



## Migration of Nigerian Women into the Italian Sex Industry through Trafficking

**Temitope Peter Ola<sup>1</sup>**

**Abstract:** The average Nigerian seeks temporary or permanent stay abroad. Some Nigerian women migrate to Europe in search of work and a better life. Coming to Europe, Nigerian women expect overseas work to transform their lives, make society work for them, and restore some sense of civility in their lives. Instead, getting to Italy to engage in sex work, their lives grew harder, their livelihood just as shattered, distant and terribly irrelevant as ever. This is thus a study in transnational participation – the simultaneous movements of people, information, monies across boundaries of Nigeria and Italy. It deals with the coordinated movements: of a segment of Nigerian women and girls; of information, including the export of creeds, philosophies, and dogmas; of physical objects, including personal properties; of monies through the face-to-face interactions between citizens of Nigeria and Italy. With a view to unpack the effects of gender entrapment on the economic opportunities of Nigerian women the study investigates the impacts of gender-based discrimination on the mobility and trafficking of Nigerian women to Italy.

**Keywords:** Nigerian women; Migration; Transnational sex; Voodoo; Human trafficking

### 1. Introduction

Migration relates to a permanent change in residence, location where one sleeps and stores possession (Rabenstein, 1889). More than 244 million international migrants were estimated to live in a foreign country in 2015 (Castelli, 2018). International migration is mostly influenced by economic reasons that include a search for gained employment, trade purposes, high and favourable standard of

---

<sup>1</sup> PhD, Olabisi Onabanjo University, Nigeria, Address: 120107, Ago-Iwoye, Nigeria, Corresponding author: ola.temitope@oouagoiwoye.edu.ng.

living and good atmospheric conditions for agriculture (Fayomi, *et al.*, 2014). It is in recognition of the fact that the inclusion of ‘decent work for everyone’ as goal number eight and ‘responsible migration’ as goal number ten of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) concedes that the human mobility and economic interaction constraints confronting the global community is a deadweight on its advancement. By so doing the global community invites origin and destination states to collaborate towards safeguarding human mobility for development.

While international migration has become a permanent feature of globalisation, economic liberalisation policies that give way to relaxed controls and open borders (Onyejekwe, 2005) are affected by illegal or undocumented immigrants and their desperation for odd jobs including trade in sex which has been described as degradation of human dignity and modern-day slavery. One major means through which this is accomplished, worldwide, is human trafficking. Nigeria has been acknowledged as a source country for people trafficked to diverse endpoints including Belgium, Czech Republic, France, Spain, Sweden, the Netherlands, and Italy. Some Nigerian women and young girls are trafficked for domestic labour, waitresses in hotels and bars, and as prostitutes to give sexual pleasures to men in return for cash payments (Erabor-Idemuha, 2003).

#### *Motivating Factors of Nigerian–Italian Traffickers Preference for Women Victims*

Generally, international migration is a multifaceted movement where factors including macro, meso and micro phenomena collectively act to generate informed decisions to migrate, thereby integrating the push-pull theory. Macro factors are evidenced in the failures of the political systems, demographic disadvantage and environmental problems including lack of human and material security. The role that the information and communication technology play as a meso factor cannot be overemphasised. Social media attracts people to the exaggerated affluence and living conditions displayed by the people in diaspora. Stereotyping the poor and personal attitude to migration form the micro-factors for migration. Personal attitudes relate to some cultural factors including the human desire to be recognised, to have a say, to have distinctive individuality recognised and seen as valuable; the acceptance of material wealth as the means for societal respect; the commercialisation of sex as a means of wealth creation; and the need for autonomy from women’s entrapment in the patriarchy system. Political stability, human security, beneficial economic policies and widening economic disparities are additional pull factors influencing international migration.

While the identified factors depict the reasons, women make informed decision to relocate abroad, the push and pull factors can also be argued to be the reason some are lured, coerced or voluntarily surrender to be trafficked abroad. According to Clark (2002), Fukuda-Parr and Kumar (2003) and Abdulraheem and Oladipo (2010) such Nigerian women consider the need to capture the lost capabilities of education, conducive environment, political stability, better remunerations as their motives for oversea travels. Moreover, given that poverty affects many young Nigerian women's access to paid-job, educational attainment and other resources, many unsuspecting parents who believe their children are going abroad to learn a trade or be educated so they can fend for the family often 'sell' their children (Nwoke, 2009) to traffickers.

## **2. Mobile Strategies of Nigerian Sex Traffickers**

Woods (2012) terms the exploitation of women by smuggling them across the Atlantic as the sexual-erotic politics of 'civilisation'. That means that women and girls are increasingly targeted for engagement in illegal activities such as begging, stealing, illegal adoptions, pornographic activities (Aghatise, 2004). That way, Elabor-Idemuha (2003) asserts that survival in the capitalist global economy reflects a society whereby globalisation maximises economic advantages through the exploitation of disadvantaged women and makes some young women and girls participate in sex trade either willingly or by coercion. Moreover, the role that money plays cannot be overemphasised. As an indispensable tool for survival in the contemporary capitalist world, money theism connotes that money is to be acquired by all means possible, even at the loss of life itself. As the chief among the push and pull factors for oversea migration of some Nigerian women to Italy money is both a means and an end in itself. Nigerian women source for money from diverse sources to complete the course of emigration. They may sale their families' agricultural land, houses, shops, and other personal possessions. The proceeds are required for visa fee, relevant documentation, shopping, airfare and for acclimatisation in the host country as well as payment to the enablers – recruiters, notaries, border crossing agents, connection home (brothel) owners, etc.

For those who are unable to raise the money to finance their travels, they are sponsored by 'madams' who then seek the refund with folds of interests through sex work. While some women self-recruit themselves and migrate to Italy, others turn to 'enablers' who are mostly members of transnational criminal web of Cosa

Nostra (Sicilian mafia), Black Axe, Eiye, and Vikings (Nigerian syndicates) with headquarters in Sicily. Literature (Aghatise 2004; Carchedi *et al.* 2007; Okojie 2009; Siegel & Blank 2010) suggests that they network and take advantage of the upsurge in people fleeing from hunger in Nigeria (a part of the *Japa* syndrome) and the Italian evergreen illegal market. The Nigerian syndicates are responsible for recruiting, transporting and transferring women for transnational sex while their Italian counterparts are tasked with harbouring and guaranteeing ‘protection’ for the women from their headquarters at Ballarò area of Palermo. On the other hand, some women are supported by families who sort sponsorship for their kin as an investment to be credited through remittances when they settle in Italy.

Therefore, chafed under the constraints of a cramped world from which Nigerian women emerged, they are easily persuaded to see their sex work in Italy less as a problem, which will be temporary anyway, but as part of a continuous array of progress, a solution, and the fastest way to get the money needed to balance the account with their facilitators and for home remittance to Nigeria. With no Italian-work experience to draw on and realising that they have a non-existing foothold in the labour market in Italy, the women have their work cut out for them. It makes it easier to galvanize them towards accepting that though sex work might not be the option they had hope for, but since the world is indifferent to their needs, it is their only option while in Italy. Such fatalism is also sustained by deliberate actions and inactions which ensure that the migrants remain ignorant of the morality of the alternate courses open to them just as they are confused about their inherent capacities due to negative self-image. Moreover, in addition to whatever domestic circumstances from which the individual Nigerian woman was fleeing, – notwithstanding the routes i.e., land, sea or air – they are deliberately designed to destroy whatever remains of their psychological and spiritual conditions of livelihoods. In cases where the Nigerian sex workers’ travels are sponsored, the women are indentured to the traffickers or ‘madams,’ compelled to take part in oath-taking rituals as well as sign phoney agreements promising to offset large debts to cover the cost of procuring the necessary travel documents and travel arrangements upon arrival to their destinations in Europe. Such women and girls are usually made to believe that they are being sponsored to work in Italy which makes them think that their exploiters are helping them out of the misery they suffered in Nigeria. Not until these women and girls are subjected to violence and human degrading acts such as stripping them of their clothing and making them to

endure physical chastisement that they realise that they are in for violence and humiliation.

*Sex Work in Italy: A Business Ladder*

Studies (Aghatise 2004; Carchedi *et al.* 2007; Okojie 2009; Siegel & Blank 2010) have highlighted the cycle of criminality involving ‘successful’ women in the prostitution business and their exploitative relationships with upcoming innocent women and girls. That introduced some forms of dynamism into the interaction between the traffickers and those that are trafficked. The reasons for such dynamisms are evident in the vertical mobility theory of Siegel (2011). They include the changing positions of the women within the sex sector. Other empirical studies and police investigations also confirmed that previously trafficked women become enablers or entrepreneurs by moving up in the trafficking hierarchy (Aghatise, 2004; Carchedi, *et al.* 2007; Okojie, 2009; Siegel & Blank 2010). Such upward mobility in the ladder of trafficking business explains why some women hold intermediate roles between being victims and traffickers (Lo Lacono, 2014). Lo Lacono further described this as the ‘gray zone’ which is populated by those who play intermediary roles in the business. Some of them are women who were formerly lured into trafficking and then transformed to contribute to the operation of the business in their own creative manner.

With reference to Siegel’s (2011) theory, it is evident that the trafficking in women and girls for prostitution abroad is a female-oriented felonious occupation and the business is a self-producing organisational structure (Carling, 2006). The ‘enablers – madams’ play crucial roles in the chain by holding leadership positions and by supervising the links from recruitment of victims to their assignment to brothels. As Aikpitanyi (2011, p. 103) explained, when the so called ‘madams’ who were former victims themselves have paid off their debt, the lack of identity documents and job make them to sort for means of income somewhere else. This then brings to fore the finance of the journey of another women or girl from Nigeria to Italy who will subsequently work for them while they progress to becoming the ‘madam’. As a result of their indebtedness, many women and girls are coerced into prostitution to offset debts owed to enablers (traffickers) who assisted in their migration.

*Control tools*

To be successful, such traffickers use diverse tactics including the myths, symbols and norms of juju, witchcraft, and voodoo (Aghatise, 2004; Carchedi *et al.*, 2007; Okojie, 2009; Siegel & Blank, 2010). The traffickers intentionally make use of indebtedness, beating and rape, threats of physical injury to the victim's family, arrest, and deportation to prevent those forced into sex work from trying to escape. Taliani (2012) compiled observations from fieldwork in Turin since 1997. The fieldwork consists of meeting Nigerian immigrant women who have shown psychological and psychiatric disorders and are victims of human trafficking and sexual exploitation (Taliani, 2012). Taliani argued that the historical symptoms of these women's hospitalisation in psychiatric wards are connected to voodoo rites. Being magic-religious delirium and persecutory delusions voodoo rituals, witchcraft and juju are used to ensure control over trafficked women (Beneduce, 2003). The series of oath of loyalty using juju, witchcraft and voodooism are increasingly in use in trafficking of humans for exploitation.

Juju is a pre-Christian charm or fetish activity of some West African people; it has supernatural powers attributed to its activities (Thompson, 1998). Witchcraft, on the other hand, is the use of magic, sorcery or a bewitching charm (Thompson, 1998). Voodooism on the other hand is the use of or belief in religious witchcraft. Oath, according to Sunday (2021), is an explicate pledge invoking a god, spirit, ancestor, place, or sacred object as witness unto the truth of the words sworn. It is among the most ancient forms of ritual solemnity (Sunday, 2021). Most oath taking process presuppose the harbouring of an act that is not for the consumption of the public. It presupposes unqualified fidelity or adherence to certain predetermined conditionality prescribed for and administered on the beneficiaries of the agreements. Often, such socio-religious oaths are fear-inducing and help to subdue and immobilize those who take it since the precise rules (Lewis, 1980, pp. 7; 20-21) of such rituals are that whoever flouts it will not be spared of the public punishment of a certain or deity (Okorie, 2009). Thus, the oaths play on the vulnerability, fear and suffering of the recipients.

Capitalising on the reference which Nigerians have for religious worship, the oaths are usually cloaked in sacred African religions' garb (Lewis, 1980). The socio-cosmic oaths are administered by the voodoo priests (third-party enforcers) who performs the sacerdotal services seven or three times between elements such as fairy rings, axes, stone circles or cross-roads, caves, the troth of graveyards while

the presence of the local gods is induced through divination (Parking, 1991) as a witness to seal and/or break the pact. The gods, spirit, usually invoked for the oaths are Ayelala (Larr, 2013), Asigidi, Ogun, Okija, Orunmila, and Shongo, etc. Although the activities attributed to these entities may be corny – they are not empirical – those who believe in them are usually loyal to them.

The manipulation of African traditional belief in deities and their powers are credited as pregame emigration commitment (Schelling 2006) to increase the costs of cheating (Campana & Varese 2013: 7) compare to the cost of cooperating (Allen 2006). Due to the harm that the priests and madams are believed to be capable of inflicting through voodoo, such rites make the victims subservient to the traffickers and which consequently procure the overstated commitment to honouring the vows (Aikpitanyi 2011). Some of the victims who neglect their vows perhaps suffer psychological trauma and fear that their families will suffer misfortune (TAMPEP, 2009; UNICRI, 2010).

Meanwhile, without the opportunity to negotiate the terms of the oath, the migrant's body fluid (menstrual blood), body tissue (strand of hair and nails), date-of-birth, undies, photograph, name, mother's name, etc. are *borrowed* to bound the migrant to her benefactors until the debt has been fully settled. With the spirits of local gods invoked, the migrants are usually made to promise, that they will always be obedient to the facilitators. Consequently, beside the economic and moral control the self-serving oaths are performative-for-benefactors over the migrants. Additionally, a residual fear of the self-invoked curses pronounced before the deities and fetish objects pervade the hearts of many Nigerian women migrants to Italy. Yet, migrants are not to reveal the stifling oaths, regarded as private secrets, to third parties.

The benefactors – border crossing capitalists – determine the terms of the oaths along with the amount to be repaid by each migrant, how the migrant will generate the money and how the account will be managed. No matter how much each migrant can raise before leaving Nigeria for Italy, most Nigerian women who got to Italy through the benefactors do so with a frigid debt burden of between 20000 to 80000 euros (for underwriting the ins and outs of the travel) to be repaid between 3 to 7 years by working as prostitute if they are to gain freedom. Unbeknownst to the migrants, the oaths function as a hostage-taking and spatial positioning conduit through which migrants are tied to the sting of the facilitators.

The details are steely disguised while the migrants get their first shocker only after getting to the 'point of no return'.

With an expectant mood heightened by varnished information regarding the total debt, fictitious portrays of what they would be doing once in Italy, the febrile migrants go through the covenants of loyalty. They go through it in good faith, with youthful idealism. They go through it without fully understanding the underlying implications. They go through it out of a desperation birthed, partly, by the inability to personally muster the requisite resources (knowledge, money, and connections) for overcoming the obstacles to attaining legal migration and legally acceptable livelihood in the country of destination. Since the facilitators knew that aspect of their 'recruits' and understood which heartstrings to pull, the oaths become high-stakes gambit used to sustain the indenture sex work. And with the rigged games of the facilitators being in hazy to the migrants the obstacle course (the oath) is effective in guaranteeing outsized subjection, submission and exploitation. Overall, the oath cage, whether for loyalty or monetary/pecuniary gain, is no doubt evidence of degeneracy. It shows how power asymmetries, deception and fear can characterise interactions.

#### *Routes to abyss*

Routes of transport include by air, land, and sea. The route of choice depends on how much victims have paid (Okojie, 2009) among other such considerations. The exit point for land route is Lagos and Katsina. The land route from Lagos, according to Okojie (2009), is through Benin Republic, Togo, Ghana, Cote d'Ivoire to Mali, Niger Republic, Algeria, then Morocco or Libya. The Katsina land route is through Niger Republic, Algeria, then Morocco or Libya. Travel by road through the Sahara Desert can take two to eight months based on the ease of using the transit to Italy. While some women do not arrive at their destination due to deportation on arrival for traveling with fake papers, others are left stranded in the transit countries. Some others are also arrested with their traffickers at borders by the immigration officials (UNICRI/UNODC 2003). Furthermore, Okojie (2009) posits that:

From any of the North African countries, victims go by air to either France or directly to Italy or any other European country from where they fly or travel by train to Italy. Lagos and Kano provide exist points to those travelling by air. The only sea



route for trafficked women is from Morocco to Spain by boat. Women and girls are kept in hostels/brothels and safe houses along the routes to be used as prostitutes and to secure travel documents (Okojie, 2009).

To ensure maximum compliance the travel documents of the victims are seized so they do not have means to escape and they are monitored not to have contacts with people outside the migration party. Monies made from the 'route prostitution' are usually taken by the 'madam' who deducts their debts, accommodation and food bills.

### **3. Neoliberalism and Nigerian–Italy Sex Trade**

The contributions of neoliberalism to making Nigeria an 'outside' oriented economy is clear. At issue is the de-linked from 'real' economy of manufacture of goods and value through objectification and commodification of feminine sexuality and its addition to the arsenal of new disposable raw material resources to be exploited, accumulated and exported. The predatory extraction of Nigerian women's sexual-erotic resources, the feminization of Nigeria-Italy export and the social violence which it entails mirror the globalisation of an 'interior infrastructure' of service and servitude that blends into the consolidation of the capitalist-patriarch-masculine logic of neoliberal development.

The Nigeria migrant sex workers in Italy are paraded public products, commodities that are publicly traded and/or home-delivered through sexualised techno-bodies that can be bought on the cyberspace via techno-sex platforms. To satisfy an ever-extending male vanity the sex workers are made to drift between various permutations of message private brothels, strip clubs, phone sex, cybersex and internet pornography, sexting, adult pornography, etc. of the transactional sex industry. Collaboratively, the erotic consumerism of postmodernism ensures the existence of a deeply entrenched – though frequently denied – kaleidoscopic sexual need of certain Italian men who are eager to buy and consume cheap sexual services. As a matter of fact, many Italian men regard black female sex as an original article of entertainment (Di Nicola *et al.*, 2009).

As observed earlier, sex workers usually have their travelling documents confiscated by their facilitators. The travelling documents are seized for two

reasons. The main reason is to dispossess the woman of her identity, making her feel helpless, hapless and with no links to the world outside of the traffickers. This depersonalisation/dehumanisation process ensures she stays in line and pays the travelling cost along with a series of other mandatory fees including rent on the joint (roadside spot where the trade is ply), resident permits, food, clothes, etc. This is even when the monies she can gain with the precarious and irregular sex work in Italy – depending on negotiation an average Italian man pays between 5 to 15 euros per sexual session – will never allow her to completely balance up the amount that was duplicitously loaned them. A secondary reason for retrieving the travelling documents is to enable the syndicate to reuse them for other recruits.

Thus, in Asti and Novara, Garda Lake, Abano Terme and Mestre; Turin, Lombardy, Veneto, Emilia Romagna and Campania are their areas. According to International Bureau for Children's Rights (2010), in central Italy

Pisa and Livorno to Grosseto, Lazio around Civitavecchia and Ostia, inland of Arezzo, Perugia, up to Terni are their areas. In southern Italy: Castel Volturno and Mondragone, shoreline Battipaglia, the suburban areas of Puglia (Foggia and Bari, Lecce and Brindisi), the Calabria coastline between Corigliano and Crotona and between Lamezia Terme and Tropea; in Sicily, in the Palermo zone and in the coastal area between Messina and Catania are the areas (International Bureau for Children's Rights, 2010).

The above-mentioned are the areas of Italy where most Nigerian women sex workers ply their trade and often live 'hidden' lives with their energies expended on forestalling apprehension by law enforcement agents.

#### *Italian Policy on Prostitution*

Official United Nations data suggest Italy as the preferred destination of the Nigerian sexual exploitation market. Through the effectiveness of social networks and chain migration of Nigerian women for 'sex' in Italy, a multi-billion-dollar commercial sex industry has now evolved. The industry is made up of travel agents, recruitment agents, lawyers, etc. (Salt and Stein, 1998) using sexual servitude and deceptive recruiting. The methods of industry are effective to the

extent that the number of Nigerian women it succeeded in putting through sexual exploitation in Italy between 2010 and 2019 is estimated to be about 26,500.

The first national law on prostitution in Italy is *The Abolition of the Regulation of Prostitution and the Fight Against the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others of 1958* (Law Decree 75/1958) which abolished the operation of brothels. While prohibiting the exploitation of prostitutes by brothel operators the law decriminalises the woman in prostitution. The implication of the law is that in Italy a prostitute can make use of private apartment, massage parlour and nightclub to ply her trade for as long as she does not exploit others nor herself exploited by a third parties. Thus, in accordance with the view of pro-sex work campaigns, in the eye of Italian Immigration Law 40/1998 (Law Decree 286/98) prostitution is not a crime in Italy. It is the axillary activities (Savona *et al.*, 2003) such as exploitation of the sex worker(s) by others that is a crime. The emigration of more Nigerian women to Italy not only threatens the nation's economic stability but increases religious, cultural and ethnic heterogeneity (Kicinger 2004). That has necessitated the installation of harden border. What all that has achieved is the creation of an industry of smugglers who make fortune at the expense of global economic equilibrium.

Yet, overseas migration is quite functional for capitalist economies. That is, Nigerian women help to meet Italy's demands for unskilled and semi-skilled labour, for instance the sex industry, which are all due to deregulation, liberalisation and flexibility. A major subsector of the Italian economy may end up relying on the labour of Nigerian women, as they do the toughest, dirtiest work for meagre pay. Many Italian consumers benefit from their work while some fear that they are burdening social service programmes, and changing the nation's racial and cultural makeup. Yet, those who are interested in sustaining a secure supply of inexpensive labour drive the migration.

It is interesting to note that Nigeria's law labour migration does not accept sex work as decent job (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2015). Specifically, Section 223 and Section 225 (A-B) of the Criminal Code prescribe various punishments for any person involve in prostitution in and or outside Nigeria (Criminal Code Act, Cap 77; Law of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2004). Even though emigration for sex work in Italy exposes Nigerian women to more insecurity and vulnerability, Nigeria benefits from the migration of some of its women to Italy. The emigration

not only helps in removing surplus labour but also provide a source of oversea remittance and investment (Koser & Van Hear, 2003) to Nigeria.

It is however clear that the government of Nigeria is becoming very ambitious in the attempt to extend its reach. That ambition forces it to react to, and often to adapt to changes in its environment. Yet, the continued existence of Nigerian sex workers in Italy reveals the ‘regulator crack’ between Nigerian government aspiration for regulation and the capability to accomplish it. This is insofar as Nigeria directly and indirectly indulged religious fanaticism, uncultured tissues of deceit and irresponsible national governance, destroyed progress, disallowed freedom, stiff logic, killed initiatives, discouraged creativity, court poverty, nourish destitution, build fatherless youths whose sense of attachment to society is rendered nugatory, with politicians flagrantly displaying stolen wealth while condemning the rest into perpetual, agonizing and vicious cycles of misery. Being therefore unable to pay the price for complete control of its environment, Nigeria has to bend to changes rather than shape the course of history.

Connected with the history of their country of origin, most Nigeria women migrants to Italy, more often than not, find themselves in irregular situations which jeopardize their asylum claims. And it is common for the law enforcement agencies in Italy to, without compassion and tact, describe those who find themselves in such ‘irregular situations’ as ‘illegal migrants.’ The situation could have been different if they are accepted as irregular migrants. However, the adopted descriptions keep the migrants in low-wage labour for maximum exploitation. What is more? Such descriptions are the precursor to the plunder of life, the extraction of life, as well as the denial of the humanity (Ochoa-Llidó, 2004) of the migrants. Some Nigerian women migrants in Italy might have engaged in ‘survival crimes’ but their predicaments are regularly exacerbated by the exclusion from overtime protection, the right to organise, and the guarantee of safe, healthful working conditions, and inhibited from seeking legal redress. In this condition it is easily forgotten that every migrant is a human being (CDMG, 2004, p. 29). The depersonalisation makes the migrants to, in the opinion of Esposito, Quinto, De Masi, Gargano and Costa (2016):

Lose their uniqueness as human beings with their own personal stories and rights, as they are considered only for the condition that brought them to detention, which is their irregularity (Sciurba, 2009).

Since prostitution is a legal and legitimate employment in Italy, Nigerian women sex workers are usually deported not for prostituting but for crimes such as involvement in human trafficking, over-staying their visa, illegal entry, lack of identification papers, failure of asylum application, etc. Yet many Nigerian women are involved in sex work in Italy as their only employment alternative in view of inability to regularize their stay to be able to work in regular jobs. Moreover, most of Italian employers ask for within-the-nation work experience and are generally unwilling to acknowledge previous work and educational experience of Nigerian women in their home country. This forces most immigrant women into jobs well below their overall skills and almost always below their potential.

#### *Sex-work Rights and Advocacy*

There have been pro-sex work campaigns advocating for the accordance of rights to sex workers (Lam, 2018) around the world. One of the campaigns is the one put forward by socio-sexuality. Socio-sexuality (Hmidan & Weaver, 2019) posits that women are adults who can choose what they wish to do with their bodies. Socio-sexuality argues that sex workers live with uncertainty and fear. Arguing that prostitution is an act of sexual self-determination from patriarchal moralism socio-sexuality concludes that sex workers' insecurities, their childhood traumas from unexpected ills carry as much gravitas as any socio-economic trend. To help scare the circle Dworkin (1997) proposed the regularization of prostitution as a profession under trade union in order to protect those involve in it from abuses.

There is a sense in which the sex-work approach to prostitution is valid. Yet, it is unable to address the inherent disarticulation between the freedom of choice argument and the fact that the women with the fewest choices (Beneduce, 2003; Salt & Stein, 1997; Siegel, 2011) are the ones found within prostitution networks. It has not explained why deception, patronage, secrecy, perjury, and violence are the instruments of the trade. Moreover, the approach seems to gloss over the fact that the nonchalant use of the human body in prostitution defies respectful interpersonal sexual relation by proffering monetary substitute for mutual desire, interests, intimacy and concerns. For these reasons the moral approach posits that the violence and exploitation which pervade prostitution makes it impossible for migrant women to 'use commercial sex for instrumental ends' (Agustín, 2005, p. 96). Even if pro-sex work advocates see the prostitution of certain Nigeria women in Italy as a way of finding a space in a country that does not welcome them, they are yet to acknowledge the fact that the political economy which sustains sex work

is hiding away in the benefits that the countries of origin and destination derive from it. In fact, since the entire process oils the capitalist system on which its continuation depends it could be argued that sex work is a continuation of state-economy by other means (Williams, 2002, p. 164).

#### 4. Conclusion

The paper discusses issues of transnational economy of commercial sex by Nigerian women in Italy. It unpacks some of the entangled moral economy of globalisation and its implications of emigration of some Nigerian women in search of greener pastures abroad. It analyses the reasons women make decisions to travel to Italy knowingly or lured or coerced to perform sexual satisfaction for men in return for money. It narrates the experiences of the migration process and travel itinerary, the journey to Italy, as well as the subjection, submission and exploitation involve. The roles of voodoo, juju, witchcraft, trickery, hoaxes and deceptions, extortion, and physical chastisement in ensuring sustenance of the 'business in women' was highlighted. It shows that the adoption of sex work by some Nigerian women migrant in Italy as a response to the existential challenge of globalisation is self-defeating and self-crippling. To break the vicious circle between non-action and the moral decency conundrum of sex trade actions must be taken to limit the push and pull factors driving Nigerian women into modern day slavery in Italy. This could be achieved through actionable development plans that give every citizen enough avenue to earn a decent livelihood within the country.

#### References

- Abdulraheem, S. & Oladipo, A.R. (2010). Trafficking in women and children: a hidden health and social problem in Nigeria. *International Journal of Sociology and Anthropology*, Vol. 2, No. 3, pp. 34–39.
- Aghatise, E. (2004). Trafficking for Prostitution in Italy: Possible effects of government proposals for legitimization of brothels. *Violence Against Women*, Vol. 10, No. 10, pp. 1126–1155.
- Agustin, L. (2005). Migrants in the Mistress's House: Other Voices in the Trafficking Debate. *Social Politics: International Studies in Gender, State & Society*, Vol. 12, No. 1, pp. 96–117.
- Aikpitanyi, I. (2011). *500 Storie Vere sulla Tratta delle Ragazze Africane in Italia*. Roma: Ediesse.
- Allen, J. (2006). *Hostages and Hostage-taking in the Roman Empire*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

- Beneduce, T. (2003). Sessualità, Corpi “Fuori Luogo”, Cultura. Pratiche e Discorsi su Migrazione e Prostituzione, Pagine. *Il sociale da fare e pensare*. Vol. 2, pp. 6–63.
- Campana, P. & Varese, F. (2013). Cooperation in criminal organizations: Kinship and violence as credible commitments. *Rationality and Society*, Vol. 25, No. 3, pp. 263–289.
- Carchedi, F. et al (2007). *Schiavitù Emergenti*. Milano: Franco Angeli.
- Carling, J. (2006). *Migration, Human Smuggling and Trafficking from Nigeria to Europe*, IOM. Available: [http://www.diversite.be/diversiteit/files/File/MH\\_TEH/documentatie/mrs23%5B1%5D.pdf](http://www.diversite.be/diversiteit/files/File/MH_TEH/documentatie/mrs23%5B1%5D.pdf)
- Castelli, F. (2018). Drivers of migration: why do people move? *Journal of Travel Medicine*, Vol. 25, No. 1.
- CDMG (2004). *Study on Obstacles to Effective Access or Irregular Migrants to Minimum Social Rights*. Strasbourg: Council of Europe.
- Clark, D. (2002). *Visions of Development*, Cheltenham: Edward Elgar.
- Di Nicola, A. et al (2009). *Prostitution and human trafficking: focus on clients*. New York: Springer.
- Dworkin, A. (1997). *Prostitution and Male Supremacy in Life and Death*. New York: Free Press.
- Elabor-Idemuda, P. (2003). Race and Gender Analyses of Trafficking: A case study of Nigeria. *Canadian Women Studies/Les Cahiers De La Femme*, Vol. 22, No. 3, pp. 116–123.
- Esposito, F.; Quinto, C.R.; De Masi, F.; Gargano, O. & Costa, P. A. (2016). Voices of Nigerian women survivors of trafficking held in Italian centres for identification and expulsion. *International Migration*, Vol. 54, No. 4, pp. 133-149.
- Fayomi, O. et al (2014). The impacts of remittances on Nigeria’s economic growth: A case study on Nigerian diasporas in Ghana. *Journal of South African Business Research*, Vol. 1, No. 1, pp. 3187–3195.
- Federal Republic of Nigeria (2015). *National Policy on Labour Migration 2014*. Abuja: International Organization for Migration.
- Fukuda-Parr, S. & Kumar, S. (2003). *Readings in Human Development*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- Global Commission on International Migration (2004). *Study on Obstacles to Effective Access or Irregular Migrants to Minimum Social Rights*. Strasbourg: Council of Europe.
- Hmidan, A. & Weaver, A. (2019). Sex dreams: Gender, erotophilia and sociosexuality as predictors of content, valence and frequency. *Canadian Journal of Human Sexuality*, Vol. 28, No. 2, pp. 177–189.
- International Bureau for Children’s Rights (2010). Trafficking of Nigerian girls in Italy: The data, the stories, the social services. *UNICRI*, [https://unicri.it/wwd/trafficking/nigeria2/docs/traffickingNigeriaItaly\\_EN.pdf](https://unicri.it/wwd/trafficking/nigeria2/docs/traffickingNigeriaItaly_EN.pdf).

- International Organization of Migration (2013). Migrant wellbeing and development. *World Migration Report*. <https://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/wnr2013-en.pdf> ISBN 978-92-9068-668-2
- Kicinger, A. (2004). International migration as a non-traditional security threat and the EU responses to this phenomenon. Central European Forum for Migration Research *Working Paper 2/2004*.
- Koser, K. & Hear, N. (2003). Asylum migration and implications for countries of origin. *UNU WIDER Discussion Paper (DP2003/20)*.
- Lam, E. (2018). *Behind the Rescue: How Anti-trafficking Investigations and Policies Harm Migrant Sex Workers*. Toronto: Butterfly Print.
- Larr, F. (2013). Deities and shrines: The 'Ayelala' example of exploiting prostitution. *Africa's Diabolical Entrapment*, Milton Keynes: Author House.
- Lewis, G. (1980). *Day of Shining Red: An Essay in Understanding Ritual*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Lo Iacono, E. (2014). Victims, sex workers and perpetrators: gray areas in the trafficking of Nigerian women. *Trends in Organized Crime*, Vol. 17, No. 1, pp. 110–128.
- Nwoke, B. (2009). Factors Sustaining Human Trafficking In The Contemporary Society: Psychological Implications. *Ife Psychologia*, Vol. 17, No. 1, pp. 161–175.
- Ochoa-Llido, M. (2005). *Recent and Future Activities of the Council of Europe in the Fields of Migration and Refugees* 5(1), 497.
- Okojie, C.E. (2009). International Trafficking of Women for the Purpose of Sexual Exploitation and Prostitution: the Nigerian case. *Pakistan Journal of Women's Studies: Alam-e-Niswan*, Vol. 16, Nos. 1&2, pp. 147–178.
- Okorie, C. (2009). There is no provision for Fetish Oath Taking in the Nigerian Constitution. *Nigerian Guardian*, 14.
- Onyejekwe, C. (2005). Influences of global human trafficking issues on Nigeria: a gender perspective (Report). *Journal of International Women's Studies*, Vol. 7, No. 2, pp. 141–151.
- Oude Breuil, B.C. et al. (2011). Human trafficking revisited: legal, enforcement and narratives on sex trafficking to Western Europe. *Trends Organized Crime*, Vol. 14, No. 1, pp. 30–46.
- Parking, D. (1991). *Sacred Void: Spatial Images of Work and Ritual among the Giriama of Kenya*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Ravenstein, E.G. (1889). The Laws of Migration. *Journal of the Statistical Society*, Vol. 52, pp. 282–297.
- Salt, J. – Stein, J. (1998). Migration as a business: the case of trafficking. *International Migration*, Vol. 35, pp. 467–94.
- Savona, E.U. et al. (eds.) (2003). *Tratta di Persone a Scopo di Sfruttamento e Traffico di Migranti*. Transcrime, Roma.



- Schelling, T. (2006). *Strategies of Commitments and Other Essays*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Sciurba, A. (2009). *Campi di forza - Percorsi confinati di migranti in Europa*. Verona: Ombre Corte.
- Siegel D. & Blank, D. (2010). Women who traffic women: the role of women in human trafficking networks—Dutch cases. *Glob Crime*, Vol. 11, No. 4, pp. 436–447.
- Siegel, D. (2012). Mobility of Sex Workers in European Cities. *European Journal on Criminal Policy and Research*, Vol. 18, No. 3, pp. 255–268.
- Sunday, L.O. (2021). Traditional Oath-taking as a Panacea to ‘Democratic Corruption’ in Nigeria. *Journal of Philosophy and Culture*, Vol. 9, No. 2, pp. 11-19.
- Taliani, S. (2012). Coercion, Fetishes and Suffering in The Daily Lives of Young Nigerian Women in Italy. *Africa*, Vol. 82, No. 4, pp. 567–608.
- TAMPEP (2009). *Work safe in sex work: a European manual on good practices in work with and for sex workers*. Torino: Associazione TAMPEP.
- Thompson, D. (1998). *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Current English*, 9th Edition. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Turner, V.W. (1982). *From Ritual to Theatre: The Human Seriousness of Play*. New York: Performing Arts Journal Publications.
- UNICRI (2010). *Trafficking of Nigerian Girls in Italy: The Data, the Stories, the Social Services*. Torino. [http://www.unicri.it/documentation\\_centre/publications/series/docs/trafficking\\_nigeria-italy.Pdf](http://www.unicri.it/documentation_centre/publications/series/docs/trafficking_nigeria-italy.Pdf)
- United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (2015). *Sustainable Development: The 17 Goals*. Available at <https://sdgs.un.org/goals>.
- United Nations General Assembly (2004). *Report on the human rights of migrants submitted by the Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights*. Geneva: UN.
- UNODC/UNICRI (2003). *Programme of Action Against Trafficking in Minors and Young Women from Nigeria into Italy for the Purpose of Sexual Exploitation*. Report of Field Survey in Edo State. UNODC/UNICRI
- Williams, P. (2002). Transnational Organized Crime and the State. Rodney, Bruce Hall & Biersteker, Thomas. *The Emergence of Private Authority in Global Governance*. Cambridge and New York.
- Woods, T. (2012). The gender entrapment of neoliberal development. *Genders*, Vol. 55. Gale Academic OneFile.