

DECONSTRUCTING THE CANADA RUSH

*A Study on Motivations for Nigerians
Emigrating to Canada*



March, 2020

Deconstructing the Canada Rush: A Study on the Motivations for Nigerians Emigrating to Canada - Report [March 2020]

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FOREWORD

Emigration of Nigerians is not a new phenomenon. Nigeria has continued to experience various dimensions and waves of emigration to countries around the world, particularly developed countries in Europe and North America. For decades, United Kingdom and the United States of America were two top destinations for Nigerian migrants- the former owing to our colonial heritage, and the latter our model democratic experience.

In the last few years, there's been a new trend of Nigerians relocating out of the country, to settle with their families in new destinations. Canada have become the new destination of choice. Canada prides itself to be one of the world's most ethnically diverse, multicultural and accommodating nation owing to its liberal immigration policies and large-scale immigration from other countries. Canadian migration policies in the last few years have made Canada emerged as an attractive destination of choice by Nigerians, compared to the United Kingdom, with its imminent pre- and post-Brexit implications, and the United States of America tightening up on immigration reforms.

The trend of Nigerians emigrating to Canada appears to have witnessed a new height and taken a new dimension with respect to the caliber of Nigerians participating in different Canadian Immigration schemes. Anecdotal evidence suggests that this category of Nigerians are the highly skilled, educated, mostly employed and upward mobile group, which constitute the middle-rung of the society. The continued exit of this class of Nigerians would have attendant effects on the country's intellectual and skills base, and resultant impact on the country's economic development and sustainability.

It was against this background that Africa Polling Institute (API) decided to undertake this study to deepen public knowledge of the motivations for Nigerians emigrating to Canada, which we have tagged: "Deconstructing the Canada Rush". The findings of the study revealed that the top five reasons (the push factors) for the new trend of Nigerians seeking to emigrate to Canada, are: (1) better career opportunities, (2) heightened insecurity, (3) the desire to provide better future for their children, (4) for further education, and (5) as a result of poor governance in the country. In addition to these push factors, the favourable Canadian immigration schemes, which makes it easy for educated and highly skilled Nigerians to emigrate, serve as pull factors.

In summary, the findings of this study highlight existential gaps in government's inability to stimulate a strong thriving economy, galvanize an effective security architecture that delivers security to all citizens, and promote institutional reforms to deliver public goods to citizens. Simply put, Nigerians are not emigrating to Canada because they want to, they are going there because they do not believe Nigeria provides them any opportunity, and security, to thrive as citizens.

Finally, it is our expectation that this report helps to throw some light on the issue of middle-class and elite migration in Nigeria; and helps policy makers, public institutions, advocates and the media to make informed judgements on this issue of Canada Migration. Lastly, we hope this report would generate some public commentary and discourse in the public space.

Dr. Bell Ihua (PhD Kent)
Executive Director, Africa Polling Institute (API)



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Signed

Amarachi Charles

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

API	Africa Polling Institute
CIDP	Canadian International Development Platform
CRS	Comprehensive Ranking System
EU	European Union
FSWP	Federal Skilled Worker Program
IMP	International Mobility Program
IOM	International Organization for Migration
IRCC	Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada
LMIA	Labour Market Impact Assessment
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
PGWP	Post-Graduate Work Permit
PNP	Provincial Nominee Program
RCMP	Royal Canadian Mounted Police
SAP	Structural Adjustment Program
STCA	Safe Third Country Agreement
TFWP	Temporary Foreign Worker Program
UN	United Nations
UNDESA	United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs
WHO	World Health Organisation





EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Immigration is a fact of human life and is in many ways positive for the origin and destination countries of the migrant. However, there could be considerable residual socio-economic impacts resulting when developing economies lose significant human capital to developed countries through large-scale migration. Indeed, this is the case for Nigeria with the upward trend of Nigerians relocating to Canada in recent times and which has nearly tripled since 2015. In August 2019, the Punch newspaper published an opinion piece titled “Canada is stealing our young people”. The author of the piece argued that “Canada is not just taking our young people, they are taking the fattest of our crops, the best, the brightest, and the brainiest!” ... “as a young professional in this country [Nigeria], you begin to wonder if there is something wrong with you if you have not commenced your own immigration process”. Indeed, the large-scale migration of Nigerians to Canada in recent years, one which we have termed “the Canada Rush” is yet another episode of the several waves of human capital flight from Nigeria throughout the nation’s history both before and after independence in 1960.

In recent times, much of the news and policy discussion has been focused on Nigerians leaving the country by irregular means and drowning in the Mediterranean as they seek to cross into Europe through North Africa. While this deserves all the attention it has gotten and much more, the magnitude immigration through formal channels on the other hand, have for the most part been left out of the conversation. Using a mixed methods approach, including an extensive review of the literature on immigration from Nigeria and a dedicated survey on the immigration of Nigerians to Canada, this study begins to bridge some of the gaps in our understanding. It explores the trends, drivers, enablers and motivations of the Canada Rush, examining its implication for the Nigerian economy, offering recommendations and advocating key policy responses. It does not provide all the answers nor claim to do so. It however goes beyond scratching the surface of a burgeoning and strategic public policy issue for Nigeria.

Nigeria is bleeding intellectually, losing her finest and brightest to developed countries. The cost to the Nigerian economy is enormous as the country continues to finance the education of students who migrate to the West for more education or work and may not return home during their most productive years. From the 1950s through the 1970s, the emerging Nigerian elite and the privileged middle class went mainly to the United Kingdom and the United States for educational pursuit, business and work. At the onset, most Nigerians educated abroad readily came home to a growing economy and plum jobs in various sectors owing to the burgeoning oil sector at the time. However, the dynamics changed in the late 1970s and 1980s as political tensions engulfed the country, the economy stagnated, and the Structural Adjustment Program (SAP) was introduced. The economic crisis saw several skilled workers migrate. Arguably Nigeria has never recovered from the SAP, and more so, in the past few years it has faced similar economic headwinds as it did in the late 1970s and 1980s; including an economic recession from the second quarter of 2016 through to 2017. In a fashion similar to the 1980’s migration wave, migration has increased. As the results from our survey suggest, Nigerian students in Canada are



staying abroad longer after graduating. Canada's postgraduate work permit offers an easy route to the "holy grail of immigration" - permanent residency, and they are taking advantage of the program. Furthermore, they and other groups of immigrants have no plans of returning home to live in Nigeria. This finding of unwillingness to return to live in Nigeria presents a major challenge to the benefits that could accrue from brain gain for Nigeria. Instead, the country is losing several generations of well-bred students and highly skilled workers in one swoop, with no end in sight.

Widespread poverty and the deterioration of the wellbeing of many also sustains the pressure for labour emigration. The inability of job creation opportunities to meet up with rapid population and labour force growth places a tremendous strain on socio-economic development, generates high levels of under- and unemployment and drives migratory pressures. Our Canada Rush survey finds that Nigerians are migrating to secure a better life for themselves and their families. They migrate in search of employment opportunities and better personal life outcomes, for better education, to secure a better future for their kids, and to escape insecurity. A further evidence of the dire economic situation in the country on migration from our Canada Rush Survey is that the higher proportion of the remittances that immigrants make is for the upkeep of their families left in Nigeria; compared to other categories like business investments and construction. This, alongside the finding that the search for employment opportunities is a major motivation to migrate highlight the low levels of subsistence incomes in Nigeria. This goes without saying that for some households in the country, the goal of having their basic needs met from month to month is only made possible by the remittances.

On another note, while the "Canada Rush" stems from weak Nigerian economy, coupled with spate of widespread insecurity; it is also a function of several external factors including a more favorable immigration policy environment in Canada relative to traditional migrant destinations such as the United States, the United Kingdom and other European countries. Canada offers several pathways to permanent residency. Also, over the past few years, it has implemented several liberal immigration policies including an upward review of its immigration targets to admit more than a million new permanent residents between 2018 and the end of 2021. With these targets, the process for migrating to the country have been streamlined and enhanced, and even more immigration pathways and programs are being piloted. At the same time, the United States of America, Canada's neighbour to the South, has become stricter on immigration. Indeed, as several of the respondents in our survey affirm, they would have migrated to the United States, but are concerned about the rise of populism and the strict immigration policies of the current US administration and are opting for Canada instead.

The findings of this study revealed that the top five reasons (the push factors) for the new trend of Nigerians seeking to emigrate to Canada, are: (1) better career opportunities, (2) heightened insecurity, (3) the desire to provide better future for their children, (4) for further education, and (5) as a result of poor governance in the country. In addition to these push factors, the favourable



Canadian immigration schemes, which makes it easy for educated and highly skilled Nigerians to emigrate, serve as pull factors.

In summary, the findings of this study highlight existential gaps in government's inability to stimulate a strong thriving economy, galvanize an effective security architecture that delivers security to all citizens, and promote institutional reforms to deliver public goods to citizens. Simply put, Nigerians are not emigrating to Canada because they want to, they are going there because they do not believe Nigeria provides them any opportunity, and security, to thrive as citizens.

Finally, a resounding theme from this study is that most individuals are migrating in search of opportunities outside of Nigeria whether in the form of employment, business and career opportunities, education, or to secure a better future for their children. As if to say they feel these are elusive in Nigeria.

Going forward, it is not likely that the trend of Nigerian professionals migrating would abate soon. However, there is every need to strengthen current policies that stimulate growth and socioeconomic development in the country, and which make staying in Nigeria an attractive option to the burgeoning working class. At the very least, the government needs to invest more in basic infrastructure and actively tackle corruption. Furthermore, the country can position itself to more actively take advantage of its youth bulge and be a hub for industry and manpower development.

The government should also strengthen policies and programs aimed at actively managing labour migration from the country by engaging with foreign partners. Canada had signaled interest to work with Nigeria in this direction with the visit of Canada's Immigration Minister to Nigeria in May 2018 to engage support from Nigeria's government to tackle irregular migration.



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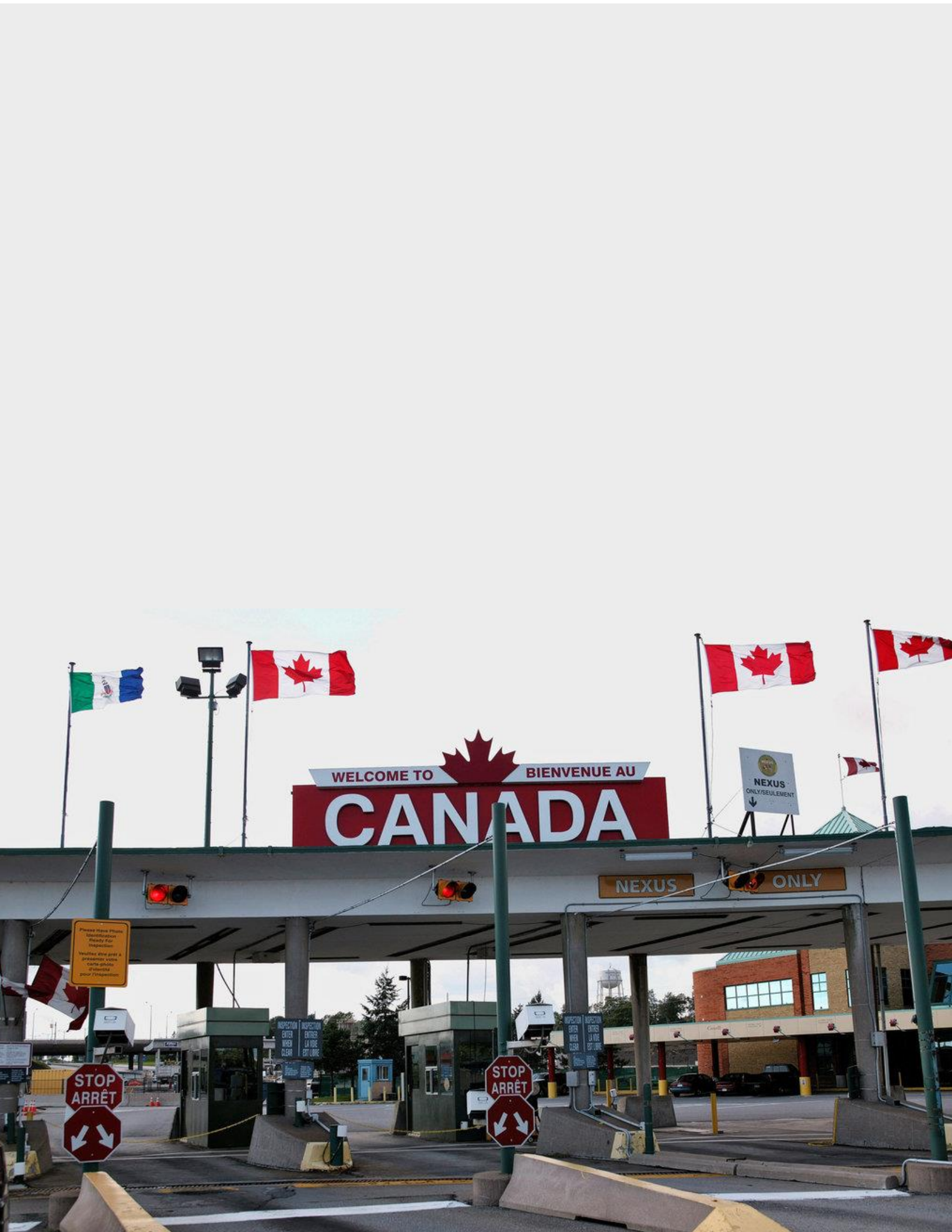
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1.0 Introduction

Nigeria is Africa's most populous country, with an estimated population of 196 million people in 2018 and is projected to have the third-largest population in the world by 2050 (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, UNDESA, 2017). It has a relatively young population with about 44percent less than 15 years old and about 75percent less than 35 years old. The population of males and females is near equally distributed, accounting for 50.7percent and 49.3percent of the total population respectively.

The number of international migrants globally has continued to grow in response to the demands and realities of globalization; reaching about 258 million or 3.8percent of the global population in 2017. Nigeria has also contributed its share to the pool of international migrants, with estimates from UNDESA showing that as of 2017, there were about 1.3million Nigerian emigrants across the globe, up from 600 thousand barely two decades ago in 2000¹. Arguably, these are very conservative estimates as there are several data gaps in the determination and mechanisms of emigration by Nigerians. The available data shows that there are relatively more Nigerian emigrants in developed regions like Europe and North America than the less developed regions of the global south.

There is nothing new about the emigration of Nigerians for various reasons, however, news-worthy episodes of their mass emigration to specific countries as has been the case of Nigerians emigrating to Canada recently, deserve closer examination. Over the years, the number of Nigerians who have acquired permanent residence in Canada for the most part, has maintained an upward trajectory reaching about 4,100 individuals in 2014. The number of those immigrating through Canada's famous Express Entry program (which began in January 2015), its International Mobility Program as well as through less regular channels to seek asylum has drawn the attention of the media in Canada and Nigeria. In 2015, 100 Nigerians moved to Canada through the Express Entry program, 1,510 admissions were granted through the International Mobility Program, and at the same time, 795 claims were made for asylum in Canada by Nigerians. These numbers have steadily risen to reach 6,655, 2,540 and 8,895 individuals for Express Entry, International Mobility Program and asylum applicant admissions respectively by December 2018.²

Surveys of Sub-Saharan Africa migrants in North America – including Nigerians - have indicated they are usually highly skilled and educated than their counterparts elsewhere in Europe.³ Anecdotal reports on the occupations of Nigerians migrating to Canada suggest that most are highly skilled workers in the healthcare and information and technology sectors. Along with other

¹ "Data | Migration data portal." <http://migrationdataportal.org/data>. Accessed 8 Aug. 2019.

² "Permanent Residents - Open Government - Canada.ca." Accessed August 8, 2019. <https://open.canada.ca/data/en/dataset/f7e5498e-0ad8-4417-85c9-9b8aff9b9eda>.

³ Monica Anderson and others, *Sub-Saharan African Immigrants in the U.S. Are Often More Educated than Those in Top European Destinations*, 2018 <www.pewresearch.org> [accessed 4 June 2018].



groups of Nigerian migrants, they represent a critical middle-class of skilled professionals whose exit from Nigeria constitutes brain drain, capacity depletion and loss of manpower needed to drive the country's economic growth and development agenda.

Asides newspaper articles and online blogs citing anecdotes of this “Canada Rush”, there has been no detailed empirical study seeking to explore and deconstruct the motivations for this recent upsurge. This study begins to bridge that gap. It carefully considers the recent upsurge in the number of Nigerians migrating to Canada (regularly and irregularly) and seeks to explore the drivers, enablers and motivations for the recent upsurge, and examine its implication for the Nigerian economy, with the aim of proffering recommendations and advocating key policy responses. The study seeks to answer a number of germane questions that ensue as follows:

1. Why are Nigerians migrating to Canada?
2. What are underlying factors behind the recent upsurge in the number of Nigerians migrating to Canada?
3. What are the implications of this migration upsurge for the Nigerian economy?

In answering these questions, the study caters to the following objectives:

1. To identify the push and pull factors underlying Nigerians' migration to Canada.
2. To explore the drivers, enablers and motivating factors responsible for the recent upsurge.
3. To investigate how Nigerians migrating to Canada could otherwise impact the Nigerian economy.

This report is comprised of seven sections. Section one is the introduction which presents the research questions and research objectives. Section two contains some base definitions of who is a migrant and presents the trends and stocks of migration from Nigeria. In section three the report narrows its focus to Nigerian migrants in Canada, examines the trends over the years and looks at the several pathways which they follow to obtain temporary and permanent residency. Section four contains a review of the literature for the motivations, drivers and enablers of migration from Nigeria. In section five the results from the Canada Rush survey is presented. Section six is the policy discussion and recommendation and section seven contains the conclusion.



2.0 Out of Nigeria

This chapter presents a brief definition and discussion of who a migrant is. It outlines a brief history of the trends of emigration from Nigeria and maps out the current spread of Nigerian migrants around the World.

2.1 Who is a Migrant?

The IOM uses “migrant” as an umbrella term to describe “a person who moves away from his or her place of usual residence, whether within a country or across an international border, temporarily or permanently, and for a variety of reasons”⁴. Although the term neither has a universally accepted definition nor is it uniquely defined in international law, the IOM’s definition seeks to capture more broadly, other well-defined legal categories of people, such as migrant workers; persons whose particular types of movements are legally-defined, such as smuggled migrants; as well as those whose status or means of movement are not specifically defined under international law, such as international students⁵. UNDESA defines an “international migrant” as “any person who changes his or her country of usual residence”⁶. This definition, however, excludes movements that are due to recreation, holiday visits to friends and relatives, business, medical treatment or religious pilgrimages. Also, UNDESA estimates of migrants in various countries often do not include international student populations.

There is some debate in the international migration literature on whether the term “migrants” is inclusive for refugees; i.e. individuals fleeing war or persecution. While an Inclusivist view holds that it is, a Residualist view argues otherwise.⁷ For the purpose of this study, the Inclusivist view is adopted such that migrants include refugees, foreign workers, trafficking victims, trailing spouses, international students and other less precise categories of individuals. Simply, therefore, an international migrant is a person who is living in a country other than his or her country of birth for any extended period of time.

2.2 Out of Nigeria: Migration Stocks and Trends

The geographical location which Nigeria occupies has for a long time been a migration hub even from the pre-colonial trans-Saharan trade and the trans-Atlantic slave trade eras. Adekola (2017), summarizes the existing research and identifies six waves of emigration from Nigeria namely (1)

⁴ "Glossary on Migration - IOM Publications - International Organization"
https://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/iml_34_glossary.pdf. Accessed 8 Aug. 2019.

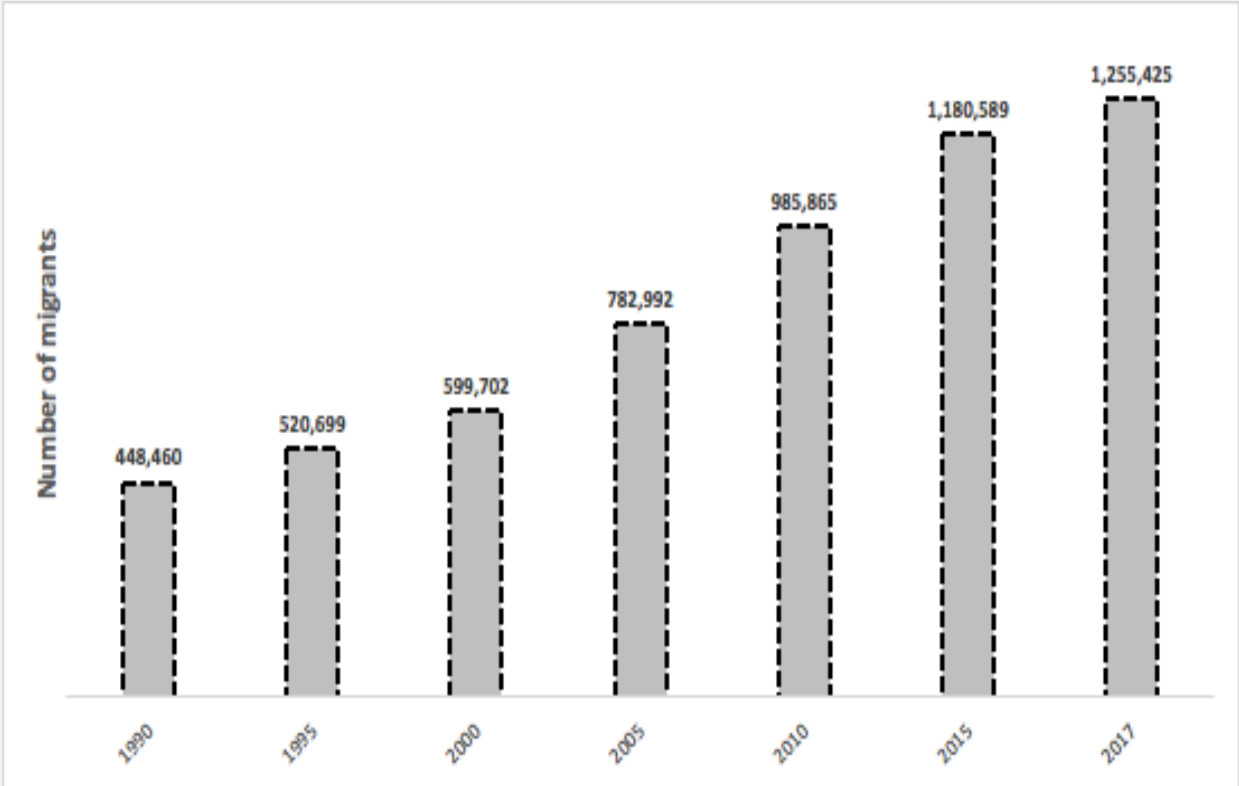
⁵ "Glossary on Migration - IOM Publications - International Organization"
https://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/iml_34_glossary.pdf. Accessed 8 Aug. 2019.

⁶ "Toolkit on International Migration - the United Nations."
http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/migration/publications/others/docs/toolkit_DESA_June%202012.pdf. Accessed 8 Aug. 2019.

⁷ "meaningofmigrants.org – Explaining the meaning of migrants and" <https://meaningofmigrants.org/>. Accessed 8 Aug. 2019.

the religious pre-colonial and colonial-era emigration of the Hausas to Mecca and Medina; (2) the involuntary emigration through the 16th - 19th century transatlantic slave trade; (3) The colonial-era emigration from the 1860 to 1947 for education and labour - to the UK, the US and other African countries; (4) the post-independence emigration from 1960 as Nigerians sought greener pastures elsewhere and following Nigeria's civil war (1967-1970); (5) The socio-political emigration of the 1980s and early 1990s as Nigerians fled economic austerity and political repression; and (6) the economic emigration of Nigerians to OECD countries. The data from the more recent past shows that the stock of Nigerian migrants around the world has been increasing steadily (Figure 1).

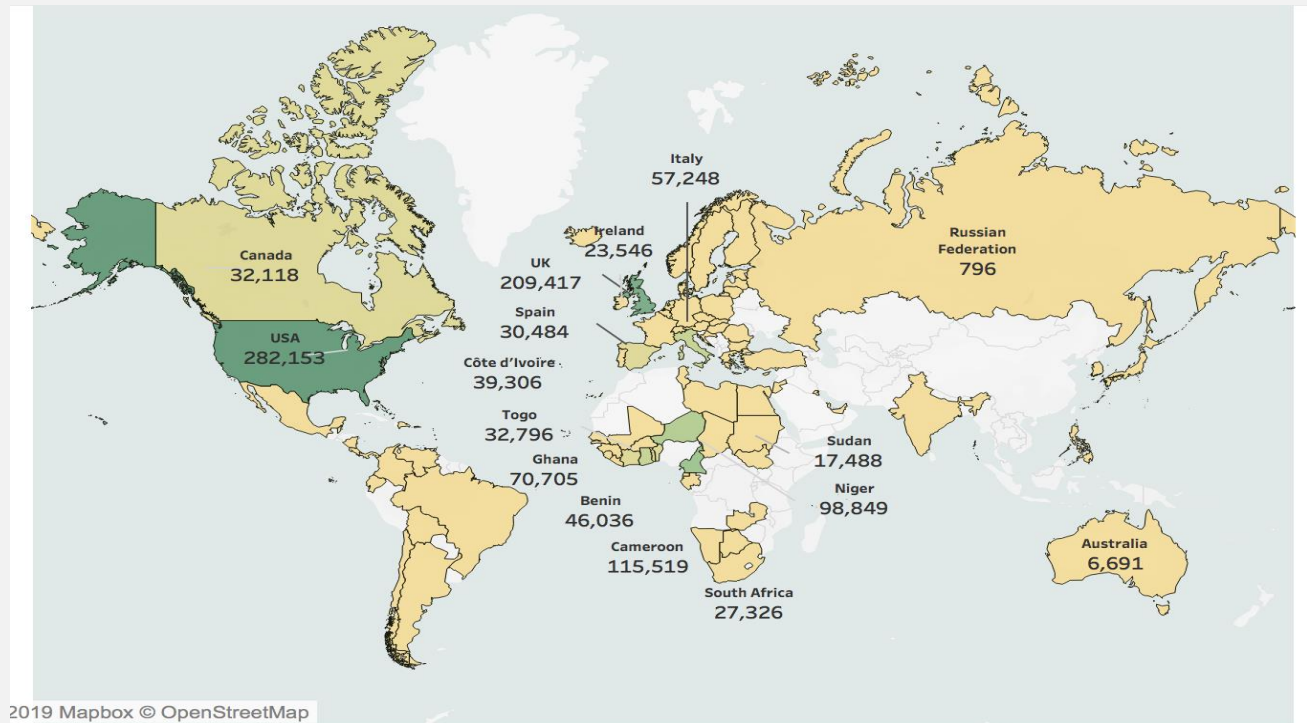
Figure 1: Total stock of Nigerian migrants around the World, 1990-2017



Source: United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs. Population Division, UNDESA (2017).

The distribution of Nigerian migrants has not been even around the World. Most of the emigration that goes on in Africa - including from Nigeria - is to other African countries. The data, however, also shows that there are higher stocks of Nigerian migrants in developed countries of the global north especially Europe and North America compared with elsewhere in Africa (Fig 2).

Figure 2: Stock of Nigerian Migrants in various countries, 2017



Data Source: UNDESA (2017)

Nigeria has maintained a large bilateral migration corridor with the United States of America and the United Kingdom. UNDESA data also shows that Canada has constantly featured among the top 10 destinations of Nigerian migrants; trailing the US, UK, Italy and other West African countries like Cameroon, Niger, Ghana, Benin, Cote D'ivoire and Togo.

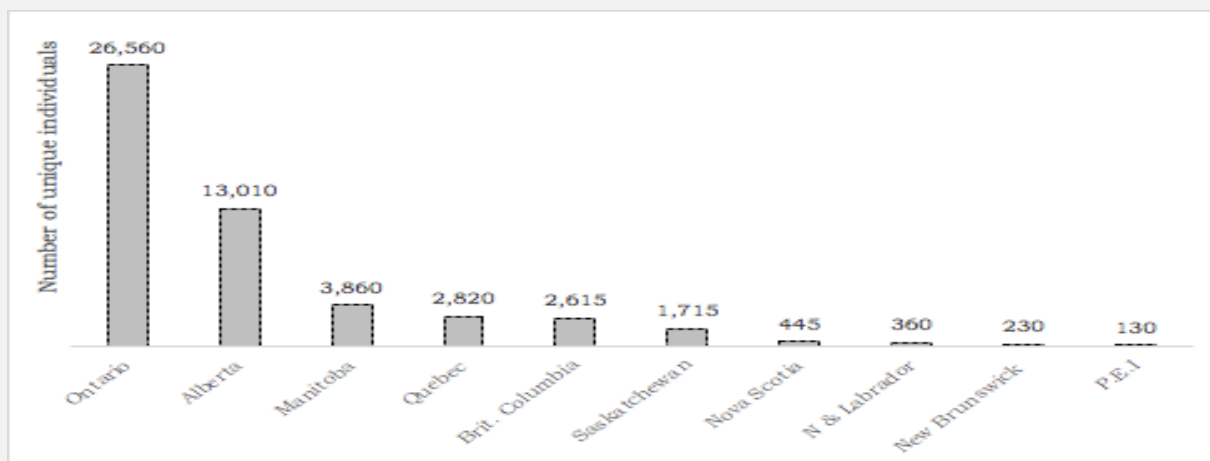
3.0 Nigerian Migrants in Canada

Canada is one of the world's highest-income countries, is located in North America and is the world's second-largest country by total land area. Various indigenous peoples have inhabited what is now Canada for thousands of years before European colonization and settlement beginning from the 16th century. Canada prides itself on being one of the world's most ethnically diverse, multicultural and accommodating nations owing to its liberal immigration policies and large-scale immigration from other countries.

Adekola (2017) observes that Nigerians began migrating to Canada during the period from 1967 to 1970; a time that coincides with Nigeria's civil war. However, Ogbomo (1999) observes that Nigerians began to migrate to Canada even before the civil war but were listed by immigration officials as part of a general category of Africans until 1973.⁸ Official IRCC data showed that in 1980, 81 Nigerians gained permanent residence in Canada. This number has increased annually over the years (with slight declines in some years) to reach 4,133 individuals in 2015.

The earliest available Canadian census data which identifies Nigerians separately from other Africans was for 2006, when there were about 19,600 individuals who identified as Nigerians.⁹ At the time 3,310 identified as Yoruba, and 715 as Ibo. Ten years later in the 2016 census, there were 51,835 Nigerians in Canada. Among them, 9,585 identified as Yoruba, 5,315 as Ibo, and 1,945 as Edo. These numbers are not evenly distributed across the country. Rather, most Nigerians were based in two of Canada's provinces; Ontario (26,560 individuals) and Alberta (13,010 individuals), which together accounted for about 76 percent of all Nigerians in Canada.

Figure 3: Nigerian Migrants in Canada's ten provinces, 2016



Source: Statistics Canada, StatsCan, (2017)

⁸Ogbomo, Onaiwu Wilson (1999), "Nigerians", in Magocsi, Paul R., The Encyclopedia of Canada's Peoples, University of Toronto Press, ISBN 978-0-8020-2938-6,

⁹"Ethnocultural Portrait of Canada - Data table." <https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2006/dp-pd/hlt/97-562/pages/page.cfm?Lang=E&Geo=PR&Code=01&Table=2&Data=Count&Sex=Both&StartRec=1&Sort=2&Display=All&CSDFilter=5000>. Accessed 8 Aug. 2019.

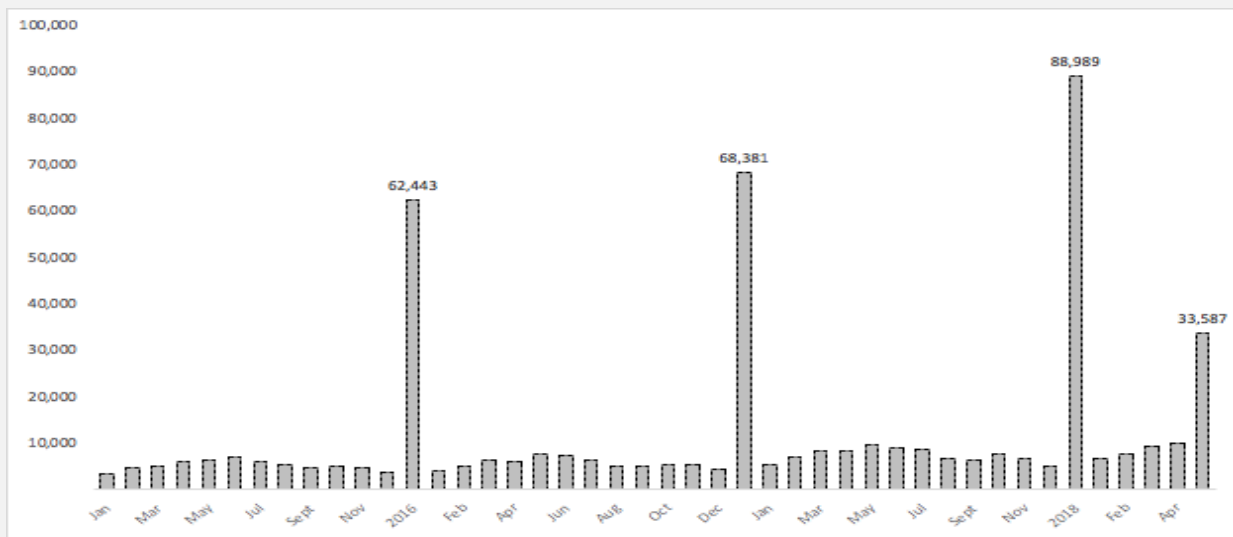
Nigerians in Canada’s Migration Pathways

There are several pathways for individuals seeking to migrate to Canada. The pathway also determines the immigration category and residency status of the individual. Migrants in Canada could fall into one of two broad categories of temporary residents and permanent residents. Temporary residents are non-Canadian citizens who are legally allowed to live and/or work in the country on a temporary basis. They include international students, temporary foreign workers, and visitors or tourists. On the other hand, permanent residents are non-Canadian citizens who have been granted the right to live and work in Canada without any limits on the time they are allowed to stay in the country. In this section, both of these migration categories and the pathways/program within each is considered. Also, the representation of Nigerian migrants on each is discussed in brief detail.

3.1 Temporary Residency in Canada

This section considers some of the temporary residency options explored by Nigerians to gain entry to Canada. Temporary resident applications include Temporary Resident Visas, Visitor Records, Study Permits, Study Permits Extensions, Work Permits and Work Permits Extensions. Figure 4 shows that there were over 88,000 temporary resident visa applications by Nigerians in Canada. This number is an increase from those in 2016 and 2017.

Figure 4: Temporary Resident Visa Applications by Nigerians in Canada, 2016 - Apr 2019



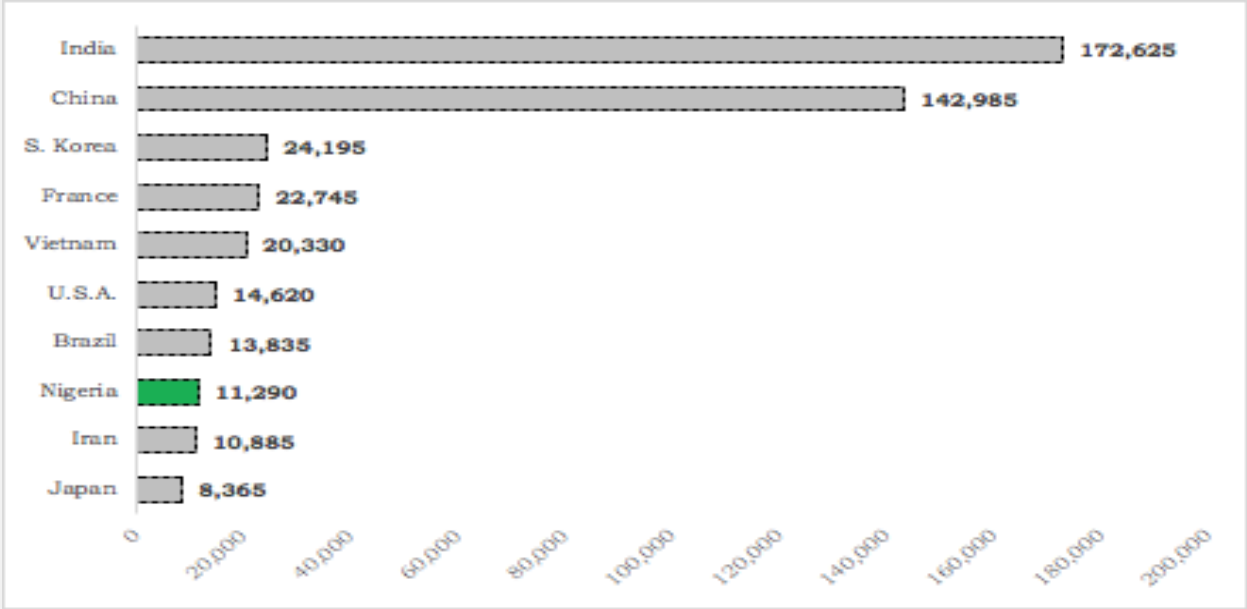
Source: IRCC (2019)

3.2 “I want a Foreign Degree”: Nigerian Students in Canada

Canada’s international students are temporary residents who are legally authorized to study in the country (depending on the conditions of their visa, they may also be permitted to work for limited periods of time over the course of their study). Most of Canada’s international students

come from Asia; particularly China, India, South Korea and Vietnam. However, since 2000 Nigeria has constantly featured among the top ten countries of origin of these students. At the end of 2018, there were 11,290 active Canadian study permit holders of Nigerian origin.

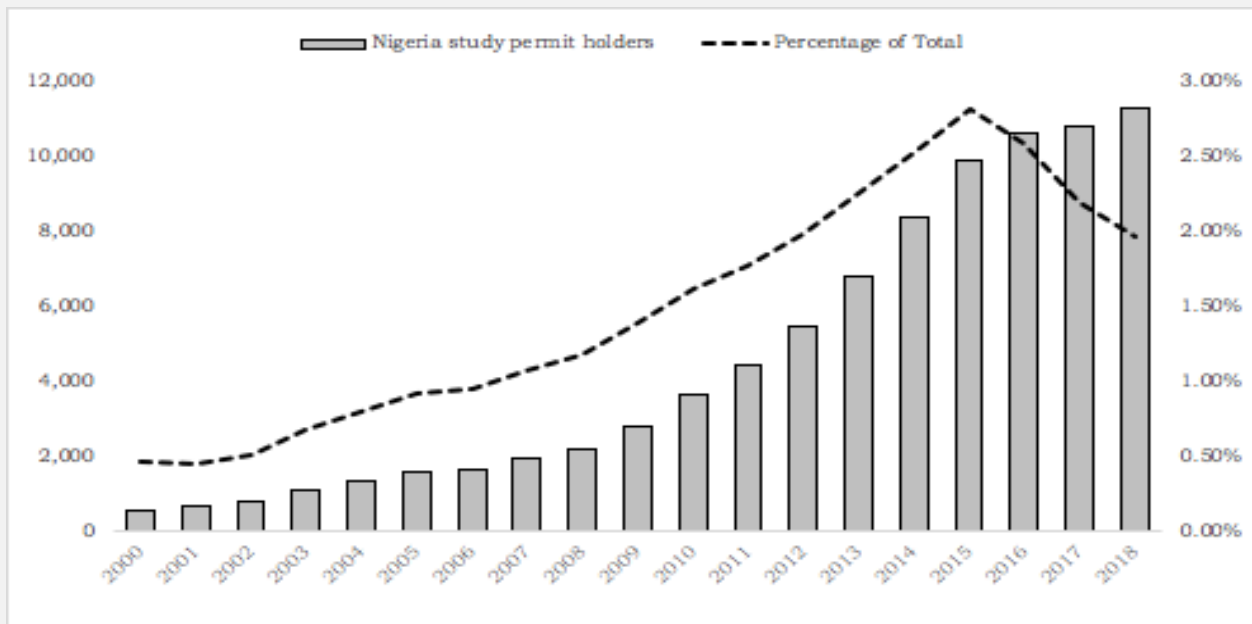
Figure 5: Top 10 countries of origin of Canada’s International Students, 2018



Source: IRCC (2019)

The number of Nigerian students in Canada has maintained an upward trajectory from less than 1,000 students in year 2000 to over 11,000 students in 2018. The trend of Nigerians as a proportion of all Canada’s international students was also upward until 2015 when it began to decline (Figure 6). The downward trend coincides with increases in the number of Nigerians migrating irregularly to seek asylum in Canada since 2015. However, no causal link is assumed between both trends.

Figure 6: Nigerians with valid Canadian Study Permits, Total and % of Total, 2000 – 2018



Source: IRCC (2019)

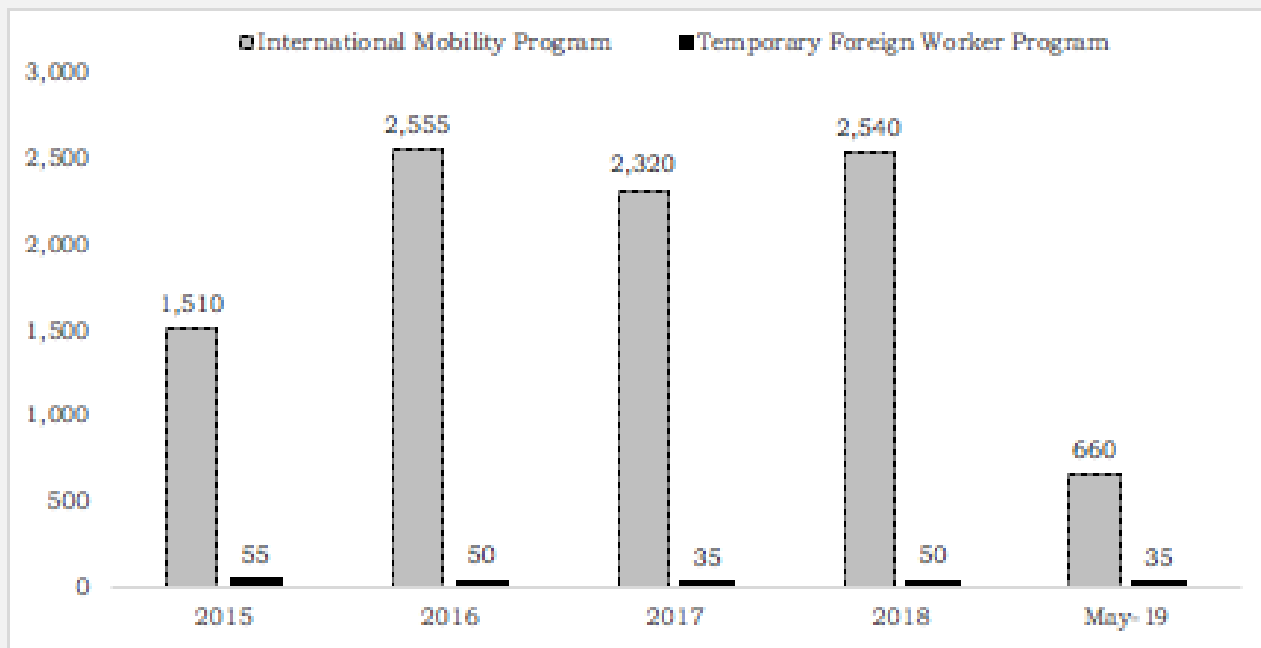
International studentship in Canada offers a unique and interesting pathway to permanent residence. Subject to certain conditions and exemptions, international student graduates of Canada’s tertiary institutions are eligible to apply for a Post-graduate Work Permit (PGWP). The permits which are valid for varying lengths of time are meant to give international students the opportunity to gain valuable Canadian work experience to facilitate an Express Entry/permanent residence application if they choose to do so.

3.3 Temporary Foreign Workers Program and the International Mobility Program

Canada’s Temporary Foreign Workers and International Mobility Programs allow Canadian employers to hire foreign workers temporarily to fill short-term labour and skill shortages. The temporary foreign worker program requires employers to complete a Labour Market Impact Assessment (LMIA).¹⁰ On the other hand, the International Mobility program lets Canadian employers hire a temporary foreign worker without a LMIA.

¹⁰ A Labour Market Impact Assessment (LMIA) is a document that an employer in Canada may need to get before hiring a foreign worker. A positive LMIA will show that there is a need for a foreign worker to fill the job. It will also show that no Canadian worker is available to do the job. A positive LMIA is sometimes called a confirmation letter.

Figure 7: Nigerians with Canada's International Mobility Program and Temporary Foreign Worker Program work permits, 2015 - May 2019



Source: IRCC (2019)

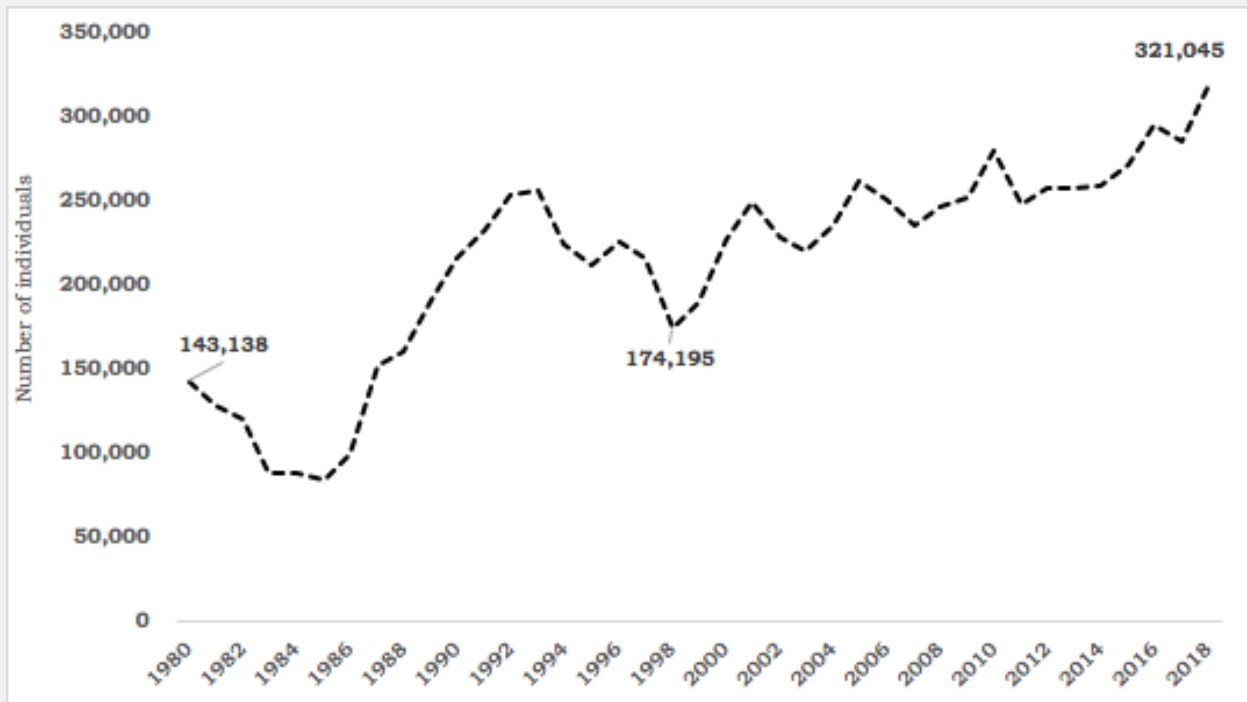
As figure 7 shows, the TFWP has not been a popular temporary residence option for Nigerians, compared with the IMP through which upwards of 2,000 Nigerians yearly have obtained permits to work in Canada since 2016.

3.4 Permanent Residency in Canada

Arguably, the prime migration category for most migrants is obtaining permanent residency in Canada. A permanent resident in Canada has most of the rights, freedoms, and protections prescribed in Canada's Charter of Rights and Freedoms (except for those exclusive to Canadian citizens such as the right to vote and run for elected office) as well as several of the rights and responsibilities accorded to citizens including the right to live, work, and study in any part of the country (except in jobs that require high-level security clearance.¹¹ Owing to the country's liberal immigration policies, the number of permanent residents admitted to the country yearly has steadily increased from about 150,000 individuals in 1980 to over 320,000 individuals at the end of 2018 (Figure 8).

¹¹ "Permanent residency in Canada - Wikipedia." https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Permanent_residency_in_Canada. Accessed 9 Aug. 2019.

Figure 8: Total Yearly Admissions of Permanent Residents in Canada, 1980 – 2018



Source: IRCC (2019)

As of August 2019, potential migrants can apply for and obtain a permanent residency in Canada under any one of ten immigration programs/pathways - each with different admission requirements - namely; (1) Federal Skilled Workers program/Express Entry (2) Refugees and Asylum; (3) Family sponsorship; (4) Provincial Nominee Programs (5) Quebec-selected skilled workers program; (6) Atlantic Immigration Pilot; (7) Home Child Care Provider Pilot and Home Support Worker Pilot; (8) Start-up Visa Program; (9) Self-employed persons; and (10) Rural and Northern Immigration Pilot. The available data shows that some pathways are far more engaged by Nigerian migrants than others.

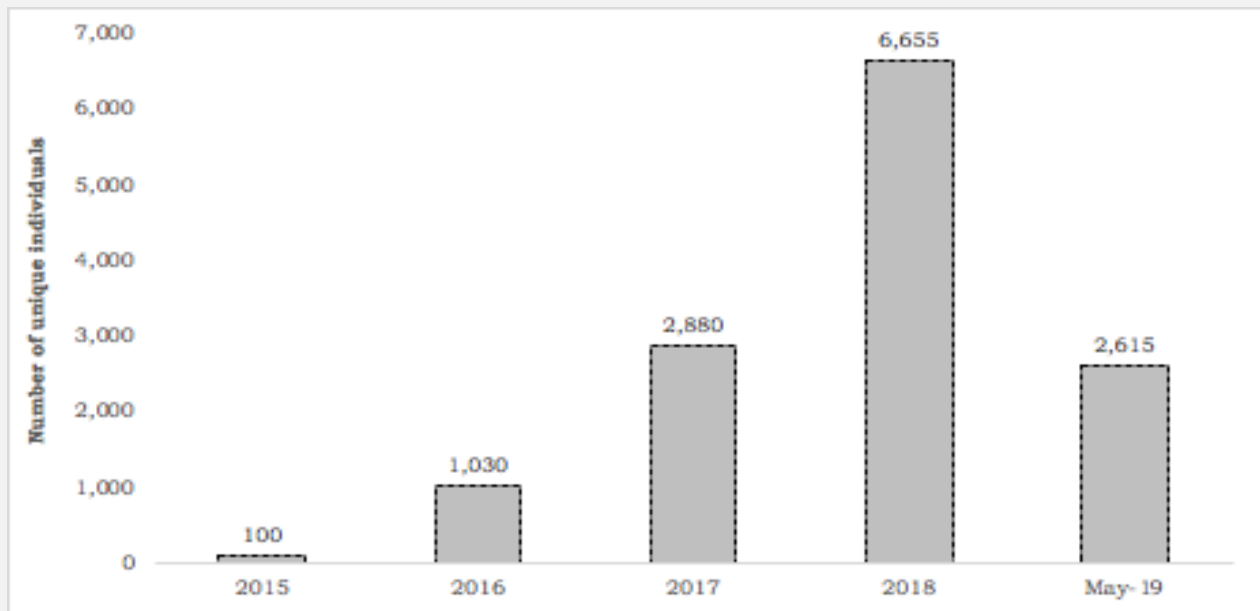
3.5 Federal Skilled Worker Program (FSWP) / Express Entry

Canada's federal skilled worker program, which was launched on January 1st, 2015, is its most popular immigration pathway. It offers a pathway for skilled workers to immigrate and reside permanently in Canada. Express entry is the online platform that manages applications to the program. Its Comprehensive Ranking System (CRS) is points-based and ranks candidates (potential migrants) using a combination of such factors as education, age, professional experience, language tests, job offer, provincial nomination etc. Routine draws are carried out

and the higher-ranking candidates in the express entry pool are invited to apply for permanent residency in Canada.^{12 13}

The express entry pathway is one that has been increasingly explored by Nigerians migrating to Canada. Figure 9 shows the number of Nigerians that have gained permanent residence in Canada through the express entry program since it was launched in 2015 until May 2019. It shows that year-on-year, the number has more than doubled between 2015 and 2018; when 6,655 Nigerians were granted permanent residency.

Figure 9: Nigerian Permanent Residents in Canada through Express Entry, 2015 - May 2019



Source: IRCC (2019)

3.6 Refugees and Asylum

According to the United Nations, “a refugee is someone who is unable or unwilling to return to their country of origin owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion” (UN General Assembly, 1951, p.152). An asylum seeker on the other hand, is someone who has applied for protection as a refugee in a country other than their country of citizenship and is awaiting the determination of their status. Canadian law under the *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act*

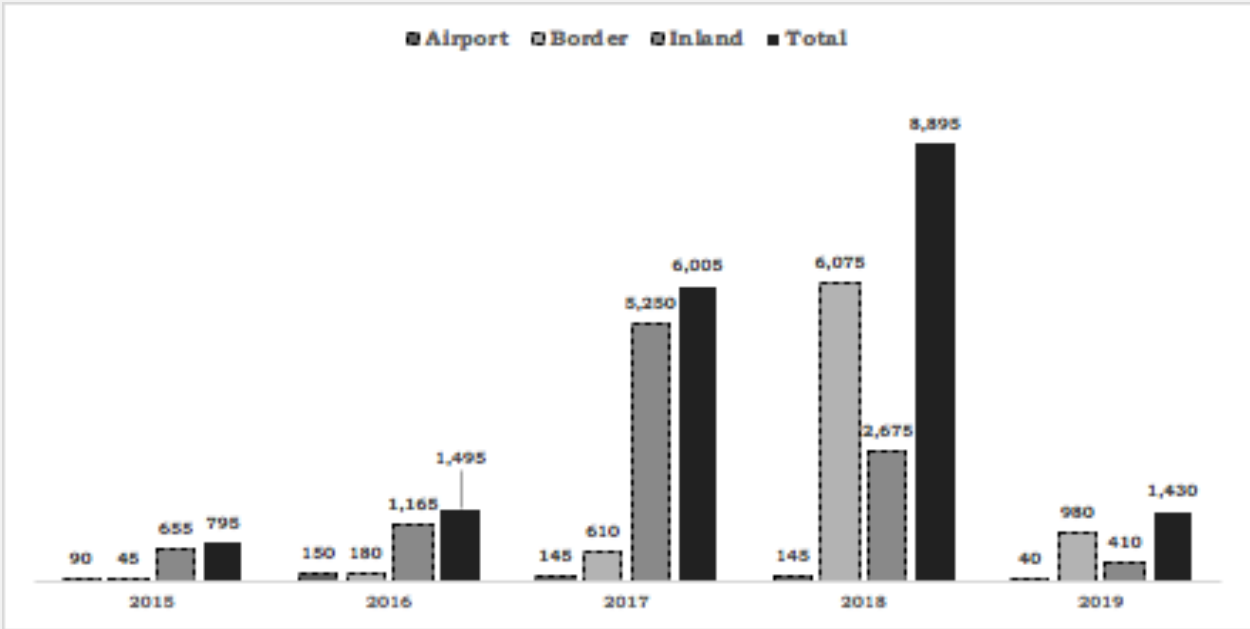
¹² "How Express Entry works - Canada.ca." 26 Jun. 2018, <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/immigrate-canada/express-entry/works.html>. Accessed 9 Aug. 2019.

¹³ "Three years of the Express Entry program - Canada Immigration News." 2 Jan. 2018, <http://www.immigrationnews.ca/2018/01/02/3-years-express-entry-program/>. Accessed 9 Aug. 2019.

adopts this definition and allows individuals who meet some basic security clearance criteria to apply for residence and protection in the country as refugees.

The refugee/asylum pathway is one that in recent times has been explored and arguably abused by Nigerians migrating to Canada. The number of Nigerian asylum claimants in Canada increased significantly from about 800 individuals in 2015 to almost 9,000 by December 2018. The mode of entry and the immigration office where their claims are made has also evolved. In 2015, 2016, and 2017, the bulk of the asylum claims were made at inland immigration offices. However, since 2018 there has been a significant shift in this trend, with more applications being made at Canada’s borders.

Figure 10: Asylum claims made by Nigerians in Canada by office type and Total, 2015 - May 2019



Source: IRCC (2019)

Through 2016 to 2018, the news in Canada had reports of people entering irregularly from the United States into the country at unofficial border crossings to seek asylum. In 2016, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) apprehended 2,464 such individuals (Kathleen Harris, 2018). In 2017, 20,593 apprehensions were made (IRCC, 2018), and an additional 11,769 apprehensions in the first quarter of 2018. Many of these individuals were Nigerians (IRCC, 2018). In the first quarter of 2018, the number of Nigerian asylum seekers was 2,995 – including those applying at official and unofficial border crossings (IRCC, 2018). These numbers placed Nigeria as the top country of origin of asylum seekers to Canada in 2018.

The influx of asylum seekers from the US into Canada has been attributed to the changing immigration policy stance of the US government which threaten the continued stay of ‘illegal

immigrants' and certain other categories of individuals in the country (Proctor, 2017). As of August 2018, 444 deportation orders had been issued against Nigerians in the US who had violated immigration rules, compared with 227, 248 and 279 deportation orders in 2015, 2016, and 2017 respectively (TRAC Reports, n.d.). Meanwhile, the irregular migration of Nigerians (and other nationals) from the US to seek asylum in Canada, has also been tied directly to the 'Safe Third Country Agreement' STCA between Canada and the US – which effectively prevents individuals from seeking asylum at official Canadian border crossings if they have first been in the US (Proctor, 2017). The implications of the changing immigration policy of the current U.S administration on the STCA and its further implications for deconstructing the “Canada rush” are further explored in a later section.

3.7 Family Sponsorship

Canadian citizens, persons registered as Indian under the Canadian Indian Act, and permanent residents of Canada who are older than 18 years can sponsor certain relatives to become permanent residents in Canada. Eligible relatives include spouses or common law partners, dependent children, parents and grandparents, orphaned siblings, nephews/nieces and grandchildren, and other extended blood relatives like uncles or aunts only if the principal applicant has no close living relative (as aforementioned) that they could sponsor instead. To be eligible to sponsor their relatives, however, permanent residents are to prove that they are not receiving social assistance for reasons other than a disability and they can provide for the basic needs of any persons they want to sponsor.¹⁴ This pathway has also been used by Nigerians to help members of their family to immigrate to Canada.

3.8 Provincial Nominee Programs (PNP)

The provincial nominee program is a pathway targeted to cater to individuals who have skills, education and work experience to contribute to the economy of a specific Canadian province or territory. Each province has a PNP stream which it manages in coordination with the federal government. Under the general PNP framework, each individual secures a nomination from their chosen province upon which they submit another application to THE federal government through Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada. The process is then integrated with the express entry process. Overall, the processing times for the PNP are longer than through express entry.¹⁵

¹⁴ "Sponsor your family members to immigrate to Canada - Canada.ca." <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/immigrate-canada/family-sponsorship.html>. Accessed 16 Aug. 2019.

¹⁵ "How the Provincial Nominee Program (PNP) works - Canada.ca." 21 Mar. 2019, <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/immigrate-canada/provincial-nominees/works.html>. Accessed 9 Aug. 2019.

3.9 Quebec-Selected Skilled Workers Program

The province of Quebec has a special arrangement on immigration with the government of Canada. It has its own rules and criteria for choosing immigrants who will adapt well to living in the province; including proficiency in French language (and English language). To migrate to Quebec individuals first have to apply to the government of Quebec for a selection certificate. If the province selects the individual, they must then apply to Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada for permanent residence.¹⁶ Although non-proficiency in the French does not automatically disqualify from getting permanent residence through the Quebec-selected skilled workers program, it puts one at a competitive disadvantage with other French proficient applicants. This appears to be a significant barrier for potential Nigerian migrants who are largely English speaking. Census figures for 2016 shows that there were 2,820 Nigerians in Quebec; 460 identified as Yoruba, 185 as Ibo, and 110 as Edo.

3.10 Atlantic Immigration Pilot

The Atlantic Immigration Pilot is targeted at designated employers in Canada's Atlantic provinces - New Brunswick, Newfoundland and Labrador, Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island - to enable them hire international and domestic candidates for jobs that they have not been able to fill locally. The employer-driven program has three streams - Atlantic International Graduate Program, Atlantic High-skilled Program, and Atlantic Intermediate - each having different candidate requirements. To immigrate to Atlantic Canada through the pilot, candidates must be recent graduates of a public-funded institution in Atlantic Canada or a skilled worker who meets the programs other requirements. There is no publicly available data on the involvement of Nigerian immigrants with the program.¹⁷

3.11 Home Child Care Provider Pilot and Home Support Worker Pilot

As of June 2019, individuals can apply for permanent residence in Canada through the Home Child Care Provider Pilot and Home Support Worker Pilot. The pilot is two-tiered in that applicants get an open occupation-restricted work permit which allows them to get the work experience needed to be eligible to apply for permanent residence. The permits are however restricted to home child provider, home support worker and caregiver roles.¹⁸

¹⁶ "Quebec-selected skilled workers: About the process - Canada.ca." 1 Feb. 2019, <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/immigrate-canada/quebec-skilled-workers.html>. Accessed 10 Aug. 2019.

¹⁷ "Immigrate through the Atlantic Immigration Pilot: about the pilot" 31 May. 2019, <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/immigrate-canada/atlantic-immigration-pilot/how-to-immigrate.html>. Accessed 9 Aug. 2019.

¹⁸ "Caregivers." 8 Jul. 2019, <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/immigrate-canada/caregivers.html>. Accessed 10 Aug. 2019.

3.12 Start-up Visa Program

Canada's start-up visa program targets immigrant entrepreneurs. To be eligible for the start-up visa, applicants must have a qualifying business - in which they hold at least 50% (individually or up to 5 applicants jointly) of the voting rights attached to all shares of the corporation. To support their application, they must get a letter of support from a designated organization - a business group that has been approved to invest in or support possible start-ups -, and at the time of receiving permanent residence, they must provide active and ongoing management of the business from within Canada - with the business being incorporated and having essential operations in Canada.¹⁹ On the average, to qualify for permanent residence under this program, applicants must also secure at least CAD\$75,000 from angel investors or CAD\$200,000 from venture capital funds. However, if the start-up is supported by a business incubator program, there is no minimum funding requirement.²⁰ Although there is no publicly available data showing Nigerians migrating through this pathway, it is clearly quite onerous and less pursued by typical Canadian migrants.

3.13 Self-Employed Persons Program

The self-employed persons program allows people with relevant experience in cultural activities or athletics and who are willing and able to make a significant contribution to the cultural or athletic life in Canada to immigrate to Canada permanently. Applicants are assessed and selected based on criteria including experience, education, age, language abilities and adaptability.²¹

3.14 Rural and Northern Immigration Pilot

The Rural and Northern Immigration Pilot is a community-driven program to help participating rural and northern Canada communities to attract and retain foreign skilled workers to meet their economic development and labour market needs.²² In the general framework, interested skilled workers need to find a job with an employer in one of the participating communities. If the community endorses the individual, and they are successful in applying for permanent

¹⁹ "Immigrate with a start-up visa: Who can apply - Canada.ca." 16 Jan. 2019, <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/immigrate-canada/start-up-visa/eligibility.html>. Accessed 10 Aug. 2019.

²⁰ "Startup Visa Canada 2019 - Canadian Immigration Experts." 23 May. 2019, <https://canadianimmigrationexperts.ca/startup-visa-canada-2019/>. Accessed 10 Aug. 2019.

²¹ "Immigrate as a self-employed person" 7 Jun. 2019, <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/immigrate-canada/self-employed.html>. Accessed 10 Aug. 2019.

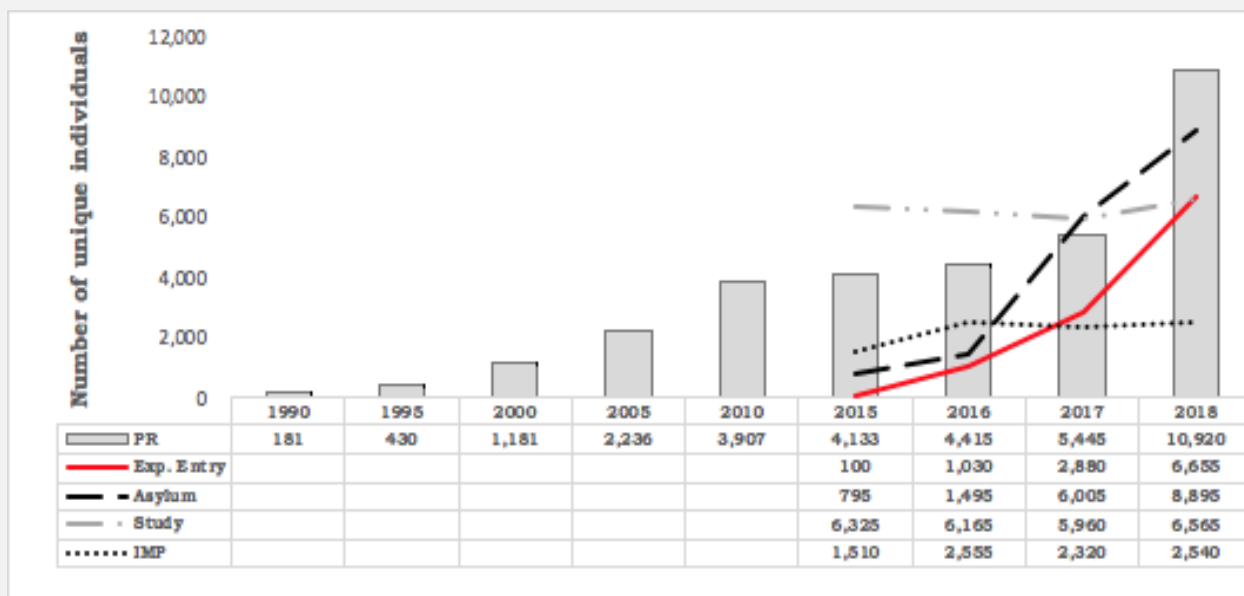
²² "Rural and Northern Immigration Pilot - Canada.ca." 26 Jun. 2019, <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/immigrate-canada/rural-northern-immigration-pilot.html>. Accessed 10 Aug. 2019.

residence, they will then move there to work and live. The application process for eligible candidates is expected to begin in fall 2019.²³

3.15 Summary

The preceding sections examine the trends in the various categories of Nigerian migrants in Canada. The examined data shows significant migratory patterns, such that for several of the major categories of migrants, Nigerians featured in the top ten countries of origin. Figure... summarizes the trends in the main categories of Nigerians migrating to Canada on temporary and permanent residence visas since 2015; express entry candidates, asylum seekers, students, and temporary foreign workers.

Figure 11: Number of Nigerian Migrants in Canada (various categories), 1990 – 2018



Note: PR - Permanent Residence, Exp. Entry - Permanent Residence under Express Entry, Asylum - Asylum Claimants, Study - Study permit holders, IMP - International Mobility Program work permit holders.

Source: Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, IRCC (2019)

Recently, the express entry and asylum pathways have been very popular among Nigerian migrants. The trend in the number Nigerian international students have been relatively stable as has the number of those obtaining temporary residence through Canada’s international mobility program.

²³ "Rural and Northern Immigration Pilot: About the pilot - Canada.ca." 14 Jun. 2019, <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/immigrate-canada/rural-northern-immigration-pilot/about.html>. Accessed 10 Aug. 2019.

4.0 On the Move

The reasons why people choose to migrate can be categorized on three levels namely macro-level, micro-level and meso-level factors (Carbone, 2017). Macro-level factors affect all the different types of individuals that leave a country. This could include the demographics of origin and destination, distance, as well as economic and other socio-political factors. Micro-level factors affect the individual migrant distinctively. Specific factors could include their personal features; age, gender, health, language, ethnicity, etc. as well as the resources available to them to facilitate their migration including finances, skills and education. Meso-level factors are the middle, less obvious factors and wider networks connecting the individual with the broader society. These different sets of factors could be responsible for the migration seen in the country.

A different and perhaps a more empirical categorization schema differentiates between push and pull factors of international migration. These factors are conceptualized within the so-called gravity international-migration model which conceives of international migration flows as a system of demand and supply relationships (Karemera, Oguledo, & Davis, 2000). Here, bilateral migration flows are expressed as a function of three broad classes of explanatory variables over time. This includes: (a) political, economic and demographic factors in the origin country – push factors; (b) political, economic and demographic factors in the destination country – pull factors; and (c) factors enhancing or restraining migrant flows to the destination country including artificial factors such as migration policies of destination countries and government limitations on freedom of travel in source countries or natural factors including distance, transport, information or other costs (Karemera et al., 2000; Mayda, 2005; Facchini & Mayda, 2008).

The rest of this section reviews the available literature and research on what are the motivations, drivers and enablers of the so-called Canada rush of Nigerians. It also makes a cursory attempt of estimating the personal financial cost of moving to Canada. Furthermore, it examines several of the dimensions of the impacts of migration on Nigeria's socio-economic development including brain drain, brain waste, brain gain and remittances.

4.1 Motivations, Drivers and Enablers of Migration from Nigeria

Adepoju, (2017) argues that in Nigeria, widespread poverty and the deterioration of the wellbeing of many have created sustained pressure for labour emigration. The inability of job creation opportunities to meet up with rapid population and labour force growth places a tremendous strain on socio-economic development and generates high levels of under- and unemployment and accompanying migratory pressures. This forces citizens to leave the country in search of better income opportunities. Ortega & Peri, (2012) suggest that the huge income inequalities between rich and poor countries continue to generate large international worker mobility.

Altai Consulting, (2015) and Adepoju, (2017) have associated the levels of migration from Nigeria with the level of conflicts in parts of the country especially the Boko Haram insurgency in the North Eastern part of the country which started in 2009 and has claimed many lives. IOM (2017b) observes, however, that even though some of the conflict-affected Nigerian population seeks refuge in neighbouring countries, most displaced persons remain within Nigeria and do not migrate from the country. Momoh (2019) empirically investigates the drivers of irregular migration from Nigeria to several countries and finds that conflict and sociopolitical factors in the country a far less significant when compared to broad economic factors, social networks and the immigration policies of the destination countries.

Nigerians may also migrate in response to the information available to them. Many young people are under pressure to migrate to Europe or some other destination as the general belief is that living conditions are better in these countries. Adepoju, (2017) argues that the internet has facilitated communication, but it has also increased the flow of false and exaggerated information regarding living conditions abroad. Earlier migrants often funnel through relatively huge earnings and remittances. They have investments in real estate at home in Nigeria and this entices others to emulate them. Another way that the previous migrants are a reason for subsequent migration is through the network effect which they provide to new migrants. Such networks could encourage migration by lowering the costs of migration information and assimilation difficulties (Beine, Docquier, & Özden, 2011).

Finally, the immigration policies of the destination can be an important factor in migration decisions. On the irregular migration of Nigerians to Europe, Adepoju (2017) argues that the closed-door policy of the EU has inadvertently boosted irregular migration by youths bent on securing entry into more prosperous countries. They then resort to irregular migration because the opportunities and resources for regular migration are not readily available to them. Czaika & De Haas, (2013) makes a similar argument by noting that restrictive migration policies tend to exact a relatively smaller effect on immigration when compared with other social, economic and political constraints and drivers. Czaika & Hobolth, (2014) argue that restrictive immigration policies can have often led to substitution for irregular migration.

Meanwhile, the spate of Nigerians migrating from the country (as documented in the previous sections of this report) may not abate soon. In a recent 2018 Afrobarometer survey²⁴, more than one in three Nigerians have considered emigrating from the country. Among those who have considered migrating, about 12% claimed to be taking active steps to move, and another 32% planned to move within the next year or two. Their desired destinations were in North America, Europe and to a lesser extent, other African countries. The predominant reasons given for the

²⁴ "One in three Nigerians have considered emigration ... - Afrobarometer." 27 Aug. 2018, http://afrobarometer.org/sites/default/files/publications/Dispatches/ab_r7_dispatchno231_migration_in_nigeria_1.pdf. Accessed 16 Aug. 2019.



desire to migrate were finding work (35%), escaping economic hardship/poverty (31%), or pursuing better business prospects (10%). A separate Pew Research Center survey²⁵ conducted in 2018 found that about 45% of adults say they plan to move to another country within five years. In yet another career-specific survey by NOIpolls²⁶ in 2017, about 8 in 10 medical doctors in Nigeria were seeking work opportunities abroad owing to challenges which they face in the medical profession such as poor remuneration, high taxes and deductions, low work satisfaction and huge knowledge gaps with their western counterparts.

4.2 Pricey New Beginnings

Flahaux & De Haas, (2016) and Adepoju, (2017) question the general belief that migration in Nigeria and other African countries is driven by poverty. They argue that a higher level of economic growth and development, the spread of new technologies as well as political stabilization in some African countries have increased the capabilities and aspirations of Africans to move²⁷ - especially over greater distances. Similarly, Carbone (2017, p7) has argued that “contrary to popular perceptions, it is not the poorest and destitute that depart their home places to try and reach more advanced nations, since some basic financial resources and skills are necessary to afford long-distance mobility”.

Flahaux & De Haas, (2016), Adepoju, (2017) and Carbone, (2017)’s narrative aligns with recent anecdotes of Nigeria’s “emerging middle class” leaving for Canada. As of August 2019, the application fee for a single individual for Canada’s express entry program costs about \$1,040 (all \$ are Canadian dollars) - including a processing fee of \$550 and a right of permanent residence fee of \$490. An extra \$1,040 is charged for applications including a spouse or partner. Language tests and certificate assessments which cost about \$200 and \$300 respectively could be required to support express entry applications. Applicants will also need to prove they can fend for themselves after making the move. This requires that they show proof of funds ranging from \$12,000 to \$35,000 depending on the size of the family.²⁸

²⁵ "Many in Nigeria, Tunisia, Kenya plan to leave country in next 5 years" 27 Mar. 2019, <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2019/03/27/many-nigerians-tunisians-and-kenyans-say-they-plan-to-leave-their-countries-in-the-next-five-years/>. Accessed 17 Aug. 2019.

²⁶ "New survey reveals 8 in 10 Nigerian doctors are seeking ... - NOI Polls." <https://noi-polls.com/new-survey-reveals-8-in-10-nigerian-doctors-are-seeking-work-opportunities-abroad/>. Accessed 16 Aug. 2019.

²⁷ For example, Adepoju, (2017) argues that political independence in South Africa in 1994, opened an alternative destination for Nigerian emigrants who pursued jobs in education, commerce and industry and other sectors rather than migrate to Europe – which had more restrictive immigration policies. However, in recent years, violent xenophobic attacks targeted at foreigners and immigrants, mostly Nigerians, blamed for the ills in the society, in several cities in South Africa may have stemmed the tide of Nigerians migrating there.

²⁸ "Proof of funds – Skilled immigrants (Express Entry) - Canada.ca." 28 Feb. 2019, <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/immigrate-canada/express-entry/documents/proof-funds.html>. Accessed 16 Aug. 2019.



Excluding the costs of flight tickets, the budget to make the express entry move could be anywhere from \$15,000 upwards. This is about four million Nigerian Naira. Recent 2019 minimum wage legislation pegs the minimum wage in Nigeria at #30,000 monthly (up from #18,000 - Naira). At #30,000 and supposing all other factors remain the same, it will take a minimum wage earner in Nigeria about 11 years of saving all their monthly income to finance the move to Canada. For an entry-level grade 08 salary earner in Nigeria's federal civil service earning #120,000 (or less), the express entry move would take them about three years of saving all their monthly income. For the average Nigerian worker, therefore, immigration to Canada is not cheap and the financial requirements to make the move puts this "pricey new beginning" out of the reach of many.

4.3 Brain-Drain, Brain Waste and Brain Gain

There are several aspects of the impacts of migration on Nigeria's economic development, including brain-drain, brain waste and brain gain (Isiugo-Abanihe & IOM Nigeria, 2016). Brain drain describes the loss of highly skilled nationals of a country through long-term employment abroad. It impacts negatively on developing countries because it deprives them of enough skilled manpower needed to drive development. Brain waste occurs when skilled migrants are under-employed abroad resulting in deskilling. Brain gain captures the benefit of reverse migration of individuals who have gained skills abroad.

Surveys of Sub-Saharan Africa migrants in North America indicate that they are usually highly skilled and educated than their counterparts elsewhere in Europe.²⁹ Of the approximately Fifty-two thousand Nigerians counted in Canada in Canada's 2016 census, about Twenty-seven thousand were males and about Twenty-five thousand were females. The difference of two thousand indicates that there are marginally more men than women Nigerian migrants in the country. Anecdotal reports on the occupations of Nigerians migrating to Canada suggest that most are highly skilled workers in the healthcare and information and technology sectors. Along with other groups of Nigerian migrants, they represent a critical middle-class of skilled professionals whose exit from Nigeria constitutes brain drain, capacity depletion and loss of needed manpower to drive the country's economic growth and development agenda.

While there are no data that disaggregates the careers and origins of immigrants in Canada, there are however a few studies that identify the healthcare as a profession of choice for Nigerian women migrants in Canada (Banjo, 2012; Adekola, 2017) as well as other reports of mass migration of Nigerian medical professionals (NOIPolls, 2018). According to the Association of

²⁹ "Sub-Saharan African Immigrants in the United States | migration policy" 3 May. 2017, <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/sub-saharan-african-immigrants-united-states>. Accessed 12 Aug. 2019.



Nigerian Physicians in the Americas there are over 4,000 physicians, dentists and allied health professionals of Nigerian birth practicing in the US, Canada and the Caribbean.³⁰ Also, according to P. Adepoju, (2018), the Canadian Medical Association Masterfile has recorded a quadrupling of Nigerian doctors practicing in the country over a decade, from 176 in 2008 to 568 in 2018. Meanwhile, Nigeria has a doctor to patient ratio of 1 to every 4,088 residents, far below the WHO recommended 1 to 600 patients' ratio. There is a significant brain drain from the healthcare sector in Nigeria to Canada.

4.4 Remittances: "We Send Money Home"

Migration often has subsequent positive impacts on the economic livelihood of the migrant and their families through remittances. Remittances are a potential economic development tool in Nigeria as it is typically channeled into financing cottage industries, business and real estate investment (Isiugo-Abanihe & IOM Nigeria, 2016). Nigeria's diaspora has been described as the country's largest export owing to the huge amounts which they remit. In 2018, an estimated \$25billion (US dollars) was remitted by Nigerians in diaspora, up from \$22billion in 2017. These numbers make Nigeria the largest remittance recipient in sub-Saharan Africa, and the sixth largest globally in 2018 (after India \$79 billion, China \$67 billion, Mexico \$36 billion, the Philippines \$34 billion, and Egypt \$29 billion).^{31,32}

Adepoju (2002) shows that migration in Africa is closely linked to long term family strategies involving the investment of resources in educating at least one member of the family (in most instances the firstborn of the family) who is then expected to seek out opportunities for income generation in their migration destination. Remittances are hence a significant source of household income and base investment capital for education, health, sanitation, housing and infrastructure. In this way education, migration and remittances are linked in long-term household strategies of economic development.

The Canadian International Development Platform (CIDP)³³ curates and publishes data on remittances outbound from Canada to other countries. These estimates are generally based on the assumption that globally, remittances by migrant workers tend to be from 3 to 4 times aid flows. It was estimated that remittances to Nigeria from Canada was about \$435.6million in 2017.

³⁰ "Association of Nigerian Physicians in the Americas - ANPA." <https://anpa.org/>. Accessed 19 Aug. 2019.

³¹ "Record High Remittances Sent Globally in 2018 - World Bank Group." <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2019/04/08/record-high-remittances-sent-globally-in-2018>. Accessed 17 Aug. 2019.

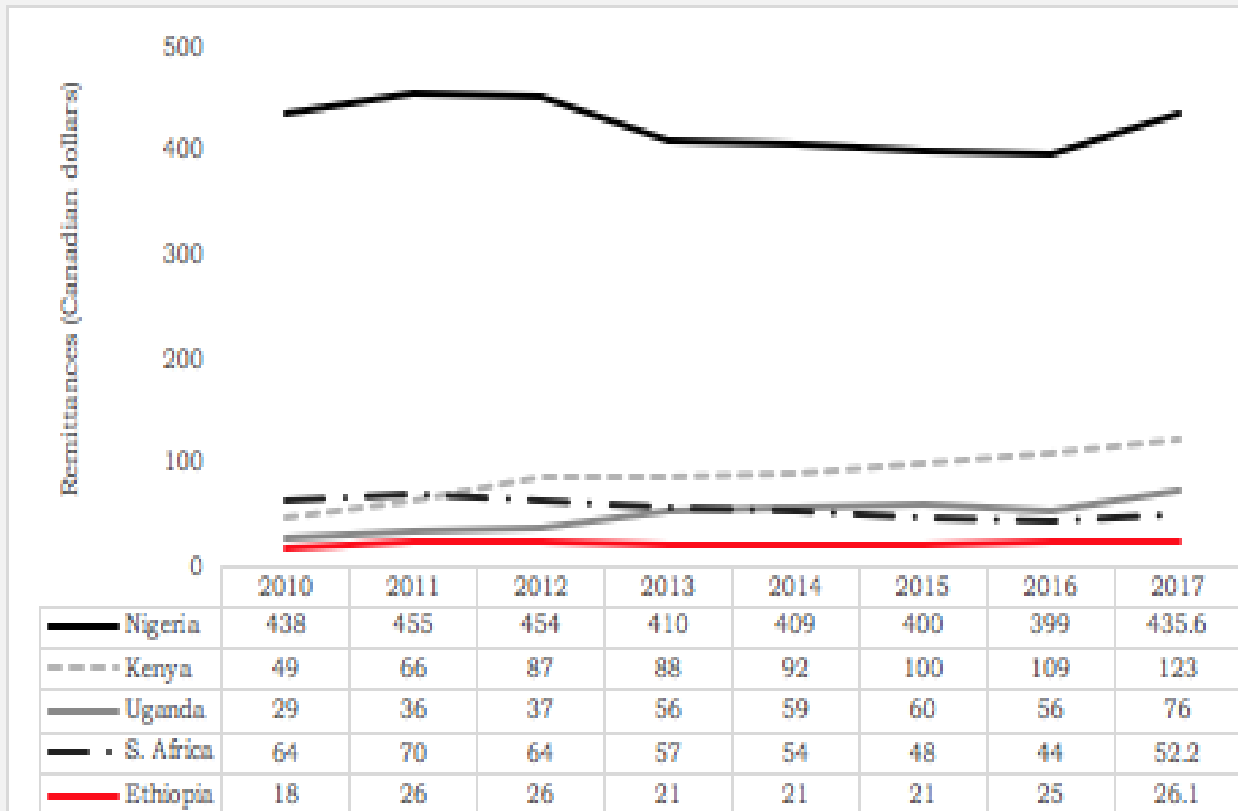
³² These figures do not, however, typically include remittances by irregular migrants through informal and less regulated channels.

³³ "Remittances Explorer – CIDP | Canadian International Development" <https://cidpnsi.ca/remittances-explorer/>. Accessed 19 Aug. 2019.



This amount was about 2 percent of the total remittance to Nigeria in 2017³⁴. As figure 12 shows, there has been a relatively steady trend in these flows since 2010. These figures made Nigeria, Canada's largest remittance recipient in Africa.

Figure 12: Canada's Outbound Remittances to top Five African Recipient Countries, 2010 - 2017 (US dollars)



Source: Canada International Development Platform, CIDP (2019)

There are no similar data of remittances from Nigeria to Canada, however, in 2018, Nigeria was Canada's second largest bilateral merchandise trading partner in Sub-Saharan Africa and Canada's largest export market on the continent, with bilateral merchandise trade totaling \$948.4 million - Canadian merchandise imports from Nigeria totaled \$480.5 million and Canada's exports to Nigeria totaled \$467.9 million.³⁵

³⁴ Dimbuene & Turcotte, (2019) have lesser estimates for the amount sent by Nigerians to relatives and friends living abroad. They estimate that in 2017, between \$52 and \$89 million (Canadian) was sent by Nigerians resident in Canada to their relatives and friends living abroad.

³⁵ "Canada - Nigeria Relations - Canada's International." 29 May. 2019, https://www.canadainternational.gc.ca/nigeria/bilateral_relations_bilaterales/canada_nigeria.aspx?lang=eng. Accessed 19 Aug. 2019.

5.0 Deconstructing the Canada Rush: Methodology & Survey Results

This section of the report explains briefly the methodology adopted to undertake the study; and thereafter delves into the results and findings. The study began with a systematic review of the migration literature covering areas such as: Who is a migrant; Migration stocks and trends; Nigerian migrants in Canada; Canada migration pathways; Motivations, Drivers and Enablers of Migration from Nigeria; and Brain Drain, Brain Waste and Brain Gain.

Following the literature review, a semi-structured online survey was designed and administered, targeting two classes of respondents (a) prospective Nigerian migrants to Canada, and (b) actual Nigerian migrants in Canada. The survey was designed and hosted on Google forms and administered between the months of October and November 2019.

In addition, given lack of an existing database to identify prospective migrants and the difficulty associated with identifying prospective or actual migrants; convenience sampling was employed to identify personal contacts who are currently exploring the emigration option and those who have already emigrated. Thereafter, the snowballing technique was used to identify other actual and prospective migrants.

Furthermore, our researchers had to disguise as prospective migrants, in order to be granted access to some telegram groups of prospective migrants in Nigeria and actual migrants in Canada; in order to be able to make a post of the online survey link and persuade group members to complete the form via the link [See Figure 13 for Example]. At the end of the survey administration period, the data was thereafter downloaded and cleaned before analysis.

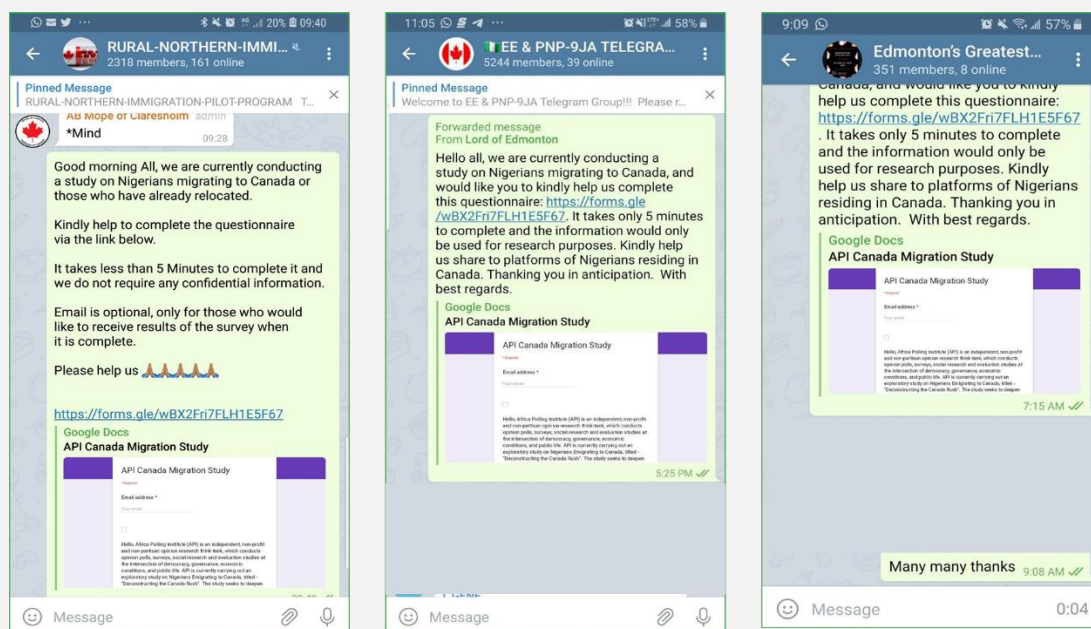


Figure 13: Example of Telegram Platforms on which the Online Survey Link was shared

5.1 Study Demography

Overall, 877 individuals responded to the online survey. Of this number, 870 identified as Nigerians, comprised of individuals from the six geopolitical zones. The survey captured responses from both groups of individuals intended, including 772 people have migrated or considered migrating out of Nigeria. Meanwhile 98 of the respondents to the survey indicated that they had not considered migrating from Nigeria. The rest of this analysis focuses on the 772 individuals - including 490 males and 282 females - who have either migrated or considered migrating out of Nigeria. The survey had more responses from prospective migrants (652 individuals or 84.4%) than from actual Nigerian migrants in Canada (120 individuals or 15.5%). The survey also captured two broad groups by age; individuals aged 18-35years (588 individuals or 76%) and those 36-60years (184 individuals or 24%). Table 1 summarizes the demographics of the different groups of the respondents.

Table 1: Summary of Demographics of Canada Rush Survey

Variable Name	Variable Label	N=772	%=100
Gender	Male	490	63%
	Female	282	37%
Age Group	18 – 35	588	76%
	36 – 60	184	24%
Current Location of Residence	Currently residing in Canada	120	16%
	Currently residing in Nigeria	652	84%
Geo-Political Zone	North-Central	174	23%
	North-East	168	22%
	North-West	310	40%
	South-East	92	12%
	South-South	14	2%
	South-West	14	2%

Source: API (2020)

5.2 Top Countries of Preferred Destination

Apart from Canada (97%)³⁶, other preferred migration destinations include the United States of America, the United Kingdom, Australia and Germany which were chosen among the top three countries of destination of choice by 55%, 43%, 42% and 23% of the respondents respectively. There is a clear bias for Canada owing particularly to the Canada-focus of the survey. Meanwhile,

³⁶ Arguably, the high percentage here is biased by the Canada-focus of the study and the survey instruments.

as figure 2 shows, Canada and these other countries are traditional destinations for Nigerian migrants.

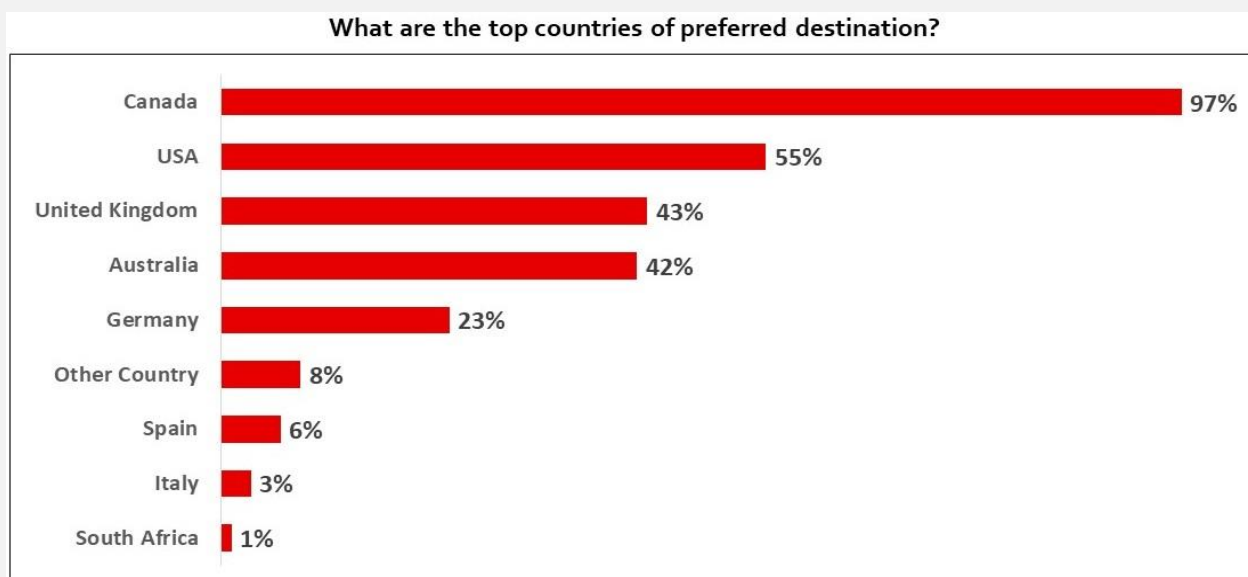


Figure 14: Top countries of Nigerian migrant's preferred destination

The relative difference in the number of responses for males and females as well as ages 18-35years and 36-60 years is a few percentage points in most cases. However, two striking observations are made. Firstly, females (49%) were more likely to prefer migrating to the United Kingdom than males (39%) – 10 percentage points difference.³⁷ Secondly, those aged 18-35years (52%) were less likely to prefer migrating to the U.S than older cohorts aged 36-60years (65%).³⁸

Table 2: Nigerian Migrant's preferred destination by demography

	Total	Gender		Age Group		Geo-Political Zone					
		Male	Female	18 – 35	36 – 60	North-Central	North-East	North-West	South-East	South-South	South-West
Canada	97%	97%	98%	97%	98%	99%	98%	97%	91%	100%	100%
USA	55%	56%	55%	52%	65%	55%	51%	58%	54%	50%	64%
United Kingdom	43%	39%	49%	43%	40%	40%	49%	41%	42%	50%	43%
Australia	42%	43%	40%	41%	45%	51%	45%	40%	35%	21%	21%
Germany	23%	24%	19%	27%	9%	20%	26%	23%	20%	29%	21%
Other Country	8%	9%	6%	8%	5%	10%	8%	6%	10%	0%	0%
Spain	6%	7%	4%	7%	3%	6%	6%	5%	8%	7%	7%
Italy	3%	2%	4%	3%	2%	2%	2%	2%	5%	7%	7%
South Africa	1%	1%	1%	1%	0%	1%	1%	1%	0%	0%	0%

Source: API (2020)

³⁷ The chi test has a P-value of 0.011006. See appendix

³⁸ The chi test has a P-value of 0.002232. See appendix

5.3 Why Are Nigerians Emigrating?

The results indicate that the most important reasons for the intentions or decisions to migrate include: search for better career opportunities (75%), heightened insecurity and violence (60%), better future for my children (55%), for further education (40%), and poor governance in Nigeria (35%). Compared with these, relatively fewer respondents indicate the search for business prospects (12%), family unification (3%) and weather (1%) were less important driving factors for their intention or decisions to migrate.

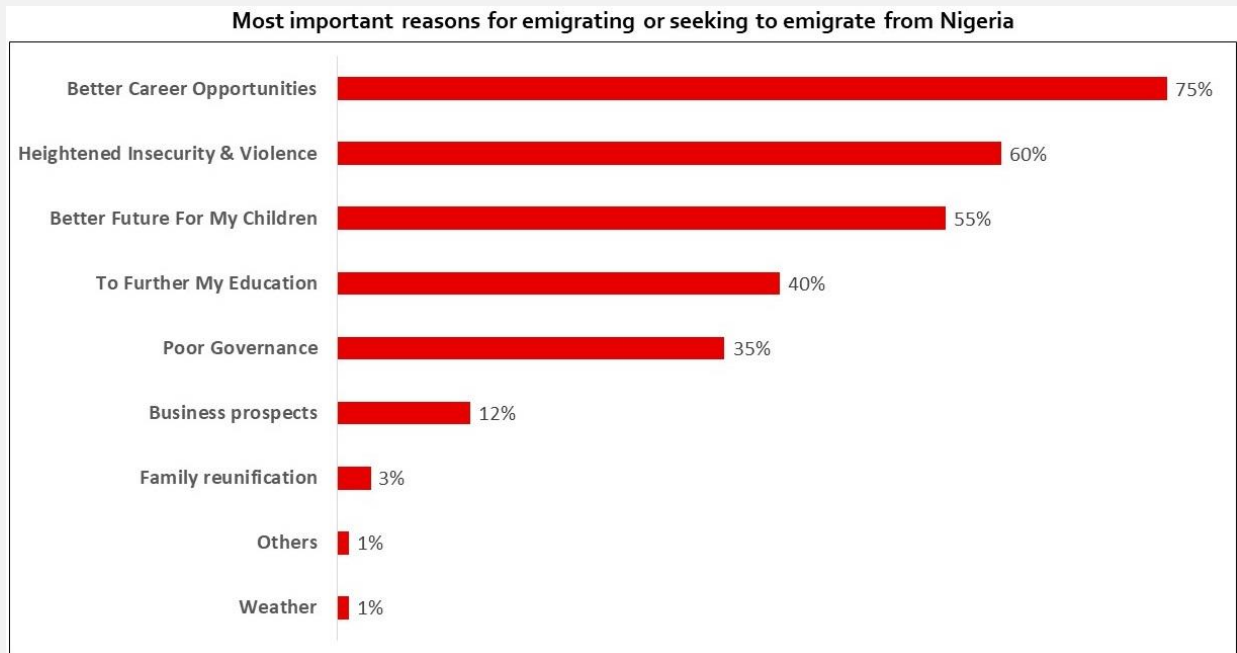


Figure 15: Why Nigerians are Emigrating from Nigeria?

A few differences in the responses between males and females as well as between those aged 18-35years and 36-60years are particularly noteworthy, however. As table 3 shows, males (77% 47% respectively) are more likely to migrate for employment opportunity and education purposes than females (72% and 29% respectively). Furthermore, females (62% and 67% respectively) express a greater likelihood to migrate to “provide a better future for my children” and for “heightened insecurity and violence” than males (50% and 55% respectively). Meanwhile, across age cohorts, the search for better career opportunities and educational advancement appears to be a more important reason for migrating among those aged 18-35years (82% and 45% respectively), than for older folks aged 36-60years (55% and 26%).

On the other hand, “heightened insecurity and violence”, the desire for a “better future for my children”, and “poor governance” appear to be of more concern for those aged 36-60years (74%, 69%, and 39% respectively), than it is for the younger folks aged 18-35years (55%, 50% and 33% respectively). A resounding theme here is that most individuals are migrating in search of

opportunities, whether in the form of employment and career opportunities, educational opportunities or to a safer and secure future for their children. As if to say they feel these indicators are elusive in Nigeria. The results however suggest that migration is fueled more by the pursuit of opportunities than by the fear of danger(s).

Table 3: Reasons for Emigrating from Nigeria by demography

	Total	Gender		Age Group		Geo-Political Zone					
		Male	Female	18 – 35	36 – 60	North-Central	North-East	North-West	South-East	South-South	South-West
Better Career Opportunities	75%	77%	72%	82%	55%	77%	76%	74%	79%	60%	74%
Heightened Insecurity & Violence	60%	55%	67%	55%	74%	60%	63%	56%	64%	68%	53%
Better Future For My Children	55%	50%	62%	50%	69%	57%	55%	55%	53%	48%	34%
To Further My Education	40%	47%	29%	45%	26%	43%	37%	40%	44%	35%	42%
Poor Governance	35%	36%	33%	33%	39%	36%	35%	37%	27%	26%	26%
Business Prospects	12%	14%	9%	13%	9%	14%	12%	13%	11%	0%	0%
Family Reunification	3%	3%	3%	3%	4%	2%	3%	4%	2%	0%	0%
Weather	1%	1%	%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	0%	7%
Others	1%	1%	2%	1%	2%	2%	1%	2%	0%	7%	7%

Source: API (2020)

Momoh (2019) follows other immigration studies to find that the presence of social networks in the destination country could be a major factor in determining migration choice and destination. About 67% of the total survey respondents indicate that they have family or friends residing in Canada. The survey results also show that family and friends are the major channel through which respondents acquired information about migrating to Canada (47%). Other lesser important channels through which they acquire this information is through social media (28%), personal research (23%), and to an even lesser degree, immigration seminars (2%).



Table 4: Factors influencing Nigerian Migrant choices and destination

How did you first hear about migrating to Canada?

	Total	Gender		Age Group		Geo-Political Zone					
		Male	Female	18 – 35	36 – 60	North-Central	North-East	North-West	South-East	South-South	South-West
Family and Friends	47%	39%	60%	42%	63%	51%	48%	47%	40%	36%	50%
Social Media	28%	31%	22%	32%	15%	26%	30%	25%	36%	28%	29%
Personal Research	23%	27%	17%	24%	21%	21%	21%	25%	23%	36%	21%
Immigration Seminar	2%	3%	1%	2%	1%	2%	1%	3%	1%	0%	0%

Source: API (2020)

5.4 Perceptions of Prospective Migrants about Immigration and Life in Canada

The survey drills further down into the opinions and perceptions of respondents about different aspects of Canadian society and life in Canada using Likert scale type questions. The questions look at areas that are central to the Canadian identity and life in Canada as shown in the existing literature; including quality of life, healthcare, safety, respect of human rights, and immigration policies. They also look at Canada relative to the United States of America in the face of stricter immigration policies in the later. Table 5 summarizes the questions and the respective responses (in percentages).

Respondents believe that Canada offers a good quality of life, supported by good healthcare services – about 78% agree³⁹ with this. They also tend to believe that Canada is a safe country (overall 74% agree), with respect for human rights and a great immigration system (overall 73% agree) and where Nigerian and other immigrants can easily be integrated into the society (overall 71% agree). Respondents were surveyed on their career success in Nigeria to examine how that might inform their decision to migrate. They were presented with the following statement “I am successful and have a good job in Nigeria, but Canada is a place where I would like to raise my children; that is why I decided or will like to migrate”. Here, about 55% agreed with the statement, 21% were neutral about it, while about 24% disagreed with it.

Furthermore, when presented with the statement “I would have migrated to the United States, but I am concerned about the rise of populism and the strict immigration policies of the current US administration, that is why I chose to migrate to Canada”, about 50% of the respondents agreed with the statement in one way or the other, 22% were neutral, and 28% disagreed with it. Overall, respondents express a strong sense that Canada is a favorable migration destination with opportunities for Nigerians.

³⁹ This includes those that say they “strongly agree” as well as those that “tend to agree” with the statement “I believe Canada offers good quality of life and healthcare.”

Table 5: Opinions and perceptions of Nigerians about Immigration and Life in Canada

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?		Total	Gender		Age Group	
			Male	Female	18 – 35	36 – 60
<i>I am considering migration, or I have migrated to Canada because I believe Canada has friendly immigration policies.</i>	Strongly agree	55%	54%	58%	53%	64%
	Tend to agree	15%	14%	17%	16%	11%
	Tend to disagree	6%	7%	4%	5%	7%
	Strongly disagree	10%	11%	7%	10%	9%
	Neutral / Don't know	14%	14%	14%	16%	9%
<i>I believe Canada is a place where human rights and the law are respected; and the best country in the world in terms of its immigration policies.</i>	Strongly agree	56%	58%	54%	55%	62%
	Tend to agree	17%	15%	22%	18%	15%
	Tend to disagree	7%	8%	5%	6%	8%
	Strongly disagree	9%	10%	7%	9%	9%
	Neutral / Don't know	11%	9%	12%	12%	6%
<i>I believe Canada welcomes people from other countries; and it's easy for Nigerians and other immigrants to integrate into the Canadian system.</i>	Strongly agree	52%	50%	54%	52%	54%
	Tend to agree	19%	17%	22%	19%	18%
	Tend to disagree	6%	6%	6%	5%	8%
	Strongly disagree	10%	12%	7%	10%	10%
	Neutral / Don't know	13%	15%	11%	14%	10%
<i>I believe Canada offers good quality of life and healthcare.</i>	Strongly agree	66%	65%	67%	65%	65%
	Tend to agree	12%	11%	14%	12%	11%
	Tend to disagree	4%	4%	4%	3%	8%
	Strongly disagree	10%	12%	8%	11%	9%
	Neutral / Don't know	8%	8%	7%	9%	7%
<i>I believe Canada is much safer than Nigeria to live and raise a family.</i>	Strongly agree	63%	63%	64%	63%	65%
	Tend to agree	11%	9%	13%	11%	9%
	Tend to disagree	5%	5%	4%	4%	8%
	Strongly disagree	11%	13%	8%	11%	10%
	Neutral / Don't know	10%	10%	11%	11%	8%
<i>I would have migrated to the United States, but I am concerned about the rise of populism and the strict immigration policies of the current US administration; that's why I chose Canada</i>	Strongly agree	33%	34%	32%	35%	30%
	Tend to agree	17%	17%	16%	18%	15%
	Tend to disagree	13%	12%	13%	11%	18%
	Strongly disagree	15%	15%	15%	14%	17%
	Neutral / Don't know	22%	22%	24%	22%	20%
<i>I was / am successful and have a good job in Nigeria, but Canada is a place where I would like to raise my children; that's why I decided or will like to migrate.</i>	Strongly agree	42%	39%	47%	40%	49%
	Tend to agree	13%	13%	13%	14%	10%
	Tend to disagree	9%	10%	8%	9%	9%
	Strongly disagree	15%	17%	11%	15%	13%
	Neutral / Don't know	21%	21%	21%	22%	19%

Source: API (2020)



5.5 Where Are Nigerians Located in Canada?

Who is in Canada?

As previously noted, the survey gathered 120 responses from actual migrants in Canada (15.5% of all the respondents). This sub-section focuses on their specific responses to the survey. The respondents were spread across seven of Canada's 10 provinces including Ontario (40%), Alberta (29%), British Columbia (18%), Saskatchewan (5%), Manitoba (3%), Nova Scotia (3%) and Quebec (2%). Here the survey results closely mirror the distribution of Nigerians in Canada's provinces as shown in the 2017 Canada Census data (figure 3).

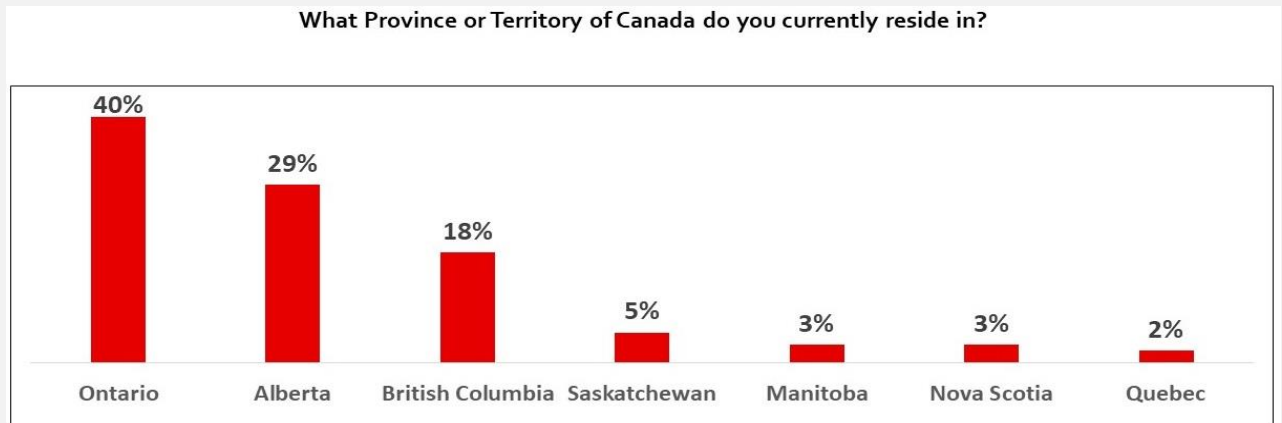


Figure 16: Spread of respondents currently living in Canada

5.6 Immigration Status of Nigerians in Canada

Most of the respondents residing in Canada are permanent residents⁴⁰ (74%) compared to those holding other status – including citizens (13%), temporary workers (8%), students (3%) or refugees (2%). The results show that most Nigerians go for the “holy grail” of immigration; permanent residency, which in Canada offers several of the opportunities and rights available to citizens.

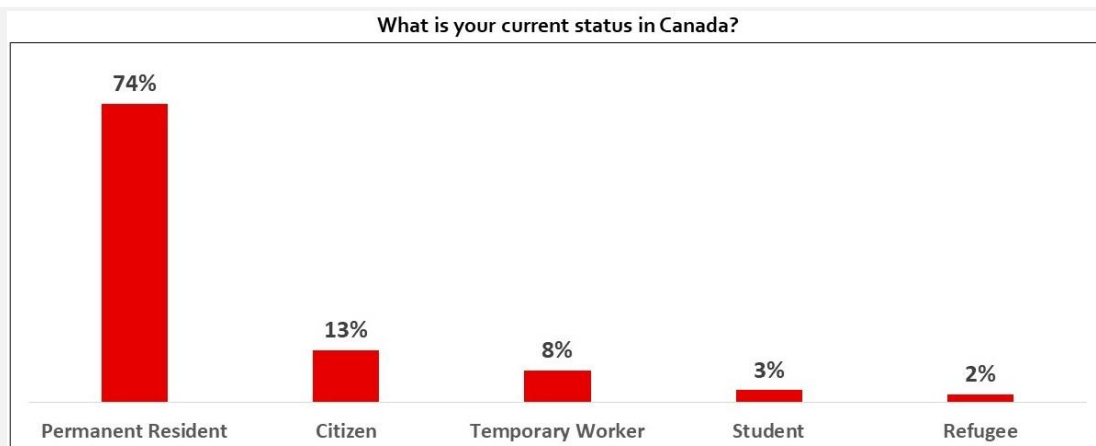


Figure 17: Current status of Nigerian migrants in Canada

⁴⁰ Although the existing data from Statistics Canada shows that most Nigerians in Canada are permanent residency holders (see Figure 11), we note the huge skew of the survey data towards permanent residents which does match the actual distribution of Nigerians across different status.

5.7 Emigration pathway to Canada adopted by Nigerians

The most popular immigration pathway is shown to be the Federal Skilled Workers Program, more popularly known as express entry. About 56% of the respondents indicate that they migrated to Canada through this program. About 25% migrated as students and have obtained a postgraduate work permit (or intend to do so) - and in fact 40% of the respondents indicate that they have some level of Canadian education.

Meanwhile, others have migrated through the provincial nominee program (12%), as refugees (3%) or were sponsored by some family member (3%). These results show that in addition to those who migrate through the express entry program, increasingly, Nigerians who go to Canada for education are not returning home. As the data in figures 6 and 11 show, the number of Nigerian students in Canada has been on the increase, as has the number of those migrating through the express entry program. Students go on to pursue permanent residence in Canada and may very well not return to live in Nigeria during or after their productive years. Inadvertently, Nigeria is losing several generations of well-educated students and highly skilled workers in one swoop.

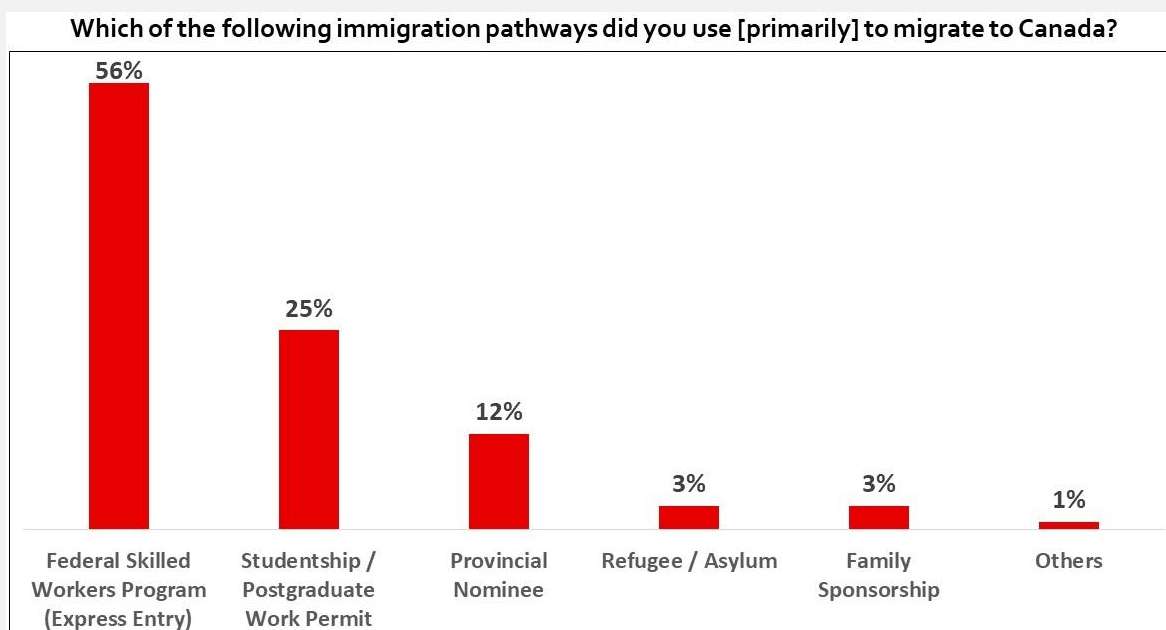


Figure 18: Top Canadian immigration pathways used by successful Nigerian migrants

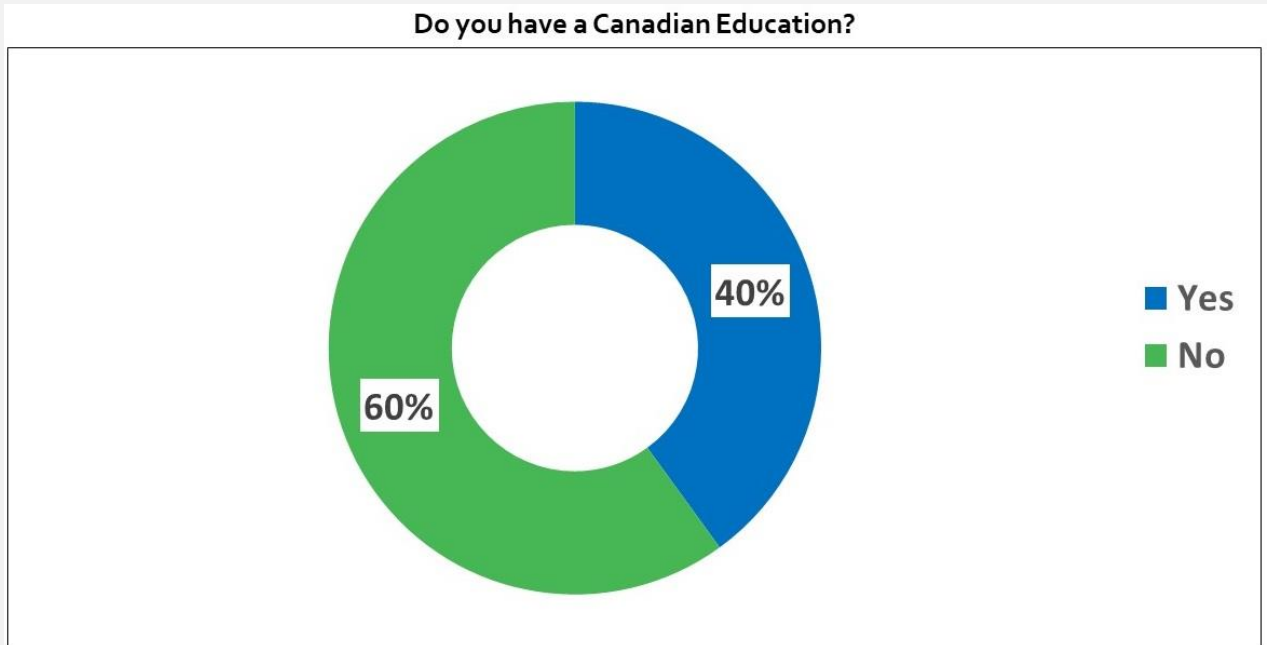


Figure 19: Estimate of respondents with Canadian Education

5.7 Respondents Length of Residing in Canada

About 55% of the respondents indicated that they have lived in Canada for between 1 - 3 years, followed by 19% who had lived in Canada for less than a year, and 13% for between 4 – 6 years, and another 13% for more than 6 years. In this way the survey may not sufficiently capture the responses of Nigerians who have lived in Canada for long periods of time.

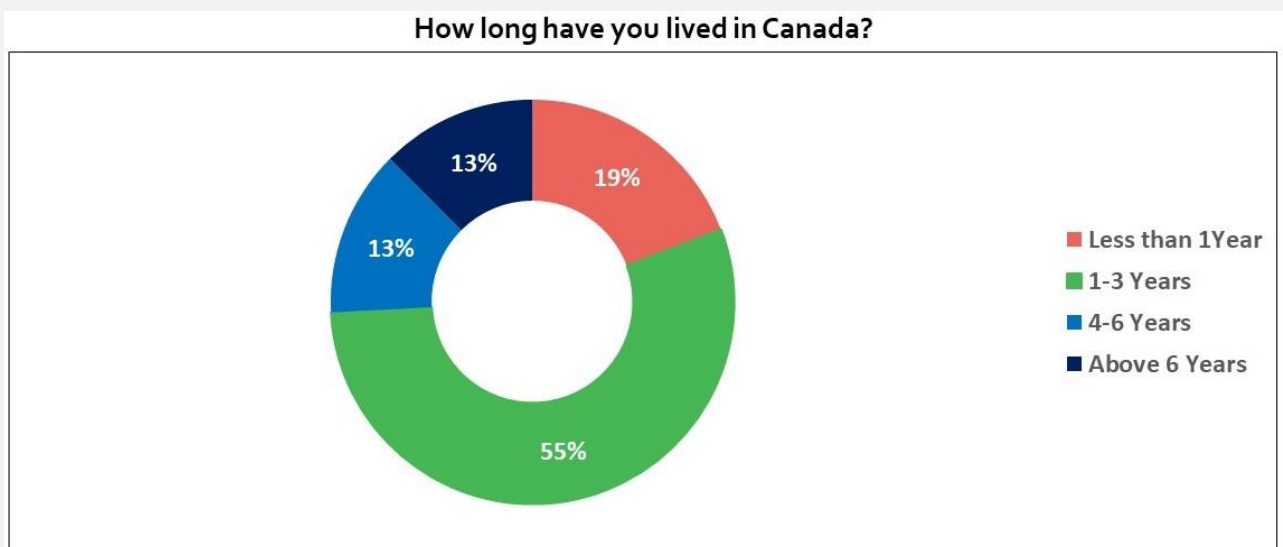


Figure 20: How long respondents have lived in Canada

Table 6: An Overview of Status and Residence of Nigerians in Canada

What province or territory of Canada do you currently reside in?		Which of the following immigration pathways did you use in migrating to Canada?	
Ontario	40%	Federal Skilled Workers Program (Express Entry)	56%
Alberta	29%	Studentship / Postgraduate Work Permit	25%
British Columbia	18%	Provincial Nominee	12%
Saskatchewan	5%	Refugee / Asylum	3%
Manitoba	3%	Family Sponsorship	3%
Nova Scotia	3%	Others	1%
Quebec	2%	Quebec Selected Skilled Worker Program	0%
New Brunswick	0%	Atlantic Immigration Pilot	0%
Newfoundland and Labrador	0%	Home Child Care Provider Pilot	0%
Prince Edward Island	0%	Start Up Visa Program	0%
What is your current status in Canada?		Rural and Northern Immigration Pilot	0%
Permanent Resident	74%	How long have you lived in Canada?	
Citizen	13%	Less than 1Year	19%
Temporary Worker	8%	1-3 Years	55%
Student	3%	4-6 Years	13%
Refugee	2%	Above 6 Years	13%
Others	0%		

Source: API (2020)



5.8 Life in Canada

An important aspect of an individual's decision to migrate is their expected life outcomes and arguably, the support structures available to them in the destination. All 120 respondents indicate that upon migrating to Canada, they received some form of support getting settled, including support from family and friends (47%), the Canadian government or its agencies (32%), previously unknown individuals (13%), religious institutions (8%), or any combination of several of these. This tends to support the sentiment expressed elsewhere by respondents that Canada is a place where Nigerian and other immigrants can easily be integrated into the society.

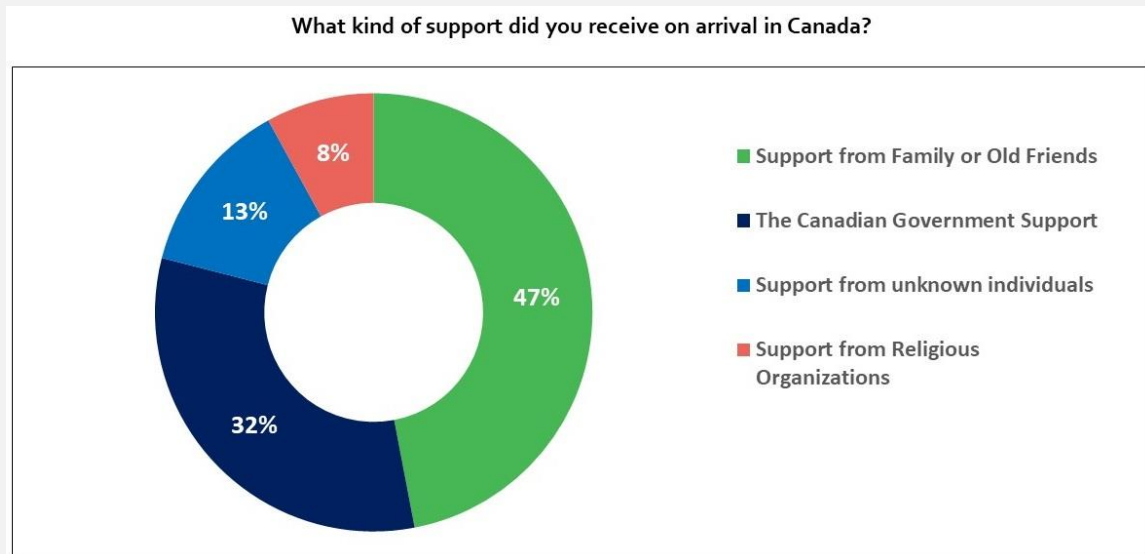


Figure 21: Support Structures Utilized by Nigerian Migrants in Canada

Furthermore, most respondents (59%) felt that their decision to migrate has been an excellent one, 38% indicate that it has been okay so far, 2% were undecided, and 1% expressed regret for their decision.

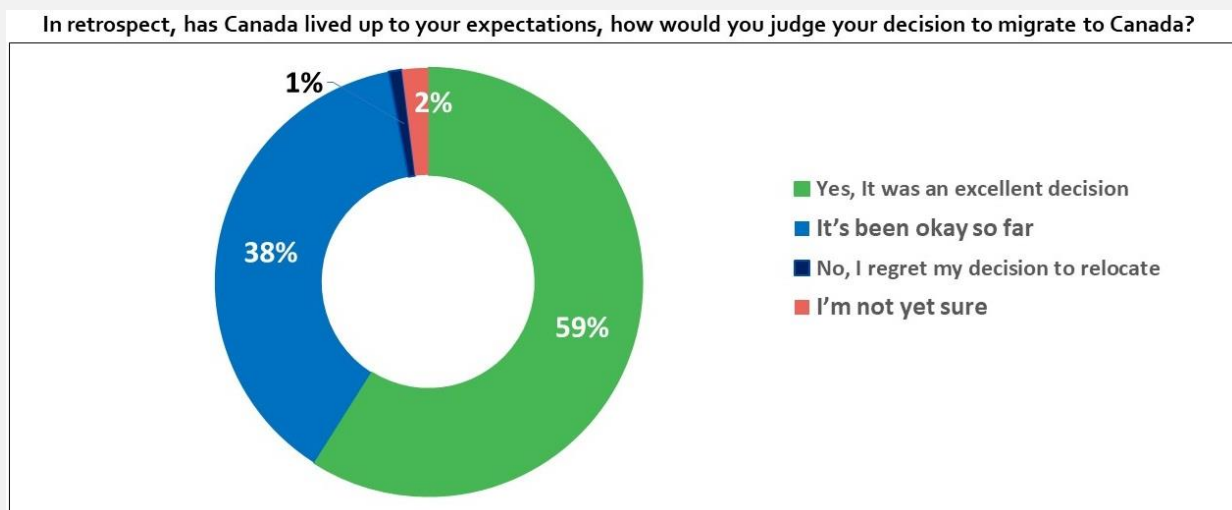


Figure 22: In retrospect, how Nigerian migrants judge their decision to migrate to Canada

5.9 Financial Remittances from Canada to Nigeria

About 81% of the respondents indicate that they make financial remittances to Nigeria, while 19% say they do not. Furthermore, amongst those that make financial remittances, 42% of them said they make monthly remittals, followed by 34% who do less frequently but several times a year. In addition, 16% said they remit monies quarterly, while 8% say they remit several times a month.

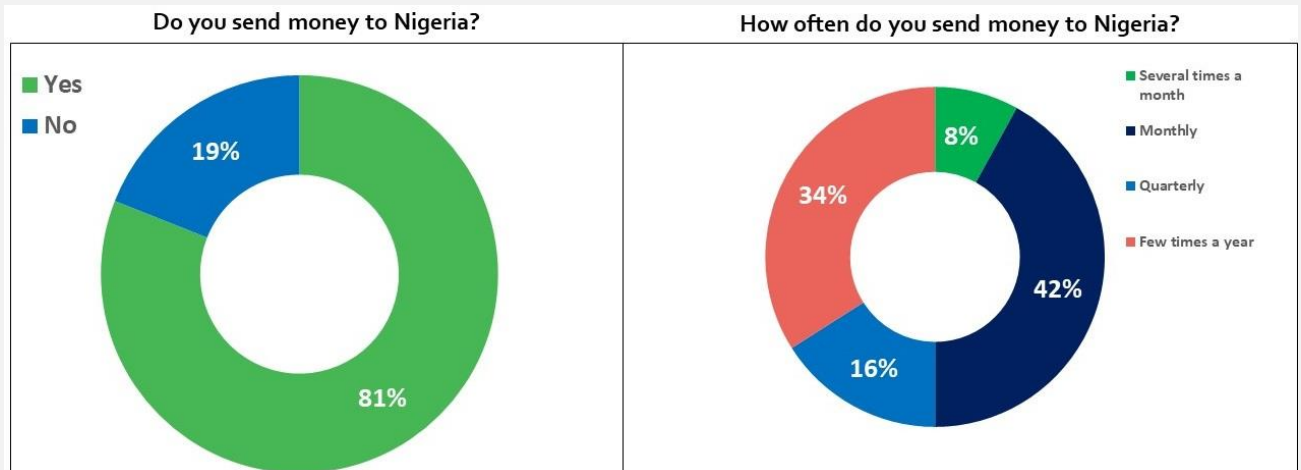


Figure 23: Nigerian migrants who send money back to Nigeria and how often they send the money

Furthermore, the major purpose (85%) identified for these remittances is to support upkeep of their family back in Nigeria. About 39% indicate that their remittances are for charity, 16% indicate that it is for business investments, 14% for building and other construction projects and 5% indicate that it was for education. The high proportion that is earmarked for family upkeep compared to other categories like business investments and construction, highlight the low levels of subsistence incomes in the country. This goes without saying that for some households in the country, the goal of having their basic needs met from month to month is made only possible with such remittances.

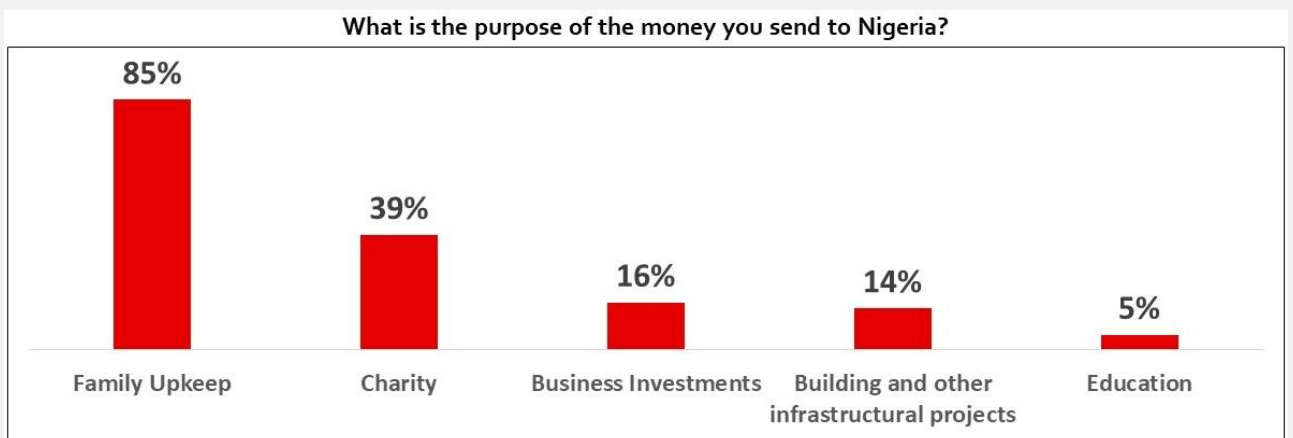


Figure 24: Purpose of the money being sent to Nigeria

5.10 Possibility of Returning to Resettle Nigeria

Despite the enduring connection to Nigeria through remittances, most respondents are not particularly enthusiastic about returning to settle back in the country sometime in the future. In fact, 64% had no such plans; 36% indicate that they did. More so, females (27%) are less likely to have such plans than males (42%). This finding of unwillingness to return to live in Nigeria presents a major challenge to the benefits of brain gain for Nigeria.⁴¹

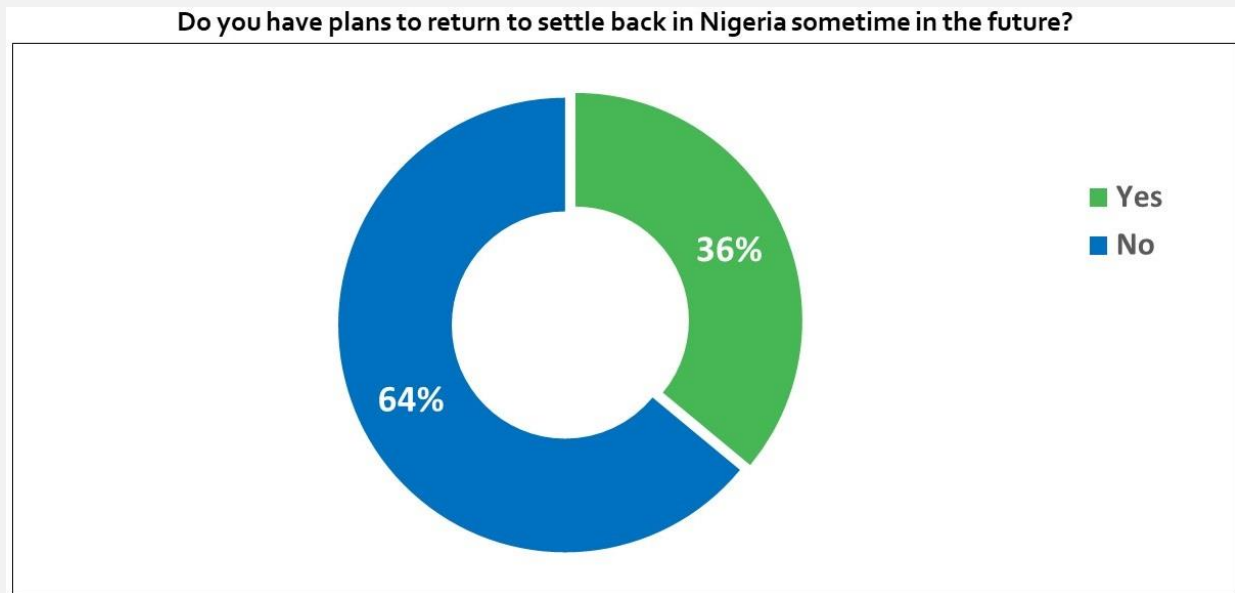


Figure 25: Possibility of Returning to Resettle in Nigeria

Table 7: Nigerians who have plans to return to settle back in Nigeria sometime in the future

Do you have plans to return to settle back in Nigeria sometime in the future?

	Total	Gender		Age Group		Geo-Political Zone					
		Male	Female	18 – 35	36 – 60	North-Central	North-East	North-West	South-East	South-South	South-West
Yes	36%	42%	27%	36%	36%	44%	26%	39%	31%	43%	20%
No	64%	58%	73%	64%	64%	56%	74%	61%	69%	57%	80%

Source: API (2020)

⁴¹ Brain Gain is the Reverse brain drain situation where human capital moves in reverse from a more developed country to a less developed country that is developing rapidly.

Less than 30% of our respondents indicate that they have visited Nigeria in the past five years; about 3% do so more than once yearly, 10% do once yearly, 7% do once in 2 to 5 years, and another 7% do once in 5 years.

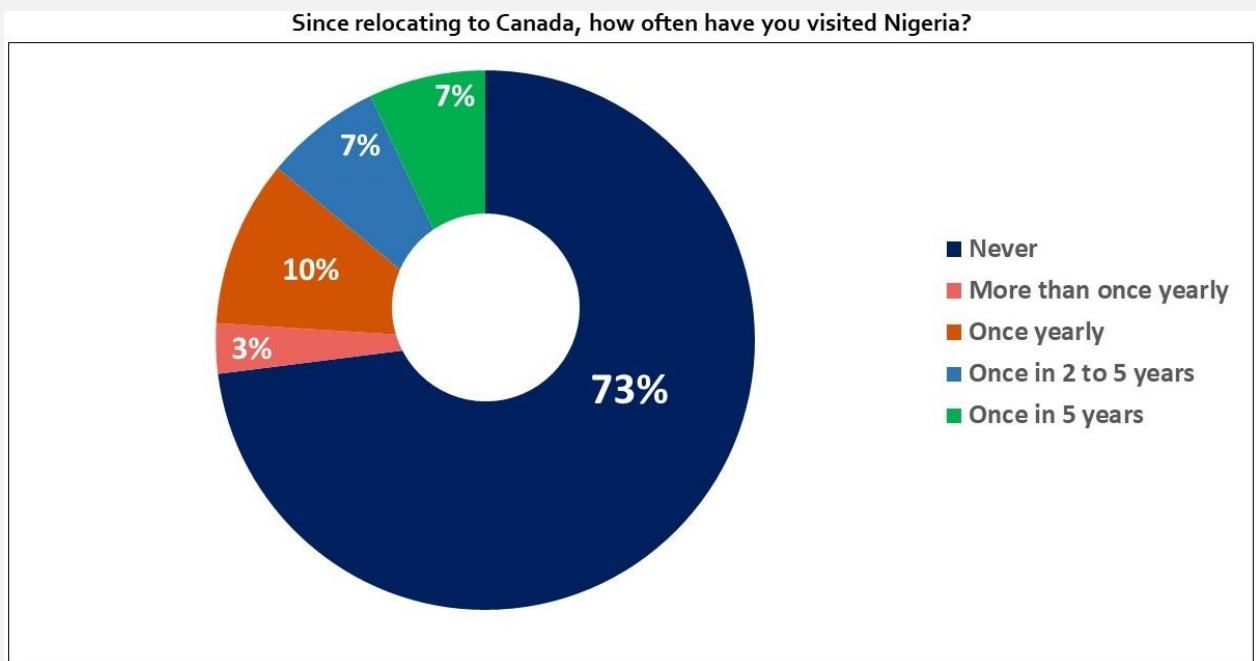


Figure 26: How often Nigerian migrants visit Nigeria

In the next section we discuss some of the policy implications of the survey finding alongside the key takeaways from the existing literature.

6.0 Policy Discussion and Recommendations

The current “Canada Rush” represents another wave of the flight of human capital from Nigeria which began long before independence in 1960. More so, it is happening at the same time as there are thousands of Nigerians being drowned in the Mediterranean, as several more tens of thousands seek to cross into Europe through North Africa. From the 1950s through the 1970s, the emerging Nigerian elite moved mainly to the United Kingdom due to its colonial ties, for educational pursuit, and in a few cases for administrative matters. This coincided with a few other trends in the migration of Nigerians to neighbouring African countries. A few others went to the United States for study, business and work. The expectation was that Nigerians schooling in the West would return with valuable skills needed for nation building.

Indeed, in the early 1960s and 1970, most Nigerians educated abroad readily came home to a growing economy and plum jobs in various sectors owing to the burgeoning oil sector at the time. However, the dynamics changed in the late 1970s and 1980s as political tensions engulfed the country and as its economy stagnated. Several Nigeria-based professionals migrated because of the austerity measures of the Structural Adjustment Program, which the government agreed to as a condition of a loan from the International Monetary Fund in the mid-1980s. The program included devaluing the national currency, wages for professionals tanked and working conditions worsened. The stream of emigrants increased but unlike previously Nigerian students tended to stay abroad for longer periods after graduating, and some never returned.

Furthermore, as desperation in the country continued, many less-educated youths became significant part of the emigration stream. By the early 2000s, an increasing number of Nigerians had migrated to countries such as Spain, Italy, Ireland Germany, France, the Netherlands, and Belgium, as well as the Gulf states. More recent migrants to continental European countries are reported to be less skilled on average, and more often work in the formal and, particularly in southern Europe, informal service, trade, and agricultural sectors. In addition, relatively highly skilled nurses and doctors were recruited from Nigeria to work in Saudi Arabia and other Gulf states.

Nigeria continues to bear the cost of educating students who will continue their education or pursue careers in the West and may not return home during their most productive years. As renowned Nigerian computer scientist Philip Emeagwali (who migrated to the United States) one put it: "The African education budget is nothing but a supplement to the American education budget. In essence, Africa is giving developmental assistance to the wealthier western nations which makes the rich nations richer and the poor nations poorer". The evidence is overwhelming. The Nigerian society has yet to recover from the now well-developed culture of professional migration which emerged in the 1970's. In another vein, the patterns and motivations gleaned



for the Canada rush point to a rather unfortunate situation in Nigeria's educational system. The high number of those migrating to find jobs and to get education underscores the failures and misalignments in the system which continue to churn out millions of "unemployable graduates" yearly. Even though there are no jobs to absorb those coming out of Nigeria's tertiary institutions, the high propensity for education abroad is arguably a reflection of the inadequacy of the educational system to meet the demands of a rapidly changing global economy.

Widespread poverty and the deterioration of the wellbeing of many have created and sustained the pressure for labour emigration. The inability of job creation opportunities to meet up with rapid population and labour force growth places a tremendous strain on socio-economic development and generates high levels of under- and unemployment and accompanying migratory pressures. As ever, Nigerians are migrating to secure a better life for themselves and their families. They migrate in search of employment opportunities and better personal life outcomes, for better education and future for their kids, and to escape insecurity. In this way, they are not fundamentally different from migrants everywhere.

The "Canada Rush" while a factor of the Nigerian economy, it is more so a function of Canada's immigration policy environment. The push factors leading Nigerians to migrate have always been at work but in more recent times, the pull of an immigration friendly Canada has been particularly strong. Nigerians are not the only nationals migrating to Canada by the droves. Over the past few years, Canada has implemented a series of liberal immigration policies alongside reviewing its immigration targets to admit more than a million new permanent residents between 2018 and the end of 2021. This includes yearly immigration targets of 310,000 in 2018, 330,800 in 2019, 341,000 in 2020 and 350,000 in 2021.⁴² With these targets, the process for migrating to the country have been streamlined and enhanced, and more immigration pathways and programs are being piloted.

At the same time as Canada has embraced more immigration it neighbour to the South, the United States, has become stricter on immigration, and the several European countries have embraced more hardline immigration policies. Canada has come to position itself as safe haven for people who are fleeing persecution in their countries of origin and elsewhere. To this extent, there is some element of displacement from these traditional destinations for Nigerians. Some respondents affirmed this sentiment by agreeing to the statement "I would have migrated to the United States, but I am concerned about the rise of populism and the strict immigration policies of the current US administration; that's why I chose Canada".

⁴²Notice – Supplementary Information 2019-2021 Immigration Levels Plan (2018). <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/news/notices/supplementary-immigration-levels-2019.html>



Huge remittances are a poster child for labour migration. Nigerians in Canada make their impact felt in lives of their families left in the country through remittances to support important aspects of their livelihood. They make remittances to support charity, establish businesses and fund education. The evidence gathered from this research suggests, however, that they are not enthusiastic about returning to live in the country. Also, the evidence from the survey indicates that there may be significant gaps in the engagement of Nigerians in Canada with each other. This is based on the finding that only 26% of the respondents in Canada are part of a Nigerian Association. These associations are avenues through which Nigerians in diaspora can engage with each other to drive and support development in back at home.

Going forward, it is not likely that the trend of Nigerian professionals migrating would abate soon. It is doubtful that the rate of job creation opportunities in the country will quickly rise to catch up with Nigeria's rapidly growing population and its youth bulge. Regardless, there is every need to strengthen current policies that stimulate growth and socioeconomic development in the country which make staying in Nigeria an attractive option to the burgeoning working class. At the very least, the government needs to invest more in basic infrastructure and reduce corruption. Furthermore, the country can position itself to more actively take advantage of its youth bulge to be a hub for industry and manpower development. The government should also strengthen policies and programs aimed at actively managing labour migration from the country. This could be done through some sort of overseas employment program which focuses on finding labour markets abroad, promoting Nigerian workers to labor-short countries, and selling these countries as potential destinations to Nigerian workers. Such a holistic approach would go on to ignite a sense of commitment the country's development for its diaspora.

Finally, the number of Nigerians migrating irregularly to Canada has also come up as a challenge; enough to going to elicit a visit of Canada's Immigration Minister, Ahmed Hussen to Nigeria in May 2018⁴³, to engage support from the Nigeria's government to help address and reverse the trend. Sustaining such bilateral engagements over the long term will be important in ensuring that the Canada Rush benefits Nigeria's economy while addressing the challenges that may arise.

⁴³ Monique Scotti, 'Immigration Minister Has Arrived in Nigeria as Border Crossings Continue: Goodale | Globalnews.ca', 2018 <<https://globalnews.ca/news/4202264/asylum-seeker-nigeria-border-ahmed-hussen-goodale/>> [accessed 12 January 2020].



7.0 Conclusion

This study “Deconstructing the Canada Rush” has highlighted the significant increase in the number of Nigerians migrating to Canada over the past few years – the Canada Rush. It explored the reason for this situation; which we have aptly called the “Canada Rush”. A clear conclusion from the study is that Nigerians migrating to Canada are in every way like migrants everywhere who do so in search of opportunities of a better life. This could assume different dimensions including increased employment opportunities, improved life outcomes for their children, and more guaranteed safety and security.

The push and pull factors for migration abound in the form dire economic conditions and heightened insecurity in Nigeria on the one hand, and a favourable immigration environment in Canada on the other. It is not all bad news for Nigeria, since immigration provides remittances needed to sustain the livelihoods of family members left behind and a source of foreign exchange. However, the socioeconomic impacts in terms of brain drain, brain waste and education subsidies for wealthier nations are significant and need to be addressed. This requires a holistic approach that recognizes, caters to and effectively leverages the dynamic push and pull factors at play in international migration.

This study relied significantly on existing studies and extensive desk research. It could, however, benefit from further research that incorporates in-person qualitative-based interviews with potential and actual migrants as well as other key stakeholders to probe further on some of the responses gathered through the survey. It will also be important to take a closer look at the nuanced differences between the individuals across various demographics and socioeconomic classes.





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APPENDIX 1 – Chi-Square Analysis

Table 8: Chi-Square test results for Preferred Migration Destination of Nigerians by Gender (United Kingdom).

Actual Values			
	United Kingdom not in top 3	United Kingdom in top 3	Grand Total
Female	145	137	282
Male	298	192	490
Grand Total	443	329	772
Expected Values			
Row Labels	United Kingdom not in top 3	United Kingdom in top 3	Grand Total
Female	161.82	120.18	282
Male	281.18	208.82	490
Grand Total	443	329	772
Chi test P-Value	0.011006135		

Table 9: Chi-Square test results for Preferred Migration Destination of Nigerians by Age Group (United States of America).

Actual Values			
	USA not in top 3	USA in top 3	Grand Total
18 – 35	280	308	588
36 – 60	64	120	184
Grand Total	344	428	772
Expected Values			
	USA not in top 3	USA in top 3	Grand Total
18 – 35	262.01	325.99	588
36 – 60	81.99	102.01	184
Grand Total	344	428	772
Chi test P-value	0.002232797		

APPENDIX 2 – Study Questionnaire

API Canada Migration Study - Questionnaire

Hello,

Africa Polling Institute (API) is an independent, non-profit and non-partisan opinion research think-tank, which conducts opinion polls, surveys, social research, evaluation studies and development programmes at the intersection of democracy, governance, economic conditions, and public life. API is currently carrying out an exploratory study to investigate the Motivations for Nigerians Emigrating to Canada, titled - “Deconstructing the Canada Rush”. The study seeks to deepen public knowledge on the key drivers, enablers, and factors responsible for the recent upsurge in the decisions and the number of Nigerians seeking to emigrate to Canada. It also seeks to offer actionable recommendations and advocate relevant policy responses to the ensuing migration dynamics.

API desires your input in this study as a player and stakeholder in the Nigeria-Canada migration nexus by helping to complete and share this survey to Nigerians within your networks. Your participation in this survey is fully voluntary and your responses will be treated as confidential and anonymized. All information gathered through this process will be used strictly for research purposes. If you have any questions and require further information about this research please feel free to contact us: africapolling@gmail.com or info@africapolling.org. Thank you for your valued input.

Screener Question (Q1):

1. Are you Nigerian?
 1. Yes (**Continue to Q2**)
 2. No (**Terminate**)

2. Have you migrated or considered migrating out of Nigeria?
 1. Yes (**Continue to Q3**)
 2. No (**Terminate**)

3. If Yes in Q2 above, what are the top three countries of preferred destination? [**Maximum of three**]

USA	
United Kingdom	
Canada	
Australia	
Germany	
Spain	
Italy	
South Africa	
Other Country (Please specify)	

4. What was our most important reason(s) for emigrating or seeking to emigrate from Nigeria?

--

5. How did you first hear about migrating to Canada?

Family and Friends	1
Personal Research	2
Social Media	3
Immigration Seminar	4
Others (Please specify)	5

6. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

	Strongly disagree	Tend to disagree	Neutral	Tend to agree	Strongly agree	Don't know
I am considering migration, or I have migrated to Canada because I believe Canada has friendly immigration policies.						
I believe Canada is a place where human rights and the law are respected; and the best country in the world in terms of its immigration policies.						
I believe Canada welcomes people from other countries; and it's easy for Nigerians and other immigrants to integrate into the Canadian system.						
I believe Canada offers good quality of life and healthcare.						
I believe Canada is much safer than Nigeria to live and raise a family.						
I would have migrated to the United States, but I am concerned about the rise of populism and the strict immigration policies of the current US administration; that's why I chose to migrate or would like to migrate to Canada.						
I was / am successful and had / have a good job in Nigeria, but Canada is a place where I would like to raise my children; that's why I decided or will like to migrate.						



7. Which of the following best describes your current location of residence?

	SKIP
I'm currently residing in Canada?	CONTINUE TO Q8
I'm currently residing in Nigeria	SKIP TO Q25

For Successful Migrants Now Living in Canada

8. What is your current status in Canada?

Student	1
Temporary Worker	2
Refugee	3
Permanent Resident	4
Citizen	5
Others (Please specify)	6

9. How long have you lived in Canada? (Kindly Enter No of years)

10. What province or Territory of Canada do you currently reside in?

Alberta	1
British Columbia	2
Manitoba	3
New Brunswick	4
Newfoundland and Labrador	5
Northwest Territories	6
Nova Scotia	7
Nunavut	8
Ontario	9
Prince Edward Island	10
Quebec	11
Saskatchewan	12
Yukon	13
Please indicate the City	

11. Which of the following immigration pathways did you use *[primarily]* to migrate to Canada?

Federal Skilled Workers Program (Express Entry)	1
Refugee / Asylum	2
Family Sponsorship	3
Provincial Nominee	4
Quebec Selected Skilled Worker Program	5
Studentship / Postgraduate Work Permit	6



Atlantic Immigration Pilot	7
Home Child Care Provider Pilot	8
Start Up Visa Program	9
Rural and Northern Immigration Pilot	10
Others (Please specify)	11

12. Do you have a Canadian Education?

Yes	1	
No	2	SKIP TO Q14

13. If Yes to Q12 above, what kind of Canadian Education do you have?

High School Diploma	1
Trade Certificate	2
Post-Secondary Diploma	3
Bachelor's Degree	4
Postgraduate degree	5
Others (Please specify)	6

14. How was the process of settling down after you migrated to Canada? Would you say it was...

Very Smooth	1
Okay	2
Difficult	3
Extremely Difficult	4

15. What kind of support did you receive on arrival in Canada?

The Canadian Government Support	1
Support from Family or Old Friends	2
Support from Religious Organizations	3
Support from unknown individuals	4

16. Do you belong to any Nigerian Association in Canada?

Yes	1	
No	2	SKIP TO Q18

17. If Yes to Q16 above, what is the nature of the association?

Faith-based	1
Cultural	2
Professional	3
Educational	4
Others (Please specify)	5

18. Since relocating to Canada, how often have you visited Nigeria?

Never	1
More than once yearly	2



Once yearly	3
Once in 2 to 5 years	4
Once in 5 years	5

19. In retrospect, has Canada lived up to your expectations, how would you judge your decision to migrate to Canada?

Yes, It was an excellent decision	1
It's been okay so far	2
No, I regret my decision to relocate	3
I'm not yet sure	4

20. Following your answer in Q19 above, in what ways? Can you kindly expatiate?

--

21. Do you have plans to return to settle back in Nigeria sometime in the future?

Yes	1
No	2

22. Do you send money to Nigeria?

Yes	1	
No	2	SKIP TO DEMOGRAPHICS

23. If Yes to Q22 above, how often do you money to Nigeria?

Several times a month	1
Monthly	2
Quarterly	3
Few times a year	4

24. What is the purpose of the money you send to Nigeria? **[Multiple Response]**

Family Upkeep	1	SKIP TO DEMOGRAPHICS
Charity	2	
Business Investments	3	
Education	4	
Building and other infrastructural projects	5	

For Prospective Migrants Still Resident in Nigeria

25. Do you have family members, friends or former colleagues currently living in Canada?

Yes	1
No	2



26. Which of the following Canada immigration pathways are you currently considering (**limit to maximum of 3 multiple choice response**)?

Federal Skilled Workers Program (Express Entry)	1
Refugee / Asylum	2
Family Sponsorship	3
Provincial Nominee	4
Quebec Selected Skilled Worker Program	5
Studentship / Postgraduate Work Permit	6
Atlantic Immigration Pilot	7
Home Child Care Provider Pilot	8
Start Up Visa Program	9
Rural and Northern Immigration Pilot	10
Others (Please specify)	11

Demographic Questions

27. Are you Male or Female?

1. Male
2. Female

28. What is your age category?

1. 18 – 35
2. 36 – 60
3. 60+
4. Don't know / Refused

29. Which part or Geo-Political Region of Nigeria do you come from?

1. South East
2. South South
3. South West
4. North Central
5. North East
6. North West

Thank you for your time



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