

# Commercialization of Migration: The Case of International Traders from Lagos, Nigeria

By

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## Abstract

The configuring of international migration from Lagos Nigeria is very dynamic. It has significantly changed from the labour flows occasioned and driven essentially by the inequality in socio-economic conditions between locations (origin and destination) as explained by most classical theories of migration. The generating energy of demand and market within Lagos, has led to the evolution of commercial migration, as traders are driven internationally in the quest to meet the socio-economic needs of the population of Lagos. It is in this regard that this study examines commercial migration from Lagos, with a view of determining, who the actors are, the underlining determinants, processes and trajectories of this form of migration. The concepts of urbanization, human mobility and international migration constituted the conceptual framework for the study. The study surveyed traders from four purposively selected international markets within Lagos, namely: Alaba, Ikeja Computer village, Balogun and Auto Spare Parts and Machinery Dealers Association Market (ASPAMDA). Questionnaire, In-depth Interviews and Focus Group Discussions were used in collecting data on the socio-economic characteristics of traders, determinants of trader mobility, pattern and evolution of commercial migration, challenges and issues that influence trader destinations. The results indicted a predominance of male traders in commercial international migration; majority of traders come from the south-east zone of Nigeria; there is a step-wise movement of traders from rural-urban to international destinations. In addition, hitherto traditional international destinations of Nigerian migrants, that is, Western Europe and North America, has changed to Asia and South-East Asian countries of China, Taiwan, South Korea, Hong Kong among others. Commercialization of migration is on the high from Lagos and contributing to the socio-economic development of the city.