



**European Politics and Society:
Václav Havel Joint Master Programme**

CHARLES UNIVERSITY

FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

Institute of International Studies

Department of European Studies

Master's Thesis

2024

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**DETERMINANTS OF AFRICAN MIGRATION: THE
NIGERIAN EXPERIENCE IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC**

Master's Thesis

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Year of the defence: 2024

Declaration

1. I hereby declare that I have compiled this thesis using the listed literature and resources only.
2. I hereby declare that my thesis has not been used to gain any other academic title.
3. I fully agree to my work being used for study and scientific purposes.

Prague, 30th April 2024

Yinka Azeez Adenuga



Bibliographic reference

Adenuga (2024). Determinants of African Migration: The Nigerian Experience in The Czech Republic . Master's thesis (Mgr.). Charles University, Faculty of Social Sciences, Institute of International Studies. Department of European Studies, Prague. Supervisor.Ondrej Klipa, Ph.D.

Length of the thesis: 20713 words

Abstract

This thesis investigates the migration dynamics of Nigerians to the Czech Republic, a less traditional destination within the European migration landscape. Using qualitative methods, the research examines the motivations, experiences, and community dynamics of Nigerian migrants through interviews with 15 participants. The research identifies economic opportunities, educational prospects, and affordability as primary motivators, framed within the push-pull theory of migration and theories of diaspora. These factors not only draw these migrants to the Czech Republic but also highlight the complex interplay of economic instability and limited professional opportunities in Nigeria. However, the migration experience is marred by significant challenges, including cultural and linguistic barriers, and experiences of racism and discrimination, which complicate integration and influence decisions regarding long-term settlement. Unlike more established Nigerian diasporas in countries like the UK and the US, the community in the Czech Republic is characterized by its emergent and fragmented nature, lacking the robust networks that facilitate integration and provide comprehensive support.

The findings reveal how important community networks are for the Nigerian diaspora in the Czech Republic, which is still in its early and fragmented stage compared to the well-established diasporas in the UK and US. This community heavily depends on networks like churches and social groups for support and integration into Czech society.

Keywords

Nigerian Migrants, Migration, Motivation for Migration, Czech Republic, Diaspora, Community network

Acknowledgement

I would like to thank Almighty Allah for making this work a complete success.

I would also like to thank my supervisor, Ondrej Klipa Ph.D., for his guidance, suggestions, and understanding throughout the course of this thesis. Particularly for his patience with me at the start and end of this thesis.

Many thanks to Ayobami Eremiye, Oluwaseun Jegede, Tahir Ijaiya, and Makinde Ebenezer for their suggestions, encouragement, editing, and love during the research process. More gratitude is extended to Ayobami for his inspiration and moral support throughout the process of this work.

I am deeply grateful to my parents and my amazing siblings for their constant support and prayers. I hope that the love we share for one another will never fade away.

Finally, I would like to thank all the participants who volunteered to participate in this research. Their contribution is highly valued.

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List of Abbreviations

CSU	Czech Statistical Office
MOI	Ministry of Interior
CR	Czech Republic
MFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
IOM	International Organization for Migration
UNCHR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
MIF	Mo Ibrahim Foundation
AEF	Africa Europe Foundation
UNDESA	United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs
AU	African Union
EU	European Union
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
AFD	African Development Bank
MIT	Ministry of Industry and Trade
KSH	Hungarian Central Statistical Office
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nation

CHAPTER ONE

1.0 Introduction

The phenomenon of migration is age-old, dating back to the earliest chapters of human history (Duru, 2021; Anitha and Pearson, 2013). Human migration traces its roots to approximately 70,000 years ago, when *Homo sapiens* embarked on a journey out of Africa, marking the beginning of global dispersion (Lily, 2017). Given the historical continuity of migration, it has evolved into a central policy concern for virtually every country worldwide (Duru, 2021).

The International Organization for Migration characterizes migration as the relocation of an individual or a collective group, occurring either across an international boundary or within the confines of a single state. This definition views migration comprehensively, covering diverse aspects such as the extent of movement, the demographic makeup of the migrating population, and the underlying motivations. It encompasses a spectrum of movements, ranging from the migration of refugees and displaced individuals to economic migrants and those relocating for various reasons, including family reunification (International Organization for Migration, 2011). Presently, migrants are everywhere and can now be found in every country of the world (Matin & Widgren 1996; Boswell 2018).

The causes of migration typically stem from economic, social, political, and environmental factors. Venturini and Goldstein (2021) contend that the decision-making process for migration results from a complex interplay of economic, political, sociocultural, demographic, and environmental factors. Economic considerations, especially the presence of job opportunities and income prospects, have become notably significant factors influencing migration (Massey 1998). Moreover, social aspects, encompassing family ties, social networks, and cultural values, have also demonstrated a central role in influencing migration decisions (Kuhnt 2019). Political factors, like conflict and instability (Tataru 2019), and environmental considerations, such as drought and natural disasters (Bordenon et al. 2019), have also been recognized as significant determinants in migration choices.

The world is now more interconnected than ever before, and there has been significant migration flow in recent years. The statistical evidence from the world migration report in 2020 indicates over 281 million migrants globally, which accounts for about 3.6% of the global population. This is significantly more than 2.8% of the total population in 2002 and 2.3% of the total population in 1980 (IOM 2021). This is also the case of migrants from Africa where the estimated number of African migrants living outside Africa increased to 19.5 million in 2020 previously from 17 million in 2015 (Africa Union 2017; International Organization for Migration 2023).

Within the specific case of the Czech Republic, the migratory landscape has witnessed a substantial transformation over time. Initially, the country was predominantly characterized by emigration patterns, but it has evolved into a significant immigration-receiving country (Czech Republic Ministry of Interior, 2023). The statistical data from the Czech Statistical Office demonstrates a notable increase in the foreign population, which surged to 659,000 in 2021. This figure is substantially higher than the 450,000 recorded in 2014 and the 254,000 in 2004 (Czech Statistical Office 2021). Migrants now comprise 5.1% of the entire population in the Czech Republic with the majority originating from Ukraine, followed by Slovakia, Vietnam, and the Russian Federation (Stojanov et al., 2021).

Interestingly, this shift in migration patterns is notable in the context of African migrants in the Czech Republic. From the statistical data obtained from the Czech Statistical Office, while the country traditionally experienced minimal African migration, there has been a continuous increase in the number of Africans residing in the Czech Republic in recent years. The data for 2021 reveals a notable increase in the number of African migrants in the country, with 8,384 individuals originating from Africa, a significant rise from 4,259 in 2010 and 2,108 in 2000 (Czech Statistical Office 2021).

Within this context, this study is tailored specifically to focus on the migration of Nigerians to the Czech Republic. The selection of Nigeria as the focal point is grounded in the statistical data provided by the Czech Statistical Office. This data reveals that, among various sub-Saharan countries, Nigeria stands out as the only country to have not only witnessed a consistent flow in the number of immigrants residing in the Czech Republic but has also consistently held the top position for over a decade, from 2011 to 2021. This fact underscores the necessity of conducting research into the emerging Nigerian diaspora in the Czech Republic.

Consequently, by focusing on a selected number of participants, this study will seek to unravel the reasons underpinning the decisions of Nigerian migrants to choose the Czech Republic as their destination over other countries such as UK, USA and Canada that have historical ties and linguistic advantages over the Czech Republic. By this, the study aims to provide insights into the motivations and factors influencing this unique migration pattern, shedding light on their decision-making. Furthermore, by providing a comprehensive understanding of these migrants in the Czech Republic, the study will set out to explore the challenges face by these migrants and if in any way impacted their decision to stay in the Czech Republic. And lastly, the study will assess the level of unity and cohesion within the Nigerian diaspora community by examining whether they forge a unified diaspora identity or exist as distinct entities here in the Czech Republic. in the country. Thus, making an important contribution to global migration discourse

1.1 Problem Statement

Nigeria, situated in West Africa, boasts Abuja as its capital and English as its official language. With a population exceeding 200 million people, it stands as the most populous country in Africa and ranks as the seventh most populous nation globally (World Population Review, 2019). Given its substantial population size, it is unsurprising to observe a significant number of Nigerians relocating abroad. Between 1990 and June 2020, the population of Nigerians residing outside the country has nearly tripled, increasing from 447,411 according to (UNICEF Migration Profiles), to approximately 1,670,455 as reported by the (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division). This demographic shift signifies a notable increase, accounting for approximately 0.8% of Nigeria's total population.

Traditionally, Western countries, notably the UK and the USA, have been preferred destinations for Nigerian migrants due to perceived opportunities and historical ties (Bashorun, 2023; De Haas, 2006; API, 2020; Jahnea). The UK, in particular, has attracted numerous Nigerian students seeking higher education opportunities. Recent data from the UK government indicates a significant increase in Nigerian study visas, rising from 8,384 in 2019 to approximately 65,929 in 2022, making Nigeria the third-largest source of international students after India and China (Ukpe

(2022). Similarly, the USA has seen a notable influx of Nigerian immigrants over the years, with the population increasing from 219,000 in 2010 to 345,000 in 2017, according to the Migration Policy Institute (Zong and Batalova, 2019).

De Haas (2006) argued that colonial history could significantly influence the migration of certain Nigerians to the UK, especially those pursuing higher education. Meanwhile, the presence of a stable economy and ample educational and economic prospects might explain why Nigerians migrate to the US (Jahnea). However, a common factor shared by both of these countries and Nigeria, which further enhances their appeal, is the use of English as their official language. Consequently, Nigerian migrants in the UK and US have established cohesive diaspora communities, fostering a sense of belonging and cultural connection (Jahnea). These communities organize various events such as festivals, meetings, and gatherings to facilitate connections among members and maintain ties with Nigeria. In the UK, examples include the National Association of Nigeria Communities and the Central Association of Nigerians in the UK (<https://ncaro.co.uk/>), while in the US, organizations like the Nigeria Foundation, Nigeria Union Diaspora in Texas, and the Nigeria Igbo Catholic Community are prominent (**Jahnea**).

Upon closer examination of the Czech Republic, it becomes evident that it lacks colonial ties with Nigeria, given its historical absence as a colonial power, and its official language, Czech, stands in stark contrast to English. Survey conducted by Harvard University reveal that Czech respondents exhibit notably higher levels of entrenched racist attitudes compared to their European counterparts (Galova, 2017). Over 80% harbor unfavorable views toward immigrants, particularly those from third countries including Africans (Eurobarometer 2017). What's striking is the lack of research on Nigerians in the Czech Republic as a cohesive diaspora community, unlike observations in the US and the UK.

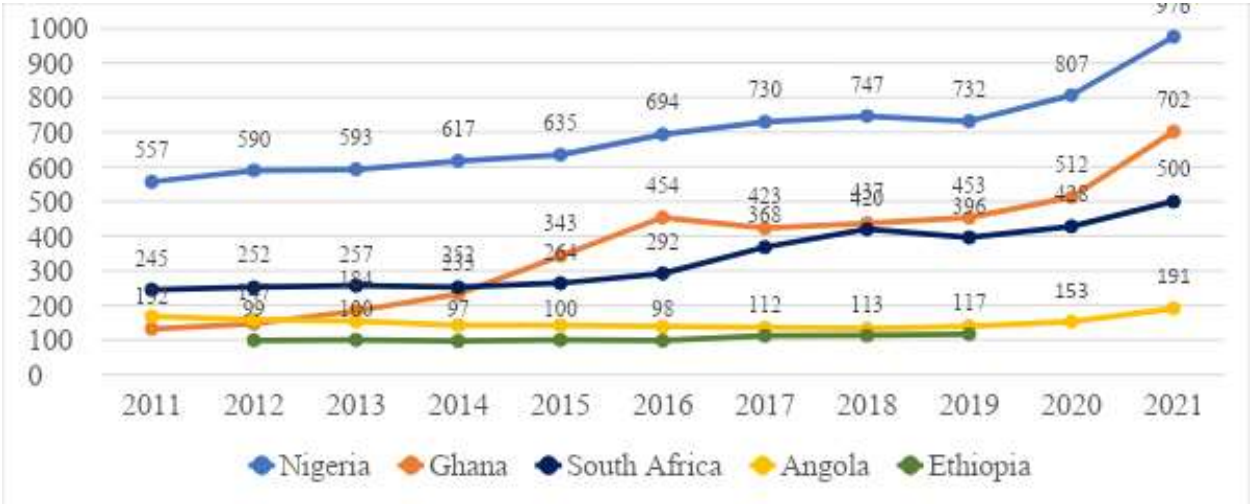
Despite these challenges, it is surprising to witness a growing number of Nigerians in the Czech Republic, consistently ranking among the top three sub-Saharan African countries with the highest migrant populations. Data from the Czech Statistical Office confirm Nigeria's sustained position among the top three sub-Saharan countries with the highest immigrant numbers for over a decade, with a continual annual increase in its migrant population (fig 1 and tab1).

The increasing emigration of Nigerians to the Czech Republic prompts critical inquiries into their motivations, challenges, and social dynamics within the Czech context. As a result, this study seeks

to understand why Nigerians increasingly choose the Czech Republic as their preferred migration destination, despite historical ties and linguistic advantages offered by countries like the United Kingdom and the USA. It aims to explore the encounters, obstacles, and perspectives of Nigerians in the Czech Republic, investigating whether these factors influence their decision to stay in the country. This investigation is crucial due to the limited scholarly work in this area.

What distinguishes this study is its examination of whether Nigerians in the Czech Republic form a cohesive diaspora community or remain fragmented individuals. Investigating whether Nigerians forge a unified diaspora identity or exist as distinct entities is essential for understanding the social structure and integration dynamics within this migrant population. This represents an area ripe for exploration, as it remains largely uncharted. Such exploration will enhance awareness among Czech nationals and expose them to the culture, emotions, and lifestyles of African migrants, contributing to scholarly understanding of migration and fostering stronger connections between native Czechs and foreigners.

Table 1: Nigerians Living in the Czech Republic from 2011 to 2021



Source: (Czech Statistical Office 2021).

Table 1: Nigerians Living in the Czech Republic from 2011 to 2021

Source: Czech Statistical Office

Year	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	Total
Number of Migrants	557	590	593	617	635	694	730	747	732	807	976	7678

1.2 Research Question

- 1 What are the factors driving Nigerians to emigrate, and what draws them specifically to choose the Czech Republic as their destination?
- 2 What challenges do they face in the Czech Republic, and do these challenges influence their willingness to remain in the country?
- 3 Do they function as a cohesive diaspora or merely as individualized migrants within the Czech Republic?

1.3 Research Objective

Considering that this research addresses a significant gap in the existing literature, concentrating on a specific facet of migration that has garnered limited attention, its main goal is to elucidate the factors influencing Nigerian migration to the Czech Republic focusing on a sample of participants. Additionally, it delves into the behavioral activities of Nigerians in the Czech Republic, exploring the challenges they encounter and the degree to which they establish a unified diaspora community in the country. Consequently, this study aims to enhance our understanding of migration dynamics in the Czech Republic and make a meaningful contribution to the broader discourse on African migration.

Lastly, this study explores an overview of general migration in the Czech Republic, providing an understanding of migration dynamics within the country. Furthermore, it delves specifically into

the migration patterns of Africans to the Czech Republic. This is an aspect that has received limited attention in previous research. This part adds significant value to the study.

1.4 Significant of Study.

Firstly, African migration to Central Europe has been an overlooked area in migration research, with most existing literature focusing on the historical migration of Africans to Western Europe, often omitting their connections with Eastern and Central European countries (Tarrósy 2014). While Western European countries, such as Germany, have seen a proliferation of studies on individuals with African heritage, Central Eastern Europe lags behind in research in this area (Rudwick & Schmiedl 2023). Considering that the Czech Republic is situated in Central Europe, this research aims to fill the knowledge gap related to African migration in Central Eastern Europe.

Secondly, focusing on Nigerians, this study will shed light on the specific reasons and factors that drive Nigerian migrants to choose the Czech Republic as their destination. It will provide insights into the motivations and decision-making processes of this migrant group, contributing to a deeper understanding of migration patterns. And will explore challenges face by these migrants in the Czech Republic.

Finally, in light of the points mentioned earlier, this research will enhance our comprehension of the growing Nigerian diaspora within the Czech Republic. It will help identify the needs and aspirations of this diaspora and contribute to the development of support networks and community-building efforts.

1.5 Research Outline

This research thesis will be divided into 6 chapters. The study's introduction will be provided in the first chapter, where it will highlight the study's background, its setting, and the research problem. Additionally, the introduction will cover the study's objectives, research questions, and significance. The second chapter will comprise the literature review. This section will evaluate and discuss previous research relevant to the study's objectives, drawing from sources such as books, journals, reports, and websites. Furthermore, the second chapter will present the theoretical

framework, which will elucidate how various concepts shape and direct the ongoing investigation. Chapter three provides an overview of migration in the Czech Republic, encompassing the presence of Africans within the country. Chapter four delves into the methodology of the study, where it will extensively address the research design, sample selection, data collection, and analysis methods that will be employed in this research. This chapter will also shed light on the study's limitations. The fifth chapter will focus on presenting the Analysis and Discussion of findings. The sixth chapter contains the study's conclusion.

1.6 Terminology

The International Organization for Migration defined migration as “*the movement of a person or a group of persons, either across an international border, or within a State. It is a population movement, encompassing any kind of movement of people, whether its length, composition and causes; it includes migration of refugees, displaced persons, economic migrants, and persons moving for other purposes, including family reunification*” (International Organization for Migration 2011).

From this definition, one can observe that the movement of persons can be either across international border or within a national border. And this brings us to the two forms of migration which are Internal migration and international migration. Internal Migration is the movement of people from one area of a country to another with the intent or effect of establishing a new residence temporarily or permanently (IOM 2011). From this, Internal migrants migrate but remain in their country of origin.

But given the focus of this research, I would emphasize more on International Migration. The International Organization for Migration defines international migration as the movement of people who leave their country of origin or country of habitual residence to settle permanently or temporarily in another country. International migrants are people who move outside their home country to another country to settle either temporarily or permanently. Excluding refugees, the UNHCR (2023) categorize international migrants as those who move across border not due to a direct threat of persecution, severe harm, or death, but for other reasons, such as to improve their circumstances by pursuing employment or education opportunities, or to reunite with family. They

continue to enjoy the privileges of their national government while abroad, and they continue to enjoy these privileges upon their return.

Depending on the movement of migrants in relation to their home and host countries, emigration and immigration are two important concepts used in the field of migration. Emigration is the act of leaving one state with the intention of residing in another. While immigration is the process by which foreigners enter a country with the intention of settling there. As a result, emigrants are individuals who leave their home country with the goal of settling in another, and they become immigrants once they arrive in the host country (International Organization for Migration 2023)

From the aforementioned, it is important to note that African migrants in the Czech Republic falls in the international category of migrants and are also known as immigrants in the Czech Republic, and emigrants in their home country. These African migrants are from the sub-Saharan African. Sub-saharan Africa relatively mean the whole of African continents except countries on the Mediterranean coast (Department of Political Science, Philosophical Faculty, University of Hradec Králové). It is a region located adjacent to the European Neighbourhood (Czech Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2019). Meanwhile, African migrants are those migrants in the Czech Republic that are born in sub-Saharan Africa. Children of these migrants that are born in the Czech Republic are not considered African migrants unless they themselves migrate to another country.

Quite distinctively, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the Czech Republic described immigration as the spatial movement of groups and individuals, as well as the process of foreigners settling in their host countries. Immigrants, according to the ministry, are foreigners, including second and third-country nationals, who arrived in the Czech Republic for a long-term stay in order to get a temporary or permanent residence card (Ministry of the Interior 2023). African migrants in the Czech Republic are foreigners that falls in the third country national's category.

CHAPTER TWO

Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

2.0 Introduction

This chapter embarks on an exploratory journey into the determinants of Nigerian migration to the Czech Republic, an area that, despite its escalating relevance, remains scantily explored within scholarly realms. This section does not only aim to enrich the discourse on migration dynamics but also aligns with the overarching aim of this study, which is to examine the complex dynamics of Nigerian migration to the Czech Republic, focusing on the attractors, challenges faced by migrants, and the role of diaspora communities if they exist. By identifying key drivers and examining the subsequent challenges and community responses, this research contributes a comprehensive perspective to migration studies.

2.1 Causes of Migration among Nigerian Migrants

Migration is a complex occurrence that is impacted by various factors that drive people to move across national boundaries. The scholarly pursuit to unravel these motivators has led to diverse interpretations and theories. Castles and Miller (2009) emphasize economic disparities and labor market demands as primary catalysts, suggesting that the quest for better employment opportunities and improved living standards drives much of global migration. Concurrently, Massey et al. (1993) highlight the significance of social networks and familial ties in facilitating migration, arguing that these networks not only provide logistical support but also act as a pull factor by themselves. Adding to this discourse, Faist (2000) introduces the concept of transnationalism, noting that migration is often a strategy employed by families and communities rather than isolated individuals, thereby underscoring the role of social structures in migration decisions. Furthermore, Skeldon (1997) points to environmental degradation and climate change as increasingly prominent drivers of migration, a perspective that adds an ecological dimension to the economic and social considerations traditionally emphasized.

Zolberg (1989) integrates political instability and persecution into the framework of migration causes, articulating how wars, conflict, and political oppression compel people to seek refuge in more stable environments. This view is echoed by Betts, et al., (2009), who stressed the importance of international protection needs in the context of forced migration, thereby broadening the understanding of migration beyond voluntary economic migration to include asylum seekers and refugees.

However, it is important to note that Nigerian migration, while encapsulating the general causes mentioned above, is distinct in its context and manifestations. Adebayo (2024) reports economic instability, exacerbated by fluctuating oil prices and unemployment, as a critical push factor for Nigerian migrants. This economic impetus is compounded by political instability and security concerns, with regions of Nigeria grappling with insurgency and conflict, driving individuals to seek safety abroad (Akinola, 2018). Educational aspirations also play a significant role, with many Nigerians pursuing opportunities for higher education in foreign countries as a pathway to personal and professional development (Falola and Afolabi, 2007). The allure of the Czech Republic for Nigerian migrants can be partly attributed to its educational offerings, a factor highlighted in broader migration research. The literature reveals a gap in a nuanced understanding of the specific motivations behind Nigerian migration to the Czech Republic. While the broad causes of migration are well-documented, the unique interplay of factors that make the Czech Republic an attractive destination for Nigerians necessitates further exploration. The next section aims to bridge that gap by delving into the myriad reasons that guide Nigerian migrants towards the Czech Republic, drawing on a rich tapestry of literature to offer a comprehensive understanding of their motivations.

2.2 Czech Republic as an Attractive Destination

It is important to note that the landscape of European migration is shaped by a complex array of factors that attract migrants from across the globe. Studies by de Haas (2008) and King (2002) highlight economic prosperity, political stability, and comprehensive social welfare systems as key factors making Europe an attractive destination for migrants. The role of the European Union's

policies in facilitating mobility and ensuring rights for migrants further enhances its appeal as a destination (Favell, 2008). However, the motivations for migration within Europe are not homogenous. Castles, de Haas, and Miller (2014) note the significance of regional disparities within Europe itself, where Eastern and Southern European countries serve as both source and transit regions for migrants heading towards the wealthier Northern and Western parts. This internal European migration dynamic underscores the continent's multifaceted migration landscape.

In the broader European context, the Czech Republic emerges as a unique case. Its transition from a post-socialist state to a stable, high-income economy within the European Union makes it an increasingly popular destination for migrants, including Nigerians. Drbohlav (2003) and Čermák (2008) discuss the economic transformation of the Czech Republic, highlighting how its robust economy and low unemployment rates make it attractive to foreign workers seeking better opportunities. Furthermore, the role of education and bilateral agreements is particularly pivotal in shaping the Czech Republic's appeal. The Czech government's initiatives to internationalize higher education, coupled with scholarship programs targeted at students from developing countries, have made it a desirable destination for students seeking quality education abroad (Horáková, 2015). Migration policies in the Czech Republic have also played a significant role in shaping the flow and experiences of migrants. The country's strategic approach to migration, aiming to attract skilled labor to address demographic challenges and labor market needs, has implications for migrants, including Nigerians (Čaněk & Čížinský, 2016). Moreover, the integration policies and support systems in place for migrants, including language courses and cultural orientation programs, facilitate the adaptation process for newcomers (Drbohlav & Dzúrová, 2007).

The economic transformation of the Czech Republic post-1989 has been remarkable, with its integration into the European Union catalyzing a shift towards a market-driven economy. This transition has not only spurred economic growth but has also created a demand for skilled labor in sectors such as information technology, engineering, and services, making it an attractive destination for foreign workers seeking better opportunities. Studies by Drbohlav (2003) highlighted this economic dynamism, which contrasts sharply with the economic instability and

unemployment issues plaguing Nigeria (Adebayo, 2015) The lure of stable employment and the possibility of upward economic mobility in the Czech Republic become significant pull factors for Nigerian migrants.

The Czech Republic's emphasis on internationalizing its higher education system has opened doors for international students, offering them opportunities to access quality education and research facilities (Dobbins & Knill, 2009). "Scholarship programs and bilateral agreements have significantly facilitated academic exchange and migration between various countries and the Czech Republic, creating pathways that are also beneficial for Nigerian students seeking educational opportunities abroad (Horáková, 2015) This educational appeal is further enhanced by the prospects of post-graduation employment within the Czech economy, linking education directly to economic incentives for migration.

The strategic approach of the Czech Republic towards migration, particularly its policies aimed at attracting skilled labor to mitigate demographic challenges and labor market shortages, plays a crucial role in shaping the migration flow of migrants, including migrants from Nigeria (Drbohlav, 2012). The country's integration policies, including language courses and cultural orientation programs, not only facilitate the adaptation process for newcomers but also signal a welcoming stance towards migrants (Drbohlav & Dzúrová, 2007; Čaněk & Čížinský, 2016). While specific studies focusing on the Nigerian diaspora community in the Czech Republic are scarce, the general literature on diaspora communities' role in migration suggests that such communities often play a supportive role in facilitating the integration of new migrants (Brinkerhoff, 2011)

By weaving together the economic, educational, and policy facets, it becomes evident that the Czech Republic's attractiveness as a destination for Nigerian migrants is the result of a complex interplay of factors. This nuanced understanding highlights the importance of considering migration within the interconnected realms of economic opportunity, educational advancement, and supportive policy frameworks.

2.3 Challenges of Migrants

Migration, while offering opportunities for a better life, brings with it a spectrum of challenges that migrants must navigate in their new environments. Castles, de Haas, and Miller (2014) underscore the complexity of integration processes across Europe, noting that migrants often face difficulties in securing employment, accessing social services, and achieving social acceptance. Ager and Strang's (2008) integration framework further elaborates on these challenges, highlighting the importance of language proficiency, employment, health, education, and social bridges in the successful integration of migrants. The legislative and social climates of host countries also significantly impact the migrant experience. According to Triandafyllidou & Gropas (2014), restrictive immigration policies and the rise of xenophobic sentiments in parts of Europe have added layers of complexity to the challenges migrants face, affecting their legal status, access to the labor market, and social cohesion.

In the Czech Republic, migrants encounter a unique set of challenges that reflect both the general difficulties experienced in Europe and specific issues related to the country's socio-political context. Drbohlav and Džurová (2007) highlight the stringent bureaucratic procedures for securing residency and work permits as a significant hurdle for migrants, which is compounded by the Czech language barrier, making integration into the labor market and society more challenging. Cultural and linguistic barriers are particularly pronounced in the Czech Republic, where the linguistic landscape is dominated by the Czech language, a Slavic language that presents considerable difficulties for English-speaking African migrants. Rabušicová and Rabušic (2016) discuss how these barriers not only hinder day-to-day interactions but also limit migrants' access to services and employment opportunities commensurate with their qualifications. The perception of migrants within Czech society and the challenges of social inclusion are critical areas of concern. Horáková (2015) addresses the xenophobic attitudes and discrimination that migrants may face, which can impede their social integration and sense of belonging. However, the role of diaspora communities and migrant organizations in facilitating integration and creating social networks cannot be understated, as they provide crucial support and advocacy for migrants' rights (Bakewell, 2009). The Czech Republic presents a unique set of challenges for migrants,

particularly those from Nigeria and other African countries. These challenges are multifaceted, encompassing bureaucratic, linguistic, cultural, and social dimensions.

Navigating the Czech Republic's bureaucratic landscape also poses significant hurdles for migrants. The complexity of legal procedures for securing residency, work permits, and access to social services often becomes a major obstacle. Similar challenges are observed in other Central and Eastern European countries, where stringent immigration policies and bureaucratic inefficiencies can impede migrants' ability to settle and work legally (Drbohlav, 2012). Comparative studies, such as those by Andrei & Merica (2019) in Hungary and Romania, highlight the regional commonality of these administrative barriers, suggesting a broader pattern within the post-socialist states of Europe.

More importantly, language proficiency emerges as a critical barrier for African migrants in the Czech Republic. The Slavic roots of the Czech language, coupled with limited opportunities for formal language education for migrants, exacerbate the difficulties in social integration and access to the labor market (Drbohlav & Džúrová 2007). The empirical study conducted by Borufka (2021) regarding the experiences of Black individuals in the Czech Republic confirms that language acts as a barrier for Black African individuals to comprehend Czech culture, consequently restricting their access to opportunities. But then, this challenge is not unique to the Czech Republic; similar language barriers are reported by African migrants in Poland and Slovakia. The prevalence of non-Indo-European languages in these countries adds an additional layer of complexity to the integration process for African migrants (White, P., & Ryan, L., 2008).

The cultural integration of Nigerian migrants into Czech society is further complicated by societal attitudes and xenophobia. Studies by Horáková (2015) and Čermák (2008) discuss the discrimination and social exclusion faced by migrants, which can hinder their ability to form social connections and fully integrate. These experiences mirror findings from other European contexts, where racial and cultural prejudices impact migrants' social inclusion (Meer and Modood, 2012). More particularly, the research conducted by Ifeadiwachukwu (2023) on the awareness of Black Africans in the Czech Republic lends support to this viewpoint. His study uncovered that xenophobia and discrimination persist as significant challenges for Black Africans in the Czech

Republic. All participants in his research disclosed experiencing discrimination in various public spaces such as buses, trams, universities, streets, and stores. Interestingly, they reported no instances of discrimination in religious and social gatherings.

The Czech labor market presents both opportunities and challenges for migrants. While there is demand for skilled labor, recognition of foreign qualifications and the language barrier often relegate migrants to lower-skilled jobs, underemployment, or unemployment. This phenomenon is not isolated to the Czech Republic but is a common challenge across Europe. The OECD has extensively documented the difficulties migrants face in terms of integration and overcoming language barriers in various European countries" (OECD, 2019). The struggle for social inclusion, exacerbated by employment challenges, underscores the complexity of integrating into a new society while maintaining one's cultural identity (Berry, 1997). Drawing parallels with similar challenges in countries like Hungary, Poland, and Slovakia, the narrative elucidates the broader regional context within which the experiences of Nigerian migrants in the Czech Republic are situated.

2.4 Understanding Diaspora

The term "diaspora" encompasses the dispersion of people or ethnic populations from their traditional homelands to foreign areas, often forming communities that maintain connections with their roots (Cohen, 1997). Brubaker (2005) argues that diasporas are not just about dispersal but also about connections and networks that transcend geographical boundaries, enabling cultural, economic, and political exchanges between the homeland and the host country. The Nigerian diaspora, with its global footprint, exemplifies this dynamic, contributing to the cultural diversity and economic development of host countries while maintaining strong ties to Nigeria (Adepoju, 2001).

The Nigerian diaspora is a vibrant and influential community with a significant presence in countries like the UK, USA, and Canada. Studies by Afolayan et al. (2008) and Okunade & Oladotun (2023) highlight how these communities serve as crucial support systems for new

migrants, facilitating their integration through social networks, cultural organizations, and business associations. The diaspora's role in fostering transnational connections has also been emphasized, with remittances and knowledge transfers contributing to development projects in Nigeria (Mberu & Pongou, 2010). The concept of "diaspora" extends beyond mere geographical dispersion; it encapsulates the complex dynamics of identity, belonging, and transnational engagement that characterize diasporic communities (Brubaker, 2005). The Nigerian diaspora, with its extensive global presence, epitomizes these dynamics, maintaining robust connections to Nigeria while contributing to the cultural, economic, and social landscapes of their host countries.

The term "japa," originating from the Yoruba language, colloquially refers to the act of migrating abroad for better opportunities, reflecting a broad desire among Nigerians to escape economic hardships and political instability (Okunade & Oladokun, 2023). This phenomenon has gained prominence in recent years, fueled by stories of success and improved quality of life shared within diaspora networks, thereby influencing more Nigerians to consider migration as a viable option for personal and professional development.

Nigerians in the diaspora play a crucial role in shaping migration decisions back home. Through social media, remittances, and personal networks, they provide valuable insights into life abroad, offering guidance and support to potential migrants (Afolayan et al., 2008). Furthermore, diaspora communities often establish organizations and initiatives aimed at facilitating the migration process, from providing financial assistance to navigating legal and bureaucratic challenges in host countries (Levitt & Jaworsky 2007).

The facilitation role of the Nigerian diaspora encompasses a range of activities, including sponsoring family members, offering accommodation, and connecting new arrivals with employment opportunities. This support system is instrumental in easing the transition for migrants, enhancing their chances of successful integration into their new environments (Mberu & Pongou, 2010). Notably, diaspora-led mentorship programs and professional networks have emerged as vital platforms for knowledge exchange and career advancement among Nigerian migrants (Nkomo & Ngambi 2009).

2.5 Theoretical Framework

2.5.1 Push and Pull Theory

The push-pull theory, a cornerstone in migration studies, provides a comprehensive framework for understanding the dynamics of human mobility. Formulated by Everett Lee in 1966, the theory delineates the reasons behind migration, categorizing them into 'push' factors, which drive individuals away from their home country, and 'pull' factors, which attract them to a new destination (Lee, 1966). Everett Lee's seminal work laid the groundwork for subsequent research in migration studies. His theory was innovative in recognizing that migration is not merely a response to adverse conditions but also an attraction to better opportunities elsewhere (Lee, 1966). Over the years, numerous scholars have adopted and expanded upon Lee's theory, applying it to various migration contexts. Massey et al. (1993), for instance, integrated the push-pull framework into their broader theory of migration, emphasizing the role of social networks and economic structures in the migration process.

The push-pull theory posits that factors such as economic instability, political unrest, and environmental degradation compel individuals to leave their homelands ('push' factors), while prospects of employment, higher living standards, and safety in destination countries serve as 'pull' factors (Lee, 1966; Massey et al., 1993). This dual framework highlights the complexity of migration decisions, which are influenced by a combination of personal circumstances and broader socio-economic conditions. This theory is instrumental in understanding the heterogeneous nature of migration. It provides a structured approach to dissecting the various influences on an individual's decision to migrate, offering insights into both the macro-level forces at play and the micro-level personal considerations (Haas, 2008). This theory's importance lies in its impact on migration policies and interventions, emphasizing the need to address root causes in origin countries and improve integration and attraction factors in destination countries (Haas, 2011). Examples of 'push' factors include economic recession, unemployment, and conflict in countries like Nigeria, driving individuals to seek better opportunities abroad. Conversely, 'pull' factors might include the economic prosperity, political stability, and educational opportunities available

in destinations like the Czech Republic. Recent studies, such as those by Adeyanju and Oriola (2021), have explored the "japa" phenomenon among Nigerian youths, highlighting how economic aspirations and the quest for a secure environment motivate migration to non-traditional destinations, including the Czech Republic.

2.5.2 Theories of Diaspora

One of the theories of diaspora, as articulated by Safran (1991), provides a framework for understanding the integration of Nigerians in the Czech Republic within the context of their dual identities and cultural heritage. Safran's concept emphasizes that diasporic communities maintain connections to both their homeland and their host country, shaping their integration experiences (Safran, 1991). For Nigerians in the Czech Republic, this means balancing their Nigerian identity with their Czech environment, influencing their social interactions and sense of belonging. Applying Safran's theory to our research questions, we can explore how Nigerians in the Czech Republic navigate their dual identities and maintain connections to Nigeria while integrating into Czech society. This analysis can shed light on the factors driving some Nigerians to emigrate, as well as the challenges they face in the Czech Republic.

Furthermore, Brubaker's work (2005) highlights the role of institutions in diaspora formation, suggesting that formal and informal organizations play a crucial role in shaping diasporic identities. In the case of Nigerians in the Czech Republic, examining the role of Nigerian community organizations, churches, and cultural associations can provide insights into the cohesion and collective identity of the diaspora. Additionally, Vertovec's concept of "long-distance nationalism" (1999) is relevant to understanding how Nigerians in the Czech Republic maintain ties to Nigeria through transnational practices. This perspective underscores the importance of social, political, and economic networks that span borders, influencing the integration and sense of belonging of Nigerian migrants in the Czech Republic.

Cohen's work on diasporas (2008) complements these perspectives by emphasizing the dynamic and evolving nature of diasporic identities. Cohen argues that diasporas are not static entities but are continuously shaped by the interactions between diasporic communities and their host

countries (Cohen, 2008). For Nigerians in the Czech Republic, this means that their identity and sense of belonging are influenced by their experiences in both Nigeria and the Czech Republic, as well as by broader social, political, and economic factor

CHAPTER THREE

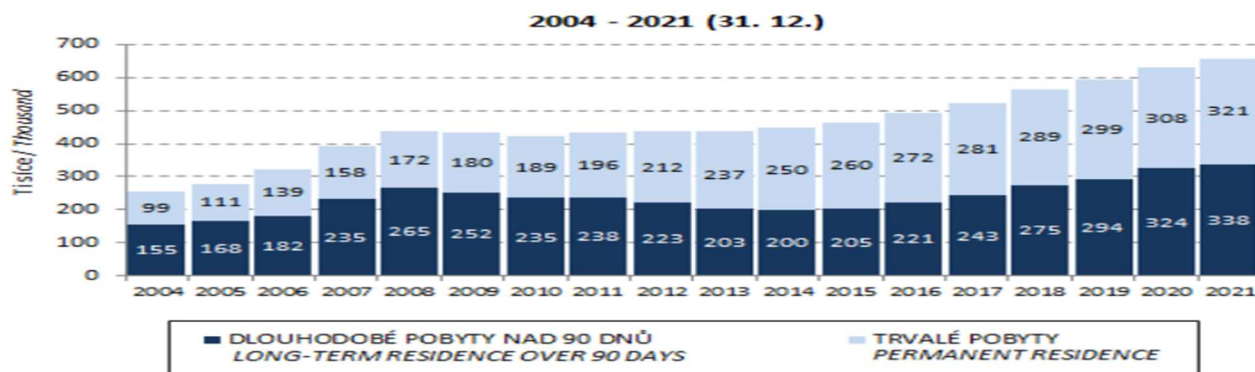
3.1

Overview of Migration In the Czech Republic

Migration in the Czech Republic has evolved significantly since the country inception. Since regaining its independence in 1989 and peacefully splitting from the Slovak republic in 1993, there has been significant rise in the number of immigrants in the Czech Republic. The number of foreigners living in the Czech Republic in 1993 was about 78,000 foreigners. And two years later in 1995, this figure rose to 159207 foreigners living in the Czech Republic (Seidlová, 2018). During this period, majority of the immigrants comes from Poland (23053 persons; 14% of all foreign nationals), Slovakia (39725 persons; 25%), Ukraine (28158 persons; 18%) Vietnam (14213 persons; 9%), and Germany (5553 persons; 3%) (CSU 2021).

Today, Czech Republic is now an attractive destination as it has become a popular destination for foreigners (Seldova, 2005; Drbhohlav & Seldovia, 2016; MOI, 2023). At the end of 2021, there were a total of 658,564 foreign nationals living in Czechia. (see **fig 3**). Two-thirds of the current immigrant population (66%) came from 5 countries (when comparing with 2018, the only change is that Romania replaced Germany among the top 5), while more than one-quarter came from Ukraine (196637 persons; 29.8%). Ukrainians are currently the largest group of immigrants and have lived in the Czech Republic for over 20 years. The second largest group is Slovakia (114630 persons; 17.4%), followed by Vietnam (64808 persons; 9.8%), Russia (45154 persons; 6.8%), Romania (18806 persons; 2.8%), Poland (17936 persons; 2.7%), Bulgaria (17295 persons; 2.6%), Germany (14792 persons; 2.2%), Mongolia (11000 persons; 1.6%), and the United States (8700 persons; 1.6%). Other nationalities account for 22.5% (148800 persons) of the total foreign population in the Czech Republic (Czech Statistical Office 2021). This shows that almost (46.4%) are three citizens of three countries outside the EU (Ukraine, Vietnam and Russia), and one quarter (20.2%) are citizens of two neighboring countries EU member states (Slovakia and Romania), and about a (33%) is made of citizens of all other countries of the world. It is important to note that most immigrants are concentrated in Prague. Other than Prague, large number of them can also be found in cities like as Brno, Ostrava, Plzen, Liberec, and Olomouc (The Immigrant Population in the Major cities of the Czech Republic 2020).

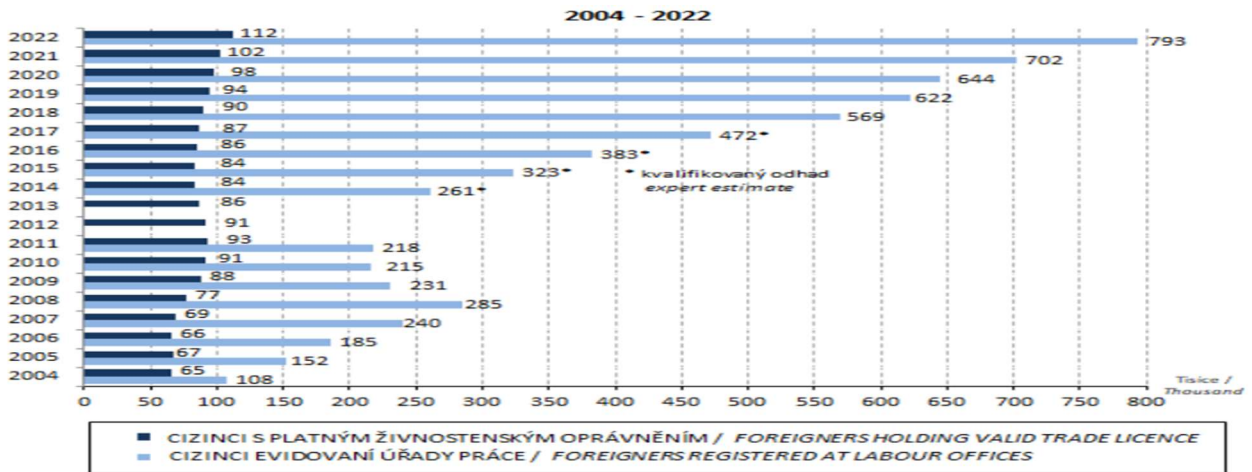
Figure 2: Rising number of Immigrants in the Czech Republic (2004-2021)



Source: CSU 2021

The migration dynamics in the Czech Republic significantly impact its labor market, with migrants playing a crucial role in supporting economic growth. The largest number of economically active migrants was recorded in 2022, when around (793000) migrants were employed in the Czech labor market. In 2004, the lowest number of economically engaged migrants was recorded (108000 persons). No migrants were recorded between 2012 and 2013, as only trade licenses were issued during this time. However, the number of active migrants engaged in the Czech labor market increased steadily from 2014 to 2022. Furthermore, the number of trade permits issued is always smaller than the number of migrants admitted to the labor market. The most trade licenses were issued in 2022 (112000), and the least number of trade licenses were issued in 2004. The number of trade licenses granted to foreign immigrants increased significantly between 2004 and 2022. (see Fig 3).

Figure 3: Immigrants in the Czech Labour Market (2004-2022)



Source: CSU 2022

3.2. Development of Immigration Policies

Legal regulations in the Czech Republic affecting foreigners encompass a range of acts and their amendments, including the Foreigners Act, Refugee Act, Employment Act, Temporary Protection Act, and Border Protection Act (Ministry of the Interior, 2017). These regulations began evolving after Czechoslovakia's balkanization in 1993 (Haimannova, 2015), leading to a laissez-faire approach to migration characterized by minimal restrictions on immigrant numbers (Barša & Baršová, 2005; Drbohlav et al., 2010; Burianova & Votradovcova, 2015). However, integration issues persisted, and the influx of immigrants increased, making the Czech Republic an attractive destination (Seldova, 2015; Drbohlav et al., 2016).

However, subsequent rises in immigration triggered domestic issues like unemployment, illegal immigration, and asylum seekers (Drbohlav et al., 2010; Drbohlav, 2003), prompting the government to adopt a more restrictive migration strategy (Burianova and Votradovcova, 2015) and align Czech law with EU standards (Barša & Baršová, 2005). This led to revisions in the Foreign Act and Refugee Act to regulate visa applications, immigrant residence, and asylum procedures (Drbohlav, 2004; Barša & Baršová, 2005; Drbohlav et. al., 2010; Drbohlav et. al., 2009).

During 2000-2005, internal migration issues dominated policy discussions, resulting in strengthened laws governing foreigners' residence (Drbohlav et al., 2010; Kušniráková & Čížinský, 2011). As a result, the Action Plan for Combatting Illegal Migration and The Principle of Government Policy in the Field of Migration of Foreigners were introduced to manage immigration and support beneficial forms of migration (Stojanov et al. and Barša a Baršová, 2005). Economic growth between 2005 and 2008 increased labor demand, but tighter laws were later enacted to curb immigration (Burianová & Votradovcová, 2015; Kušniráková & Čížinský, 2011). The 2015 European migration crisis prompted a more stringent migration approach (Stojanov, 2022), with the Czech Republic being among the first to close its borders (Wintour, 2018). This shift continued, with limited asylum acceptance and challenges in EU cooperation impacting Czech migration policy (Labeda & Mensikova, 2016).

3.3 Africans in the Czech Republic

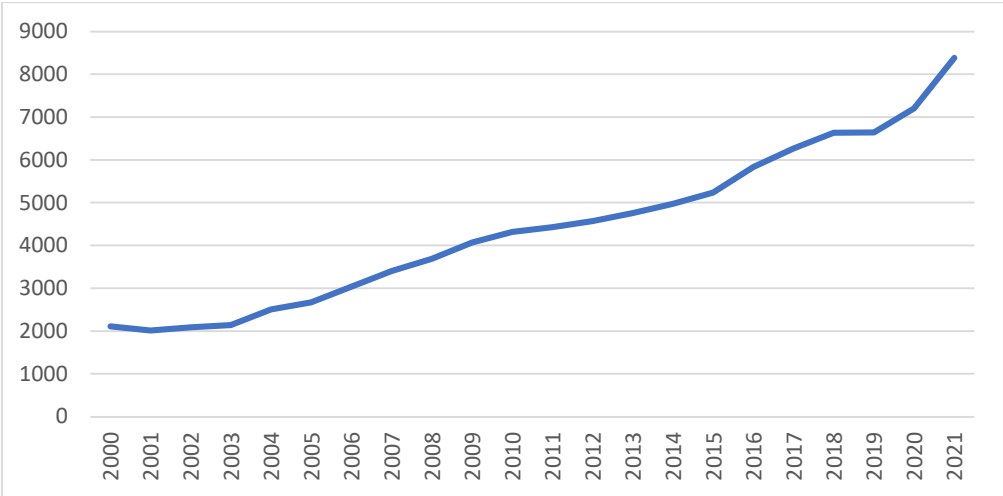
The official figures in the Czech Republic indicate that the African population is considered a minority compared to other ethnic. The total number of Africans who entered the country in the last five years is 35125 people. This is significantly less compared to the biggest migrant communities living in the Czech Republic such as Ukraine, Slovakia, Vietnam, Russia, Germany, Poland, Bulgaria, Romania, and the United States of America.

However, historically, the immigration of African migrants to the Czech Republic can be traced to the period when there was a rich contact between socialist Czechoslovakia (former name of the Czech Republic) and some African states. Due to the Soviet Union influence, Czechoslovakia closely followed African activities and politics by engaging with and providing diplomatic support to African countries in the process of decolonization from colonial rule (Zidek & Sieber 2007). According to Noubel (2020), Czechoslovakia established bilateral relationship with some African states (Angola, Benin, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Ghana, Guinea- Bissau, Mali, Mozambique, Nigeria, and Zambia). Form of this relationship which include scholarship benefits and training opportunities provided a pathway through which some Africans from these aforementioned African countries migrated to Czechoslovakia to study and receive host of training opportunities (Aspaturian, 1984: Barbara, Praeger and Oprea, 2009: Felcer 2019). In 1960, it was estimated that hundreds of African students received scholarships to study in the fields of science,

technology, military science, and medicine at various universities in Prague (Noubel, 2020). Between 1978 and 1979, approximately 139 Ethiopian students studied in Czechoslovakia, while in 1984, 194 Angolan students were enrolled in Czechoslovakian universities and secondary schools. Meanwhile, some of these recipients never returned to their home country after the completion of their studies and training (Noubel, 2020). As a result, most of them stayed in the Czech Republic following the dissolution of Czechoslovakia (Noubel, 2020).

Presently, there has been growing number of African immigrants in the Czech Republic from 2000 to 2021. Between these periods, the lowest number (2108 persons) of African migrants in the Czech Republic was recorded in 2000, while the highest number (8384 persons) was recorded in 2021 (Czech Statistical Office 2021). Almost two-thirds of the African immigrant population originated from Nigeria, Egypt, Tunisia, Algeria, and Ghana (Czech Statistical Office, 2021). Interestingly, In the past five years, Nigeria, Ghana, and South Africa have emerged as the countries within sub-Saharan Africa with the highest number of immigrants into the Czech Republic (Czech Statistical Office 2021), with Nigeria maintaining the top positions, and with a continual annual increase in its migrant population (please see fig 1 and tab1).

Figure 4: Rising number of African Immigrants in the Czech Republic (2000-2021)



Source: Constructed by the Author but adapted from CSU 2021

CHAPTER FOUR

Methodology

4.0 Introduction

This section will thoroughly explore the research design, philosophical stance, methodology, data collection, and analysis procedures, along with ethical considerations and guidelines governing the execution of this research endeavor.

4.1 Research Philosophy

To understand the method for this study, it is imperative to describe the nature of the knowledge this study seeks to obtain. This process is termed research philosophy, which is often the beliefs, assumptions, and principles that guide the way research is being approached, and a methodology developed (Jasen 2023). Sander (2015) describes ontology, epistemology and axiology as the three approaches to research philosophy. However, the philosophical approach for this study is both ontology and epistemology.

Ontology is the study of being” (Crotty, 1998, p. 10) and “raises basic questions about the nature of reality and the nature of the human being in the world” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p. 183). It focuses on what exists in the world that can be acquired by human being (Moon and Blackman 2017). The ontological position for this study is constructivism. Crossan (2003) asserted that the foundation of constructivist ideology lies in comprehending the phenomenon under study via thorough examination using qualitative methods. This approach emphasizes relying on the respondent's viewpoint to provide a detailed depiction of the studied phenomenon, rather than quantifiable measures. As a result, data collection is descriptive and qualitative.

Epistemology deals with beliefs regarding knowledge, including what is considered as credible, valid, and authorized knowledge, as well as methods for conveying knowledge to others (Burrell and Morgan 1979). As stated by Crotty (1998, p. 3), epistemology pertains to the method by which one comprehends and justifies their knowledge. The epistemology position for this study is interpretivism. Al-Saadi (2014) defines interpretivism as the process wherein an individual's understanding of reality is shaped by their interactions within society, their firsthand observations,

perceptions, and interpretations, ultimately contributing to their own construction of reality or knowledge generation.

In this context, the aim of the study is to explore the reasons behind Nigerians' decision to leave their country and relocate to the Czech Republic, while also investigating their experiences and challenges since arriving in the Czech Republic. Therefore, it is essential to employ qualitative research methods, as they allow for a nuanced understanding of participants' experiences, perceptions, and in-depth interpretations, unlike quantitative or survey methods which primarily focus on numerical data.

4.2 Qualitative Research Method or Approach

Qualitative research endeavours to delve into a social phenomenon, uncover the emotions associated with the problem, and grasp the subjective experiences of individuals linked to a research problem. This approach focuses on comprehending how individuals attribute meaning to their social realities (Mwita, 2022). It entails the collection and analysis of non-quantitative data, such as textual, visual, or auditory information, to gain insight into the thoughts, viewpoints, or experiences of individuals (Chinyere & Eze, 2023). The objective of qualitative research is to achieve a holistic understanding of social phenomena within their natural contexts. It relies on individuals' firsthand experiences as they construct meanings in their everyday lives and emphasizes the "why" rather than the "what" of social phenomena (Fossey et al., 20024). Kumar (2011) suggests that qualitative research aims to comprehend, elucidate, explore, uncover, and clarify the situations, emotions, perceptions, attitudes, values, beliefs, and experiences of a specific group of individuals.

The qualitative research method was deemed more appropriate for conducting this study as it offers a greater ability to delve deeper and derive meaning from individuals' experiences regarding reasons for migration and their experiences in the Czech Republic. Consequently, this study will utilize the phenomenological qualitative approach. The phenomenological qualitative approach centers on individuals' phenomena or experiences and the significance behind these experiences (Paley, 2016). It allows us to explore the lived experiences of individuals and their thought

processes. The primary objective of this approach is to comprehend the significance of individual experiences and their emotional impact.

4.3 Method of Data Collection

For this study, interviews serve as the chosen method for data collection. They entail a dialogue between the researcher and the respondents (Mwtiwa, 2022). Through interviews, pertinent information related to the study is gathered from participants via a series of questions posed by the researcher. Interviews can take on structured, semi-structured, or unstructured formats (Hammergerg et al., 2016). For this study, the semi structured Interview method is adopted. Semi-structured interviews combine elements of both structured and unstructured formats (Cachia and Millward, 2011). In this approach, a predetermined set of sequential questions serves as the interview guide, yet the researcher retains the flexibility to pose spontaneous follow-up questions based on the interview's dynamics and direction. One notable aspect of this interview style is its capacity to encourage participants to elaborate, thereby offering greater flexibility and breadth, and consequently enabling the extraction of more comprehensive information from the participants (Conroy, 2010).

This type of interview is particularly well-suited for this study because it fosters mutual exchange and interaction between the researcher and participants. This enables the researcher to refine follow-up questions based on participants' responses and provides participants with the chance to express themselves verbally during the interview (Kallio et al., 2016). Furthermore, this interview format allows the researcher to address complex and sensitive topics with participants by providing an opportunity to prepare participants before asking sensitive questions and to clarify complex questions in person (Kumar, 2005).

The semi-structured, in-depth interview method was employed to gather information from Nigerian participants residing in the Czech Republic. This approach facilitated a more open expression of their reasons for migration and their overall experiences in the Czech Republic. It also allowed the researcher to pose quick follow-up questions, resulting in the acquisition of additional information from the participants. This method proved especially beneficial when addressing sensitive topics with participants, such as racism and discrimination, and navigating

the challenges they encounter in the Czech Republic. Moreover, complex and challenging questions were clarified and simplified for the participants, with ample time dedicated to preparing them for such questions.

In addition to the interviews, other instruments used for data collection included the interview guide and a telephone. The interview guide consisted of a set of questions that directed the entire interview process. The researcher ensured that these questions were addressed during the interview; however, they were not necessarily asked in a specific order, as it depended on the flow of the conversation with the participants. Participants were given ample opportunity to freely discuss specific aspects related to the topic of study, with the interview guide questions serving as a reference point only if a participant did not naturally cover a particular aspect of the topic.

Another crucial tool utilized was the telephone, employed to record interviews for enhanced quality analysis. The researcher sought permission from each participant to record the interview, proceeding only upon receiving consent. All participants granted permission for the interview to be recorded. This instrument proved valuable as it enabled the researcher to transcribe and repeatedly listen to the interview, thereby bolstering the quality and precision of the study's analysis.

4.4 Sample and Population (Purposive Sampling and Snowball Sampling Techniques)

Sampling involves selecting a subset of individuals or a larger group for a specific research purpose (Makwana et al., 2023). It allows researchers to study a small portion of a larger population (Baral, n.d). The significance of sampling stems from the impracticality of surveying an entire population due to constraints of cost and time (Elfil and Negida, 2017). As it is often unfeasible to study an entire population, sampling becomes necessary. A sample serves as a scaled-down representation of a larger population, capturing its key characteristics (Makwana et al., 2023). For this study, only a small segment of the population is selected for research purposes.

Sampling is divided into probabilities and non-probability sampling techniques. This study employs non-probability sampling techniques, wherein the researcher selects samples based on their subjective judgment rather than through random selection (Baral, n.d). In this approach, not all members of the population have an equal chance of being included; rather, selection is

determined by the researcher's subjective assessment (Etikan and Bala, 2017; Baral, n.d). Non-probability sampling techniques encompass snowball sampling, quota sampling, convenience sampling, and purposive sampling (Makwana et al., 2023). These techniques are particularly useful when researchers face limitations in terms of resources, time, and workforce (Etikan, Musa, and Alkassim, 2016).

This study employs both purposive sampling and snowball sampling techniques. Purposive sampling involves selecting research participants based on their relevance to the research objectives (Makwana et al., 2023). Consequently, researchers establish inclusion criteria aligned with the research objectives and select participants who meet these criteria. On the other hand, snowball sampling begins with the identification of individuals who meet the inclusion criteria for a study. Subsequently, these initial participants are asked to recommend others who also meet the inclusion criteria (Baral, n.d). These two sampling techniques are suitable for studies with a small sample size and in situations where participants are challenging to reach (Makwana et al., 2023).

4.4.1 Study area and location

Giving the nature and aim of this study, the researcher directs his focus towards Nigerians residing in the Czech Republic, specifically Prague. In 2021, among sub-Saharan African nationals residing in the Czech Republic, Nigeria accounted for the largest proportion at approximately 41.08%, followed by Ghana at 29.71%, South Africa at 21.18%, and Angola at 8.09%, with an average of approximately 591 individuals per country. Additionally, the number of Nigerians have increased over the period of 10 years. As a result, it becomes pertinent to investigate Nigerians in the Czech Republic and understand the reason behind this increase.

The choice of Prague as the location of the study is not far-fetched. In 2021, Prague (236229) recorded the highest number of foreign nationals, with more than 25% of its workforce being comprised of individuals from other countries. These foreign nationals constitute approximately 15% of Prague's overall population, according to the Czech Department of Statistics (2021). Analysis from the Prague Institute of Planning and Development (IPR) shows that One-third of all foreigners are citizens from the European Union, while the remaining two-thirds are citizens from non-EU countries. Nigerians are part of the non-EU countries in Prague.

In light of this above, the researcher opted to recruit participants from Prague because it is easier to find many Nigerians in the city, which facilitates easier access to a significant number of them within the study's constrained timeframe.

4.4.2 Sample Size and Survey

It will be impossible, time consuming and expensive to study all Nigerans in Prague. As a result, the researcher decided to work with a small sample size of 30. However, only 15 people responded and participated in the study. A sample size of 10 is enough for qualitative research comprising individuals who share similar characteristics or traits (Sandelowski 1995). While Crouch and McKenzie (2006) noted that qualitative research benefits from a smaller sample size of fewer than 20 respondents, as this facilitates establishing closer connections and enhancing communication with the participants.

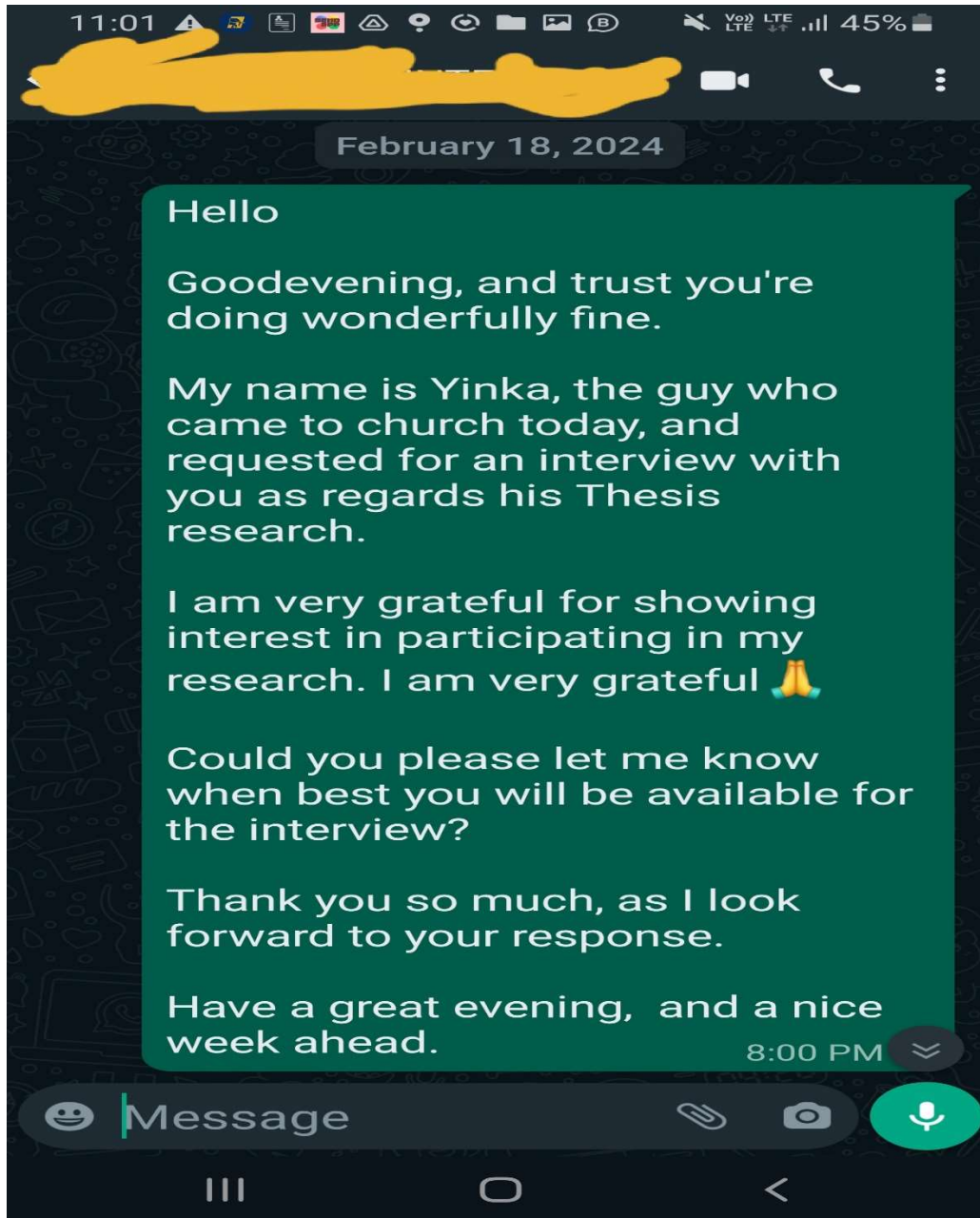
Participants were recruited through personal contacts of the researcher as well as through an African church and a mosque situated in Prague. The researcher visited these religious institutions to connect with Nigerians. Considering the nature and busy schedules of these religious settings, obtaining personal contacts of Nigerians was necessary to follow up and schedule interviews at their convenience. This study applied inclusion criteria aligned with the aims and objectives of the research when selecting participants for interviews.

The criteria are outlined as follows: Participants must be Nigerian citizens legally residing in Prague for a duration exceeding one year. Additionally, they should have been born and raised in Nigeria, and they must not be refugees. The purpose of these inclusion criteria is to ensure that the data obtained align with the research goals and objectives. Nigerians who did not meet these criteria were excluded from the study by the researcher. However, even among those who met the criteria, only those who provided consent and agreed to participate were ultimately selected for interviews.

4.4.3 Table 2- Profile of Participants (Source: Interview)

Participants	Age	Gender	Sate of Origin	Occupation Sector	Educational Level	Lenth of Stay in the Czech Republic (years)	Marital Status	With Family
1	18-30	Male	Ekiti	IT System Engineer	Bachelor	4.5	Single	No
2	31-45	Male	Osun	Information Sector	Masters	7	Single	No
3	31-45	Male	Ogun	Finance	Masters	7	Married	Yes
4	18-30	Female	Port-Hacourt	Human Resources	Masters	2.5	Single	No
5	18-30	Female	Lagos	Human Resources	Masters	3	Single	No
6	18-30	Female	Imo	Student	Bachelor	2.5	Single	Yes
7	46- above	Female	Niger	Diplomat	Bachelor	2.5	Married	Yes
8	18-30	Male	Bauchi	Students	Secondary	2.5	Single	Yes
9	46- above	Female	Osun	Business Owner (Beautician)	Bachelor	15	Single	Yes
10	46- above	Male	Lagos	Business Owner	Masters	20	Married	Yes
11	31-45	Male	Osun	Student	PhD	2.5	Married	No
12	18-30	Female	Edo	Finance	Masters	7.5	Single	Yes
13	31-45	Male	Oyo	Student	Masters	1.5	Single	No
14	18-30	Female	Lagos	Student	Masters	3	Single	No
15	18-30	Male	Ondo	Data Analyst	Masters	3	Single	No

4.4.4 Figure 5- Sample of Follow- up Message Sent to Participants



4.5 Data Collection Procedure

Official language in Nigeria is English, and as a result, it is important to note that interviews with each participant was conducted orally, and purely in English. This was to ensure effective communication as both the researcher and participants thereby eliminating any potential language barrier.

Prior to the interview, an interview guide containing a set of questions relating to migrants' determinants and experiences were prepared. These questions were mainly open-ended questions with a small number of closed questions relating to information such as age, sex, nationality, length of time in the Czech Republic and then follow-up questions. Participants were then contacted via telephone reminding and reiterating the interview goals and objectives to them. Interview date was scheduled in advance according to the participants' availability. There were four to five occasions when the agreed date had to be pre-poned or postponed. Some were not available eventually and they had to withdraw from the interview. Also, the interview time and venue were based on participants' convenience and decision as some chose to have it in their home, restaurant, recreation centers, and business office. The mode of interview was either through online or in-person, as it largely depends on the choice of the participants. About 90% of the interviews were through face-to-face and only 10% online.

On the date of the interview, the researcher reassured participants again about their anonymity, confidentiality, and the option to disengage if they feel uncomfortable. It was explained that participation is voluntary and without monetary incentives. A pre-test interview was carried out before the actual interview. Participants were able to understand and get familiar with the interview questions and structures. The data collected for the pre-test interview was not recorded and included in the analysis. For the actual interview, permission was requested from the participants to make a recording of the interview using a phone recorder. All the participants permitted the interviews to be recorded digitally. The duration for each interview on average lasted about 35 minutes to 1hr 18 minutes. Recording the interview helped preserve the original data for potential future use and allowed the researcher to review each recording post-interview, ensuring access to original, comprehensive, and high-quality data for analysis. Participants' data and information were safely stored and viewed only by me, and my supervisor only when necessary.

4.6 Data Analysis (Thematic Analysis)

To ensure a thorough and robust analysis of the qualitative data collected, this study will utilize the approach outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006) for data analysis. Here is an overview of the process:

- **Familiarization with Data:** The initial stage involves an in-depth engagement with the data, where all interview transcripts will be read and listened to multiple times. This immersion allows the researcher to become intimately familiar with the content, facilitating the identification of preliminary patterns and insights (Guest et al., 2012). It is important to note that this initial engagement with the interview data of Nigerians in the Czech Republic goes beyond mere reading. It involves a deeper immersion into the stories and experiences shared by the participants, reflecting on the variations of migration narratives that have been uncovered in the literature review. Insights from interviews underscore the complexity of migration drivers, which will be instrumental in identifying patterns related to economic, social, educational, and other motivations.
- **Generating Initial Codes:** The data from the participants will be meticulously coded. This process entails identifying segments of text that represent foundational ideas and cataloguing them with relevant codes. The coding will be both inductive, emerging from the data, and deductive, influenced by the study's theoretical underpinnings (Saldaña, 2015).
- **Searching for Themes:** Following the coding process, the generated codes will be collated and explored for overarching themes that capture significant aspects related to the study's research questions. This step is crucial for organizing data into meaningful clusters that reveal patterns across the dataset (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This stage will crucially connect the individual experiences of our participants.
- **Reviewing Themes:** Each theme will undergo a meticulous review against the coded data and the entire dataset to ensure their validity and comprehensiveness. This iterative process may result in refining, merging, or discarding themes to accurately reflect the collected data (Nowell, Norris, White, & Moules, 2017). This iterative review will involve

comparing the emerging findings with the narratives and conclusions drawn from the interviews, refining each theme to ensure they capture the essence of Nigerian migration experiences in the Czech Republic.

- **Defining and Naming Themes:** In this stage, themes are precisely defined, and appropriate names are assigned. This involves articulating the scope of each theme, its significance to the research questions, and how it integrates with the study's theoretical and conceptual framework (Braun & Clarke, 2006). In defining the themes, the researcher aim to encapsulate the multifaceted nature of migration uncovered through the analyses. Each theme will be named to reflect its significance within the context of Nigerian migration to the Czech Republic, ensuring that the themes are directly tied to the study's aims.
- **Writing Up:** The final step entails the detailed documentation of the analysis, integrating thematic descriptions with pertinent examples from the data. This narrative will link the empirical findings with the literature review and theoretical frameworks, providing a comprehensive understanding of the research phenomenon (Riessman, 2008).

4.7 Limitations

While this research breaks new ground by delving into the motivations of African migrants in the Czech Republic, specifically focusing on Nigeria, it encounters certain challenges. Foremost among these challenges is the scarcity of secondary sources on African migrants in the country, owing to the nascent state of research in this area. To address this shortfall, I employed semi-structured interviews extensively. Leveraging this approach facilitated the acquisition of precise, reliable, and insightful data from the participants.

Furthermore, constraints in terms of time, resources, and participants' willingness necessitated the adoption of a small sample size. However, this strategic decision enabled the thorough collection and analysis of high-quality data within the stipulated timeframe and available resources.

CHAPTER FIVE

Analysis and Discussion of Findings

5.0 Introduction

This chapter is divided into two. The first part outlines the primary themes where findings from the Interview sessions are presented thematically, categorizing each objective raised in the study into themes. In this part, participants will be identified numerically as P1-P15, and their responses will not follow a synchronized pattern. And each objective will be addressed from the perspectives of all or nearly all the 15 participants. The second part discusses the findings from the analysis. It illustrates why the findings are relevant to the research and relate the findings to other existing academic literatures.

5.1.1 Newness of The Czech Republic

Nearly all participants noted that the Czech Republic is not a popular country in Nigeria when compared to the likes of USA, UK, and Canada. It is relatively a new country in Nigeria.

P6 noted that the country is not widely known among Nigerians, with many people lacking awareness of its existence. This lack of awareness suggests that the Czech Republic is not a prominent destination in the collective consciousness of Nigerians. P11 echoed this sentiment, stating that the Czech Republic is not among the top choices for Nigerians seeking opportunities abroad. This indicates that the Czech Republic may not be perceived as a desirable destination compared to other countries considered more popular or prestigious.

Not a lot of people know about the Czech Republic. I think even to date not everyone knows the country because sometimes If I would tell my friends that I'm in the Czech Republic, they would be like, where is that? It's not popular in Nigeria (P6)

Most of us coming from Nigeria are actually looking at the Big Seven. The Big Seven comprises Canada, the UK, the US, Australia, and Germany. These are the Big Seven. So the other countries we're not looking into them (P11).

Furthermore, P1, revealed that he had limited prior knowledge of the Czech Republic before being informed about an opportunity in Prague. His awareness was mainly based on knowing about Peter Cech, a Chelsea footballer. He admitted to not actively choosing the Czech Republic but rather following the directive of their company. P4 discussed how she learned about the Czech Republic through her academic background in International Relations and Diplomacy, which exposed her to the historical context of Czechoslovakia. However, she emphasized that while some historical knowledge exists, the Czech Republic remains relatively unknown in Nigeria due to its small size, with people mainly associating it with its past.

You know, I only knew Peter Czech, the Chelsea footballer, and I am a Chelsea fan, and that was really all I knew about the Czech Republic. So I didn't really have prior knowledge about the Czech Republic per se. It was when I got the job and was told I was going to be coming to Prague that I started doing my research about living in the Czech Republic and what it would take, among other things. (P1).

I studied International Relations and Diplomacy, so I heard about the Czech Republic from Czechoslovakia. Historically, I think that's what most people know about the Czech Republic in Nigeria—just history. People know about it based on its history, of course, because a lot of Nigerians are educated and exposed. So, people know about it. But then I think it's a very small country. So, people really don't know much about it. (P4)

Czech is not popular among Africans... Many people don't even know about the Czech Republic. That might be one of the factors that's not making many Nigerians want to be here. And I believe probably many other Africans too. (P13).

It is important to note that several factors were identified as contributing to the Czech Republic's lack of popularity among Nigerians. Language emerged as a significant barrier, with English-speaking Nigerians preferring destinations where English is widely spoken. The Czech Republic's linguistic differences may deter Nigerians from considering it as a destination for study or work.

Additionally, the absence of strong cultural or colonial ties between Nigeria and the Czech Republic may limit awareness and engagement between the two countries.

P14, discussed the lack of awareness about the Czech Republic's pronunciation among Nigerians, indicating the country's marginal visibility in Nigerian society. This lack of linguistic familiarity

may further contribute to the Czech Republic's low popularity among Nigerians, as it may be perceived as unfamiliar or inaccessible due to linguistic differences. He added the low number of Nigerians in the Czech Republic as a plausible reason for this too.

The number one reason would be the language. The fact that it's not an English-speaking country. Knowing that English is the official language in Nigeria, Nigerians will generally tend towards countries that have similar languages to English. Moreso, the Czech Republic has historically not been very open to people of African descent. However, this narrative might be shifting now. One reason for the lack of awareness about the Czech Republic in Nigeria could be the relatively small number of Nigerians living there. If there were more Nigerians in the Czech Republic, there might be greater awareness of the country back home. (P14)

Furthermore, the lack of exposure to Czech culture and society may contribute to the Czech Republic's low visibility among Nigerians. P13 mentioned that awareness of the Czech Republic among Africans is limited, with many people only becoming aware of it through personal experiences or interactions. This suggests that the Czech Republic's cultural and social aspects are not widely promoted or recognized in Nigeria, contributing to its low popularity. Participants 5, 11, and 12 all mentioned that they got to know about the Czech Republic through recommendations from friends and family.

I have this friend who's currently in the Czech Republic; we attended the same university together in Nigeria. He was giving me good reports about the country because honestly, I didn't used to know about the Czech Republic. So I was like, what's up? What's with this country that you are in? Is it a good place? And all of that. And of course, he gave me feedback like, it's okay, the educational system is not bad, you can learn in English and all of that. (P5)

P11 shares his journey to the Czech Republic, which initially involved plans to study in Germany. However, due to visa processing delays, he explored alternative options and eventually decided to pursue education in the Czech Republic. This decision was influenced by the encouragement of his friend already enrolled in a Czech university. While Participant 8 mentioned that his knowledge of the Czech Republic came from football, particularly the famous goalkeeper Petr Cech.

The push-pull theory helps explain why Nigerians might choose the Czech Republic as a migration destination. Unlike the USA, UK, and Canada, which offer strong pull factors like excellent

education and robust economies, the Czech Republic is less known and lacks such strong attractions. This, combined with language barriers and a lack of historical connections, means that while there are many reasons pushing Nigerians to leave Nigeria, there are fewer strong reasons pulling them specifically to the Czech Republic. This helps explain why the Czech Republic is not as popular a destination for Nigerian migrants, even though there are some emerging opportunities there.

5.1.2 Educational Opportunity and Affordability

From the interview conducted, Education is another important theme because nearly all the participants came to the Czech Republic through education. For most participants, they decide to stay back after the completion of their studies. One of the reasons why this is possible because the Czech educational institutions, known for their high standards and relatively affordable tuition compared to other Western countries, have made the Czech Republic an attractive destination for Nigerian students.

Participants 3 and 12 were once in Malta, and both revealed that they came to the Czech Republic due to the high cost of tuition fees in Malta. For them, tuition fees in the Czech Republic are more affordable. Participants 3 noted that:

I didn't complete my education in Malta because it was quite expensive compared to the same quality of education in the Czech Republic, a very reduced amount, I think the government subsidized most of the courses in the Czech Republic, so that's the reason why I left Malta for the Czech Republic. (P3)

Most of the institutions in Malta were private. I think they only had one public school, which was really difficult for Africans to get in into, and the only option for Africans at that time was to go to a private school which as at then they were charging €6,000 per year, which was a lot, but then compared to Czech Republic where I actually got a scholarship, a part scholarship to study and I was paying about 5000 Czech crowns, which was like €200 per year at that time, so I still consider it really cheap. (P12).

After the Bachelors, then I decided to go for Masters, I went into a different field which was Economics and Management, and I wasn't on scholarship. So, I had to pay the full tuition, which was about 32,000 Czech Crowns, and that was about €1,500 at that time, which was still very cheap compared to what I would be paying in Malta or even UK or US. I'm very aware that UK and US are very, they are on the high side when it comes to things like that. So, for me it was the best option and very affordable. (P12).

Comprising the tuition and living cost of Czech Republic and other more traditional destinations like the US or the UK, Participant 2 remark, *The tuition here is more affordable compared to the US or the UK. It's not just about the fees; the cost of living is also reasonable, which makes a huge difference for someone like me who is self-financing their studies(P2).*

Participant 14 also finds value in the economic efficiency of studying in the Czech Republic, which made the decision easier for her family, *I found myself in the Czech Republic because I actually didn't try any other country. By affordability, I mean that it was relatively cheap, right? It was not going to be difficult for my sponsors or my parents to pay my school fees, to even send me some sort of upkeep if I needed it, you know, at any point (P14).*

It is interesting to note that it is not only about the tuition fee, but also the standard and quality of education in the Czech Republic. The quality of education and availability of advanced resources in Czech universities are highlighted by Participant 4 and 12, who appreciates the access to superior research materials and laboratories not available in Nigeria. This not only enhances the quality of education but also enriches their overall learning experience, *In Nigeria, you might not have access to certain research materials or advanced laboratories. Here in Czech, the facilities are just amazing and that directly affects the quality of our research and learning (P4).*

Participant 3's remarks underscore the international exposure and quality of education available: *Here, you get to meet professors from around the globe, offering a perspective you just can't get back home. The technology and resources here are first-rate, something I couldn't say about my university in Nigeria (P3).*

Lastly, P 11 and 14 look for practical learning opportunities and international exposure as pivotal reasons for choosing the Czech Republic, underscoring a desire to engage in a more diversified

academic environment. *I wanted to study in Czech because I would like to learn more of the practical aspects, to have access to state-of-the-art equipment, which I think it's only a few universities have in Nigeria, and in order to experience a more diversified culture and to have more experience around the world* (P11).

I wanted international exposure, I wanted to learn from other experienced people. That was why I generally moved out of the country. Right, I was bent on not having my masters in Nigeria. I wanted something more. (P14)

However, it is important to note that educational stability is also a very important factor for participants. Comparing the educational stability of the Czech Republic and Nigeria, P2 was motivated to leave the country due to the disruptive university strikes that elongated programmes unpredictably. The promise of a stable academic calendar in the Czech Republic offered a stark contrast, providing the kind of reliability, stability and structure that he, and many others, deemed crucial for serious academic pursuit. He shares, *The decision to leave Nigeria wasn't easy, but the frequent university strikes and the uncertainty it caused in our academic calendar really pushed me. In Czech, the system is so structured and the academic environment is incredibly stable, which is critical for any serious student* (P2).

This belief was also echoed by P13, who complained about the academic strikes in Nigeria ; *So I think one of the factors affecting the education system of the country are the strikes. You know, people don't want to go on strike. You don't want to use more than the normal time. And you know, many Nigerian universities are prone to strike, and which may cause delay in achieving your set goal.* (P13)

Similarly, P 5 and 3 reflects on the inefficiencies of the Nigerian educational system, where not only are strikes common but the theoretical approach often lacks practical application. These participants sought an education that was both uninterrupted and more practically oriented, illustrating a common narrative among those who chose to study abroad for enhanced learning experiences. According to P5: *I believe that outside Nigeria, you have more practical knowledge in whatever you're studying. Then considering the Nigerian educational system, your two years*

course is never just 2 years because of the ASUU strikes. I don't think I was willing to go through that stress. I had enough of this in my bachelor's (P5).

This analysis shows that the choice of Nigerian students to study in the Czech Republic is sharply delineated by the push-pull theory, which identifies compelling reasons for their migration. Educational disruptions and a theoretical-heavy curriculum in Nigeria serve as significant push factors, prompting students to seek out more stable and practical alternatives abroad. Participant experiences, such as P2's struggle with the unpredictable academic calendar and P5's quest for practical knowledge, underscore the inadequacies of the Nigerian educational system. On the other hand, the Czech Republic offers attractive pull factors: affordable tuition, high-quality education, and superior research facilities, which are highlighted by P3 and P12's favorable comparisons to other Western countries. The stable academic environment further enhances its appeal, providing the reliability that Nigerian educational institutions often lack. This blend of affordability, quality, and stability makes the Czech Republic an increasingly popular choice for Nigerian students seeking to enhance their academic and personal development abroad.

The participants' experiences highlight a blend of motivations behind the migration for education, characterized by the pursuit of stability, affordability, and quality of education. These factors not only reflect the inadequacies faced in their home countries but also the opportunities that studying abroad offers in enhancing both their academic and personal development.

5.1.3. Economic Considerations and opportunities

In exploring the economic motivations that drive Nigerian migrants to the Czech Republic, each story unfolds like a unique chapter, revealing diverse paths and experiences. These range from the allure of better job prospects to the entrepreneurial spirit driving individuals to establish their own ventures.

P1 experience is a compelling example of seizing professional opportunities. Initially drawn to the Czech Republic for specialized training with a major IT company, his plans were to return to

Nigeria. However, unexpected twists, including a global pandemic and job restructuring, transitioned his temporary stay into a permanent residency. This twist in his career path underscores how professional opportunities, particularly in high-demand sectors like IT, are important in shaping migration trajectories. His story illustrates the importance of adaptability and seizing opportunities that arise unexpectedly.

I went to Prague for a year-long training program as part of a graduate engineering initiative. Initially, I didn't plan to leave Nigeria permanently; I was primarily seeking learning opportunities. However, due to COVID and subsequent restructuring within the company, I stayed in Prague. When a local position opened up, I accepted it and have been here ever since.(P1)

Similarly, P4 who reflects on the transition from education to employment, highlighting the pivotal role of Czech educational institutions in providing pathways specifically in talent acquisition. *The opportunities I found here were unexpected but have proven essential for my career development* (P4). This exemplifies how educational pursuits often serve as a bridge to substantial employment opportunities, allowing migrants to leverage their academic achievements into viable career paths in the Czech Republic.

Meanwhile, Participant 3 expands on the narrative of economic opportunities influencing decisions to stay for post-study. After completing his education, he was presented with a job offer that not only provided immediate financial stability but also paved the way for further economic ventures, including setting up his own businesses and investing in property. This highlights how initial educational migrations can evolve into long-term economic integrations, facilitated by the availability of professional opportunities and an environment conducive to business development.

I decided to stay back because I was offered permanent employment after my studies (P3).

The entrepreneurial spirit is vividly captured by the P 9,6 and 10. P9 who found a unique market niche in the Czech Republic that resonated with his interests and skills. His decision to stay was propelled not just by the lack of competition but by a genuine affection for the place and its people..

I moved to the Czech Republic and chose to stay because I loved the place and saw no competition for my business, so I stayed to start my own. (P9)

The above illustrates the intersection of personal affinity and economic calculation, showing that migration decisions are often influenced by a combination of factors including potential market gaps and personal satisfaction. P6 discusses the entrepreneurial landscape, emphasizing the support structures that aid newcomers in navigating the business environment. *Starting a business here was challenging, but the support from the Czech-Nigeria Business Forum really helped me navigate the initial hurdles (P6)*. This support is crucial for migrants looking to establish themselves economically and highlights the importance of community networks in fostering entrepreneurial success.

P7, offers insights into the economic advantages from a different angle—highlighting the cost-effectiveness of living in the Czech Republic compared to other European countries. Her observations about the affordability of life in Czech, due to lower living costs and favorable currency exchange rates, point to the practical considerations that can influence expatriates' decisions to relocate and stay in a foreign country.

The Czech Republic is quite affordable compared to other countries because it uses its own currency instead of the euro or dollar. It's a nice place where you can manage comfortably. (P7)

Lastly, P12 talks about the broader economic potential within the Czech Republic, which remains largely untapped by the migrant community. *There are a lot of opportunities here, a lot of opportunities that people are not yet to discover (P12)*. This statement highlights the optimistic outlook for future migrants who are willing to explore and capitalize on the opportunities that the Czech Republic has to offer.

The analysis examined Economic motivations and showed significant influence on the migration patterns of these Nigerians to the Czech Republic, guided by the push-pull theory. Economic challenges in Nigeria 'push' individuals abroad, while attractive job prospects and an entrepreneurial-friendly environment in the Czech Republic 'pull' them. For instance, P1's initial

temporary training led to unexpected permanent residency due to new professional opportunities. Similarly, the educational journey of P3 and P9 transitioned into successful careers, underscoring the Czech Republic as a fertile ground for economic opportunities. Additionally, the affordability of living and studying, highlighted by P14 and P2, enhances the Czech Republic's appeal, presenting a cost-effective option for quality education and living. These economic factors not only attract Nigerian migrants but often influence their decisions to stay permanently, as seen in the experiences of P10 and P9 who view the Czech Republic as a long-term home.

5.1.4 Shared Racism and Discrimination

One prominent observation gleaned from the responses of my participants is the common experience of discrimination. Each respondent confirmed having encountered discrimination to some extent, which often colored their interactions with locals. Even though the Czech Republic is full of opportunities as revealed by participants, it also shadows the harsh realities of racism faced by the participants. Almost all the participants experience their fair share of racism in the Czech Republic. P 2 narrated his experience inside the bus and the impact of such experience on his stay in the Czech Republic.

Sometimes you get stare by people in the public transport. These things make you rethink staying here long term. But then, I weigh it against the opportunities here (P2)

Not only stare, P13 noted that:

When I see others deliberately avoiding sitting next to me on public transport, it sends a clear message and makes me feel terrible. It's evident they prefer standing to sitting beside me (P13)

Participant 4 experience came with verbal abuse.

While riding the bus home with my three friends, we experienced discrimination from a lady who was giving us this hard stare and repeatedly told us to 'shut up' and eventually told us to 'go back to your country'. Despite our attempts to engage in conversation, she continued with her offensive remarks until we left the bus (P4)

It got worse for P9 when she discussed her experience with one of the two racist groups that existed in the Czech Republic. She revealed that the 'skinhead' and the 'punk' are the two racist groups she knows about in the Czech Republic. Her encounter with the group on public transport marks the extreme end of racism's spectrum, where physical safety becomes a daily concern. The indifference of bystanders during these episodes not only exacerbates the sense of isolation but also signals a disturbing acceptance of such aggressive behaviors within the community. This lack of intervention, as described by P9, starkly contrasts with her experiences in other countries, pointing to a specific cultural reluctance in the Czech Republic to confront or engage with racial violence.

However, it is important to note that most of these racism experiences are often in public spheres. Some participants noted that they don't experience racism or discrimination in work, official settings and social gatherings. P1 noted that his place of work is made up of people from diverse countries including Romania, Egypt, Kenya. Interestingly, he noted that most Czech people he met from office were very nice to him, and it is different from when meeting them in public spheres. Participant 2 likewise shared a comparable experience in work environments but added the reason might be due to the familiarity among people in social gatherings and the ethical guidelines in companies, particularly international ones like where he works in Prague, which promote inclusivity.

Upon arriving in Prague for work, I joined a diverse group comprising individuals from Romania, Egypt, Kenya, and even a Czech colleague. My initial interaction with Czech people was through my friend in the office, who warmly welcomed our group. He introduced us to Czech culture, took us to visit his family in Pilsen, and showed us activities like skiing and ice skating. Working in an office with Czech colleagues has further enriched my experience. (P10)

In both work and social settings, I haven't encountered racism or discrimination. I believe it's because in social gatherings, people tend to be more exposed and have already interacted before, creating a sense of familiarity. Additionally, many companies have ethical guidelines that promote inclusivity, especially in international companies like where I work in Prague. (P2)

But P8 had a different experience in his professional life as a footballer. As a football player, he confronts stereotypical assumptions about his physical abilities and intellectual capacities, which are often diminished by teammates and spectators alike. This stereotyping not only affects his social interactions but also impacts his professional opportunities and personal growth. He shares

his frustration with the constant need to prove his worth beyond the simplistic and prejudiced views others hold about him.

Because I play football. So people think that because I'm African I'm stronger than the rest of the teammates. And because I'm African I'm not smart, I don't understand things. They think I'm dumb, I don't understand what's going on” (P8).

The participants experience in the Czech Republic is not surprising because, according to Kowalski and Smith (2019), post-communist societies like the Czech Republic often exhibit heightened skepticism and sometimes hostility towards foreigners, which can manifest in xenophobic public sentiments and policies.

5.1.5 Social Inclusion and Cultural Adaptation- Czech Society a stumbling block?

For many participants interviewed, moving to the Czech Republic presents a considerable shift in social and cultural dynamics compared to their homeland. The primary challenge was the stark cultural differences and the initial struggle with social inclusion. This is due to the reserved nature of Czech society which posed an initial barrier to forming new social connections and inclusions. For some participants, this has greatly not only affected their daily interactions but also shaped their overall integration experiences. P 15 described an incident where his attempt to interact in a typically friendly Nigerian manner was met with coldness, illustrating the contrast in social interactions. As a result, this barrier has translated to loneliness and made some participants feel unwelcome. P4 describe his experience of being visibly different and feeling isolated in the school. *I was the only person of color in my class and in my whole one of the very few in my entire program so there was that thing where I always felt like it was harder for me to integrate due to the nature of the Czech Republic (P4).* P4 loneliness was not just a matter of being physically alone but also feeling culturally and socially isolated, a feeling that is increased by the individualistic nature of Czech society, which contrasts sharply with the Nigerian ethos of collectivism. For P15- *As someone who moved to the Czech Republic at the age of 25 years, and I'm 27 now, I've spent majority of my adult life in Nigeria. So, it's me basically leaving a huge chunk of my social life, what I'm used to and learning how to be an adult in a different country operate very independently. So, it was very lonely for me.*

However, for few participants, the reserve and closed nature of the Czech is attributed remnants of communist ideology. P2 reflects on this, noting *' I think it's just the way they are... Czechs came out of the communist era which then forced them to behave in a certain way (P2)*. P9 also reflects on this, articulating the initial wariness they encountered upon arrival: *When I first came here, it felt like people were always on guard, like they weren't sure if they could or should open up. It's something about their history, you know, being under communist rule, that makes them quite cautious about new people (P9)*. P 5 added that: *I heard that there was a war maybe when they were still like Czechoslovakia and they were going to like split the countries or something so there was this war where you just have to talk silently in your house you just have to be quiet because you don't know if the military people are coming to get you or not (P5)*. *Because of their experience during communism, if you talk to foreigners, you go to jail or they question you. So they try to avoid foreigners altogether. During that time, they are not allowed to travel, only foreigners can travel, they are not allowed to do a lot of things. For me, I understand it from my personal knowledge of Czech that that makes them not to be open to people(P10)*. This historical connection has thus led to a societal structure that is often closed off, making it challenging for outsiders, particularly from culturally vibrant countries like Nigeria, to feel welcomed. However, this in contrast to the Nigerian environment where openness and communal interaction are embedded in the cultural fabric of the society. *As P6 noted - Back home in Nigeria everyone's your neighbor, everyone's potentially a friend. Here it's like everyone is minding their own business (P6)*. This explains the difficulties faced by migrants in navigating a society where social bonds are not readily formed and where the communal support systems they are accustomed to are absent.

However, it is important to note that the willingness of Nigerian migrants to remain in the Czech Republic is significantly influenced by this barrier to forming new social connection and inclusion as a result nature of the Czech society. While it has made some participants rethink their decision to stay back in the Czech Republic, only few participants have broken through this barrier and have formed strong community ties and are more inclined to view the Czech Republic as a viable long-term home. Participant 10, who has established a small business and integrated well into the local economy, sees a future for themselves and their family in the country, citing the safe environment and economic opportunities as key factors in their decision. Participants 9 who speaks

Czech language and have been in the Czech Republic for some years consider the Czech Republic her home.

I call myself Czech Afro because I've been here for long that if I go back to Nigeria, people see me there, they say 'Oyinbo'. Here is my home now because I've been here for over 15 years and If I go home in a year, I spend maybe three weeks in Nigeria and I'm back. So, this is my base. So even if I go anywhere in the world, I will come back here because I feel more at home here (P9).

5.1.6 Language a barrier?

According to (Chiswick and Miller, 2005; Isphording and Otten, 2011), it is easier for a foreigner to learn a language if his native language is more similar to the target language. This is not the case participants interviewed. One thing they have in common is that they all speak English. This is due to the fact that English is extensively spoken and considered an official language in Nigeria. Unlike the Slavic languages, the English language is not similar to the Czech language, making it difficult for non-Slavic speakers, particularly Nigerians, to understand it. As a result, it is no surprise to see that language has been both a barrier and a pivotal factor in integration processes for participants interviewed in the Czech Republic.

P1 clearly outlines the initial challenges faced due to language barriers, noting how these limitations surfaced more prominently as he moved through different phases of his life in the Czech Republic: *I wasn't fully immersed in the Czech experience when I first came. It was after I had left my first job that I began to feel the impact of language (P1).* This indicates not only the immediate difficulties in communication but also the long-term implications on social integration and professional advancement. Echoing this sentiment, P2 provides a practical example of how language barriers directly impact daily transactions and deeper cultural integration: *"If you go to a grocery store and you don't speak the Czech language you will not basically be able to make that decision (P2).* P 7 admitted that it has not been easy living in the Czech Republic because of the language barrier. *It's not easy living in Czech because of the language barrier. I'm from Nigeria, we speak English and here they speak their language Czech. So in everything here you have to learn the language before you can be able to communicate. (P7).* This challenge is also felt in their interaction with the local authorities. P14 found her experience with the migration authority

particularly stressful. *It was very difficult for me to actually hear anything. And the thing is they assume that everyone speaks Czech. So they're not even going to try to hear you.* (P 14). As a result, P 5 noted that you have to go with a translator when going to the migration office. While Participant 6 argued that language is a big hinderance when it comes to getting a permanent residency because you need to have a high level of proficiency in Czech which takes longer to get.

Nearly all participants they agreed that Czech is a difficult and complex language. Participants interviewed find the language very difficult to learn and understand, which has undoubtedly affected their desire to learn the language. For P 6, *I tried learning Czech, but it's tough. You really need it to feel a part of everything here, but it's a challenge, especially with the pronunciation and grammar* (P6). This difficulty has affected the desire and purpose to learn the language. P3, who is trying to learn the language noted that *-I am learning not simply because I like the language that much, I'm learning because of I want to get my PR* (P3). While Participant 15 noted that after experiencing the difficulties of the language, his motivation has really dropped a lot (P15). Other problems participants find difficult with the Czech language is the limitation of its usage. Participant 11 noted that he doesn't have the motivation of learning the language because the language is not economical and its not useful outside the Czech Republic. Participant 6 noted that *aside Czech Republic no other countries Speaks Czech* (P6). While Participant 14 stated that-

If I would want to learn a new language, it wouldn't be Czech language. I would maybe want to go to France to learn French or go to Germany to learn German or go to Spain to learn Spanish. Nobody will travel to Czech Republic just for the sake of the language, because it is spoken by just 10 million people and then maybe part of Slovak or Slovak will understand it (P 14)

Nearly all participants interviewed had this experience. But for Participant 9, it was a different thing entirely as she was able to learn and adapt to the language. Unlike other participants who struggle with the language barrier, P9 leverages her multilingual skills to facilitate her learning of Czech. She explains, *"Maybe because I speak other languages I was able to pick it up. So I can go around speaking without any problem"* (P9). Her proactive approach to language acquisition is further highlighted by how she immersed herself in the local culture through media: *I was actually communicating already three to four months because I was watching, for example, I discipline myself on Czech TVs and cartoons my movies I put them in Czech so within three months I was able to say few things* (P 9).

However, some participants that still tried learning the language despite its difficulty, admitted that it will be of great benefit for them to understand the language. It will relatively make it easy for them to integrate into the Czech culture society.

The good thing is once you speak to Czech people in their language and they see you can speak Czech they want to speak to you, they want to attend to your problem, and they want to help you. So the effort of me learning it really give me the advantage of getting a lot of my things done within the community of Czechs (10).

When they find that you're making an effort to speak the language they actually are very impressed and they want to help you, you know, figure out (P 4).

Language barriers through this analysis presents significant challenges for Nigerian migrants in the Czech Republic, complicating daily interactions and deeper integration processes. The unfamiliarity of the Czech language serves as a '**push**' factor, heightening the difficulties in navigating daily tasks and administrative procedures. However, successfully overcoming these barriers can transform language into a '**pull**' factor, facilitating better integration and community interaction. For instance, Participant 9's ability to learn Czech through proactive immersion significantly eased her interactions, making her feel more accepted and connected within the local community. This positive response from locals, as experienced by Participants 4 and 10, underscores the importance of language proficiency in enhancing migrants' societal integration.

5.1.7 Integration vs Individualism

Most participants discuss about the level of unity within the Nigeria diaspora in the CR compared to other countries. Participants that have spent less than 10 years in the CR all attest to the fact that there is absence of unified Nigeria community in the Czech Republic as compared to what we have in the US, UK. Participant 1 through a comparison affirm that there is absence of a cohesive body of Nigerians in the CR as compared to the Ghanaians. He noted the establishment of unified body of Nigerians in the Czech Republic to be a work in progress. P2 noted that he is not even aware of any unified body of Nigeria diaspora in the CR. Other participants emphasized on the sense of individualism among migrants, where Participant 4 sees noted that Nigerians in the Czech

Republic see themselves more as individual migrants rather than a unified diaspora compared to US, UK and Canada due to the lack of a cohesive Nigerian community in the CR.

I believe that Nigerians in the Czech Republic lack a strong sense of community compared to Ghanaians. The Ghanaian community is well-established with organized associations, regular dues, and collective activities. In contrast, Nigerians have not yet established such a cohesive community. It's a work in progress for them (P1)

P2

There is no evidence backing it that there is uniformity of diaspora in the Czech Republic

P6 There isn't like a community for Nigerians in the Czech Republic, everyone does things individually.

P 15 and 2 gave plausible reasons while there is absence of a unified Nigeria community. Participant 2 suggest the reason to be the small population of Nigerians in the Czech Republic compared to the UK.

Compared to what I have heard from other countries like the United States, United Kingdom, and Canada, there is not much of a unified diaspora here in Czech Republic. The reason is not farfetched, as Nigerians in such countries have stayed there for a long period of time, and as such, created such communities resulting into a unified diaspora. P15.

Similarly, P2 observed the reason to be the lack of generational continuity among Nigerians in the Czech Republic, unlike in the UK, where multiple generations of Nigerians have lived for an extended period. He advised that with time Nigerians will have their own unified community in the Czech Republic.

However, two Participants that have spent more than 10 years in the Czech Republic revealed that there used to exist a unified Nigeria association between 2000-2005 but was disbanded. They both recount the historical presence of a Nigerian Union, which once served as pillars of community cohesion. However, internal conflicts based on ethnic background and changing dynamics led to the decline of this union, diminishing their relevance over time.

There used to be a Nigerian Union from around 2000 to 2005. It was a significant organization because almost all Nigerians in the Czech Republic at that time were part of it, and it was presided over by an Igbo. We mostly knew each other during that time. However, due to internal strife, the Igbo faction separated from the community to form an Igbo union, which I believe is not even functioning now. Everything was disbanded back then. (P10)

Echoing this, P9 noted that.

There was once a Nigerian community where we would gather monthly or every three months, welcoming both newcomers and long-standing members. We even had a president at one point, but unexpectedly, the dynamics shifted, leading to division. It seemed that our ethnic differences - whether Igbo, Yoruba, or Hausa - played a role in causing discord within the group, ultimately leading to its fragmentation. (9)

In the absence of a unified cohesive Nigeria community in the Czech Republic, the role of the church emerges prominently in discussions about communal activities. Churches are often central to maintaining some level of unity, as described by participants. It has played a vital role in unifying and bringing Nigerians together. Most participants see the church as the location where they meet and connect with other Nigerians. *Most Nigerians I have met here are in church, if not all. (P4). The only reason why I probably know Nigerians in Czech Republic is due to the church (p6).* Most participants see it as a focal point for social interaction and support. Through the church, participants noted that they were able to form bonds based on common beliefs and cultural backgrounds, fostering a sense of belonging and solidarity. This is because significant portion of the Nigerian population in the Czech Republic is affiliated with the church, facilitating gatherings of people with shared faith and nationality. Most of the participants emphasize the practical support, information sharing, and camaraderie that the church provides, highlighting instances where church members helped with practical matters like immigration processes and financial support. They also describe frequent gatherings and events organized by the church, providing opportunities for socializing and preventing feelings of loneliness among community members.

P 1 noted that church was the only way he could meet Nigerians.

Church is the only channel through which I've met other Nigerians. I don't have any other channel for meeting Nigerians. The church organizes a couple of activities that allow for people to bond. For example, One of this activities is sports. The church organizes sport activities and you see people coming to play football, volleyball, basketball, track activities and things like this. The church also organizes something like summer camps where Nigerians come and camp together (P1).

P 2 noted that the church is a place where people find community and it is even becoming a prominent place for blacks and other minority people in the Czech Republic. The church provides an avenue where people meet up together. He emphasized the support programmes and services provided by the church:

In the church, we have programs tailored for new students arriving in the country, where we furnish them with information on various topics such as immigration procedures and how to navigate their immigration applications. Also, concerning necessities like food supplies, the church runs a program aimed at providing support to students residing in the country. The church also arranges language programs to aid individuals in learning new languages. Moreover, the church offers guidance for those interested in starting a business, purchasing an apartment, or acquiring property in the Czech Republic. (P2)

The activities above highlight the church's role as more than just a place of worship but also as a community hub that mitigates the sense of isolation commonly experienced by migrants. Nonetheless, the extent to which churches promote community cohesion may vary among different religious communities. The interviews do not provide specific details on Muslim participants mainly because a lot of the participants were Christians. These experiences suggest a gap in the narrative that might indicate differing levels of community support based on religious lines.

However, there has been effort in recent years to recreate such unified body of Nigerians in the Czech Republic. Only few participants (1, 3, 4, and 10) mentions the existence of a Czech-Nigeria Business Forum (the Platform), an association of Nigerian and Czech professionals or

businesspeople, as an example of such initiatives. However, they admitted that a fully formed Nigerian Community Association is still a work in progress.

According to P3

There is existence of a social network called "The Platform," which connects Nigerian professionals, students, and businesspeople in the Czech Republic. The Platform serves as a forum for networking, idea exchange, and facilitating trade between Nigeria and the Czech Republic (P3)

Participant 4 noted that the emergence of the platform indicates *some attempts to create unity among Nigerian professionals (P4)*.

The integration experiences of Nigerian migrants in the Czech Republic, illuminated by the theories of diaspora from scholars like Robin Cohen and William Safran, provide deep insights into the challenges and adaptations of this community. Cohen's framework identifies diverse diasporic characteristics which highlight the complex interplay of identity, belonging, and community in shaping migrants' lives. Safran's criteria further enrich our understanding by outlining the critical elements that influence a diaspora's experience, such as dispersal from a homeland under adverse conditions. For Nigerian migrants, the move often stems from economic and political challenges at home, countered by the allure of better opportunities in the Czech Republic. Despite their physical relocation, they maintain still maintain connections to Nigeria, exemplifying Cohen's depiction of diasporic communities that remain actively engaged with their homeland. This enduring bond is crucial in preserving their cultural identity and easing the alienation felt in a foreign land. Social gatherings, religious functions, and community events become pivotal in retaining cultural practices and mitigating feelings of estrangement. These activities not only help maintain a collective memory but also foster a sense of community that Cohen and Safran note as vital for diasporic integration.

In the Czech Republic, while formal Nigerian community structures may not be as cohesive as seen in other countries, emergent groups like churches and business forums provide crucial support. These platforms offer more than just social interaction; they facilitate practical support and foster a sense of belonging, which is essential for newcomers. Thus, integrating the diaspora

theory into this analysis not only contextualizes the personal experiences of Nigerian migrants but also underscores the dynamic process of navigating new cultural landscapes while staying connected to one's roots.

5.2 Discussion and Findings

The Czech Republic is relatively new to Nigeria, as it is not widely known or popular there. However, Migration from Nigerians to the Czech Republic, though not as common as routes leading to the UK or US, is becoming increasingly notable. This shift is influenced by a variety of factors, including economic, political, and educational incentives that draw Nigerians to the Czech Republic. Economic instability in Nigeria, characterized by fluctuating oil prices and economic downturns, drives many to seek better opportunities abroad. This aligns with the **Push-Pull** Theory of Migration which suggests that economic hardship is a significant driver of migration, pushing individuals to seek more stable environments where they can secure employment and improve their standard of living. In the Czech Republic, Nigerian migrants find a landscape marked by stable employment opportunities, especially in high-demand sectors such as IT and engineering. These sectors not only offer job security, but also competitive salaries compared to Nigeria, making the Czech Republic an attractive destination for skilled professionals. This observation is supported by literature that underscores the importance of economic opportunities in migration decisions (Massey et al., 1993; Castles and Miller, 2009). Some participants in the study frequently cited these economic opportunities as a decisive factor in their choice to migrate to the Czech Republic, highlighting the country's growing reputation as a hub for technology and innovation. In the context of these Nigerians' migration to the Czech Republic, the theory of diaspora offers valuable insights into integration and community formation. While the Czech Republic is a relatively new destination for Nigerian migrants compared to the UK or US, a Nigerian diaspora is emerging, influenced by economic, social, and cultural factors. The theory distinguishes between cohesive diaspora communities and more individualized migrants. Some Nigerians in the Czech Republic form strong communities based on shared experiences and cultural ties, while others remain more isolated. Factors such as population size, community organizations, and social integration play roles in shaping these dynamics. Social institutions like churches and community

groups are crucial for fostering cohesion among Nigerian migrants. They provide support, social interaction, and cultural preservation, helping migrants maintain their identity and sense of belonging. The theory also explains the transnational nature of these Nigerian's migration, highlighting connections between migrants in the Czech Republic and their homeland.

Educational aspirations also play a significant role, with many Nigerians pursuing opportunities for higher education in foreign countries as a pathway to personal and professional development (Falola and Afolabi, 2007). The allure of the Czech Republic for Nigerian migrants can be partly attributed to its educational offerings, a factor highlighted in broader migration research. It is important to note that our findings correlated with this. A standout feature of the Czech Republic that attracts Nigerian migrants is the exceptional combination of high educational standards and relatively low tuition fees offered by its universities. This distinctive aspect serves as a powerful pull factor, distinguishing the Czech educational landscape from other popular migration destinations. The affordability of higher education in the Czech Republic, coupled with the quality of its academic programs, makes it an increasingly attractive option for Nigerian students seeking quality education abroad without the financial burden typically associated with universities in countries like the USA or the UK. The economic accessibility of Czech universities not only alleviates the financial strain on students but also opens doors to opportunities that might have been inaccessible elsewhere. This unique educational value proposition is particularly significant in the context of migration patterns, as it not only meets the academic aspirations of Nigerian migrants but also aligns with their financial realities, providing a practical and attainable pathway to personal and professional development in a global setting. Highlighting this aspect resonates with broader migration research, which underscores the importance of educational opportunities in shaping migration decisions, particularly among skilled professionals and students from developing countries seeking to enhance their prospects and capabilities in a competitive world. From the study, some participants interviewed were once a student before transitioning into the Czech labour market. Additionally, the country offers a range of educational programs taught in English, which are not only affordable but also of high quality. Knowing fully well that all participants speak English, this makes the Czech Republic particularly appealing to participants interviewed who are students and young professionals looking to enhance their qualifications in a globally recognized educational system. The allure of higher education abroad and the specific offerings of Czech universities create a compelling case for migration, especially for those seeking

to improve their skills and knowledge base. Some participants. Meanwhile, the substandard and instability in the Nigeria educational system serves as a push factor for these participants leaving the shores of Nigeria to study in the Czech Republic.

As participants interviewed navigate their new environment in the Czech Republic, they encounter both opportunities and challenges. While the economic, political, and educational aspects draw them to the country, the process of integrating into Czech society presents its own set of difficulties, from cultural adjustments to dealing with bureaucratic systems. However, the initial attractions—stable jobs, safety, and education—often outweigh these challenges, influencing their decision to stay and build a life in the Czech Republic. Even though the experiences of integration, often complex and demanding, include navigating language barriers, adapting culturally, and confronting instances of racism and discrimination. These hurdles resonate deeply with the broader European context, where migrants frequently face similar obstacles (Ager & Strang, 2008), which according to (Horakova 2015) often impede their social integration and sense of belonging. Participants in the study express difficulty with the Czech language, which not only impedes daily interactions but also affects their broader integration into the society, mirroring challenges documented across Europe (Phillimore, 2011). Moreover, employment and the recognition of qualifications emerge as significant concerns. Many Nigerian professionals find that their credentials are not readily accepted or valued in the Czech job market, a common issue faced by migrants in many countries, which can lead to underemployment or employment outside their fields of expertise (Bauder, 2003). This lack of recognition not only affects their economic stability but also impacts their social status and integration, as employment is often closely tied to social networks and a sense of belonging.

Social inclusion, or the lack thereof, further complicates the lives of Nigerian migrants in the Czech Republic. The Czech society's generally reserved nature can exacerbate feelings of isolation among migrants. This reserved nature was traced by some participants to be the influence of the communist era. But this aspect of Czech culture, marked by a less overtly communicative and open approach, contrasts sharply with the more communal and expressive Nigerian culture, making social integration challenging (Berry, 1997). Participants noted that while there are opportunities to connect, such as through churches and community groups, the broader societal engagement feels limited. The role of churches and other associations like the Nigeria Business Forum (the

Platform), an association of Nigerian and Czech professionals or businesspeople which is still evolving, becomes crucial in this context. These entities often serve as vital support networks for Nigerian migrants, offering a sense of community and practical support in navigating life in the Czech Republic. The importance of such community support systems is well-documented in migration literature, emphasizing their role in successful migrant integration (Castles & Miller, 2009). However, despite the support from these community organizations, the Nigerian diaspora in the Czech Republic appears less cohesive compared to more established Nigerian communities in countries like the UK or the US. This might be due to the newer and smaller scale of the Nigerian population in the Czech Republic, which impacts the level of organized community support available.

Exploring these intricacies of Nigerian migration to the Czech Republic reveals a complex interplay of motivations and challenges that shape the migrants interviewed experiences in this emerging destination. In addition to exploring the reasons behind Nigerians' decision to migrate, this study looks at the various experiences that shape their lives in the Czech Republic, offering a more comprehensive knowledge of their influence on the dynamics of both the individual and the larger group. It shows that some Nigerian migrants interviewed are increasingly drawn to the Czech Republic, enticed by opportunities for economic stability, higher education, and a safer living environment. This trend is explained by the push-pull model of migration: economic and political instability in Nigeria push individuals away, while attractive job prospects in sectors like IT and engineering, educational opportunities, and safety pull them toward the Czech Republic. Despite its lower profile compared to destinations like the USA or UK, the Czech Republic is emerging as a viable option for Nigerian migrants. However, settling in the Czech Republic is not without its challenges. Migrants often struggle with language barriers, cultural differences, and the non-recognition of their professional qualifications, which impedes their integration into the local community and labor market. Additionally, experiences of racism and discrimination complicate their adjustment and influence their decisions about making a long-term home in the Czech Republic.

The dynamics within the Nigerian diaspora in the Czech Republic also reflect a varied picture. Unlike more established Nigerian communities in the UK and the US, the diaspora in the Czech Republic appears less cohesive. While some migrants find a strong sense of community through

churches and associations that help ease their integration process, others experience a sense of isolation. This disparity highlights the need for stronger community networks that can support new arrivals and foster a sense of belonging.

CHAPTER SIX

Conclusion

6.0 Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of the entire research project and highlights the significant findings that have emerged. Additionally, it identifies potential limitations for future research endeavors.

This study set out to explore the migration dynamics of 15 Nigerian migrants to the Czech Republic by investigating the factors motivating their emigration, examining the challenges they encounter in the Czech Republic, and assessing the level of cohesion within the Nigerian diaspora community in the country. By identifying key drivers and examining the subsequent challenges and community responses, this research contributes a comprehensive perspective to migration studies. The research questions were examined through a qualitative approach in the form of semi-structured interviews. The use of semi structured interviews allowed for more in-depth insight into the personal experiences of participants, which made the interpretation and analysis of the findings more meaningful.

The literature review aspect of the study explores diverse migration drivers, including economic, political, and educational factors, underscoring the distinctive context of Nigerian migration. The Czech Republic's appeal to migrants is detailed, emphasizing its economic stability, educational opportunities, and migrant-friendly policies. Despite these attractions, this chapter reveals the challenges migrants encounter such as bureaucratic hurdles, language barriers, and social integration issues, reflecting broader European migration complexities. Additionally, the chapter delves into the pivotal role of the Nigerian diaspora in supporting migration decisions and integration efforts, highlighting their transnational engagement and contributions to both host countries and Nigeria's development. The chapter also adopts Push and Pull Theory, and theories of migration. The research design and method employed for collecting data from Nigerian participants (use as case study) in the Czech Republic was a qualitative approach through semi-structured interviews. Similarly, thematic analysis was utilized as the data analysis method,

enabling the thematic categorization of concepts and objectives for clearer comprehension and presentation of findings. From the findings, it was discovered that economic instability, limited job prospects and high cost of quality education in Nigeria drive the participants interviewed to pursue better opportunities abroad, with the Czech Republic offering stability and potential. The appeal of advanced educational prospects, often more accessible and of higher quality than those at home, also draws them to the Czech Republic. Safety, though less quantifiable, influences their decision-making. Together, these factors outline the push-and-pull framework that characterizes much of the migration discourse, with a unique twist in the Czech Republic context.

However, the migration journey presents challenges that test the resilience and adaptability of these participants. Language barriers pose significant hurdles, impacting daily interactions and long-term integration efforts. Cultural adaptation is another formidable obstacle, with the distinct Czech cultural landscape often feeling unfamiliar to newcomers. From the participants interviewed, the narrative of the Nigerian diaspora in the Czech Republic stands in stark contrast to the more cohesive communities found in countries like the UK or the US. Here, the diaspora appears fragmented at times, lacking the strong communal ties that facilitate the integration process. This fragmentation can increase integration challenges and diminish the effectiveness of mutual support networks. Enhancing these community networks and ensuring they receive sufficient support from both the diaspora and host country institutions could greatly enhance migrants' experiences. Furthermore, shared experiences of racism and discrimination stand out among the complex issues experienced by participants in the Czech Republic, posing a significant barrier to their integration and acceptance within the community. Participants in the study often recounted experiences of prejudice that profoundly impacted their professional trajectories, mental well-being, and social interactions. These encounters with racism frequently exacerbate feelings of isolation and hinder the development of a sense of belonging in their new environment. To address these issues and foster an inclusive and tolerant society, systemic policy reforms alongside community-level initiatives are imperative. Enhancing awareness and embracing diversity in the Czech Republic could mitigate these adversities, ultimately enhancing the overall Broader demographic engagement and possibly longitudinal studies to track changes over time could provide deeper insights into the ongoing dynamics of Nigerian migration. Such efforts would enrich existing data, offering a clearer understanding of evolving migration trends. Moreover, the

significance of diaspora communities is evident from this study, highlighting both current shortcomings in community cohesion and the potential for diaspora-led initiatives to enhance the migrant experience. Strengthening these communities could improve the welfare of Nigerians in the Czech Republic and contribute to the socio-economic fabric of both host and home countries.

Conclusively, this study makes a substantial contribution to the global migration discourse by shedding light on the experiences of a relatively understudied migrant group within a less traditional migration destination. The implications of these findings are extensive, reaching beyond academia into areas such as policymaking, community engagement, and individual experiences. They emphasize the importance of continued research and dialogue in navigating the intricate landscape of migration in our interconnected world.

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Appendix 1

3.4.1 Interview Questions

1) What are the factors driving Nigerians to emigrate, and what draws them specifically to choose the Czech Republic as their destination?

- Could you tell me about your journey and what led you to move from Nigeria
- Why didn't you move to an English speaking country like USA, UK, Canada that have historical connection with Nigeria?
- How and what did you know about the Czech Republic before coming?
- Can you share with me what initially attracted you to consider the Czech Republic as a destination for migration?
- Can you share with me your future plans regarding your stay in the CR?
- What do you think are the greatest strengths and weaknesses of CR?

2) What challenges do they face in the Czech Republic, and do these challenges influence their willingness to remain in the country?

- How has your experiences in the CR been so far? (language, cost of living, finance, transport, health, food, weather).
- What are some of the challenges you faced during your first month in the CR ?
- would you say loneliness is a challenge for you and how you do cope with it in the CR?
- Can you describe any specific incidents where you felt unwelcome or discriminated against, and how did you deal with it and does that in anyway affect your willingness to stay here?
- were you aware of any perception or stereotype about CR attitude towards African migrants ?

3) Do they function as a cohesive diaspora or merely as individualized migrants within the Czech Republic

- To what extent do you feel a sense of community and connection with other Nigerians living in the CR?
- Are there Nigerian communities or social networks where you meet up and connect with other Nigerians ? What form of support system do they provide?
- In your experiences, do Nigerians in the CR engaged in shared cultural, social, or recreational activities?
- Can you provide examples and how often do they meet?

- In your opinion, do Nigerians in the CR perceive themselves more as a unified diaspora or as individuals migrants? Why?

Appendix 2

3.8 Ethical Consideration

Ethical considerations in this study were paramount to ensure the dignity, rights, and welfare of participants were protected throughout the research process. Following guidelines established by Creswell and Creswell (2017) and the British Psychological Society (2018), the following ethical protocols were adhered to:

Informed Consent: Consistent with the principles outlined by the American Psychological Association (APA, 2020), participants were fully informed about the study's purpose, the nature of their participation, the use of the data, and their rights to withdraw from the study at any time without any consequences. Consent, as recommended by Sieber (2012), was obtained from all participants prior to the interviews.

Confidentiality: In line with recommendations by Wiles et al. (2008), participants' confidentiality was rigorously maintained. Personal identifiers were removed or altered during the transcription process to ensure anonymity, and all data are stored securely, with access limited to the researcher as advised by Mertens (2014).

Voluntary Participation: Emphasizing voluntary participation, as detailed by King and Horrocks (2010), participants were informed they could withdraw at any point during the interview or research process without any penalty.

Sensitivity to Participants: Acknowledging the potential for sensitive topics to arise, the approach was modeled on the empathetic and respectful strategies suggested by Liamputtong (2007). Participants were assured of the confidential handling of their responses and given the option to skip questions they were uncomfortable answering.

Data Security: Digital recordings and transcripts are stored in a password-protected electronic format, aligning with data security measures recommended by Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill (2012). Physical copies are only accessible only to the researcher.

Use of Data: The data collected will be used solely for academic purposes, specifically for the completion of this thesis and potential academic publications or presentations, with the understanding and consent of the participants regarding this use, adhering to the ethical guidelines for data use suggested by Bryman (2016).

By grounding these ethical practices in the literature, this study aligns with established standards, ensuring the protection and respect of all participants involved.

Appendix 3

4.1 Participant Profile

Participant 1. (P1)

Participant 1 hails from Ekiti state, Nigeria, but was born in Minna, Niger state, due to his father's job, which required him to move frequently across Nigeria. He spent significant time in various cities, including Lagos, where he pursued his university education in Electrical Engineering. Despite being from Ekiti, he never lived there for an extended period. Participant 1 primarily speaks English and Pidgin, with limited knowledge of Hausa. He identifies as male, Christian, and holds a Bachelor's degree from the University of Lagos. The Czech Republic is the only country he has lived in outside Nigeria, where he works as a Systems Engineer in IT. He has been in the Czech Republic for almost 4 1/2 years, living independently away from his family.

Participant 2. (P2)

The participant is from Osun State, Nigeria, located in the Southwestern region. He resided in Osun State before moving to the Czech Republic. He falls into the age range of 31- 45 and identifies as male and Christian. The Czech Republic is the only country he has lived in outside of Nigeria. Currently, he works in the information security sector in the Czech Republic and has been there for seven years, living alone.

Participant 3. (P3)

The participant is from Ogun State, Nigeria, in the western part of the country. He falls into the age range of 31-45 and identifies as male and Christian. His educational qualification is a Master's degree. He has lived in countries other than Nigeria, including Malta for two years before moving to the Czech Republic, where he has been residing for seven years. He currently lives in the Czech Republic with his family. He works in finance and currently owns a fashion business in the Czech Republic

Participant 4. (P4).

The participant is a female from Port-Harcourt, in the South-South region. She falls into the age range of 18- 30 and identifies as Christian. Her educational qualification is a Master's degree. While she has traveled to several countries, including the United States, Germany, Poland, Hungary, and Austria, she considers the Czech Republic the only country she has lived in outside Nigeria. Currently, she works in Talent Acquisition in the Czech Republic and has been there for two years, with plans to stay longer. She moved to the Czech Republic alone for studying purposes and does not reside with her family.

Participant 5. (P5)

The participant is a female originally from Lagos, Nigeria, who currently resides in the city. She falls within the age range of 18- 30 years old and identifies as Christian. Her educational qualification is a Master's degree. She has lived outside Nigeria for an extended period, primarily in the Czech Republic. In the Czech Republic, she works as an HR management assistant and has been there for 3 years. Despite her relocation, she lives alone in the Czech Republic.

Participant 6. (P6)

The participant is a female from Imo State, which is located in the southern part of Nigeria. She falls within the age range of 18 -30 and identifies as Christian. Her educational qualification is currently pursuing a Bachelor's degree. She has lived in two countries outside Nigeria, namely Kenya and Poland, before moving to the Czech Republic. In the Czech Republic, she is studying and working part-time. She has been in the Czech Republic for approximately two years and a few months and currently resides with her family there.

Participant 7. (P7)

The participant is a female from Niger, the northern part of Nigeria. She is 45 years old, identifying as a Muslim and holds a Bachelor's degree in Business Administration. Prior to living in the Czech Republic, she has lived in multiple countries, including South Africa, Saudi Arabia, Benin, and Ghana. Currently, she works as a diplomat in the Czech Republic and has been there for almost two and the half years. She resides in the Czech Republic with her family, including her husband and children.

Participant 8. (P8)

The participant in the interview transcript is a male from Bauchi, the northern part of Nigeria. He falls within the age range of 18- 30 and identifies as Muslim. His educational background is at the secondary level. The Czech Republic is not the only country he has lived in; he has also lived in Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Ghana, and Benin Republic. He expresses a preference for these countries over the Czech Republic, citing them as more enjoyable and fun environments, particularly during his childhood. He has been in the Czech Republic for two and the half years with his family.

Participant 9. (P9)

The participant is a woman from Osun State, Nigeria, who lived in Abuja for about six years before moving to the Czech Republic. She is in the age group of 45 and above. She identifies as a Christian. Her educational qualification is at the Bachelor level. She has lived in various countries such as the UK, US, Italy, Russia, Singapore, and France, for varying durations, ranging from 18 months to several years. Despite traveling extensively, she has settled in the Czech Republic for about 15 years. She works as a beautician, specializing in hair, beauty, manicure, pedicure, massages, and consultations. She considers herself part of the community in the Czech Republic and lives with her sister and daughter, considering them her family.

Participant 10. (P10)

The participant is a male from Lagos, Nigeria. He falls within the age range of 46 and above. He identifies as a Christian and holds a Maters as his educational qualification. He has lived in other countries besides the Czech Republic but considers Nigeria and the Czech Republic as his main places of residence. He has been in the Czech Republic for 20 years, during which he has worked for various companies and is currently

running his own small company. He is married to a Czech lady, whom he met while they were classmates, and has three children.

Participant 11. (P11)

The participant is a male from Nigeria, specifically from the southwestern part, Osun State. He falls within the age range of 31 to 45 and identifies as a Christian. His educational qualification is a PhD. He has lived outside Nigeria before, spending about 5-6 years in South Africa. Currently, he is studying in the Czech Republic and has been there for over two years. However, his family, including his wife and children, remains in Nigeria, so he is presently alone in the Czech Republic.

Participant 12. (P12)

The participant is a female from Edo State. She falls within the age range of 18- 30 and identifies as a Christian. Her educational qualification is a Master's degree. She has lived in countries outside Nigeria, starting with Malta before moving to the Czech Republic. In the Czech Republic, she currently works in the finance sector and has been there for seven years and half. She resides with her uncle and his family.

Participant 13. (P13)

The participant in the interview transcript is a male from Oyo State, specifically Ibadan, in the Yoruba part of Nigeria. He falls within the age range of 31 to 45. He identifies as a Muslim. His educational qualification is a Master's degree. He has lived in countries outside Nigeria, including Italy for a year, Poland, and currently the Czech Republic.

Participant 14. (P14)

The participant is a female originally from Lagos. She falls within the age range of 18 -30. She identifies as Christian. Her educational qualification is a Master's degree. The Czech Republic is the only country she has lived in outside her own country. Currently, she is finishing her Master's degree in Economics and Management in the Czech Republic. She has been in the Czech Republic for 3 years and is presently living alone.

Participant 15. **(P15)**.

The participant is a male from Nigeria, specifically from Ondo state in the South-West region. He is between the ages of 18-30 and identifies as Christian. He holds a Masters Degree and has previously lived in Italy and France for a few months. Currently, he is pursuing his Masters program at Palacky University in Olomouc, Czech Republic. He has been in the Czech Republic for 3 years and is residing alone.