

# Hausa Migrants in the Socioeconomic Development of Postcolonial Lagos State

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## Abstract

*The transformation of Lagos to an industrial and cosmopolitan society is a combination of many factors. Its geostrategic location, for example, played a prominent role in its emergence as the economic nervecenter of Nigeria. This status influenced the exponential migration of people of diverse cultural, sociopolitical and economic backgrounds into the area, including people from the northern parts of the country, who are generally called Hausa, though some of them are not really of Hausa stock. The presence of these Hausa migrants contributes to the socioeconomic development of Lagos as they mostly engage in numerous occupational economic activities, particularly those that require much physical strength. On the other hand, there had been a number of social problems associated with the presence of these migrants. In light of the foregoing assertions, this paper examines the socioeconomic impact of Hausa migrants in the state. The paper adopts a qualitative research methodology using historical approach to data collection and interpretation.*

*Keywords: Hausa migrants, socioeconomic development, ethnoreligious crises, Lagos State*

## Introduction

The history of man is dominated by migrations. In fact, settlements are established, ideas are dispersed and innovations flow across different parts

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of world as a result of migrations. Urbanised societies of the world are those that have benefited from the inflow of ideas and innovations from outsiders. Migrants are found of providing complimentary services which are important to the socio-economic trajectory of the host community. Migrant populations though often maintain affiliations with their communities of origin; usually turn the host community to permanent bode (Akinrinade & Olukoya, 2011:71-85). This is usually influenced by socio-economic convenience and acclimatisation. In many cases, however, crises, xenophobic activities and other forms of social problems could be associated with the presence of migrants within the host community. Many ethnic and communal clashes have occurred in various parts of the world owing to indigenes/settlers/migrants dichotomy. The continuous influx of migrant populations into an area could also create pressure on the existing social services and infrastructure such as water supply, transportation, health facilities, and housing (Olukoju, 2003). These pressures always occur due to inadequate town and urban planning, especially planning for expansion. In addition, the native of the host communities may be relieved of their jobs because migrants are mostly prepared to take up any available jobs, even at lower wages, a scenario which is typical of Hausa migrants in Lagos State.

In light of the above propositions, this study examines the place of the Hausa migrant labours in the socio-economic trajectories of Lagos State, particularly during the post-colonial period. The paper is divided into seven sections; this general introduction is the first section. The second section briefly traced the emergence of Lagos State as a melting pot in Nigeria. The third section clarified some of the related concepts. The fourth section traced the origin and pattern of Hausa settlements in some specific areas of Lagos State. The fifth section examined the economic activities of Hausa migrants in various parts of Lagos State. The sixth section analysed the social problems and challenges accompanying the presence of the Hausa migrants in Lagos State. The last section summarised the basic discussions in the paper.

### **Lagos State: The Melting Pot of Cultures and Civilizations**

The emergence of Lagos State as an urban, industrial and cosmopolitan centre could be linked to its ability to accommodate and cross-fertilise civilisations and innovations from series of migrants who have made inflow into the State. In fact, the name “Lagos” reflects an element of initial migration to the original settlement. The name, which is etymologically derived from a Portuguese word, means “lagoon.” Lawal (1994:1) is of the opinion that Lagos was so named by the Portuguese migrants because it had physical and geographical characteristics which were similar to that of a small coastal lagoon town in Portugal, called Lagos. In addition, the native name for the area is “Eko” which has been identified as an Edo word meaning “war camp” by some scholars, though Lawal (1995:136) has also argued that the Awori account of Lagos history claims that “Eko” is derived from “oko” (a Yoruba word meaning farm). However, a careful analysis of the Awori account of the history of Lagos reveals that it is a making of the migrations of various ethnic entities into the original settlement.

From a small fishing and agrarian society during the fifteenth century, Lagos gradually transformed to the initial administrative capital and till-date the most active hub for industrial and commercial activities in Nigeria. It has continued to witness series of immigration from across the world. Thousands of migrants visit the State on a daily basis and virtually all ethnic groups in Nigeria have adequate representation in Lagos State (Agboola & Agunbiade, 2007). This historical and incessant inflow of migrants into Lagos is attributed to a number of factors. In the first instance, its geography and climate are suitable for convenient habitation and various economic activities. Also, the security provided by its creeks, swamps and lagoons attracted the early settlers into the area, laying the foundation for continuous inflow of people into Lagos (Ibrahim, 2017). Also, during the slave trade era, Lagos received quite a number of migrants because it served as one of the major centres where slaves were traded and exported to Europe and the Americas. This opportunity came majorly as a result of its being situated along the Atlantic Ocean. Even as at when slaves were to be returned back to the shores of what later

became Nigeria, Lagos was the first point of call. By the middle of the nineteenth century, the British imperial ambitions in Africa needed some form of political hegemony. In this respect, Lagos served as the nucleus of the British colonial rule in Nigeria. Therefore, migrants from various parts of the country moved into Lagos because of the attendant opportunities accruable as the administrative and commercial nerve-centre of the country.

After independence, people of diverse socio-cultural, economic and political backgrounds continued to troop into Lagos due to the presence of large industrial plants, sea ports, air ports, transportation networks, and educational institutions among others (Olukoju, 1994:34-38). In particular, the place of the sea ports that are located in some parts of Lagos State in the socio-economic relevance of the State cannot be underestimated. In addition, socio-cultural ties such as ethno-religious affiliations also account for the reasons for some migrations into Lagos. For instance, Lagos State has continued to host the headquarters of many religious associations and denominations particularly Christian and Islamic groups. In addition, Lagos has often provided a safe haven for migrants who were seeking asylum from crisis ridden areas of the country. The post-colonial federal civil service structure has also paved the way for the movement of civil servants and the arm forces to every parts of the country, especially to Lagos State. By and large, the fact remains that these migrations have continued to contribute to the socio-economic transition of Lagos State. Lagos State has therefore continued to serve as the melting pot for socio-cultural, political, and economic activities in Nigeria. On the other hand, the State has been confronted with numerous social problems such as incessant occurrences of kidnapping, man-stealing, rituals killings, armed robbery, shoplifting, public transport robbery, car-snatching, dilapidated infrastructural facilities, and existence of squalors among others, most of them arising from the uncontrolled influx of migrants into Lagos State (Osifodurin, 2007).

### **Conceptual Clarifications: Migrant, Settler, and Hausa**

The terms “migrant” and “settler” are derivatives of migration and settlement respectively. Migration, due to its historical, economic, and socio-cultural perspectives, has always been subjected to a variety of interpretations which has tended to incorporate the “space” and “duration” dimensions. For example, Roseman (1971) focused on the spatial dimension when he asserted that migration is a situation whereby an individual or a group of people relocate their residence to another place. On the other hand, Fussell (2012) tried to incorporate the time/duration dimension into the definition of migration in her contention that migration is the movement of people, in whatever may be its length, composition, or motives. Migration is a global historical phenomenon which had continued to occur within or across the borders of countries, hence there is internal and international migrations. It could either be voluntarily, forcefully, or circumstantially motivated. To this end, a migrant could be regarded as a person who move from one area to another (mostly on a temporary basis) for various push and pull reasons. These reasons may include the search for economic opportunities; seeking for refuge or asylum with respect to natural disaster, religious crisis or political persecution; voyages for evangelism, facts finding mission, and explorations among others (Sharkdom *et al*, 2014:292-342). In essence, there are migrant traders, migrant labourers, migrant beggars, migrant hawkers, and migrant preachers among others.

Sequel to above, it can therefore be asserted that settlement is a product of migration. Unlike migration, settlement entails a lengthy period of occupation, acculturation, assimilation, and acclimatisation within the host community. Usually, it takes two or more generations for a settlement to have been entrenched. Therefore, a settler could be regarded as a migrant who had lived in the host community for a long period and in most cases had found comfort in his new community. It must be added that observations have shown that the settlers usually ensure that the socio-political structure of their community of origin is replicated within the settlement as much as possible (Veracini, 2015). In some cases, the settlers are very much integrated into the socio-political and economic

fabrics of the host community with some of them becoming land and title holders. Solaja et al (2013) refers to this kind of establishment as “Firm Presence.”

The term “Hausa” connotes a group of people who shared historical, ethno-cultural and political affiliations and are majorly found in northern part of Nigeria (Stride & Ifeka, 1971:81-89). The term could also be used to refer to the language spoken by this group of people. Hausa language is widely spoken in the West African sub-region and the original speakers constitute the major bulk of the autochthonous settlers of most parts of north-western and north-central zones of Nigeria (Cohen, 1961). It must, however, be emphasised that all migrants from the northern parts of Nigeria are usually referred to as Hausa in Lagos State and many other Yoruba cities, even though some of them are not really of Hausa origin. Hausa migrants, like their Igbo and Yoruba counterparts, are present in the nooks and crannies of Nigeria. Apart from Nigeria, they also spread across some other countries in the West African sub-region. Lagos State, as a result of its strategic and economic positions, has continued to receive the influx of migrants from northern parts of Nigeria. There is hardly a Local Government Area or Local Council Development Area in Lagos State that does not have a cluster of the Hausa elements within it. In particular, factors such as trade and commerce, religion affiliation, socio-cultural affinity and recently crises of insecurity in the north have overtime influenced the large migration of the Hausa people into Lagos State.

The Hausa population in Lagos State could be structured into the migrants and the settlers. With respect to the Hausa migrants, they are more or less wanderers who were perpetually moving from place to places in search of livelihood and greener pasture. Some of them are seasonal migrants who would only stay in Lagos during the dry season but immediately return back to their *Arewa* once the rainy season begins in order to continue with their farming activities. Some other maintains a semi-permanent stay in Lagos State whereby they stay in Lagos for about six to eight months and spend the rest part of the year with family at *Arewa*.

In fact, the money realised by these migrants during their temporary stays are used to boost their farming businesses. Apart from this set of Hausa population, there are also the Hausa settlers who or whose parents or grandparents had settled and had become integrated into some specific areas of Lagos. Most of the earlier Hausa migrants to Lagos State were kola nuts traders who later became permanent settlers and even landlords and are referred to as *Baranda*. To this group, there had been some sort of generational shift, they have acculturated and assimilated and some of them have become land owners and sellers in Lagos. For example, the first Imam of the Lagos Central Mosque is said to be of Hausa origin and his lineage has continued to be part of the houses that produce Imam of the mosque till date (Lagos Central Mosque). Though, this article focuses majorly on the Hausa migrants, some attention shall also be devoted to the settlers at least to aid our analysis and discussions.

### **Hausa Settlements in Lagos: Origin and Pattern**

A number of historical records have substantiated the fact that several years before the advent of colonial rule and amalgamation of Nigeria, various component regions of what later coalesced into Nigeria had interacted on various levels (Lagos Horizon Newspaper, August 1989). Falola and Heaton (2008:61-84) established the fact that these interactions were, however, largely dictated by trade and commerce. To this end, the migration of the Hausa people into Lagos State could also be traced to the pre-colonial era. Cohen (1969) supported this view by emphasising that a significant amount of Hausa people had migrated into Yorubaland and even as far as Lagos prior to colonial rule. For example during the slave trade epoch, Lagos served as a viable centre for slave trading and many Hausa people were transited from Lagos to destinations in the Europe and Americas. In fact, at the inception of what later became Nigerian Police, (which was first initiated in the colony of Lagos) was the conscription of some runaway Hausa slaves in 1861 into what was then known as the Lagos Constabulary (Nigerian Army). In fact, Mahdi Adamu (1976) contended

that both Kings Adele and Kosoko of the pre-colonial Lagos used Hausa and Nupe slaves as the most important source of their military.

However, it suffices to add that colonialism added impetus to the inflow of Hausa migrants in particular, and generally other ethnic groups in Nigeria into Lagos and colony districts. Arising from colonial policies such as the introduction of taxes, construction of roads and railways, the migration of Hausa people into Lagos was increased. In the first instance, taxes were not only made mandatory, they were to be paid in the newly introduced coin currencies. The search for a paid job that could guarantee the payment of these taxes led to the development of migrant wage labour (Fasoto, 2014:37-52). Apart from the fact that these taxes were used to finance colonial administration; they were also mechanisms to lure peasants to produce cash crops to enhance the export of the local agricultural produce to Europe. Many Hausa migrants began to move to different parts of the country, including Lagos and environs, where they could exchange their produce and livestock for cash in order to fulfil their financial obligation towards the colonial government.

Construction of roads and railways was another factor that provided impetus to migration during the colonial era, particularly with reference to Hausa people's migration into Lagos and the colony districts. The Ibadan-Kano railway line which was completed in 1912 assisted to galvanise the movement of Hausa migrants towards Yorubaland (Gatawa, 2015:111-126). The line provided increased opportunities for the movement of goods, services, and migrants between the northern and southern parts of Nigeria. While produce such as groundnuts, grains, potash, and livestock were transported from the North, kola-nuts and European products were taken to the North in exchange. The chain of exchange was handled by both the Hausa and Yoruba migrant traders. The emphasis here is that the construction of railways and roads enhanced the commercial interactions between the North and the South thereby increasing the presence of Hausa migrants in Lagos and colony districts of Lagos during the colonial period.

Apart from the foregoing factors, another factor that has influenced



the continuous migration of the Hausa population into Lagos is the seasonal migration. Some Hausa people are seasonal migrant traders and labourers that venture into Lagos during the dry season when farming activities become tedious and less lucrative. Many of these seasonal migrants may eventually decide to settle in Lagos as traders of variety of wares. In summary, Hausa migrants have established themselves, either on temporary or permanent basis, into communities in virtually all parts of Lagos State. Generally, these communities were usually and initially called *sabo* meaning “a point of settlement for migrants,” a smaller community is called *sago* which literally translates to “a smaller shop” or “provisional store” in Hausa language. Notwithstanding, their presence in one area of Lagos seems to be earlier, more organised, and populous than the other.

Among the parts of Lagos which has witnessed the formation of Hausa migrant settlement is Orile-Agege. This community is said to have been established on a farmland which originally belonged to the Awori. Hausa migrants’ settlement in Orile-Agege started as a trading post where kola-nuts and cattle were exchanged between the Hausa migrants and their Yoruba hosts. Tijani (2008:173-180) opined that by begin of the twentieth century, the Hausa traders had begun to form residents in this area by constructing trading camps. This is in line with Cohen (1969) position that inter-groups relations between the Hausa and Yoruba became cordial in the twilight of the nineteenth century and that lands were allotted to the Hausa migrants by their hosts. Apart from trading, these Hausa migrants also began some farming activities on the allotted lands. Today, Agege area of Lagos has a good number of generations of Hausa population. In fact the physical appearance of the area demonstrates a sort of prolonged Hausa-Yoruba socio-cultural assimilation.

The historical foundation of the area which later became the seat of administration of Lagos State today could be traced to Hausa migration and settlement. The area which is currently located in the north-eastern part of the State’s capital is reported to have been established in the 1930s by a group of Hausa migrants led by Abdullahi Usman from Kano (Human Rights Watch, 2003). However, what this account failed to provide is

whether the group was the first people to occupy the area or whether the land they occupied was allotted to them by the earlier settlers. However, another tradition suggests that the area was first occupied by a group of Hausa refugees who requested for shelter from the early settlers (Lartey, 2005). The refugees were said to have accosted one Akiola who was a chieftain at Oke-Isheri Olofin for accommodation within his territory. Though he turned down the refugees' request, Akiola prevailed on his neighbours within the area to accommodate the refugees. Before long, the population of these migrants began to snowball into a community and was called Abule Tapa and later-on Alausa. Another source traced the historical origin of the Hausa settlement in the area to trade and commerce (Lagos Horizon Newspaper). It opined that the area emanated and became known as Alausa arising from the initial exchange of horses between the Hausas and their Yoruba hosts. Later the migrants were provided a space at the outskirts of the town and a leader known as *Seriki* was appointed to adjudicate on less serious matters among the Hausa migrants. However, the area was popularized majorly because many traders were coming to hire the Hausas as porters for their luggage.

Apart from Agege and Alausa above, another area which had emerged as a Hausa settlement in Lagos is Olodi-Apapa. This area is said to have been inhabited by a good number of Hausa population since the early twentieth century (Gatawa, 2013). Till date, Olodi-Apapa is still attractive to many persons of Hausa descent either as migrants or settlers. The Hausa community in the area started as a gathering where the Hausas engaged in trade and craftsmanship. Later, it emerged into a community where the presence of Hausa culture is conspicuously noticed, the Hausas had erected many large houses in this area. Typical of Hausa settlements in Lagos, the area inaugurated the institution of Sarki Hausawa (Leader of the Hausa elements). Beside the settlers, Hausa migrant workers constantly visit Olodi-Apapa. This group would stay in the area for a short period engaging in trade and menial jobs before returning to *Arewa* (Gatawa, 2013). In another vein, the origin of settlement in the Oshodi area of Lagos is credited to one Oshodi Tapa who was a Nupe man from

Bida. Oshodi Tapa is reported to have brought Ahmad Azare (a Hausa Muslim cleric from the North) to pray for the success of the reign of Oba Adele Ajosu during the late 18th century. In the course of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries the settlements of the Hausa people increased in various parts of the state such as Alaba Rago, Okokomaiko; Obalende, Sabo Oyingbo; Sabo Ikorodu; Mile 12; Idi-Araba; Ojota and many others. While some of these Hausa people settled for prolonged period of time, others only engage in temporary economic and commercial activities and intermittently return to *Arewa* to meet with their families.

### Hausa Migrants and Socioeconomic Activities in Postcolonial Lagos

The making of an economically viable Lagos State is a combination of different factors. It was also influenced by the contributions from various ethnic groups that constitute what is now Nigeria. Though, there is no doubt that the autochthonous and indigenous population provided the lead and accommodated people from different parts of the country *ab initio*, there is no gainsaying the fact that these strangers (other ethnic and subethnic groups) contributed significantly to the trajectory of economic development of Lagos as a state. For instance, the contributions from the Igbo ethnic extraction to the development of transportation from Lagos to other parts of the country cannot be underestimated (Salau, 2015). In the same vein, some Ijebu elements are said to have dominated the textile and fabrics trade in some parts of Lagos (Adedipe, 2010:441-446). The Uroboh, Egede, and Igbira people have also served as efficient farm labourers in many parts of Lagos, right from the period of colonial rule. The same situation is applicable to the Hausa migrants with respect to socio-economic development of Lagos State. In many sectors of the economy of Lagos, the Hausa migrant labourers are active participants, especially since Independence.

Trade and commerce is one of the major sectors of the Lagos State economy where a sizeable number of Hausa migrants are involved. To this extent, Hausa migrants are huge participants in virtually all the markets in Lagos State. The Mile 12 market which is reputed as one of the largest

foodstuff and grocery markets in West Africa is dominated by the Hausa migrants (Solaja, Atolagbe, & Soyewo, 2013). Many people from all over Lagos State and neighbouring States patronise this market on daily basis. The market which was moved from Iddo to its present location in 1976 houses surplus agricultural products from the North such as pepper, tomato, yam, onion, potato, orange, vegetable, rice, beans, corn, fruits, poultry products, palm oil, groundnut oil, and the like. The market is an important source of revenue for the Kosofe Local Government Council of Lagos State Government. Also, it is a viable source of employment for numerous “Lagosians” who derive their livelihood directly or indirectly from the daily commercial activities within and outside the market. In addition, the agricultural produce that is regularly brought to the market contributes to shoring up food security within Lagos State. The business of bringing these produce, wholesaling, and retailing them is largely handled by the Hausa migrants. The activity of off-loading baskets and bags of the agricultural produce from the big trailers coming from the North are also largely handled by the Hausa migrant labours. Some of the Hausa migrants are porters who help buyers to carry their loads to the parks. Nowadays, many of these Hausa migrants are now seen on the Lagos-Ikorodu expressway between Mile 12 and Owode Onirin hawking foodstuffs and produces inside the perennial traffics. In fact, the large presence of the Hausa migrants performing one activities or the other within the market has influenced the settlement of big Hausa communities within the area. Apart from the Mile 12 Market, the Hausa migrants also engage in similar commercial activities in the Alaba Rago Market in the Ojo Local Government Area, Sabo Market in Ikorodu, and many other markets across Lagos State. Nowadays, there is hardly a market in Lagos State that Hausa migrants are not performing one commercial activity or the other.

Street hawking and trading is another aspect of commercial activities that the Hausa migrants engaged in different parts of Lagos State. Varieties of wares such as clothes, clothing materials, leather materials (shoe, purse, belt, horsewhip etc.), wrist watch, agricultural produce, bedding materials, carpets and rugs, provisions, and many others are hawked on

the streets of Lagos State by the Hausa migrants. The hawking activities are not restricted to the urban areas alone, many of these migrants are found in the remotest areas of Lagos State trading one product or the other. Related to street hawking and trading are the numerous small shops that are established by the Hausa migrants in the different parts of Lagos. In every community they found themselves, the Hausa migrants usually establish small counter where provisions are sold. Before long, this counter may have turned to kiosk and could from there become a big retail shop. Selling of livestock such as goat, sheep, ram, and cow is also another major economic activity of the Hausa migrants in Lagos State. They engage in the business of transporting these animals from the North where they are reared in multitude to Lagos State especially during the *Ileya* festival. "Lagosians" also buy these animals during naming, burial, housewarming, wedding, *iwuye* and other ceremonies. In addition, some of the Hausa migrants are engaged by prominent persons to rear their cattle for them and from this *fura de nono* (raw animal milk) are extracted and sold by the female Hausa migrants. During the 2000s, many Hausa migrants usually push their wheel barrows to trade tubers of yam from the Mile 12 market to various parts of Ikorodu Local Government Area. Furthermore, many Hausa migrants engage in exchange businesses such as those in clothes, gold, and money. The business of exchanging used clothes for household materials such as cooking utensils, big kettles and cooler is generally called *paro* among the Yoruba people, is majorly handled by the Hausa migrants. In addition, the Hausa migrants used to dominate *bureau de change* business of buying and selling foreign currencies in different parts of Lagos State. They also buy and sell gold from place to place.

Artisanship and menial jobs are another form of economic activities that are carried out by the Hausa migrants in various parts of Lagos State. Many of them serve as shoe repairers, tailors, iron benders, umbrella repairers, basket weavers, rope makers, and so on. Though many have questioned the quality of work performed by these people and have regarded them as quack in the business, many of them are seen on the streets of Lagos on daily basis hunting for patronage. Compare to their

competitors in this business, their services are generally assumed to be cheaper. Apart from artisanship, there are numerous menial jobs that the Hausa migrants are engaged in Lagos State. In fact, the hardy and labour intensive jobs are usually reserved for the Hausa migrant labours. For instance, many of the Hausa migrants are used as farm workers to clear the land for farming, till the land for cultivation, harvest farm produce, and even to transport the produce to areas where vehicles would come and take them. Also, many Hausa migrants are used in the construction of buildings in Lagos State to clear the bush for foundation digging and serve as labourers for bricklayers, electricians, plumbers and others. They are also engaged whenever there is the need to collapse dilapidated buildings across Lagos State; in fact, it seems that these sets of work are reserved for them. In addition, sizeable numbers of Hausa migrant labourers are used in the construction of roads and other infrastructural facilities in Lagos State. Here again, the general opinion is that services rendered by these migrants are comparatively cheaper. Related to this is the involvement of many Hausa migrants in the supply of water to homes, restaurants, offices, and construction sites in different parts of Lagos State. The Hausa migrants that engage in this business were initially called *mai sonda or mai ruwa*, because they use gallons and wooden poles to fetch water to supply to numerous Lagos residents. Nowadays, many of the *mai sondas* now use trucks which have the capacity to carry about ten gallons to fetch and supply water to different homes. The prices of their water supply varies from places to places and is usually determine by the general economic situations within the country particularly the fluctuations in the pump price of the premium motor spirit (PMS) and at times due to prolong outage of electricity. In virtually all bus stops in Lagos State, Hausa migrants render porter services to people by assisting commuters to carry their luggage to destinations. These sets of Hausa migrants are called *Kaiya*. In another vein, many of the Hausa migrants perform laundry services to many people in Lagos State, especially the elites. Particularly, the Hausa migrants are experts in laundry of caps, guinea brocades, and *agbada*.

Security and transportation sectors of the Lagos State economy have also witnessed the participation of the Hausa migrants during the post-colonial period. Apart from the fact that the Hausa migrants constituted the root of what later became the Nigerian Police and Nigerian Army, their role in the security architecture of Lagos State during the post-colonial period cannot be underestimated. Precisely, many Hausa migrants are engaged as private security guard (popularly called *mai guard*) in many residences. The elites and well-to-do in the societies, particularly in areas like Ikoyi, Victoria Island, and Lekki, usually engaged the Hausa migrants to man their gates and also serve as night guards. Public opinion seems to suggest that the reasons why these people are preferably engaged in this regard are due to their trustworthiness and the belief in the efficacy of their talisman. In most cases, once a Hausa migrant is engaged in this kind of service he would permit some of his tribesmen to stay with him and may even establish a kiosk for provisions, confectioneries, and small wares. Coupled with this is the fact that many Hausa migrants are posted to different parts of Lagos State for official duties in the Nigerian Army, Nigerian Police and other Para-military forces. A number of them had assumed the post of Commissioner of Police in Lagos State while Major Gen. Buba Marwa was the military administrator (the Chief Security Officer) of Lagos State between 1996 and 1999.

The participation of the Hausa migrants in the transportation sector was initially minimal, but as the tempo increased owing to the expanded commercial inter-actions between the North and the South. Many of the trailers that transport livestock and agricultural produce from the North to Lagos State are not only owned by these Hausa migrants, but also driven by them. Also because of the position of Lagos State as the major sea port in Nigeria, large volumes of petroleum products are transported from the depots of the major oil companies from Lagos State to other parts of the country. The trucks handling those of the North are usually driven by the Hausa migrants. In addition, many of the Dangote trailers which are used to transport cement and other products across Lagos State are largely driven by the Hausa migrants. One of the major changes in the public

transport sector of Lagos State at the close of the twentieth century was the conversion of motorcycles into a popular means of transportation. Prominent among the major factors that warranted this is the consistent heavy traffics on Lagos roads owing to continuous increase of vehicles on the roads cum construction, re-construction, and rehabilitation of roads. The congestion that arises from this situation usually prompted commuters to always want to easily navigate themselves to their destinations using the motorcycles, popularly called *Okada*. Secondly, the continuous development of new sites which are warranted by rising cost of accommodation and scarcity of good accommodation has turned the tide of rural-urban migration and led to the emergence of suburban and peri-urban areas in Lagos State. Many of these new sites, due to lack of adequate town planning are lacking in motor-able roads constraining dwellers to the use of *Okada* as means of transportation.

The participation of the Hausa migrants in the *Okada* public transport was unnoticeable initially, but the trend has shown that the Hausa migrants are at the frontline of this business in the last decade. This upsurge in the participation of the Hausa migrants could directly be linked to the insurgency and banditry ravaging most part of the North. The spate of insecurity in northern Nigeria in the last two decades has frustrated many Hausa to move to Lagos State for safe haven. The insecurity has also caused disruption in the economic sustenance of many northerners as many of them could not carry out their farming activities successfully. Consequently, many of them began to move southward, particularly Lagos, in search of greener pasture. The continuous population upsurge in the North particularly with reference to the *al-majiri* syndrome is also a factor in the trooping of Hausa migrants to Lagos State. In essence, many of these migrants move down to Lagos to engage in the *Okada* public transport business. In fact, many of the Hausa migrants and their motorcycles are usually loaded in trailers and dumped in different parts of Lagos State. Though some of them had mastered the act of riding the motorcycles from home, the fact that it is quicker and easier to learn the act of driving them gave room for many of the Hausa migrants to get engaged in this



business. The Hausa migrants are also popular with the use of carts and wheel barrows to transport goods and other materials from one place to the other across Lagos State. They are seen at major bus-stops struggling to engage commuters to carry loads to destinations for different prices. Some use the carts to fetch and sell water to “Lagosians.”

Another aspect of the socio-economic trajectories of Lagos State that the Hausa migrants have participated significantly is the health sector. The use of herbal concoctions as remedy for health challenges is a common phenomenon among different African ethnic groups. Though the Yoruba are equally adept in the use of herbal medicinal practices, the Hausa migrants also make inroads into the provision of herbal remedy for the residents of Lagos State. There are Hausa migrant herbal experts who engage in dealing with ailments relating to the oesophagus (locally called *belu-belu*), some are experts in the drawling of blood from the body (i.e. cupping, locally called *gego* among Yoruba people), while others are involved in bone settings in different parts of Lagos State. These people use herbal and traditional medicines to attend to some of these health challenges. Though there are testimonies about successful operations, some people have criticised the practice base on methods and hygiene. Apart from that, many Hausa migrants hawk different kinds of herbal medicines for the cure of various ailments such as *jedi-jedi* (pile), malaria, and blood pressure amongst others. In addition, some of them are known for trading herbs that provide “man power” called *burutanshi* in Hausa language. The general criticisms of lack of precise prescription of dose to individuals, absence of pre-treatment test, and lack of necessary hygiene that are levelled against traditional medicinal practices are also levelled against the Hausa migrant medicines.

Another aspect of the health sector of Lagos State where the Hausa migrants have made inroad enormously is the environmental sanitation. In this regard, many Hausa migrants are found in different parts of Lagos State using wheel barrows and carts to collect refuse from homes, shops, offices, and restaurants to dump sites for different charges based on the quantity of refuse. With the introduction of the Lagos State Waste

Management Authority (LAWMA) and the government embargo on street/individual collections of refuse, many of the Hausa migrants are engaged by the PSP Operators in helping to pack the refuses into the refuse trucks. Related to this is the fact that many of the Hausa migrants usually engage in scavenging waste materials such as iron and plastics. The scavenging Hausa migrants are usually called *bola* by the local people and they are found of trekking several miles searching for these materials. Sometimes, the scavengers buy the wastes from their owners. Many of Lagos homes use the pit system (locally called *shalanga*) for disposing their faecal wastes and the Hausa migrants are usually engage in digging the pits. In essence, many of the jobs that the indigenous and other tribal elements in Lagos State would perceive as “dirty” jobs are easily done by the Hausa migrants. At their *sagos* and *sabos*, the Hausa migrants also offer barbing, manicure, pedicure services to some men by helping them to shave their heads and removing their finger and toe nails. Some of them even render these services by trekking from one place to the other. Those who engage in this trade are called *wanzamai*, a Hausa appellation for barber. Some commentators have condemned patronising these Hausa service providers on the basis that their tools are not adequately sterilized. One of the dynamics of the active participation of the Hausa migrants in the socio-economic activities of Lagos is that many of commercial and trading activities that are strictly confine to the female folks are performed by the male Hausa migrants.

### Hausa Migrants and Socio-economic Problems in Lagos State

That the socio-economic transformations witnessed in Lagos State since the post-colonial period has been attended with series of challenges remain incontrovertible. Many factors have contributed to this situation and the continuous influx of people of diverse social and economic backgrounds into the State is a contributory factor. Like other ethnic and sub-ethnic groups domiciling in Lagos State, the presence of Hausa migrants has its challenges. Ethno-religious conflicts have been identified as one of the major problems associated with the presence of Hausa migrants in

Lagos State. There were occasions when the socio-economic interactions between the Hausa migrants and the host communities and even with some Igbo elements become sour owing to controversies that have economic, ethnic and religious colourations. For instance in November 1999, violence crises ensued within the Mile 12 Market and its environs between the Hausa migrants and their Yoruba host (Olubomehin, 2012). The root cause of the crisis was traced to the rivalry between the Hausa migrants and the Yoruba elements over leadership and control in the Mile 12 Market. While the Hausa migrants believed that they should be saddled with the leadership of the market because of their large population and prolonged stay within the market, the Yoruba elements believed that they were the autochthonous settlers of the area and that the market is located in Yoruba land and therefore they must maintain dominance over the market. In fact, the Hausa migrants claimed that they were the first set of people to move to the market when the administration of Gen. Muritala Muhammad ordered the relocation of the market from Iddo in 1976. The Yoruba traders were initially sceptical about the prospect of the new site and were therefore reluctant to relocate until they were persuaded (Lartey, 2005). During the violence clashes that erupted due to these controversies, several lives were lost, properties were destroyed and commercial activities were paralysed. The Odua People's Congress (OPC) which prime itself as the liberator of the Yoruba race during this epoch coordinated the Yoruba offences in the course of the clashes.

Apart from the Mile 12 imbroglio, several other ethno-religious crises associated with the Hausa migrants occurred in the post-colonial Lagos State. For instance in September 2016, a violent crisis erupted between the Hausa scraps collectors and their fellow Fulani cattle breeders in the Agege area of Lagos State (Folarin, 2016). The remote cause of the hullabaloo was the demolition of the shanties and shops constructed by the Hausa scraps collectors around the railway line by the Nigeria Railway Corporation. The scraps collectors lodged their grievances over the issue to the Seriki Fulani, the head of Hausa community within the area hoping that he would assist them to lobby the government to stop the demolition

but the leader was of the opinion that they comply with the position of the government. The Hausa scraps collectors felt the Seriki Fulani was in support of extermination of the Hausa community in the area and began to nurse grudges against the Fulani in the area. Matters came to its head when a Fulani man was reported to have physically assaulted a Hausa lady who he refused to pay for the food she initially served him. The harassment erupted into attacks and reprisal attacks from the two tribes during the middle of the night leading to killing of three Hausa migrants and sustenance of injuries by several Fulani men. In addition, the entire area was tension soaked for several days and business activities were paralysed within the area.

In another vein, about 15 shops were burnt into ashes on Thursday, 8 October 2020 as violence crisis erupted between some Hausa and Yoruba youths in Igbo-Olomu area of the Ikorodu West Local Council Development Area of Lagos State (Osunfemi, 2020). The crisis occurred as a result of controversies over minor issue relating to payment for okada and became escalated into an ethnic clash but for the immediate intervention of the leaders of the Yoruba and Hausa communities and the Nigerian Police. Apart from the injuries sustained by few people, the area was thrown into trepidation as the pandemonium ensued leading to suspension of socio-economic activities. In April 2021, some Okada riders, majorly Hausa migrants, clashed with the members of the National Union of Road Transport Workers (NURTW) around the Iyana-Iba area of the Ojo Local Government Area of Lagos State (Kwenta, 2021). The remote cause of the clash was the consistent extortion of the Okada riders by the Agbero (member of the NURTW) which was at its peak. The immediate cause of the pandemonium was the alleged beating to death of a Hausa migrant Okada rider by the Agbero. During the clashes, gun bullets were shot, stones were pebbled, the Iyana-Iba section of the Badagry international expressway was blocked from the passage of vehicles, and the commercial activities within the axis were paralysed.

On 18 August 2019, the Oke-Odo market which is located along the Lagos-Abeokuta expressway was agog with ethnic violence clashes between

some Yoruba youths and Hausa migrants (Okojie & Oguntade, 2019). The root cause of the crisis was the allegation from a Yoruba cultist group (popularly called the Awawa Boys) against the Hausa migrant scavengers of stockpiling arms in their huts. Therefore, around 10pm on 18 August 2019, the Awawa Boys (who were notorious for creating disturbances in the Agege area of Lagos) decided to invade the huts of the Hausa scavengers who immediately prevented their unauthorised invasion. This erupted into violence between the two groups and the Hausa did not hesitate to quickly invite their tribesmen from the Oke-Odo market to join the fight. Before long, the imbroglio was taken to the market the following morning leading to burning of wares and kiosks. Though there were no casualties in terms of deaths, the pandemonium left many people injured and caused traffic congestion in Iyana-Ipaja, and Abule-Egba. In addition, a violence clash which resulted into loss of life and destruction of property erupted between Yoruba and some Hausa migrants in Ikorodu township of Lagos State on 2 March 2016. Also on 3 March 2016, the Orile area of Lagos State witnessed violent clashes between Yoruba and some Hausa-Fulani youths. In the crisis that ensued, many persons (Hausa and Yoruba alike) and officers of the security forces were killed while homes, chattel, property, and places of worship were burnt down.

Apart from the ethno-religious crises however, another area where the presence of the Hausa migrants have contributed to the socio-economic problems confronting Lagos is in the area of the growing beggar and squalor communities. Unlike other mega cities across the globe, the number of beggars on Lagos streets has increased to quite an alarming and embarrassing rate. The fact that the Hausa migrants constitute a huge amount of this number cannot be controverted. There is hardly a street in Lagos State where a Hausa migrant beggar would parade begging for alms. In every towns and villages in Lagos State are portions where a cluster of Hausa migrant beggars resume on daily basis to beg for alms. Many of them with minor physical paralyses seized the opportunity to begin to beg for alms. A number of factors had been identified as promoting the continuous expansion of the Hausa migrant beggars. There is a school

of thought that asserts that these beggars are being sponsored by some privileged Hausa elites who sponsor their transportation to Lagos State and collect daily returns from them. Another school of thought opines that the proliferation of the Hausa migrant beggars in Lagos State is due to fact that they enjoy patronage from quite a sizeable number of “Lagosians.” This patronage is influenced by the belief by many of this people in the efficacy of alms giving towards making provisions for their late parents and as an efficient means towards the actualisation of their worldly desires. Apart from money that is given in alms, packages of food and used clothing materials are distributed to the Hausa migrant beggars. These are done on daily basis but especially on Thursdays and weekends and are enough incentive for the beggars to remain on the street. It is on these streets that the female beggars carry their pregnant and rear their children. In fact, some of their children are also initiated into the begging business right from childhood and are converted into street urchins.

A third school of thought acclaims that the protection given to the Hausa street beggars by the “power-that-be” in Nigeria make it extremely impossible for all efforts of the Lagos State Government to eradicate them on the streets were abortive. This is coupled with the facts that there is lack of adequate political will on the part of the Lagos State Government. Despite the construction of rehabilitation centres where these beggars could be kept and be given adequate attention and other policies introduced by the government, they have continued to litter various parts of Lagos State. Their clusters such as Ikorodu round-about, Okokomaiko section of the Badagry expressway, Iyana-Iba section of the Badagry expressway, Kano street in Lagos, Iya-Ipaja axis, and many other are usually untidy and close to the refuse dumps. Staying along the streets and highroads is also very risky as there could be accident at any time. In another vein, the contribution of the Hausa migrants to the development of ghettos and squalors in various parts of Lagos State is very huge. Unlike other ethnic and sub-ethnic groups in Lagos State, many Hausa migrants are not accustomed to renting apartment for their shelters. Rather, most of them prefer sleeping inside nearby mosques, squatting

in the compound of a rich man, and some even sleep on the pedestrian bridges. Some construct shanties and huts along expressways while many others (particularly the scavengers) sleep very close to refuse dumps. A good example of these scenarios is what is obtainable around Alaba Rago section of the Badagry express way where the shanties are constructed on the road; they sleep, bath, toilet and do all sorts in the place.

A recent study conducted by the Lagos State Command of the Nigerian Police has revealed that Okada riders generally are a major part of the security threat to the State. The Hausa migrant Okada riders which constitute the major proportion of the Okada riders are also identified as part of the security threat in Lagos State. Many non-Nigerian riders have infiltrated the ranks of the Hausa migrant Okada riders and some of them are fully armed with weapons and charms which are used to terrorise Lagosians. These elements are used to carrying out nefarious activities such as kidnapping, man stealing, shops robbery, and snatching of phones and other items among others. Apart from this, the rate at which these non-professional riders plunged into accidents is quite alarming leading to loss of many lives and sustaining of injuries.

### **Conclusion**

With their own distinctive settlement and economic patterns, the Hausa communities in Lagos State have contributed to the socio-economic transformations in Lagos State. Their activities in the areas of trade and commerce, particularly with reference to agricultural produce and manual labour cannot be underestimated. On the other hand, they also constitute some form of social problems, particularly in the areas of ethnic crisis and street-begging. Thus, this study espoused that Lagos as a converging point of different cultures and traditions exhibit the characteristics of a multi-ethnic society with its attendant socio-economic development and challenges. Differences in the source of migrations, ethnic identity, cultures and traditions of groups making up the component parts give rise to several skirmishes of violent behaviours. The spate of intrusion of the Hausa migrants into Lagos State is quite alarming and in order to check

their excesses in terms of creating nuisance and security, the need to begin to have a proper documentation of them cannot be overemphasised.

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