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**PERCEPTUAL FACTORS AND NIGERIAN IMMIGRANTS IN JOHANNESBURG: A
STUDY OF THE ROLE OF NIGERIAN-SOUTH AFRICAN INTERMARRIAGES IN
SOCIAL INTEGRATION**

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to God and my family especially my late granny (Mama Elizabeth Omoladun Adeagbo) who laid the foundation for my education, as well as all Nigerian immigrants in South Africa who live under the yoke of discrimination and xenophobic prejudices.

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Ese gan! Siyabonga! Thank you all!

DECLARATION

I declare that this thesis is my own unaided work and it has not been previously submitted for a degree or diploma in any other university. This thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the thesis. This work is submitted for the degree of Masters in Africa Centre for Migration and Society, in the Graduate School for the Humanities and Social Sciences, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg.

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ABSTRACT

This study seeks to understand how the general assumptions, perceptions, and representations of Nigerian immigrants shape marriages between Nigerian men and South African women in Johannesburg. It looks at the impact of prejudice on marriages between Nigerian men and South African women in an environment of generalized xenophobia and anti-Nigerian sentiments. This study looks into the private lives of intermarried couples, how they negotiate everyday discriminations and prejudices and the impact the usual general violent attacks and media reports bring upon their marriage.

The major purpose of this study is to look at the impact of xenophobia and discrimination against Nigerian-South African marriages in Johannesburg. The study finds that despite the discriminations and prejudices directed against Nigerian immigrants in Johannesburg, Nigerian-South African couples often adopt love and humour to negotiate such discriminations. Also, the role of religion, particularly, the church in preaching and promoting love and unity among intermarried couples in this study is also significant. Further, this study finds that despite different contacts between Nigerian immigrants and South Africans through intermarriages, Nigerian husbands are subjected to close scrutiny to prove their innocence or confirm their guilt. Accordingly, the levels of integration differ among couples. Also, the study finds that this contact between Nigerian immigrants and South Africans is changing the perceptions and pre-conceived generalizations that all Nigerians are bad.

The study is based on data gathered from a 4-month ethnographic fieldwork (August-November 2010) among Nigerian immigrants, South Africans and others (non-South Africans) in Johannesburg, South Africa. The data was collected through interviews of Nigerian immigrants, Nigerian husbands and their South African wives, friends and families. I interviewed 15 couples (Nigerian-South African couples), of both young and old marriages.

The study uses Alba and Nee's (2003) 'intermarriage and assimilation theory' which was originally applied in America to show the importance of intermarriage as the major indicator of integration. The context was quite different from South African context due to South Africa's unique history and concept of marriage as well as the importance of other factors like employment, legal status etc as indicators of integration. Although this theory also works in the South African context by promoting more personal contacts between Nigerian immigrants and South Africans (particularly black South Africans), the continuous scrutiny of identity and integrity of Nigerian husbands make its operation different from where it was originally applied. Therefore, there were no absolutes in applying this theory in a South African context because intermarriage does not depict integration since other factors like employment and legal status play important roles in the integration process.

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CHAPTER ONE

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

1.0 Historical Context

Historically, South Africa's labour migration particularly the mining industry plays an important role in the present South African environment and marriages in the Southern African region. It has been argued that the marital crisis in post-apartheid South African society has its roots in the devastation of family life caused by apartheid-era migrant labour system (IDAF, 1981; Hilda, 1985; Schapera, 1947; Wilson, 1975; Wilson & Ramphela, 1989; Francis Wilson, 1972). This claim is supported by the statement of South African sociologist Dr. Trudi Thomas who describes the aftermath experiences of families left behind by Bantustans men when they went to work in the cities. In his words, "broken marriages and desertion and faithlessness are distressingly common, and the reason is clear...African relationships, as in all cultures, depend on loyalty and affection. These bonds in turn depend upon mutual support and comfort, on shared experiences and responsibilities, and companionships. All these must be sacrificed when the man goes away for long periods..." (*Trudi Thomas (1974), "The seeds of deprivation", Black Sash, quoted in Hilda Bernstein 1978:30*). Similarly, Monica Wilson (1975: 17-18) states that "Migrant (oscillating) labour continuing over a long period of time and involving a substantial proportion of the population is, I believe, the single most destructive force in our society...South Africa has lived on the capital of a very strong family system and that capital has been squandered...". Colin Murray (1981) studies in Lesotho also show that long absence of men away from home due to labour migration generated several problems: socio-economic

problems, marital dissonance, psychological and emotional problems as well as disruption of communal peasant society.

Furthermore, Hilda (1985) maintains that migrant labour during apartheid affected South African women by depriving them of their rights and the system made it illegal for South African women to live with their husbands, except during the two-week holiday given to migrant workers to visit families. She argues that this affected the family unit which is the bedrock of every society. It is also important to note that migrant workers and their wives never wished to live apart but the laws (Pass Laws and Influx Control) of the apartheid era imposed this on them which directly eroded the value of family unit and brought about marital instability (Hilda, 1985; Wilson, F. 1972). It is also recorded in the literature that men are the sole providers for the family while women stay back at home especially in rural areas to build the family – called *umuzi* (homestead), and men are regarded as *umnumzana* (head of family) (Cole & Thomas, 2009), but the survey conducted in 1974 revealed that 80 per cent of women headed households in Bantustan area of Bothashoek while 67 per cent headed rural households due to absence of men that have gone to work in ‘white’ cities (Hilda, 1985). Wilson and Ramphele (1989) also maintain that apartheid migrant labour system in South Africa disrupted traditional family settings and affected women badly. Francis Wilson (1972) pointed out that migrant labour disrupted family settings and made the breakdown of parental authority common among children. Wilson argues from Christian point of view that, “to argue, as some do, that a family can survive provided the man can visit at least once in a year to sleep with his wife, is an utter travesty of the biblical teaching on marriage as summed up by our Lord himself when he taught: They are no longer two individuals: they are one flesh. What God has joined together, man must not separate” (191). Similarly, Lye and Murray (1980:21), studies of Tswana and Sotho in

Southern African region revealed that 30,000 workers left Lesotho to work in South African mines, and their absence affected families left behind because men often stay away from home for years. They state that “family life is ravaged by the separation of spouses and the absence of fathers” (21). It has also been argued that prior to the influence of labour migration in South Africa, marriage was “unstable, unchanging institution and extramarital affairs was one sign of this fact” (Delius and Glaser 2004: 141). Nonetheless, from this period up to contemporary South Africa, it is only men that are ready to pay *ilobolo* or *lobola* (bride wealth) that are regarded as responsible men and some actually left the rural areas to urban areas to look for employment in order to pay this “bride wealth” whether in monetary value or livestock.

The old apartheid system that subjected women to subsistence farming while men were away working in the cities changed at a point, and women also joined the pool of migrant labourers in the cities. This was as a result of sexually discriminatory laws that gave women no right to land in the Bantustans. Some of them worked as either ‘domestic servants (38%) or as farm labourers’ (IDAF, 1981; Hilda Bernstein, 1978). Due to many constraints e.g. finances, education of women and long wait for husbands to come home to perform the marriage rites or payment of bride wealth, some women also left for urban areas to look for domestic jobs which made some of them forget about marriage altogether (Hunters, 2005). Unlike previously when marriage seemed to be the ultimate and women’s work was to take care of the family while the men were away working (especially in the mining industries), women, especially the educated ones began to take the same position as men as labour migrants. Consequently, some of these women started rejecting marriage (Hunter, 2005; Kark, 1950). Therefore, some of these women began to marry not only their South African men who were capable of paying *lobola*, they started marrying

foreigners including Nigerian immigrants that were willing to pay *lobola* and perform necessary marriage rites in post-apartheid South Africa.

Such marriages between Nigerian immigrants and South African women are perceived by some South African males who are unable to pay the bride price for some of their women as inappropriate because they believe they are being marginalized hence, they conclude that foreigners are now taking their wives –particularly Nigerian immigrants (Everatt, 2010). Nigerian-South African marital union and the antagonism of some South African males to such marriage could be described as crises between lower class and middle class or lower middle-class. Some Nigerian immigrants that are willing to pay the bride price and go through other marriage requirements are lower middle-class or middle-class people (self-employed or otherwise), with a stable income to take care of their families unlike some of their South African counterparts that are not willing or often find it difficult to pay the exorbitant bride price and perform marriage rites. Some of my informants confided in me that even some South African men that are willing to pay the bride price often abuse their wives because of the bride price paid unlike Nigerian immigrants that are said to be non-violent and less abusive.

In a study conducted by Institute of Security Studies in 1999, it was found that 90 percent of women interviewed had experienced both emotional and physical abuse, 71 per cent experienced sexual abuse, 58 per cent experienced economic abuse. 60 per cent of these abuses were committed by partners (www.iss.co.za). Similarly, it has been estimated that one out of every four South African women are survivors of domestic violence (The Department of Justice, 1997). For example, a report was posted on the internet about a South Africa man from Tshephe Tshephe informal settlement in Khayelitsha, who always beat his wife. On one occasion of such beatings, he broke his wife's ankle and 50 community women marched to his house to show

their rejection of his behaviour (Nombulelo Damba 16 February, 2011 <http://allafrica.com/stories/201102160630.html>). Sakala (1998) argues that South African men often abuse their women because women are regarded as the property of men since their bride price has been paid. The absolute transfer of woman's right to her husband could explain the abuse experienced by women because men often like to exercise their superiority as the head. The above could also be used to explain the present marital crisis in South African society and the contention between the lower and the middle classes.

The transition of South Africa from Apartheid to democracy brought about the influx of foreigners particularly from other African countries including Nigeria. The first set of Nigerian immigrants in South Africa who came before 1993 came to the country voluntarily either to work or study and most of them were young and single males (Morris, 1998). The number of Nigerians migrating to South Africa increased during the 1990s due to political turmoil in Nigeria and many Nigerians, especially the political activists relocated to South Africa (Morris, 2001). Following the annulment of the June 12, 1993 general elections and the continuous political and religious crises that followed, many Nigerians left the country for different parts of the world including South Africa. Statistics show that there are about 1.5-2.5 million immigrants in Gauteng Province with the vast majority of them from the SADC region and Nigeria (Landau, 2010).

It is said that when one walks in a familiar but dark alley, it is easy to mistake a common place object for a ghost (Iyi J. et al 2003). This adage buttresses the predicaments faced by some Nigerians who seek to integrate into South African society through intermarriage and the impact of the prevalence of negative perceptions about Nigerians. This general perception is underpinned by certain perceptual factors - the demonization of the "other", crime, the role of the

media, accusation of Nigerians taking South African women and jobs, and institutionalized xenophobia (Morris, 1998; Iyi et al, 2003). It is a popular saying that irrespective of how holy a group is, there is always a “Judas” within such group. One then tries to make sense of some bad eggs among Nigerian immigrants who are involved in all kinds of crimes e.g. drug trafficking (Morris, 2001 & 1998; Neocosmos, 2006), which has led to generalized anti-Nigerian sentiments.

Despite the generalized discriminations and prejudices against Nigerian immigrants in South Africa which is rife among most South Africans living in both rural and urban areas, educated and uneducated. It is noteworthy however, that in spite of these negative perceptions, intermarriage between Nigerian men and South African women continue to take place. It is against this background I undertake this study.

1.1 Introduction

Stereotype is as old as human culture and it reflects the worldviews or ideas a particular group of people hold towards other groups which is different from them. Stereotypes pay no attention to the distinctiveness of individuals because it paints all members of such group as the same. The implication of this is that, the particular behaviour of a person in a group is unfairly generalized as the behaviour of a whole group. Stereotypes are an amplification of differences between groups as a result of rivalry between such groups, and thus reducing what these groups have in common and exacerbating their differences. This could be said to be true of South African environments where there is crises of classes e.g. middle and lower classes, and stereotype is mobilized through such tension. Stereotypes can also be seen as the ability of a majority or in-group to blame the minority or out-group group for social ills, economic disorder etc in their

society (Brewer, 1979). The implication of this definition is that a particular majority group often vilifies or scapegoats the minority group, and this has a negative effect on the activities of the minority group in such environment. Charles E. Hurst (2007: 6) stated that "One reason for stereotypes is the lack of personal, concrete familiarity that individuals have with persons in other racial or ethnic groups. Lack of familiarity encourages the lumping together of unknown individuals."

South Africa experienced painful segregation during apartheid and this has contributed in no small measure to the present state of xenophobic attitude towards foreigners in the country (Everatt, 2010). The South African environment is a classic example of an environment where foreigners are vilified or scapegoated for the social ills in the country and I undertake this study in recognition of that fact. Nigerian immigrants constitute a sizeable part of foreigners in South Africa and there is some sort of 'special' prejudice directed against this group concerning drugs and illegal activities. This further exacerbates anti-Nigerian immigrants' sentiments in South African communities. Such generalized anti-Nigerian sentiments seem to be more pronounced among black South African males that believe that foreigners are milking their system and taking their wives and jobs (Everatt, 2010). Interestingly, despite the generalized anti-Nigerian immigrant sentiments in South Africa, marriages between Nigerian men and South African women continue to exist.

Marriage brings two families together and bridges the gap between them. In other words, marriage is the cohabitation of two different people from different backgrounds, national, religious, ethnic etc. Also, the concept of integration also comes into play where intermarriage occurs. Integration is the act or process of mixing people who have previously been separated, usually because of colour, race, religion, nationality etc (Hornsby, 2001). It also means an

interactive process between immigrants and the host community. Consequently, social integration is defined as the inclusion and acceptance of immigrants into the core institutions, relationships and positions of a host society (Bosswick et al 2006). It is in line with the above definition of social integration by Bosswick et al (2006) that this study examines the impact anti-Nigerian immigrants stereotypes in Johannesburg is having on Nigerian-South African couples and the role Nigerian-South African intermarriages play in the process.

The study is an inquiry into the impact of prejudice against Nigerian-South African marriages as well as the couples' private lives and the strategies they employ to reconcile such prejudice in their daily activities in an environment of generalized xenophobia and anti-Nigerian sentiments. This research on marriage is expected to contribute to the literature within the field of studies on xenophobia and integration which do not usually go beyond violent encounters and media reports. This will deepen our understanding of the situation of the Nigerian immigrant as manifested in the social context of marital union and the larger environmental context of the Johannesburg host community.

Among the different theories of intermarriage, this study uses Alba and Nee (2003) 'intermarriage and assimilation theory' as a theoretical starting point to examine the tension between Nigerian-South African intermarriage and the existing prejudice about Nigerian immigrants in South Africa. Although South Africa has a unique concept of marriage, the importance of this theory cannot be underestimated because it shows that intermarriage between immigrants and natives brings more contact and familiarity, thus, blurring ethnic or racial lines, nationality issues, discrimination and prejudice. It could even diminish discrimination and prejudice (Lucassen et al, 2009). Although this theory is applied in a South African context, there are some differences compared to America where it was originally applied.

1.2 Research Questions

In order to understand the impact of prejudice on Nigerian-South African marriages, it is pertinent to ask the following questions to frame the focus of this study.

What is the impact of the prejudice directed towards Nigerian immigrants on Nigerian-South African marital relationships and how do the couples negotiate the tensions among their friends, families and the society?

- (a) What are the stereotypes against Nigerian immigrants and how have they been talked about?
- (b) What is the role of the host community in reinforcing such stereotypes?
- (c) How do the couples negotiate the tension between love and discrimination among friends, families and the entire society?
- (d) What are some of the challenges they face and how have they reacted to those challenges?
- (e) How does this affect their social integration into their host communities?

1.3 Research Objectives and Rationale

The world is full of ethnic, racial and religious divisions and intermarriage between members of different groups can be seen as an important means of closing the gaps. Marriage is seen as a physical, mental and spiritual union of two souls irrespective of their backgrounds and race. Similarly, intermarriage is considered to be a major pointer of social distance among groups and cohesion of societies. Although marriage had always taken place across social strata, but

marriage was basically about reproduction in the traditional South African context. As more women move up the economic ladder, the demands on a modern, working middleclass couple pose its own challenges to marriage and this creates tensions and instability in marriages that were largely absent in traditional marriages.

As will be shown, many Nigerian immigrants marrying South African women are in the middle class and they are therefore often able to meet their marital obligations to their families. Such middleclass men are more willing and able to fulfill the marriage requirements, something those in the bottom rung of the social and economic ladder find difficult to do. This is often viewed by their South African male counterparts as a blow to their ego and a defeat in the rivalry and competition with foreigners.

However, intermarriage has been argued to be a channel through which members of different groups relate and interact with one another in a more positive way and see each group as being socially equal without any form of prejudice or discrimination (Christiaan et al, 2005; Gunduz et al, 2002; Kamiljn, 1998). Intermarriages between Nigerian men and South African women exist in South Africa. It is however striking how much little research there is, both on social integration in Africa, and particularly, on Nigerian-South African intermarriages.

The aim of this study is to understand how the general assumptions, perceptions, and representations of Nigerian immigrants shape marriages between Nigerian men and South African women in Johannesburg. This study seeks to make sense of the importance of marriage between Nigerian men and South African women in an environment of generalized racial intolerance and anti-Nigerian sentiments.

It is also the aim of this study to see how the couples negotiate the discriminations towards Nigerian husbands among their peers and how they see such prejudice in a positive way. In other words, this has to do with the role love plays in helping the couples overcome such prejudice and how they negotiate it among the bride's family, friends and the entire host community.

The study also seeks to fill the gap between the field of studies dealing with xenophobia and integration which hardly go beyond direct violent attacks and media reports. It explores the 'private domain' of Nigerian-South African couples in their everyday life as against the 'public perception' represented by media sensationalism of prejudices directed towards Nigerian immigrants in South Africa. It tries to understand how these couples negotiate their private lives and daily activities in an environment characterized by violence and anti-Nigerian sentiments.

There is a dearth of literature on the relationship between prejudices, inter-marriage and social integration among Nigerian immigrants (also of other immigrants) in Johannesburg. This study therefore contributes to the existing literature.

1.4 Structure of the Report

This study is divided into four chapters. Chapter one is the introduction to the study, its historical context, research questions, research objectives and rationale, literature reviews and theoretical framework, research method, research design, population of the study, sampling and sampling strategy, data collection procedures, techniques and instruments, data analysis, challenges, ethical considerations and limitations of the study. Chapter two discusses the discriminations directed against Nigerian immigrants and its impact on Nigerian-South African marriages in Johannesburg and found that. It found that the prejudice permeates Nigerian-South African couples everyday activities and private lives. Chapter three focuses on the findings and strategies

Nigerian-South African couples employ to transcend the impact such anti-Nigerian immigrant stereotypes have on their marriage. The study found that couples often adopt love and humour to reconcile and manage their differences and the impact of the generalized prejudice on their marriage. Chapter four gives a summary and conclusion of the study.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

1.5 Introduction

The present tension between South Africans and Nigerian immigrants has extended beyond a simple conception of alien versus indigenous by traversing the spectrum of ethnicity, citizenship and legal status. This study draws on the extant literature on prejudice and intermarriages to understand Nigerian-South African marriages which are formed in the midst of widespread discrimination and anti-Nigerian sentiments in Johannesburg, South Africa.

1.5.1 Subsisting Prejudice

Prejudices are preconceived ideas, beliefs, opinions or judgments without establishing if they are true or not. The word “prejudice” is always used to refer to some preconceived claims towards some set of people with different ethnicity, race, social class, beliefs, religion, and other personal features. This can also be said to be *a priori* beliefs towards some people without adequate verification of those beliefs (Rosnows, 1972).

Morris (1998 & 2001) shows the importance of language in shaping the perceptions of foreigners in South Africa. The media broadcast news, publish articles and produce films (e.g. District 9) in which foreigners particularly the Nigerian community is vilified and painted in the most derogatory light. He argues that media and political leaders are major proponents of this

discrimination and have helped in no small measure in spreading this prejudice against foreigners –especially Nigerian immigrants with their writings and statements. What people read and hear about a particular set of people shape their attitudes and views about such group even when they have no direct contact with such group and vice versa. This study seeks to examine how the prejudices play out in a context of Nigerian-South African intermarriage.

Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC, 2008) argues against the widespread discriminations against foreigners but contend that Nigerians in particular are involved in high level organised crimes such as drug trafficking. HSRC submitted after a research done by the body that it is clear from the evidence heard that many misconceptions; stereotypes and uncertainties exist about the presence of foreigners in South Africa. This research therefore seeks to examine such stereotypes in a marital context.

Valji (2003) maintains that the examination of xenophobia and its manifestation reveals that ‘the foreigner has become a site for the violent convergence of a host of unresolved social tensions. The difficulties of transition, socio-economic frustrations, a legacy of racial division, and an inherited culture of violence are just some of the factors contributing to violent xenophobia in South Africa today. In the same vein, Neocosmos (2006) argues after critical examination that a majority of South Africans are indeed xenophobic and their opposition to immigration and foreign citizens is widespread.

It is noteworthy that some recent research focused on how racial prejudice affects interpersonal relationships and was argued that contact or relationship between members of different groups reduces prejudice (Sewell & Davidson, 1956; Basu & Ames, 1970). Sewell and Davidson (1956) discovered that the level of interactions of Scandinavian students with Americans was positively

connected to their right behaviour towards United States of America. Similarly, Basu and Ames (1970) opine that interrelationship was an important factor in changing the attitudes of international students towards their host country. It is also on this note that Triandis and Vassiliou (1967) maintain that the interaction between groups is likely to emasculate stereotypes.

In contrast, Lambart and Bresseler (1955) found that not even a polite and good contact between natives and immigrants can lead to favourable thoughts or attitudes. Similarly, Anant (1971) submitted that the negative perceptions and prejudices of Indian students towards the groups they had frequent contact or interaction with are high. Ford (1973) in his study found that despite the increasing interaction and contact between whites and blacks, those blacks became more prejudiced while the whites did not. Wen Li et al (1974) are of the view that contact or interaction between natives and foreigners does not essentially reduce prejudice.

Some of the works above explored different ways in which prejudice is formed and discussed. Some scholars maintain that contacts between two different groups can bring about reduction in the level of prejudice of one group towards another while others argue that contacts between two different groups do not bring about reduction in the level of prejudice of one group towards another.

While recognizing that contact reduces prejudice as the above literature suggest, this study hopes to discover, whether these findings hold true in the South African context where you have competition for socio-economic space, and disparity in social and economic fulfillment; and whether contact through marriage has in any way helped to reduce prejudice directed against Nigerian immigrants in Johannesburg. It is significant that competition for resources/space and unequal distribution in socio-economic opportunities between these groups impact on whether

contact will in fact reduce prejudice in a given context. Where the socio-economic differences between the groups are narrow, contact is more likely to reduce prejudice than where there are wide social and economic disparities between the groups.

Similarly, many scholars have dealt with the discrimination, violence and prejudice against foreigners in South Africa. This study builds on the above theories noting that contact does play a role in reducing prejudice by one group against another. But since the case of Nigerian-South African marriages have not been specifically interrogated in the sense of conducting an impact assessment of anti-Nigerian sentiments on Nigerian-South African intermarriages, this study seeks to apply this theory to that context.

1.5.2 Intermarriage

There are many discourses on intermarriage and its importance in the modern world. Intermarriage is a marriage between two people of different backgrounds and this can either be religious (such as Christians marrying Muslims), racial (such as a European marrying an African), and class (e.g. upper-class marrying a lower-class). Intermarriage can also be said to be exogamy or marriage outside one's social group. Some study showed that in the area of inter-racial marriages for example, the children produced have gone on to find a place for themselves in the world notwithstanding that many often have to contend with discrimination (George, 2003; Gardner, 2001). The implication of the above is that in effect, intermarriage could be a tool to overcome barriers and tensions between people from different social groups through union of new familial groups. Formation of such family could be the beginning of a world of harmony and tranquility.

It is noteworthy that majority of studies on intermarriage are done in the rich Northern countries like US, Britain, France, Sweden, Australia, and Canada etc (Kalmijn et al, 2007; Quian, 1999; Rosenfield, 2002; Meng et al, 2005; Jones & Luijckx, 1996, Kalbach,2002; Tzeng,2000) with huge middle class population. It is in this vein that this study examines some of the patterns observed in traditional immigrant countries to understand the Nigerian-South African marriages in the South African context.

Chester and Richard (1957) argued that love tends to replace the discrimination or prejudice towards a particular person or group of people. They gave the example of a Filipino woman that married an American man despite her parents' objections and later, there was reunion between the bride parents and the couple. The bride family reconciled with their son in-law and visited them often, especially when they had a new baby. However, there are so many differences in the couple's culture, religion and background but the couple try to negotiate the tensions in their marriage by recognizing individual differences and culture and by developing intermediate kind of culture. According to the authors, 'housekeeping standards, interaction with relatives, child care practices, dietary habits, sexual practices, and handling of money tended to follow a pattern midway between that of the two cultures'.

Similarly, Kalmiljn and Tubergen (2007) examine intermarriages among Surinamese, Dutch Antilleans, Turks, and Moroccans in the Netherlands. These authors maintain that ethnic intermarriage is an important discourse in migration literature and such marriage is the reflection of social interaction and social acceptance between groups. Similarly, it has been argued that immigrants who marry out of their group have a better economic position and children of such marriages identify themselves with more than one group and their prejudice towards other groups could be less (Meng & Gregory, 2005; Kamiljn, 1998).

Kang Fu (2001) in contrast to the general assumption that people who intermarry are less likely to be affected by group limitations and prejudice found that the level of intermarriage between two different racial groups does not reflect total acceptance between members of the two groups. Intermarriage can be said to weaken the racial boundaries between these groups but cannot be said to be a gauge or pointer of the potency of the group limitations because it is not always the case that marriage between two people with different worldviews depicts integration. Christiaan et al (2005: 20) opine that “this double-sided character of intermarriage, as an indicator of social distance among groups and a cohesion-producing agent has made it one of the most important variables in the study of intergroup relationships”.

Quian and Litcher (2001) maintain that some studies of social integration of immigrants have pointed at socioeconomic, locality, family background indicators which are often ignored and understudied in intermarriage between natives and immigrants as important factors in the modern patterns of social integration. During their study of intermarriage in the United States of America, they discovered that assimilation into American society is hastened by intermarriage and that intermarriage is the final step of social integration. Similarly, it has been argued that intermarriage is an indicator of development in race interactions and reduction in racial discrimination and intergroup opposition (Besharow and Sullivan, 1996). Lucassen and Laarman (2009:55) in their analysis devised the “contact theory” of marriage (between immigrants and natives) and presuppose that people have to meet before starting any relationship. The extent to which different groups (in case of migrants and natives) ‘attend the same schools, live in the same neighbourhoods, work in the same place, go to the same clubs, bars, or worship together, strongly influence the propensity to intermarry’. Peter Blau (1982:47) argues in a similar way

that “a person’s multiple group affiliations constitute mostly crosscutting circles” that further deepen long-term and enduring intergroup relationships.

Unlike the contact theory, the “barrier theory” was coined by scholars out of the restriction on racial intermarriages in the United States to explain a situation where serious institutional barriers are present and assume low intermarriage rates. Lucassen and Laarman (2009:5) state that “secular and/or religious authorities put up (institutional) barriers to restrict marriage across social, religious, racial or national lines”. Based on this theory, barriers to intermarriages manifest in different forms –institutional, legal, religious etc that could be erected to block intermarriages.

However, barriers do not solely become apparent from the host society, they can also originate from migrant groups as well and this could be linked to ‘political, cultural or religious reasons’ (De Hart 2006; Moran 2001; Hondius 2000; Kennedy 1994). There used to be a barrier to intermarriage in the United States until the U.S Supreme Court struck down this law in 1967. Intermarriage patterns therefore not only shed light on the integration process but also on the criteria that in certain historical contexts are deemed relevant, both by migrants and established populations (Lucassen & Laarman 2009).

Alba and Nee (2003:15) in their study of assimilation processes in the United States argue in the tradition of the Chicago School of Sociology that “a high frequency of mixed (intermarriage) marriages is in general a sign of decreasing social and cultural distance between ethnic groups, showing that social and cultural differences are not regarded anymore as an obstacle to marry out by both the minority and the majority group”. Alba and Nee called their theory ‘intermarriage and assimilation theory.’ This was a merger, and response to both the ‘contact’ and ‘barrier’

theories of marriage. The implication of this theory is that ethnic or racial boundaries, national boundaries, discriminations and prejudice towards one another will blur and gradually fade away (Gordon 1964; Lucassen & Laarman 2009). Sinke (2002) maintains that the relation between intermarriage and fading of group boundaries is not unambiguous. Qian and Litcher (2001) interpret 'growing intermarriage in positive terms, as indicative of improvement in race relations and decline in racism and intergroup antagonism'. It has also been argued that "for the immigrants, integration means the process of learning a new culture, acquiring rights and obligations, gaining access to positions and social status, building personal relationships with members of the host society and forming a feeling of belonging to, and identification with, that society. For the host society on the other hand, integration means opening up institutions and granting equal opportunities to immigrants" (Bosswick et al 2006: 11).

Although Richard Alba and Victor Nee (2003) applied intermarriage and assimilation theory to American situation to show the importance of intermarriage in bridging ethnic and racial gaps, it is however not the case in the South African context. This is due to the fact that marriage is not very prevalent in South Africa and so does not form the main index of measurement of integration since there are other forms of contacts which also play important roles in the integration process. It is still arguable that the contact intermarriages bring foster integration though other forms of contact could also contribute to that process in the South African context.

This study employs ethnographic method to study the day-to-day activities and discriminatory experiences of Nigerian-South African couples, and how they coping techniques in such situations.

There is a dearth of literature lending credence to the misrepresentations, discriminations and intermarriages of foreign immigrants, (particularly Nigerian immigrants) in South Africa. This study looks at discrimination and prejudice against foreigners (specifically Nigerian in Johannesburg) and the impact of such prejudice on Nigerian-South African intermarriages and the measures these intermarriage couples adopt to manage the tensions as well as how these interactions shape the social integration process of Nigerian husbands in Johannesburg.

1.6. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This study looks at the impact of xenophobia on Nigerian-South African marriages in Johannesburg, and also looks into the private lives of the couples using ethnographic method in order to show how the couples manage the impact of such prejudice on their marriage.

In order to determine the effects of xenophobic attitudes, stereotypes and prejudices of some South Africans in-laws, families, friends and immediate community on Nigerian-South African marriages in Johannesburg, the following key tasks were performed:

- Understanding of what the general assumptions, perceptions, representations of Nigerian immigrants are, and their impact on marriages between Nigerian men and South African women in Johannesburg;
- Analysis of how couples negotiate the discriminations directed towards their Nigerian husbands amongst their peers, families, social gatherings, religious institutions, host communities etc;

- Development and evaluation of hypotheses based on data analysis and literature review and possible explanations of findings.

The above tasks were performed through ethnographic fieldwork and participant observations among fifteen couples and their families in Johannesburg as explained below.

Research Method

This study used qualitative research method and data was gathered from four month ethnographic fieldwork (August-November, 2010) among Nigerian immigrants, South Africans and others (non-South Africans) in Johannesburg, South Africa. The data was collected through semi-structured interviews from Nigerian immigrants, Nigerian husbands and their South African wives, friends and families. I interviewed fifteen couples (Nigerian-South African couples), both young and older marriages and their families. I also used my day-to-day activities and encounters (as a friend of the family) with the couples and others –families and friends – as a means of getting data.

Snowball approach was also adopted in this study to get data. The snowball technique was useful in identifying the social networks of participants needed for this study in Johannesburg. That is to say, participants that were interviewed helped in recommending other people that meet the criteria of the study and those recommended were contacted and interviewed. Nevertheless, it is also important to show how my identity as a Nigerian hampered data collection for this study. Though being a Nigerian male gave me access to personal information from Nigerian husbands and friends but it posed a greater limitation in getting detailed information on personal and family issues from their wives' families and friends. Some were reluctant to talk to me while others chose their words and withheld some personal information during interviews. There was

little I could do to convince them since the study is voluntary and they are not under compulsion to answer questions. The interviews conducted and my fieldwork provided the bulk of data used in this study. Despite the limitations, the study was successful.

There is important to note the importance of employing qualitative methods in this research. Social researchers, especially ethnographers employ qualitative methods very effectively for understanding the daily activities of human life and their environment. According to Moore & Flowers (2002: 1), “the primary objective of qualitative research is to obtain information by exploring, identifying, and examining an issue by questioning, engaging, and/or observing those individuals who are involved with, affected by, and/or familiar with the issue under study”. Ethnographic methods are interactive ways of studying the private lives of those involved in a study. It has been argued that ethnographic methods e.g. participant observation is a study that gives us insight into the real actions and everyday activities of the group under study (Johnson, 2000; Jorgensen, 1989). Therefore, this study applies qualitative research methods to study the impact of generalized anti-Nigeria sentiments pervasive in the daily private lives of Nigeria-South African couples. Most research focus on xenophobia, clashes between foreigners and South Africans, illegal immigrants, criminal gangs run by foreigners, systematic and institutionalized discriminations, etc. Media hype catches in on this and the life of the South-African woman and her Nigerian husband caught in this complex web hardly gets the intellectual attention it deserves.

Research Design

Since it is the aim of the study to see how Nigerian-South African couples negotiate their relationship among their families and friends in an environment of prevalent anti-Nigerian sentiments, the research is an ethnographic study which involves the detailed examination of fifteen couples and their families situated in suburbs of Johannesburg. This derives from the fact that ethnographic study is "a descriptive account of social life and culture in a particular social system based on detailed observations of what people actually do" (Johnson, 2000:111). My participation in the couples' social activities (e.g. attending the couples' church and social gatherings) encouraged them to be free with me and were willing to supply information needed. This helped me to observe how they relate and their behaviour during those activities.

Population of the Study

The population of this study is Nigerian-South African couples and their families and friends living in Johannesburg. Nigerian immigrants constitute a sizeable number among foreigners in South Africa with unique historical backgrounds in terms of ethnic relations and their business acumen. While only a few of my interviewees fall within the middle-class and had Bachelor's degree or Postgraduate qualifications, majority came from lower middle class and are educated. Some of them have been married for over three years except the two new couples I attended their weddings at Limpopo and Rustenburg respectively. Majority of my interviewees are Christians and only very few are Muslims and I met some of them through Snowball approach. That is, one interviewee recommended another to me.

Sampling and Sampling Strategy

According to Kandace (2010:1) “Sampling is simply stated as selecting a portion of the population, in your research area which will be a representation of the whole population”. In other words, sampling is a subset of population one selects in one’s study to represent the whole population. In this study, I sampled fifteen couples and their families and friends living in Johannesburg to represent different experiences of some Nigerian-South African couples, families and friends and this cannot be said to cover the whole Nigerian-South African couples living in Johannesburg.

This study used a form of Judgment Sample which is Snowball Technique, and the participants meet the given criteria for the research. The participants are interviewed and asked to help in recommending other people that meet the criteria of the study and those recommended are contacted and interviewed.

Data Collection Procedures, Techniques and Instruments

The data for this study was collected through comprehensive face-to-face interviews and informal discussions with the respondents. Interviews were conducted in English language because of the couples’ disparity in languages and lasted approximately one hour. The respondents were contacted at their different homes, offices and place of choice with prior appointments through telephone or personal appointments. Some of my respondents were reluctant at first before allowing their wives, family members and friends to participate in the study. I achieved this by familiarizing myself with the families, attending their churches and social gatherings. This gave them confidence and aided my data collection.

The data collection process involved the use of semi-structured interviews, informal discussions and participants' observations. The interviews were tape-recorded with the consent of the participants while informal discussions and observations were written down. The interview questions are strictly developed by me because the study of intermarriages between foreigners and locals is new in South Africa and there was no extant work or study to be consulted but I had to revise some of the questions as the interviews progressed.

Data Analysis

The data collected through the tape-recorded interviews from the respondents are transcribed into texts and emerging themes from the study are identified and recorded down. Interpretive techniques are also used in this study, and this is a method of analysis used in qualitative research using observer impressions during the study. My personal field notes also became a sourcebook that helped me to reflect on the data collected and it also helped in developing the emerging themes from the data.

Challenges

I encountered a number of challenges in the course of this study. Firstly, some of the Nigerian husbands were afraid of the way their wives, wives' friends and families will take the interviews and its effect on their home because some of them were sceptical about their privacy despite showing them my identification documents and the consent forms that guaranteed their privacy.

Another challenge encountered during the study was the unavailability of the participants. Participants often failed to turn up for the interview as promised while some will give incomplete addresses that cost me more time and money. Some participants asked me to provide refreshment

before or during the interview because they felt I was paid for the research I was conducting. Finally, it took persuasion and familiarization before getting access to couples' families and friends for the study.

Despite the challenges, the study was successfully completed and this is due to the fact that I visited the participants often and got involved in their religious and social gatherings as well as made efforts to understand their cultures. I believe my sense of humour and the respect with which I treated my participants made them welcome me to participate in some of their activities. On some occasions, I was invited to pass the night in my participant's house. For instance, I went with one participant to Limpopo for a wedding involving a Nigerian immigrant that married a South African woman.

Ethical Considerations

This study is a sensitive one because it deals with discrimination and intermarriage. Since the study deals with marriage, it is important to protect the participants' interests and privacy in order to produce a quality research and to conform to the ethical standards of the University of the Witwatersrand. All participants are notified about the nature of the study and participation was voluntary. Participants have the right to withdraw their involvement at any time during the study and their anonymity was guaranteed. The following measures were considered during the course of this study:

- **Informed Consent:** Participants were aware of the research prior to the interviews and they were tape-recorded. Consent forms were given to them to complete and sign in order to demonstrate their participation and acceptance of the conditions stated therein before the conduct of the

interviews. They understood that their participation was voluntary and could be stopped anytime. They were aware of the fact that they may choose not to answer any question they did not like.

- **Anonymity/Confidentiality:** Respondents were aware of the confidentiality of their identities and information given during the course of the study. I often told them to suggest any name they would like to substitute in order to reassure them that their privacy would be guaranteed. Participants were also aware of the fact that their voices recorded during the interview would be kept in strict confidence and would be destroyed after the completion of the thesis.
- **Careful Approach on Sensitive Issues:** Although some participants accepted me as a member of their families later on during the course of the study, but I made careful efforts to avoid incursion into their privacy as marriage is a sensitive issue.
- **Feed Back:** Respondents were assured of the results of the study if need be through their contact details on the consent form.

Limitations of the study

There were limitations that affected this study. Though being a Nigerian male gave me an easy access to Nigerian husbands and their friends but not without limitation in getting adequate information from their wives' friends, families and other natives. This hampered the research. Another limitation is a methodological one. The method used in this study has its disadvantages because the 15 couples used in this study cannot be said to have represented the whole Nigerian-South African couples in Johannesburg. Nevertheless, such marriage exists and their different world-views are of great importance and detailed in this study.

Despite the limitations, this study touches the important aspect of an immigrant's life, and it is new in South Africa because it looks at the impact of xenophobia on intermarriage and takes the

field of studies dealing with xenophobia and integration beyond violent attacks and usual media reports.

CHAPTER TWO

Analysis of discrimination directed against Nigerian immigrants and its impacts on Nigerian-South African marriages in Johannesburg

2.0 Introduction

The impact of discrimination and prejudice on marriages between Nigerian men and South African women in an environment of generalized violence cannot be over-emphasized as this affects the day to day activities of the couples. This effect could be seen in the continuous harassment of Nigerian business centers and the continuous scrutiny of Nigerian husbands. Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC, 2008) argues that while there is widespread discrimination against foreigners and against Nigerians in particular, they dispute the basis of such discrimination and submit that Nigerians are involved in high level organized crimes such as drug trafficking. Similarly, Valji (2003) maintains that the examination of xenophobia and its manifestation reveals that ‘the foreigner’ has become a site for the violent convergence of a host of unresolved social tensions.

Before proceeding with this analysis, it is imperative to give a brief demographic description of informants of this study in order to give an insight into their different backgrounds:

Asari family

Mrs. Asari (29yrs) is a South African from Mpumalanga and has been married four years to a Nigerian businessman in Johannesburg. She works with her husband, a retailer of men and women clothing and they are blessed with two children (a boy and a girl). She is currently

enrolled in a university for a bachelor's degree. Mr. Asari (36yrs) is from the south-south part of Nigeria and he obtained a diploma certificate in business administration from a polytechnic in Nigeria before coming to South Africa nine years ago. Mr. Asari came to South Africa purposely to migrate to Australia but things did not work out as planned. So, he decided to settle down in South Africa. I can say from my observations that the family is doing well. During one of the discussions with the husband, I discovered that they record daily sales of about ten thousand rand worth of goods besides those sold on credit. This family can be said to be a middle class family and their financial success could be seen in their business, residence and the school their children attend. They are both Christians and attend the same church. They are also members of Johannesburg Traders Union which consists mainly of South Africans.

Olayemi family

Mr. Olayemi (37) is married to an Indian-South African woman from Kwazulu-Natal. They got married two years ago and they have no child yet. Mr. Olayemi is from the south-western part of Nigeria. He obtained a Higher National Diploma in Civil Engineering from a polytechnic in Nigeria before he came to South Africa five years ago. He actually came to South Africa as a visitor but he decided to stay back because he likes the country. Mrs. Nikky Olayemi (32) is an Indian-South African from a learned family in Kwazulu-Natal. Mrs. Nikky Olayemi holds a diploma certificate in administration from one of the colleges in South Africa. They both work and earn a reasonable income and they can be placed under middle class because of the level of their exposure, residence, income and associates. Although, the couple did not reveal their actual income to me but I observed the couple is doing fine financially and most of their associates are Indians. Mr. Olayemi is a Muslim while his wife practices Hinduism.

Okpong family

Mr. Okpong (34) is from the south-south of Nigeria and came to South Africa four years ago for postgraduate studies. He is currently a PhD candidate in one of the universities in Johannesburg. Mr. Okpong is a graphic designer with one of the companies in Johannesburg. He is also a tutor although he informed me that he has family business he is running in Nigeria as well. Mrs. Okpong (27) is from KwazuluNatal and born into an educated family with liberal views about foreigners. She is a human rights lawyer and she works as a company secretary in Johannesburg. Mr. and Mrs. Okpong have been living together as a couple for three years and are blessed with a baby girl. Both of them are currently postgraduate students in one of the universities in Johannesburg. The family is doing well financially. I got to know about the socio-economic strength and financial status of the couple through in-depth discussion with husband as well as my observation of the family. I observed that aside the personal income generated by this couple, the couple came from rich families and they substitute their income with what they get from their families. They are both Christians and attend the same church.

Oleja family

Mr. Oleja (34) is from south-south part of Nigeria. He holds a university degree in Public Administration from Nigeria. He came to South Africa five years ago and has been married to a South African with two kids for more than three years now. He came to South Africa for greener pasture due to acute unemployment in Nigeria. He is a businessman as well as a registered immigration consultant. Mrs. Oleja (28) is from Mupamalanga area of South Africa. She is also from a good family as well. She holds a diploma certificate in computer science from a Johannesburg college. She works with a company at Illovo, Johannesburg. She and her husband

are Christians and attend the same church. The marriage is blessed with two children (girls) and they are doing well financially. I observed that the family could be described as an average family financially. The couple is able to provide for their needs and their apartment reflects that they live averagely and not that extravagant. The couple has a good car, latest electronic gadgets, and one of their children attends a good school.

Ben Family

Mr. Ben (35) is from the eastern part of Nigeria. He holds a diploma certificate from Nigeria and he works as a consultant to the Nigerian Embassy in Johannesburg. He came to South Africa for greener pastures. Mrs. Ben (28) comes from a family of four girls and less educated parent in Venda. She works in a store and currently a registered correspondence student in one of the universities in South Africa. The family is doing well financially and has no children. They are both Christians and attend the same church. This family could be described as a middle class one due to their financial and economic status. The family lives in a very big and beautiful apartment with lots of latest electronic gadgets. The couple has two new cars and the biggest individual gym centre I have ever seen.

Oteh Family

Mr. Francis Oteh (40) is from the eastern part of Nigeria. He holds a degree in Communications and Language Art from Nigeria. He has been in South Africa for over eight years and he manages advertising and modeling outfit with his wife. He came to South Africa to for greener pastures. Tunega Oteh (32) is from Grahamstown in Eastern Cape. She is from a learned and influential family. Her father was one of those who fought against apartheid in South Africa. She does advertising and modeling with her husband. The couple has been married for four years. They have two children (a boy and a girl) and attend the same church. The couple stays in a

house of their own in an expensive site in Johannesburg. The couple's has two exotic German cars, expensive antiques in their sitting room, and their kids attend a very good school. I also observed that this family pays more than twenty employees, and this family could be described as above the middle class level. Their socio-economic status placed the couple in connection with "who-is-who" in the society and this could be seen in their associates.

Martins Family

Mr. Martins (38) is from the south-western part of Nigeria. He holds a higher degree in Media Studies from one of the universities in South Africa. He has been in South Africa for more than six years and has been married for more than three years. They are blessed with a boy and manage a joint-advertising and modeling company in Johannesburg. He is a close ally and business partner of Mr. Francis Oteh. He also came to South Africa for greener pasture. Mrs. Martins (30) comes from a good and educated family. She holds a degree in journalism from a university in South Africa and she and her husband manage the same business. The family attends the same church and they are doing well in their business. During one of my visits to the family's residence, I discovered that this couple often supports the destitute by providing foods and clothing for them. This family could be described as a middle class one due to their business and financial status. The couple stays in a good apartment and has two good cars. The couple's is also an employer of labour.

Ajanlekoko Family

Mr. Ajanlekoko (45) is from the south-western part of Nigeria and he has been in South Africa for more than eight years. He has been married to a South African woman from North West for over six years. He has a degree from Nigeria and used to work with a bank in South Africa as a contract staff but was retrenched recently. He came to South Africa for greener pastures due to

unemployment and economic recession in Nigeria. Mrs. Ajanlekoko (32) holds a diploma certificate and works in one of the banks in Johannesburg. They are blessed with three kids and both attend the same church. The family is doing well but unlike before when the husband has a stable income. Despite the present unemployment of the husband, the couple could be described as a middle class. The couple stays in a good apartment and their kids attend one of the best schools in Johannesburg.

Rasaq Family

Mr. Rasak (38) has been in South Africa for over five years, and he sells all kinds of computers with accessories both old and new. He also owns a cybercafé. He has diploma certificate from Nigeria and venture into business afterwards. He is married to a South African woman from Kwazulu-Natal. He came to South Africa for business and to better prospects. Mrs. Rasaq (29) holds matric certificate and works in one of her husband's shops. Mr. Rasaq is a Muslim and his wife is a Christian. The family is blessed with a beautiful girl. I observed that the family is doing well in their businesses and private lives. Mr. and Mrs. Rasaq live in a good apartment and they have two cars. I discovered from a close associates that the family is trying to build a business empire and this could be explained with their level of busy schedules. It was hard for me to get them interviewed during the study.

Chukwu Family

Mr. Chukwu (33) comes from the eastern part of Nigeria. He holds a certificate in computer graphics from Nigeria. He owns a shop where he sells all kinds of food stuffs at Hilbrow. He has been in South Africa for seven years, and married a Zulu woman four years ago. He also came to South Africa for greener pasture. Mrs. Chukwu (28) works with a company in Johannesburg and

currently a correspondence student in one university in Johannesburg. The family is blessed with two children (a boy and a girl) and they both attend the same church. From my observations, the couple is living comfortably in a good apartment, good cars, and their children attend good schools. This family could be described as a middle class family.

Gbenga Family

Mr. Gbenga (37) is a professional engineer as well as an associate pastor in one of the popular churches in Johannesburg. He came to South for post graduate studies and settled here when he secured employment. He has been in South Africa for more than ten years and has been married for six years. Mrs. Gbenga (34) comes from a learned family in Limpopo. She has a degree in education and teaches in one of the colleges in Johannesburg. The couple is blessed with three children and they attend the same church. The couple lives in a good apartment in Sandton, own two expensive cars, and their children attend one of the best school in Sandton. From my observations, the family could be described as living above middle class level and this could be seen in their affluence and associates.

Olumide Family

Mr. Olumide (31) is from the western part of Nigeria, he holds a degree certificate in civil engineering and came to South Africa five years ago. He came to South Africa for greener pastures. He has been married to his wife for three years now and has a year old baby boy. He works as a consultant. Mrs. Olumide (27) is from Soweto. She has a degree in music and teaches in one of the high schools in Johannesburg. The couple attends the same church and they are doing well. . I discovered that the couple's earn a good income through in-depth discussions with the husband. The couple also lives in a good apartment with expensive electronic gadgets and

antiques. The couple has one good car and could be described as a middle class in terms of their socio-economic status.

Smith Family

Mr. Smith is from the Niger-Delta part of Nigeria and holds a diploma certificate in management from Nigeria. He owns a shop where he sells all kinds of electronics. He came to South Africa seven years ago and has been married for three years and they are blessed with two children. He came to South Africa during the political turmoil in his region (Niger-Delta). Mrs. Smith is Xhosa from Eastern Cape. She is a customer consultant in a bank in Johannesburg. She is from a less educated family. The couple attends the same church and they are doing well. The couple's apartment and associates reflect that the couple is living fine. They earn a good income from their different works and stays in a very good apartment with luxurious electronic gadgets and couch sets. The couple owns a car and could be described as a middle class family.

Aresejabata Family

Mr. Aresejabata (32) is from Western Nigeria, and he holds a Higher National Diploma in Accounting. He also holds a professional accounting certificate from South Africa and works as an accountant in one of the companies in Johannesburg. He came to South Africa four years ago better prospects and he has been married for close to two years. The family is blessed with a baby girl. Mrs. Aresejabata (27) is from Cape Town. She holds a degree in communication and works in a radio station in Johannesburg. She is from an educated family. The couple attends the same church. From my observations, the couple lives in their personal house, and has three expensive cars. The decors in their sitting rooms reflect their taste of fashion as everything in the room is black and white. This couple could be described as middle class due to their socio-economic status and associates.

Akanni Family

Mr. Akanni (40) is from Western part of Nigeria. He is a doctor, and came to South Africa for post graduate studies nine years ago and subsequently got a job before establishing his personal clinic in Johannesburg. He has been married for five years to a Xhosa woman and blessed with two children. Mrs. Akanni (33) is a Xhosa woman from Eastern Cape. She holds a degree in Management, and she is a senior staff in one of the leading banks in South Africa. They are both doing well and attend the same church. The couple stays in a good apartment of their own and has two expensive German cars. The couple could be described as a middle class family due to their socio-economic status and associates.

Mrs. Rahaj (Mrs. Nikky Olayemi's Mother-Indian-South African)

Mrs. Rahaj (57) is a widow from Kwazulu-Natal. She is an educated Indian-South African. She retired from government job and established her personal consulting firm. She is a Hindu woman.

Mr. and Mrs. Mpumi (Mrs. Okpong's Parents)

Mr. and Mrs. Mpumi are from Mupamalanga. They are both educated. Mr. Mpumi (55) is a journalist with one of the South African TV stations, while Mrs. Mpumi (51) is a civil servant. They are both Christians and live together.

Majority of the informants above had church weddings except Muslims and Olayemi's family that failed to disclose their type of wedding. It is also pertinent to note that interviews conducted

for this study provided the bulk of data discussed in this study and was enhanced by my fieldwork and observations.

During this study, I discovered the kinds of discrimination waged against Nigerian immigrants, how they have been talked about, and their effects on Nigerian-South African relationships.

These are explained below:

2.1 Generalizations of illegal activities of some Nigerians

From the interviews, interactions and observations, I discovered that there is no way we can shy away from the fact that some Nigerians are engaged in illegal businesses in South Africa particularly drug trafficking. My visit and fieldwork in Hilbrow and other places gave me an insight and more understanding of this generalization. I observed some of the shady (drug dealings and illegal businesses, for example, buying/selling of stolen goods, e.g. phones and Laptops) business activities of some Nigerians in Johannesburg particularly those in Hilbrow and Yeoville in order to acquire wealth. Some of them see it as survival strategy as well as a means to acquire capital in order to stand on their own and possibly venture into legal businesses. Yet this does not apply to the whole Nigerian immigrants in South Africa. Consequently, it is obvious that the activities of some Nigerians engaged in illegal activities are being used to generalize Nigerian immigrants as bad. The interesting thing from the fieldwork is how Nigerian immigrants and non-Nigerians particularly South Africans, relate with this generalized idea in their daily activities. I discovered through my informants that this generalization affects their daily activities especially those working (whether personal business or employee) in South Africa.

Mrs. Asari informed me that:

“There is this stereotype that all Nigerians are drug dealers, criminals, bad etc and I believe this is not fair because not all Nigerians are like that. It’s like saying all South Africans are drug addicts and it is quite unfair to generalize”.

Mrs. Asari is a South African from Mpumalanga and she is married to a Nigerian businessman in Johannesburg. She works with her husband, a retailer of men and women clothing. Mrs. Asari narrated how the prejudice affected their business before she finally took over from her husband, because many people including South Africans know that it is a Nigerian shop but her presence changed the level of sales in the shop but not without continuous harassment of her husband and customers by police officers. She told me that police officers often come to the shop because they know that her husband is a Nigerian and they take advantage of this and always look out for drugs, illegal or contraband goods in their shop which she finds frustrating. She said that the belief is that Nigerians cover up their illegal activities with a legitimate one and this harassment is really affecting their business because customers are afraid to come to their shop. The couple said they have reported the case at police stations several times but nothing has been done about this harassment. I personally witnessed police presence there once and we (I and customers) were sent out of the shop because it was as if they were on a special mission. I asked Mr. Asari what happened when the police officers left after spending approximately thirty-five minutes in the shop, he told me that they came looking for contrabands/illegal goods. Also, it is interesting to discuss what people particularly South Africans said about Mr. Asari where I was having drink when the operation by police officers was going on in his shop. Their major discussion was about where and how the man got money to start the business, and some concluded that Mr. Asari does illegal businesses too, that he is just covering up with the shop.

I actually felt bad about this because I thought same thing could happen to me as a Nigerian and I was left wondering if it is always the case that Nigerians involve in illegal dealings and cover it up with legal businesses. As an observer I cannot say this claim about illegal dealings of Mr. Asari is right or wrong because I did not caught him doing one.

Mr. & Mrs. Nikky Olayemi:

Husband: "South Africans don't know the part of Nigeria that is doing this bad thing, but for us Nigerians we know because where I came from, there is nothing like fraud and drugs, you need to keep your family name and dignity..."

Wife: "Each Nigerian has his own flaws but that does not mean all of them are bad..."

Mr. olayemi is married to an Indian-South African woman from Kwazulu-Natal. Mrs. Nikky Olayemi narrated her experience with me about the generalization that all Nigerians are bad on her relationship with her husband. She told me that she had a pre-conceived idea before she met her husband in her work place and she had her reservations about that. She said they were good friends at first, and her thoughts toward Nigerians were challenged by the attitude and manners of her husband before they got married. She said even her family especially her mother could not believe her husband behaviour and manners, and this makes it easier for them to get along despite the generalized discrimination against Nigerians. So, her family now takes her husband as a son of the family because all her siblings are ladies and she is the only one who is married among them.

Mr. Okpong stated that:

"We have few unscrupulous Nigerians who out of living in frustration find it difficult to adapt to the ways of life in South Africa found a way of the actual drug barons, they are just being used as retailers or middlemen for the big shots. I can easily tell you that the

big shots in the drug business in South Africa are the Indians, Chinese and the Pakistanis who have shops which are used as fronts for laundering wealth. If true be told Nigerians are scapegoats because they tend to be loud with their wealth and they attract undue attention to themselves which has attracted hatred from the locals who see them as creating such wealth at the expense of their community and the citizens of the country. It is high time the authorities tracked down on the drug peddlers, be it Nigerians, Pakistanis, Indians, Chinese even South African. It is high time they are tracked down without the authorities being biased that all Nigerians are involved in this unwanted situation in the community”.

Mr. Okpong’s statement above was based on the generalized prejudices against Nigerian immigrants and his personal experiences with the locals particularly Home Affairs and South African police officers. Mr. Okpong is currently a PhD candidate in one of the Universities in Johannesburg and he has been in South Africa for over four years now. He saw in his daily experiences and harassment of police in Braamfontein. He narrated one of his experiences when he and some Nigerian colleagues were standing in front of his residence with his wife. On hearing their conversation and noticing their accent, police officers that were just passing-by interrupted their discussions and called other police officers in order to arrest them. He said those police officers asked them where they kept the drugs and they searched them thoroughly and when they could not find anything on them, they were charged for loitering. He and his wife were infuriated by this action of the police officers. He gave another example of how some officers at Home Affairs were telling his wife in his presence in the local dialect that she had been brain-washed to have married a Nigerian because they all involved in illegal businesses and drugs peddling. According to him, he has experienced this discrimination in many ways but there

is absolutely nothing he could do to change this perception that all Nigerians are bad. He just decided to live with it. Another respondent has this to say:

Mr. Oleja:

“Of course there are bad Nigerians, so also it is in South Africa and also in all societies. I have seen so many Nigerians who came here to make a living in one way or the other and they came to the street and started selling hard drugs (e.g. cocaine) and South Africans are complaining that Nigerians are ruining the lives of their people. What I am saying is this, if you do not patronize them they won’t sell to you and to them they are doing business to earn a living. I am not saying what those Nigerians are doing is good but if you do not patronize this guy he won’t sell it. I think if the government can tackle the root by tracking those importing drugs in containers and large quantities and orientate the youth in school to stop taking drugs and tell them the side effects of it, I think it will decrease and the society will be better and a drug free society”.

Mr. Oleja is married to a South African with two kids and he is a businessman who deals with immigration issues. He is an educated man who has studied in Nigeria before coming to South Africa. He informed me that the generalized prejudice against Nigerians is affecting his relationship and business with his South Africans clients. He maintained any Nigerian caught with a bad act should be dealt with accordingly instead of generalizing.

Mrs. Rendani Ben:

“...From what I hear, I mean a lot of things I heard from South Africans, most South Africans believe all Nigerians are bad and all of them sell drugs...”

Mrs. Rendani Ben is a South African who is married to a Nigerian. She had personal reservations for Nigerian males and never thought of marrying one at first due to what she learnt about Nigerians from her young age. She informed me that her relationship with her husband at first was full of suspicions until she was convinced enough about the integrity of her husband. She said although some Nigerians involve in illicit business but not all of them.

Mrs. Tunega Oteh:

“As a Nigerian you need to prove yourself ten times harder than the locals...and when we started the relationship my family members told me what they heard about Nigerians and I think everything goes down to the media and the bad apple that are trying to tarnish the whole bunch...”

Mrs. Tunega Oteh is a South African who is married to a Nigerian and run a modeling and advertising company with her husband. She made the above statements out of personal encounter with some Nigerians through her husband. She believes there are always bad people among the good ones in every countries of the world and Nigerian immigrants’ case in South Africa should not be seen as an exception by generalizing that all of them are bad.

Majority of my informants agreed that there are some Nigerians involved in unwholesome activities which they condemned but see as an inevitable survival strategy due to general unemployment and difficulties in accessing original work permits by foreigners in order to seek legitimate employment in South Africa. This suggests that the widespread allegations against Nigerians engaged in illegal activities have some elements of truth. Knowing this as a partial explanation of the basis of the prejudice against Nigerians, the respondent try to differentiate themselves from this group of Nigerians but find it so hard to do so. At the end they are caught up in the complex web of prejudices. These continuous activities have been used as a yardstick

to judge other Nigerian immigrants with good intentions and this perception is transferred from one person to another. This perception not only affects Nigerian-South African couples relationships among their families and friends but affects their economic lives as well. For example, Mrs. Asari narrated how incessant police harassment is affecting their business. Likewise, Mrs. Tunega Oteh informed me of how this perception is affecting their business because she runs advertising and modeling outfit and according to her, 90% of their models (mostly young ladies) are South Africans but the bad image of Nigeria is affecting the business since her husband is one. Mr. Ajanlekoko also narrated his personal experience that as a family man, he would be on the street from morning till night and nothing to show for it because no one wants to employ him due to his inability to access work permit. He claimed that if at all he had those permits, the possibility of getting the job is one per cent because of Nigeria's image here. He believes that the discriminatory and xenophobic attitudes in South Africans is due to ignorance because if a South African rejected a job and same job was given to him for a lesser pay, he would do it because he needs to survive and this is one of the reasons discrimination is strong against foreigners.

The foregoing analyses of respondents' feedback and descriptions show how the prejudice permeates their daily activities and everyday lives ranging from socio-economic to their interactions with state agents and their immediate environment. The implication is that irrespective of the level of your trustworthiness as a Nigerian, there is always a second thought about you and this has a negative impact on Nigerian-South African couples.

2.2 Gender/Racial Prejudice and Discrimination

There is indication that the prejudice and negative perception is gender-biased, suggesting that the discrimination seems to be pronounced and directed from South African males against

Nigerian males rather than from South African females against Nigerians. In contrast to South African context where more females tend to support interracial marriages compared to their male counterparts, Cardell et al (2006) found that more males tend to support interracial marriages compared to their female counterpart that were less supportive of such marriages in America. Tucker & Mitchell- Kernan (1980) reported that 4.6 per cent of black male-marriages and 2.1 per cent of black female-marriages in Los Angeles included partners of other races. The aforementioned case studies are just to show similar situations and differences in gender support of intermarriages although they are diametrically opposite to the South African context because more females support intermarriages than their male counterpart here.

I had a discussion with a South African lady who said she married a Nigerian because her elder sister was married to a Nigerian and from that experience; it was easier for her family to accept her fiancé. According to her (Phindile) "... my sister cleared the way for me because she is married to a Nigerian and it was very easy for me unlike her case that was a bit hard due to the negative perception of Nigerians here...". I discovered during my fieldwork that there is a male-male rivalry between the Nigerian immigrant and his South African counterpart. I also discovered that the generalized negative perception about Nigerian immigrants is more pronounced among black South African men who believe that their Nigerian counterparts are taking advantage of them. This is what some of my informants have to say in this respect:

Mr. Ajanlekoko stated that:

"...I think the male South Africans are the ones Nigerians are having problems with because they trip when they see a Nigerian making it or dealing with their ladies..."

Mr. Ajanlekoko is a Nigerian who is married to a South African woman from North West for over six years and he has been in South Africa for more than eight years. He claimed that some of his wife male friends and others are not happy with their marriage because they believed he snatched their girlfriend and this same applies to other foreigners. Similarly, David Everatt (2010) cited a case study on the prevalence of xenophobic attitudes against foreigners in South Africa. "... foreigners are morally bankrupt, they make babies with our sisters and then run away after that, they were sucking on our system, these guys from outside...commit crime, they are the one who commits so much rape, and they sell everything we want to sell...this is heaven and paradise for them...they are living like kings" (7). This statement cited in Everatt's paper gives us an insight into the everyday competition for jobs, basic amenities and women between foreigners particularly Nigerians and their South African male counterparts.

Mr. Aresejabata:

"...It seems this issue of discrimination and prejudice against Nigerian immigrants here tend to be more pronounced among black South African men who believe that we are taking their jobs and wives..."

Mrs. Oleja:

"...Sometimes when they see us together (South Africa woman and Nigerian man) they envy us and if my husband speaks English in a taxi they abuse him..."

Mrs. Oleja is from Mpumalanga area of South Africa and she has been married for more than three years to a Nigerian immigration officer. Her statement above was an expression of emotions at the xenophobic attitude directed towards her husband in their daily activities by other locals. She gave an example of when she and her husband were in a taxi, other locals

(mostly males) never knew the man was her husband because they were not sitting together in the taxi. She said the locals and the taxi driver (a male) were abusing her husband in Zulu because he was speaking English to them, and they picked it from his accent that he was a foreigner, and the driver pretended as if he could not speak English and started speaking Zulu to him that he should go back to his country. She said she kept quiet in the taxi because she did not want to complicate issues and this infuriated her so much. She also narrated her experience of how police would stop them and start asking her husband all kinds of questions (including private ones) even with his authentic and valid documents.

During my ethnographic fieldwork and some in-depth discussions with my informants, I discovered that Nigerian immigrants do not have much problem with South African women. The discrimination and prejudice seems to be more pronounced among black South African men against Nigerian immigrants. Looking at this critically, this attitude seems to be traceable to the historical period of labour migration in South Africa when the males often set out to work in order to build a home and to pay the bride wealth of a particular girl he likes to her family but with lesser emotions and connections with the girl. The concept of 'love' during this period was not necessarily a romantic and in-depth one where men and women knew themselves very well without the interference of families before getting married unlike what prevails these days. It was due to the long years of absence of men particularly those working in mines that made some ladies to start rejecting marriage, and some educated ones among them started moving to urban or metropolitan areas to look for job and thereby meeting foreigners that show them romantic love before extending it to their families with some of such relationships resulting in marriages. Some of these ladies could also be said to be rejecting marriages due to the different hard experiences of their mothers that were left behind by their fathers in the rural areas due to

apartheid system. Padilla et al (2007) reflect on how migration and inflow of people from one place to another (e.g. rural-urban migration) are reforming the local concept of 'love' and how this reformation influence international migration.

It would also be unfair to conclude that this attitude of South African men towards foreigners' particularly Nigerian immigrants is a failure on their part. It is arguable that this attitude as a result of the of the huge responsibility tradition placed on them – exorbitant cost of bride-wealth and the inability to discharge this responsibility that probably contributes to the marital crises in present South African society. What is important here is the historical context that gave birth to the issue of 'who has right to marry who', nationality, class, and the impact of 'real love' which underlies the gender/racial discrimination in South African communities. In other words, South African historical concept of marriage gave birth to the present marital crises and South African women often tend to marry any man that loves them and non-violent but not without financial ability to sustain the marriage. Cole and Thomas (2009) maintain that women in Africa often embrace romantic love as a strategy for more 'egalitarian gender relations' and financial security of their relationship. Therefore, South African women prefer to marry any man whether foreigner or South African who is responsible and ready to pay the bride-wealth and take care of them.

2.3 Pervasiveness of the Prejudice in Couples Private Lives

Negative comments often follow when a Nigerian name is mentioned among South Africans particularly black South Africans because of what they have heard and learnt about Nigerians. This has affected and still affects the relationships of some Nigerians with South Africans in business, marriages etc in no small measure. Some Nigerian immigrants who are professionals

and those who are married are finding it increasingly difficult to fully be part of their immediate communities due to the negative representations and perceptions that all Nigeria immigrants in South Africa indulge in illegal activities (Morris 1998 & 2001). What is also interesting here is that some of my informants told me that every individual who came from West Africa especially those who can speak *Pidgin English* are said to be from Nigeria and it is difficult to recognize and separate these set of migrants by the locals. At the end everybody is grouped and called a Nigerian. Some of my informants who are business owners and professionals told me of the stigmatization they face in their daily activities as Nigerians and they have accepted to live with it since there is nothing they could do to change their identity. Even those who are married maintained that they are under close watch and surveillance because some of them need to prove themselves ‘beyond reasonable doubt’ as a responsible Nigerian to their South African wives’ families and friends before their total acceptance into the family and society.

Mr. Ben informed me that:

“Initially my in-law was not happy and my wife’s mother nearly got heart-attack when she heard of our relationship. Their perception was that I will lure her into drugs and other illegitimate activities, and my wife’s sister has been the major antagonist of our relationship. She says all sort of things to their mother about Nigerians... the media has a major role in reinforcing the stereotypes about Nigerians because many South Africans don’t know who a Nigerian is, they have not come in contact with a Nigerian, and they can’t even separate a Nigerian from Cameroonian or Ghanaian especially when you speak Pidgin English”.

Mr. Rasaq:

“when I started my business I used to be affected, being a Nigerian people look at you as a crook and there is no way I can change my identity and I refused to let people tell me my identity, I know who I am. There are people who have met me and they got encouraged while others do not and I never wanted anybody to tell me who I am...”

Mr. Rasaq has been in South Africa for over 5 years and he sells all kinds of computers with accessories both old and new, and he also has a cybercafé. He narrated his experience about how his identity has affected his business and his personal interactions with people. He recalled an example of one of the cases, that he submitted a proposal to a company for supply, installations and managing their computers. He said he was told categorically by the receptionist that ‘we don’t give men from your country any job here’. He said he was devastated by such statement but he believed that God has nothing for him in that company that was why he didn’t get the contract. He also talked about some companies he had worked with and those he is still working with despite the prejudice and discrimination. He concluded that whether he likes it or not, the discrimination is there but he must look ahead because out of every challenge there is always an opportunity.

Mrs. Nikky Yemi:

“People’s feelings or stereotyping is not because you are a Nigerian; it is the culture that people have cultivated about the Nigerian community and what your brothers have done. I never expected my life to turn out this way because I have my reservations as well about Nigerians but I had to let my relationship flow and know the person I am into relationship with very well before our marriage...”

Mrs. Nikky Yemi is an Indian-South African who is married to a Nigerian. The above statement shows that she had pre-conceived notions about Nigerian immigrants in South Africa as well as the country itself. She informed me of her reservations about Nigerians that her orientation changed when she met her husband and she had to study him very well when they were courting before they finally got married.

Mr. & Mrs. Oteh:

Husband: "...some South Africans are with the mindset of Nigerians being a set of criminals and they teach their children the same thing and the children grow with such mentality. It is very bad because the communities are not helping the matter at all."

Wife: "The society as a whole has misled some people to believe that Nigerians are here for illegal purposes and at times we can't blame these people because all what people get from the media is about the negative side of Nigerian immigrants. We cannot blame the people because they are fed with negative information about a particular set of immigrants everyday and this will in no small measure change their mindset towards such group which is then passed from parent to child and to the entire society. I have transcended such barrier because of my personal relationship with a Nigerian I am married to and what the media has been saying was in total contradiction to what I found. There is still a long way to go but eventually and gradually it will fade away (may be two decades)".

Mr. & Mrs. Okpong:

Husband: "It is obvious that as a Nigerian you have challenges. You come in contact with people with your strong identity and expectations."

Wife: "there is even something else, anytime I tell people that I am married to a Nigerian, you will see the shock in them and there is always a kind of stigma there..."

Mr. and Mrs. Okpong have been staying together as a couple for three years, blessed with a baby girl, and they are both current postgraduate students in one of the universities in Johannesburg. Mrs. Okpong told me about humiliations she suffered from her fellow South Africans just because she married a Nigerian. Her experience with Home Affairs officers which was narrated above is a good example of such experience. She concluded that unlike what she was told at the Home Affairs, she enjoyed her stay in Nigeria and she learnt to live with different people with different worldviews. Mr. Okpong also narrated the daily challenges he faces as a student as well as husband just because he is a Nigerian. He concluded that the prejudice has come to stay and they (couple) face the challenge it poses to them in their everyday activities.

Mr. & Mrs. Chukwu:

Husband: "...Even some other nationals are using our (Nigerian) passports and when they are involved in illegal deals and are caught, it is Nigerians that bear the brunt. I can say that 80% of Nigerians here are responsible now, it was in the past that some things used to happen and a lot of those involved in illegal activities are now seeing the light and they are into legal deals now".

Wife: "Like what Chuks said some other nationals are using Nigerian passports and when they are caught they are taken for Nigerians. You know I don't know the difference between Nigerians and other black countries like Cameroun, Ghana etc when I was in high school and other people as well have not noticed the difference and that's why they categorize everybody as Nigerians".

Mrs. Oleja:

“...one of the obstacles relates to identity, I mean he is a Nigerian and I am a South African and not everybody approved of our relationship at first. Most South Africans are skeptical and my family and friends are skeptical about him because he is a Nigerian but since we are married now they are beginning to see that he is a good Nigerian...”

Mr. Gbenga:

“...When I went for an interview for employment in one company in Sandton, the company secretary told me that men from my country (Nigeria) are not accepted here...and after 2 years when I got the same job, my director called me one afternoon and told me that they have been monitoring my emails and calls I made on company’s line since I started the job...”

Mr. Gbenga is a professional engineer as well as an associate pastor in one of the popular churches in Johannesburg. He is happily married to a South African with three children. He has been in this country for more than ten years and has a lot of experiences about the perceptions of Nigerians in South Africa. He narrated some of his experiences and believes that this poor perception will fade away one day because it affects his daily activities. He came to South Africa as a postgraduate student and after his masters degree programme he could not get a job to survive and he started tutoring in schools and got paid per hour. As a family man, he waited for three years after his master’s programme before he could get a job in South Africa. He said he attended many interviews during this period but his identity has been the major challenge of his life and many employers were afraid to employ Nigerians whether you are qualified or not. He said he took to full time pastoring when he couldn’t get a job but they still found it difficult to

pay the church rent because some of its members are students. He said after sometime, he stopped applying for jobs but he was encouraged not to give up by his wife. His statement above indicates his first experience at his current job when he went there for an interview and he thought he would not get the job but according to him God intervened in his matter. Unknown to him after his employment, everything he does in the company is being monitored which shows the extent or level to which the stereotypes about Nigerian immigrants in Johannesburg is being taken.

Aside his experience as a worker, he also talked about how South Africans and some foreigners view Nigerian pastors here who are also immigrants. He said unlike in Nigeria where someone can be trusted as a pastor, some South Africans have negative perceptions about Nigerian pastors and this could as well be due to what some pastors had done here. All these put together had shaped and contributed to negative perceptions of Nigerians here in South Africa according to Mr. Gbenga.

The above views of different people indicated the diverse perceptions of Nigerian immigrants in their workplaces, marriages and the societies where they found themselves. Some of these informants accepted the fact that some of the deeds of Nigerians in the past and present have contributed in no small measure to the prejudice that pervades everyday lives of these couples. I found that irrespective of how holy you are even if you are a pastor, as far as you are a Nigerian, the pre-conceived negative perceptions are there. This negative perception not only affects Nigerian immigrants particularly those that are married to South African women but it also affects their South African wives because they are perceived as having been brain-washed to have married Nigerian men. I experienced discrimination myself as a student and I was once

called *kwerekwere* by a taxi driver but this does not mean that we do not have some South Africans who have come to appreciate Nigerians especially Nigerian-South African couples.

2.4 Media, Ignorance and Contact Problems

What people read and hear about a particular set of people shape their attitudes and views towards such group even when they have no contact with such group or vice versa. It has been argued that media and political leaders are major proponents of this discrimination and have helped in no small measure to spread anti-immigrants' prejudice especially Nigerians with their writings and statements (Morris, 1998 & 2001). This study seeks to examine the impact of these prejudices that go beyond media reports on Nigerian-South African intermarriage and their daily activities in South African societies.

It is important to note the roles media, ignorance and contact play in South African communities on xenophobia and generalized anti- Nigerian sentiments. Although I have heard and read about the impacts of media in reinforcing xenophobic attitudes in South Africa but I came to understand its impact and how it saturates everyday lives of those affected during my study. Some of my informants claimed that although they have not really met any Nigerian in the past but majority of what they learnt about this group of immigrants are negative things, and they only believe what they watch, read and hear in the news. Some of them claimed that stories about illegal activities and drugs are mostly attached to Nigerians and some parents always tell their children not to go near Nigerians in order not to be corrupted. Irrespective of the fact that some Nigerian immigrants are actually involved in illegal activities, it is also true that South Africans cannot differentiate between Nigerians and other West African nationals because they have been made to believe that they are all Nigerians. Some of my informants recalled their

experiences about negative reports about Nigerians before/during their relationships and their marriages.

Mr. Ajanlekoko:

“Initially I used to get angry about people discriminating against my nationality but now I realized that when strangers say something about Nigerians they still come back to be Nigerians’ friends. Some of them have not come in contact with Nigerians, they only react to what they read or heard from the media and I don’t get angry anymore”

Mrs. Nikky Olayemi:

“...my objectives at first when I first met Yemi was to study him if he is like other Nigerians we hear about in the media but he turned out to be a good person and I never expected it. Firstly, Nigerians are drug addicts and they sell drugs and secondly, I heard that if a South African married a Nigerian and they visit Nigeria, the South African girl would be abducted and maltreated. The third issue was fraud and corruption and people believe is that all Nigerians obtain money through that way”

Mr. Ben:

“ the media has a major role in reinforcing the stereotypes against Nigerians because many South Africans don’t know who a Nigerian is, they have not come in contact with a Nigerian, and they can’t even differentiate a Nigerian from Cameroonian or Ghanaian especially when you speak Pidgin English”

Mr. Okpong:

“...the communities contributed to the discrimination against Nigerians in ignorance. Ignorance in this sense depicts the fact that you cannot say all Nigerians are drug dealers due to one Nigerian who is involved in drugs and what effort have they made to report such Nigerian to law enforcement agents...? where we found a drug addict, there is always a drug dealer, let such drug dealer be brought to book if at all such person is a Nigerian and let it be known that a Nigerian was prosecuted for drug dealings instead of generalizing that all Nigerians are drug dealers”

Mrs. Asari:

“The media plays a major role in influencing people’s mind and it happens to be the largest form of communication in South Africa. People believe so much in what they watch and read from the papers and it is reality to them even though it’s not true”

Mrs. Oteh:

“...the society as a whole has misled some people to believe that Nigerians are here for wrong doings and at times we can’t blame these people because all people get from the media is about the negative side of Nigerian immigrants. We cannot blame the people because they are fed with negative information about a particular set of immigrant everyday and this will in no small measure change their mindset towards such group and this is passed from parents to children and to the entire society...”

Mr. Oleja:

“...it all goes down to the media and ignorance. Most people carrying the news about Nigerians never met any Nigerian before and they keep acting and passing over the

negative information they heard or read about Nigerians. They say we steal their jobs, collect their wives and all sort of things. This is my beautiful wife, for instance, a South African man would want to claim that I have collected his wife, how... ”

Mr. & Mrs. Smith:

Wife: “...let me say my family used to be ignorant about Nigerians, although they have never met any Nigerian and they tried to get close to him because of my relationship with him. What they heard about Nigerians here in South Africa made them skeptical. As time went on, they began to learn, and now they have accepted him because we have two children now.

Husband: "They now have grandchildren and they are happy with the children and those children came from a Nigerian man ”.

The above statements of my informants shed more light on how prejudice is formed towards Nigerian immigrants and its impact on Nigerian-South African couples. Some of my informants claim that although the prejudice against them seems to have formed in different ways, the commonest way was through accessing incessant media reports about illegal activities of some Nigerian immigrants in South Africa. For instance, a particular Nigerian-South African couple heard on TV and read in the newspapers about Nigerian ‘quack’ doctors practising in South Africa. This news was published on February 9th 2011. Irrespective of how holy the husband is at that moment, there could be some misgivings by the South African wife though they could transcend it subsequently. Similarly, I observed that each time there is any bad reports about some Nigerians activities, Mrs. Okpong mood changes. My discussion with her about this revealed that she is not always happy with such reports because it affects the integrity her husband is building with her family and herself. This has impact on their private lives and

everyday activities in their immediate environment. Regardless of how the prejudice and discrimination against Nigerian immigrants are formed, it is interesting to note how Nigerian-South African couples reconcile the challenges posed by such attitudes with life as couples.

2.5 Spouse Families Class and Perceptions

Different factors have been linked to people's attitudes towards intermarriages but the most researched variable is education. Education is said to play a great role in reducing prejudice and discrimination in an environment where intolerance and stereotypes are prevalent. (Sandefur & McKinnel, 1986; Schoen, Wooldredge & Thomas, 1989; Schuman et al 1997). St Jean & Parker (1995) found that in the United States, black males and females without high school diplomas did not accept unrestrained interracial marriage compared to their colleagues with high school diplomas. The implication of this is that education plays an important role in interracial marriages. As people come in contact with various group of people at school, the orientation changes due to such meetings thereby reducing their level of prejudice and stereotypes. Apart from the contact formal education promotes, people also learn more about a particular group informally and this new knowledge may challenge what they used to know about such group thereby reducing discrimination directed against such group. Similarly, Herring & Amisshah (1997) found that people in urban areas support and approve interracial marriages than those in rural areas. The aforementioned literature shows the influence of formal education, informal education and cosmopolitan environments in changing the perceptions of a group about another particular group due to the new knowledge gained through daily interaction between these two groups. This can be said to be true in South Africa also as social interactions between Nigerians and South Africans continue to occur in schools, workplaces, churches or mosques, social gatherings, sports activities etc.

In the course of this study, I gathered that the way Nigerian immigrants are perceived by spouses' families differ from family to family. I discovered that some well educated and well exposed parents tend to have less resentments or objections to their daughters' relationships with Nigerian husbands while the less educated parents tend to be more way and subject the would-be Nigerian husbands to close scrutiny and this could even continue after the marriage. This is sometimes manifested in their close monitoring or maintaining regular contacts with their daughter's associates if they the parents are not immediately present. The illiterate parents tend to be very suspicious and some of them often show rejection and stiff opposition to the relationship between their daughters and Nigerian suitors before marriage because of what they have heard from their immediate communities through media or other modes of information about Nigerian immigrants in South Africa. In the case of parents in the rural areas, they learn about Nigerian immigrants through media or second-hand through their other children who pass information to them about their daughter's relationship with a Nigerian man in the city. Interestingly, when some girls who are daughters of this set of illiterate parents are unable to convince their parents and friends to accept their Nigerian fiancé, they end up ignoring their parents and friends and going ahead with the relationship. On the other hand, the more moderate parents insist on the Nigerian suitor proving his "cleanness" or innocence "beyond reasonable doubt" both prior to, and after the marriage. See the views of some of my informants below:

Mrs. Oteh:

"...I am from a westernized family and open-minded and we are allowed to marry anybody from any part of the world since you are happy staying with such individual".

Mrs. Nikky Olayemi's Mother (Indian-South African):

“I personally as a learned individual don't have any grudges against Nigerians although the media and the government made us believe that Nigerians are bad and they involve in all kinds of illegal work. I even heard last week that there is a law coming soon to deport Nigerians back to their country but my question is that: are they going to deport Nigerians that are married to South Africans? For instance, my daughter is married now to her handsome and good husband and I don't think she (like my family) will allow her man to be deported. Although it was not that easy at first to accept him but I found out having contact with him that Nigerians are interesting and loving people better than as they are portrayed by our media. So many of my Indian friends and families never believed my daughter could marry a black particularly a Nigerian but I can't choose for her because she is an adult. She has the right to choose whoever she wants to marry, what is the essence of 'rainbow nation' if we cannot marry one another and talk about one another well?”

Mrs. Okpong:

“My family and friends never had a problem with my husband being a Nigerian”

Mrs. Okpong came from an average, educated family with liberal views about foreigners. She informed me about her parents response when she told them she was dating a Nigerian before marriage. She said their response was based on what the person does for living then, and she told them he was a colleague at the university. She informed me that their relationship did not attract much sentiments from her immediate family unlike her extended family e.g. uncles and aunts who believed in the general news about Nigerians in South Africa. She mentioned the fact that

meeting her husband in the university as a fellow student then facilitated his cordial relationship with her parents and he was already a member of the family before their marriage. Also, he had no problem with friends because majority of her friends knew him in the university before they got married. In contrast to the testimony of Mrs. Okpong above is the experience of Mrs. Ben narrated below.

Mrs. Ben:

“I didn’t tell my family at first that Ben was a Nigerian and when I told them later they couldn’t contain it and they were suspicious that he wanted to use me to get legal immigration documentation.. I am sure some Nigerians do that all around the world and this has been the news around the world and the media only spread the negative aspect of the story and let the positive sides go. But I really played a major role in trying to influence my family that Nigerians are not that bad as painted and it was through me they came to understand that Nigerians are not as bad as they are portrayed to be...”

Mrs. Ben comes from a family of four girls and her mom is an illiterate. She narrated the experience of how her elder sisters corrupted her mother’s mind towards her husband because he is a Nigerian. She said her sisters told her mother a lot of stories about her husband to the extent that it became very hard for them to get married. She said she ignored everybody and continued with her life and after a while, one of her sister visited her and found that she was actually staying with her fiancé but without any pregnancy or child for six years. She informed me that her elder sister finally gave in to her plea and Ben’s respectful manners changed her thoughts and she went back to tell their mother everything she saw. She said her mother eventually visited her and Ben in Johannesburg and thereafter asked Ben to start make necessary arrangements for the wedding because her mother was surprised Ben could live with her daughter more than six years

without impregnating her out of wedlock. Mrs. Ben said she is happy today because her family has really changed towards her husband who is a Nigerian and they have accepted him as member of the family.

Mrs. Okpong Parents:

Dad: "I had no objection to my daughter's relationship when she brought her Nigerian fiancé despite what I had learnt about Nigerian immigrants as a journalist before they got married, but her mother was worried then..."

Mom: "I was actually worried at first despite the fact that they met in school because of what I read and heard about Nigerian activities here but everything is fine now and we are one big family..."

The statements of Mrs. Okpong's parents above also reflect the deep interest of mothers-in-law in their daughters' relationship unlike fathers. Mr. Mpumi (journalist) informed me that by marrying a Nigerian, he was at first concerned about his daughter's security, since he had no absolute control over being an adult she was free to decide what she wanted. In contrast, Mrs. Mpumi (business woman) informed me about her sleepless nights about the choice her daughter made in marrying a Nigerian. She said she thought about it deeply because her immediate society does not support their interaction with Nigerian immigrants (male) because of what they hear about them. Same thing goes for her extended families. She also informed me that she could see that her daughter loved him and she could not destroy her daughter's happiness although she tried to discourage the relationship because of family and societal pressures. Mr. & Mrs. Mpumi claimed that they are happy today with the marriage of their daughter to her Nigerian husband because they faced a lot of pressures then and some family members refused to attend the wedding. Fortunately everything is working out fine for them.

The testimonies above are some of the few diverse experiences of my informants about Nigerian-South African marriages. I discovered that some parents particularly mother-in-laws, have strong interests in such marriages because of community and social groups influence. Some of them do not want to be associated with a set of immigrants that the whole communities believe to be bad influence in their environment. For example, Mrs. Ben's mother was initially against her daughter's relationship with Mr. Ben due to what her other daughters told her and what she learnt in her community about Nigerian immigrants in South Africa. She was reluctant to support the relationship because doing so would have put her in bad light as a leader in one of the local community women's association.

It is also important to note that more educated people are aware of class than ethnic or national differences while other classes are more concerned about ethnic/national than class differences. Examples that readily come to mind are the different reactions of Mrs. Okpong's and Mrs. Ben's families respectively. Mrs. Okpong's immediate family supported her marriage but her mother was concerned about her family's reputation and what other community members would think about her daughter's relationship. Also, Mrs. Ben's immediate family was initially opposed the marriage before finally given their consent. Despite the different negative views about Nigerian immigrants, some of these parents who have related with their sons-in-law testify that their views of Nigerians have changed but still maintain that not all Nigerians are good. Their contact with Nigerians has softened their stance of never to get close to a Nigerian let alone permitting marriage between their daughters and Nigerian men.

In summary, this chapter analyzed the discrimination the Nigerian immigrant faces and its impact on Nigerian-South African marriages in Johannesburg. It reflects on how this prejudice permeates private and everyday lives of Nigerian-South African couples. It also reflects on

extant literature and related studies that have been undertaken elsewhere and attempt to apply it to South African context.

CHAPTER THREE

Findings and strategies Nigerian-South African couples employ to negotiate the impact of stereotypes against Nigerian immigrants on their marriages.

3.0 Introduction

This chapter deals with the themes that emerged during this study and the strategies Nigerian-South African couples adopt in resolving and negotiating their daily activities. It also considers the impacts of discrimination against Nigerian immigrants on their marriage. Below are the findings and strategies:

3.1 Emergence of more Marriages between Nigerian Men and South African Women

Despite the discrimination, prejudice and generalized anti-Nigerian sentiments in South Africa, marriages between Nigerian men and South African women are now common. This claim is due to more contacts as highlighted as a propensity by my informants. In other words, there is a sense among my informants that there are more Nigerian-South African marriages. I gathered that South African women are willing to disregard family and peer -group pressure to marry Nigerian immigrants because they view Nigerian husbands as more caring. Also, the issue of marriage between South African women and foreigners, particularly Nigerian immigrants does not happen in a vacuum. It has a historical context.

Historically, labour migration plays an important role here because men had the belief that a responsible man with proper orientation of the concept of building a “home” (where the husband works and the wife stays back at home to take care of the family) should take care of his family. So men went extra-mile to work in mines which for years was the major employment

opportunity available to get money to pay *lobola* (Hunter, 2005). One of my informants told me that traditionally, an average man can afford the required cows for *lobola* unlike today where cost of cows is exorbitant and majority of men cannot afford it. Gradually, men started losing interest in marriage because they began to view marriage as a business for the family of the bride particularly the extended family –especially if the lady is highly educated. He said an average South African man cannot afford the current cost of cows and other things in order to marry a girl, and seeing foreigners, particularly Nigerian immigrants marrying their women make them feel defeated.

On the other hand, some women claim that waiting for a suitor who has gone for years without returning back eroded their interest in the old and traditional mode of marriage. Coupled with the fact that some of them, especially the educated ones started migrating to urban centres. (Kark, 1950). Heaton & Jacobson (2000) argued that metropolitan areas and environments give room for more contacts between people of different racial groups and encourages a higher rate of intermarriage. Also, St. Jean & Parker (1995) and Herring & Amissah (1997) found that more people in urban areas support and approve interracial marriages than in rural areas. Some of my informants claimed that their movement from town/rural areas to metropolitan areas like Johannesburg gave them another orientation of what marriage is – starting from romantic love and courtship then to marriage. This is unlike in the past where there was less affection or intimacy and interaction between would-be bride and their suitor was minimal. Some ladies claim that their contact with foreigners particularly Nigerian immigrants had changed their orientation about marrying only their men and that they found nothing wrong in marrying foreigners since they can show them love and care and are willing to pay the *lobola* and perform other marriage rituals. They also claim to have the testimonies of friends and family members

who are married to Nigerians pointing to the fact that a Nigerian immigrant husband is less likely to abuse his wife compared to his South African counterpart. This claim about abuse could be supported by previous studies in South Africa. University of South Africa's Institute for Social and Health Sciences, (UNISA) revealed that more than 20 per cent men confessed to be physically violent against their lovers and 2.5 million people are recorded each year to seek health care for non-fatal wounds mostly sustained by violence; it has also been argued that one out of every six women that died in Gauteng are killed by their partners (www.powa.co.za). This study explores these aforementioned claims about emergence of more marriages between Nigerian men and South African women. First, consider my informants' statements below:

Mr. Ajanlekoko:

"...One of my friends met his fiancée at my party sometime ago and would be paying lobola to my wife's parents by the end of this month because he is in a relationship with my wife's sister".

Mr. Olumide:

"...Yes because some members of her family will want to marry Nigerians. For instance, her sister is now in a relationship with a Nigerian because of my character towards my wife and her family members".

Mrs. & Mrs. Okpong:

Wife: "...I know a woman who is willing to marry a Nigerian. You know there is stereotype that Nigerians are drug dealers, bad etc but there is another side of it that Nigerians are loving people, they take care of their family, they are nice and they have money (laugh).

Husband: I got a feeling on our wedding day that if we had some Nigerian single young men there, they would all have been married by now. Our wedding has effect because most of the single ladies there were loitering around single Nigerian men that were there”.

Mrs. Oleja:

“My sister is seeing my kids and she loves them and she might want to marry a Nigerian probably because of my happy home. What I know is that Nigerian men love their families and all you have to do is to love them back and cook for them”

Like Mrs. Oleja, some of my interviewees claimed that Nigerian men are less abusive compared to their South African counterparts. Some of the women claimed that some South African men are too autocratic in their daily interactions with their wives and the rate of abuse is high. They claimed that this could be as a result of exorbitant bride price men pay during marriage and they see their wives as slaves afterwards. Lye and Murray (1980) study of Tswana-Sotho tradition shows that women rights are handed over to their men if they are bride price (*bogadi or bohadi*) has been paid and this can be seen in the popular Tswana-Sotho idiom (‘the child belongs to the cattle’-cattle represents the pride wealth).

Mrs. Oleja informed me that this is not the case with her husband and with some of her friends that married Nigerian immigrants because her husband does not see her as a slave but as a sister. Whenever there is a dispute, they settle it amicably. She also gave example of her past experiences with her South African boyfriends and she said they are not family-oriented, possessive and always claim to be right in everything even when they were wrong. This superiority of South African men over their women could be seen in the study of Max Gluckman (1950) of Zulu marriages that revealed absolute transfer of woman’s rights to her husband if her

bride price has been paid. The issue of ‘family man’ was one of the major arguments of interviewees and some of them maintained that no woman wants to get married to an irresponsible man, an abusive man, and a man who does not care about his family. Similarly, Mrs. Chukwu also claimed that most South African men prefer spending their money on beers with friends at the expense of their children and wives, and they do not care about the well-being of their families coupled with the fact that beat and maltreat their wives like slaves. It has also been argued that excess alcohol consumption by men and economic deterioration are the major cause of these abuses which often suffered by women and children particularly girls (Sakala, 1998; Heise, L. 1991).

Find below some pictures of Nigerian-South African weddings that I attended with my informants:



New Nigerian-South African Couple at Limpopo



Nigerian Pastor that preached at the wedding and his wife in Nigerian traditional attire.



The husband's Nigerian friend in traditional attire dances to the music.



New couple at Rustenburg with the South African pastor that joined them together...

Some of the testimonials above show the gradual emergence of marriages between Nigerian men and South African women with less prejudice and discrimination due to witnesses and contact between these two groups. Some of the claims by women about abuse and inability of some South African men to pay the bride price are some of the factors that contributed to such marriages. Sakala (1998) argues that women often stay in abusive situations because they have few or no alternative way to improve their status in the society. Walker (2005) explores the issue of masculinity and women abuse in Post-Apartheid South Africa. She maintains that men abuse their wives because of their ego as the independent head of the family because their wives depend on them. She showed in her work the cruel attitude of men towards women and how this

was passed to their sons. From the above, it is important to note that every woman wants security (whether financial or otherwise) and no woman would want to marry any man who does not treat her with respect or incapable taking care of her. Therefore, South African women marry anybody including foreigners that can give them the security needed in marriage and Nigerian immigrants are examples of such foreigners.

3.2 Differences in Integration Level of Nigerian Husbands

Integration is the act or process of mixing people who have previously been separated, usually because of colour, race, religion, nationality etc (Hornsby, 2001). It also means an interactive process between immigrants and the host community. Consequently, social integration is defined as the inclusion and acceptance of immigrants into the core institutions, relationships and positions of a host society (Bosswick et al 2006). It is important to note that the generalized prejudice against Nigerian immigrants pervades everyday activities and private lives of Nigerian immigrants whether married or single, and this played a significant role in their integration. The implication of this is that the generalized prejudice has negative effects on the integration of Nigerian husbands and this seems to be a determinant of their integration level. It is interesting to know that some Nigerian men that married South African women are integrated at the different levels depending on the place where they found cordial relationship. Despite the prejudice, some Nigerian husbands tend to integrate within their faith (religion), workplace, immediate society etc.

I gathered during my fieldwork that intermarriage between Nigerian men and South African women has reduced the level of discrimination and prejudice directed towards Nigerian immigrants because more personal contacts had occurred between Nigerians and South Africans

at workplaces, religious gatherings, educational institutions etc. What is interesting about this contact between Nigerians and South Africans is that some Nigerians married to South Africans are more integrated than others. Some also tend to be more integrated within the vicinity of their faith and workplace rather than the general society because they feel more comfortable within such environments. It is also important to note the comments of a few of my informants who say their marriage has nothing to do with their integration. See below the comments made by my informants about the level of integration despite their marriages.

Mr. & Mrs. Nikky Olayemi:

Wife: "Your character means a lot when you are interacting with other people and had it been that I was a mean Indian woman I will not interact with any other person."

Husband: "she has really helped me integrate into the society because things that are taken for granted in Nigeria are noted here. She has really helped in guiding me and made me emulate some of the ways they do things here and their norms and values which have really helped in my integration".

Mr. Olayemi statement above reveals that his marriage has really helped him integrate into the host community. He maintains that his wife played an immense role in his integration and that he is fully integrated. Mr. Yemi informed me that he used to be affected by the discrimination against Nigerian immigrants in South Africa, but his orientation has changed since he met his wife. He informed me that his wife and her mother really helped him integrate by helping him get necessary documentations and facilitated his employment.

Mrs. Oteh:

"I have families who are married to foreigners as well but Francis is integrated well and majority of his employees are South Africans and the way we carried ourselves played a

positive role in his integration. Everything is okay and Francis is fine with my friends and family”.

Despite the role of marriage in Mr. Oteh integration, Mrs. Oteh maintains that other factor played an important role in her husband integration. She supported this claim with the fact that her husband is a foreigner as well as employer of labour and majority of his employees are South Africans. She informed me that the prejudice against Nigerians has no much effect on her husband integration and his relationship with her family members and friends.

Mr. Oleja:

“...I would not want to say now that the perception about Nigerians here is affecting my integration because I am fully integrated into the society. I am married, I have two kids and I am doing a legitimate job and also I am a tax payer, so, I am fully integrated into the society but to some people, they are not”.

Mr. Oleja interpreted his integration as being a successful married man with kids from a South African woman amongst the generalized anti-Nigerian immigrants’ sentiments. He told me that he has cordial relationship with his in-laws and his business is moving fine. He also informed me that being a tax payer is another form of his integration aside his marriage because he does business with South Africans and other foreigners. We could deduce from Mr. Oleja statement that marriage is not the only indicator of integration.

Mr. Ben:

“I will say church is the only community we have really integrated into because I found out that Nigerians do not want to mix up but church has been the community where they are fully integrated”.

Mr. Ben gave his personal account of the generalized anti-Nigerian sentiments and maintains he is personally more integrated in church compared to the outside environments. He informed me that everybody (whether South Africans or foreigners) is the same in church and they see themselves as brothers and sisters. He maintains that he is not integrated into the South African communities as much because majority of his clients are Nigerians and church is the only place he feels fully integrated.

Mr. Okpong:

“...Once you are married to a Nigerian in my country be it white or any colour, you are regarded immediately as a Nigerian because we love foreigners more than the way we love ourselves. It is quite tasking here because you are still made to prove yourself beyond reasonable doubt to be taken as part of the family and the host country...”

Mr. Okpong statement above reveals that marriage alone does not bring integration. He informed me that despite his in-laws attitudes towards him as a good man and his marriage to South African woman, he feels he is always subjected to integrity test and scrutiny. He said integration is a continue process for him because of the prejudice against his countrymen which affects his daily activities despite his marriage.

Mr. Martins:

“...my marriage has shaped my perception about what people say about the discrimination that the society is hostile and brutish. I do think like that in some way before but my marriage has shaped my understanding that this happens everywhere and is bound to happen in South Africa as well. I see everybody as one and I don't think this affects my integration in any way...I just live my life every day. I am learning their language in other to communicate effectively if I am somewhere alone without stress”.

Testimonies above show differences in the level of integration of my informants despite their marriage but the role of marriage in their integration cannot be over-emphasized. Some of my informants claimed that they are integrated because they are employed by companies or self-employed (personal businesses) while some explains their own integration in relation to the level of their acceptance in church or mosques because they feel more secured within their faith. Likewise, some claim that their marriage has really helped in facilitating their documentation and this has helped them to be more integrated compared to when they felt insecure due to continual police harassments. A few informants claimed that their marriage has nothing to do with their integration because they did not have necessary documentations and jobs despite their marriages.

Notwithstanding these divergent views – some Nigerian men married to South African women claim they are integrated differently while very few deny such integration – it is noteworthy that this study has found that marriage alone does not bring about integration, other factors like legal status, employment, etc have roles to play in the integration process in South African environments. This finding is quite different from what was found in some traditional immigrants countries like US and Canada because marriage is a family model that brings about integration in some of these countries.

3.3 The Roles of Religions in Inter-marriage

It is of great importance to note the roles, impact and influence of religion e.g. Christianity, Islam etc on Nigerian-South African marriages in an environment of generalized anti-Nigerian attitudes in this study. I gathered through some of my informants that the role religion play particularly church in their relationships cannot be overemphasized.

Some of my informants identified the roles of religion as another pillar aside 'love', which is sustaining their marriages. I observed during my attendance in church with some couples that relationship between Nigerians and South Africans seem to be cordial because everybody seems to care for one another. Even the house-fellowships (Christian group gatherings) they attend may explain this. I could remember the preaching of the pastor (South African Pastor) in one of the churches I attended with my interviewees about marriage and how to raise children. The pastor used Nigerian-South African marriages to illustrate the fact that there would be serious problems where a spouse sees himself/herself as an outcast. He said couples should always see themselves as members of society irrespective of the peer or societal pressure in order to help their children to be more integrated into the society as children of mixed couple and not outcasts.

Irvin and Rabbi (1984) in their study of intermarriage within the Jewish society show the importance of religion in marriage. They argued that irrespective of people's religion, culture and background, the success and failure of intermarriage depends on how it is handled. They maintain that religious communities provide a special attention and common ground to intermarried couples due to their different backgrounds and worldviews. The above argument of Irvin and Rabbi could be said to be true in South African context because the church for example, often provide a common ground for intermarried couples by organizing special programmes, marriage seminars, special prayer meetings, couples' picnics etc in order to impart knowledge on how the couples can live peacefully with each other and in the society without any form of prejudice. I observed that people, whether South Africans or Nigerians in different departments, men and women associations, often work together to achieve the same goal in church and the South Africans often speak English language in the church. Even some church

made English language a compulsory mode of communication in order for all the parishioners to have a common ground and to understand one another.

Also, social gatherings like wedding seem to bring interaction between South Africans and foreigners together but the level of interaction is quite different from church interactions. For example, the wedding I attended between a Nigerian man and South African woman in Rustenburg, North West Province suggests so. I observed that the level of interactions between Nigerians and South Africans in church was quite different from what I saw at the reception venue. Although there was interaction between these two groups but each group remained detached and close to their fellow nationals at the events, quite unlike the wedding ceremony I attended in Limpopo where everybody seemed to be one and there was free flow of communication and open show of love. Below are the testimonies just to mention a few:

Mr. & Mrs. Smith:

“The church has played a huge role in our relationship. As a couple we are not perfect and sometimes when we have issues we do talk to one of the elders in the church and we settle it. So far so good our relationship has been a good one and guided with biblical injunctions”.

Mr. & Mrs. Okpong:

Husband: “...We are married couple and as such we need to do things together and we need to be spiritually connected and so we attend the same church”.

Wife: “The church plays a big role in our life because our relationship is governed by the laws in the bible, how we behave, how we raise our children and so on”.

Mr. & Mrs. Chukwu:

“The church continues to play a major role in our relationship because we have large numbers of Nigerians and South Africans in the church. Family values are reinforced especially in the church we attend. My apologies for saying this, South African environment is too liberal because people do not remember to put God first in whatever they do, and I know that no matter what or how bad people think Nigerians are, we are essentially a religious people and that’s an inspiration that make us live our lives for God. Given the kind of environment we are in South Africa, the church keep us focused on different desires and on God”.

Mrs. Nikky Olayemi:

“At first I found it difficult because I was not a Muslim, I am actually a Hindu by birth and I had a hard time in adjusting but since Christianity and Islam are almost the same thing, I am getting used to it...Every couple has their differences and we are not perfect couple but since we are married we have to abide by the rules, and the rule is that we must love ourselves forever”.

Mr. & Mrs. Ben:

Husband: “The church has played an immense role in our relationship. As a person, if I am angry, I could be angry for days and not talk to her. The church has taught me how I could get angry but not sin and now when we have misunderstanding we just settle it amicably. It has been the church; my mindset changed because of the church. The church taught me to love her more”.

Wife: “for me as an individual when I met Ben I was not attending any church and it was when I met him I started worshipping in a church and I discovered that it is not all about waking up and saying thank you God. The church has really helped our family life, and I would also say that our mindset have been changed through listening to the word God. It is also the church that makes us live the kind of life we are living now”.

Mr. & Mrs. Aresejabata:

“The church played an immense role in our relationship and I don’t think we would be together as husband and wife today if not the words of God that we listen to and that really changed our conceptions of one another. We speak to our pastor each time there is a big misunderstanding and such pastoral advice and prayers really help us”.

Mr. Gbenga:

“...I grew up in a Christian environment and when I took my wife to church here, she started seeing things in different ways and she has come to realize so many things about life and religion. The church helps so much because they do organize couples’ retreat, seminars and other teachings about how you can handle your relationships. I think the impact of church cannot be underestimated”.

Mr. Martins:

“...The pastor and his wife are good to us and take us as part of their family. They talk to us and we call them when we have problems and they have also been praying for us. So far our marriage is built on a solid foundation in God”.

From the testimonies above, we can deduce that majority of my informants are Christians and some of them believe so much in building their marriage on solid foundation which they believe to be biblical injunctions and God. This biblical concept of building marriages on solid

foundation is not achieved without various seminars and couples' group meetings in the church. I observed that majority of the churches I attended with my informants whether with a Nigerian or South African pastor, put in place different programmes to help couples particularly intermarried couples. This is because these sets of couples have to find ways of negotiating their differences (e.g. language barrier, culture, family and societal pressures) and how to build a 'home' without prejudice and discrimination. We can also deduce from the above that some of these people seek pastoral advice and prayers since they understand that there is always a room for misunderstanding. In general, I observed that religious groups and social gatherings have some roles to play in peaceful interactions between foreigners and South Africans. Mutual understanding and cooperation particularly in the daily activities of Nigerian-South African couples and families in Johannesburg was also observed to be vital to these couples.

3.4 Couples Negotiation of their Different Backgrounds

It is important to note the differences in intermarried couples which could be racial or cultural, and this as illustrated by the differences between Nigerian husbands and their South African wives. Intermarriage is a marriage between two people of different backgrounds and this can either be religious (such as Christians marrying Muslims) or racial (such as a European marrying an African). Despite the love between couples, it is important to note how they accommodate one another as well as how they settle their differences.

I was informed during my fieldwork by some of my informants of how they try to negotiate their differences when there is a clash of interests due to their different backgrounds. Each family has different experiences and different ways and methods in which they negotiate their differences. Excerpts of my interviews are given below:

Mr. & Mrs. Oteh:

Husband: "...It was not easy at first when I met my wife due to our differences in terms of culture, beliefs and worldviews. You know every relationship is a process because we are not a perfect couple but things are working fine now, it is just a matter of time.

Wife: "We need to accommodate one another and we learn to compromise and teach each other our culture because we were born in different places and different culture entirely".

Mr. & Mrs. Oteh shared their experience with me about how they accommodate each other's interests. They said they sometimes have disputes due to their different cultural backgrounds but that they have learnt to accommodate each other mostly when there is a clash of interests. They have both recognized their differences he said, and that they consider this in whatever they are doing to avoid clash of interests. Mr. Oteh gave me an example of how the signing between a South African and Swaziland girl model into their company nearly broke his home because of their separate interest in each of these girls. He said her wife liked the Swaziland model so much and she wanted him to sign her but he also liked some qualities in the South African model and at a point in their family this caused problem because his wife was no longer in talking terms with him. He said, he had to use wisdom to handle the matter and they settled the case amicably and they eventually signed the South African model after much discussions. Mr. and Mrs. Oteh informed me that getting to understand themselves required a lot of patience and compromise. I observed during my usual visits to this family's residence that Mrs. Oteh hardly speaks South African language with her friends. Her husband told me that it was agreed that English language should be the communication language at home and office for transparency.

Mr. & Mrs. Okpong:

Wife: "...Sometimes it's really difficult and when it's hard to reconcile our differences, there is always a clash of interests but as time went on, we began to understand each other and we now live in peace."

Husband: "My understanding of being married is that as the head of the family and as the leader in the house, my wife is married to my culture and should learn to live in my culture and other things but I am not that a strict cultural person because I am also married to her and I recognize the fact that I must adjust to some of her cultural beliefs and I think it is not a day thing, it is a journey which has just begun and we learn every day".

Mr. & Mrs. Asari:

Wife: "I would say we are both Africans and what I have learnt is that our cultures are similar and sometimes there are some cultural differences e.g. the way we address, what we eat and the way we eat it. For instance, I could remember my first time of tasting egusi, I didn't enjoy it at first but I learnt it and like it very much now."

Husband: "even though there are differences in our cultures I think understanding matters a lot. I think I have changed and she has also changed. Culture plays a role in the way you were raised but understanding the person you are married to play a bigger role".

Mrs. Oleja:

"The fact is that our cultural backgrounds have no role to play in our day-to-day activities. We met, we love each other. Be it Nigerian, be it another tribe or race, we are the same thing, so why can't we get along? Our different backgrounds do not play any role in our relationship because we loved each other".

Mr. Rasaq:

“...No relationship is perfect and there are ups and downs in relationships. You know we were brought up in different ways and different cultures and this has effect on our communication process. At times, when I feel like communicating the way I feel in my local dialect I will remember I have to speak English because of my woman and other differences as well. I would not want to say there is a perfect relationship but where love exist your background and culture cannot be a problem. So far so good we are living fine”

From the foregoing, I observed that clash of interests often derived from the surrounding circumstances of generalized prejudice and residual suspicions about Nigerians in a Nigerian-South African marriage. I discovered that prejudice impact on the process of negotiating cultural differences between Nigerian-South African couples during conflicts. The latent peril in this kind of situation and its potential impact on the marriage if not properly managed is enormous. Some of the examples above do not necessarily paint a picture of perfect marriages, rather they show overcoming different backgrounds and beliefs among Nigerian-South African couples involve require understanding by the two couples, and, a recognition of the areas of interests where such problems might likely come from. Overcoming such barrier is a process and many of my informants recognized this fact and they draw on their spring of ‘love’ where there is a clash of interests in to overcome this barrier believing that with time such barriers would disappear completely or become ineffectual.

3.5 Humour: A Way of Negotiating Discriminations/Prejudices among Intermarried Couples

Since the major theme of this study is to look at the impact of discrimination and prejudice directed toward Nigerian immigrants on Nigerian-South African marriages in a xenophobic

environment, it is important to look at how the couples negotiate this generalized discrimination and prejudices against Nigerian immigrants. Nigerian-South African couples often negotiate the generalized discrimination and prejudice against Nigerian immigrants in different ways including the use of 'humour'. Humour is defined as "the quality in something that makes it funny or amusing: the ability to laugh at things that are amusing" (Hornsby, 2001: 586). I explore how Nigerian-South African couples employ this in an atmosphere of discrimination and anti-Nigerian sentiments in South Africa. Testimonies of my informants below show different ways in which they see and negotiate such discrimination and prejudices directed towards Nigerian immigrants in Johannesburg from a humorous perspective:

Mrs. Oleja:

"...we always laugh about it and reduce it to jokes because the best way to look at such problem is to lighten it. Sometimes, I just call him and say you Nigerian, he is comfortable with me. We know what people are saying about us, we know what they are saying about our relationship, it is a life we have chosen and we are living it"

Mr. & Mrs. Oteh:

Wife: "I married Francis Oteh and not any media or anybody whatsoever who is painting Nigerians black. Prejudice and discrimination have nothing to do with our marriage, we look beyond those things and we just laugh over them.

Husband: "I am not seeing my wife as a South African woman, am seeing her as any other good woman out there and not just as a South African"

Mr. Rasaq:

"We both have understanding and not every South African thinks that way. Had it been that she thought of me as a foreigner we would not have been in a relationship at first. I

think understanding matters a lot in every relationship especially where both of you are from different countries. We do ridicule the discrimination in so many ways. For instance, if I see her brothers doing some things I will just tell her that they are bush people and if she is watching Nigerian movies, she will say things as well especially Nigerians' pronunciation of words".

The above testimonies are examples of how Nigerian-South African couples manage the impact of anti-Nigerian sentiments is having on their relationships. Majority of them admitted that the discrimination is there and people look at them scornfully when they see that they are married to Nigerians but they only make jest of such people because it is a choice they have made and they would not allow what people are saying affect their relationships. Some of my female informants also claimed that their husbands were able to transcend the discrimination problems with their sense of humour and respect for their family members and friends. My observation during this study reveals that some of the couples often laugh over serious issue but there is always a sign that reflect in their laughter how serious the incidence they laugh over is. I think deep down inside them, they still think about other ways to reconcile such matter aside humour.

3.6 The Concept of Love: A Way of Negotiating Discrimination/Prejudice in a Positive way among Intermarried Couples.

Unlike in the past, when love was seen as a matter between the suitor and the bride's family in the traditional South African society, love in the contemporary times has changed this concept. Similarly, Murray (1981) account of how marriage in Lesotho has changed overtime is instructive here. Traditionally, marriage is often organized by both parents of the boy and girl. The boy father would make enquiries and an emissary would be sent when he has found an appropriate girl for his son. This reflects less/no affection between the boy and the girl since the marriage is organized by both parents. But reverse is the case in the modern Lesotho society. A

man can formally ask a girl's hand first, give her personal gifts and the engagement conducted publicly without any problem unlike before where marriage process is through both parents. Also, the concept of 'love' and marriage in the traditional South African society depended on family ties and friendship and the ability of the suitor to pay the bride price. For instance, historically, an average Zulu man can afford the required cows for *lobola* and other rites for marriage but the rising unemployment and exorbitant cost of marriage ceremonies is making it more and more difficult for some South African men to meet these requirements.

Many South African families see marriage as an avenue to recoup what they have spent on their daughters especially the educated ones. As already noted above, the concept of love in marriage in the traditional South African societies is between the suitor and the bride's parents and there is less affection between the suitor and bride due to long term absence of the suitor who has gone to search for jobs mostly in mining sector in order to pay bride price and other marriage requirements. This does not only affect single women, it has a greater impact on married women during apartheid. According to Thomas (1974) "broken marriages and desertion and faithlessness are distressingly common, and the reason is clear...African relationships, as in all cultures, depend on loyalty and affection. These bonds in turn depend upon mutual support and comfort, on shared experiences and responsibilities, and companionships. All these must be sacrificed when the man goes away for long periods..." (*Trudi Thomas 1974, "The seeds of deprivation", Black Sash; quoted in Hilda Bernstein 1978, p.30*). The implication of this is that women often got tired of the return of these suitors and they too started migrating to urban areas in search of better lives and marriage dropped on their scale. It has been argued that this movement of women started as a result of sexually discriminatory laws that give women no right to land in the Bantustans under apartheid system (IDAF, 1981; Bernstein, 1978 & 1985). Similarly, Padilla et

al (2007) study shows the impact of migration of people from one place to another (e.g. rural-urban migration) in restructuring the local concept of 'love'. Due to their movement to urban centres, women met all kinds of men including foreigners and the concept of 'love' as they once understood changed as they found affection and attention in some of these foreigners. The romantic relationships and marriages between Nigerian immigrants and South African women buttress this point. Hirsch and Wardlow (2006) study on 'Modern Love' shows how marriage that are built on feelings and kindheartedness recently became the 'modern and globally ideal marriage' which is different from traditional conception of marriage. These women orientation about love changed having met foreigners because there is always a close relationship and affections between the suitor and the lady before marriage unlike the old way when there was close tie between the man and the bride's parent. It has been argued that the only gift a man can give a woman as a sign of love is his commitment to marriage and building the *umuzi* (homestead). Every other gift is seen as insignificant or even immoral (Vilakazi, 1962). In contrast, Linda Rebhun's (1999:86) study in Brazil focuses on the necessity of money in relationship in order for women to "exploit their love to build necessary friendship networks and supplement their meager incomes." Similarly, Murray (1981) study of marriage in Lesotho reveals that a man can formally ask a girl's hand first, give her personal gifts without any problem unlike before where marriage process is through both parents.

The new concept of 'love' has helped in no small measure in shaping the relationship of South African women with men and the experiences of Nigerian men attest to this fact. This new concept has helped those in Nigerian-South African relationships in the midst of xenophobia and anti-Nigerian sentiments. Majority of Nigerian men that married South African women met the

wives before the respective families. They established close ties, exchanged gifts, expressed their love before informing the wives' parents of their intention to get married.

Some of my interviewees had lived together for some time before their marriage and this really helped their interaction and relationships. This practice did not obtain under the traditional setting where the concept of 'love' was different and there was no much interaction and shared emotions between suitors and brides. Cole and Thomas (2009) maintain that women in Africa often embraced romantic love as a strategy for more 'egalitarian gender relations' and they also show the importance of financial security in every relationship. I discovered during this study that this new concept of 'love' has really helped Nigerian-South African couples to negotiate the discrimination and prejudice directed against the Nigerian husband in Johannesburg. Majority of Nigerian-South African couples interviewed believed that the foundation of their love is their ability to understand their differences and this has sustained their relationships.

During my fieldwork, I interviewed two couples who had just married. I attended the marriage ceremonies at Mafikeng, North West Province and Limpopo respectively. After chatting with the new couples, I discovered some similarities in the experiences of the couples and their relationships. The first couple told me that the bride's uncle and other family members were skeptical about the relationship and the lady was advised not to marry her Nigerian husband. Since, the lady's biological parents were deceased, she said she spoke to her eldest uncle and brothers about their intention to get marry because she was convinced about her love for the man. She said that if she had not known her man very well, she would have been dissuaded from marrying her husband due to family pressure. She said that with the help of the said uncle, her family finally agreed and today they have no regrets because her family has come to like her husband.

The second new couple was studying at different institutions but met in church. Notwithstanding the fact that they met in church, the bride's mother was not happy about the relationship and the bride was not prepared to do anything against her mother's wish despite her love for the Nigerian suitor. Yet, she said she and the man had become so close that she found it very difficult to allow her mother's wish to kill her love. She said at a point she thought she was going to go crazy because she had become emotionally and psychologically stressed up because of the whole situation. The more she thought about it the more she became confused because she had to choose between her 'love' and her mother's wish that she should not marry a Nigerian. The couples informed me that mutual understanding and their long-time undying love really helped them in convincing their family members to have a change of heart.

From the foregoing, we could see the historical background of the concept of 'love' in traditional South Africa and how this differs from 'love' in contemporary South African society and how this impact on intermarriages in Johannesburg. Majority of my interviewees e.g. friends and families recounted their initial objections and negative attitudes towards marriages between Nigerian men and South African women but that they had since come to realize that the role of 'love' can be very powerful between a man and a woman regardless of their tribe, race, colour, nationality or religion. They also highlighted the difference in the traditional notion of love and the contemporary concept. Their conclusion was that both impact on marriages. For example, the old concept did not give room for the suitor and the lady to become intimate or explore each other emotionally and romantically let alone having premarital sex. On the other hand, the contemporary concept of 'love' gives room for sexual expression of feelings between suitors and their brides and premarital sex occur regularly sometimes resulting in pregnancy outside wedlock due to the long period of courtship or cohabitation. Crohn (1965:46-47) stated that "quite

recently some ethnic and religious leaders have argued that, far from being a sign of deviance, intermarriage is an indication of enlightenment and the path to a better world. From their perspectives, those who intermarry are at the forefront of the breakdown of inter-group barriers, models for a future world where people will no longer divide themselves by antiquated and dangerous cultural identities”.

3.7 Integrity Test and Identity Scrutiny as a Nigerian

South African societies at present are poised against foreigners especially Nigerian immigrants who need to prove “beyond reasonable doubt” that they are men of integrity before being given a place in the society. This identity and integrity scrutiny is experienced by Nigerian immigrants married to South African women as a condition for acceptance by their wives families, friends, associates and immediate society.

Although as claimed by some of my informants, some South Africans have never met Nigerians but what they hear and what they read from the media about Nigerian immigrants gave them cause for suspicion about Nigerian. This is heightened in the case of parents when they hear of their daughters’ emotional relationship with Nigerians because they fear that their daughters would be lured into drugs and illegal activities. Despite these prejudices and discrimination, Nigerian men still marry South African women, but such a Nigerian would be prepared to be subjected to integrity test before his would-be in-laws. Some of my informants who married South African women shared their experiences with me on how they convinced and are still convincing their in-laws and immediate society that they are good Nigerians with good reputation and intentions.

Mr. & Mrs. Oleja informed me that:

Wife : “Most South Africans are skeptical and my family and friends are skeptical about him because he is a Nigerian but since we are married now they are beginning to see that he is a good Nigerian.”

Husband: “Candidly speaking, I need to break my experiences down. There are lots of convictions and work to do in order to convince my wife’s family of my integrity and character. I believe that you cannot judge a book by its cover; you need to read it before you know its contents. It is true that one way or the other there is a stigma attached to Nigerians but all Nigerians are not the same... the perception is there and you are always on observation no matter how good you are, there is always an eye watching you if you will mess up”.

Mrs. Oteh:

“As a Nigerian you need to prove your honesty ten times harder than the locals and when we started the relationship my family was like this is what we heard about Nigerians. And I think everything goes down to the media and the bad apple that is trying to spoil the whole bunch...”

Mr. Okpong:

“...it is quite tasking here because you are still made to prove your honesty beyond reasonable doubt to be taken as part of the family and the host country”.

Mr. Martins:

“...at first, her family thought I wanted to just use her ‘Hit and run’ and if you are a person who does not believe in yourself and the person you are dealing with I think there will be a problem. So far I have changed the perceptions of her family, friends and those who are close to her about Nigerians...”

Mr. Martins has been in South Africa for more than six years and he manages a joint-advertising and modeling company with his wife in Johannesburg. He narrated his experience with his wife’s family. Though he was accepted when his wife introduced him to her family but he said he could read the suspicious eyes of his wife’s mother and her siblings. His wife comes from a good and educated family which helped their relationship. However, the everyday news about Nigerian immigrants’ continues to hunt their judgments of his relationship with their daughter. He said his wife comes from a good and wealthy family and her family, particularly her siblings thought he wanted to exploit her to regularize his immigration status and establish himself but they surprised that he was able to start his company with his hard-earned money and he takes care of his wife and kid. Above all, he and his wife have never taken a dispute between them to her family for mediation or resolution.

He maintained that he relates with his wife like his sister and when some of her friends and family members see the bond and love between him and his wife, they confided in his wife in secret that they envied her. Further, he said his manners and attitude have changed their perceptions about Nigerians and they have realized that not all Nigerians are irresponsible as they once thought. He informed me that majority of his employees and models are South Africans and he has given some of them hope when they thought could not make it in life

because of their poor backgrounds. According to Mr. Martins, “I am giving back to the community what the country has given to me and am happy today for this. My status has also risen both in the business world and my immediate society”.

Mr. Ajanlekoko:

“When we started dating not all her family members was happy about our relationship even when they were laughing with me. With her friends, when they see us together you will definitely see in their eyes that they are not happy and I had to convince them of my integrity to a certain extent before I was accepted”.

Mr. Akanni:

“...even my woman thought I was doing drugs then but after studying me critically, she realised that that I don't do drugs..”

The excerpts above show what Nigerian husbands married to South African women went through to get the acceptance of their South African in-laws. In fact, it would be interesting to imagine how many Nigerian men in relationships with South African women are currently going through similar experiences due to the prevailing atmosphere of generalised prejudice and anti-Nigerian sentiments in South Africa. Some of my informants narrated different stories of their daily experiences about this challenge. For instance, one of my informants (Mr. Ben) informed me that when his mother-in-law came to spend some days with his family, initially she was not comfortable with him but was studying him critically. But after about two weeks, she called him and spoke to him about her actions towards him and since then their relationship has been cordial. He said he convinced the mother-in-law in so many ways before she could accept him. I discovered through in-depth discussions with some Nigerian husbands that they understood the

locals particularly their in-laws actions towards them because many atrocities had been committed by Nigerians and other foreigners in the past, and this was largely responsible for the present stereotypes of foreigners in South African societies. Regardless of the bad eggs among Nigerian immigrants, the responsible ones with good intentions especially those that are married to South African women are now helping to convince and redefine their identities among their wives' families, friends and their immediate societies.

From the foregoing, it is important to note that for a would-be Nigerian husband, having made first impression is not enough, he must continue to submit himself to identity scrutiny and integrity test and this is problematic because it cannot be settled once and for all. There is always an eye somewhere watching the Nigerian husband reflects in the everyday activities of the couples particularly the Nigerian husbands.

In summary, this chapter explored the findings of this study and strategies Nigerian-South African couples employ in their private lives to negotiate the effect of generalized anti-Nigerian immigrants sentiments on their marriages. The study found that love and humour are two of the common methods adopted by these couples to reconcile their differences and to manage the impact the generalized prejudice has on their everyday activities.

CHAPTER FOUR

4.0 Conclusion

South Africa has made significant progress since 1994 in trying to build a non-racial, human rights culture that is appropriate for the country's new democratic order. But the inability of the citizenry to adapt and accept the equal treatment of foreigners' particularly African migrants has been a major challenge to the government (Crush, 2008). This led to the widespread xenophobic attacks in the country in May 2008 and in which tens of foreigners lost their lives and thousands were displaced. Despite that unfortunate incident and the condemnation it drew from far and wide, xenophobic attacks, discrimination and stereotypes are still pervasive.

Nigerian immigrants are one set of foreigners that have been at the receiving end in this respect. They have been blamed for the different social ills plaguing South African communities –the widespread unemployment, trafficking in hard drugs and other social ills etc. This has exacerbated the already entrenched anti-Nigerian sentiments harboured by many South Africans and as this study shows, Nigerian immigrants in Johannesburg live their everyday lives in very difficult circumstances of discrimination, harassment from police officers etc. Often for reasons borne out of rivalry and competition for socio-economic space, most natives resent the presence of Nigerian immigrants because it is believed that immigrants, especially Nigerians are taking over the few available jobs, competing with South African males to marry South African women (Morris 1998 & 2001).

Situated in the above context, this study tries to explore the interaction between prejudice, discrimination and xenophobia directed against Nigerian immigrants in South Africa with

reference to existing literature and the impact they have on Nigerian-South African intermarriage. The study examines the effect this is having on Nigerian-South African couples' daily lives. The study finds that intermarriage is a channel through which members of different groups relate and interact with one another in a more positive way and see each group as being social equals without any form of prejudice or discrimination (Christiaan et al, 2005; Gunduz et al, 2002; Kamiljn, 1998).

From the survey conducted in the course of this study, there is indications that apartheid labour migration system, unemployment, and the old concept of love (non-romantic love) in South African communities all impact on the present-day prejudice of South African males against marriage between Nigerian men and South African women. This study shows that most South African men believe they are being short-changed by foreigners that are now taking over their women as wives due to their own inability to pay the expensive bride price (*lobola*).

The study also finds that majority of Nigerians married to South African women are within the middle or lower-middle class who are often educated, enlightened, gainfully employed and thus with a source of income that can keep their families together. Thus, care and financial security are significant factors in these marriages and measures the stability of marriage between Nigerian men and South African women aside their love for one another. Specifically, this came out strongly from some of the respondents who hold the view that Nigeria men are family-oriented, non-violent and caring compare to their South African counterparts.

Empirical evidence gathered in the course of this study shows that although there is pervasive prejudice against Nigerian immigrants in South African communities, South African women continue to marry Nigerian immigrants and the explanation appears to be that Nigerian men are

seen to be more willing to pay the bride price and undergo necessary marriage rites. This implies that care, non-violence and financial ability of Nigerian suitors play important roles in their marital relationships with South African women, and so trumps other negative factors like prejudice and xenophobic feelings. This also equips the couple to deal with the challenges prejudice and anti-Nigerian sentiments pose to their post-marriage lives. It also buttress the importance of financial security in marriage, and support the view that women in Africa often embraced romantic love that promises financial security to stabilize their marriage as well as guarantee them equal footing with their husbands in marriage(Cole & Thomas, 2009).

The study also finds how prejudice works in the couples' private lives especially between the wives' family members and the Nigerian husbands. It looks into the role daily media reports play in Nigerian-South African couples' relationships and how they negotiate such reports in their daily activities and private lives. The study finds that despite the fact that couples often adopt love and humour to negotiate the impact of prejudices on their marriages, Nigerian husbands are still subjected to scrutiny and integrity test especially from the immediate wives family members.

Further, the study finds that marriage alone will not necessarily produce integration without other factors like legal status, employment, etc because integration is a continuous process. Although marriage is a family model and seems to bring integration in some of the traditional immigrants countries like United State of America, Canada etc, this is however not the case in South African context where marriage is presently in crises and precarious (whether among middle or lower class) due to the historical background about disruption of marriage and family unit in the country. Where integration has taken or is taking place, factors like economic, legal status and interconnected social life are contributory and play important roles in the process.

The study also reflects the importance of the religious community e.g. church, in bridging the gaps between the couples and their families. With continuous teachings, seminars, workshops etc about biblical concepts of marriage and love, Nigerian-South African couples are provided both spiritual and moral guidance to navigate their everyday marital lives in an atmosphere of xenophobic sentiments. My informants attest to the fact that their different religions really helped them in building their marriages on solid foundation amongst in spite of the criticisms and opposition from family, friends and immediate communities.

By applying Alba & Nee's 'theory of assimilation and intermarriage' to study the importance of marriage in reducing prejudice and discrimination between two groups in South Africa, this study demonstrates that more personal contacts had occurred between Nigerians and South Africans with the help of intermarriages and this has changed the perceptions of the individuals in question. However, it has not been able to erase the generalized anti-Nigerian immigrants' sentiments and this is evidenced by the continuous scrutiny and integrity tests Nigerian husbands undergo.

This study discovered that the generalized anti-Nigerian sentiments in Johannesburg affect the relationship between Nigerian-South African couples and they fight this prejudice everyday among families, friends and the entire community. This study also takes the concept of xenophobia in South Africa beyond the general violent attacks and media reports to reflect its impact on the daily lives of intermarried couples (Nigerian-South African couples). Although there are so many arguments on the role of intermarriage as a major pointer of integration (Meng & Gregory, 2005; Kamiljn, 1998; Kamiljn & Tubergen, 2007; Chester & Richard, 1957) but marriage alone does not bring integration in South African context as other factors play

significant role in integration process. Some of the findings highlighted above still need further research for a better understanding of the subject in the South African context.

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Appendix A: INTERVIEW SHEET AND VERBAL CONSENT FORM (COUPLE)

PERCEPTUAL FACTORS AND NIGERIAN IMMIGRANTS IN JOHANNESBURG: A STUDY OF THE ROLE OF NIGERIAN-SOUTH AFRICAN INTERMARRIAGES IN SOCIAL INTEGRATION

Good day, my name is *Adeagbo Oluwafemi* from the Graduate School of Humanities at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. I am conducting a research on Migration and Intermarriages with a focus on prejudice and Nigerian-South African marital relationships in Johannesburg. It is the aim of this study to make sense of the importance of marriage between Nigerian men and South African women in an environment of widespread xenophobia and anti-Nigerian sentiments, and also to fill the gaps within the field of studies of xenophobia and integration.

I would like to invite you to take part in this study and your participation is voluntary. You are free not to answer any question you do not feel comfortable with or to stop the interview at any time, and the information gathered would be used for this study only. The information you give me, and your identity will be kept in strict confidentiality and please note that, apart from my appreciation, I do not promise any form of compensation for your participation. I am the only person who will have access to the recording and I will not pass it to any archive or third party and the material would be destroyed a year after the completion of the research.

The interview will take about an hour and will be tape recorded (recording), and pseudonym would be used in place of your real identity for privacy purpose. You would be informed about the findings of the study (if necessary) and if any of the interview questions upset you, I can refer you to a counselor that you can further discuss with.

I consent to be interviewed by this researcher and agreed to provide relevant information to all the questions being asked after reading this written consent and getting more explanation. If I need further details I may contact the researcher through the below address.

Participant (s)

Print full name

Signed

Date

Thank you so much for being part of my research.

Researcher Information:

Adeagbo Oluwafemi

Department of Forced Migration Studies,

University of the Witwatersrand,

Johannesburg, South Africa.

Cell no: +27785826991. Email: femiadex@yahoo.co.uk

Appendix B: INTERVIEW SHEET AND VERBAL CONSENT FORM (FAMILY/FRIENDS)

PERCEPTUAL FACTORS AND NIGERIAN IMMIGRANTS IN JOHANNESBURG: A STUDY OF THE ROLE OF NIGERIAN-SOUTH AFRICAN INTERMARRIAGES IN SOCIAL INTEGRATION

Good day, my name is *Adeagbo Oluwafemi* from the Graduate School of Humanities at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. I am conducting a research on Migration and Intermarriages with a focus on prejudice and Nigerian-South African marital relationships in Johannesburg. It is the aim of this study to make sense of the importance of marriage between Nigerian men and South African women in an environment of widespread xenophobia and anti-Nigerian sentiments, and also to fill the gaps within the field of studies of xenophobia and integration.

I would like to invite you to take part in this study because your participation will shed more light on how the bride's family was able to accept the Nigerian husband despite the discrimination against Nigerian immigrants in South Africa, and your reaction as a family member/friend to their relationship. Please note that your participation is voluntary without any form of compensation and you are free not to answer any question you do not feel comfortable with or to stop the interview at any time, and the information gathered would be used for this study only.

The information you give me, and your identity will be kept in strict confidence and pseudonym would be used in place of your real identity. This interview will take about an hour and will be tape recorded, and I am the only person who will have access to the recording and I will not pass it to any archive or third party and the material would be destroyed a year after the completion of the research. You would be informed about the findings of the study (if necessary) and if any of the interview questions upset you, I can refer you to a counselor that you can further discuss with.

I consent to be interviewed by this researcher and agreed to provide relevant information to all the questions being asked after reading this written consent and getting more explanations. If I need further details I may contact the researcher through the below address.

Participant (s)

Print full name

Signed

Date

Thank you so much for being part of my research.

Researcher Information:

Adeagbo Oluwafemi

Department of Forced Migration Studies,

University of the Witwatersrand,

Johannesburg, South Africa.

Cell no: +27785826991. Email: femiadex@yahoo.co.uk

Appendix C: AUDIO TAPING: RECORDING CONSENT FORM (VERBAL)

PERCEPTUAL FACTORS AND NIGERIAN IMMIGRANTS IN JOHANNESBURG: A STUDY OF THE ROLE OF NIGERIAN-SOUTH AFRICAN INTERMARRIAGES IN SOCIAL INTEGRATION

I consent to be interviewed with the aid of tape recorder by the researcher, and I have read the Participant and Information Sheet and understand that my identity will be kept confidential. The researcher has explained to me that the interview will be transcribed to text and used for the purpose of this research only. I also understand that I am free to withdraw this consent at any time without being disadvantaged in any form.

I understand that only the researcher will have access to the recording files (interviews) and it will not be passed to any archive or third party and the material would be used for this study only. I also understand that the data would be destroyed a year after the completion of this research.

I have agreed to be interviewed by this researcher and I can contact the researcher through the below address if needs be .

Participant (s)

Print full name

Signed

Date

Researcher Information:

Adeagbo Oluwafemi

Department of Forced Migration Studies

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APPENDIX D

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS (COUPLE)

1. Can I meet you please? Madam, what part of South Africa are you from?
2. How long have you been living in South Africa?
3. Why did you come to South Africa?
4. Where did you live when you first came, and where do you live now?
5. Are there stereotypes against Nigerian immigrants in South Africa?
6. If any, how has it been talked about?
7. What are the causes of such prejudices and what is the role of the community in reinforcing such prejudice?
8. Did it affect your relationship with your spouse, friends and family before you got married? If yes, how?
9. How long have you been married?
10. What kind of marriage is it? (Religious, Cultural, Life partnership)
11. How have you been coping with your spouse despite your differences in terms of cultural backgrounds and beliefs?
12. How is your relationship with your spouse's friends, families and the entire society?
13. Do you have children? If yes, how many? boys or girls?
14. Do you attend the same church or mosque with your spouse?
15. If no, why? If yes, what is the role of the church in your relationship?
16. Does the generalized prejudice against Nigerian immigrants affect your marriage in any way? If yes, how?
17. How do you interact and negotiate such discrimination as a couple?
18. Does any of your family members want to marry a Nigerian man/South African woman just because you married a Nigerian/South African? If yes, why?
19. How has your marriage shaped the social interactions among your families, friends, and the integration of Nigerians into the host communities?
20. What are some of the challenges you face in the integration processes and how have you reacted to those challenges?
21. What efforts have you made to achieve peaceful integration into the host community?

APPENDIX E

Families/Friends Interview Questions

1. Can I meet you please?
2. Who are you to the couple?
3. Do you have any knowledge of Nigerian immigrants here in South Africa?
4. What is/are your views about them?
5. Have you come in contact with any?
6. If yes, where and for what purpose?
7. How did you react when you heard about the couple's relationship before marriage?
8. Have you in any case tried to convince the bride not to marry the groom?
9. If yes, why?
10. Since they are now married, what did it take you to approve their marriage?
11. Are you close to the couple (especially the husband) after marriage?
12. If yes, how is your relationship with the couple especially the husband?
13. Has the couple changed your perception about Nigerian immigrants in any way?
14. If yes, how?
15. Can you allow any of your family members to marry a Nigerian immigrant again?
16. If yes, why?
17. Do you think the couple (particularly the Nigerian husband) is integrating into the host community despite his marriage to your daughter?
18. If no, why?
19. What effort have you made as a family member to help the couple's integration into the host community despite the discrimination against Nigerian immigrants?