Leadership and Membership Structure of Migrant Associations: The Case of Nigerian Migrant Associations in Accra, Ghana

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LEADERSHIP AND MEMBERSHIP STRUCTURE OF MIGRANT ASSOCIATIONS: THE CASE OF NIGERIAN MIGRANT ASSOCIATIONS IN ACCRA, GHANA

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ABSTRACT
Migrant associations are a worldwide phenomenon, featuring in much of the migration studies literature. However, much of these studies focus on migrant associations in the USA mostly of Latino migrants from Central and Latin America. In Africa and more particularly Ghana, literature on migrant associations is paltry. The few that exist only explore their development impacts on the migration sending areas. In this paper, I explore three Nigerian migrant associations in Accra, Ghana. The leadership and membership structures of the Nigerian Women, Nigerian Committee of Brothers and the Edo State associations in Accra, Ghana are under the spotlight of this discourse. Data for the study were generated using multiple ethnographic methods of observation, in-depth interviews, focus group discussions (FGDs) and informal discussions. Other data types were obtained from association minutes, and other relevant documents. The findings of the paper indicate that, the associations operate under relatively durable organisational structures with well defined tenures of leadership. Memberships of the associations are not large, ranging between a little over seventy (70) and above two hundred (200). The membership of the three associations indicate that, new migrants show higher leaning to the associations, but leadership responsibilities are mostly entrusted in the hands of older migrants. And as in all human institutions, the associations show elements of discord and schism.

Keywords: Migrant association, Ghana, Nigeria, Leadership, Membership

INTRODUCTION
Immigrants generally create social networks as part of their settling process in the destination (López et. al 2001). These social networks provide valuable opportunities and facilitate the activities of migrants in such areas as job searching and housing, and of learning to live in their new destination (Massey and Espana, 1987; Zabin et al. 1993). For some scholars' these networks constitute 'social capital', a concept defined by López et al (2001:10) as the accumulation of knowledge, experience, and contacts by some members of the immigrants' networks. These networks also foster increased migration as people become socially connected, thereby reducing the cost for migration. Immigrant associations are a more formal manifestation of these social networks. For Owusu (2000) they are formed by immigrants soon after they have arrived in their destinations to meet their various needs.

Nigerian immigrants in Ghana conform to this general view of immigrants. Their presence in Ghana dates back to the early period of the nineteenth century even though their
Connection with Ghana goes as far back as the pre-colonial time during the period of the caravan trade (Anarfi et al, 2003). They were important source of labour for Ghana’s cocoa and other industries until the late 1969 when Ghana expelled many immigrants through the promulgation of the Aliens Compliance Order. Nigeria reciprocated Ghana’s ‘gesture’. In 1981 and 1983, a large number of Ghanaians in Nigeria were expelled from that country (Adepoju, 1984; Brydon, 1985; Fafowora, 1983; Gravil, 1985).

In recent times, indeed since Ghana returned to democratic governance in 1992, Ghana has experienced widespread immigration, mostly from the West African sub-region, and Nigeria in particular. There is heavy presence of Nigerians in the Ghanaian banking sector, a fact that Ghanaian banking industry watchers have observed for some time now. This presence of Nigerian banks in the Ghanaian banking landscape was influenced by Charles Soludo’s banks recapitalisation policy. In recent times, some Nigerian movie actors and producers are taking residence in Ghana. Nigeria’s mobile communication giant, Globacom secured license in June 2008 to operate as Ghana’s sixth mobile communication operator. These aside, Nigerian students also form bulk guests at the admission offices of most Ghanaian universities, visiting and calling daily to make inquiries on admission and transfer requirements. In 2004 and 2005, for instance, Nigerian students constituted 56% and 49.6% respectively of University of Ghana’s international student component (University of Ghana, 2004; 2005).

These developments are evidence of the presence of Nigerian migrants in the Ghanaian social and economic landscape. Their presence in Ghana is consolidated by the associations they have formed to meet their needs. These associations have certain defining features, including qualifying criteria for membership, periodic meetings, often at a regular meeting place and more importantly an established or rather specific purpose. They are shared-interest groups and therefore stand in contrast to associations created by fiat or force which neither are guided by shared interest nor personal volition in the decision to join. They also defer from informal, ephemeral, less structured groups such as cliques and gangs.

CONTEXTUALIZING MIGRANT ASSOCIATIONS

Migrant associations, otherwise known as migrant organisations, have been described variously in the migration literature. The term has been used to describe ‘social groupings formed by migrants from the same origin or country in their host communities’ (Silva, 2006:2). It has also been used to describe organisations, most commonly known as home-town associations – HTAs (Lopez, et al., 2001), ethnic associations, and home country associations – HCAs (Owusu, 2000) or clubs formed by migrants from a particular community or country in order to meet their peculiar needs. According to Orozco (2006) migrant associations, specifically hometown associations (HTAs), are entities formed by migrants who seek to support their places of origin, maintain relationships with local communities, and maintain a sense of community as they fine-tune to life (see also Orozco 2000; 2003). In the words of Levitt, migrant associations are organizations of migrants from the same ‘town or parish or host country’ who congregate primarily for social and mutual-aid purposes (Levitt 2001). These associations are a common feature of migrants, and have been institutionalized in myriad of migrant destination areas.
Formed by migrants of the same origin, migrant associations have been described by anthropologists and historians as “migrant village associations” with reference to migrants moving from rural areas to towns and cities (Fitzgerald, 2004). Recently however, they have come to be known as “home-town associations” (HTAs) in the international migration literature, in particular to describe Oaxacan (Mexican) immigrant organisations in the United States (Lopez, et al., 2001), and Filipino migrants in Canada (Silver, 2003; See also Beauchemin and Schoumaker, 2006 for the Burkinabe case). They are also referred to as diaspora-based organisations to emphasize their role in local development (Akologo, 2005) or immigrant transnational organizations (Portès, Escobar, et al. 2007). Honey and Okafor (1998) also observe that, in Nigeria, migrant associations have been designated by the government as community development agencies because they have taken on a share of the tasks that the state can no longer assume. For this reason, Honey and Okafor describe Nigerian migrant associations as local ‘shadow states’.

But while it can be argued that, migrant association is an umbrella concept which covers several sub-concepts such as hometown associations, ethnic associations, sports clubs and other professional organisations, it is synonymous with voluntary association, a term that Scott (1957:316) has defined as ‘a group of persons relatively freely organized to pursue mutual and personal interests or to achieve common goals, usually non-profit in nature’. These associations unite members for any purpose, permeating the entire social structure without conflict, but uniting on the basis of ties with no manifest modification of the existing social order, whatever the explicit goal may be (Anderson and Anderson, 1962). Migrant associations have also been celebrated as a development tool (Akologo, 2005; Babcock, 2006; Beauchemin and Schoumaker, undated; Caglar, 2006; Orozco, 2006; Silva, 2006) and ‘the human face of globalisation’ (IOM, 2005a:119-24).

In West Africa, the first migrant associations were created in Nigeria under British colonial rule (Honey and Okafor 1998). These migrant associations were said to be essential in the strategy of indirect rule. Consequently, they were depicted as a tool for fostering local improvements by marshalling development efforts in Nigeria. According to Beauchemin and Schoumaker (undated) this function of marshalling development in Nigeria remained central to migrant associations even after decolonization (see also Honey and Okafor 1998).

**TYPOLOGIES OF MIGRANT ASSOCIATIONS**

There are different kinds of migrant associations in the migration literature. In the words of Silva, these associations range from hometown associations to sports clubs and professional organisations (Silva, 2006). To this list, in the view of Owusu (2000), one can add ethnic associations and national associations. Others forms of migrant associations include community or area-based associations, business associations, alumni associations, church or faith-based associations, charity associations and cultural associations. In general terms then, one needs to think of migrant associations in a multifarious way, though the most common type, according to Silva (2006) is the hometown association. Examples of Ghanaian migrant associations cited in the Ghanaian migration literature include the Fante Benevolent Society of Chicago, and the Sankofa Foundation, a Ghanaian
diasporan organization in the Netherlands. The Nkuransa Association in the United Kingdom, and the Okyeman Cultural Association with chapters in Canada, United States and United Kingdom have also been cited in the literature (see Akologo, 2005).

In studying migrants Sardinha (undated) suggests that, one does not have to think of the associations they form in a homogeneous manner. Sardinha argues that, we are faced with varied socio-economic as well as politically stratified organisations. And while making reference to Carita (1994), Sardinha (undated) further argues that, on one side, there exists a group of elite associations constituted by a ‘subgroup’ of individuals already established and well integrated into the host society, and an opposing stratum consisting of associations which focus their activities on making better, the conditions of members especially those with low levels of education and professional qualifications. These associations are usually found in the peripheral and or side-lined shanty housing neighbourhoods or in re-housing project neighbourhoods close to the people they represent (Sardinha, ibid).

In simple terms then, according to Sardinha (undated), two strands of migrant associations can be identified – one for well established, well integrated and highly educated migrants called elite organisations, and another for migrants with low levels of education and qualification. This second strand can best be described as mass migrant associations. And although there are different kinds of migrant associations – HTAs, Community or Area-Based, Business, Professional, Alumni, Church or Faith-Based, Sports, Charity, Cultural, Ethnic, National, Elitist, Mass etc. - informality and voluntary structure and their intermittent relationship with their hometowns appear to be the main defining characteristics (Orozco 2000).

RESEARCH TRAJECTORIES ON MIGRANT ASSOCIATIONS
There is no doubt that research on different types of immigrant associations abounds in the literature (Amelina, 2007; Orozco and Rouse, 2007; Babcock, 2006; Orozco, 2006; Silva, 2006; Odalmal, 2004; Mooney, 2003; Lopez et. al 2001; Alarcón, 2000; Owusu 2000; Guarnizo, 1998; Okamura, 1983). In each of these studies, migrant associations are treated from different viewpoints. The result of this is that, migrant associations have been portrayed differently in the literature.

While in some studies, some key elements of the associations such as membership and leadership, entitlements and benefits, ties with hometown and discords inherent in the association as well as the role played by migrant associations in facilitating integration into the host society are examined (Okamura, 1983; Sardinha, undated), in other studies, the developmental impacts of migrant associations are examined (Antwi Bosiakoh, 2009b; Portes et al, 2007; Babcock, 2006; Caglar, 2006; Orozco, 2006; Silva, 2006; Akologo, 2005; Beauchemin and Schoumaker, undated). Other studies on migrant associations look at the cross border networks that they sustain in adjoining countries (Guarnizo, 1998). In all these, one hardly finds studies on migrant associations in Africa and Ghana that examines the membership and leadership structures of the associations. It is against this background that the Nigerian migrant associations in Accra, Ghana are the spotlight of this paper.
Although Nigerians have been in Ghana since the period of the caravan trade (Anarfi et al., 2003) the associations under study started only in the early 21st century. The timing of the formation of these associations was influenced by the recent influx of Nigerians to Ghana. This influx was also informed by the relative peace and stability the country enjoys (Antwi Bosiakoh, 2009a). It is these factors that provided viable platform for the formation of the associations. Table 1 below gives a summarized profile of the three (3) associations under study. The summary is themed on the following considerations: name, sex of membership, size of membership, year of establishment, meeting place and location of the associations. This table notwithstanding, detailed profiles of the three associations are also provided. The associations fall into three categories as follows: ethnic association (the Edo Association), national association (the Nigerian Women Association) and a semblance of brotherhood or charity association (the Nigerian committee of Brothers Association). It must however be stated that, in all, there are between 12-15 Nigerian migrant associations in Accra.

Table 1: Summary Profile of the Associations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Associations</th>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Member Size</th>
<th>Yr. of Est.</th>
<th>Meeting Place</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ESA</td>
<td>Males and Females</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>2006</td>
<td>Hse. No. 31, First Race Course Link, Lapaz</td>
<td>Abeka Lapaz</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NCBA*</td>
<td>All-Male</td>
<td>Over 200</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>Rotational</td>
<td>Madina</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NWA*</td>
<td>All-Female</td>
<td>Over 100</td>
<td>2001</td>
<td>Nigeria House</td>
<td>Accra</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

Source: Author’s Fieldwork, December 2007-March 2008

Gender Considerations and Age of the Associations

Of the three associations, Nigerian Women Association is the only all-female and the oldest. It was established in 2001 at the Banquet Hall, Accra. Its inauguration was done by the then First Lady of Ghana, Mrs. Theresa Kuffour in the presence of the then High Commissioner of the Federal Republic of Nigeria in Accra. The Nigerian Women Association is now 8 years and still counting. Following the Nigerian Women Association in age is the Nigerian Committee of Brothers Association. This association was established in 2004 and is 5 years now. It is located at Madina though membership is not exclusive to Nigerians at Madina. Its membership is open to all Nigerians in Accra, irrespective of the suburb one stays in Accra. The Nigerian Committee of Brothers Association is the only all-male of the three associations. The Edo State Association, unlike the other two associations is a mixed sex association. It draws its membership from Edo State Nigerians in Accra, Ghana. It is the youngest of the three associations under study. Currently, the association is 3 years, having been established in 2006. It is located at Abeka Lapaz, a suburb of Accra.
FORMATION HISTORIES OF THE ASSOCIATIONS

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

The formation history of the Nigerian Women Association, the oldest of the three associations, exemplifies broadly, the way the three Nigerian migrant associations emerged in Accra, Ghana. First, this association was started anew for it represented revival of previously existing association. The previous association collapsed because of inactivity. Later in the later part of the 1990s, there developed an awareness of the growing numbers of Nigerian women in Accra, Ghana. It was this awareness of the growing numbers that gave rise to a desire on the part of these migrants who shared a common nationality to establish and to maintain ties with one another through formal association. Prior to the formation of the association, the migrants formed friendship networks based again upon one factor - common citizenship.

Under this common factor however was the fact that, as women migrants (mostly husbands of the male migrants), there was the need to form a distinctive association to deal with their peculiar problems. These women migrants were aware of their unique position as women, and also realized the absence of institutional bodies in Ghana to assist them meet their unique gender-specific needs. There is therefore the acknowledgement of the role of agency in the formation of the Nigerian Women Association. It was being responsive to the lack of structures in place to cope with the gender-based needs of women migrants that led them into organizing themselves autonomously away from their men counterparts. In general terms then, gender and nationality were the main components of Nigerian women forming an association to deal with their problems. The process was however facilitated by initially forming friendship networks.

Attempt to find solutions to their unique problems as women, nationality, gender and the formation of friendship networks based upon unifying and or identifiable factor(s) help explain the formation history of the Nigerian Women Association. Part of this explanation however is appropriate for the other two associations - the Edo Association and the Nigeria Committee of Brothers Association. At the background of the formation histories of these two associations was the realization of the growing numbers of Nigerians in Accra, Ghana. There developed at this time the need to form associations to deal with the problems they encountered in Accra, Ghana. It is therefore accurate to argue, just as some scholars have submitted, that migrant associations are formed to take care of the problems migrants face in their destinations (Okamura, 1983).
ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE AND MEMBERSHIP OF NIGERIAN MIGRANT ASSOCIATIONS

Like other migrant associations, Nigerian migrant associations are led by presidents (chairpersons), secretaries and treasurers, financial secretaries etc who are elected periodically. For the Nigerian Women Association, the structure is headed by a patron exclusively reserved for the wife of the current high commissioner of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. This position is followed by the executive contingent which is responsible for the day-to-day running of the association. The executives specifically comprise the president, first and second vice presidents, secretary and vice secretary, financial secretary, treasurer, protocol officer and a programmes officer.

The Nigerian Committee of Brothers Association presents organizational structure similar to the women's association. Some variations exist though which require mention. Here in the Nigerian Committee of Brothers Association, there is a single vice president (chairperson) and no vice secretary. These aside, the association has a public relations officer (PRO) whose position falls between the secretary and the treasurer. Following the treasurer then is an auditor and a disciplinary committee headed by a chairperson. The Edo Association presents a structure that combines elements of the two structures presented. None of the associations has an institutionalized board of directors. High level consultation is however done by the associations with the High Commissioner when a major activity is to be undertaken. Indeed, the associations involve the High Commissioner in such activities. In this way, as suggested by the Vice President of the Nigerian Women Association, ‘the High Commissioner serves as a certain kind of Board’. The associations also see senior diplomats in the Nigerian High Commission in the same light. The President of the Edo Association put it this way:

‘Our association does not have any standing board of directors. However, when the association is to engage in any major activity, we consult and involve the High Commissioner and officials of the Nigerian High Commission. The High Commissioner serves as a sort of Board for this association.’

Generally, executive positions in the associations are for a period or tenure. This implies that, the associations do not maintain leadership in perpetuity. There is strict adherence to tenure of office. One can vie for any position but the final decision is made by the members through election. In the Nigerian Women Association for instance, it became apparent that executive positions last for two (2) years. Thereafter, both outgoing executive members and general membership are allowed to express interest in the available positions. This is then followed by elections to elect substantive executive members. Election to any position among the three associations is guided by character, as well as commitment to the course of one’s association. Members measure the suitability of aspiring executives in terms of their attendance at meetings, participation in discussions at meetings and general friendly, neighbourly and brotherly or sisterly relations. This is how the Chairman of the Nigerian Committee of Brothers put it:
'A member who has the interest of the association at heart, regular at meeting, and has settled all financial obligations can nurse the hope of becoming an executive member without having any problem with the general membership’.

In the case of the Nigerian Women Association, the Vice President captured the leadership eligibility criteria in a process she described in the following words:

'A member may decide to nominate herself or another person for executive position. This is followed by elections. But selection or nomination is accepted by general membership if the nominated candidate is of good character. Indeed for one to be elected depends on how active one is, and how regular and vibrant the member is in the association. As for me, I put it that, nomination and election are based on commitment, action and vibrancy in the association, for as one does these, members watch, in most cases, unperceived by the actor’.

Nigerian migrant associations have memberships ranging between a little over 70 members to over 200 members who meet on regular basis. In specific terms, the Nigerian Committee of Brothers Association has membership of 200, the Edo Association 75 and the Nigerian Women Association close to 100 members. The membership size of associations of this nature does not remain same for long though, because new members join and others leave with time. One executive member of the Nigerian Committee of Brothers Association shared his experience on the growth and decline of association membership as follows:

'Up to now, we have become so convinced that, the membership continue and will continue to change. Members on contracts and whose contracts expire leave the country and automatically leave the association. But as some members leave, others enter the country on the same line. The same can be said of members serving the UN and AU when they are re-assigned or transferred to different countries’.

Moreover, given the nature of the activities of some associations whereby they work to provide services both to members in their destination as well as communities in Nigeria, locally based volunteers and clients (such volunteers and clients often exhibit strong attachment to the association though they may not be registered members) could number into the hundreds. In this case the membership of the association, if it is to include such volunteers and clients, could be higher than what exists in their books.

It appears among the three associations that, new migrants show higher leaning to become members of the associations. It was observed during the course of the study that, most members of the associations were recent arrivals. Various respondents claimed these migrants often experience difficulties and therefore turn to the existing associations for help in whatever form they come. This observation is clearly consistent with existing literature on migrant association membership (see for example Orozco and Rouse, 2007).
According to one member of the Nigerian Women Association, the association ‘taught me in my early days in Ghana, the Ghanaian culture and how to live peacefully with Ghanaians. I was taught to be law-abiding so as to be in peace with my host society’. My informant at the Nigerian High Commission Accra confirmed this, and suggested as follows: “I have been telling my country people that, Ghanaians are naturally our friends in West Africa. I advise them that they ‘come down’, forget about the little advantages they have and live with them as brothers and sisters and as friends”.

MEMBERSHIP, LEADERSHIP AND SCHISM IN NIGERIAN MIGRANT ASSOCIATIONS

Membership in the three Nigerian migrant associations is influenced by economic, social, ethnic and cultural factors. In general terms, the argument that, new migrants are more likely to belong to an association than old migrants (see Orozco and Rouse, 2007; Owusu, 2000) appears to find support in this discussion. There are differential membership predispositions for old and new migrants. Whereas old migrants shun the associations, new migrants cling to them as though their life in Ghana could be successful only if they belong to the association. This differential leaning to the associations can be explained by making reference to the usefulness of the associations in the lives of the two group of migrants.

For newer migrants, the associations were viewed as important opportunity for meeting others from Nigeria at a more general level and specifically other ethnic group members, and socializing with them as they try to settle down in Ghana. Here, the associations become important resource for tapping into other resources in the new social, economic and cultural spaces in Accra, Ghana. Older migrants on the other hand are more integrated into the Ghanaian society. Some are engaged in busy work schedules and other commitments. Others had learned to one degree or another, at least one relevant Ghanaian language to ensure proper integration. They therefore do not necessarily need the association before they could participate socially, culturally and economically in the Ghanaian society. They could not think of any interest or time for the association. These observations reflecting how the two group of Nigerian migrants view the associations broadly explain why new arrivals have higher leaning towards their associations and older migrants spurning them.

This however is not to suggest absolutely that that, older migrants had never joined associations before. It was found that some older migrants previously belonged to associations. Indeed there were others who continued to remain members of their associations. Older members who remain members of the associations often take up leadership positions in the associations and make their experiences in Ghana available to the association. They appear successful in Ghana and attend association meeting in posh vehicles. In a sense, it may be accurate to argue that, such older migrants consider the associations as a means for enhancing their public status and influence not only in the associations but also in the general society. Leaders of the associations with direct contact with the Federal government of Nigeria (the Nigerian Women Association and the Edo State Association) also use their association as a means to project their status in Nigeria. The Edo Association for instance deals directly with the Edo State officials in Nigeria while the Nigerian Women Association engages directly with Federal government officials on
visit to Ghana. In each case, the leaders use their positions to negotiate higher prestige for themselves.

Element of this self status projection was found particularly with the Nigerian Committee of Brothers Association. This was reflected in internal discord in leadership. Some complaints from members maintained that, the association was being used by leaders as avenues for status competition. The chairmanship was particularly mentioned to have fallen into ‘sycophancy’ and was widely regarded as a stooge\(^*\). Most importantly, leadership was accused of using the association for self glorification. In response, some members protested. This protest was generally at meeting ground. There were several attempts by some members to demonstrate that, leadership was not for self glorification. At one of such meetings for instance, attempt to resolve this issue ended up in exchange of words (between leadership and aggrieved members) and display of oratory to impress the rank and file members. Speaker after speaker demonstrated both oratory and knowledge of parliamentary and judicial procedures, often employing flamboyant grammatical expressions to impress members.

The presence of schisms and rifts was also reflected in other matters. Fund disbursements often attracted comments that suggested travesty of transparent principles. Some respondents argued they sometimes feel leaders had used association funds for self benefits rather than what they were intended for. These members intimated it is during meetings that they get the opportunity to probe into association funds and disbursements.

'It is during meetings that we get the opportunity to ask questions on matters of financial disbursements that we think did not follow obvious best practices. During such times, especially when the treasurer presents financial report, we question the reasons for certain disbursements and ask whether expenditures came with receipts to prove that the monies were really spent'.

**Nigerian Migrant Associations: Problems and Prospects**

Three main problems confront Nigerian migrant associations in Accra. These are identity affirmation, internal discord, and problem of organizing groups of diverse backgrounds. And though these three problems were evident, respondents admitted the biggest problem is in the area of identity affirmation. The associations find it difficult asserting themselves as groups that can be trusted. This is as a result of the unpleasant image that some unscrupulous Nigerians in Ghana have carved, not only for themselves but for Nigerians in Ghana generally. Employing all manner of tactics including devious and aggressive deceits, and sometimes underhanded strategies, some Nigerians have succeeded in carving for themselves, nauseating and repulsive images in Ghana. In Ghana these days, one hears about Nigerian migrants and what follows is deceit and fraudulence. They are often cited in armed robbery cases, money and drug counterfeiting, internet fraud, automobile smuggling, and all manner of phony activities including imitations. These activities were acknowledged not only by the associations but also the Nigerian High Commission in Accra. And although these activities are undertaken by few Nigerians in Ghana, they have unfortunately become *master statuses*, defining not only those involved in the activities, but the general Nigerian community in Ghana. For the
associations therefore, this is the biggest challenge, trying to assert their trust worthiness in the face of what some respondents termed ‘distorted identity’. Recognizing this problem, the Nigerian Committee of Brothers and Edo Associations have incorporated some ‘behaviour checking measures’ before one’s admission into the associations. For a new member to be admitted, a thorough study is done to identify what the prospective member does for living. This aside, the prospective member serves a three-month probation before membership decision is reached. For now, the associations treat character issues with utmost sense of urgency and therefore monitor the behaviour of members, both new and old. They do so just to ensure that they are not dragged into any unpleasant activity.

Members who engage in what some respondents described as potential ‘image destruction acts’ are first counseled by elders in the association, suspended secondly after the ‘offending’ member had failed to heed to counsel, and finally dismissed should suspension fail to induce behaviour change.

The second problem Nigerian migrant associations encounter is internal discord. This problem emanates from two sources; financial irregularity described, in most cases as improper fund disbursements, and leadership for self glorification. This problem was identified more with the Nigerian Committee of Brothers Association. By far, these are the two main problems Nigerian migrant associations encounter, for the third, problem of organizing groups of diverse backgrounds, was mentioned sparingly without detail.

ENDNOTES


ii The following are but some of the present existing Nigerian banks in Ghana: United Bank for Africa (UBA), Zenith Bank Ghana Limited, Intercontinental Bank, Standard Trust Bank, Bank PHB and the Guaranty Trust Bank (GTBank).

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

iv The Nigerian Women Association is an all female association. It is the only association that draws its membership from all Nigerian women in Accra. The Nigerian Women Association was formed in 2001, having been started anew because the previous one collapsed. Though it is an all-female association, it allows men to be part of its activities. It currently has membership size of 100. Its activities are mostly in charity and philanthropy. Children occupy a central place in the activities of the Nigerian Women Association. The association meets once in a month. The Nigerian Committee of Brothers Association is an all male Nigerian association in Ghana. The association was formed in 2004, with the objective to bring together, all Nigerian brothers in Ghana and monitor each brother's activity to create a good image of Nigeria in Ghana. The association meets every fortnight on Sundays and has membership strength of over two hundred (200) people. Membership into the association is based on sex (males) and citizenship.
(Nigerian). Ethnicity does not play a part in considerations for membership. The association’s greeting which has become its motto begins with ‘Committee’ and the response ‘Brothers’. This is repeated three times.

\[\text{v} \]
Interview with a Minister at the Nigerian High Commission in Accra.

\[\text{vi} \]
The association of Edo migrants in Ghana was formed on 20\textsuperscript{th} August 2006 in Accra, following discussions by three people from the Edo State of Nigeria. Edo is one of the numerous ethnic nationalities and administrative states in Nigeria. The Edos as people occupy the old Bini province of the Western Region of Nigeria. It is also a state in Nigeria with Benin City as its capital. The Edo State Association in Ghana is just one of the many Edo State Associations around the world. There are chapters in Europe in Italy, and Britain just to mention few. There is a US chapter and in West Africa, branches exist in Ghana, Togo and Benin. Edo Global Organization (EGO) is the umbrella organization for all Edos in the diaspora. The Edo State Association in Ghana meets every fortnight on Saturdays. It is an association for both males and females. The association has membership strength of over sixty (60) people. To be a member of the Edo Association requires that, one comes from the Edo State in Nigeria and resident in Accra, Ghana. It is important however to indicate that, it is not all Edo migrants in Accra, Ghana that are members of the Edo state Association.

\[\text{vii} \]
Interview with Minister S. E. Eze of the High Commission of the Federal Republic of Nigeria in Accra. Wednesday, 26\textsuperscript{th} March, 2008.

\[\text{viii} \]
Joe was the first Nigerian friend I made in the course of the study. He could speak both Ga and Twi. And though Joe speaks impeccable English, he preferred to speak to me in the Twi language, on phone and in face-to-face conversations. He has been in Ghana for over ten years and could even rhyme in the Twi language. He even challenged me he could give formal speech in the Twi language. Joe could not be doubted for he uttered Twi proverbs even in instantaneous situations. A number of the friends I made later also showed great abilities in the use of Ghanaian languages such as Ewe, and Ga. Most of them enjoyed Ghanaian hiplife songs and adored Ghanaian hiplife artistes. Bakasi enjoyed Sydney’s ‘Oga dey chop’m fugafuga’ song to the extent that he even could recite its lyrics. Both Joe and Bakasi are undoubtedly part of the world’s greatest pool of non-Ghanaians who know Ghana’s culture and languages. They however are far from being the only people even when one would like to argue based on the respondents of this study.

\[\text{x} \]
This was in reference to the position of chairmanship and not the occupant. It did not refer to the chair as a person but to the position itself.

\[\text{REFERENCE} \]


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