such my study shows how this disparity still persist till date from the findings above because she can be a victim of GBV and human trafficking and smuggling at the same time since in most cases they are all interwoven as the findings in chapter three shows and the summary above shows but this aspect is supplanted and swept under the guise of human trafficking for sexual exploitation.

Furthermore, the findings on determination which covered the way and manner such stories are believed or not believed as well as the ways in knowing when they are true/false stories about the situation of migrants during the identification and reception phases showed on the one hand that Ms A and those with the same characteristics of such stories are believed to be true more than 70% of the time they encounter them howbeit some more information are needed to have a complete picture of all that happened in their situation as such they are certainly seen as victims of trafficking at the end while on the situation for Ms B and those who fall under such category are believed mostly 50% of the time they come across them until unless during the identification and reception phases more information on the true picture of their situation is shown to also have other markers which most times they look out for criteria relating to trafficking that is when they would change their stance on what they believe, on the other hand the findings indicated that the tools used in asserting if a story is true or false are varied but can be used at the same time depending on the situation of the women in both cases and on the person or professional handling their cases, thus frequent training of

professionals, body mannerism of the victims or of Ms. A and Ms. B, sharing of information among co-workers and organizations, the use of cultural mediators, the element of time, among others, are vital tools which help in making the professionals who handle such cases to get the true picture of events, and separate facts from fictions during the interview and identification phases as well as providing the adequate social assistance and protection services to the women in Ms. A and Ms. B stories as well as those that have similar characteristics of the stories, once the truth has been known. Although, in some cases it takes some time before the full story is eventually told, this can take some weeks and months interestingly the findings revealed that they are still kept within the system which is followed by informal interactions regularly during these period, thus creating a safe and comfortable environment for such person which invariably makes them open up later to the people handling their cases.

Howbeit, the study still uncapped some discrepancies during the way the determination process is done in Italy. The findings of the study showed that in relation to body mannerism even though on the one hand this aspect is very vital as it helps to get some informal information on the true event that happened from the women and girls in such stories from the way they move, the twitching of their eyes, their facial expressions, their leg and hand movement as well as other things done which the victims do not take seriously when they are sharing their story to these people, on the other hand it may preclude others from being inserted into the reception and social assistance programmes who do not fall within this spectrum of showing their feelings and emotions during such process.

Moreso, the findings showed that the case of Ms B and people with children are taken further in the sense that the Territorial Commission goes to verify the stories from the origin country with getting police as well as medical and health reports before ascertaining the realness or falseness of the situation. This may hinder people with children from getting the needed help and assistance on time, due to the cumbersome process involved thus, these acts as disadvantages to women and children entering into Italy from Nigeria.

Furthermore, the findings uncapped that on the one hand even though the Italian protection system procedures and the professionals indicated that they don't force the women to speak on their situation or trajectories of life when they come in contact with them as they are given freedom to choose when they want to speak which lasts within a month which is a good thing, on the other hand it is still a form of violence and force because it means anybody that do not share their story within the time frame will be sent back to their origin country, therefore disregarding the danger they would face if returned back to their country of origin thus the institution plays a role in the GBV that these

women and girls face as a result of them seeking for social assistance and protection which plays out as a double standard as the Italian system prides itself as being generous and welcoming but on the other end, they are restrictive and forceful whereby when such women and girls do not share their stories within the time frame they are sent back to the places of danger which shows a lack of empathy and the welcoming spirit they want to always portray. Thus the system produces violence at the same time during the process of granting safety for the women and girls.

In all, the findings from the professionals answered all the research questions for the study as it showed the various things that women and girls pass through before, during and after their migration journeys from the various themes used starting with the identification process down to the determination procedure where they showed from an institutional perspective how human trafficking and GBV is seen, framed and attended to in the various reception centres and shelters in Italy, as such the findings revealed the background of the women and girls from their home and what drives them out of the country, it also showed that women and girls go through various abuse (especially sexual and physical abuse) during their journey especially starting from when they are in Niger through the Sahara desert to Libya and eventually Italy thus confirming research questions one and two. Moreso, the aspect of women being abused and getting pregnant, sickness, contracting diseases, among others, during and after the journey was highlighted from the responses gotten from the professionals thus answering research question three mainly linking it to Ms. A for single girls and women situation rather than Ms. B which was revealed to not be common when talking about Nigerian women and girls coming into Italy with children. And eventually, research question four was answered with all the professionals noting that the socio-economic and political situations in Nigeria has to change for such undocumented migration and trafficking especially for sexual exploitation of women and girls to stop.

5.2. Recommendations

The findings from the study discussed above has showed that international migration and trafficking in Nigeria has not been fully addressed, as such women and girls are still prone to being lured into trafficking from Nigeria to Italy which takes various forms. Since the EU border control initiatives and its externalisation policies in third countries such as Niger and Libya and other bilateral agreements between other members, like Morocco and Spain as well as Italy and Libya, the numbers of Africans that cross the Mediterranean sea have reduced. However, the risk and dangers involved have increased within a short period. This is because traffickers now look for other means and routes for sending their victims across borders from Africa to Europe which many Nigerian women and girls

pass through the Mediterranean sea from Libya to enter into Italy. Although legal pathways are available, however they are most often very limited for migrants from third countries as have been documented in previous chapters. Thus this study recommends the following to be taken into consideration for effective stemming of undocumented migration, trafficking as well as GBV of women and girls victims from Nigeria to Italy including when they seek protection from the social protection system and organizations across the country.

- ✓ The situation of socio-economic decline should be fully addressed in the Nigeria as the high rate of unemployment, insecurity, little prospects for growth and opportunities, among others all accounts for why the youths including women and girls seek opportunities outside the country which also makes them vulnerable to trafficking as they become desperate to leave the country by being attracted to such appeals of the traffickers. Thus, the government should make significant investments in initiatives that have the potential to provide work and several opportunities for the country's vast pool of unemployed young people.
- ✓ Government and non-government organizations should create entrepreneurial centers and programs to provide options for women and other marginalized groups who are vulnerable to being trafficked, and in need of basic education, literacy, and skills training. Supporting women and girls to become independent is vital for the curbing of GBV and human trafficking in Nigeria. Thus, various empowerment schemes and programmes should be initiated across the country that would give women and girls the requisite skills and knowledge to transit into gainful activities which invariably leads them to establish themselves and also contribute to the family and society at large.
- ✓ There is need to diversify the Nigerian economy from what it is presently (over 80% on oil export). Thus, there should be a shift from the dependence of oil exports alone to more inclusion of agriculture, technology/ICT as well as other natural resources, being explored and developed fully to maximum capacity. This would create leeway for a shift from the peripheral level in international and regional markets to a more centralized level. And in addition, paving the way for more opportunities for the citizens in the country in relation to job opportunities.
- ✓ A key aspect in stemming human trafficking from Nigeria to Italy, is to provide access to schools and free/reduced cost of education as a trained mind will hardly fall prey to trafficking. Moreso, Education also provides people with ammunition and hope that they can

access some job markets in the country as both the public and private sectors takes into consideration the certificates of the kind and/or level of education gotten before many jobs are given in Nigeria.

- ✓ Awareness schemes, outreach and programmes regarding the risks and dangers involved during and after the migration journey will be very useful to deter people especially women and girls from embarking on such tortuous journeys in the first place. This can be done through the portraying of the real events in theatre movies, local plays and dramas as they can help raise more awareness about human trafficking and Gender Based Violence that Nigerian females face on their voyage to Europe and when they have arrived in Europe. This can deter many families in the villages from allowing their daughters and sisters from embarking on such tortuous journeys.
- ✓ The Global Compact on Migration signed in 2018 should also be fully implemented and backed politically in order to guarantee safer ways for migrants to move as well as reduce the spate of irregular migration
- ✓ This study further advocates for a change in the EU policies concerning migration, especially from third countries and in particular from Africa, as this would give people more opportunity to make use of the legal channels of migration and at the same time reduce the spate of irregular migration from Africa, including Nigerian immigrants. Thus, Europe should create policies that are attractive and less on restrictive and securitization policies as Europe is an ageing population and as such they need the manpower to also augment their workforce especially as the UK has left the EU now. This will act as a win-win situation for both continents in the long-run.
- ✓ It is imperative that migration, which has been recognized for a long time as an effective approach to reducing poverty and fostering human development, be included in the development strategies of Nigeria's Federal, State, and Local governments.
- ✓ Moreso, the various GBV laws enacted in Nigeria should be fully implemented and the culprits of such crimes be punished according to the laid down laws, as well as more awareness at the grassroot levels about the various GBV laws passed in Nigeria. And in particular, in relation to human trafficking which is not only a violation of the human rights

but also a form of GBV whereby the victims [usually Nigerian women and girls] are used for forced labour and sexual exploitation. As Nigeria holds a triple position in relation to origin-transit and destination country, these laws against GBV and Human trafficking should be strengthened, and its application should be done across all the states particularly the laws against Human trafficking, which is hardly taken up strongly when such traffickers are caught.

- ✓ Proper monitoring of the borders with incorruptible border polices and immigration officers as well as drones, electric passing system etc should be encouraged and implemented and those caught in the act of trafficking and smuggling should be punished appropriately according to the laws pertaining to such crimes. This would bring an end to the porosity of the national and international borders which foster not only GBV to occur on Nigerian migrant women and girls but will also stem the phenomenon of trafficking as those who are caught will be made to face the law squarely this time without corruption creating an obstacle.
- ✓ Furthermore, victims of human trafficking should be granted longer-stay permit once they are intercepted and found to be in the victim's profile, most especially in Italy where they are granted permit for short stay pending when they will get their protection status approved or not. This would help to fight against re-trafficking and exposure to Gender violence.
- ✓ Moreso, the way and manner of identifying victims of trafficking and GBV is done sometimes may exclude some women and girls who are victims of GBV to be inserted into the social assistance and protection programmes especially as they need to show so much proof of what they experienced and if their stories do not contain some elements of such experience they are denied. This study advocate that such a process should be re-evaluated to give room for a more nuance aspect from migrant women and girls as they may all not have the same things done to them, but they can still fall under victims when those markers are not strictly followed.
- ✓ Moreso this study calls for a reclassification of GBV in relation to migration studies on human trafficking and Nigerian women and girls, as the study showed that during such undocumented migration of women and girls from Nigeria to Italy, they encounter various forms of GBV in which the perpetrator/s changes along place, space and time, showing that at the various time of their movement the people who carry out such violence of them varied ranging from males to females, people they know and those they don't know as well as exposing how gender is also a factor in determining the type of violence that Nigerian women and girls experience as

in all their cases sexual violence and abuse is carried out on them mainly by men and boys while the other forms of violence such as physical abuse, oath taking and ritual, domestic abuse, forced labour and prostitution is carried out by both male and female however in most cases the women who are their madams are the ones usually carrying these other forms of GBV on them. Thus, bringing to light that the aspect of women being regarded as those on the receiving side when it comes to definition and classifications of GBV, in the Nigerian trafficking scenario the asymmetry of power relations holds strongly from female-to-female relations with the traffickers/madams at the helm of affairs and the lower end are the women and girls who are trafficked, as such this aspect is vital to include.

- ✓ Finally, GBV is an inherent part of human trafficking especially for Nigerian women and girls who come into Italy as this study has showed above, however the reason why all the victims of trafficking are protected in Italy are based on human trafficking for sexual exploitation leaving the other aspects of GBV they faced, thus this study advocates that when such cases or profiles are being judged and handled, the various forms of GBV should be taken on par with the other ones, as GBV is inherent in human trafficking and not trafficking inherent in GBV.

5.3. Future Research

The relevance of my study findings was hinged on the various forms of Gender-Based Violence that Nigerian migrant women and girls faced on their voyage to Italy. Thus, the research done is not indicative of all that women and girls pass through, but it shows a comprehensive aspect of such movements from and between both continents giving more room to the voices of the victims as well as the professionals on how they handle such cases in Italy. As such, through the findings of my research the following areas are suggested for more research to be done in order to continue expanding our understanding of human trafficking, Gender-Based Violence and undocumented migration from Nigeria to Europe.

- Men and boys also go through Gender-Based Violence as such it would be interesting to learn how they experience their own as well as a comparative study/analysis and/or between both male and female binaries as this would give a richer perspective on GBV faced by them during the course of their migration as well as trafficking journey.
- Also, the impact of the Oba's Swear of 2018 should be studied more broadly in order to ascertain the level of success of the declaration. Even though a small part of this was covered

in the present research, it is almost 5 years now since the Oba's Declaration happened, it would be fascinating to see how far it has been applied in laws as well as its impact unofficially from victims of trafficking as well as their traffickers in Nigeria and all over the world.

- Furthermore, Nigerians who are working as professionals and some who have organizations in Italy can be studied to ascertain their level of involvement and influence as gatekeepers between the Nigerian community and Italian community, with a focus on their involvement with migrant women and girls.
- Moreso, research should be conducted in the future to study how the prospect of attaining an independent legal status has also served to safeguard migrant women and girls in Italy. As well as setting the required level of proof of violence at a fair level so that women and girls are not prevented from accessing their rights.
- Finally, more research is needed in relation to the aspect of Nigerian women and girls who enter into Italy with children from Nigeria as the findings of the research showed that majority of the professionals denied this to be the case, thus it would be interesting to know the real situation and/or if there has been a change to the way undocumented migration is carried out on girls and women from Nigeria to Italy who have children when they arrive and are received at the reception centres across the country.

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Appendix 1: Interview Questions for Migrants Women and Girls

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR NIGERIAN GIRLS AND WOMEN

Research question one: Why do Nigerian girls and women engage in irregular migration to Europe despite the risks?

1. How long have you been in Italy?
2. When did you leave Nigeria?
3. How would you describe your life in Nigeria before migrating?
4. How did it come that you decide to move out of Nigeria? (or What made you decide to move out of Nigeria?)
5. How is your life now that you are in Italy?
6. How does it work in Nigeria if you want to leave?
7. Did you travel with legal documents or not? Why?

Research question 2: What kind of discourses frame different kind of violence with a focus on Gender-Based violence of Nigerian irregular female migrants?

8. It is often said that some places in Nigeria are violence ridden, was this a motivation behind your migration journey?
9. Can you describe the hardest time you had during your migration journey?
10. Did the boys and men who travelled with you, experience the same distress too?

Research question 3: To examine the consequences of the different kind of violence (gender-based violence) and of the different framing discourses of gender-based violence?

11. Can you describe when you were on the road, how did you feel?
12. What were you thoughts through the migration journey?
13. How would you describe the environment you stayed in during the journey?
14. How did people treat you and the other women in your camp?
15. Was there any medical personnel to treat people when they fell sick during the journey?
16. Who supported you during your journey?

Research Question 4: How can the causes and challenges associated with illegal migration of Nigerian girls and women be addressed?

17. Would you migrate again if given the opportunity? In case, why?
18. Would you migrate the same way you used to get to Italy, or you will do any migration route?
19. Were you aware of any risk involved in migration before you left the Nigeria? Can you please describe them?
20. Did the journey go according to your expectation?
21. Do you think government shall do something to end undocumented migration? In case, what shall they do?
22. With your experience so far, what are the areas you think the Nigerian government can improve on to help stem these types of violence?

Appendix 2: Vignette for Professionals

VIGNETTES FOR PROFESSIONALS, SOCIAL WORKERS, LEGAL GUARDIANS, HEADS OF RECEPTION CENTERS, NGOs ETC.

Social welfare

Ms A, a young irregular immigrant

Ms A's Story

Ms A is a 20-year old female. She lived with her parents in a small flat in Nigeria, she is the first of 7 children in her family. Her father is a retired civil servant, and her mother is a petty trader. Due to the recession faced in the country, Miss A has been unable to get a job both in the public and private work sectors. She started her own small-scale business but was unable to maintain it due to low funds and maintenance of her family, as she supports her family from the proceeds she gets from the business. As a result, Ms A made the decision to relocate to look for a better job to help sustain her family. She fled out of the country having no valid passport and enough money to apply for a visa, she went through irregular routes. During this journey, she was made to stop by temporary in a city, where she was forced to work to raise more money to continue the trip. She was given a passport bearing another person's name. she worked there for some months, was forced to work for long hours and also paid little money as the person's identity she was using was collecting shares from her salary. She was placed in a tiny room which was shared by 4 people including men and women, and also given little food once daily. Whenever she makes a complain about her condition, she is beaten and told to be grateful for what she has. Eventually she was able to save enough money to continue the journey and she finally arrived in Italy.

Consider the following conditions:

- a) Ms A has no relatives and family member in this place
- b) Ms A has little educational background (just the basic primary school education)
- c) Ms A sends money to her family monthly for their upkeep

Given the above conditions, Ms A comes to your organization to seek for help

Questions

- 1) Did it happen that you take charge of a case like this?
- 2) Is this a case that is easy or hard to cope with compared to other type of cases?
- 3) If you have experienced a case like this, could you tell me what were the main issues?
- 4) How does the procedure for taking care of this person works?
- 5) What are the reasons to protect this person? Is it because of victim of violence, human trafficking, Gender-Based Violence, etc?
- 6) Do you think this story is real?
- 7) What are the tool used by you and your organization to explore if this story is real or not?

Ms B, a housewife with children

Ms B's story

Ms B is a 35-year old married woman. She has 3 children (6, 4 and 2 years old) and they live in an urban area in Nigeria. She worked in the civil service commission until 3 years ago when she had to leave her job to take care of her family. Her husband works in a big multinational company, he came up with the idea of her leaving her job in order to carter fully for the family. Several months after leaving her job, she noticed a change in her husband's behaviour. He returns home late from work, often times he is drunk and when she tries to talk to him about this, he abuses her verbally and hits

her physically too. This also manifested in their love life, as he beats her into submission and uses force on her for sex. In the last one year, the beatings became intense and in one occasion, he gave her a beating which landed her in the hospital for 3 days with fractures all over her body. After this incident, Ms B fled out of the country with the children in order to get a better and safe life.

Consider the following conditions:

- a) Ms B and her children are undocumented
- b) Ms B has no savings as she no longer works
- c) Ms B has no family member
- d) Ms B has only a secondary school junior certificate
- e) Ms B depends on her husband for financial support

Given the above conditions, Ms B comes to your organization to seek for help

Questions

- 1) Did it happen that you take charge of a case like this?
- 2) Is this a case that is easy or hard to cope with compared to other type of cases?
- 3) If you have experienced a case like this, could you tell me what were the main issues?
- 4) How does the procedure for taking care of this person works?
- 5) What are the reasons to protect this person? Is it because of victim of violence, human trafficking, Gender-Based Violence, etc?
- 6) Do you think this story is real?
- 7) What are the tool used by you and your organization to explore if this story is real or not?