Fluid Mobilities? Experiencing and Responding to Othering in a Borderless West Africa

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Abstract

This paper seeks to interrogate the processes of othering that takes place in Ghana, a country with a long history of migrants from the region now known as Nigeria. The paper draws on Spivak's (1985) concept of othering and explores both the ways in which Ghanaians othering of Nigerians is made manifest as well as the ways in which Nigerians respond to these processes of othering. Ultimately, I argue that until both Ghanaians and Nigerians recognize othering as a problem worthy of redress, the full import of the ECOWAS Protocol on Free Movement of Persons will be lost on these two groups of West African citizens. For, while people can and do move across the 16 borders of West Africa, they do not necessarily move freely. Migrants are often reminded of their status as the other even in a country where our founding father sought to establish a strong sense of Pan African unity.

Keywords: Othering, migration, agency, free movement

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Résumé

Cet article cherche à combler l'écart en interrogeant les processus d'altérisation au Ghana, un pays ayant une longue histoire de migrants issus de la région connue aujourd'hui sous le nom de Nigéria. L'article se base sur la notion de l'altérisation proposée par Spivak (1985) et explore à la fois les façons dont l'altérisation des nigérians par les ghanéens se manifeste et les façons dont les nigérians réagissent à de tels processus d'altérisation. L'article soutient qu'à moins que les ghanéens et les nigérians ne reconnaissent la question d'altérisation comme étant un problème qui doit être résolu, la pleine portée du Protocole de la CEDEAO sur la Libre Circulation des Personnes ne sera pas réalisée parmi ces deux groupes de ressortissants ouest-africains, et ce, au vu du fait que tandis que les gens peuvent franchir les 16 frontières de l'Afrique de l'Ouest et tandis qu'ils le font, ils ne circulent pas librement au vrai sens du mot. On rappelle toujours aux migrants qu'ils ont le statut de l'Autre voire dans un pays où notre père fondateur chercha à établir un fort sentiment d'unité Panafricaine.

Mots-Clés: Altérisation, migration, agence, libre circulation

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Kwame Nkrumah, one of the continent's most famous sons and a firm believer in Pan-Africanism, argued over a half century ago during the period when many of the countries on the continent were gaining independence that:

> We in Africa with its islands are one Africa. We reject the idea of any kind of partition. From Tangier or Cairo in the North to Cape Town in the South, from Cape Guardafui in the East to Cape Verde Islands in the West, Africa is one indivisible.

Nkrumah (1963:217)

Fifty years on, the continent is far from united. Instead, across the continent we have entrenched our ethnic and national differences which manifests in a multitude of ways, the most egregious of which has been death. The Rwandan genocide in 1994, the Ivorian crisis of the early 2000s and the deaths of Zimbabweans and others in South Africa in May 2008 are all examples of murder justified on the basis of difference, xenophobia taken to its logical conclusions.

In the West African subregion, Kwame Nkrumah's ideas of Pan African unity were made manifest in the enactment of the Economic Community of West Africa's (ECOWAS) Protocol on the Free Movement of Persons and the Right of Residence and Establishment in May 1979. There are two components to this Protocol. The first ratified by all member states in 1980 makes it possible for citizens from member countries with the requisite travel documents and international health certificate to travel into another without a visa for ninety days. The second, ratified in 1986, allows for residence. Although the Establishment component of the Protocol is yet to be ratified, in 1992, member states recommitted themselves to the tenets of this Protocol with a revision in the Treaty of ECOWAS. To help actualize their commitments under this Protocol, in 2008, the Executive Secretariat of ECOWAS was tasked with the responsibility of defining an ECOWAS common approach to migration. The task of ensuring free movement across the region has not been easy (Adepoju 2015).

Scholars who interrogate the failings of the ECOWAS Protocol attribute it to macro-level factors such as security concerns about the spread of terrorism across the region or economic ramifications of the policy given the economic (mis)fortunes of the sub-region (Okunade and Ogunnubi 2018) as well as the weak ability of the ECOWAS Court to enforce the provisions of the protocol (Ibrahim et al., 2017). There is little by way of scholarly analysis that takes a micro-level approach and focuses on the everyday behaviours of citizens towards immigrants to ascertain the extent to which ordinary West Africans will be welcomed across the sub-region if all the macro-level constraints to the Protocol were eliminated. A few exceptions in the West African sub-region are the works of Adida (2011) and Cogley et al., (2019) that offer quantitative perspectives on the matter.

In other parts of the continent, South Africa in particular, much more scholarly attention has been paid to the nature of interaction between immigrants and indigenes in these communities drawing on both quantitative and qualitative material. The

within South Africa. While the world was shocked by the violent xenophobic attacks on foreigners in South Africa in May 2008 that left roughly 60 people dead and over 100, 000 homeless (Dodson 2010: 3), Dodson (2010: 4) argues that infact, African immigrants in South Africa are subjected to less violent, "ordinary" experiences of xenophobia on a daily basis. Crush et al. (2008: 7) make similar claims when they draw on data from the Southern African Migration Project to assert that "xenophobia and hostility to (particularly) other Africans is not the preserve of a lunatic fringe but represents the conviction of the majority of citizens."

Scholars such as Dodson (2010) and Morris (1997) who have undertaken qualitative studies in Cape Town and Johannesburg respectively detail a range of everyday experiences of hostility that immigrants faced. They were accused of taking jobs away from citizens, as noted in a quote by a 34 year old Somali male: "Others say just because we're foreigners we can't run business because we are getting their jobs, but it doesn't mean that." Similarly, a 28 year old Malawian male opined, "The Xhosas are a bit naïve towards us—they blame us for causing unemployment to them" (Dodson 2010: 16). Immigrants were not only accused of taking jobs from the South Africans, but also of taking their women as noted by a Nigerian male immigrant who lamented: "You look at the papers and they say the foreigners are taking their jobs, or that they're being arrogant to them. They're even taking their women…" (Morris 1998: 1122, 1123).

Beyond these accusations, immigrants faced verbal and physical attacks. Describing his experience of being accosted and robbed simply for being foreign, a 16 year old Somali male said, "They are very hostile and often attack and rob us. Even in the streets they stop us and ask for money"(Dodson 2010: 17). A young Congolese woman related the verbal abuse she was subjected to in the following words: "One night I was walking in Hill-brow and this woman started shouting at me: "I know you're not from this country. Just go back. We don't need you here. We don't like you here" (Morris 1998: 1123).

Immigrant Africans in South Africa are also routinely called the derogatory term of amakwerekwere (Morris 1998; Sidzatane & Maharaj 2013), or kwirikwiri (Dodson 2010) which is basically "a scornful imitation of the accents of some Southern Africans" (Dodson 2010: 19). In addition, state officials, particularly the police routinely discriminate against the foreigners. They subject them to bribes (Sidzatane and Maharaj 2013) and arbitrary arrests (Dodson 2010). As one trader in Durban put it: "Sometimes [the] police just come and ask you to give them R200. If you do not have the money, they take your goods, and you lose. You cannot pay rent as a result" (Sidzatane & Maharaj 2013: 381).

While there is a fair amount of literature on the process of othering in South Africa, there is little in terms of the ways in which immigrants respond to these forms of othering on a day to day basis. This article seeks to redress two gaps in the literature on othering on the African continent. First, it seeks to add to the literature on othering on the African continent by providing a West African case. Secondly, this article looks at both the process of othering and immigrant responses to these forms of othering. It seeks to do so by interrogating both the processes of othering and responses to othering in Ghana, a country with a long history of migrants from Nigeria. The article draws on Spivak's (1985) concept of othering and explores both the ways in which

Ghanaians' othering of Nigerians is made manifest as well as the ways in which Nigerians respond to these processes of othering. I argue that Nigerians do experience a range of everyday forms of othering and that unlike other contexts where migrants challenge citizens who seek to other them, in Ghana, low income Nigerians seem resigned to the othering that they experience. In a sense, they accept it as the norm (Sibley 1995; Mensah & Williams 2015).

Methodology
This qualitative study draws on twenty interviews conducted in 2013 with low income Nigerian migrants resident in Ghana as well as content analysis of Ghana's major online and print media sources (the Daily Graphic) over a period of three years (2013–2016). Low income Nigerians are defined in this study as workers in the informal sector, specifically traders as well as workers in the hospitality industry. Our interest in low income Nigerians was based on the fact that these comprise the majority of Nigerians in Ghana (Essuman-Johnson 2006). In addition, similar studies done on the topic in the Southern African region (Morris 1998; Crush et al., 2008; Dodson 2010; Sidzatane et al., 2013) focus on low income immigrants. Thus, this approach allows for comparative analysis across the continent. The interviewees comprised 10 women and 10 men aged between 20 and 39 who had been resident in Ghana for periods ranging from 2 months to 19 years. Seven of the ten women were married and so were five of the ten men. All the married women were married to Nigerian men while two of the five married men had married Ghanaian women. While most of the married couples lived in Ghana with their families, two had left their families in Nigeria. All of the interviewees worked in the informal sector. The majority of the interviewees had small shops in central Accra and sold a range of products such as videos, CDs, phone accessories, electrical parts and, for the women, fabrics. Three of them (two women and one man) worked in the service industry as cooks, waiters or retail assistants in small shops. One woman also focused solely on her role as a Pastor's wife ministering to the largely Ghanaian congregation in that capacity.

The interviews with these participants focused on three main themes: interaction with Ghanaian institutions, both public and private, interaction with Ghanaians in their neighbourhoods and interaction with Ghanaians in their places of work. Interviews lasted between thirty and ninety minutes. The interviews were transcribed and then using the thematic network analysis of Attride-Stirling (2001), the relevant themes and patterns were identified and discussed. A second source of data for this article was a content analysis of the largest circulating paper in Ghana, the Daily Graphic, over a period of three years (2013–2016). The key themes of interest in doing this analysis were the positive as well as negative images that the Ghanaian press portrayed of Nigerians in Ghana.

The Concept of Othering
The concept of othering is evident, even if implicitly, in all philosophical and theoretical traditions that focus on the self and the other in discussing social differences of various sorts such as gender, class, religion, race and ethnicity. Over the last three decades, scholars have established a number of key points with respect to the concept of othering. First is the fact that although the process of othering is largely

negative, there are instances where this process of othering can be made positive. Canales' (2000) work makes this point powerfully when she illustrates how Latino faculty in nursing programmes draw on their own negative experiences of othering to create a more positive classroom experience for all students who do not fit the normative definitions of race or class or gender in their classrooms. Secondly, othering can take place in subtle or more overt ways. Both forms can exist in various institutions in society. When institutional othering takes place in subtle ways, minority communities might over time come to expect this othering as the norm (Sibley 1995; Mensah and Williams 2015).

Third is the fact that there are various dimensions of othering. The post-colonial scholar Gayatri Spivak highlighted this fact in seeking to make sense of the British colonial enterprise in India. She drew on archival material to identify three dimensions of othering. In the first dimension, the powerful represented by the British colonial officers seek to establish themselves as the domiant one in the dyadic relationship and the other by extension as the subordinate. One of the examples she uses to illustrate this dimension is a letter Captain Geoffrey Birch, then an assistant agent of the Governor, writes to Charles Metcalfe, the Resident in Delhi. Birch explains the purpose of his travels through India as follows:

> [I have undertaken this journey] to acquaint the people who they are subject to, for as I suspected they were not properly informed of it and seem only to have heard of our existence from conquering the Goorkah and from having seen a few Europeans passing thro' the country.
>
> (Spivak 1985: 254).

In the second dimension, the powerless is also rendered pathological and morally inferior. To illustrate, she quotes from a letter written by Major General Sir David Ochterlony:

> Mr. Fraser . . . considers these Highlanders as having the germs of all virtue, and I see them only possessing all the brutality and perfidy [sic] of the rudest times without the courage and all the depravity and treachery of the modern days without the knowledge or refinement.
>
> (Spivak 1985: 254–255).

In the third dimension, the powerful arrogates to themselves the ultimate rights to knowledge. This idea is made manifest in a letter drafted to the Governor General although later expunged which suggests that only the master (the British) have an understanding of science. Part of the letter reads:

> The limited degree of science which it may be consistent with good policy to impart to the troops of native powers in alliance with the British government should be imparted by officers in our own service: because from those officers only have we a sure guarantee that our intentions shall not be over-stepped.
>
> (Spivak 1985: 256).

Much of the theoretical extension of this concept of othering has focused on the consequences of the second dimension of othering for the powerless and is evident in current definitions of the concept. Jensen (2011:65) for example defines othering as:

> discursive processes by which powerful groups, who may or may not make up a numerical majority, define subordinate groups into existence in a reductionist way which ascribe problematic and/or inferior characteristicsto these subordinate groups. Such discursive processes affirm the legitimacy and superiority of the powerful and condition identity formation among the subordinate group(emphasis mine).

Basically, in Spivak (1985)'s original analysis and much of the body of work on the subject (Andersson 2010; Jacobsen and Andersson 2012; Akhtar 2013; Gronborg 2015), there is the belief that only the powerful in a dyad have the agency to engage in othering. The powerless in these dyads are simply subject to the powerful's practices of othering and have no voice or ability to respond to these constructions of themselves.

More recently, scholars have begun to question this understanding of the process of othering and have shown, using evidence from other parts of the world, that it is possible for the powerless in such dyads to resist or construct alternative conceptions of themselves other than that provided by the powerful (Jensen 2011; Park 2012; Coombs et al., 2014). For example, Jensen (2011), writing about ethnic minorities in Denmark discusses two such forms of agency: capitalisation and refusal. Capitalisation is the positive appropriation of discourses of othering by which he means imbuing these discourses with symbolic value. He points out that these young minorities choose screen names that allow them to imbue their characterization as the other with symbolic value. One such youth had taken on the screen name 8210-cent, combining the local zip code of the stigmatized part of town where he lived with the globally revered hip hip icon 50 cent. In refusal, the subordinate party in a dyadic situation refuses to adopt the category of the other imposed upon them by the powerful party in the dyad. To illustrate, he describes how teen minority youth in Denmark would go into a shop and make it point to disclose to the tellers that contrary to what they think, they are not stealing anything from the shops. Drawing on both the idea of the other as powerless as evident in the older literature on othering and the idea of the other as possessing agency as evident in more recent scholarship on othering, this article reflects on both the portrayal and treatment of Nigerians in Ghana as well as Nigerian responses to these.

A Historical Analysis of Nigerian Migration to Ghana

Rouch (1954) argues that migration across the West African region dates as far back as the 1500s. With specific reference to migration between Ghana and Nigeria, Anarfiet al., (2003) trace it to the caravan trade of an even earlier period. However, data does not exist that far back to give us a sense of the exact numbers of migrants across the sub-region. The earliest statistics we have document the numbers of Africans in Ghana in 1921. According to the census of that year as reproduced in Antwi-Bosiakoh (2009: 95), 21, 200 of the 48, 600 migrants (43.6%) in the country came from Nigeria. By the time of the 1931 census, it was down to 67,700 of 289, 000

(23.4%). Three decades later, the percentage of immigrants in Ghana who were Nigerian was roughly the same (190, 800 out of 811, 700 or 23.5%).

A fair number of these migrants were traders. Indeed, Skinner (1963) notes that a full 40% of the female traders at Kumasi Central Market, the largest outdoor market in West Africa, were the Yoruba from Nigeria. They were also actively involved in diamond mining (Stapleton 1959; Peil 1974). These numbers were drastically reduced during the 1970s for two main reasons. First was the Aliens Compliance Order of 18 November 1969 (Act 160) which mandated that all foreigners without resident permits had to leave the country within a fortnight if they could not obtain one. Yoruba traders formed a disproportionate number of the foreigners who found themselves wanting in this regard (Brydon 1985; Aremu and Ajayi 2014). A second factor was the oil boom in Nigeria which offered Nigerian immigrants an incentive to return to the land of their birth.

It is difficult to access official statistics on the current numbers of Nigerians in Ghana. An estimate from the Nigerian High Commission in 2008 put the numbers at as high as 2 million (Antwi-Bosiakoh 2009: 95). These figures are corroborated in journalistic pieces on Nigerians in Ghana (Smith-Asante, 2015). While this may well be an exaggeration, it is quite clear that there is a significant Nigerian presence in Ghana; restaurants offering Nigerian delicacies dot the Accra landscape and in tertiary institutions across the country, particularly the public universities, there is a sizeable population of Nigerian students. In industry, there are Nigerian owned banks such as United Bank for Africa (UBA), Intercontinental Bank, Standard Trust Bank, Guaranty Trust Bank (GT Bank) and Zenith Bank as well as the cement company owned by Africa's richest man Aliko Dangote and the telecommunications giant Glo. A fair number of elite Nigerians are also believed to have homes in Ghana (Ohene, 2015). In addition, there are some famous Ghanaians of Nigerian extraction such as the Akiwumis and the Yebesis.

Nonetheless, the relationship between Nigerians and Ghanaians has been fraught. A key marker of these tensions is the state expulsions of both groups of people. This dates as far back as November 1969 when the Busia government in a quest to restrict certain economic activities, expelled all foreign traders, the majority of whom were Yoruba traders, from Ghana (Aremu and Ajayi 2014). Infact, Aremu and Ajayi (2014) point out that Ghanaian agitation for the expulsion of Nigerians predated independence. During the cocoa hold up crisis of the 1930s, Nigerians had apparently been opposed to the hold-up led by the chief of Akyem Abuakwa. In response, the Okyeman had written a resolution on 5th February 1935 that read in part:

> Okyeman consider [the minutes read] that it is now time that people from Sierra Leone, Nigeria and other places should be made amenable to the customary laws of the various states in which they reside and that any act of insubordination on the part of any such strangers should, with the sanction of Government, be punished by deportation.
>
> (Rathbone 1996: 517).

In 1983, President Shehu Shagari gave Ghanaians a taste of their own medicine when he also issued an Aliens Compliance Order that saw over one million Ghanaians expelled from Nigeria (Gravil 1985). The image of Ghanaians returning home with their belongings in the now infamous "Ghana must go" bags is seared in the memory of Ghanaians. While there have been no state sanctioned expulsions since then, Ghanaian citizens in particular clamour for such expulsions. The most recent example of this was in 2019 when traders took to the streets calling for the removal of Nigerian traders in Ghanaian markets.

Given Ghanaians' long history of encountering Nigerians and the longstanding tensions evident in these state sanctioned expulsions and current calls for expulsions, it is important to understand the everyday experiences of othering that Nigerians resident in Ghana face as well as their responses to these forms of othering. I am not arguing for integration or assimilation of Nigerians into Ghanaian culture. Like Landau and Freemantle (2016), I am interested in the possibilities of conviviality, the ability to get along without necessarily belonging to the same group or sharing the same values for it is only when conviviality exists that the goals for which the ECOWAS Protocol of Free Movement of Persons was passed can be made truly manifest.

Othering of Nigerians in Contemporary Ghana

To explore the ways in which Ghanaians perceive Nigerians as the other, I investigate the ways in which Nigerians are treated when they interact with officials in public and private institutions, as well as the ways in which ordinary Ghanaians treat Nigerians in the communities in which they reside as well as their places of work. Where historical material is available, I draw on these to assess the extent to which the process of othering has changed over time.

Institutional Othering

Nigerians in Ghana have to deal with a number of institutions on a regular basis; hospitals, educational facilities, financial institutions, the police, immigration officials, tax collectors and city officials. With the exception of city officials, our respondents were of the opinion that in their interactions with institutions, they did not feel any form of othering. In speaking of interactions with banking officials, Oluwa notes, "For them, there is no problem. They charge all of us (Ghanaians and Nigerians) the same rate." Similarly, Chuku in describing his interactions with tax collectors says of them, "They treat us well and sometimes when I don't have enough money to pay, I petition them to come another time for the tax and they understand."

Three of the respondents point directly to feeling the wrath of the state (specifically the Ghana Investment Promotion Council) evident in calls for the expulsion of Nigerian traders in Ghana. James says "my bad feeling about the country is that the government is not supporting the traders." Oluwa affirms this perspective when he notes:

> The bad experience for me was when all foreigners trading in Ghana were asked to leave the country. This was some four years ago and the kind of registration and the amount they were asking us to pay was too much. Many Nigerians could not pay so they left.

These calls for expulsion, which were enforced to some extent by city officials, harken

back to the late 1960s when the state in the promulgation of the Ghanaian Business Promotion Act of 1970 (Act 478) made attempts to reserve some economic activities, including wholesale and retail trade below certain levels, solely for Ghanaian citizens (Killick 1978: 312). In a revision of this Act of 1970, the Ghana Investment Promotion Council Act 2013 (Act 865) states that non-Ghanaians interested in engaging in trading in Ghana (where trading was defined as the purchase and sale of imported goods and services) were expected to invest a minimum of $1, 000, 000.00 and employ at least twenty Ghanaians. This revision had been instigated in large part by the influx of Chinese traders on the Ghanaian market and the Ghanaian Union of Traders' Associations' objection to this (Obeng 2015).

None of our 20 respondents described a situation where state authorities had sought to enforce these laws by demanding the closure of their shops. Instead, in the everyday interactions with Nigerians in their places of work, as we shall see later, ordinary Ghanaians sought to enforce these laws. While the coercive power of the state is supposed to be made manifest in state officials' insistence on adherence to the law, we find in this particular case that this did not happen. Instead, citizens sought to enforce a law that left to institutions alone would probably not be implemented. Citizens and not state officials served as enforcers of the law, a point to which we shall return later in discussing the forms of othering in workplaces.

Othering in Neighbourhoods
Landau and Freemantle (2016) in discussing relationships between migrants and citizens in a peri-urban site in South Africa note the practice of disconnection, the practice whereby migrants 'mind their own business' in their everyday activities. Rather than engaging on a daily basis with the other, they tune them out as much as they can. This practice of disconnection was evident historically in urban Ghana. As Hundsalz (1972: 218) notes in describing Ghanaian-Nigerian relationships half a century ago:

> The Yoruba have never integrated themselves into Ghanaian society. Their relationship to each other and their social linkages with relatives who stayed behind in their home areas were still, after decades of living in Ghana, stronger than their adherence to the Ghanaians.

The practice of disconnection is not as pervasive in contemporary Ghana as it was in the past. Seven respondents spoke quite positively of their experiences with Ghanaians. Five of the seven spoke about having great friendships with Ghanaians. James notes, "I have very nice Ghanaian friends who show me how to go about everything and that is very helpful." Kehinde says, "The only person that I am so tight with, we are so close, is my colleague at work, he is a Ghanaian, we share our secrets." Oyin describes her friendship with a Ghanaian in a similar manner, "There is also a Ghanaian friend I met within a few months of getting here. I go there, we talk, we share everything."

Beyond friends, two other respondents shared that their neighbours were quite friendly. Chichi says of his neighbours, "I don't know whether it is because of my character, everybody likes me. Even right now, I just moved to a new house and whenever I go back to the old place, they will be all around me. They will say, "chaley, we miss you ooo." Ada who had moved to Ghana alone with a six year old daughter, Joy, describes Ghanaians in the following manner:

> Ghanaians are kind people... people just want to help in general. If I tell you the number of times my neighbours in my compound have been willing to take care of Joy for me while I was away, you would not believe it. And by the time I come back home, they have fed her, given her a bath, you know it is just kindness all the time.

However, there were still ways in which Nigerian migrants showed signs of disconnection. Three of the twenty respondents chose to live in neighborhoods with lots of Nigerians or in homes with fellow Nigerians. Ifeoma said, "I live at Kisseman, there are a number of Nigerian people I was connected to in that area, I just got my room, I was living with friends until now, when I got my [own] place." Chioma reports, "I am staying with one Nigerian woman in the same house."

Two others who did not live with Nigerians spent their days off in neighborhoods with Nigerians. Oyinwho had a close Ghanaian friend, notes, "every Tuesday is my day off, so I normally go to Circle [the central part of Accra], my town people are there, my Nigerian people, they are there. I go there, I talk, I sit down with a few of them, then afterwards I come back." Similarly Kehinde who also describes a close friendship with a Ghanaian reports, "Tuesday is my off day where I work. Tuesdays like this we always try to meet, put heads together, see how we can make things work for ourselves, we are just young, young guys and we are hardworking." Both Oyin and Kehinde point to the possibilities of both disconnection and connection in the same individuals. Being close to Ghanaians does not preclude being close with Nigerians. Some migrants maintain strong ties with both their community of origin and community of adoption.

Others joined Nigerian associations, the presence of which Antwi-Bosiakoh (2009) has already noted. James says, "I have a club that I am a member of... it is like a network of guys from Nigeria who meet to discuss issues and plan and relax." In addition, the majority who were not Protestant or Muslim attended Nigerian branches of charismatic churches in Ghana such as Winners Chapel and Christ Embassy.

The Nigerian migrants were also extremely supportive of one another. The women in particular assisted each other to set up trading businesses. Amina notes, "Usually when the Nigerian men marry and they bring their wives, they come to me to learn this trade. I have so far trained three women who now have their shops and are also selling clothes." The men either employed co-Nigerians or found other Nigerians to employ them and when all else failed in their efforts to link them up with co-ethnics, they assisted their fellow citizens to find work with Ghanaians. Emeka says, "I have assisted two of my Nigerian friends to get jobs [with Ghanaians] and they are doing well." Ifeoma was assisted to find work as a nanny caring for two young children of Nigerian professionals living in a high end Ghanaian neighbourhood. When she quit that job, she found work with a Nigerian hairdresser assisting with braiding, styling and washing hair.

If the Nigerian migrants maintained close ties with their migrant community, it is not surprising given that in their interactions with Ghanaians no matter how loosely, they were treated quite poorly. Our respondents provided numerous instances of such poor treatment. Once Ghanaians got the sense that they were dealing with a Nigerian, no matter how remotely, they could treat them quite poorly simply on the basis of their origins.   James recounts the experiences of a middle class Ghanaian employee in a Nigerian bank who had a car with a Nigerian driver's licence as follows:

> Sometimes people are supposed to give her chance to enter some lane [give her the right of way] but because she has a Nigerian number [licence plate] they will insult her and talk down to her, thinking that she is a Nigerian.   She has received a lot of embarrassment so she is requesting for the bank to give her a Ghana number [licence plate].

Chichi provides yet another example of poor treatment of Nigerians with whom Ghanaians did not necessarily have a close relationship:

> Once it was Nigeria's independence day and Zenith college students were marching on the street… I believe they can't be marching without permission. They had permission and a police escort, so they were going round celebrating their independence peacefully with their Nigerian flag, when Ghanaians saw them they were shouting "You people, Anago[2] people, go to your country. Can you try this in Nigeria? Go back to your country."   So I said, "hello, calm down. If these people are marching, they have the permission to do so so why don't you just ask somebody before you start to complain."   Then they said, 'ehhh, 419 people blah, blah, blah… talking plenty."   So I said "eeei."

419 is a reference to the numbered provision in the Nigerian Criminal Code which prohibits the impersonation of another for financial gain (Glickman 2005). 419 is used in reference to the internet scams offering unsuspecting individuals quite large sums of money for which they had to first dispense with a few thousand and in some cases hundreds of thousands of dollars.   Glickman (2005: 472) argues that this practice dates back to the sixteenth century when it was associated with the Spanish. Currently, however, this is a practice widely associated with Nigerians – witness General Colin Powell's reference to Nigeria as a "nation of scammers" (French 2004: 35) and seems to be at the heart of Ghanaians' disdain of Nigerians. Like Colin Powell, the Ghanaians who are disdainful of Nigerians believe that they are scammers. Media sources add to this sentiment that Nigerians are scammers. In the content analysis of the thirty five news items written in a major newspaper about Nigerians between 2013 and 2016, the largest number of twelve (34%) were dedicated to news items about Nigerian criminal behavior in Ghana.   In other words, one in three news items about Nigerians in Ghana featured them in unfavourable ways.   Given these circumstances, it is no wonder that Chichi surmises as follows:

[1]Anago is a type of Nigerian dress.

> It's hard oh, because most times they see us like, they see most Nigerians here as bad people… They don't even want to know who you are, they have not even met you, once they know [you are] Anago [Nigerian], they conclude that everybody is the same.

As a result of these negative perceptions, some Ghanaians refrain from associating with Nigerians at all. Tunde notes "Some landlords will not give their rooms to a Nigerian for rent unless you get a Ghanaian to be your guarantor."   When they do offer you a place for rent, Ghanaian landlords will charge the Nigerians exorbitant rents. Solomon notes, "The Nigerians here when they go looking for a room to rent, the landlord increases the amount.   "They say, he is Nigerian, he has money so they increase the amount – they double it."   Chichi corroborates Solomon's views by noting, "When you are going to rent a house, because you are Nigerian, the house that is supposed to be for 50, 60 Ghana cedis [about $25–$30], they will give it to you for 100 Ghana cedis [about $50]."

Furthermore, when Ghanaians accepted Nigerians' money and offered them accommodation, there was no guarantee that they would be neighbourly or friendly because of the stereotypes they associated with Nigerians. Tunde recounts his personal experience as follows:

> In the yard where I stay, the people will allow you to stay but they will treat you with reservation. There was a day that a five year old girl, who lives in the same compound, said to me "My father says you Nigerians eat human flesh." That day, I felt very sorry, it meant they saw me as a devil or carrying some juju [black magic] and they did not want to have anything to do with me.

Gordon Allport's contact theory, the idea that prejudice is dissolved the closer the contact different groups have with one another, developed over half a century ago, has been affirmed in various studies over the years (Yancey 1998; Savelkoul 2010). Based on this theory, Ghanaians who find themselves in close contact with Nigerians in their home spaces or places of work would have more favourable attitudes towards Nigerians.   Tunde's account of his experience, however, follows a logic completely opposite from that suggested by contact theory; in Tunde's case, the closer a Ghanaian's interaction with a Nigerian, the more likely the Ghanaian was to exhibit his/her pathologising of the Nigerian. As Tunde puts it:

> If you are on your way to a place and you don't know the place and you ask a Ghanaian, that person will stop everything s/he is doing and give you the directions to the place. The Ghanaian will do that for anybody, it does not matter whether you are a foreigner or not. But you will have a problem with them if you are living with them in the same territory.

It is clear from the above then that while Nigerians maintained close contacts with their fellow migrants both historically and currently, some Nigerians (a quarter of our respondents) have close friendships with Ghanaians. A few others (one–tenth) have

close associations with both Nigerians and Ghanaians. Given the general hostilities that Nigerians face from Ghanaians as well as the outright discrimination as in refusal to rent to Nigerians or the charging of exorbitant rents when they do, it is perhaps not surprising that there is a fair amount of disconnection between the Ghanaian and Nigerian communities. Workplace interactions are not significantly different from what pertains in neighbourhoods.

Othering in Workplaces
The Nigerian women we spoke to had far more positive things to say about their working relationships with Ghanaians than the men did. The 419 stigma seemed to be much more associated with the men than with the women. Four of the ten women described quite positive relationships with their Ghanaian counterparts in the workplace. Mercy says of her fellow traders, "They treat me well, I do not have problems with anybody. This mama is like my mother. When someone comes to buy something and the person cannot speak English or pidgin, she translates for me."Three of the other female respondents noted the willingness with which their fellow traders took on the responsibility of serving as translators for them whenever the Nigerian traders had clients with whom they had a language difficulty. Obioma corroborates the words of Mercy when she notes, "It was very difficult initially but my fellow traders around did help by translating for me and with time, I have learnt to speak Twi. Now I can speak Twi and I have no difficulty selling my wares."

However, other female respondents did not have such nice things to say about the Ghanaian traders with whom they shared market space. Amina notes, "Initially, it was very difficult. My fellow traders used to insult me a lot." Insults were the least of the worries of the Nigerian traders. Others, both male and female spoke of being outright cheated. Oluwa recounts:

> You know, I used to buy the goods for my shop from Ghanaians here in Ghana. But I realized that they were cheating us Nigerains. For instances, they would sell a yard of cloth at 8 Ghana cedis to Ghanaians and then sell it at 9 Ghana cedis to Nigerians so when we come to our shops to sell, we are not able to make profits and people don't buy from us. This is because while we sold a yard of the cloth for 10 Ghana cedis, the Ghanaians were selling it for 9 Ghana cedis. This was not fair, so I decided to go to Nigeria to bring the goods myself.

Tunde shared a similar story of being cheated by a Ghanaian man he considered to be his friend. Tunde needed an ear piece for his phone and asked his friend who had an original ear piece how much his had cost. The friend said 4 Ghana cedis but insisted that he would charge Tunde 5 Ghana cedis for getting him one, 1 Ghana cedi being his profit. When Tunde found out that his supposed friend had gone ahead to purchase a fake and therefore cheaper ear piece for him which he passed off to him as original, he was livid and got into a fistfight with his friend. What is worse, he got little support from the other Ghanaian traders who heard his story. They either laughed at him or told him to forget the incident had ever happened. Having learnt his lesson the hard way, he no longer interacted with this particular individual.
Nigerians who worked for Ghanaians did not have an easier time of it either. Chichi

was of the opinion that because of the perception that Nigerians were scammers, they could be denied job opportunities. Kehinde described his personal experiences with the job search in Ghana as follows, "Before I got this job, anywhere I went, they would say, you are a Nigerian, we do not have a job for you. We cannot accept a Nigerian because they said Nigerians, we have some bad image and all that." Others found that there was a certain sense that Nigerians were unfairly competing with Ghanaians for jobs. Emeka was asked, "How come you are struggling with Ghanaians for a job?" Ada who served as the sales clerk at a building supplies shop owned by Ghanaians described an experience she had:

> Well I can say one time, someone came to the shop claiming to want to buy something but then he asked me 'are you Nigerian or Ghanaian?' I said 'I am Nigerian' and he started saying 'you Nigerians you leave your country and come here and overtake our own businesses. You people are not supposed to involve yourself in business for us. You people are taking everything.' I was so shocked I couldn't say a word. I was really hurt and I wanted to say 'I am only a shopkeeper and not a business owner' but I couldn't talk, so I just let it be.

Here, it is clear that the customer was seeking, albeit unsuccessfully, to enforce the legal prohibition against migrants' involvement in small scale trading enterprises.
For the most part then, whether as self–employed individuals in the informal sector or employees in the private formal or informal sector, Nigerians experienced what Spivak (1985) describes as the second dimension of othering either from co–workers or clients.   Given these circumstances, we were interested in exploring the manner in which Nigerians responded to this particular form of othering.

Responses to Othering – A finger dropped in oil stains the five fingers
More recent work on othering focuses on the agency of the perceived powerless party in a dyad. Rather than accept the notion of themselves as pathologically inferior, studies from both Scandinavia and America (Jensen 2011; Park 2012) show the ways in which young male ethnic minorities in particular actively resist their characterization as pathologically inferior.Such active resistance to the characterization of Nigerians as pathologically inferior is also evident among Nigerian scholars and officials in Ghana. For example, Titilope Ajayi in January 2019 responded to the negative characterization of Nigerians in Ghanaian media by penning a piece in "Africa as a country" titled "The burden of being Nigerian" where she critiqued the persistent depictions of Nigerians as pathologically inferior. Similarly, the Welfare Officer of the Nigerians Association in Ghana, Emmanuel Chibueze chided Ghanaians and indeed the world for their negative perceptions of Nigerians in a June 2019 speech on a Ghanaian radio station, Kingdom 107.7 FM where he urged everybody to refrain from tagging Nigerians as criminals.

One quarter of the respondents we spoke to shared their perspectives on how Nigerians should respond to the various forms of othering they experienced. Interestingly, however, contrary to what the newer literature on othering suggests and what has been observed with respect to Nigerian scholars and officials in Ghana, four of the five people basically had the opinion that Nigerians could do little about the poor

image Ghanaians had of them. This is perhaps due to their inability to have their voices heard on radio and in academic spaces. Not only did they seem resigned to the fact that Ghanaians had a poor image of them, They spoke in a manner that seemed to suggest that they deserved to be treated in the poor manner in which Ghanaians treated them. Chichi describes this perspective best when he suggests,"But really, I don't blame them, because we have many Nigerians who come here to do things – things that are uncalled for. My people say a finger dropped in oil stains the five fingers so before you know it, the hand is stained."In a similar manner, Ifeoma suggests:

> Ohh, this whole 419 thing is all over the place. Ghanaians believe that most Nigerians are frauds and all that, which is very bad. But also it is what some Nigerians who are here come to do. If they do bad things and spoil their names, that will be a problem for all of us.

Tunde offers yet another series of justifications for Ghanaians' poor perception of Nigerians. He says, "There are bad people in Nigeria who have spoilt the name of Nigeria. All this Boko Haram, Niger Delta crisis, they have spoilt the name of Nigeria. The bad Nigerians have spoilt the name of the country, Nigeria."Kehinde describes what Nigerians discuss when they get together in the following manner; "We talk about how our people are constituting a nuisance in this country."

Only one person, Bimbo, had a different opinion. The wife of a pastor, she said:

> Some people have complained about being treated badly because they are Nigerians. They complain that people call them names and accuse them of being 419... and deceiving them with money. So, I advise them to keep up the good behavior and do the right thing. With time, people will know them truly for who they are.

Conclusion

As evident in the discussions above, Ghanaians' othering of Nigerians is quite pervasive. At the level of institutions, there is not much of a difference between how Ghanaians and Nigerians are treated. The only exception is in regards to the passage of laws that prohibit Nigerians from engaging in small scale trading. Although in the late 1960s the initial version of this law was implemented to the letter and Nigerians expelled, more recent permutations of this law have been less stringently enforced. Nigerians therefore do not experience institutional othering to the same degree that they experience individual othering. In both their places of residence and at work, there is much more of a negative reaction from Ghanaians than a positive one. These negative perceptions are extended even to Nigerians with whom Ghanaians have very little contact, such as those they meet on the street, witness the response to the Nigerians marching to commemorate independence day celebrations in their home country. Surprisingly, contrary to what has been documented elsewhere and what is evident from Nigerian scholars and officials, for the most part, the average Nigerians who formed the sample for this study justify the poor treatment they experience from Ghanaians. Given the country's long term association with internet fraud coupled more recently with the numerous terrorist attacks of Boko Haram and the kidnappings in the Niger Delta, these Nigerians seem to think that they deserve to be treated

poorly as migrants. While they can therefore migrate to any of the other 15 member countries of ECOWAS thanks to the Protocol on Free Movement of Persons, they do not necessarily expect to be treated well in the countries in which they choose to settle.

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