

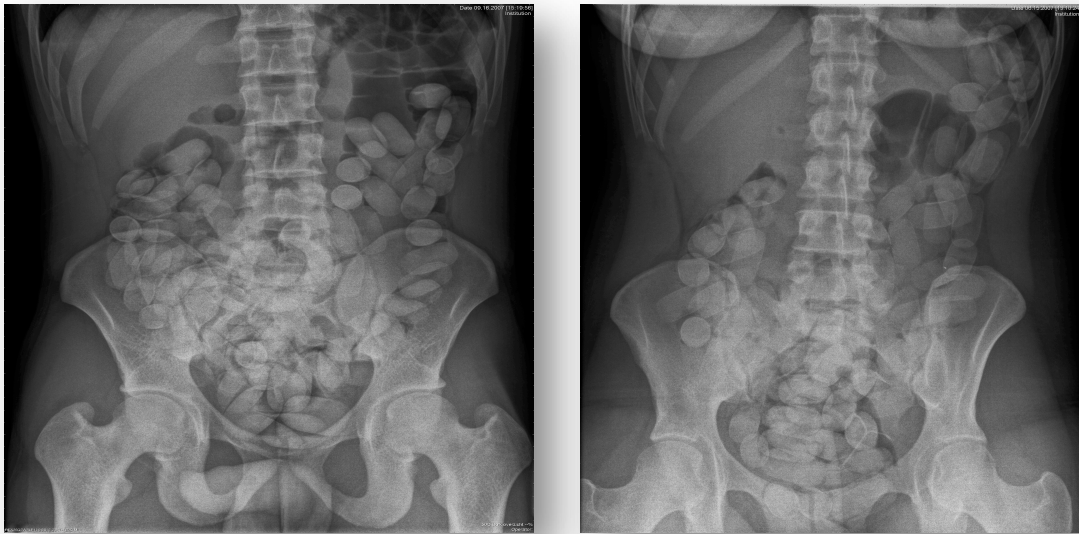
COCAINE HOPPERS

THE NIGERIAN INVOLVEMENT IN THE GLOBAL COCAINE TRADE

COCAINE HOPPERS

DE BETROKKENHEID VAN NIGERIANEN IN DE GLOBALE COCAINE HANDEL

(met een samenvatting in het Nederlands)



Proefschrift

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door

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te Orlu.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

450kg cocaine concealed in customized floor wood was uncovered in a container shipped from Chile by the National Drug Law enforcement Agency in April 2010 (NDLEA 2010, April 8)... in January 2011, 110kg cocaine hidden in floor tiles and cement in container shipped from Bolivia was confiscated by NDLEA. Vanguard Nigeria (2011, January 31)

Seven Nigerian male drug couriers nabbed on one flight excreted 8.7kg cocaine: 1.616kg, 1.594kg, 1.450kg, 1.167kg, 1.103kg, 935 and 874 grams respectively. All except one were heading to Hong Kong-China. Nigerian Eye (2014, November 29)

The above are summarized examples of the Nigerian cocaine trafficking instances that make headlines in Nigeria and many countries globally. It is a phenomenon that poses a challenge to democratic governance and human security in Africa (Aning & Pokoo, 2014; Brown, 2013). According to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) the last decades have witnessed a new trend in international cocaine trafficking: the increasing role of West Africa, especially Nigeria, in smuggling cocaine between South America to Europe and other countries (UNODC, 2013).

“Nigerian organized criminal networks remain a major factor in moving cocaine and heroin worldwide, and have begun to produce and traffic methamphetamine to and around Southeast Asia. In addition to drug trafficking, some of these criminal organizations also engage in other forms of trafficking and fraud targeting U.S. citizens. Widespread corruption in Nigeria facilitates criminal activity, and, combined with Nigeria’s central location along major trafficking routes, enables criminal groups to flourish and make Nigeria an important trafficking hub” (U.S. Department of States, 2013).

Nigerian cocaine traffickers have taken advantage of the various technological changes in establishing a worldwide trafficking network provided by globalization. Exploiting entrepreneurial skills, they have been able to establish themselves in cocaine production and transit countries in South America and in consuming destinations around the world. Some Nigerian international cocaine traffickers see their activity simply as a trade opportunity based on the market forces of covert demand and supply. In addition, there are several push-and-pull factors responsible for the involvement and success of those attracted to the international cocaine trafficking, both direct and indirect.

According to the Nigerian National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA, 2012), a significant profit can be realized when transactions are successful. This is the reason Nigerian international cocaine trafficking attracts individuals across all ethnic groups, professions, ages, and races. Nigerians have been accredited with popularizing deployment of couriers who swallow cocaine balls, as show in the pictures below.



Figure 1. Cocaine pellets.



Figure 2. Male courier



Figure 3. Female courier

(Source: Customs Intelligence Unit Schiphol-team, Amsterdam, The Netherlands: 2011, April 6).

Figure 2 shows an x-ray of a man who swallowed cocaine pellets, and figure 3 shows the same image of a woman. This displays an edgework drug trafficking in which male couriers ingest twice as much, in the profit- and greed- driven Nigerian global illicit cocaine trade as NDLEA officials claim. However, this is too simplistic an assessment for a country that has suffered from instability and unrest for most of its history. In fact, financial problems and poverty, endemic bribery and corruption, crimes of the powerful or even of the State, inadequate role models, and strain from the 'Nigerian Dream' (Oboh & Schoenmakers, 2010; Oboh, 2011; Udema, 2013) all play a role in the trafficking culture, indicating that the Nigerian state crisis has created a criminogenic situation that has made the illicit cocaine trade either attractive or necessary for some of its people. As such, this environment has fostered a kind of 'reverse' social capital, wherein criminality as a means to achieve wealth becomes the driving force of social networks, connections and associations both in and between all levels of society.

Thus Nigerian cocaine traffickers, in targeting a large financial profit or 'the big catch' (as the traffickers refer to it), effectively exploit the blurred relationship, in Nigeria, between legal and illegal business. As brokers in the cocaine business, they have realized that the trade is an open enterprise, attractive to whoever has the means to join the chain. What is particularly remarkable is the pervasiveness of reverse social capital in the Nigerian context (which will be further explained ahead and contextualized in other chapters throughout this

work) and its effective utilization by the traffickers in their business relations. Nevertheless, while some have derived immediate financial results from international cocaine involvement, this is in no measure comparable to its devastating long-term effects both in Nigeria and abroad. In the Nigerian news media, reports of South American cocaine seizures and individuals arrested in connection with cocaine trafficking are common.

As Nigeria joins the world in marking the International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Drug Trafficking, the anti-drug control agency NDLEA, reported having successfully arrested 46,087 suspected drug traffickers out of which 9,782 persons were convicted, and the seizure of a total quantity of 1,310,860.348kg of various drugs from 2006 to date: cannabis 1,284,341.896kg, cocaine 16,746.629k, heroin 643.076kg, and other psychotropic substances 9,128.747kg (NDLEA: 07-03-2012). While some traffickers are apprehended in Nigeria, others are caught globally. However, the number of Nigerians involved remains uncertain.

Bovenkerk, Siegel, and Zaitch (2002) found in similar research on drug traffickers in the Netherlands that dark numbers—crime that is neither reported nor recorded by law enforcement agencies—are by definition difficult to trace, but calculations in such cases are even more problematic for several reasons. First, no study of any sort has yet been conducted on this specific involvement. Second, the number of illegal Nigerian migrants in Brazil or China, for instance, is a matter of rough estimation. Third, secrecy, flexibility, and imprecise information exchange lies at the core of any drug transaction. This work seeks to provide insight into a new trend in international cocaine trafficking that presents a serious threat to lives and security to West Africa and the world at large. Transit countries too easily become cocaine consumers, as is evidenced in Brazil and Mexico; Nigeria is not an exception. Figures remain complementary because the actual number of Nigerians serving time in various jails globally will perhaps never be known due the nature of the new illicit trend, which this work seeks to unveil. Nevertheless, the Nigerian anti-drug control agent estimated that there are about 9,000 Nigerians in prison around the world, most of which were convicted of drug trafficking¹.

Furthermore, the Chairman of the House of Representatives Committee on Diaspora Affairs of Nigeria, Mrs. Abike Dabiri-Erawe revealed there were over 500 Nigerians, including 16 women, imprisoned for drug-related offenses in Brazil, as highlighted by Arhewe (2013, September 12). In the wake of this, highlighted remains that there are approximately 131,000 people jailed in the São Paulo prison system (UNODC, 2013). The official list from Penitentiary Administration Secretary of São Paulo State reports they were 272 Nigerians in Brazilian prisons as of December 2011. They were convicted of cocaine trafficking offenses principally. Of these, 247 are in São Paulo, comprised of 233 men and 14 women.

Amongst the 14 Nigerian female inmates serving time for cocaine trafficking offenses in São Paulo's women prison, Penitentiary of the Capital (PFC) in Brazil, I interviewed Mrs. Hafsat Awosade. She expressed to me:

“I am 74 years old...I heard people saying that the system should not judge someone over 70. I hope they consider my age. They should not let me die here” (Hafsat Awosade: SP, December 2011).

But she did.² As evidenced by the significant number of arrests in Nigeria and abroad, including arrest of some high-profile politicians, Nigeria has gained the reputation as a major

¹ *Citizen* (2013, June 27).

² *Vanguard Nigeria.com: Nigerian female drug suspect, 73, dies in Brazil.* Mrs. Hafsat Awosade, a grandmother, was held early last year by Brazilian security authorities with illicit drugs. She died last week of high blood pressure. See Ndiribe (2012, November 15).

trafficking nation in recent decades (UNODC, 2009). But although cocaine trafficking is risky, the high monetary profit derived when successful attracts many to this business, despite the possibility of jail time—or in some countries such as Saudi Arabia, Singapore, Vietnam, Malaysia, China, and Indonesia, execution—if convicted³.

However, it is easy to point fingers at criminals in Nigeria and the Nigerian Diaspora throughout Europe as well as the rest of the world, as being solely responsible for cocaine trafficking. Nonetheless, if, as suggested above, the Nigerian state crisis has caused systemic factors that create an environment where cocaine trafficking is for some the only source of income or escape from poverty, then the reasons for the Nigerian role in international smuggling is more complex than is currently acknowledged. On the one hand, millions of innocent Nigerians are victims of humiliations and distrust worldwide. On the other hand, some Nigerians in the Diaspora are party to the cocaine trafficking networks. As such, the role of Nigerians in international cocaine trafficking must be analyzed from a more comprehensive and multifaceted perspective, examining the multiple factors that continue to drive so many into this dangerous business.

1.2 Knowledge gap and research questions

The trends in international cocaine trafficking have created new problems for governments and enormous challenges for law enforcement agents in this era of globalization (Fukumi, 2008). Additionally, researchers in many countries are curious about the workings and factors behind the success of the newcomers in this business. There is little information on drug trafficking within the region because this type of crime depends on detection by the authorities (Van de Bunt, Siegel & Zaitch, 2014; Oboh, 2011). In both popular discussions and in research⁴ arguments have been made to suggest that the increasing role of Nigerians in drug trafficking has to do with the side effects of policy and lack of leadership in Nigeria, which push many to crime and cocaine trafficking; however, the link between this relationship is still unclear. Given the ambiguity, this current study aims to examine the Nigerian involvement in the cocaine business to explain it. Some important questions are:

- **What is the role of Nigeria and Nigerians in the international cocaine trade?**
- **What are the mechanisms behind the success of Nigerians in the global cocaine trade?**
- **What is the involvement of Nigerians in a cocaine export country (Brazil) and in a destination country (China), and how can this involvement be explained?**

In trying to bridge this knowledge gap, this work cannot provide a singular ‘solution’ to the problem, but it will contribute to the debate by providing insights into the role of Nigerians in international cocaine trafficking, as well as its consequences to the Nigerian nation and the world. While this work will trace Nigerian traffickers’ enthusiasm in Brazil, it will also zoom into their activities in China. In contrast to Brazil, which has historic connection with Nigeria and Africa at large, as we shall discuss in Chapter 4, China is interesting because it represents a new and original market for the new trend traffickers. In this respect, they have posed

³ The New York Times: Indonesia Executes 8, Including 7 Foreigners, Convicted on Drug Charges. Four of the seven men shot by police firing squads were Nigerians. See Cochrane (2015, April 28).

⁴ In this area, see for instance Ellis (2007), Akyeampong (2005).

considerable challenges to the law enforcement agents and society in cities like Guangzhou and beyond, which this work seeks to unveil. According to an article on the National Mirror, there were over 2,000 Nigerian detained in various prisons in China, the majority for drug-related offenses (Arhewe, 2013).

Anthropological and criminological studies point out the importance of fieldwork, observation and data collection in gathering information close to the source to provide the most comprehensive understanding (Zaitch, Mortelmans, & Decorte, 2010). As such, each chapter will deal with one of the significant factors that contribute to the causes of Nigerian involvement in the cocaine trade. More personally, however, although this research on Nigerian drug trafficking is directly related to the study of criminology, I was born and raised there, and issues related to developments in Nigeria have always been part of my daily observations. For example, when pursuing my undergraduate studies in Italy, some of my fellow students supplied the highly demanded Nigerian cannabis to their Italian contacts, and were convicted for international trafficking of cannabis from Nigeria to Italy. One of the persons convicted stated that his reason for engaging in drug trafficking was to raise money to pay for his studies in Italy because foreign students were not allowed to work.

Consequently, while this study is grounded in theoretical and empirical research, it is also informed by my personal experiences of seeing so many real people affected by cocaine trafficking both in Nigeria and abroad.

1.3 Methodology

This work was initiated based on the fact that much is known about Nigeria as a country, but very little information is available on the involvement of Nigerians in the cocaine trade and who the Nigerian traffickers are. The general belief is that they follow the standard model of the highly organized cartels or criminal gangs, and are headed by drug barons who work in partnership with South American cartels.

As a result, the academic world has only been able to rely on the information that exists in the media or from law enforcement agents, but not on firsthand observations or detailed interactions with the participants. Scholars therefore only have limited insight on the Nigerian involvement in the illicit international cocaine business.

In this regard, the research method was implemented in line with the anthropology and sociology of deviance carried out by interviewing and observing participants in the criminogenic environment. Hence it was based principally on different types of qualitative data collected in Nigeria and in various countries abroad, including the Netherlands, Malaysia, China and Hong Kong, and Brazil.

This part continues with the researcher's role in the field or entry fieldwork, ethics, security, challenges, the validity and reliability of this study.

Three methods of research

The qualitative methods consist mainly of observation, open interviews, and informal conversations. This primary data is based on empirical observations and is complemented with secondary data in related fields: academic work, media publications on cocaine and immigrant enterprises, reports from various international institutions and organizations on the Nigerian international cocaine traffickers.

These were the materials used for the general information on Nigeria and theoretical concepts on crime in order to establish a sound argument for the analysis of the Nigerian case, meaning to acquire insight into the viewpoint and experiences from the perspective of Nigerian international cocaine traffickers. It is predominantly qualitative methods and ethnographic research that can enlighten the reasons and motives Nigerian involvement in the

illicit international cocaine trafficking. The goal of this work is to help to understand this development from the insider viewpoint (see Decorte & Zaitch, 2010).

Intermixing interviews, observations, and the analysis of the secondary data resulted in gathering ample data to respond the research questions. This chapter will concisely appraise the range, selection process, and general research set-up for the three methods. Difficulties related with these methods are as follows.

1.3.1 Observations

Concerns regarding social developments in Africa and doubts about the reasons why events in Nigeria and its negative image abroad are the way they are were the reasons that inspired my transition from agricultural engineering, after years of working for the United Nations, to study criminology in 2006. During the study, my observations on deviant activities committed by individuals from Nigerian or of African origin increased particularly both in the Netherlands and Nigeria during family visits. This is complemented by more than fifteen years personal experience working for the Dutch Ministry of Justice and simultaneous long-standing interactions with Nigeria(ns). Prior to the fieldwork, I consulted with people both in the Netherlands and in Nigeria on the research aim and objectives, including experts in the field of criminology and law enforcement, as well as personal contacts like relatives and friends. These last contacts noted that in Nigeria cocaine trafficking is an ‘open secret’ because it is a regular part of discussion that people feel safe talking about. Nevertheless, I was frequently advised to be cautious when choosing with whom trafficking is discussed.

1.3.2 Semi in-depth interviews

In addition to participant observation, open interviews were conducted for gathering information during fieldwork in various countries. My contacts in the Netherlands and Nigeria suggested that Lagos was the best place to begin this research since it is the commercial heart of business in Nigeria. Social networks brought me into contact with direct and indirect participants of Nigerian cocaine trafficking. In total, I conducted in-depth interviews and conversations with more than 150 people from whom information in Nigeria and abroad could be gathered.

Interviewees ranged from several direct actors, convicted individuals in prison, and my informants. Additionally, acquaintances, relations of cocaine traffickers in Nigeria, the Netherlands, Italy, England, Germany, Malaysia, Hong Kong, China, and Brazil were contacts. The purpose was to pull together various direct and indirect actors in terms of background of members of the Nigerian international cocaine trafficking. This made it possible to compare divergent views and experiences, as the selection of respondents is based on a theoretical, purposive sampling technique (Mortelmans, 2010). I seek to provide an assessment that can not only illuminate the meaning and attraction to cocaine trafficking, but additionally thwart a preconception vis-à-vis ethnicity, age, religion, profession and the willingness to take part in the illicit trade.

As the snowball method assisted to engage respondents through existing trust relations, this method added to acquiring respondents that could have been unreachable or otherwise declined to participate.

The selection method deployed in this research resulted in a wide range of people from Nigeria principally, but also other countries. Ages ranged from 16 to over 70 years old, but the majority of respondents were between 25 and 40 years old. Nigerian international cocaine trafficking is a borderless activity involving individuals across all ethnic groups in Nigeria, though Igbo are represented. Respondents’ level of education varied from primary

and high school levels to higher institutions and university. Of course, such a diverse group requires more data to reach saturation (Mortelmans, 2010, pp. 100-104). In this project, data streaming observations and informal conversation analysis compensates for the relatively limited number of interviews. Furthermore, in harmony with the requirement for saturation, the final interviews did not lead to novel information but substantiated the initial finding.

Also useful were personal ties in the country, which had networks that allowed entry into various settings also frequented by those involved in cocaine trafficking. These included bars, restaurants, dance clubs, fundraising activities, traditional weddings, churches, markets, retail stores, private homes, village chiefs, traditional rulers, etc. It is difficult to enumerate the scenes and events observed, or individuals discovered and interviewed during this fieldwork. On most occasions with Nigerians in Nigeria or amongst the Diaspora, issues related to Nigeria's problems were always discussed. Likewise, Nigerians involvement in cocaine trafficking was no exception.

As a vital instrument, a theme list assisted to allow the respondents to chat liberally, as well as to cover all relevant issues⁵. Interviews develop into more open conversations in the course of the fieldwork, allowing a certain degree of flexibility within the structure of the work for respondents to express their views extensively. Conversation and interviews lasted about 3 to 4 hours on average. Follow-up conversations resulted to further meetings in Nigeria, Brazil, China, and other countries. Looking at the extensive nature of Nigerian international cocaine trafficking, I made a selection of useful occasions and sub-forums for the fieldwork.

The selection criteria concerned when to travel to a particular country, when the in-depth interviews and conversations took place, as well as their content and duration in different countries and varied suitable places:

Nigeria

I was born and raised in Nigeria but I left the country in January 1978 for Italy to study with a Nigerian Federal Government scholarship. Though I travel to Nigeria regularly, since 2006 when I started the study of Global Criminology, I visited mostly once or twice annually. Each visit lasted about three weeks on average. I spent one year in Nigeria between October 2012 and December 2013. I observed and interviewed cocaine traffickers and experts in this area. In Nigeria, although cocaine traffickers are active in most parts of the country, my fieldwork was concentrated in Western Nigeria (particularly Lagos, the country's largest city), the Southeast, and Abuja (the Nigerian capital city). About forty-eight personal interviews and many more informal conversations were conducted during gatherings in Lagos between 2006 and 2013. Several respondents invited me to social events like drinking at bars, dance parties, child naming celebrations, wedding parties, and meals at their homes. My main objective was to observe and participate in routines and thereby gain insight into Nigerian traffickers dynamics, attitudes, and behavior in various settings.

I had extensive in-depth interviews and conversations with experts from various public institutions including law enforcement agents like NDLEA, EFCC and the Nigerian Police Force. I also spoke with university professors and lecturers who encompassed criminologists, anthropologists, sociologists, historians, and linguists at University of Lagos. In order to dig into the historical connection between Nigeria and Brazil, these interviews included the Brazilian returnee descendant, Mrs. Angelica Da Rocha, Mr. Anthony Salako, and Dr. Gabriel Adetokunbo Pearse.

I interviewed NDLEA's Chief Spokesman, Ofoyeju J. Mitchell in Lagos, NDLEA Head and several officers at Abuja airport, EFCC Head of Operations and three officers, Dutch Police

⁵ In this area, see for example Beyens and Tournel (2010, p. 203-205), Noaks and Wincup (2004, p. 79-80).

Liaison-Officer to Nigeria in Abuja as well as several officers of Nigerian customs. They provided me insight from law enforcement agents' view of the Nigerian cocaine trafficking phenomenon, combat, and challenges.

Interviews and conversations did not only vary in terms of time and privacy but also in frequency. I met some only once or twice, whereas I met others on manifold occasions during my visits. I made phone calls to some to reconfirm information and to receive updates. The aim was to dig out and comprehend their perspectives on the activities of Nigerian international cocaine trafficking and combat. I also sought to understand its root causes and why the phenomenon persists in Nigeria. The content of the discussions was also a criterion for selection. A detailed inventory of subjects and their popularity resulted in the varied opinions concerning the dynamics of Nigerian cocaine trafficking. Not only did their opinions cover various popular topics, but also topics that they lend themselves to.

Brazil

My fieldwork in São Paulo (SP) was planned to coincide with a period when eligible inmates on semi-open and open prison regimes are granted temporary outing or *saidinha*, which take place about five times in a year including during Easter, Christmas and New Year, Mother's Day, Father's Day, Children's Day, and All Souls' Day. For instance, during 2011 Christmas 23,639 inmates were granted temporary leave privileges (Bocchin, 2012). I implemented about four months of fieldwork in São Paulo, where I travelled 3 times. I made one trip in 2011 and two in 2012, conducting about 34 in-depth interviews and approximately 90 informal conversations. Observing occasional social activities outside the inmates' prison life enabled me to conduct additional research.

Interviewees were not exclusively members of Nigerian international cocaine traffickers but also Legal Aid lawyers, private lawyers, judges, police officers, teachers, university lecturers and individuals from NGO Coletivo DAR; Directors and officials from public institutions such as women prison *Penitenciária Feminina da Capital* (PFC), *Coordenação de Políticas para População Negra e Indígena* (CPPNI), Institute of Social Medicine and the Criminology (IMESE), *Santa casa de misericórdia*, which offers mental health care to inmates, and The State Council for Drug Policy (Coned) among others. On invitation through my contacts like Drs. Marisa Feffermann and the Director of IMESA Drs. Maria Alice Pollo Araujo, I was an observer during annual closing meeting of the São Paulo State Council for Drug Policy (Coned), held on December 15, 2011. It provided me the opportunity to interview an Inspector of police and several other public servants, to learn about the structure of advice on drugs in the State of São Paulo and monitor reports of the activities related to the theme⁶.

China

With the importance of China growing among Nigerian international cocaine traffickers, several trips were made to China for practical observations and informal talks in 2008–2013 where I spent around four and half months in total, holding about two dozens of in-depth interviews and approximately 70 informal conversations in cities like Beijing, Shanghai, Yiwu, Hong Kong, and Guangzhou.

I had extensive interview with renowned Anthropologist Professor Mathews Gordon of Chinese University of Hong Kong. Introduced through him I interviewed students of Anthropology and had a forum at Chungking Mansions with about 14 Asylum seekers in Hong Kong (HK) from various countries in Africa including Nigeria, Ghana, and Uganda. Through them I connected with several traders and sex workers. This gave me the

⁶ CONED (2011, December 15). The State Council for Drug Policy (Coned) explores the role of social assistance in the drug treatment.

opportunity for interviews and conversations. Some invited me out to lunch and dancing where we talked extensively, which enlightened more on the activities of Nigerian cocaine traffickers in HK.

I also interviewed Professors Wing Lo of Applied Social Studies City University of Hong Kong and three students. These extensive interactions enlightened me on issues regarding not only drug consumption amongst students but also its prevention strategies amid students and at home. It provided me the opportunity to learn their views on Hong Kong drug prevention polices and its working amid students. I compared these with those I gathered from students I came across at Shanghai University and in Guangzhou.

The snowballing within social colleagues in the Netherlands delivered good contacts within Law enforcement agents in Hong Kong. I had in-depth interviews and conversations with Liaison-Officer of The Royal Netherlands *Marechaussee* for Immigration and Police Affairs. He was very instrumental in making further interviews possible including Hong Kong Detective Chief Inspector Interpol Division, Liaison Bureau and even the Nigerian Embassy in Hong Kong. These interviews provided me insight from a law enforcement point of view regarding the activities of Nigerian cocaine traffickers in HK. It also made available secondary data useful to the research for comparison.

Malaysia

In addition to Brazil and China, I traveled to Malaysia once for fieldwork in 2012, and I stayed for three weeks because Malaysia is a country where Nigerian international cocaine traffickers are active. As in China, several have been executed in Malaysia. In Kuala Lumpur, I did not only interview about eight direct and 20 indirect actors of the new trend drug trafficking, but also law enforcement agents and criminal lawyers handling cases for some Nigerian cocaine offenders.

In May 2012 I interviewed a Nigerian inmate at Sungai Buloh Prison, Jalan Kuala Selangor Sungai Bulo, who possibly faced execution because of international drug trafficking. This gave me the unique chance with a young male of about 40 years old facing his incarcerated life and opinion about his involvement/punishment. These detailed interactions in Kuala Lumpur and Malaka not only gave me insight into the new trend international cocaine trafficking, and “cross-fertilization of crime” (McGovern, 2009), but also confirmed already acquired information about the extensive network and mechanism underpinning their achievements in a second Asian country.

The Netherlands

Concerning drug trafficking from a formal state perspective, law enforcement officials from the Netherlands were interviewed, including the Dutch National Police Intelligent Service [IPOL]), The Netherlands Police Agency (*Korps Landelijke Politiediensten* [KLPD]), Amsterdam-Amstelland Police, and KMar⁷. Likewise several other experts working with Dutch criminal justice system including a criminologist specializing in drug trafficking and criminal-justice lawyers. In addition to specialized journalists, I interviewed professional judiciary interpreters in various countries such as Germany, England, Italy, and the Netherlands especially. Because of its commercial importance, good infrastructure, and location, the Netherlands is not only an important cocaine transit hub but also a consumer. About 15 years of work experience with the Dutch criminal justice system and immigration provided me with broad experience on the nature of Nigerian involvement in the illicit

⁷ The Royal Netherlands Marechaussee abbreviated to KMar, (Royal Marshals, but commonly seen as Royal Constabulary) is one of the four Services of the armed forces of the Netherlands. It is a gendarmerie force performing military police and civil police duties.

cocaine business in the country and extensive networks globally. It also gave me the chance of interaction with law enforcement agents internationally.

On the whole, I surveyed several different countries and varied suitable places. I subsequently assessed the quality of the discussions implemented in the various countries. Often, the beginning of the interview or conversation could emerge relevant, but then the participants tended to digress to other topics. Getting off-topic sometimes allowed for relevant and interesting information; otherwise such digressions were disregarded. Having varied respondents within social networks led to respondents with differing opinions about the involvement of Nigerian in the international cocaine trafficking.

1.3.3 Secondary data

The third method deployed for gathering information during fieldwork was secondary data collection from several sources. I consulted selective encounters of some cocaine cases from law enforcement agents in the Netherlands in and within cities including Amsterdam-Amstelland and KMar Schiphol Airport, Rijnmond Rotterdam, The Hague, Tilburg, and Breda to mention but a few. I compared information with Nigerian anti-drug agent NDLEA's annual reports and official list from Penitentiary Administration Secretary of São Paulo State Government. As expected, neither the NDLEA nor Dutch police dossiers could be consulted due to their highly secretive nature. Nevertheless, from the data that was gathered from these agencies, law enforcement was geared toward the 'criminal' offenders (small 'fish') including the offense, names or operational particulars of a specific case and arrest. Likewise, social backgrounds and other non-deviant information (such as their hopes or expectations, careers, etc.) of the offenders are not a part of the anti-drug control agents' information gathering. This therefore poses an interesting gap in the information given and received by officers, and which this study aims to offer from a societal level.

Other secondary sources of information gathered include cocaine court case hearings in the Netherlands and China, where arrested actors were confronted with the offenses and were able to speak briefly as to how and why they became involved in cocaine trafficking.

Additional sources included journalistic accounts on information from Nigeria and Dutch newspapers, magazines, reports, and Internet databases. Relevant information from related literature on organized crime, UNODC reports and those from different international organizations concerning Nigerian immigrants were also collected. Various sociological and anthropological theories on deviant behavior were also incorporated throughout this study to give a further context for the primary and secondary research.

1.3.4 Ethical issues; anonymity and confidentiality

Besides selecting respondents and fieldwork settings there are other decisions that researchers need to make prior to commencing fieldwork. Research approaches that depend confidently on human interactions require researchers to take a number of ethical issues into contemplation—comprising principally the nature of the study, the researcher's role and acquired information, concerns of anonymity and confidentiality.

Following advice from my supervisors and other experts, my research method is as follows: first I made known the research aim, objectives, and myself to the participants. In favor of ethical reasons I took on the role of an overt, obtrusive researcher (Noaks & Wincup, 2004; Zaitch et al. 2010). I introduced myself and I made it clear that the purpose of this study was to provide insight into the nature of Nigerian cocaine trafficking and its consequences. I sought to uncover the causes that could push some individuals into the world of cocaine trafficking. Participants were informed that the research was not solely focused on the

particular individual, but rather it was extensive, ranging across disciplines, attempting to address the many factors of a problem that costs Nigeria a great deal economically, politically, and socially. I mentioned to participants that they would remain anonymous and that information gathered would solely be used for academic purposes. This addresses the crucial ethical issue of guaranteeing the anonymity and confidentiality of information shared by respondents⁸. This is dissimilar to journalists; academics maintain their sources anonymous.

However, introducing myself as a researcher was sometimes not done by me directly. At times, others introduced me as such because it would have interfered with on-going interactions and render observing them impossible. Instead respondents, friends, and contacts introduced me as a student conducting field research and who needed information. It was also emphasized repeatedly that real names would not be mentioned. Sometimes if they did not, I introduced myself as a researcher when the opportunity turned up. As such, confidentiality was guaranteed during all conversations and most informants in this research are anonymous.

As part of this, the numerous reasons why Nigerians feel disappointed by their so-called leaders was discussed, as was the hypocrisy of western politics; both of these more general discussions allowed the various players to talk freely and openly about cocaine trafficking, wherever and whenever they did not feel threatened by the presence of law enforcement agents. Interestingly, the cocaine business is not discussed or carried out in secluded, murky underworlds. They talked about it in restaurants, bars, marketplaces, social gatherings, buses, parties, and churches. Cocaine mules sit next to other voyagers, and cocaine cargos are loaded, transported, and stored by legal agents and businesses, and bank and remittance bureaus handle its financial proceedings. Pastors pray for cocaine traffickers deals to work out well and couriers prior to departure.

People talked about every aspect, from buying, packaging, transportation, clearing, and distributing narcotics, depending on the environment and their personal experiences. Several scholars inquire why drug traffickers talk about their illicit activities. I found that Nigerian traffickers had multiple and perplexing reasons for sharing their knowledge about their activities with me. Some talked because they were angry about deals that did not work. Others talked because they were disappointed that they had been sent to prison and about dreams that were not realized. Many talked about their bitterness following maltreatments or being cheated by co-partners as well as their mistrust of friends and acquaintances. Yet some talked to me because they considered me a friend, or because they wanted assist me on hearing that I was doing my 'doctoral' in criminology. Even though most did not attend university, their desire was for their children to be not only educated but to have good education.

They admired that I lived in several cultures in Africa, South East Asia, and Europe, and could speak some international languages including Italian, Dutch, Portuguses/Creools, and French. These are languages I acquired during international engagement as Agricultural engineer with Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO)-United Nations. They talked because we could speak together in Igbo, Pidgin, English, and many other languages, because Nigerians are found everywhere. Surprisingly, a number of them talk because they want to attract new contacts by claiming that they know a lot about cocaine trafficking, and several talked and even boasted their success in the business.

Using both justification and neutralization techniques, most Nigerians in various deviant activities like cocaine trafficking and human trafficking see themselves as pushed into it due to the crime of the power in the country. They pointed to the activities of the Nigerian elite who are embezzling the nation's wealth with their foreign associates in most western countries as one reason it was easy to comfortably discuss the cocaine trafficking

⁸ See for instance O'Gorman and van der Laenen (2010), Creswell (2007), Fontana and Frey (2000).

phenomenon. In these situations, the researcher's knowledge of and experience in foreign countries helped in opening conversation among traffickers.

Fieldwork had its challenges as well. In a number of circumstances my official request for permission to entry fieldwork was refused, meaning they denied me admittance to their activities. For instance, access to interview some Nigerian inmates incarcerated in Chinese prisons was refused. Securing interview with Nigerian Embassy official was problematic in Hong Kong, because they were apprehensive about negative publicity, should the research results be made public. Nevertheless, these experiences were unique as I mostly encountered cooperation during fieldwork. Accordingly, every variety of activities and groups were amply reachable.

1.3.5 Confronting challenges and constraints to validity

Gaining trust and handling distrust

Common to all studies, my fieldwork also posed several barriers. Whereas participant observations and interviews were more exciting to implement than the gathering of secondary data, it also had its challenges. I had to listen to boasting, exaggeration, and lies: that this or that guy spent a two thousand dollars per night buying drinks for friends or made millions of naira or several hundred thousand dollars in one cocaine deal. Given that I was interested in facts and wide-ranging trends, I strived to observe a lot, to inquire face-to-face with others (cross-checking whenever possible) and to contrast the stories with information I gathered from close recluses. Also a common practical limitation was that Nigerian informants and interviewees hardly came to appointments timely; they came and went at will. Nonetheless, inherent to the qualitative approaches of this work are matters including trust, socially pleasing information and the unrealistic presentation of self, secretiveness and unwillingness to participate. Every of these topics could influence the validity of the information.

I made it explicitly clear to the respondents that I was interested in interviewing and chatting with direct and indirect participants of the Nigerian cocaine traffickers. At a cursory glance, introducing myself in this manner could be seen as a case of academic self-destruction because I had to mingle with Nigerian cocaine traffickers, people who sometimes feel they are scapegoats and might become more distrustful in response to such an introduction (Babbie, 2001, p. 291). However, elucidating my research equally as one wanting to dig into the root causes of the phenomenon that continues to claim many lives and its implications to Nigerians were good points that opened conversation. Conveying this and accepting invitations to socializing with respondents recalls a certain level of adaptation to the social environment (Zaitch et al. 2010).

On the one hand, the majority of the respondents opened up by first acknowledging governments' othering them as greedy and disgraceful cocaine traffickers. Accusing the stakeholders of the Nigerian state as the real criminals embezzling Nigeria's wealth and pushing them into cocaine trafficking. Others respondents remained skeptical because of previous exposures of cocaine traffickers by undercover journalists.

All through my fieldwork the issue of distrust manifested itself in diverse ways, which I dealt with in various manners. Mostly distrust arose when the Nigerian traffickers did not know me well. I heard rumors that people suspected I was working for the police and Intelligence Service, which scared them from opening up to me. Especially with individuals that I had first met, conversation remained somewhat shallow—meaning that acquiring information from interviewees concerns about gaining trust remains central. Moreover trust shows its importance in the absence of observation as an option. Trust makes a difference linking having a respondent or no valuable information at all. The work of experts has shown the various ways through which researchers could win trust. These includes patience,

networking, showing honest interest, and by giving something in return (for details see Noaks & Wincup, 2004, pp. 62–63).

Patience principally served me in observations as well as a strategic move to getting interviewees. For instance I delayed asking some Nigerian cocaine traffickers to grant me interviews pending when we knew each other better. New to a certain environment and context, I refrain from starting by posing difficult inquiries (Oberhuber & Krzyzanowski, 2008, p. 188).

Networking strategy was very instrumental to increase trust. Over the years I built positive contacts with individuals from various ethnic groups in Nigeria and from various races in different countries. For example, having helpful contacts provided me access to participate in a closed-door meeting of an important organization that worked for convicted Nigerian traffickers and to conferences in Brazil. Such was also the case in Hong Kong where I met with a group of Asylum seekers. These contacts contributed to other respondents to gain trust and open up to me.

Showing honest interest, transparency and willingness to protect and handle acquired information cautiously, instigated trust from informants⁹. For instance, I was confronted once after forgetting to obtain permission ahead of time. I apologized for not having done it beforehand, and explained that otherwise I would have forgotten. Showing what I had noted was enough to regain the respondent's trust. I offered interviewees the option go through what I noted or listen back his/her recorded conversation. This assisted to confirm that I wrote what they told me or that I did not record any material not explicitly offered by the informant. Most of the time they opted to stop reading or listening. This option created a more agreeable environment, kindness, and trust to open up more. This implies that more transparency could take away doubts and unrest and create trust, and also inclusion (Boone, van de Bunt & Siegel, 2014). This process improved data collection and reassessment of previously collected information. Furthermore I maintain contact with a number of respondents leading to a firmer establishment of trust. This even caused some respondents to call me to relay important updates.

Last, but not least, responding to all inquiries from interviewees fostered building trust. For instance most wanted to reconfirm what they heard about Amsterdam concerning drug tolerance, jail conditions or Dutch football. A few wealthy individuals asked information about university possibility for their children in the Netherlands.

Internal validity

Partaking in interviews and trust solemnly does not amply assure high quality data. Because information collected could be gravely inconsistent if respondents provide a socially desirable response or an idealistic representation to the researcher. Among the many explanations in this area already mentioned, respondents could regard me as undercover agent working for the police, therefore choosing not to unveil their genuine views. For this reason, they were enticed to merely declare what they thought I wanted or needed to hear (Bailey, 1994; Grix, 2001). Respondents exaggerated their stories at times. In addition, participants might have opted to keep secrets for opportunist motives, like not disclosing certain *modus operandi* or involvement in the illicit cocaine trafficking to keep out of the sight of the criminal justice system.

However impediments to validity can be dealt with in many ways by first and foremost not regarding the respondents' reports at face value. Meaning it is essential to remain critical over their testimonials through contrasting acquired information from objective facts from similar research works and by evaluating attitudes with actual behavior.

⁹ See Hamm (2005a, pp. 242–243); Siegel (2011, 2012).

Besides, implementing extensive and manifold conversations assisted to explore deeper and get to actual opinions. Implying that in the right environment, with heartfelt interest and unbiased approach demanded by academic research, Nigerian cocaine traffickers talked openly about their activities and how, when, where, and with whom they do it. Instrumental in this area is that triangulation of the interviews, observation and analysis equally assisted to foster the validity (Maesschalk, 2010; King, Keohane, & Verba, 1994).

Each method has its benefits. For instance, my years of observations experience made contradictions evident between behavior and words. Recognizing this dissonance entails using the three methods deployed in this fieldwork to shrink restrictions each posed singularly. Hence triangulating acquired information by viewing them in the broader context of the debate contributed to responding the research inquires.

External validity

Inherent to ethnographic qualitative study remains rejection for generalizations outside the research population. Implying here that the results merely allow for conclusions regarding the role of Nigerians in the global cocaine trafficking. I believe that these two cases are beneficial cases to research. I have chosen a source country and an end country. Analyzing the situations in Nigeria, Brazil and China give us a very good understanding of Nigerians involvement in the whole chain. I did not choose just one part of the chain, but all states. It is representative for the different states in the international cocaine business. Findings of this work are relevant cases that tell us a lot about other possible cases. This evokes the concept of ‘thick description’ of the research material that enhances comparison to parallel cases in other places. Varied nations have their particularities, and perhaps Nigerians in other countries have a different position. Exemplary cases for others could be transferable to other communities. Transferability of the conclusion could also follow from theoretical generalizations. The nature of Nigerian international cocaine trafficking endeavors to recontextualize traditional criminological, sociological, and social-psychological theories on the basis of its results. Consequently, it adds to the development of theory that may perhaps have validity in other cases¹⁰.

1.3.6 Fieldwork human factors

Qualitative researchers are subjected to important roles played of human factors. Personality and background could impact the researchers’ manner of perceiving the world and realities. Thereby influencing his/her ways of interpreting data and affecting the reliability of acquired information (see Abell & Myers, 2008, p. 157; Oberhuber & Krzyzanowski, 2008, p. 197). This evokes the essentiality for a researcher to distinguish and confront not only one’s own biased tendencies like prejudices and emotions, but also be set to handle narrow-mindedness and emotions of the respondents. Researchers’ nonaligned position between the insider and outsider perspectives and matters that concerns dealing with personal relations and the expectations of respondents.

Reliability: Insider versus outsider perspective

As a Nigerian native researching the new trend illicit cocaine trafficking, I needed to be aware of my position toward the subject matter I was studying. A situation cited between two ends of a spectrum: on one end that of the total outsider, and on the other end that of the group member or insider. Outsiders face the risk that they may fail to understand the insider perspective, either because they hold a conscious or unconscious bias against the reality of the

¹⁰ See especially Zaitch et al. (2010), LeComte and Goetz (1982, pp. 37–40), Denzin (1970).

insiders or because they lack a shared language and shared symbols, which renders them incapable of understanding. This means that the collective construction of criminal pleasure and excitement that opens Nigerian cocaine traffickers experiences to a method of criminological *verstehen*, to understand in a deep way, closes them to some extent as well for a number of reasons that includes: First, the different positions in structures of social class, gender, age, ethnicity, and often holding a different position than those examined. Second, because of these differences in identity, researchers may not succeed or those that do achieve partial success no matter how attentively they go about the process. Third, since the meaning and appeal of these criminal experiences reflects not only sub-cultural dynamics but also larger structures and one's location within those subcultures, researcher in criminal events may neither fully experience nor understand the seduction found there by others who lead different lives (Ferrell, 2005).

On the other hand, the position of insiders can threaten the reliability of findings because it could constitute the researcher's submersion in the dangers of criminality. Taken both inside the setting and inside the emotions and experiences that animates it. Also as field researcher immersed in edgework of Nigerian cocaine trafficking, I may be in the net of police surveillance or face arrest by legal authorities for whom this type of research represents case of criminal misconduct or sympathy for the devil—the risk of redefinition by crime control agents as criminal accomplice or accessory (Leo, 1995; Marquart, 1986). This evokes that losing their distance from the group studied researchers becomes assimilated and run the risk of 'going native.' Consequently, a blind spot for what they come to see as self-evident practices or beliefs could develop. Alternatively, they may refrain from reporting certain findings, for example, out of fear of retaliation or because of conflicting interests (see Zaitch et al., 2010; Geelhoed, 2011).

All through my research, I have strived to advance an unbiased balance between the insider and outsider approach. Firstly, harking back to myself of the difference between 'understanding' and 'accepting' the respondents' truth remained crucial achieving insider perspective. This mechanism assisted to lessen the predisposition to distance myself from respondents' views, fostering a candid interest.

Also my cultural capital with language assisted me to open up the insider perspective by interacting with respondents. I followed discussions and chatted with people in different languages and regularly asked questions to clarify uncertainties and comprehend nuances in Nigeria cocaine traffickers' way of reasoning, expression, and view of the world. I shared a common background and that facilitated understanding. Moreover, right from the onset of this research, my supervisors went through my transcripts and gave suggestions to strengthen this work's internal reliability.

Handling expectations from respondents

In the course of this fieldwork, building relationships with direct and indirect respondents resulted in certain hopes and expectations from myself, as a researcher. These anticipations and hopes could lead to tense situations. Despite trying to stay as close as possible to the traffickers in order to get needed information, it was also necessary to prevent the possibility of witnessing or engaging in activities related to cocaine trafficking. As such, roles and settings were chosen that allowed only for the mingling and talking with traffickers, and would not compromise the researcher's ethics. Proposals of all sorts to get involved in trafficking were refused. I avoided this 'going native' by making it explicit that I should remain peripheral, far from cocaine packs, money, and dangerous details. I repeatedly said this to informants and those cases at interviews with people I knew or that knew me. Several informants and contacts in Nigeria, the Netherlands, Brazil, Malaysia, Hong Kong, and Mainland China saw me as a possible source of money. Occasionally, they demanded money

in exchange for connections and contacts. It was sometimes necessary to buy them food, soft drinks, alcohol, and even pay for discothèques; it was also sometimes necessary to buy some contacts ‘gifts’ such as perfumes, telephone airtime, or cash deposited for incarcerated inmate suffering hunger, all in exchange for their observations.

Registration of fieldwork information

For this research I used various methods for note taking during the interviews and observations. Daily-recorded notes of observations, interviews, experiences were taken, and I reminded myself constantly to seek permission ahead of time. However, in some sensitive settings I refrained from attaining it, as it could compromise the research. One instance was during an in-depth conversation with Nigerian homeless drug-addict in *Cracolândia*, São Paulo in which other drug-addicts might have attacked me thinking I was an undercover police officer. Otherwise throughout this research, quotations of recorded conversations are literally reproduced, and in some cases, translations are included. As averred by Goffman (2001), “[...] about notetaking, obviously you find corners in the day when you can take notes. And every night you should type up your fieldnotes. [And] you have to do it every night because you have too much work to do and you’ll begin to forget. If you put your notebook on a large piece of paper, people won’t see your notebook. It’s masked. They won’t be disturbed by it” (pp. 157-158). Furthermore, what is emphasized remains that accurate data registration is essential¹¹.

Furthermore, unless consent was given I never made use of a tape recorder to record conversations, nor openly wrote notes during encounters. Key meetings and observations were reconstructed—either voice recorded or written in small notebooks—immediately afterwards. In some settings, when I wanted to stay low profile I desisted from asking questions. Right after I left, regularly on the way home in bus or train, I made notes or tape-recorded the events, recalling the actions chronologically and noting down all that I could remember. I maintained a daily diary for more general observations and made a detailed report of these notes within one or two days. Throughout this research, quotations of recorded conversations included are literally reproduced, and in some cases, translations are included. Where recording was not possible, the story has been reconstructed to provide as much additional detail as possible (Yin, 2002).

1.3.7 Security and challenges

Nigeria’s negative image abroad creates the conjecture of a hazardous area for criminological researchers. The country evokes deviancy of all sorts, insecurity and violence. Differing conventional profess of ‘jailhouse’ criminologists, access was not the most difficult facet of my fieldwork. Having refrained from participating in core activities related to day trafficking, I assumed peripheral roles (Adler & Adler, 1987, p. 36) that only permitted me to mingle and talk with Nigerian cocaine traffickers and their social place evading direct contact with operational illicit plans. Experts have highlighted the personal risks involved in dangerous fieldworks¹².

While I took several basic security measures, I did not feel I was in danger, threatened, blackmailed, or injured in any way. Also I had to confront ethical issues. With this type of research, I comprehended that tension can exist between the necessity to protect research population and (from retribution, denouncement or privacy invasion), and the need to inform about harmful or criminal offenses (to other informants or law enforcement agents) I encountered along the line. In this regard, protecting my informants and contacts was a

¹¹ See for instance Zaitch et al., (2010, pp. 309–311); Oberhuber and Krzyzanowski (2008, pp. 189–190)

¹² Good examples in this area include Williams, Dunlap, Johnson and Hamid (1992); Ferrell, Hamm, Adler and Adler (1998).

priority. The researcher's personal opinion was not expressed, even if there was concern about lies, gossip, defamation, or overstatements. Neither did I consider drug trafficking offenses, illegal residence or unverified gossip of any kind as ample reason to breach the neutrality pledged to informant. I have tried to restrict potential negative consequences for my informants in several ways.

I did this by discussing the topic with them to know and to inform them about limitations and problems. I avoided gossiping and leaking information, and I respected all security regulations put forward by informants during this work. I already altered all real names in my fieldwork write-ups, and for the published version too. I changed names in most places to make it unrecognizable. I did not do undercover research. I told people that I was doing research. I made clear that this study is not intended to stigmatize Nigerian communities. On the contrary, I believe that there are some problems in it. These problems are as a result of some institutional and political problems, but I want to show the limitation of these problems.

This work should not be read to blame the traffickers. It is meant to show that there are some political and institutional problems in Nigeria that have produced the phenomenon. The traffickers say it themselves that Nigeria has failed its people. This is my way to contribute to initiating discussions on a society in search of respect, good governance and development. There is lack of opportunities in the country, many Nigerians are serving lengthy years of imprisonment and several face execution for drug trafficking globally. I explained to them about my interviews with Nigerian inmates in different countries. For instance, the 73 year-old woman who died in a Brazilian prison and the 40 year-old man who faced execution in Malaysia, all because of drug trafficking. As I was narrating the inmates' misery and messages, some traffickers started crying, which is the problem I'm attempting to explore. It is one of the high costs of drug trafficking. It would help them rethink participation in drug trafficking.

In all, Nigerian drug traffickers keep fewer secrets than they pretend to in their activities that involve to a large extent of manipulation, public relation, and impression management. During this process, information from various brokers, or 'strikers' and couriers was counter-checked, where possible.

Finally, not all stories from the fieldwork have been presented in this work. Some accounts were not complete and as such they have served only as verifying background data. Instead, this study has only featured a few key informants, since their in-depth stories in their real context exemplify the individual experiences and influencing factors of so many of the Nigerian traffickers. Analysis of these observations, interviews, and experiences are the basis for the work found in Chapters 2 through 9.

1.4 Structure of thesis

The purpose of this research is that in the last decade Nigeria and Nigerians have played a role in the international cocaine trafficking in two directions: First, Nigeria has not only become a transit nation, but also it has turned out to be a consuming country. Second, Nigerians are all over the world; they have become more involved in international trade than before outside Nigeria. Distributing cocaine to provide the markets in Nigeria and also internationally. Nigeria turned into a consuming country because Nigerians became actors as brokers of Latin American cocaine, and equally due to the presence of cocaine in Nigeria. The geographical location of Nigeria, transversely the Atlantic Ocean, encouraged easy transportation from South America into the country. Nigeria's historical connection with Brazil, through the slave trade, helped to consolidate Nigerian's participation in the international cocaine trade. In all,

Nigeria became a consuming country because of the involvement of Nigerians in the international trade, and international trade facilitates the illicit cocaine trade.

In addition to the modus operandi of Nigerians in the cocaine business, I research into the backgrounds and their motivations, the why questions: Why Nigeria? What makes them successful? Nigerians are relatively successful in the international cocaine trade, as they are involved and persist in it. If they are not successful, they could have withdrawn. Brazil and China are two countries where Nigerians traffickers are prominent. On the one hand, Brazil is very important because it is the exporter number 1 of cocaine at this moment (UNODC, 2013). Whereas they do not produce, cocaine is moved in from all the 3 main producers Bolivia, Peru, and Colombia, which Brazil exports it to the world. On the other hand, the centrality of China is that in the recent times, Nigerian traders were sought out by their Chinese business partners to come to China for long-term business relationships. However, luring in Nigerian traders, China equally attracted the new trend illicit cocaine traffickers. Because the illegal trade flows with the legal, Nigerian traffickers discovered that there is a new market and it is growing. China provides good possibilities, for Nigerian traffickers in continuous search of new markets and novel clients.

The theoretical framework of this thesis is that there is a vicious circle where the demand creates the glamorizing of cocaine and the supply increases the demand in Nigeria. A circularity because Nigerians go outside in order to supply the cocaine markets, and that the Nigerian market is growing because of Nigerians going outside. I choose this subject because of the growing risk for the society in Nigeria. It is not only the concern of Nigeria becoming a consuming country and that many Nigerians are serving lengthy jail sentences or executed in various countries; but also the issue of narco-state, at the structural level and organized crime from above. The whole international community, observers and law enforcement agents in various countries, point to Nigeria as a narco-state or to the Nigerian criminal ‘cocaine barons,’ ‘cocaine gangs’ and their worldwide Nigerian criminal networks (NDLEA, 2010; U.S. Department of State, 1998). It is the whole issue of stigmatization. Because Nigeria is seen as a narco-state, then Nigerians are considered as agents of this narco-state.

The involvement of Nigerian elite in organized crime, illicit drug trade, demonstrates also Nigeria’s inability to control it. For instance, the Nigerian army officer, Brigadier Benjamin Adekunle, popularly known as ‘the Black Scorpion’ and a hero of the Nigerian army during the Biafra war, was one of those inculpated as partner in international drug trafficking offense in 1974 (Ellis, 2009, p. 176). The implications of the Nigeria state under Babangida’s regime in the 1980s, or close others in drug trafficking and related crimes, accredited Nigeria as “the hub of African narcotics trafficking” (Ellis, 2009, p. 179; Labrousse, 2001; Klein, 1994).

In this context, development has given rise to organized crime from which the Nigerian global cocaine trafficking draws upon. Ebbe (2012, pp. 179-184) outlined the Nigerian organized crime’s criminal structure, which employs some basic principles and codes of the Italian mafia and American organized crime groups. A phenomenon embedded in political, economical, socio-cultural, and external forces that resulted in four principal types of organized crime syndicates in Nigeria: head of state/politicians organized crime, state governors/state ministers organized crime, federal government departments organized crime, and business organized crime. It consists of two or more persons who, with continuity of purpose, engage in committing various crimes including predatory crimes like embezzlement, theft, assault, as well as the supply of illegal goods and services such as vice, and loansharking. The illicit cocaine trafficking is no exception.

Having introduced my study, the methodology, and the main underpinning theoretical concepts in this chapter, subsequently the thesis is further portioned into three sections:

Section one, *Insight Naija* (Nigeria), will explain the situation in Nigeria the moment under the growing corruption and demand for drugs. We will start with Chapter 2, which zooms into the Nigerian ‘State Crisis’—the fostering of a cocaine culture. Following this, Chapter 3 will end this section by discussing the social organization of Nigerian cocaine trafficking, network and actors. It will focus on the cocaine business in Nigeria, the giant of Africa, elucidating its pioneer traffickers, consumption, types of traffickers and various participants in search of respect in the society. Whereas the new trend cocaine trade draws on this structured organized crime and endemic corruption in order to provide drugs in Nigeria; to supply other markets, the growing interconnectedness of states and societies and the progressive enmeshment of human communities with each other (Franko-Aas, 2007), play an important role.

Throughout the interviews, the possibility of travelling abroad was often cited as a reason for becoming a cocaine courier. Otherwise, some individuals borrow money to pay smugglers, risking their lives through the Sahara desert and the Atlantic Ocean in attempt to enter Europe, as indicated by UNODC (2013). Wishful thinking for a multicultural society exists as newcomers are faced with legal status issues, complicated integration processes and financial problems. Due to the negative effects of some specific governmental policies that put significant restrictions on immigrants, many become marginalized and are passively pushed into illegal activities as a means of survival (Bovenkerk & Yesilgoz, 2004). Faced with survival issues in the new country and pushed into debt in Nigeria, for some, cocaine trafficking becomes attractive option that delivers quick monetary rewards. Maintaining networks of family, friends, and acquaintances that can assist them in making connections to help pay off debt or to create wealth. Resorting to the ‘reverse social capital’ that benefits only those well connected, a structure that forms the basis of Nigerian society, whereby wealth by any means necessary is accepted ‘rule’. While there is no way to track how many Nigerians live abroad, and how many are actually trafficking cocaine, the UNODC Individual Drug Seizures records arrests of Nigerian nationals have occurred in at least 45 countries since 2000 (see UNODC, 2013, p. 15; UNODC, 2008, p. 24).

As Nigerians are becoming more and more active internationally, they underline not only the notion of contemporary processes of globalization of the drug trade but also the concept that crime results equally from direct or indirect dependency and exploitation by core rich countries of poor peripheral countries. Bovin’s (2010) views that the world economic systems with respect to cocaine trafficking highlight an organized trade that inextricably links the developed and underdeveloped countries. Where there is a fundamental disagreement about what is right as well as a connection to the global market, as Gilman et al. ’s (2011) deviant globalization entrepreneurs, Nigerian cocaine traffickers also arise to meet the unfulfilled demand. There is enormous demand of cocaine in Nigeria. This demands for drugs are impossible without the supply and that we will see in next section.

Section two, *Brazil Connection*, will start with Chapter 4 by highlighting the historical background—Nigerian cocaine traffickers in São Paulo, Brazil, the giant of South America. This chapter seeks to answer questions frequently posed by scholars such as: why Brazil? And, what is the relationship between Brazil and Nigeria? Next, Chapter 5 will discuss the Brazilian reaction to the new trend, providing insight into the criminal justice response to the phenomenon. This section ends with Chapter 6 focusing ahead on the discursive reaction from the target group with response from inside—the Nigerians themselves.

However, for the new trend traffickers it is not only Brazil. Brazil is traditional but that is not enough as globalization allows going to other countries. How this market is expanding, we will see in the subsequent section. Meaning that in order to increase the supply, recalling Galeotti (2012), and Paoli, Greenfield, and Reuter’s (2009) notions of globalization of crime and drug trafficking, Nigerians exploited new horizons and possibilities, even going to China.

Section three, Things happening in China, discusses the nature of the Nigerian involvement in the cocaine business in the second world largest economy and the giant of Asia. Chapter 7 will discuss following the goods, Nigerian traffickers' novel environment. It will provide insight into the influx of Nigerian traffickers in Guangzhou and their enthusiasm. Subsequently, the next chapter will draw attention to Guangzhou and the Chinese reaction to the attitude of the new comers. This chapter will focus on the criminal justice system's restrictive policy measures and combat, in reaction to the challenges posed by the Nigerian international cocaine traffickers. Chapter 9 will focus on redrawing the line: Nigerian community's retort to the phenomenon.

Chapter 10 will end this work by attempting to pull together the conclusions of this study, emphasizing the multifaceted nature of the Nigerian cocaine business—its ideologies, its business and the larger consequences—and the short- and long-term challenges that Nigeria and the world face. Finally, it offers suggestions and possibilities for a new mindset.

Section 1

Insight *Naija* (Nigeria)

Chapter 2

The Nigerian ‘State Crisis’: The fostering of crime and a cocaine culture

“Nigeria is without any shadow of doubt one of the most corrupt nations in the world ... with a fairly timid manifestation in the 1960s, corruption has grown bold and ravenous as, with each succeeding regime, our public servants have become more reckless and blatant ... we have sunk more and more deep into the quagmire we have been “blessed” with a succession of leaders who are said to possess impeccable personal integrity but unfortunately are surrounded by sharks and crooks. I do confess to some personal difficulty in even beginning to visualize genuine integrity in that kind of fix; for it has always seemed to me that the test of integrity is its blunt refusal to be compromised”
(Achebe, 1983, p. 42).

2.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on the Nigerian ‘state crisis,’ contextualizing historical and contemporary developments in Nigeria, which has allowed for the contemporary criminogenic environment that fosters deviancy—from which the new trend international illicit cocaine trafficking emerged. Despite its vast natural resources including oil and gas, the Nigerian government has failed to remedy the crushing poverty that affects about 70 percent of its population (CIA, 2014).

The country is a democracy in transition and is besieged by a number of political and socio-economical problems, which observers such as Azaiki (2003) and Moro (2008) point to as a major cause of crime. Ruggeiro (1996, p. 30) averred that geo-political factors are crucial for a group or region to succeed in illicit activities, less as social problems (backwardness, poverty, wars) than in terms of social advantages (good natural resources, modern economic infrastructures, know-how, good connections, etc.). Demographically, the large population (most of whom live in poverty), as well as the various ethnic groups and their distrust of one another also contribute to creating a criminogenic environment. Historically, critics point to Nigeria’s history, such as the impact of colonization in fostering distrust and fragmentation, and political instability and failed leadership as causes. In particular, they reference the impact of the Nigerian civil war (1966–1970) and the mismanaged oil boom in the 1970s.

Criminogenic experts identify organized crime in Nigeria, from which the Nigerian international illicit cocaine trafficking emerged. Ebbe (2003, 2012) argued that the government of Nigeria could be defined as a ‘predatory state,’ where the head of state rules and decrees much like the head of an organized crime ‘family,’ using criminal individuals and syndicates to loot his country’s treasury (Ebbe, 2003, p. 137). A circumstance that not only nourishes the international cocaine trafficking but also renders control virtually impossible in Nigeria.

Nigerian organized crime has come to symbolize the ‘soft state’ or ‘weak state,’ endemic corruption, and celebration of criminality among the key factors underpinning the new trend illicit cocaine trade. Each of the principal features will be explored in this chapter in order to better understand the internal causes of Nigeria’s role in international cocaine trafficking. Finally, each of these factors will be discussed in the context of ‘reverse’ social capital, wherein the theory of beneficial connections between social networks and communities is driven not by a code of conduct that positively benefits a community and society through education, democracy and social responsibility, but rather through a system which elevates those who perform illegal acts to positions of authority and power in Nigeria.

In all, this chapter will discuss permeable and ineffectual borders control, historical influences, understanding crime in the ‘soft state’ or ‘weak state’ Nigeria, lack of good governance, the effects of poverty and undiversified economy, unemployed and youths’ nightmare, stumpy law observation and ‘the Nigerian Dream’ and ‘Chop money’ syndrome: corruption structurally underpinned in a globalized world.

2.2 Permeable and ineffectual border control

Nigeria has exhibited an ineffectiveness to manage its extensive border areas that covers a total area of 923,768 square km, of which 13,000 km is water and 910,768 square km is land (CIA, 2014). This has fostered crime because several ungovernable space and internal lawlessness have sprung up, as demonstrated by Boko Haram in the North and Niger delta insurgences in the south of the country. Membership to the Economic Community of West African States offers free movement of people and goods due to loose control system. It suggests that West African countries have permeable borders due to traditional trading practices as well as weak border-control system (Cockaye & Williams, 2009). Widespread border crossing arising from ethnic and religious proximity with neighboring nations is a usual encounter, which the Nigeria authorities are unable to control (see Olawale & Hassan, 2011).

Yet vast and porous borders provide an ideal environment for drug trafficking. For instance, Lagos’s Murtala Muhammed International Airport (MMIA) airport is ranked number 86 in the world (CIA, 2014). On average, around 6,000 passengers travel through it daily and over 90 percent of drug suspects arrested at the airports were found to have ingested illicit drugs (see NDLEA Report, 2008). Nigeria boasts of hundreds of miles of unpatrolled coastal lines vastly lingering from the high sea to the delta communities, featuring 3,000 riverine waterways of the country. There are veiled bays, islands and peaty swamps in these areas too numerous to reach and awkward to guard. In all, Nigeria’s porous borders are linked to its state crisis because budget for acquiring equipment and training personnel is embezzled by unscrupulous public officers (Udama, 2013). Coupled with the geographical locations of the country and the sub region, it offers a comparative advantage for West African and South American drug traffickers (NDLEA, 2012; UNODC, 2013).

In addition to porous borders several other features foster the upsurge of the new trend illicit cocaine trafficking in Nigeria’s past.

2.3 Historical influences

The Nigerian ‘state crisis’ from which illegal economy and the new trend drug trade flourished is rooted in the European colonialism, driven by economic motives. Several works exists on the effects of colonialism.¹³ Though accredited with introduction of western education, religion and western style governance, colonialism laid the foundation for a weak state resulting in the present criminogenic environment in various ways.

First, it actively supported comprador classes¹⁴ to impose various systems of control for covert economic exploitation in Africa. Britain deployed direct and indirect rule, the French, Belgians, and Germans deployed assimilation, and the Dutch embraced rule by Apartheid (Biko, 2005). By definition, colonial rule tended to be unaccountable to Africans and overly reliant on the military to suppress dissent (World Bank, 2000, p. 51). Colonized countries were systematically stripped of their natural resources, with few benefits accruing to the local population (Wannenburg, 2005). In this regard, colonialism evokes a goal-driven,

¹³ See for instance Rodney (2012), Gilbert and Reynolds (2011), Biko (2003), Ebbe (2000).

¹⁴ Compradors are natives of a colonized country who act as the agents of the colonizing actors (Biko, 2005).

instrumentally cogent character of organizational deviance where the goal, means, and control to commit are inseparable. I explain that states and corporations act together in a criminal manner on interactional, organizational and institutional levels. In Kauzlarich and Kramer's organizational theories with those of the political economy and organizational crime, criminal behavior at the organizational level results from a coincidence of pressure of goal attainment, availability and perceived attractiveness of illegitimate means, and an absence of or weakness of social control mechanisms (1998, p. 148).

Second, British indirect rule grouped together more than 250 different ethno-linguistic tribes in Nigeria without considering the pre-existing cultural differences. Metz (1992) averred that while in the north, the system benefited the colonists due to the pre-existing centralized Islamic system of governance and Sharia Law; in the southeast it was inadequate because of the absence of a centralized system and governance by elders. Afigbo (1972) pointed out that disrupting this existing coherent system caused widespread social and political disorder, fostering erosion of informal social control system, because Nigerians saw the colonialists as illegal occupiers and exploiters.

Third, it instituted weak governance as aftermath, which cemented the divisiveness underpinning the Nigerian state crisis. Wole Soyinka expressed in his 2006 memoir, *You Must Set Forth at Dawn*, that the signs of independence were hopeless from the beginning:

“The 1959 elections that led to the First Republic of Nigeria were manipulated by the British, with consequences that would afflict Nigerian politics for years to come. The elections that placed a government in power at the center were rigged — by the British! ... On instruction from the British Home Office, even the Nigerian census was falsified, giving an artificial majority to the North, which was largely feudalist by tradition and conservative in political outlook... Specific instructions were issued... The final results of the election to the federal legislature must be manipulated, where necessary, in favor of the political conservatives” (Soyinka, 2006, p. 54).

In a society besieged by neo-colonial divide and rule strategy, clientelism and patrimonialism became pre-eminent. Weber (1978) averred that patrimonial authority is exercised not through impersonal rules but through personal ties between rulers and their subordinates. Official duties are defined not by rules but by personal loyalties. Clientelism can thrive in conjunction with modern, bureaucratic government. Law and bureaucracy provide the framework within which patrons can offer to advance their clients' interest by exercising discretion (or influencing its exercise or by 'bending' the rules) (Green & Ward, 2004).

The result is the culture of election manipulations in Nigeria, riven by deep internal cleavages centered upon ethnic, religious, linguistic, or regional division, which are overlaid by extremes of wealth and poverty. Under such conditions it is extremely difficult, if not impossible, for an overall consensus—in the sense of basic agreements on rules of the political game—to emerge. An atmosphere of acute distrust prevails; politics becomes a ruthless zero-sum contest in which contending parties strive not simply to stay on top but to eliminate their opponent altogether. Under such circumstance it is easy to appreciate the immense significance that will be attached to building up and maintaining the cohesion of clientele networks (Theobald, 1990, pp. 93–4). Azaiki's (2003) work captured the historical, socio-political and economic features linking Britain and its ally's indirect control over Nigeria, which contributed to the Nigeria state crisis. In a situation where crude oil was first exported in 1956 (Ellis, 2007)—well before the country's independence—imperialism continues because members of the capitalist class constituted a 'ruling class,' and through their political representatives, controlled the state (Simpson, 2000, p. 64), its dangerous effects notwithstanding.

2.3.1 Effects of war

Furthermore, the contemporary criminogenic situation arising from the Nigerian state crisis is also linked to the negative effects of wars. During the Cold War, Africa became an ideological and strategic battleground where ‘trusted allies’ received foreign assistance regardless of their record on governance and development (World Bank, 2000). For instance, Nigeria aligned with the West, yet state power was effectively personalized, and nascent ethnic conflict emerged from the failure of governments in the sub region to manage conflicts effectively and to distribute national resources equitably (Wannenburg, 2005). Conflicts impose enormous costs including crime. The Biafra Civil War (1967–1970) resulted in between one to three million casualties, economic disaster, marginalization of Igbo, and alienation from the institutions of governance (Achebe, 2012; Ebbe, 2010; Metz, 1992).

Many Nigerian cocaine traffickers point to the negative effects of the war frustrated them into the illicit trade. In this area, Hobbesian war primarily arises not because material resources are scarce, nor because humans ruthlessly seek survival before all else, nor because we are naturally selfish, competitive, or aggressive brutes, but because we are fragile, fearful, impressionable, and psychologically prickly creatures susceptible to ideological manipulations, whose anger can become irrationally inflamed by even trivial slights to our glory. Arash Abizadeh writes that the primary source of war, according to Hobbes, is disagreement, because we read into it the most inflammatory signs of contempt. Both cause and remedy are therefore primarily ideological: the Leviathan’s primary function is to settle the meaning of the most controversial words implicated in social life, minimize public disagreement, neutralize glory, magnify the fear of death, and root out subversive doctrines. Managing interstate conflict, in turn, requires not only coercive power, but also the soft power required to shape characters and defuse the effects of status competition (Abizadeh, 2011).

Contrary to popular belief, Africa’s conflicts do not stem from ethnic diversity. Rather, in a pattern found around the world, conflicts are driven by poverty, underdevelopment, and lack of economic diversification, as well as by political systems that marginalize large parts of the population. Civil war lowers per capita GDP by 2.2 percentage points a year, and above all dynamic sectors that use or supply capital and transact intensively—manufacturing, construction, transport, distribution, finance—suffer disproportionate losses (Collier, Hoeffler, & Pattillo, 2001; Davies, 2010). Countries recuperating from civil war could experience high levels of crime as its after effects, as the Nigeria state crisis evidenced. Because civil wars directed largely at the civilian population, rupture the fabric of society and its institutions.

Research points to its intergenerational impact on crimes including drug abuse and the use by ex-combatants of the skills of war in criminal activity. For instance, homicide rates have been found to increase by 25 percent in the five years following a civil war (UNODC, 2005, p. 24). Also the relationship between Boko Haram terrorism war and drug trafficking is further evidence. The 2013 report from Inter-University Centre for Terrorism Studies in USA confirms that Boko Haram and Ansaru are funded by drug cartels in Latin America through their activities, which include illicit drug trafficking, kidnapping, and piracy¹⁵. In all, the undermined Nigeria state’s foundation and effects of war have contributed to enhancing contemporary criminogenic environment in Nigeria. Yet Nigeria got its independence more than half a century ago.

¹⁵ See, Falayi (2013, March 9) Latin American drug cartels fund Boko Haram, Ansaru – Report. Punchnew.com; See also Onuoha and Ezirim (2013, June 24) Terrorism and Transnational Organized Crime in West Africa.

2.4 Understanding crime: ‘Soft state/ weak state’ in Nigeria

Post-independence Nigeria typifies principally a soft or weak state, as it was besieged by military rule, dictatorships, corruption, and mismanagement in mid-1970s to 1990s, which proved disastrous from an economic and institution-building point of view, as evidenced in the country between 1983–98. Wannenburg (2005) pointed out that these circumstances have contributed institutional decay for criminal networks to find safe haven for crimes and the development of illicit economy in the country. If a soft state could be seen as one in which formal rules, laws, and procedures properly stated are applied arbitrarily and in a slack rather than a scrupulous, coherent and fair way; then Nigeria is included. There is barely any corollary for offenders mainly amid elites and their cronies regardless of the gravity of the offense. Only the powerless in the society suffer. This institutional flaw and cultural facets of its citizenry have contributed immensely to soft state Nigeria and in illegal drug trafficking in the country. Myrdal’s (1968) work ‘Asia Drama’ pointed out to the third world where breaking rules and flouting law is a cultural norm rather than exception. Likewise, Barbara (2002) observed that in such states government necessitates minimally of its citizens and even those obligations that exist are obligated ineffectually if at all, and there is a low level of social discipline among the citizens.

Yet, Rice and Stewart (2008) stated that weak states are those that are lacking the capacity and/or will to perform core functions of statehood effectively. Government in weak states does not control their territories, borders and institutions effectively. Similarly, Cockayne and Williams (2009) attribute the on-going exploitation of West African by foreign drug cartels in collaboration with established local networks to large extent as the result of relatively weak state capacity, weak-drug control, low law enforcement capacity and the ubiquity of corruption in the country which made it a soft target for drug trafficking organizations from Columbia, China, and Lebanon (Udama, 2013). While the activities of Nigerian international cocaine trafficking will be detailed in the chapters ahead, the root causes underscoring the criminogenic environment that fosters the phenomenon is the subject matter that this chapter seeks to divulge. Nigeria is a soft state because its operators have refused to implement underlined characteristics of a well-functioning state that includes the capacity to maintain nationwide peace, law, and order; secure individual liberty and equality before the law; workable checks and balances on the arbitrary exercise of power. With institutional infrastructure in order, the public sector’s role in financing and providing key social, infrastructure, dispute resolution, legal and administrative services, and sanctions regardless of the social and political status of perpetrators. Free press and public watchdog organizations guard against abuse of power and reinforce checks and balances and effective service delivery.¹⁶ All these peculiarities of Nigeria as a soft state further creates environment for deviant activities through the inability to implement transformative and inclusive governance.

2.4.1 Insufficient governance

As mentioned previously, a recurrent legacy of a soft or weak state includes insufficient governance, low law observation, and futile crime control. Achebe (1983, 2012) writes that the Nigerian people argued that the problem with Nigeria is the lack of good governance—namely, a failure of leadership. Since Nigeria got its independence, democracy and leadership has not fared well in terms of governance, consequently myriads of socio-economic, and political issues are the order of the day. There are an avalanche of problems such as ethnicity,

¹⁶ For details see, Can Africa Claim 21st Century? (World Bank, 2000, p. 50)

power struggle, citizenship, and indigeneship issues. In addition, these were exacerbated by imperative disquiet like weak and dysfunctional institutions, sectarian violence, entrenched corruption, terrorism, drug trafficking, and poverty pervading its entire landscape (Udama, 2013). This is due to the country's legacy of weak governance and economic mismanagement. Yet the government is rich, but the majority of people are poor and crime is high because of failure in governance, causing the Nigerian state crisis. How much the country has earned from the production and exportation of crude oil remains unknown. Otaha (2012) suggests its over 340 billion U.S. dollars (USD) in oil revenues since 1970s. Nigeria has earned over 250 billion dollars since 1958 according to Azaiki (2003). The World Bank (2000) averred that political and economic liberalization in the late 1980s and 1990s led to adopt structural adjustment policies opening up markets, encouraging deregulation and private initiative, and reducing state economic intervention.

Cooper pointed out in his article, *The new liberal imperialism* (2002, April 7), that postmodern imperialism could take the form of voluntary imperialism of the global economy. Usually operated by international multilateral conglomerate through financial institutions such as the IMF and the World Bank. These organizations offer help to governments longing to reintegrate back into the global economy and into the virtuous circle of investment and prosperity. Financial institutions make policy demands that in their view address the political and economic failures that have contributed to the original need for assistance. If states wish to benefit, they must open themselves up to the interference of international organizations and foreign states just as, for different reasons, the post-modern world has also opened itself up (Cooper, 2002)¹⁷. Often because of mismanagement the negative effects of these interference leads to more exploitation and economic impoverishment of the less connected.

In all, economic mismanagement, a failed structural adjustment program, and continuous political contestation marked the decline of the Nigerian state (Osaghae, 1998; Maier, 2002). For instance, in the period from 1970 to 1997, while countries like Benin, Burkina Faso, Gabon, The Gambia, and Mali recorded increases in their GDP, Nigeria, Senegal, Togo, Ivory Coast, Ghana and Sierra Leone experienced negative economic growth.¹⁸ Nigeria plunged in a low-level equilibrium of poor institutional capability and ineffective economic transformation that led to a situation of economy of plunder or of captured state, as shall be discussed ahead. It reveals how weak institutions and poor governance results in undiversified economy and exclusion of majority of Nigerians and paucity, as consequent of wealth distributed quickly and unevenly among political, military, and economic elites.

2.4.2 Undiversified economy

Another repercussions of soft or weak state and lack of good governance is reflected in the undiversified economy in Nigeria that not only underpins high poverty rate¹⁹ but also underdevelopment and crimes through heightened rate of unemployment, urbanization, and inequality. A principal reason for undiversified is the nation has depended too heavily on the capital-intensive oil sector,²⁰ which provides the 28% of GDP, 95% of foreign exchange earnings and about 65% of government revenues (Oduh, 2012). The revenue it generates when prices are high tends to cause "Dutch-Diseases," indicating the slump in other sectors of

¹⁷ In this area see also Shivji's (2009) *Accumulation in an African Periphery: A Theoretical Framework*; Moyo 's (2010) *Dead Aid: Why Aid is Not Working and How There is Another Way for Africa*.

¹⁸ For details see, *Can Africa Claim 21st Century?* (World Bank, 2000, p. 9)

¹⁹ In 2012 in Nigeria, the highest poverty rate was about 71.4% while the lowest was 49.8% (Oduh, 2012).

²⁰ Nigeria has 37.2 billion barrels of proven oil reserves (world number 10), the largest oil producer in Africa. Also it has 182 trillion cubic feet of proven natural gas reserves (world number 9), the world's fourth largest exporter of liquefied natural gas (Harrison: 02-13-2014).

the economy that accompanies influx of revenues from oil exports²¹. As one of its major effects, the extensive generated influxes of money from oil proceeds lean to encourage improvident spending. Soaring oil revenue raises exchange rates; promote adverse balance of payment, as the cost of imports rises (Auty, 2001).

In all, it has fostered unemployment, inequality, and underdevelopment in Nigeria through destroying incentive to risk investment in non-oil sectors, and disrupted competitiveness of important sectors like agriculture and manufacturing. It is certainly not a blessing to Nigeria. It is a curse, recalling a view that the resource-poor countries have outperformed the resource-rich countries compared by a considerable margin (Auty, 2001, p. 180). Similarly, Ross (2001, p. 101) explains that countries rich in natural resources, especially oil, grew slower than those without. This could be the case looking at countries like Angola and Colombia for instance, where there is lack of rule of law and good governance. In contrast, oil is a blessing to states with rule of law such as the United States, Norway, Canada, England, and Dubai.

Oil export dependency economy for development does not work for Nigeria. These effects evoke the concept of oil states being “rentier states” (Ross, 2001, p. 114). This view advocates that states reliant on external rent like oil, develop a different bond between government and their citizenry from those that rely primarily on taxation. Such states are less likely to be democratic than those that are tax reliant (Ayodele, 2004, p. 14). All too often, the economic benefits accrue to a small business or government elite as well as the agent of multinational companies while on array of burdens such as expropriation of land, disruption of traditional ways of life, environmental devastation, etc., are imposed on local communities unabated. Self-interest political elites connive with multinational companies who are the agents of IMF, World Bank and World Trade Organization to construct weak environmental regulations, preferential tax regimes, cheap, and legally unproductive labor. Otaha (2012) points out that these conditions allow companies to operate with disregard for the affected communities and to use destructive processes, toxic substance, and pollutants that are banned or severely restricted in developed countries. All these negative variables that accompanied the exploitation and sale of crude oil cumulatively represent ‘Dutch Disease.’ Implying as outlined in the literature of development economics, the impediments of oil revenue to economic growth and development of oil-dependent Nigeria. The huge financial proceeds resulting from oil tend to foster overzealous and irresponsible spending as evidence in the country.

In Nigeria, the undiversified economy has repeatedly been not only a source of conflict, war and international drug trafficking, as evidenced by Niger delta or Boko Haram terrorist insurgences, but the dearth to vital sectors that could generate jobs and development.

2.4.3 Frustrated unemployed

Another risk factor fostering deviant activity through undiversified economy is high rate of unemployment in Nigeria, which is estimated amid youths at about 41.6% by the National Bureau of Statistic (Alabi, 2014). One reason for this is the failure to develop the agricultural sector that engages over two thirds of the population, and generates about a third of the GDP. Most affected are the young people, where majority are under the age of 30. Nigeria’s youth unemployment rate of 30.7% in 2007 and 35.2% in 2010 is high compared to Sub Sahara

²¹ The oil dependence and the volatility of oil prices in international markets lead to significant problems in fiscal planning, reduce the quality of public spending, and lead to financial disaster when oil prices collapse. When oil prices fall, however, fiscal budgets go into deficit, countries start taking loans leveraged against their reserves, and march unimpeded into debt (Auty, 2004, p. 3).

Africa 12.8% in 2007 and 12.8% in 2010 Youthful population is a vital asset for innovation and creativity in society. However, these characteristics are at stake when not properly harnessed. For instance, it propels migration of youths to cities in search of better jobs and greener pasture, given a rural poverty was about 73.2% in 2010 (see Alabi, 2014).

Nigeria is not known for efficient planning for the future of its citizenry and society. Unplanned towns and cities as well as uncontrolled urbanization have resulted in congestion where people live in poor quality conditions devoid of the basic amenities. Desperate young males represent 'shock troops' of deviant activities and the portion of young people in the population constitutes almost half of the population in the country as above data has shown. Expeditious and high rate urbanization has the potential of disrupting traditional custom and regulations of behavior that oversee justice, regulate people's conduct, and preside over social relations in former communities. It could disperse the bonds amid people and weakens social organizations, unveiling conditions for deviancy.

Cockayne and Williams (2009) noted that the withdrawal of the state and informal forms of authority from the urban cities result inevitably in sprouting of alternative forms of government that is distinguished by anonymity and forms of life not found in rural areas. This lowers the barriers to deviancy and leaves the hopeless and chanceless youth seeking fellowship, community, and identity through gang behavior and connecting with Nigerian international cocaine traffickers. Yet the frustration in the city life is heightened because the manufacturing sector is also undermined by undiversified economy, as the industrial and service sectors in the country could absorb only a small fraction of the labor force. On the one hand, Nigerian economy is described as vibrant because it's economy has grown recently at about 6–8 percent per annum. Yet the oil companies and few noteworthy others like UAC, Cadbury, and Guinness are foreign owned (Otaha, 2012).

In Nigeria, there is no viable private sector and that undermines youth employment. One reason for this is the lack of empowered entrepreneurial middle class, who have the knowledge and skill to establish small and medium scale companies that will create more jobs and foster growth. Contemporary Nigeria's non-inclusive growth has not served to substantially reduce poverty or inequality, but it has served to produce the Nigeria state crisis, instability, crime, and inability to attract more investors. The ability to attract investors could be enhanced by improving factors like inadequate power supply, lack of infrastructure, delays in the passage of legislative reforms, an inefficient property registration system, restrictive trade policies, an inconsistent regulatory environment, a slow and ineffective judicial system, unreliable dispute resolution mechanisms, insecurity, and pervasive corruption (CIA, 2014).

An international survey indicated that major factors hindering doing business in Nigeria includes access to financing, corruption, inadequate infrastructure, policy instability and crimes.²² It is in the very nature of the capitalist mode of production to overwork some workers while keeping the rest as a reserve army of unemployed paupers, as averred by Marx (1848). Underlined here is the need for a 'reserve army of labor' of surplus labor (employees), under-employment and unemployed that creates downward pressure on wages, because they fight among themselves for scarce jobs at lower and lower wages (McLellan, 1998). On the one hand, a quick glimpse portrays unemployment as futile because the jobless do not increase profits. On the other hand, it remains profitable within the global capitalist system through lowering of wages and costs.

In this context, the super-rich politicians together with super-rich capitalists formed a cabal and logically established economic imperialism. The few available jobs for the battalion of youth job seekers are politicized. Unless the job seeker is connected to a political godfather he may not get the job (Alabi, 2014). This evokes the concept of a dual labor market. On the

²² World economic Forum: The Africa Competitiveness Report (World Bank, 2013, p. 279).

one hand, attention was called to a ‘primary’ sector in which employment was stable, where pay was good and where there were strong unions. On the other, attention was called to a ‘secondary’ sector in which employment was unstable, where pay tended to be low, prospects of promotion poor and unions of small importance.²³ Amongst the most affected are the young people in the country.

2.4.4 Youth’s nightmare

Unemployment in Nigeria presently represents youths’ nightmares. Coupled with the ever-widening social gap and inequality, it is believed to contribute in frustrating some youths into illicit drug trafficking, and other crimes like oil bunkering, kidnapping, and arms dealing in the Niger Delta as well as the religious crisis in North Nigeria. These are social problems resulting also from disproportionate distribution of social resources, reflected by the persistent high-income inequality rate in the country; for instance, 38.7% in 1985, 46.5% in 1996, 58% in 2007 and currently prevalence of about 45% (Alabi, 2014). Inequality is said to affect social relationships especially in a situation in which while the income of the rich rises, the poor feel relatively more deprived. Such deprivation can lead to alienation and subsequent crime.

Research shows that, on the one hand, an increase in income inequality has a significant effect of raising crime rates, while on the other hand, that GDP growth rate has a significant crime-reducing impact. Indicated is that the rate of growth and distribution of income jointly could determine the rate of poverty reduction.²⁴ Notwithstanding, Nigeria’s current GDP for 2013 of \$509.9 billion USD, critics averred that Nigerian population is not better off tomorrow because of that announcement. It doesn’t put more money in the bank or more food in their stomachs. It changes nothing.²⁵

While this matters for the World Bank and multinational companies, it does less for the ordinary Nigerians. It has failed to diversify the economy, and its snowballing effect is low productivity in the mainly subsistence agricultural sector and manufacturing. It has made Nigeria an import-dependent economy nation, with 63% of consumption expenditure directed to food out of which more than 43% is imported. Furthermore, continually about 80% of government expenditures are recycled into foreign exchange, coupled with excessively high domestic production costs partly resulting from erratic electricity and fuel supply have reduced industrial capacity utilization to less than 30% (see Oduh, 2012). Consequently, Nigeria’s ineffectiveness in addressing the Nigerian state crisis has fostered instability, insecurity, and underdevelopment while perpetuating unemployment, inequality, and high poverty rates. It has encouraged several poor youth into deviant activities including illicit drug trafficking and other crimes. Various publications exist on the role of poverty and vulnerability to crimes in society.²⁶ Criminologists and economist have linked poverty to crime. For instance, pioneer of the ‘poverty cause crime’ concept Guerry and Quetelet (1842), linked it to absolute deprivation.²⁷ Unemployment could lead to crime as a result of the feeling of deprivation, rejection and personal failure, which could lead to mental stress, apathy, and illness factors that could pave way for criminal behavior. The main point is it is tied to economic growth. That is to say, during economic recessions, crime tends to grow rapidly. Economic recessions result in greater unemployment, and this could drive people into criminal behavior. In their work, Masih and Masih (1996) summarized most of the literature

²³ See, for instance Bosanquet and Doeringer (1973); International Labour Office [ILO], (2013)

²⁴ In this area, see for instance Fajnzylber, Lederman and Loayza (2002); Bharadwaj (2014).

²⁵ See, Nigeria becomes Africa’s biggest economy. *BBC News* (2014, April 6).

²⁶ Various publications exist on the role of poverty and vulnerability to crimes in society (For instance see, Fajnzylber et al. 2002; Nelson 1998).

²⁷ See for example Bohm and Vogel’s, *A Primer on Crime and Delinquency Theory* (2010, p. 27).

on the relationship between unemployment and crime, and stated that 33 studies found this relationship positive, and 19 negative or no relationship. Fajnzylber et al. (2002), found while applying panel data for 45 developed and developing countries from 1965 to 1995 that violent crime rates decline when economic growth improves. There are countless unemployed young people in several cities across Nigeria, participating in visible ‘idleness.’ They congregate at bars and restaurants to drink, watch football matches, converse, and/or smoke marijuana for substantial parts of the day.

Interviews with some members of Nigerian international cocaine traffickers revealed that such atmospheres are good places for recruiting drug mules, as we shall discuss in chapters ahead. Devoid of legitimate means of livelihood, they grow up in a culture that fosters deviant activity. They survive by engaging in various activities such as petty trading, casual work, petty gambling, stealing, pick pocketing, drug dealing, prostitution, touting, and other illegal activities (such as Internet and financial frauds in Nigeria). Some have become drunkards; others are on drugs such as marijuana, crack-cocaine, etc. Unemployed youths roaming the streets have been given various names in different cities, such as ‘Area Boys’ *Yan-iska*, *kwanta kwanta* e.t.c in Nigeria (Somavia, 2012).

In the Niger Delta, drugs are one of multiple interchangeable currencies along with stolen oil, weapons, and cash. This links a variety of criminal activities to the drug trade, ranging from kidnapping expatriate oil company employees for ransom, to oil bunkering (McGovern, 2009). Oil thefts—a long-time problem in the Niger Delta—are increasing at an ever-faster rate despite government officials and international companies offering increasingly dire warnings about the effect on Nigeria’s crude production. Just like most international cocaine traffickers did, several condemned armed robbers interviewed in varied prison facilities in Nigeria claimed poverty and unemployment as major factors. For instance, research by Odekunle at the Abeokuta, Agodi, and Kirikiri prisons in Nigeria, highlighted that ‘the typical criminal is illiterate, unskilled and unemployed,’ underlining that between 86% and 89% of inmates were unemployed at the time of their criminal offense (Dambazau, 2009). This remains exaggeration because a crime is not limited to unskilled and unemployed, as Fala Kuti expressed that “*Authority stealing pass arm robber*” (Stealing by the powerful is more than armed robbery’s)²⁸.

In all, poverty in terms of basic human needs only as discussed previously does not necessarily cause criminal behavior as various criminological perspectives like positivists, sociological, psychological radical, and critical schools portray varied views on crime and its causes, as several actors of the Nigerian international cocaine traffickers are capable of demonstrating the validity of these concepts. I will come back to this in the chapters ahead. Yet, in Nigeria affluence represents a risk factor motivating deviant activities. Varied reasons could be responsible for this inclusion. Firstly, because a lot of people place a high premium on economic affluence for everybody, regardless of the fact that majority of people lack the basic educational and financial stand to succeed through legitimate means; and secondly, the cultural influence that places emphasizes on the extended family system in which the family pressure on the males of a community to succeed financially is very high aggravates this issue (Dambazau, 2009).

The widespread mentality in Nigeria is that more successful someone becomes, the more recognition he gets by way of traditional and societal titles, while how the person made it is not subject to inquiry. ‘Government officials’ loot the public treasury without the slightest pricking of conscience and in many instance, such looters are hailed as successful and honored with titles of dubious values. Wealth is not only glorified; it is worshiped. In a country such as Nigeria, this is inflamed by lack of control.

²⁸ See Fela Kuti’s Album, *Authority Stealing* (Kalakuta Records, 1980, January 1)

2.5 Stumpy law observations and ‘the Nigerian Dream’

The failure to inflict the rule of law and satisfactorily punish criminals is further distinctive of a soft state. In Nigeria, the rule of law is deficient and breach down in law and order is widespread. Transgression rarely attracts punishment, particularly when it involves the elite or powerful individuals. There have been excessive uses of force by the security agencies where they extort money and indulge in extra judicial killing with impunity. Within the society itself, assassinations, ritual killings, and kidnapping are frequent and the government has not been able to resolve or react to most of these incidents (Udama, 2013).

The judiciary is a vital third arm of government and important in the fight against crimes including illicit drug activities, but the criminal justice system in Nigeria has functioned far below anticipations of most Nigerians and beyond—in most instances delivering highly dubious rulings. In one case, a former governor of oil rich state in the country accused of corruption was set free in court. He misappropriated millions of dollars from a state where civil servants were not paid adequately and where good infrastructure did not exist. However, the very set of evidence that was discounted by the Nigeria judiciary was used to convict him in the United Kingdom. Having admitted 10 counts of conspiracy to defraud and money laundering in early 2012, he was jailed for 13 years for fraud totaling nearly £50 million pounds or \$77 million USD.²⁹ Similarly offenders implicated in the Halliburton bribe scandal of at least \$436 million USD were punished in the United States whereas the Nigeria state unceasingly buffers its own citizens involved.³⁰ It typifies a classical state of affairs that perpetuates the criminogenic environment for crimes. Victoria Ojeme’s article highlights that the International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Officer, at the United States Embassy in Abuja expressed the need for prosecuting corrupt government officials as culprits and punished when found guilty. Corruption sucks money out of the economy, which affects the building of roads, power, and other social amenities. The Nigerian judiciary has been overwhelmed by some tribulations that have resulted to this contemporary situation. A number of these include the shortage of highly competent personnel with veracity required to assume the roles of prosecutors and judges, shortage of funds to remunerate them adequately in spite of large caseloads, and decent working conditions. These shortcomings foster judicial personnel vulnerability to corrupt practices, lured by drug traffickers among others. In terms of their capacity to enforce the rule of law in their territories, weak states are typically under-resourced and subject to corruption. Due to lack of basic resources, many West African states lack a functioning criminal justice system to respond to either the drug trafficking problem or official corruption as highlighted by Antonio Maria Costa (UNODC, 2008, p. 35).

In all stumpy law observations is not only an endemic feature underscoring the Nigerian state crisis, but also it is an ordinary factor that unifies the country. In Nigeria, where leaders are not accountable to those they serve, it inhibits development as they help themselves with money that would otherwise be used for development projects.

Nigeria has become a society that adores criminals and money, wherein the society is not concerned with how one makes money, and that all matters is whether one is rich. It recalls a situation where some are morally outraged by the presence of cancer like phenomenon eating deep into society just as there are some apathetic to it. One that Anthropologist Daniel Smith (2008) adequately captured, underscoring how condemnation and acceptance of criminal behavior can coexist in the same society or even the same person in Nigeria.

²⁹ Southwark Crown Court was told the amount he stole from the people of Delta state was "unquantified." Ibori, who evaded capture in Nigeria after a mob of supporters attacked police, was arrested in Dubai in 2010. He was extradited to the UK, where he was prosecuted based on evidence from the Metropolitan Police. See BBC News Africa (2012, April 17)

³⁰ See, Nigeria’s Punishment Problem. Nigeria Curiosity (2009, April 27).

Collective Action Theory explains this phenomenon further. It is the collective actions or inactions of the people in relationship with one another in Nigeria that determines the economic outcome of such society. In a context in which corruption is the expected behavior (as evidenced in Nigeria) there will basically be no actors, by and large, willing to take on the role of controlling corruption. This imbue logic among the citizenry becomes what the Swedish Nobel laureate Gunnar Myrdal emphasized as “Well, if everybody seems corrupt, why shouldn’t I be corrupt,” as it increasingly appears to make no sense to be the only honest player in a ‘rotten game’ since this will not change the game.³¹ When one lives in a society where everybody steals, thievery become common because the probability that you will be caught is low, and even if you are caught, the chances of your being punished strictly for a crime so common are even lower. By contrast, if one lives in a society where theft is uncommon, the chances of being caught and punished remains high, which deters stealing. In this context the collective action theory echos Nigerian occurrence. Robert Klitgaard writes, “but suppose everybody on our side felt that way, then I’d certainly be a damned fool to feel any other way! Wouldn’t I?” (2010, p. 18). Given the foregoing, therefore, the suggestion that corruption should be viewed and treated as an institution appears relevant to Nigerian situation. It recalls a paradox that when almost everyone is corrupt, honesty is the deviant behavior.

Nigeria is now a country where individualism dominates. This evokes Durkheim’s (1964) explanation for crime and deviance in the cultural realm, deviance as a product of cultural definition. ‘The sickness of infinity,’ which Durkheim observed during France’s rapid industrialization caused a massive transformation in social structure and social ethos—especially the rise of a culture of individualism and decline in more solidaristic, traditional values. He averred that a society whose core cultural values exalted individual competition and offered incessant and ever-retreating goals was one, which would be inevitably unstable and conflict-ridden. Since this is an outcome of cultural creation of capitalism rather than natural, a society with less crime and conflict could occur if a unifying culture were developed out of trust, meritorious reward, and finite achievement (Ferrell, Hayward, & Young, 2008, p. 33). Furthermore, Durkheim writes that in a ‘society of saints,’ some would come to be defined as criminal (1964, p. 68-9) and that deviance arises not from the act, but from the rules that forbid (1965, p. 43).

McLaughlin & Muncie (2005) defined anomie as a state of ethical normlessness or deregulation, pertaining either to an individual or a society. Drawing on Durkheim’s work, Merton’s in ‘Social Structure and Anomie’ (1938) emphasized that crime and deviance, rather than being a matter of individual pathology, are in fact a ‘normal’ response to particular cultural and structural circumstances. In this view, the nuance of ‘poverty causes crime’ does not hold. Instead, the stress on the American Dream, the notion that success and social mobility is open to all, grinds against the actual structural limitations on success. This American value causes deviance and disorder as “anti-social behavior is in a sense ‘called forth’ by certain conventional values and by a class structure involving differential access to the approached opportunities...” (Merton, 1938, p. 24). In addition, the overemphasis on success goals, in place of the means of achieving them represents a criminogenic feature that could cause deviant activity. As Merton suggests this jointly—the cultural emphasis on success at any cost, and limited opportunities—created a terrible strain. One way to adaptation to this strain is to commit crime through the innovative creation of new means to achieve cultural goals of success. In this sub-cultural perspective, crime and deviance are viewed as cultural and material solutions to contradictions in the wide society.

³¹ See Persson, Rothstein and Teorell (2010, p. 6)

As Merton pointed with regard to the influence of monetary accumulation in the ‘American dream,’ the same can be seen in ‘the Nigerian dream:’ in effect, society is not worried with how one makes money—what matters is whether one is affluent. The Nigerian dream recalls a culture hooked on materialism and showing off with designer clothes and shoes, latest car models, watching television the whole day, sharing the mainstream culture’s obsession with violence, as well as worshipping success, money, wealth, and status, as experienced in Nigeria today. All of this is reminiscent of Merton but where, in a late modern context, the implosion of the wider culture on the local is dramatically increased (Young, 2007). This delusion generates frustration amongst people in Nigeria, especially the educated youth and the ‘middle class.’ In popular discussions, people wonder if the term ‘middle class’ is still suitable in their society. What is appropriate are concepts of the few ‘haves’ and the masses of ‘have nots.’ Most Nigerians are deprived of the legal means of acquiring a decent life (Smith, 2008). This relative deprivation is one of the major driving forces that push many of the helpless and hopeless into various types of deviant activities, including the international cocaine trafficking that generates huge profit when successful.

A good number of cocaine traffickers and aspirant ones asserted that ‘norms of the game’ have changed into the ‘game of the normless’ underlining that most Nigerians have become impatient people who want everything and immediately. They want it because most are frustrated by the illusions of get rich fast syndrome, exposed relative deprivation and poverty and its vulnerability. Positive adherence to hard work through the mainstream values, emphasizes not only the threat but also the resilience or responsiveness in exploiting opportunities and in resisting or recovering from the negative effects of a changing environment. The means of resistance are the assets and entitlements that individuals, households, or communities can mobilize and manage in the face of hardship. Vulnerability remains connected to assert ownership, and the more assets someone has the less vulnerable they are, and the greater the erosion of people’s assets, the greater their insecurity (Moser, 1998). This vulnerability increase as the Nigerian societal ‘value’ skyrockets, recalling that the point is so much becoming affluent and self-fulfillment, not of hard work rewarded, but of spontaneity and expressivity anew. The cocaine trafficker Kodo had this to say:

“Life in Nigeria is like in a ghetto. CNN shows life in the ghettos many times. But it’s even better in the ghettos of America, because they have the basics like water, electricity, roads, and all that. Here these amenities are dreams because they embezzled the money. Please don’t be fooled. Here illegality is legal. Look the foreigners rob this country as much as they can. Nigerians do it as well regardless of tribe or ethnicity. The northerners have defrauded the nation as much as they can, likewise the westerners or easterners and the southerners. The government deserted the country long ago. Nigeria is a ghetto!
(Kodo, Lagos 06-10-2011)

But Kodo’s comparison with American ghettos is an interesting one. Many in Nigeria would dream to be in American ghettos, just because there are basic amenities that are affordable only by wealthy in Nigeria. Also Kodo takes on marginalization of poor black Americans, who have often been ostracized to the fringes of civil society. Wacquant (2004, 2008, 2009) points to two fundamental interconnected processes in the making of black American ghetto, namely the concept of de-civilizing at social-relational level and demonizing at a symbolic level. Similarly, Nigeria’s slums have cultivated pools of frustrated, unemployed youth who are pushed into survival activities based upon informal (or illegal) economies. In this regard, the process that gave rise to slums and its crimes in Nigeria are related to the fact that in de-civilizing process, slums are created and maintained by ineffective governance, the disintegration of local institutions and public services and social relations. The masses in Nigeria express that the government has abandoned them at all levels. Instead it has created a

criminogenic environment and serious lack of adequate infrastructure and efficient public institutions. The process of demonization occurs when the government plays down a segment of its citizens as despicable drug traffickers associated with evil, greed, and violence Wacquant (2004, 2008, 2009).

Many people point out that Nigerian government has succeeded in portraying the country and its citizens to the world as poor, fearsome, evil and even criminal. Disappointed with the elite stakeholders who, in many people's minds, siphons the nation's wealth. From this perspective, an interaction between fear, violence, and the state leads to de-pacification of everyday life. Social undifferentiating that enhances organizational desertification, informalization of the economy and crimes (through such activities as international cocaine trafficking, minor prostitution abroad, and advanced-fee fraud). Nigerians themselves refer to their country as a risky place, a 'jungle' or even a 'ghetto.' Equally, Nigerian elites consider the slums of Lagos and other cities as unsafe areas or as hot spots for crimes and criminality, thereby shifting the failure of their governance to that of the society.

In this view, it is not difficult to see how the concepts of de-civilization and demonization caused by the Nigerian state crisis contribute in enhancing the new trend cocaine trafficking and to stigmatizing Nigerians globally as 'criminals.' The traffickers point out to the operators of the nation and their foreign partners who enhance and celebrate criminality.

2.6 'Chop money' syndrome: Corruption

Regulars to Nigeria are aware that people are conversant with the street language 'chop money,' a 'Broken-English' (or Pidgin), connotation for misappropriation of public funds. One often hears, "Aaa! Bros you hear say them chop 20 billion naira?" (Hey friend, have you heard that 20 billion naira was embezzled?). In other cases, there are accusations or formal corruption charges brought against officials in connection with embezzling huge amounts of public funds that ends with little or no sanction against offenders. Endemic corruption fosters Nigerian international cocaine trafficking through its mutual relationship with lack of accountability, integrity, and transparency granted by the state to its 'agents.'

Evoking that departure of British colonial administrators in government agencies resulted in the struggle by each ethnic group for its share of the 'national cake' intensified. Every politician representing his own region/ethnic group in the federal administration resorted to embezzlement with impunity of federal property entrusted to his care. In effect, despite the laws against bribery and stealing from the government, there was no sense of guilt in graft, pilferage, and wanton malfeasance among some politicians and top civil servants in Nigeria (Ebbe, 2012).

Such practices have fostered the contemporary criminogenic environment that underpins drug trafficking and all sorts of organized crime, which in relation to the state develops as follows: firstly, a predatory stage in which gangs employing violence attempt to gain territorial control and a monopoly over the use of force, all the while, however, bring subjects to the forces of law and order. Secondly, a parasitical stage in which state prohibitions, war, conflict, UN sanctions, etc., creates the condition for criminal organizations to flourish and connect with the corrupt sections of the political elite. Thirdly, a symbolic stage in which "organized crime has become a part of the state, a state within a state" (Lupsha 1996, pp. 30–32). At the extreme of predatory states are 'captured states,' such as Nigeria under Sani Abacha, Zaire under Mobutu, and Liberia under Charles Taylor (Bayart, Ellis, & Hibou, 1999). Nigeria became more than ever a literal kleptocracy, a system of government

by theft and bribery³² (Ellis, 2009). Ebbe (2003) argued that the government of Nigeria could be defined as a ‘predatory state:’

“A predatory state is a government that resorts to whole-sale abuse of government power, and where the head of state rules and decrees much like the head of an organized crime ‘family’, using criminal individuals and syndicates to look his country’s treasury. To this end, he uses government agencies, cabinet ministers, and directors of statutory corporations as bribe-collection agencies” (Ebbe, 2003, p. 137).

Devoid of relatively strong and efficient civil administrations, the pursuit of political power and authority is integral to private gain. The political environment and the way socio-economic groups interact with state officials affect the prevalence as well as the perception of corruption. This aspect relates to the relative prominence and powers of the public sector vis-à-vis the private sector in the economy.

As the Nigerian case demonstrates, the public sector wields enormous influence on pattern of resource allocation, which is why it constitutes the key arena of corruption. Ironically, however, the public sector has effectively become the real tool in the hands of the private sector’s self-enrichment process. It recalls that through the phenomenon of ‘state capture’ which depends on the relative power of interest groups, the private sector players are helped to accomplish their goals, in a reciprocally beneficial way, at the cost of society. The ruling elite enriches and empowers, and accumulation via theft of resources is thus transformed into political power (Green & Ward, 2004).

This recalls Marx’s ([1867] 1976) notion of primitive accumulation, which highlights the various historical process that pave the way to the uninterrupted phenomenon within the capitalist method of production, linked to the subordination of the underdeveloped to the developed world economy. In the context of Nigeria, this view could assist in shedding more light on explaining the paradox of a wealthy but poor country. In the first place, it points to an accumulation of capital amassed primarily for speculative reasons. Secondly, accumulation in the hands of this class is incapable of, ultimately transforming this hoarded wealth into actual means of production. Called to mind is the widespread irritation amid Nigerians aware that not only is their national wealth needed to develop the country robbed, but its siphoned to countries where it enhances means of production, if not, borrowed back as a loan to Nigeria or the like. Relevant here is Amin’s (1974) intrinsic to continuous primitive accumulation seen as transfer of value in the world economy. As the rich in Nigeria fail to invest the stolen money in the country, they forget that relations between the formations of the ‘developed’ world and that of the ‘underdeveloped’ world are affected by transfer of value. Whenever the capitalist mode of production enters into relations with pre-capitalist modes of production, and subjects these to it, transfers of value take place as a result of the mechanisms of primitive accumulation. These mechanisms do not belong only to the prehistory of capitalism; they are contemporary as well. It is these forms of primitive accumulation, modified but persistent, to the advantage of the center that form the domain of the theory of accumulation on a world scale (Amin, 1974, p. 3).

The fall short of this awareness amid the custodian of the state in Nigeria is a principal feature, which intentionally or unintentionally underscores crimes including the new trend international cocaine trade, as emphasized in this work. Nigeria is Africa’s largest single oil

³² According to Geneva’s public prosecutor, Switzerland will return to Nigeria about \$380 million linked to the former military leader, late General Sani Abacha. Whereas some \$500 million had already been returned to Nigeria, the Abacha affair began in 1999 when Nigeria asked the Swiss judicial authorities to help it recover \$2.2 billion. See UNCOVA, (2015, March18).

exporting country, and is the world's eighth-largest crude oil exporter according to U.S. Energy Information Administration (2013). Unofficial figures from the Standard Bank estimates that Nigeria made 6 trillion USD in oil revenue over the last 50 years,³³ yet poverty reigns in the country. Oil became of interest to the colonialists in Nigeria in the first half of the 1900s, and was first drilled commercially in the Niger Delta in 1956 by the Anglo-Dutch oil giant Shell. Having gripped Nigeria since the 1930s, the oil giant Shell claimed it had inserted staff into all the main ministries of the Nigerian government, giving it access to politicians' every move in the oil-rich Niger Delta, according to a leaked U.S. diplomatic cable (Smith, 2010).

Some aspects of the World Systems Theory (Wallerstein, 1974, 1979), closely related to dependency theory and globalization theory, could be instrumental in elucidating the mechanism fostering the Nigerian cocaine trafficking. From the macro-sociological viewpoint, the theory attempts to explain the forces of the capitalist world economy as a total social system. More recently, Chase-Dunn and Grimes (1995), Barak (2001), Martínez-Vela (2001), and Pomeranz and Topik (2006), have argued for its use as well. In this view, crime in the 'third world' could be caused by inequality and uneven economic development (Martínez-Vela, 2001). Crime could result as a product of direct or indirect dependency and exploitation between core rich western countries and poor peripheral countries. The main mechanisms involved are the exercise of arbitrary political or economic power and uneven expansion of capitalism. Furthermore, researchers argue that crime surges as a result of restrictions and demands from developed countries such as: policies aimed at drug prohibition, migrants, arms embargos, human trafficking, prostitution, precious metals, and the oil trade. The imbalance may result in crimes of resistance and rebellion such as terrorism, drug trafficking, homicide, and property destruction (Franko-Aas, 2007; Zaitch, van Swaaningen, & Geelhoed, 2007), as events in Nigeria demonstrate. Also, the network and trade structure of the world economy between the core countries and peripheral nations is also related to the World Systems Theory. Boivin (2010) suggested applying the concept to international trafficking of drugs like cannabis, cocaine, heroin and synthetic drugs. The world systems with respect to cocaine trafficking highlight an organized trade that inextricably link developed and underdeveloped countries. However, international drug trafficking is an enterprising activity both alike and very dissimilar to legal markets. Its trading outline is comparable to that provided by luxury goods and leisure, affordable only by a select few at very high prices in a world where the local has a global impact.

Echoing the work of Franko Aas (2007), while globalization boosted international network of flows of material, resources, and human social capital, it is also the case that this new dynamic process involves illegal trade, as demonstrated by net new trend illicit cocaine trade. Processes parallel to those which made globalization good for the interdependent world economy, have also enabled criminal organizations to emerge and thrive at an unprecedented global scale.³⁴ Similarly, globalization with multinational corporations may cause local events within countries that could have negative or devastating effects, such as the vast environmental damage that has occurred in the Niger Delta in Nigeria, one of the world's largest wetlands but also home to Africa's biggest oil industry (Okonta & Douglas, 2003). Indeed, while oil companies have reached record profits year after year, in Africa the per capita income that had grown by 34.3 percent from 1960 to 1980 has fallen by about 20 percent from 1980 to 1997 during the era of globalization (Brecher, Costello, & Smith, 2000). Instead of economic development and financial benefits, it has pushed the majority into poverty and has directly or indirectly pushed many into deviant activities including cocaine trafficking (Obboh, 2011, 2010; Moro, 2008).

³³ See, Greenwood (2010, July 23). Are Africa's commodities an economic blessing?

³⁴ For details in this area, see for instance, Nwebo & Uba (2015); Paraschiv (2013); Albanese (2012, 2011)

Nigeria is ranked number 16 of amongst the Failed States Index 2013, slightly deteriorated from its position 15 in 2007 (Fund For Peace, 2013). The organization emphasized that states fail when national governments lose control of part or all of their territory and can no longer ensure the personal security of their people, provide possible training grounds for international terrorist groups, and it become a source of drugs. While these characteristics have bred the crime of the powerful to create the criminogenic environment that flourished the international cocaine trade, the role of the strong states in grounding it in the country could not be overlooked, as Hobbs' (2001a, p. 549) indicated that too great a focus on international organized crime encouraged us to locate it as a foreign rather than local phenomenon. In strong states, organized crime offers much less in the way of governance or shadow statehood, rather than a competitor or threat to state power. For example, in America, it has coexisted and to a certain extent, complemented the legitimate structure of power and authority. One reason for strong states to collude with the services of organized crime is to ensure and protect the conditions most favorable for the maintenance of capitalist relations of production, as the skill and operational resources of organized crime make it the best means to fulfill those goals.

In the past, the Nigerian state has given extensive protection to oil companies by violently repressing local Nigerians who express dissent because they have never felt the impact of the revenue generated. The violent suppression of these protests is committed either by state security forces, or by 'private' security forces that are trained by the Nigerian state, and remain closely connected with state security forces (Green & Ward, 2004; Alemika & Chukwuma, 2000). Protests and resistance are brutally crushed, as was embodied in the 1995 hanging of Nigerian writer and environmental activist Ken Saro-Wiwa by the government under Abacha. In an attempt to compensate Nigeria for a decade of devastating effects from its activities, on 9 June 2009, Shell paid a sum of 15.5 million dollars in restitution for the murder, torture, and other human rights abuses of Saro-Wiwa, and other members of the Ogoni tribe of southern Nigeria (Zambito, 2009). There have also been charges of major environmental pollution, and despite the United Nation's exoneration of Shell, international environmental and human rights groups are calling for further legal action to ensure proper compensation and adequate compliance and regulation (Vidal, 2010). Additionally, as mentioned previously, U.S. oilfield services giant, Halliburton came under fire for its corruption practices in Nigeria. Former U.S. Vice President Dick Cheney, who led the energy company Halliburton as CEO and Chairman of the Board from 1995 to 2000, was charged by the Nigerian anti-corruption agency EFCC for corruption in Nigeria. The government considered a settlement (in lieu of prosecution) of 250 million dollars with Halliburton, which stemmed from approximately 180 million dollars, paid in bribes to Nigerian officials (Byrne, 2010).

2.7 Structurally underpinned?

Abacha's authoritarian regime qualified with kleptocracies or economies of plunder (Bayart et al. 1999) is long gone. Yet the concept persists in the Nigeria society. Organized crime as illicit drug trafficking has become central to the building of political authority. In Nigeria for instance, it has paved the way for vulnerable individuals to engage in cocaine trafficking to raise money for achieving political goals: Firstly, as Nigerian senator-elect wanted for U.S. drug deal was arrested (Faul: 23-05-2015); Secondly, as a cocaine-smuggling aspirant politician is arrested for attempting to smuggle 2.12kg cocaine in his stomach (Akpan, 2010). Critics point to the structure that facilitates embezzlement, and in some cases, it is possible to trace the flow of money by adamant whistle blowers like the ex-Governor of the Central Bank of Nigeria, Mallam Lamido Sanusi. He revealed that the Nigeria National Assembly

consumes 25 percent of the country's overhead expenses. Nigeria has some of the highest paid lawmakers in the world, earning up to \$2 million USD a year (or 397.9 million naira). More than 70 percent of the federal budget is spent on the salaries and benefits of about one million government officials, which leaves little revenue to help Nigerians living in poverty (Winsor: 18-06-2015). The earning of a Nigerian Senator per day is more than the yearly income of a doctor; it is more than the salary of 48 university professors or 70 commissioners of police, despite the fact that the minimum monthly salary is less than 100 dollars, and the average earning of 80% of the populace is below N300 naira per day.³⁵

The fact has shown its potential in fostering drug traffickers from would-be politicians. While on the one hand, it evokes the concept of social capital and underscores the importance of good role models and formal and informal social control. Putnam (1993) and Bourdieu (1993) underlined the relevance of the concept. While it refers to social connections and the attendant norms and trust, in terms of network mechanisms, it implies that some people are better connected to exchange certain goods or favors. In other words, social capital is seen as an expression of advantage (Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992).

Also other views have expressed social capital in structural and cognitive forms (Uphoff & Wijayaratra, 2000). The first is characterized by relatively external and visible components such as roles, rules, procedure, precedents, and social networks that establish ongoing patterns of social interaction. In contrast, cognitive forms of social capital are more internal and subjective. Its characteristics include norms, values, attitudes, and beliefs that incline individuals to cooperate in achieving reciprocal communal goals. It is believed that all cultures have the basic elements of social capital within them, but social structures and shared values can be disinvested in by neglect or misuse (Uphoff & Wijayaratra, 2000).

In addition, according to Aldridge, Halpern and Fitzpatrick (2002), social capital can exist as: (1) Bonding social capital, which is a very strong bond often found among family members or ethnic groups; (2) Bridging social capital, which is a weaker bond that exists for instance among business partners, friends from various ethnic origins, acquaintances and friends of friends; and (3) Linking social capital, which is the type that exists for example between people from different social classes—like the rich and poor or the political elite and the general public. Akçomak and ter Weel (2008) indicated that if social capital is an asset that paves the way to community governance (c.f. Bowles & Gintis, 2002) or to achieve goals that could not be achieved or could be achieved only at a higher cost (Coleman, 1990), then any factor that would lead to disorganization and detachment in the community would eventually reduce social capital.

In this regard, the merits and weaknesses of social capital are many as events in Nigeria explicate. Among its advantages is that social capital helps the better connected with chances to be creative in seeing profitable opportunities and flexible in anticipating and adapting to unforeseen problems along the line as observed with drug traffickers' networks. However, the disadvantages of social capital include the fact that it can enhance conduct that deteriorates rather than improves economic performance. It can obstruct social inclusion and social mobility. It could act as pervasive factor that divides instead of uniting people, communities or societies. It can cause education underachievement, health and environmental damages, and in particular cases it may encourage deviant activities and crime more willingly than decreasing it (Aldridge et al. 2002).

Furthermore, underscored in this work is the notion of 'reverse' social capital, which may better help to understand the prevalence of cocaine trafficking as a 'legitimate' means of financial success in Nigeria. Meaning that the financial and social gain from *illegal behavior* has become the motivating factor for individuals involved in the trade. In contrast to

³⁵ See, Legislator's Jumbo Pay, Cost of Governance and the State of Education in Nigeria: Issues and Contradictions (Kalama, Etebu, Martha, & Sophia, 2012, pp. 73-77).

traditional social capital theory, 'reverse' social capital encourages illegal and criminal behavior as a way to advance in society. Resulting in networks that allow drug traffickers, police, and politicians to both perpetuate and even encourage the Nigerian international cocaine trafficking. Arias (2006) wrote that one must understand the ways that criminals, civic leaders, and state officials build connections to each other. Networks help to bring together functionally differentiated actors who have diverse skills and experiences that can contribute to ongoing criminal activity (p. 318). In this regard, Von Lampe pointed out that criminal network analysis is geared towards capturing only manifest links and not latent links. Because latent links are activated sporadically as opportunities and needs arise, they remain important for understanding and assessing criminal structures and social capital within the structures at any given point in time (Von Lampe, 2009).

In Nigeria, reversed social capital and structurally underpinned economies of plunder have prompted all sorts of comments and name-calling. For instance, "Our Leaders Are Not Nigerian. Reason Why the Nation is Going Down. Non-Intelligent, Greedy and Easily corrupt Rulers In Africa = N.I.G.E.R.I.A" (see Pan Africa Nigeria: 15-08-2011). Like others, the commenter above is disillusioned because the country is slow to answer development calls. For instance, regarding an endemic electricity power shortage in 1999, the government promised to generate 10,000 megawatts of electricity by 2007. As averred by Medupin (2015), yet in end 2011 there were vowing to move from 4,200 megawatts to 5,000 megawatts. As publicly acknowledged by Nigerians themselves, endemic corruption in the public sector-managed power sector is the major contributor to Nigeria electric power crisis. So many individuals and groups corruptly benefit from the dysfunctional power sector that trying to turn it around is almost comparable to trying to clear the Augean stables. Put otherwise, the inefficiency in the power sector is the lucrative business of some people like generator importers and those who award contracts in the sector. A frequently reported comment is that they sabotage the reform of the sector. The National Assembly and the Presidency at some point made it known that a sum of USD 16 billion was purportedly spent on power generation and equipment between 1999 and 2007, but there is no corresponding result to show for it as Nigerians suffer still under erratic and non-functional electrical supplies. In attempt redeem these shortages, as Nigeria's trade with China grows 700% and is expected to reach 13 billion end 2014, a big increase from 2 billion in 2005, the present administration moves to secure a 3-billion-dollar loan for the infrastructure, including the electricity power supply (Nordstrom, 2013). This is because the financial minister estimates the Nigerian need as 10 billion U.S. dollars yearly to improve the infrastructure, like roads and electricity to keep up with its rapidly growing population and to sustain economic growth of between 6–7 percent. Amongst major projects includes a 1.3 billion U.S. dollar loan for the construction of four airport terminals and a 700-mega watts hydropower station that will be signed with the export-import bank of China. Whereas critiques point out that China brings its own workers for the projects, the investors said this is essential because of human resource shortage in Nigeria.

In all, these excesses recall the negative effects of 'reverse' kind of social capital eating deep to the heart of the country's development. It represents a structurally underpinned phenomenon that encourages deviant activities and crime more willingly than decreasing it. Seen from this angle, social networks could enhance corruption and opportunism. Rose (2002, p. 8) alerts that informal networks can be 'anti-modern', in as much as they are utilized to corrupt formal organization, as it reflects in the role of mafia in Southern Italy or Russia as well in Nigeria, where cocaine traffickers brag about how easily some law enforcement agents are to corrupt because of the dysfunctional states. In such circumstances, social networks are associated with the development of 'delinquent community' and 'bandit capitalism,' rather than economic efficiency; and whereas the state have ceased to function, the profusion of social networks is viewed as a source of 'stateless order' (Little, 2003), otherwise what

Vlassenroot and Raeymaekers (2008) relegates to as ‘governance with out government,’ which fuels pervasive corruption and the activities of Nigerian international cocaine traffickers, to be discussed in the next chapters.

2.8 Summary

This chapter addressed the Nigerian ‘state crisis’ and its role in fostering of a cocaine culture. It has highlighted the geographic, demographic, historical, political, and economic factors of crime. These criminogenic factors are directly or indirectly relevant to understanding the rise and developments of crime in Nigeria. It has contributed to an environment that is at the very least unstable, and more likely have directly pushed many helpless and hopeless Nigerians toward criminal activities, including cocaine trafficking. Particularly when the risks are misjudged acceptable and are accompanied by a quick monetary reward when successful.

Underlined here is that the enthusiasm of Nigerian cocaine traffickers is enhanced by endemic corruption, crimes of the state and the powerful, crushing poverty and the farce of ‘The Nigerian Dream;’ resulting in a country built on ‘reverse’ social capital. These aspects summon up to the Agent’s Theory and Collective Action Theory. A major driving force that pushes some people into deviant activities like cocaine trafficking is that the majority of the population, relatively deprived, witnesses the ‘operators of the nation,’ which celebrate criminality. The World Systems Theory averred that much of the corruption in developing countries can be attributed to more dominant, most frequently, Western countries’ and multinationals’ interests in the natural reserves of poor developing nations. It is a paradox that keeps the Nigerian organized crime, corruption, embezzlement, and relative deprivation in place. It blocks economic development and creation of job opportunities with adequate income resulting in a vicious circle of lower standard of life.

Low observation of the law amongst the stakeholders of the nation Neglecting has enhanced the erosion of discipline that both forms and protects good behavior and cohesive communities. This has created a normless environment that indirectly tolerates crimes, including the financially attractive cocaine trafficking. The more Nigerians criticize the situation, the more they participate in it; in familial, clan, tribal, or cult relationships. It recalls the view that the ‘Nigerian State Crisis’ is also, by virtue of its covert but open nature, a local phenomenon. In order to curtail this, there must be first the political will and structure because most of the problems are structural. A strengthened government and a control organ, like the EFCC in particular, could play an important role.

Having addressed the ‘Nigerian State Crisis’ and its role in fostering of a cocaine culture, the next chapter will provide sight into the cocaine business in the country.

Chapter 3

The social organization of Nigerian cocaine trafficking: Network and actors

3.1 Introduction

Nigerian international cocaine trafficking is influenced not only by individual choices and decisions, but also by the conduct of others involved or the society in general. As the traffickers have demonstrated, unbalanced social capital could contribute to this. Given the opportunity and chance, certain people may be less attracted to cocaine trafficking if friends, family, and society discouraged it, but if a society is neutral to, or even rewards deviant behavior, this shifts the social capital in favor of criminal activity such as Nigerian international cocaine trafficking.

Who are the actors, the Nigerian cocaine traffickers and smugglers? What kinds of traffickers are they? What are their social backgrounds? What are the connections between them? What can we say about their culture? The goal of this part is to provide a clear profile of the hub of the cocaine market in Nigeria, the networks that occur, and the various kinds of Nigerian traffickers, from the *Ogas* (big bosses) to the part-time traffickers, who only occasionally involve themselves in trafficking.

3.2 Network dates back from an early period

Drug business has a long history in Europe and in the United States, long before its upsurge in Nigeria. Britain exported opium, cultivated in India after 1757, to China to rectify its balance-of-payments deficits. The Germans, Dutch, and American enterprises profited from processing cocaine between the 1890s and World War II, as indicated by several writers³⁶. Writers indicated the importance of the coca leaf as far back as the sixteenth century and touted it as a “wonder drug” in the second half of the nineteenth century, in both the pharmaceutical and food industries. They also emphasized its criminalization in the late 1920s when it became a public issue due to dependency problems and moral concern for the youth (Phillips & Wynne, 1980; Zaitch, 2002).

Demand for drugs has existed for centuries,³⁷ becoming a recreational trend again in the late 1960s, fostered by the Beatle-mania rock-n-roll and the hippy culture in Europe and America.³⁸ Akeampong (2005) emphasized the existence of a small trade in cannabis in West Africa before the first half of the twentieth century where the Colonial Government Authority of Nigeria in 1934 experimented with the cultivation of the coca plant in the botanical gardens in Calabar and in different parts of the country.

Contemporarily, the new trend of illicit cocaine trade through sub-Sahara Africa, is a convergence of interests by Nigerian traffickers and members of Lebanese, Pakistani, Mexican, Colombian, Venezuelan, Surinamese, and European organizations operating in the same territory and plugging into the same pipeline (Farah, 2009, 2012). Seizures and arrests

³⁶ For details in this area, see for instance Newman (2007); Chaudhuri (2005); Courtwright (2001)

³⁷ Over 5,000 years ago, ancient Mesopotamians discovered the effects of opium. Drugs continued to be prevalent in ancient Chinese and Greek cultures. See Matthew's (2011, p. 903) “International Drug Trafficking: A Global Problem with a Domestic Solution.”

³⁸ See, Public Broadcasting Service's “Thirty Years of America's Drug War, a Chronology”. In late 1960s recreational drug use became trendy amid young and middle class Americans. “The social stigmatization previously associated with drugs lessens as their use becomes more mainstream. Drug use becomes representative of protest and social rebellion in the era's atmosphere of political unrest (PBS Frontline, accessed 31-01-2015).

in several West African countries have shed light on trafficking networks facilitated by a range of individuals including businessmen and women, youth, politicians, as well as members of the security forces and the judiciary. Nigerian government and society are evoked to apprehend that transit countries became user countries with easy availability of cocaine at a cheap price, as events in Brazil and Mexico have demonstrated (UNODC, 2013; Harrigan, 2009).

Hard drug trafficking through Nigeria to overseas markets dates back to 1952, when U.S. officials uncovered a Lebanese syndicate trafficking parcels of heroin from Beirut to New York via Kano in North Nigeria and Accra in Ghana, as Ellis (2009) pointed out. The involvement of an Italian intelligence officer in the deal underlines illicit drug trafficking intertwined with the work of secret intelligence agencies and elite participation from an early period. There are about 30,000 Arab-Lebanese living in Nigeria,³⁹ as indicated by the U.S. Center for World Mission (2010), and the Lebanese are among the leading traffickers of South American cocaine via West Africa and Nigeria to the United States (UNODC, 2007). What started with the coca plant cultivation trials by the British colonialists later expanded to include actors from varied ethnicity and race.

Though there is overrepresentation of individuals bearing Igbo names, the arrest of offenders from Yoruba, Hausa, Edo, and Nigerian Moslem pilgrims to Saudi Arabia for the Hajj already in the 1970s unveils that the phenomenon stretches also across ethnic groups and religion. In the 1980s, Saudi Arabia stood third place amongst countries where Nigerians were apprehended for drug trafficking behind the USA and the United Kingdom (Green, 1998, p. 46). Nigeria international cocaine trafficking persists because those charged with the responsibility of eliminating drug trafficking are fascinated in the phenomenon than proficient traffickers themselves.

The involvement of Nigerian elite in organized crime, fostering the contemporary illicit cocaine trade, demonstrates Nigeria's inability to control. For example:

A 33 years old Nigerian woman, Iyabo Olorunkoya, convicted in 1974 of importing 78 kilograms of marijuana, implicated some Nigerian army officers as partners in crime. Brigadier Benjamin Adekunle, known as 'the Black Scorpion', a hero of the Nigerian army during the Biafra war was one of those she named. Adekunle was suspended from duty thereafter (Ellis, 2009, p. 176).

The implications of the Nigeria state under Babangida's regime, or close others in drug trafficking and related crimes, accredited Nigeria as "the hub of African narcotics trafficking" (Ellis, 2009, p. 179; Labrousse, 2001; Klein, 1994). Nigerian international cocaine trafficking remains trans ethnic because it spreads to other countries in the sub region. The involvement of the late president of Togo, Gnassingb'e Eyadema, former Liberian president, Charles Taylor, and arrest of diplomats from Ghana and Burkina Faso are documented. Also allegations of complicity in cocaine trafficking were made in Ghana against the government of Rawlings, and family (Akyeampong, 2005).

In this regard, the new illicit cocaine trade that moves large quantities of cocaine through Nigeria is a top down and borderless activity that should be discontinued.

³⁹ The colonialists sanctioned the entry of a group of "middlemen" that linked European companies in the capitals with producers in the hinterland. In West Africa, the middlemen were mainly Lebanese nationals who became a market-dominant minority that owned most of the productive sectors of the economy (Wannenburg, 2005)

3.2.1 Tri-Border Area

While some elite are busy in the continent, Nigerians and Lebanese traffickers congregate in several countries across Latin America, particularly in the Tri-Border Area (TBA), where Argentina, Brazil, and Paraguay meet. Experts outlined the convergence of transnational organized crime groups in TBA, a general clearinghouse for shipments from South America. Native criminal syndicates helped to create a criminogenic environment that fostered organized crime groups from: Colombia, Italy, Russia, Japan, Taiwan, Ghana, Lebanon, and Nigeria, among others (Lyman & Potter, 2007). Analysis of fieldwork information revealed that the Tri-Border Area was a meeting point for Nigerian traffickers forwarding cocaine to Nigeria. This coincides with the fact that prior to 2003, only 10 percent of the cocaine destined for the European market first transited West Africa, but by 2007, the estimate had risen to nearly 60 percent, representing 180 to 240 metric tons, about 18 percent of the total world cocaine production (Wechsler, 2009).

3.2.2 Foreign partners

Nigerian traffickers claim that their foreign partners are important in the smuggling chain. In popular discussions these foreign traffickers are popularly referred to as ‘Oyibo JJC’ (‘White Johnny Just Come’), who either are on a short visit to Nigeria for a deal or who are entrepreneurs or residents of Nigeria or neighboring countries. ‘Oyibo’⁴⁰ can be of European origin, Arab, Asian, or people of mixed ethnic backgrounds. Most traffickers who were interviewed commented that Lebanese, Pakistanis and Indians have Nigerians as apprentices and business partners. Good apprentice and business partners learn every aspect of the business from the boss. Sharing important strategic contacts, fostering establishment of front companies and illegal networks to facilitate drug trafficking, safe houses, and financial proceeds laundering amongst others.

Captured by Ellis, the ingenuity and entrepreneurial skills of Nigerian drug traffickers attracted the attention of smugglers wanting their services not only in South America but also in several destination markets in Asia (2009, p. 186). However, whereas entrepreneurial ability remains obvious, most Nigerian cocaine traffickers indicate that their hardness, described as ‘shock absorbers,’ is an ulterior motive for why their counterparts overseas look to them. The successful cocaine trafficker Tambu stated:

“These guys want to do business with us no matter what. They said it’s because of our ability to handle cocaine and that we are serious. They recognize Nigerians for being ‘shock absorbers’ of risks. Nigerians know how to absorb shock. This is the difference between (Nigerians and) other Africans.” (Cocaine trafficker Tambu: Lagos 06-08-2013)

Tambu’s comments are not the exception. Throughout my fieldwork, a number of Nigerian traffickers shared the same view. They comment that Nigerians are hardened individuals, or ‘shock absorbers,’ because of their colonial experience under Britain, their experience with civil wars, dictators, poverty, and corruption (as discussed in Chapter 2). Many Nigerians traffickers stressed that their entrepreneurial skills and their hardened perspective on life formed by Nigeria’s chaotic environment have helped them establish a worldwide network.

Many Nigerian traffickers have settled in some cocaine production, transit, and consuming countries. Collaboration with their local counterparts, Nigerian traffickers, like Tambu have exploited the interconnectedness between the legal and illegal commercial activities in supplying South American cocaine through Nigeria and other countries in sub-Saharan Africa to demands in Europe and beyond. Nigerian traffickers have exploited several

⁴⁰ “Oyibo” is a Nigerian expression for a Caucasian. It is not derogatory. It is just a word used to identify a “white” person.

macro- and micro-competitive advantages and shipping methods to reach destination markets with success. They steadily move small and medium quantities of South American cocaine to contacts in destination countries, sometimes never even touching down in Nigeria. The cocaine may go directly to contacts worldwide, who are also part of the Nigerian trafficking network. Implying that the perfect match between Nigerian traffickers ‘shock absorbers’ and their foreign associate ‘Oyibo’ underlines this shift in international cocaine trafficking through West Africa.

3.3 Success crowned

Nigerian cocaine traffickers crown their achievement for several reasons including that intensified interdictions have made it harder for Colombian and Mexican cartels to move cocaine directly to the U.S. or European markets. The changing global cocaine markets and declining value of the U.S. dollar comparative to the Euro, herds Latin American traffickers to look for alternative routes. The success of Colombian governments in disrupting the activities of FAC cartel resulted in an upsurge of desperate smaller groups like Negras or Aguilas seeking partners elsewhere. Nigerian international traffickers ended up being their best match, resulting in at least 50 tons of cocaine being shipped annually to Europe via West Africa (UNODC, 2013).

The new trend of illicit cocaine trade has also succeeded because traffickers have taken advantage of Africa’s proximity to cocaine production nations across the Atlantic Ocean, permeable borders, volatility, poverty, corruption, and weak law enforcement. Braun (2009) averred that due to poorly equipped police, military, and intelligence institutions and infrastructure, West Africa’s borders of more than 2,600 miles of coastline remain mostly unguarded and porous, and several governments have feeble legal and judicial structures and inefficient customs authorities.⁴¹ Traveling from to Port of Santos, Brazil to Port of Lagos (Apapa), Nigeria takes about 19 days, and straight from South Africa to the Gulf of Guinea is only a 2-day journey by boat, or a about 6 hours flight (Carson, 2009).

Nigerian traffickers claim that smuggling cocaine through Nigeria’s—or neighboring—seaports is successful due to ineffective policing and corruption. Nigerian international cocaine traffickers deploy various shipping methods like containerized concealments in different packages and goods, postage using conventional mail services, and the drug courier approach.

3.3.1 Cultural (eating) habits

Nigerians have developed particular methods that make it easier for them to ingest wrapped cocaine for air travel. These include what Nigerians popularly refer to as the swallowing practice, which prepares them for the ingestion of wrapped cocaine, or ‘suicide balls,’ as they are popularly referred to amid Nigerian traffickers. Frequently, interviewed traffickers pointed out that an important factor encouraging the ‘enthusiasm’ of Nigerian cocaine traffickers is the culture of swallowing certain staple foods, such as *fufu*, which is widespread in Western and sub-Saharan African countries. *Fufu* is a thick dough-like food made by boiling and pounding starchy edible root such as cassava, yam, cocoyam, maize, and/or plantain, and then served with soups or stews.

⁴¹ What is the security situation really like in some West African countries? Cops without ink pens and paper, much less radios, automobiles, guns and ammunition; border guards without uniforms, not to mention basic checkpoint facilities and contraband detection equipment; militaries often led by the toughest thugs money can buy; and intelligence service operatives who blend seamlessly in with the bad guys, because they are working directly for, or in conjunction with, the bad guys (Braun, 2009).

The traditional way of eating *fufu* is to pinch off a small-sized ball of *fufu* in the right hand, making an indentation in the ball with the thumb in order to use as a scoop for the stew or soup. Among several ethnic groups in Nigeria, the ball is often not chewed but swallowed whole since chewing *fufu* is considered impolite. This practice is acquired even at young age: swallowing *fufu* starts at about two years old. Whereas for the Nigerian traffickers it was a big factor that aided the move to ingest balls of cocaine.

Ingesting anabolics like Ketamine given to cows in Nigeria enhances couriers' performance. They feel physically strong and emotionally ready due to their experiences that include taking analgesic and strength enhancing substances, which are easily available in Nigeria. They compare themselves to cows that walk unimaginable distances without resting, meaning that the courage, attitude, and emotions exhibited by many couriers of the Nigerian international cocaine traffickers, constitutes one of the undisputable features booking their success. In this sub-cultural strain context, the combination of hard physical work, consumption of pain relieving and strength enhancing medicine, coupled with the attractive financial reward from cocaine when successful, turned some individuals into dare-heart couriers ready to extend the limits of edge work, swallowing more cocaine. The larger quantity risked, the more they were compensated, either in money or in cocaine. As we shall see later in São Paulo, they see themselves as highly demanded materials.

Nigerian traffickers refer to cocaine pellets as 'suicide balls,' due to the chance of cocaine balls busting in the stomach. One kilogram of cocaine costs about 500 U.S. dollars to wrap. For a good wrap, the procedure is as follows: inspect the condom for visible openings. Then weigh about 10–20 grams of cocaine with a small spoon and put it at the end part of a condom. Press down the content and twist the condom a couple of times while holding the edge. Double fold the condom, then close and seal the top by heating with a lighter. In some cases, the condom is wrapped in aluminum foil to throw off any machine that might be able to detect it. The final step is to seal the pellet with black solo-tape, about three or four times round. A well-sealed pellet should remain sunk at the bottom of the basin. If it floats to the surface, it means that it's not air-sealed. If there is an opening on it somewhere, there is a high risk of it busting in the stomach. In this case, it has a defect and should be unpacked and redone.

If it is well sealed, it can be swallowed with the help of slippery sauces, such as okra⁴² vegetable soup, made of finely crushed okra to which water is added. Likewise, it is encouraged for couriers to slightly cover the surface of the wrapped ball with some *fufu* before swallowing so that the digestive acids in the stomach only attack the *fufu* and disregard the cocaine ball. Swallowing the cocaine can take hours. Couriers tend to eat light during trip to avoid needing to use the toilet. Finally, upon arrival at the destination, couriers excrete the swallowed balls. Drinking milk assists excretion, and the process can last for several hours, if not days.

In addition to swallowing, also prominent amid Nigerian cocaine traffickers is the *kele* trafficking method, which consists of anal or vaginal insertion of the cocaine: "initially the system was common with girls and women but it became known among guys." In the *kele* system, the quantity trafficked is less, fluctuating from few grams to about one kilogram. The average is about one kilogram; otherwise, it becomes difficult to walk, according to most couriers.

⁴² Botanically called *Abelmoschus esculentus*, okra is also known as *lady finger*; popular nutritious vegetables of North-Eastern Africa origin. Usually gathered and used while the pods are green, tender, and at immature stage. (Rodrappa, 2009).

3.4 Cocaine consumption and retail in Nigeria

Cocaine is sold and used in Nigerian cities like Lagos, Abuja, and Aba, to mention only a few. The consumption trend seemed to be stabilized in North America and Western and Central European markets, which accounts for roughly one half of cocaine users worldwide, and it's increasing in Africa. According to UNODC, as of 2011, about 17 million people used cocaine at least once in the previous year, equivalent to 0.37 percent of the global population aged 15–64, implying that Latin America, the Caribbean, and Africa collectively account for 6.2 million users or 36 percent of the global total. Contrary to popular belief, cocaine and heroin are no longer out of the reach of the common man.

I observed standby dealers retailing tiny raps or grams of cocaine to its users in Lagos. Crack is available for 100 Naira, (little less than \$0.50 USD) from a young retailer of about 22 years old. Owo, one of my contacts during fieldwork, sold a gram of pure cocaine for 10,000 Naira. Owo and his friends' lives revolve around crack cocaine dealing, one fix after another in search of the ultimate high. They seem unconcerned about arrest. Owo had this to say:

“Dicey! Do not worry because the police collect their share of the “cake” (money) and some even buy it too. My guys are capable of anything. They will deal with anyone suspect of menacing their interest.” (Owo: Lagos, 10-08-2013)

Over the past decade, Nigeria has become a major importer of cocaine including by-products of the refinement process, notably crack (Klein, 1994). In Lagos “joints or bunks” are confined names for places where drug users hang out. Such are located in grimy environments in Lagos Island (around Mandila’s Square, the Central Mosque) and also near hectic streets in Ajegunle, Agege, Ikeja, Mushin, and Shomolu (Figure 4).

Figure 4. City of Lagos
(Source: Google Map Ajegunle Lagos State)



Usually, many law-abiding citizens who are scared of being attacked or confronted with the social problem avoid such places.

Cocaine is becoming more available for use within the hinterland, places without any direct air link where it may be easy to access illicit drugs on transit. Each year the U.S. deals with a loss of about \$70 billion USD due to drug-related crimes, illnesses, and death.

Drug-related crimes result in the steady increase of arrests. Drug addicts are generally unaware of the damage that drug abuse has on their family, education, health, and their neighborhood (Youngquist, 2000). The NDLEA’s Demand Reduction Directorate has reinvigorated its school-oriented programs and other programs targeting youth, professional truck and bus drivers, sex workers, community leaders, and transport workers. In 2013, the

NDLEA counseled and rehabilitated 3,350 drug addicts up from 2,493 in 2012, most of whom were marijuana users, as averred by the International Narcotics Control Strategy Report (INCSR, 2014).

3.4.1 Street dealing: Price and cutting

Cocaine is expensive in the Nigerian market, attracting a price conservatively approximated at \$32.5 USD per gram. Once the cocaine crosses the Atlantic, the price skyrockets because a gram of the street priced cocaine fetches about \$62 USD in Britain and the Netherlands, and \$87 USD in Germany, according to UN World Drug Report (2011). The price also rises because transporting cocaine is a risky job—the hardest in the cocaine trade because deceiving customs and police agents is a constant challenge (Bodrero, 2013).

For a good financial return for the risk taken, Nigerian cocaine traffickers often mix pure cocaine with other readily available chemicals, as traffickers often serve as manufacturing precursors.⁴³ Even a small dealer like Owo tries to get some of this money by retailing cocaine. On a hot afternoon in Idumota in Lagos Island during fieldwork, while lighting a small piece of crack in a small pipe, the second fix in about 20 minutes interval, he stated, “Bros! them dey cut coke too much here oh. For me, I cut my own. What they sell for street is shit” [Brother or friend! Cocaine is adulterated too much here. What is sold on the street is shit] (Owo: Lagos, 10-08-2013).

Nigerian traffickers cut the cocaine with up to 45 percent of other chemicals, depending of the quality of the initial product. Pure cocaine is in high demand in Nigeria because it is adulterated prior to re-exportation to markets overseas. Researcher Steve Down in England, Dean Ames of the Forensic Science Service’s drugs intelligence advisor, underlined that cocaine is heavily cut with other substances, including anaesthetics and animal worming agents. Police seizures of cocaine in 2009 averaged 27% purity, with some as low as 5% according to recent cocaine trade reports in Britain.⁴⁴ Adulterants imitate some of the biological effects of cocaine to increase its perceived quality, and diluents act as simple fillers to enhance the bulk, and consequently the profits of the drug dealer. Distinctive adulterants include caffeine, and anesthetics such as procaine, lidocaine, and benzocaine. For good returns on investment local dealers adulterate cocaine further. Adaki stated, “I cut my ‘market’ (cocaine) with procaine, which I buy here in Lagos and cut pure cocaine to 60%. I must double the gain” (Adaki: Lagos, 27-11-2013).

People can buy cheap cocaine at hidden corners in any city, fuelling a market estimated at about \$85 billion USD annually (UNODC, 2011).

3.5 ‘White market’ and the ‘big catch’

Lagos is the largest city in Nigeria, home to the country’s largest seaport and the gateway of Nigeria’s economic activity. It is also the hub of criminality and cocaine trafficking. Lagos Island is the commercial heart of the city, where most of the corporate businesses are located. While there is criminality in most parts of Lagos, Ajegunle and Lagos Island areas are of special interest to cocaine trafficking. This is due to the fact that the slums of Ajegunle guarantee a steady pool of potential traffickers, while the Lagos Island hosts the Idumota market, which is the big wholesale for imported goods covertly exploited by some cocaine

⁴³ ATS precursor chemicals were seized at the scene including 41 kilograms of ephedrine, five kilograms of methamphetamine and laboratory equipment. Arrest of Bolivian nationals involved indicates a successful partnership between Nigerian international drug traffickers and their South American criminal syndicates (UNODC, 2012).

⁴⁴ See, House of Commons Home Affairs Committee (2010, February 23). *The Cocaine Trade: Seventh Report of Session 2009–10*.

traffickers. In Nigeria, *ahia ocha* is the term for the cocaine trafficking business. This is the ‘white market,’ the buying and selling in the business of cocaine. In the Igbo language, *Igbu ozu* was used during hunting for food as a term for ‘killing an animal.’ While it is still a common expression, it is now used to express success and achievements among the Igbo and business people. Likewise, cocaine traffickers also deploy the expression when deals are successful. When used in trafficking, *igbu ozu* can indicate that the shipment has been received in good condition in Nigeria or elsewhere. It can also mean that the courier(s) have arrived safely or that expected money payment is collected. Finally, it is used as a term for making a ‘big catch’ or a big sale.

3.5.1 Actors: Categories of Nigerian traffickers

The major actors can be divided into six groups: (1) *Oga* (‘big man’) large-scale smuggler; (2) small-scale traffickers or entrepreneurs deploying the services; (3) strikes, (4) ‘suicide birds’ or couriers; (5) part-time couriers/‘freelance’ traffickers; and (6) retailers—as we have discussed above under consumption. However, as is often the case with any illicit network, it is difficult to separate these groups since actors can play roles in two different stages of cocaine trafficking. Identifying these six levels and the Nigerian participation in each of them will assist to illustrate the complexity and heterogeneity of such an involvement (avoiding simple pictures that hardly distinguish amongst the people engaged) in terms of background, chances, skills, commitments, expectations, social and labor relations, power and gender differences, etc. What follows categorizes and explains the roles of each of the types of brokers and distributors, having created market at wholesale, small quantity, and retail levels.

3.5.2 ‘Big man’ smuggler

In popular discussions among Nigerian traffickers, ‘big man’ smuggler includes elite of all sorts in public and private sectors, both indigenous or of foreign origins in the country. Amid established entrepreneurs of various general import and export companies, hotels, and manufacturing businesses. As smugglers they have money or the ‘reversed’ social capital, offered by the structured Nigerian organized crime as mentioned previously, to import large quantity of cocaine or other drugs that small traffickers cannot import. Nigerian ‘big man’, large-scale cocaine smugglers include individuals among the hundreds of thousands of foreigners, popularly referred to as *Oyibo JJC*. According to interviewees, several small-scale traffickers told me their dream is to become a successful *Oga* (or graduate as they express it). The parlance *Oga* or *Oga pata pata* or *Oga madam* could mean boss, senior, or person in charge, but it is also used to indicate the status of a wealthy person. In Nigeria status and titles are important. *Oga*, *Alhaji* and *Chief* are examples. When inadequately addressed by subordinates they feel disrespected. In regards cocaine, you have to please *Oga* if you want to have access to cocaine imported by *Oga*, because *Oga* would not assist someone who disrespects him.

Several Nigerian traffickers told me that they strive to succeed as brokers for a Latin American cocaine Boss because as it offers a once in a lifetime opportunity. One major reason for this is that Nigerian traffickers receive large amounts of cash or at least 10% of the cocaine shipment as payment for services. One way that South American and Asian cartels have fostered their operations is by residing and partnering with local associates in establishing front companies and illegal networks to facilitate drug trafficking, storage space, safe houses, banking, among others—not only in Nigeria but also in several African countries like Guinea-Bissau, Ghana, and South Africa. Members of Mexican, Colombian, Venezuelan, Surinamese, and European organizations are operating in the same territory and protecting

shipments and making deals. Already in 2007 Africa was operational base for about nine top-tier South American and Mexican drug trafficking groups and several own residences and diversified businesses particularly in West Africa (Farah, 2009). A clear indication of this is the seizures of methamphetamine manufacturing facilities near Lagos in July 2011 and February 2012, which led to the arrest of Nigerian and Bolivian traffickers (NDLEA, 2012).

As fieldwork reveals, these trafficking methods exist until uncovered. An interview with experienced, wealthy big man smugglers reveals that Nigerian traffickers have deployed containerized smuggling of cocaine and heroin since the late 1980s. Sometimes containers take two or three months to get into Nigeria. Lately, it attracted the attention of intelligence, as in the case of Nigerian brokers in Brazil. Some successful Nigerian big man smugglers told me that big deliveries are made by cargo ships, including crude oil vessels. Oga Dede stated, “Route and plan change as the ‘law’ moves in. Have you heard of *Shark couriers*?” he asked (Oga Dede: Lagos, 15-10-2013). Analysis of fieldwork information highlights that ‘sharks’ work on the ships and they move in tons of cocaine, not in containers but in various special made cavities in the ships. The same mechanism that assists them to move cocaine into Nigeria from various Latin American countries such as Brazil, re-forwards it to different destinations abroad, including the Netherlands and China. In Nigeria, there are several reasons that contribute to this. Corruption in Tin Can Port Lagos enhances illicit smuggling of cocaine by allowing regular trade crimes that involve concealment of true goods and quantity, under-declaration, and under-invoicing by importers in order to short-pay government. This is a regular crime in which government loses revenue every year. Checkmating such shortcomings remains difficult due to the activities of Nigerian organized crime as mentioned previously.

Resulting in Nigerian posts that some unscrupulous custom officers clearing some containers without undergoing necessary processes. Consequently, the seaport has a poor image, a place where anything goes. For instance, 450.4 kilo of cocaine from Chile, neatly concealed in customized floor wood inside a container was cleared and taken to a private warehouse in Lagos.⁴⁵ This underlines the strong collaboration between direct and indirect ‘big men’ Nigerian traffickers—because the 20-foot container was opened, thoroughly examined, and confirmed to contain only processed wood and other furniture materials. Whereas the numerous agencies engaged in cargo examination and release processes at the Tin-Can Island Port are frantically trying to redeem their battered images, the Taiwanese trafficker, was sentenced to 30 years of imprisonment by a federal high court sitting in Lagos and his Chinese conspirator to 18 years. The three Nigerian clearing agents alleged to be their accomplices, were discharged and acquitted due to lack of evidence.⁴⁶

The achievements of the ‘Big man’ or Nigerian international cocaine trafficker draw on well-structured, organized Nigerian crime. In trying to pinpoint organized crime and the roots within criminological theory, Ruggiero (1993) summarizes that the interpretation of organized crime illustrates an extraordinary continuity in time. For over a century its aetiology has been based on categories such as: tradition and absence of the state (Lombroso); ‘cancer,’ pathology and lack of control (Durkheim); the lower classes’ adaptation (Merton); disorganization and cultural deviance (Chicago School); learning processes involving selected individuals (Edwin Sutherland); and delinquent subculture (Cohen; Cloward; and Ohlin).⁴⁷ Emphasized is that all these groupings plunge in diverse degrees, within a paradigm of

⁴⁵ Cocaine SAGA: Tin-Can Customs and others agencies fail to redeem image in the wake of the 450.4 kilograms of cocaine import from Chile by Chinese and Taiwanese business men: a 62 year old importer of textiles and shopping bags, and his 54 year old co-national, timber merchant. The container slipped through their noses and was successfully intercepted by the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) in a warehouse in Orile-Iganmu, Lagos. See Ship and Ports (2010); NDLEA (2010, August 4).

⁴⁶ See, The Street Journal: 08-07-2011.

⁴⁷ See, Zaitch and van Houdt’s (2005) Transnational Organized Crime-the concept and the case of God’s own medicine.

deficit, whereby the causes reside where a dearth exists: be it one of control, socialization, opportunities, rationality, etc. The concepts of ‘deficit’—social and material deprivation, traditional and absence of state and social control deficit amongst others—are persistently used to explain organized crime, as Ruggiero 1993 writes, but they fail to uncover why certain deviances become ‘organized’ and why certain ‘deficits’ do not lead to deviance or clearly block the chances to succeed as a criminal. For instance, as mentioned in chapter 2, geo-political factors are crucial for a group or region to succeed illicit activities, less as social problems (backwardness, poverty, wars) than in terms of social advantages (good natural resources, modern economic infrastructures, know-how, good connections, and the likes). In fact, “organized crime can only reproduce itself if it develops external relationship with street crime, collective clienteles, power structures, and the legal economy and society at large” (Ruggiero 1996: 33). He further stresses that “organized crime thus could be interpreted as an outcome of unfettered production, generated less by a deficit than a hypertrophy of opportunities. It could be seen as the effect of the gigantic and uncontrolled proliferation of ways in which status can be achieved; as an outcome of development rather than the consequences of underdevelopment” (Ruggiero, 1993, p. 135). This might explain why some of the wealthiest drug dealers in the world are ethnic Dutchmen (Siegel & Bovenkerk, 2001).

This implies that organized crime and society are linked symbolically and exchanged materially in Nigeria. The illegal world has a meaningful relationship with the legal world as between organized crime and the legitimate societal context, there are usually all sorts of ‘interfaces,’ and the relationships between legality and illegality are by no means necessarily antagonistic or aimed at avoiding one another. Instead of operating in a social vacuum, organized crime has a habit of interacting with its social environment (Van de Bunt et al. 2014)

Ebbe (2012, pp. 169–189) highlighted that heads of states in Nigeria have a propensity to run the country like crime bosses. He traced the etiology of Nigerian organized crime, structured at various levels of the society comprising of head of state/politicians, state governors/ministers, federal government departments and business organized crimes. Organized crime manifests in the endemic culture of public administrators or ‘middlemen’ that secure 10–20% in bribes for enhancing deals is popular in Nigeria, operating top down from federal government ministry to lower departments. Subsidiary departments collect illegal money through bribes. Captured by Ebbe’s work, “the leaders of these sub-departments send part of the illegal money to their immediate bosses, and their bosses send some to the permanent secretary or to the minister of the department in order to secure their positions.” In effect, bribery and corruption are the modus operandi in public offices including the Customs and Excise Office and the law enforcement agents (Siegel & van de Bunt, 2012, p. 181). This is why measures and laws meant to fight Nigerian international cocaine trafficking and corruption remain mostly meaningless due to lack of political will and capacity to implement them, resulting often in confiscated cocaine vanishing instead of being destroyed, anti-drug control agents aiding smugglers and some Nigerian cocaine traffickers remaining ‘untouchable,’ due to privilege. As with the Chinese/Nigerian ‘big man’ cocaine traffickers without the persistence of USDEA intelligence, it was a success. This shows that the immunity enjoyed by large-scale Nigerian cocaine traffickers is due to their skill in undermining the work of the anti-drug agents through systematic corruption driven by persistent organized crime. To avoid impunity, the U.S. anti-drug agent DEA, extradites arrested traffickers to face justice in the U.S. rather than in Africa, where the chances of avoiding persecution is high.

In all, the Nigerian ‘big man’ smugglers are responsible for importing and exporting large quantities of cocaine. Their success is powered by Nigerian organized crime and endemic corruption; a mentality structured at all levels of the government departments. They

represent a role model, fueling the activities of the Nigerian cocaine small traffickers that not only assist large-scale importers but also deploy the same advantage to participate in the international illicit cocaine trade.

3.5.3 Small traffickers

Traffickers importing about three to 20 kilos of cocaine of their own characterize this group.⁴⁸ Among these are educated and uneducated, female and mostly male entrepreneurs engaged in the import of cocaine concealed amid varied goods, as well as deploying the services of strikes and couriers, or ‘Suicide Birds,’ to import and export less than two kilograms of cocaine from Nigeria. Among the several reasons underscoring their success are: first, they have close and trustworthy individuals to perform such a risky task because recruits remain accountable if apprehended and will not implicate them, or in case of dirty play, they could target the associates or courier’s relatives for pay back, retribution, or reimbursement. Second, the courier sees their participation as a favor, a personal assistance to progression in life and achieving the societal values. Keep in mind the Nigerian dream discussed in Chapter 1. All of this is reminiscent of Merton but where, in a late modern context, the implosion of the wider culture on the local is dramatically increased (Young, 2007). Third, there is a pool of frustrated individuals longing to take the risk, as dedicated, pushed not only by negative personal circumstances like deprivation, unemployment, debts, social exclusion, or specific calamities, but also by a more ‘positive’ mechanism—the pressure for upward mobility in the context of violent competition and overnight turnovers in which successful role models have made it by illegal means. Fourth, as entrepreneurs, they have the ability to plan, coordinate, and execute numerous multifaceted responsibilities involved in business transactions and liquidity management. These tasks often entail the deployment of many human and material resources: skilled and unskilled labor force, communication devices, entrance to restricted areas, cars or other vehicles, houses, hotel rooms, warehouses, import firms, local contacts with wholesalers, and resources to move and deal with large cash amounts (Zaitch, 2002).

Small-scale traffickers are mostly found in markets in Nigeria including Lagos, Kano, Onitsha, Benin, Aba, and Port Harcourt. In Lagos for instance, they are found not only amongst entrepreneurs in shoe and jewelry imports or some men and women importers of textile materials in Idumota market, but also amid importers of electronics, furniture, building materials, car dealers, and suppliers of varied items to cosmetic and pharmaceutical manufacturers in others markets as well.

For instance, Teku has his legal business located in the Idumota market, one of the busiest wholesale markets in Lagos Island frequented by traders from all over West Africa. We agreed to meet in a restaurant close to his shop that many businessmen and women frequent for lunch. As we were eating, mobile telephones were ringing at random in the restaurant. People kept discussing openly in locale languages or broken English issues related to cargo goods, shipment in containers, or about clearing of their containers forwarded from various parts of the world. While at first it seemed like legitimate business, from time to time, they jokingly called each other names, one man sitting three tables away from us called his friend who had just arrived ‘Alhaji Escobar’ his friend replied: “I am OK, Mr. Peru” (Teku: Lagos: 07-10-2013).

During the phone conversations, some discussed their business transactions, including

⁴⁸ In June 2014, the Cross River State Command of the NDLEA on operation at the Inland waterways of Calabar, arrested a 26 years old Nigerian man based in Cameroon for trafficking 6.3kg of cocaine; concealed in six factory-sealed ladies handbags (Mudiaga, 2014).

-A 32-year-old Nigerian man was arrested by NDLEA on March 26, 2014 at the Young Shall Grow Motor Park at Iddo, Lagos, for the possession of 17.8kg kilograms of cocaine intended for export. He was sentenced by a Federal High Court in Lagos to three years imprisonment (News Agency of Nigeria [NAN] (2014, June 3).

ahia ocha (white market or cocaine) and *ahia oji* (black market or heroin). I also heard names of cities and like Guangzhou (China), São Paulo (Brazil), Amsterdam, Napoli, and others.

This highlights the relevance of cell phones as important characteristic of the new trend illicit cocaine trade. Paradoxically, a will to restrict its use for security reasons clashes with more objective needs: personal meetings can be even more dangerous, transactions lack the standardized and bureaucratic procedures and channels available to legal trade, and imperfect or false information force people to stay in touch regularly. Moreover, unexpected changes and improvisation are such common features in the business that traders have to be 'online' to check, confirm, or repeat instructions. After all, deals involving millions of dollars are closed by pure verbal communication (Zaitch, 2002). The 43 year-old Teku, a successful *Oga*, imports shoes from Italy, Spain, China, and Brazil and owns three trading companies in Lagos. But he is also a successful cocaine smuggler. Teku states:

“Business is business. I really do not feel bad doing cocaine. It’s a commodity in demand. *So wetin you dey talk?* [So what are they talking about]? Things spoiled right from the top. We are in Nigeria, money talks! It’s whom you know.” (Successful cocaine trafficker Teku: Lagos, 07-10-2013)

Teku, like many others, is aware that cocaine is an illegal trade. He told me that cocaine trafficking ‘business’ is like the time, which no one can stop because scanning all goods or even big ships moving in and out of Nigerian ports remains an impossible task. Applying Skye and Matza’s (1957) neutralization technique,⁴⁹ Teku sees his illicit cocaine trading not intrinsically as crime. He and his friends contribute money to make bulky order of desirable goods that meets the target. After all, if six kilos of cocaine is reworked into 12 pairs of shoes, it’s successful, but if it’s not illicit, why conceal it?

They pointed basically to the Nigerian ‘state crisis’ and villainous IMF’s Structural Adjustment Programs (SPA), which led to a series of macro-economic policies change that rigorously bankrupt Nigerians and strangled businesses and industrialization.⁵⁰ Teku and friends were pharmaceutical petty traders who sold medicine like tranquilizers, anabolic steroids, and analgesics. They accumulated expertise on their functions. With this knowledge and frustrations combined, Teku couriered for some big man traffickers for a few years and moved up to well-established ‘businessmen.’ This evokes that through experience, individuals gradually internalize external structures (fields and its rules), providing them with a sense of how to act in everyday life (Kraschl, 2008). This may actually facilitate the spread of deviant behaviors in severely disadvantaged communities. Many Nigerian smugglers confirm these arguments. Another successful Nigeria illicit cocaine trader, Eketé explained to me:

“The West is like a crocodile. They cry while they are swallowing you up. These days it’s all about Nigerians. Common man! Did you say you’re living in Holland? There are

⁴⁹ Drawing on Arthur Sutherland’s Differential Association theory which states that an individual learns criminal behavior through “(a) techniques of committing crimes and (b) motives, drives, rationalizations, and attitudes” which go against law-abiding actions, Neutralization is defined as a technique, which allows the person to rationalize or justify a criminal act. There are five techniques of neutralization: denial of responsibility, denial of injury, denial of victim, condemnation of the condemners, and the appeal to higher loyalties (Sykes & Matza, 1957, p. 664).

⁵⁰ Trade liberalization, downsizing of the public sector and currency devaluation. Between 1985 and 1999 the Nigerian currency lost 99% of its value, and inflation was an average of more than 200% high (Meagher & Yunusa, 1996). Also Promulgation of Decree number 21 by Nigerian government in 1988 to regularize the pharmaceutical sector by the National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and control (NAFDAC), was an attempt to eradicate fake medicines out of sales and distribution in the open markets and streets by unlicensed dealers (Erhun, Babalola, & Erhun, 2001). This move displaced many people who were previously self-employed in the sector who could not employ the services of a pharmacists, as required by the new regulation of the NAFDAC.

plenty of Dutch people in Brazil doing that shit! Also the Germans, Italians, Spanish, Lebanese and the rest are involved. All they are worried is that Africans have discovered it and making it. Well let them know that we are fighting poverty through this. They used every thing at their disposal to make money and are still doing it covertly. What is happening to Nigeria have everything to do with some western countries hunger for money and hypocrisy.” (Nigerian trader Eketete: Lagos, 08-11-2012)

These justifications are often heard from many traffickers. They see their activities as just one part of a larger culture of corruption that exists in Nigeria. In effect, given the historical, economic and social fraud, ‘a shadow state,’ in which rulers draw authority “from their abilities to control markets and their material rewards” (Reno, 1995, p. 3). They simply are attempting to obtain wealth. They see cocaine trafficking not as an illicit activity in their world characterized by oppression, poverty, inequalities and relative deprivation, but as a means of obtaining their own share, wealth and power in that society. As for the illegitimacy, the new trend cocaine traffickers frequently “view the black market as the only way to redistribute wealth from the north to the south, arguing that mainstream commercial channels are effectively occupied” (Shaw, 2001, p. 66). In her research on drug couriers in Britain, Green (1996, p. 18) puts all the emphasis on the relative poverty and economic hardship impelling couriers into trafficking. Though recognizable, these factors alone do not explain why they are pushed to deviate from mainstream survival strategies.

Decades of studies carried out on both crime and causalities by many institutions and experts indicate that there is always a small percentage of people in all societies who deliberately choose to commit deviant activities or to live as a career criminal (Wolfgang et al., 1972; Greenwood & Abrahamse, 1982). Between 1979–83 under Shagari government, one of the most corrupt briberies/outright fraud and theft of public funds became invasive. The country accumulated \$8 billion USD of external debt, as multinational corporations, foreign entrepreneurs, and international freelance business criminals engaged in many diverse kinds of fraud: over-invoicing, falsification of import and foreign exchange transactions and assisting public officials in laundering ill-gotten money into foreign bank accounts (Shaw, 2003). As research revealed, it is worth noting in the context of this discussion on the growth of organized criminal networks originating from Nigeria that many Nigerians hold the West responsible for the decline of the country. That, for many, has provided justification for their involvement in criminal activities, often mentioned in interviewee Nigerian traffickers. The more this allegation lingers, the more discuss throughout, and cocaine trafficking has attracted individuals from all social and economic backgrounds.

3.5.4 Strikers

Owo is one of my main contacts in Lagos during fieldwork, and is regarded by many as the “Number One” striker. His experience in trafficking has allowed him to move up the ranks. He has been into cocaine trafficking since 1982, and has served time in jail four times in various countries in Europe and the U.S.. Owo explains:

“Actually I went in there good and came out totally bad. Worst than ever because I made a lot of friends in the prison from Latin America, The U.S., Europe, Asia and Africa. Then, learnt a lot about cocaine, heroin, crack and speed. As courier, I made my contacts, travelled and packaged my ‘thing’ myself, swallowed and brought it back myself.” (Cocaine Striker Owo: Lagos, 16-12-2012)

He dropped out of secondary school after his second year in Lagos because no one could pay his school fees following his father’s death, and after an eight-year apprenticeship in

pharmaceutical distribution company in Lagos, his boss settled him in 1980 with a start capital of just 600 naira (then an equivalent of about 200 USD). Lured by a friend, Owo became a drug courier. While this underlines the role of vulnerability and the importance of education, a supportive family and discipline, however, he also became successful and powerful in his business dealings.

One of the striker's most important tasks is the recruitment of couriers or *Nunnu* ('Suicide birds' as expressed by Nigerian cocaine traffickers). An important feature of the Nigerian system that makes effective police detection so difficult is that the use of independent specialists provides a vital cutout between the top level of operation and the humble courier (Ellis, 2009). Full time strikers are highly valued and well respected among cocaine traffickers because they possess detailed information about many, if not all, details concerned with cocaine trafficking, from recruitment and counseling of new couriers to procurement of cocaine, traveling documents and routes, vast prison experience, and contacts all over the world.

In Lagos, traffickers do not look for couriers because there are lots of them. It is a 'soldier go, soldier come' thing, as expressed by most strikers. It's comparable to a battlefield because there will be casualties. This is why successful Nigerian cocaine traffickers sponsor as many couriers as possible so that some *crowns*, or succeed to evade control. Strikers claim that most couriers are aware of it except the *mugu* [stupid]. The problem is not finding couriers, but sorting out the ones that can carry above one kilogram of cocaine. Potential couriers advertise themselves according to the quantity swallowed. In Lagos, Owo has several people who are his agents for recruiting good couriers. They play their role as middleman and through this way they will make some commission from the owner of the cocaine and also from the courier.

3.5.5. Entering the 'birds' (couriers) nest

The use of couriers on commercial air flights is a favored technique of West African groups worldwide (UNODC, 2007), that helps them import and re-export cocaine. Through this they control their business as important partners in distribution of small quantities of cocaine in some consuming markets. The wholesale cocaine trade with Europe is subjugated largely by Colombian organizations that generally work with Spanish distribution networks, although lately they do it more often with Nigerian and Moroccan gangs (Brombacher & Maihold, 2009). Many cocaine traffickers themselves refer to Nigerian slums as the breeding ground for low-level drug couriers. For instance, Apapa is one of the important areas in Lagos because it's home to the largest port of the country, and also one of those breeding grounds. While the center of Apapa is wealthy, it is surrounded by some of the poorest slums in Lagos. One of those slums is Ajegunle (ironically, Lagosians point out that the real meaning of the name Ajegunle is 'residence of wealth' or 'a land of commerce'). Though its population remains an estimate, one source indicated that with about 555,000 inhabitants, it is popularly known as the ghetto city of Lagos State.⁵¹ Slum dwellers occupy irregular settlements, squatter housing, unauthorized land developments, as well as rooms and flats in dilapidated and uncompleted buildings. Nigeria has a fair share of these irregular settlements where there growth is 4.23% with urban population in 2007.⁵²

More notably, however, Ajegunle usually evokes thoughts about poverty and crime. In such places, I found desperate individuals who said they would want to become drug

⁵¹ Paradigm Initiative Nigeria (PIN). KIVs in Ajegunle: A Report of the Activities of Korean Internet Volunteers in Ajegunle.

⁵² See for instance Akinwale, Adeneye, Musa, Oyedeji, Sulyman, Oyefara, Adejoh, and Adeneye (2013).

couriers just to escape from Nigeria, underlining what is often heard from amid traffickers that they do not look for low-level couriers because there are lots of them readily available. Many aspiring traffickers expressed the fact that Nigeria is already difficult to live in for the pool of frustrated people and consequently it does not matter much if they risk their lives with this method or migrate abroad to earn money. Nigeria's ineffectiveness in addressing poverty has encouraged some youth into illicit drug trafficking and other crimes. Most of them do not have the skills required for any employment. This condition has resulted in cheap price placed on labor and on their lives. Many youths are ready to undertake risks for a price lower than anything (Udama, 2013).

Additionally, whether through hearsay or through their own rationalization, many think that airports overseas are just as ill-equipped for detecting couriers as those in Nigeria. For example, Ada stated:

“Life is already unbearable in this country. It's a country where you can lose your life any time and nobody cares. Didn't you see some dead body on the roads in Lagos? For me I better become a courier, gain some money or use it as way to migrate abroad.” (Nigerian female Ada: Lagos, 26-10-2012)

It is common to see the same disregard for human life Ada mentions. During my fieldwork on October 7, 2010, while I was on my way to Lagos Island for interviews, a dead body was lying on the Eko Bridge that leads to Idumota. The body was half crushed by car and nobody seemed to care. This shocking sight reveals the dismissiveness by many for human life (and death) in Nigeria. Similarly, Owo's observations about 'Suicide birds' or couriers also demonstrate this dismissiveness. Owo notes that: Nigeria is a 'battlefield' that will inevitably have 'casualties.' However, rather than considering the effects of this disregard for human life, he dismisses these casualties only as an element of the business. Many complain about the hopelessness of life in Nigeria, and Ada's observations reflect the destitution and poverty that most Nigerians face with many believing they are simply destined to die anyway so they have nothing to lose by trafficking, especially when assisted otherwise.

3.5.6 Part-time couriers/ 'freelance' traffickers

No one talks about being a full-time trafficker; most noted that it sounds too negative, even in Nigeria. No one wants to be known as a smuggler of cocaine alone because of its nature. It's something that goes hand-in-hand with a conventional business. Despite engaging it, they prefer not to be known as doing only that. Thus, even for those who are fully involved as career traffickers and dealers still preferred not to carry the heavy weight of being called a full-time cocaine trafficker. Instead, being a 'part-time' trafficker is more common.

'Drug courier' primarily evokes exploited persons. However, it is not limited to only poor male and female individuals from the slums. I found that all sorts of individuals have been involved as part time drug couriers. Ranging from despairing young men and women of urban areas to considerably well-established migrants in cocaine consuming nations, from acquaintances, friends or family members of drug traffickers to low and middle class adults willing to move upwards, from adventurers to discreet personnel, but also stranded students deprived study grants and work possibilities. This compounds the attraction of these freelance traffickers because of availability of cocaine at the wholesale market in Nigeria. Categories of traffickers invest their savings, or contribute money together, to purchase up to a kilo of cocaine or more. For instance, raised up in a Latin American country, Eketé has the right nationality, language, appearance, and contacts. Trafficking freelance, he established his

business in Lagos and travels often to other countries for work. He invests also in other part-timers. Eketé stated:

“First you start by thinking to do it only once. Then you make the first money and you discover that it is possible. Then you do it again and again. It is like this, once you start it’s hard to go back so you combine it with your normal activity.” (Cocaine trafficker Eketé: Lagos, 05-10-2011)

While involving persons of usually with residence, debts, good contacts in Nigerian and a taste for conspicuous consumption or even some VIP frequent flyers with local support and a strong sense of invulnerability. I could hardly find any stable Nigerian professional living in the Netherlands, Brazil, China, Germany, or the USA as legal alien that would work as a courier. On the other hand, since it is rather difficult to get a visa for a simple courier, the new trend traffickers and strikers look for citizens of rich nations, someone with a second nationality or a permit to stay in rich nations, a relative to visit, a course or study to follow, and so on. As demonstrated by Table 2 (Appendix), eight of the nine couriers arrested at Schiphol airport Amsterdam in 2011 were residing overseas.

In his work on Colombian traffickers, Zaitch (2002) averred that in many occasions, they have improved their educational levels, but their expectations are truncated either by denied access to the labor market or by unsatisfactory jobs in terms of personal aims and achievements. Similarly, I found amid Nigerian international cocaine traffickers, individuals of both sexes, but mostly male from lower or middle class, usually adults in charge of a household, several having specific acute financial problems, whereas others just facing few projections for the future. Underscoring the risk of middle-class family of generations of traffickers, the Nigeria couple arrested for having used their six year-old twins in smuggling about four kilograms of cocaine at MMIA Lagos in 2010, had a supper market in an elite part of Lagos, owned a set of 50 million, and had traveled to London 17 times since 2006 under the guise of holiday or visit.⁵³ Their reason for carrying drugs was that they were swindled of N2.2 million and needed to smuggle the drugs to enable them pay the school fees of their children.

During fieldwork, I noticed that on average, traffickers are aware of the dangerous nature of the job, but their discernment is often diminished by a number of conditions. Risk is often talked down by the suffering of a misfortune, a too fatalistic or too positive attitude towards adversity, the excitement of potential rewards, a strong identification with surrounding successful couriers, or the trust endowed to friends and relatives who often mediate in the recruitment. Zaitch (2002) affirms that cocaine exporters with an active policy of misinformation further promote these mechanisms. They do that by denying controls, lying about the freight, trivializing the risks around the delivery, and even hiding the fact that they will be denounced to the police. The levels of creativity that drug traffickers have shown, displays their determination and keep law enforcement on their toes. The things that they are willing to employ to successfully get their illicit drugs past the most difficult of security measures is mind blowing.

⁵³ NDLEA arrested a couple, Mr. Jimoh Bashir and Mrs. Mulikat Adebukola, who used their six-year-old twins in smuggling cocaine at MMIA Lagos: the family was arrested with 4.050 kilograms of cocaine prior to boarding a flight to London Heathrow. During screening 350gr of cocaine were found on each on the children pants, while 3.350 kilograms was found on their mother private part (Ehigiator, 2010).

3.6 How ‘actors’ evade control

Several Nigerian cocaine traffickers claim that despite increased control at major Nigerian airports, assisting couriers to avoid control is no big deal. They claim NDLEA’s efforts mostly succeed in arresting novice traffickers who either dare risk, did not want to pay, and/or paid the wrong contact person or ‘agent.’ Otherwise, the agent paid did not settle colleagues appropriately. Deployment of couriers that swallowed cocaine balls is rampant, and involves all sorts of individuals from various social, professional, and economical backgrounds. This is why any person can be suspected and taken for a drug scan test, but also why Nigerian traffickers achieve.

On a return trip to the Netherlands in October 2010 during fieldwork, departing from Lagos international airport, subjection to a drug control scan by NDLEA Officer Nafiu offered me a unique chance for observation. At the last custom check and police control, I was among the eight men randomly picked up for a scanning test that lasted about 20 minutes. “You can go, the result is negative,” said another NDLEA officer who showed me the stomach x-ray on computer screen. Two out of the eight men had positive results to which they admitted. Demonstrating the chance that several other couriers not picked up escaped control. This is the chance exploited by Nigerian cocaine traffickers. Because given the availability of army of potential couriers, a further reason characterizing the new trend illicit trade is the chance of evading arrest at entry and departure points (see Table 1. Destination of drug couriers arrested by NDLEA at MMIA, Lagos, in 2011; Appendix 1):

This table shows that the influx of drug into Nigeria when compared to outward movement of couriers is about 21.21%, which indicates the fact that Nigeria is still being used mostly as a transit nation. The United States tops the list of outward destinations of the couriers from Nigeria. Followed by Malaysia and United Kingdom.

Whereas no courier was reported apprehended by NDLEA to the Netherlands in 2011, records on cocaine couriers arrested by KMAR Schiphol Airport⁵⁴ Amsterdam in the same year, shows that nine couriers were apprehended from flights that departed Nigeria: six from Lagos and three from Abuja (see Table 2. Schiphol Airport Amsterdam: Data drugs couriers, Nigeria 2011; Appendix 1).

This means that Nigerian cocaine traffickers evade control for several reasons. Firstly, the flow of a huge number of people through Lagos airport makes interdiction difficult. This is because good border management seeks to balance the competing goals of primarily facilitating and even expediting access for people and goods that are both needed and desired, with secondarily interdicting and stopping ‘bad’ people and ‘bad’ things. Traffickers succeed due to difficulties of the anti-drug agents to accurately and efficiently identify high-risk passengers and cargo, target them for inspection, and prevent the entry of dangerous goods and people without impeding the flow of legitimate cross-border traffic (Lake, Robinson, & Seghetti, 2005). Secondly, deploying organized crime influences bribery among Nigerian cocaine traffickers, who buy their safety when crossing couriers at control points.

‘Pushing the courier,’ as popularly expressed. Most traffickers claim they pay between a \$500 and 1,000 USD bribe for a courier to evade control at the airport in Lagos. Distinctive is their air courier tactic called ‘shotgun method,’ or the ‘battlefield approach’ as many express it. Placing as many as 24 couriers sent on a single flight, as we shall discuss in Brazil, conscious that some may be apprehend. Several interviewee ex-convict couriers claim the owner of the cocaine betrayed them by purposely informing anti-drug control agents to arrest

⁵⁴ Koninklijke Marechaussee, District Schiphol—The Duct Military Police (2014).

them so as to let other couriers proceed. “Sacrificed” as expressed by Nigerian cocaine traffickers.

In all, the above approaches represent strategies that enhance the achievements of Nigerian traffickers deploying couriers. They have established in many countries in sub-Saharan Africa that offer excellent transport and criminogenic environment for imported cocaine to be repacked and re-exported to markets abroad, be it Togo, Ivory Coast, Ghana, Angola, Uganda or South Africa, but also in Brazil and China. One of the reasons why traffickers avoid direct flights to their destinations is to ward off suspicion because of 100% control measures on all passengers on flights from Nigeria and sometimes to reduce cost and increase chances of success.

3.7 Indirect actors: Relatives, friends, and acquaintances

It became apparent that many of the relations between cocaine traffickers were based on maintaining and making further contacts that could help them in their business. This consisted of talking about business connections, inquiring about earlier encounters, friends, acquaintances and friends of friends. Their focus was on establishing effective, reliable and trustworthy links among the various players in the ‘business.’ In certain circles some talked about *white market* and how to use each other’s social capital; in other contexts they discussed relationships, such as powerful people in key positions—‘*long leg*’ or ‘*Ibrahim*’ (*a godfather or godmother*) as popularly called in Nigeria. In these situations, it was also common to hear stories about someone’s relative, friend, or acquaintances who ‘got into problems’ (e.g. was arrested or jailed for drug trafficking conviction). Likewise, there were also discussions, arguments and speculations about the reason why the person got into problems. It is clear that Nigerians talk openly about cocaine business and issues when in the right environments.

As has been shown throughout the interviews, cocaine traffickers and many potential traffickers stressed that the cocaine business in the country is succeeding thanks to the good social relation the trade has developed within the larger Nigerian society. They argue that it has become part and parcel of doing business in Nigeria for many people. Moreover, it has provided work opportunities and financial reward directly or indirectly for people connected with the business such as transporters, clearing agents, warehousing facilities, customs officers, police, and many others. Some businessmen and women have invested the financial proceeds into creating further employment opportunities and providing financial means to unemployed, elderly, and young family members.

In contrast to the notion of big cocaine gangs, barons, and syndicates, as has been posited by law enforcement and government intelligence agencies and academics, this research has observed that those involved in the cocaine trafficking business in Nigeria operate using small networks of couriers and middlemen in exploiting cocaine trade in Nigeria and abroad. Within Nigeria, they frequently form groups based upon regional, ethnic or friend groups. Above all, due to the secret nature of the transactions, trustworthy or reliable partners and contact persons are essential instruments.

One important way to build trust is through the intervention of a trusted third party who can introduce or recommend a newcomer. Observers point out that drug traffickers operate in networks of people who know each other very well, and work on the basis of faith and friendship. Cocaine entrepreneurs have many ways of constructing trust: First and foremost, trust is established, making use of relatives and close friends (Zaitch, 2002). Also, reciprocal trust between criminals is more important than between business people, likely because of the severe consequences such as jail or even death. For instance, among some traffickers and their friends during a traditional marriage ceremony in Lagos during fieldwork,

people were observed arguing about disappointments from trusted contacts and friends. Maïke noted:

“I trusted Nnanna but he embezzled my money. He ran away with my 1.8 kilos of pure cocaine. To this day I have not seen him and I heard that he is living illegally in London. I complained to his father. He promised to settle the case and asked me to cool down.”
(cocaine trafficker Maïke: Lagos, 14-03-2010)

Because of the nature of cocaine trafficking, traitors are not brought to the police. To avoid violence following burned bridges of trust, family members of those held responsible, reimburse financially, or with property. Otherwise, kidnapping and violence results in evidenced amid Nigerian cocaine traffickers in Brazil and China especially. Whereas most traffickers said they are conscious about who to trust, illicit cocaine adds to already established trust. One needs plenty of trust and not just trust alone.

This is a view shared by many individuals engaged in cocaine trafficking in Nigeria (and abroad). Many stressed the importance of working with close relatives, friends, and acquaintances with good recommendations. Evoking the concepts of strong and weak ties, as we shall discuss in the chapters ahead. Most traffickers discussed that they work together with between two and five individuals who collaborate with each other in a flexible manner. At the same time, they make use of services from others based on strong recommendations within their reverse social capital networks. In this way, transactions with the various actors involved are based on trustworthy oral agreements and financial reward. In this sense, trust, confidence, and flexibility are what cements all deals between individuals that can trace themselves back to their villages and even families in Nigeria

3.7.1 No specific chain of command

In contrast to the dominant notion of big cocaine gangs, barons, and syndicates, this research has observed that Nigerian international cocaine traffickers are a network with no specific corporate structure or chain of command. This suggests that Nigerian traffickers are dissimilar to criminal organizations that follow the ‘godfather,’ mafia-type corporate model, with obvious hierarchies and divisions of labor, that seek to monopolize criminal enterprises nationally and internationally (involved in prostitution rings, drug trafficking, gambling casinos and offshore banks amongst others) and to have symbiotic relationship with the government that could gradually assume political and administrative functions.⁵⁵

The new trend traffickers go along the enterprise model instead. In part, this is also a reflection of the activities in which they are betrothed in—these are many, interconnected and overlap with each other. Loose and often temporary alliances or associations formed around specific ‘projects.’ Individuals or small groups of people are best described as nodal points in a larger web of criminal activity. They adhere to propose flexible and adaptive networks that expand and contract to deal with the uncertainties of the illicit enterprise. Nigerian cocaine traffickers organize to the extent that they can effectively carry out activities practically. They recall other research on the entrepreneurial character of organized crime in Nigeria amongst others, which underscore the transitory alliances of bold risk takers who seize opportunities to make large profits on investments akin to drug trafficking.⁵⁶ Furthermore, apart from a rather small core group, most are brought in as needed to provide special services.

These underline the reasons why Nigerians from varied backgrounds are involved in the lucrative cocaine trade be it in Nigeria, Brazil, and China. The responsibility, ability, and

⁵⁵ See for example Zhang and Chin (2002), Nikiforov (1993).

⁵⁶ A good example in this area includes Siegel and van de Bund (2012, p. 169), Chin and Zhang (2007), Shaw (2003).

risks vary. Likewise, the actors involved in ‘white market’ and their chances of ‘big catch’ as expressed by Nigerian traffickers are also variable in their roles.

3.8 Ritual priests and pastors

Important are the non-trafficking actors who, while not actively participating in the trafficking process themselves, condone and assist the Nigerian cocaine business. One group in particular is the ritual priests and pastors, who are frequently involved in ‘absolving’ traffickers and couriers of their sins or bless their journeys to their final locations. Mbiti observed that priests have an incredible influence on society, and play an important role in West African societies, including Nigeria. “Traditional priests are found in Uganda, Tanzania, Nigeria, Ghana, and other parts of West Africa, where people had or have temples and cults associated with major spirits or divinities” (Mbiti, 1975, p. 159).

Consequently, as pointed out by several traffickers, they frequently use religious rituals like blessings or prayers or Juju/voodoo ceremonies, which they believe will enhance their mental and emotional mindset needed for overcoming the risk fear involved in trafficking act. For instance, this may involve the consultation of ritual priests or fortune-tellers in invoking ancestral magical powers or the use of artifacts and symbols as protective mechanisms to boost their ‘luck’ in avoiding detection by law enforcement agents at entry or exit points or to prevent swallowed cocaine balls from bursting in the stomach.

However, religious rituals may also be used as a fear mechanism. For instance, the big-man trafficker or *Oga* forced courier Owo to swear oaths of allegiance to him that if broken would result in harm coming to them or their families through the ceremonial ritual. Research points to the misuse of religious practices by trafficking rings in Africa (Siegel, 2007; Bovenkerk, 2001) and Latin America to seek out supernatural protection and guidance. In the U.S. for example, federal authorities have discovered indigenous practices of Nigerian Juju, West African voodoo, and Latin folk magic being used to maintain control of organizations and keep victims of trafficking in silence (Kail, 2008). However, the use of indigenous religious beliefs and natural powers invocation is not only limited to the Nigerian cocaine traffickers; the practice may also be linked to police officials, for instance the Mexican police in Tijuana occasionally turn to voodoo in an attempt to win the desperate battle against violent drug cartels (Hough, 2010).

In popular discussions in Nigeria, people explained that witchcraft and magic are an integral part of the culture, even amid Nigerian inmates in Brazil, as we shall see. Sorcery, witchcraft (evil employment of mystical powers), medicine men, and priests still play an important role in the life of many Africans. Indeed, ritual priests or witch doctors often amass fortunes, and often end up with official designations, enjoying the direct exercise of power (Vermaat, 2010; Etounga-Manguelle, 2000). Nigerians are open about the role voodoo or juju plays in the daily lives of people, and some traffickers interviewed indicated that there is frequent consultation of traditional religious priests.

Several cocaine traffickers told me that it is normal, upon request from some pastors, to say prayers and exercise fasting in order to be successful. For instance, from the holy bible: Sam 7, 35 or 51; and ordered to fast from 6am to 12pm and pray at midnight for twenty-one days. Many couriers indicated the importance of receiving some blessing and powerful words from some pastors or preachers prior to their undertaking cocaine deals and trips; for example, Chika stated:

“I always consult my pastor to do a special prayer for me so that deals and travels go well. The pastor of my church has special powers and things do move well for me with his prayers and blessing. So I am open with the pastor about my cocaine trafficking. He pray

had for me anytime I swallow and travel. Above all through prayers he receives special power from Jehovah. He sees a lot through dreams and advices me when or when not to travel. I know that friends also relay on the prayers of their priests as an addition means of protection. It's God who gives good luck and money. So that's why I need prayers from a powerful priest." (Cocaine trafficker Chika: Lagos, 12-03-2010)

But there are some who are wary of these services, as Owo demonstrates:

"Yes prayers and pastors are part of the business. But I have seen it all! For me one thing is clear, *"not all that glitters is gold."* I have my doubts about the so-called powers of the pastors and their dubious ways of performing miracles. Prior to my trips to the U.S. and to Holland, I consulted my pastor. He prayed, and downloaded all those spiritual emotions and mental preparation in Jesus" name. He cited all sorts of quotations from the bible and gave me lots more prayers to say before going to bed and as first thing each morning." (Cocaine striker Owo: Lagos, 12-03-2010).

Yet Owo was caught and jailed for cocaine trafficking several times. Nonetheless, the practice persists because some traffickers call up wives, girl friends, or relatives to say midnight prayers together. In some 'churches' in Lagos, Amsterdam, São Paulo and Melaka, pastors persuade 'flamboyant guys' to give ample donations and 10% tide from financial proceeds in order to 'provoke' God to enhance more substantial returns. God has always forgiven sinners, otherwise the world could have been no more, one pastor told me during fieldwork in Lagos. Observers point that some contemporarily religions are geared by competition and a customer-driven approach to salvation (Katukani, 2009): One unique 'American-style religion' of 'pastorpreneurs,' has begun to spread around the world, with both American and local pastors building mega-churches and entrepreneurial empires. In this view, Nigerians pastors have realized spiritual game, "In God we Trust: All Others Pay Cash" (Shepherd, 1991), ignoring its costs. It is about the nature of Nigerian illicit cocaine or drug trade based not only on the covert demand and supply, but also a mental phenomenon as traffickers could draw on help from various social capitals—intentionally or unintentionally from family, friends, acquaintances, ritual priest or fake pastors, to mention but a few.

In this view, Nigerian cocaine traffickers have realized spiritual game. They have gotten it that the rule is 'In God we trust, but for every other thing pay cash' just like the say in the U.S. Educated, the pastors have understood the psychology of the drug traffickers. They want hope and courage to undertake the risky 'job.' He or she wants to be given hope, and what is that hope? The hope is God. The request is to pray more. In this way they are lured into believing that by praying more they become successful. In the act, the little he has goes with the wind, as an offering. Whereas 10% tide is usual successful cocaine traffickers buy car for the pastor as fieldwork information reveals.

But the point is that heaven helps those who help themselves, because even God said it that by the sweat of their brows they shall feed, invariably telling us that we have to work hard before we can feed ourselves. But if the pastor tells cocaine traffickers his church will be empty and there will be no offering. On the other hand however, it is the nature of Nigerian international cocaine trade, which with the help of family, friends, acquaintances, some pastors, and priests of Juju/Voodoo. Nigerian traffickers have used their social capital to create international networks throughout the Nigerian Diaspora, which will be explored next.

3.9 Summary

British colonialists started with the cultivation trials of coca plants in Nigeria, which later expanded to a globalized Nigerian international cocaine trafficking. A trans ethnic illicit trade even involves some Nigerian top army officers, already in early 1970s. In Nigeria, the Elite did not only lay foundation for the on-going democratization of cocaine trade and consumption, but also the mentality amid Nigerian traffickers that it is not wrong. The illicit trade is embedded in the contacts at all levels in the country; most got involved without having criminal tendency whereby drug-related crimes steadily increase.

Nigeria is now not only transit country, but also a consumer market in the making. Cocaine consumption is becoming common in Nigeria because cocaine is locally available and easily adulterated with substances manufactured in Nigeria. This makes “cocaine” and by-products obtainable at cheap prices on the street. The Nigerian cocaine business is intermingled in the contemporary globalized mainstream commercial activities. They have created market at wholesale, small quantity, and retail levels.

The achievement of Nigerian cocaine traffickers is crowned also due a numbers of cultural habits. Delicates and swallowing habit of staple food, like *fufu*, has accredited Nigerians traffickers with popularizing courier approach, ingesting cocaine pellets. Another important role and an incredible influence in the Nigerian society concern the traditional priests and pastors. They do not underrate their role in bond-varied participants and encourage traffickers to overcome the fear, thereby playing an indirect role in their success.

In Nigeria status and titles are important. Oga, Alhaji, and Chief when inadequately addressed by subordinates it is disrespectful. This work distinguishes its major actors into six clusters: (1) *Oga* (‘big man’) large-scale smuggler, (2) small scale traffickers or entrepreneurs deploying the services, (3) strikes, (4) ‘suicide birds’ or couriers, (5) part-time couriers/ ‘freelance’ traffickers and (6) retailers. It is difficult to separate these groups as actors can play roles in different stages of cocaine trafficking.

Different actors form loose and ad-hoc alliances made up from all background and race around specific cocaine transactions. Individuals willing to undertake the risk underline the distinctive air courier tactic, the ‘shotgun method’ or ‘battlefield approach.’ Endemic bribery and kickback aid Nigerian cocaine traffickers to evade control at entry and departure points, in pursuit of the ‘Nigerian Dream.’

Section 2
Brazil Connection

Chapter 4

Historical background: Nigerian cocaine traffickers in São Paulo

4.1 Introduction

This chapter is divided into two parts: the first focuses on the historical background, the second on Nigerian cocaine traffickers' activities in São Paulo (SP).

The two countries are trade partners, dating back centuries, brought together by the illicit trade of human beings, to the present day business in natural resources and manufactured goods. The Catholic Church declared a 'holy war' in 1452 to justify the capture and supplying of African slaves to meet the needs of labor demand in the sugar plantations of the new world.⁵⁷

After the abolition of slave trade in 1888 in Brazil (Khapoya, 2010; Shareef, 1998; Klein, 2014), the historic resettlement in Nigeria of the freed slaves or returnees from Latin America and other countries had a great impact on the country as well as in the one they left behind. Brazil shifted its diplomacy from subservience to Portuguese colonial interests, formalized in the 1953 *Luso-Brazilian Treaty of Friendship and Consultation*, to support for African Nationalist aspirations. Underlining Brazil's connection amongst others in terms of its strong cultural and linguistic ties with Africa.⁵⁸

The international slave trade created an African Diaspora in the Americas and the Indian Ocean world, and the presence of blacks in South America has meant that present-day West African travelers to South America are not racially out of place (Akyeampong, 2005). I observed amid Nigerians in Amsterdam during the 2014 World Cup in Brazil, that some people were making mobile phone calls to relatives, friends and acquaintances or business partners in Brazil during exciting moments of the match. Likewise, in such instance, it was remarkable to hear some cocaine traffickers who take advantage of the moment mobile telephone call to gain some information from business partners in São Paulo. For instance, Aka inquired, "Brother, how much is 'market' now? Oh! 5.2, is ok. We talk later" (Aka Amsterdam: 12-07-2014).

Zooming into the excitement of Aka and others will provide insight into the nature of Nigeria cocaine traffickers in Brazil further on. Through fieldwork findings, their role within the pressing questions on smuggling of cocaine globally from SP will be emphasized by the traffickers themselves, since they have the ability to both corroborate as well as contradict published information by researchers and law enforcement agents.

Explained next are accounts of the historical background that links both nations. The resettlement of the returnees from Brazil and other places in Nigeria was affected by their socio-cultural, educational, and economic contributions in the country they returned to, as well as its impact in the one they left behind.

4.2 Historical information

Brazil's relations with Africa date from the beginning of the slave trade following the discovery of the new world by Christopher Columbus in 1492. As averred by Tunde

⁵⁷ See, for instance Shareef (1998), paragraph: The Portuguese and African Slavery in Bahia. See also Harris (1998).

⁵⁸ For details consult for example Forrest (1982, p. 3).

Babawale the Portuguese landed in Lagos around 1444 and the city derived its name from the Portuguese language. The direct shipment of slaves from Africa initiated in 1532 and by late sixteenth century, almost 80 percent of the slaves from West Africa were taken to the Americas, particularly Brazil (Babawale, 2008).

Various academic works and publications exist regarding the Atlantic Slave Trade, Africa and African Diaspora relations like Reis (1995) and Law (1977). Slavery implemented by the Portuguese, Spanish, Dutch, French, British, and their African associates was responsible for the wide exhaustion of the continent's productive human capital. Slaves were abducted, commercialized, brutalized, and exploited for centuries in gold and silver mines, sugar plantations, and industrial production in the Americas for centuries. In all cases, the ultimate goal was monetary accumulation and acquisition of power at all means.

In pursuit of wealth, critics point out that some ex-slaves participated in the lucrative slave trade and made fortunes from it. For instance, Domingo Martinez, the mulatto who, due to his close connection with Yoruba chiefs, became one of the tarnished slave traders in the nineteenth century (Kopytoff, 1965). What motivates someone who suffered the atrocities of slavery to abduct and sell others as slaves? Why engage in it knowing that it was illegal and immoral? This brings us to the same inquiry that lingers in connection with the present day illicit cocaine trafficking trend among Nigerians. As demonstrated by several individuals in this research, morality plays a lesser role compared to attaining power and making money.

The atrocities of this illicit trade, resilience and perseverance of Africans, the revolutions in Latin America and the Caribbean until its abolition in 1888 in Brazil are documented.⁵⁹

These works emphasize the repatriation movement to Africa that took place between the 1840s and 1860s and the harsh discriminative post-slavery environment after the abolition of slavery forced many slaves from different parts of the world to seek prosperity and security elsewhere, especially in West African countries like Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Liberia, Ghana, or Togo.

The returnees that engaged in slave trade became neo-colonial entrepreneurs. However, their wealth did not translate to much because of the nature of the trade. In a trade controlled by the colonial mentality, most of the money went abroad due to the fact that slavery was substituted with colonization and Nigeria's inability to shake off the neo-colonial mentality that keeps Nigerian 'state crisis' in place. This implies that colonialism-directed trade and travel from Nigeria to the Western metropolis, creates different patterns of movement.

4.3 The returnees' influence in Nigeria

In their journeys to and from Nigeria the returnees, or freed slaves, did not only create new African societies in both regions, but they also affected cultural, economical and political factors. On the other side of the Atlantic, the slaves were the cultural survivors that made enormous cultural impact on the Brazilian society.

My research displays that since most of the returnees were of Yoruba descent, they chose to resettle in Yoruba-populated areas in West Africa including Togo, Benin Republic, Ghana, and Nigeria. In regards to Brazil and Nigeria, by the middle of the nineteenth century there was a regular flow of thousands of Bahian ex-slaves especially into Lagos and Abiokute, and the hinterland of Nigeria including Benin City, Onitsha, Port Harcourt, and Calabar

⁵⁹Amongst the various publication existing in this area includes those of Barry, Soumonni and Sansone (2008); Afigbo (2006); Melanie (1998); Brown and Lovejoy (2010); Thornton (1998).

among others.⁶⁰ They resettled in the central part of the Lagos Island called *Popo Aguda*, hence they were known as *Agudas*—their counterpart from Sierra Leone, *Saros*.

There is wide spread of Yoruba language, or its hybrid, and the religious worship like *Candonbele* are imbibed in the Brazilian social life in Bahia as observed during fieldwork. During the worship, they make sacrifices, beat drums and sing Yoruba folklores. *Abada*⁶¹ dress is common in these rituals.

4.3.1 Socio-cultural influences

Socio-cultural influences are seen in architectural design. Roofing made of bricks and facades, remains in Lagos on the few historical buildings that still exist. David Aradeon pointed out in *The Unmaking of Tradition*, that the style created a new building type in Nigeria. The Shitta Bey Mosque was derived and developed from Brazilian religious architecture.⁶² Regardless of this legacy, the question that lingers is: where is the sense of respect for the Nigeria's cultural heritage? But the old heart of Aguda is no exception in this sense, because it only reflects the general lack of culture or maintenance in Nigeria.

Another socio-cultural influence the returnees initiated, is the Brazilian-style annual street-carnival in Lagos⁶³ that started in Lafiaji in 1937 and was instrumental in attracting the Second World Black and African Festival of Arts and Culture (FESTAC 1977), held in Lagos in January 1977 (UNESCO, 1977).

Furthermore, Portuguese and English surnames are common in Nigeria including Da Rocha, Da Silva, Fernandez, Pears, Ranson, Kutu, Macaulay, etc. Brazilian returnees sang songs in Portuguese, greet each other with Brazilian expressions, and enjoy dishes cooked with a mix of Brazilian heritage and African flavors.

The 84-year-old granddaughter of Da Rocha said to me, "I appreciate that you are digging into the past connection between Nigeria and Brazil" (Lagos: 02-09-2011). She explained that Brazilian returnees did not only popularized the agricultural produce cassava, which is an important staple food in Nigeria but equally the spread of Christianity and the maintenance of Islam and local African religions.

4.3.2 Knowledge and political influences

The returnees contributed immensely to the advancement of knowledge and politics in Nigeria. Whereas those from Sierra Leone (*Saros*) impacted much in the fields of education and politics, their counterparts from Brazil or Latin America (*Agudas*) contributed mostly in the areas of business and craftsmanship, as emphasized by Dr. Pears.⁶⁴ He made a program with the Nigerian Television (NTV) in the '70s called *My Lagos* on the history of Lagos.

Privileged access to education allowed most returnees to enter into professional careers as lawyers, doctors, and politicians. For instance, Sir Adeyemo Alakija, the son of freedman Marcolino Assunção, became one of the founding fathers of the first Nigerian political party, the Action Group (AG). Additionally lawyer, Bode Thomas, was a financier of the AG the political party.⁶⁵ Mr. Festus Marinho was the former Nigerian National

⁶⁰ See for example Araujo (2011), Otero (2010), Cunha, da (1985), Olint (1970)

⁶¹ "Abadá" is a word popular to people who do capoeira and to people who've marched in Bahian Carnival *blocos*. In capoeira it refers to the pants worn and in Carnival terms it refers to the shirt/shorts combination that marks one as a member of a particular *bloco*. The word is derived from the Yoruba *agbada* which is a long robe (see Salvador Central, 2015)

⁶² See for instance Aradeon (1996), Alinta (2013), Bay and Mann (2013), Oshodi (2010).

⁶³ See Bella Naija (2011, May 18)

⁶⁴ Dr. Gabriel Adetokunbo Pearse: Senior Lecturer African, Afro American and Caribbean Literature and Culture; Department of English, University of Lagos, Akoka, Yaba- Lagos, Nigeria.

⁶⁵ See, Chief Bode Thomas Biography. He left a legacy of integrity. He was deputy leader of Action Group (AG), a member of the House of Representatives and Federal Minister. See The Nation (2008, November 24).

Petroleum Corporation (NNPC)‘s Managing Director. The famous Nigerian Musician, Fela Kuti’s families were renowned medical doctors and his mother was the first woman to own and drive a car in Nigeria (Ajayi, 1969; Han, 2010). Through their activities as teachers, nurses, doctors, civil servants, and politicians the returnees contributed to the development of knowledge and politics in Nigeria.

4.3.3 Economic influences

The returnees also made a significant economic contribution to the societies where they resettled. As the commercial heart of Nigeria, Lagos was already transformed in the late eighteenth century, from subsistence economy into a complex slave-dominated commercial system, where slave trade brought abundant wealth not only to the ruler of Lagos,—from the tolls and customs duties levied on European slave traders—but also to the well-connected elite. Brazilian returnees were good entrepreneurs and artisans whom their services were in demand and many were already in business in Brazil. Having brought money, they made more through investment. Examples include the families of Da Rocha and Fernandez.⁶⁶

Kosoko, the ruler of Lagos, adopted a freed slave Oshodi Landuji and made him the chief customs collector and interpreter. The rich entrepreneur freed-slave, Muhammad Shitta-Bey, financed the building of the Central Mosque in Lagos (Aradeon, 1996) by himself in 1892. In this area, several publications emphasized that returnees enjoyed privileged status from the British colonists that led to wealth. Prior to 1914 the British ruled Nigeria through councils (1849–1860), through the chartered company like the Royal Niger Company (1861–1900), and through the aggressive policy of indirect rule in their quest for total domination and annexation of Yoruba-land and the hinterland areas of ‘Nigeria.’ To help this agenda, the British exploited the returnees as intermediary. In order to secure their cooperation, they were rewarded for their expedient relationship with land allocation in Lagos, the ‘desired’ British education, and raised elite status in colonial Lagos (see Ebe, 2000; da Cunha, 1985).

Several returnees became wealthy entrepreneurs who engaged in the regular shipping lines and commerce that flourished from Bahia or established factories in Lagos. Captured in the book, *The Water House* (Olinto, 1985), the Da Rocha family became successful in business by selling water in Lagos. All the economic contributions of the returnees pioneered the fact that as at 2012 Brazil is Nigeria’s fifth export trade partner after the U.S., India, the Netherlands and Spain (CIA, 2014).

4.3.4 A Brazilian returnees’ descendant’s current point of view

My Contacts Herbert and Uche were participants to the interactive conversation (on 30 August 2011) with Brazilian descendants Antonio, Paulo, and Tunde. While enjoying some cold beer and locale delicacy *Suya* (hot and spicy roasted beef) in Gbobaniyi Center, my in-depth chat with Antonio and his friends enlightened the research more. The focus of our discussion became the moral/immoral question of some ex-slaves (or freedmen) in the same slave trade and the contemporary Nigerian international cocaine trafficking. The reality is that there is still slavery in Nigeria in one way or the other:

“Have you not heard about kidnapped children, rescued from human traffickers in Nigeria,” Antonio asked me? It’s in the media in Nigeria and those involved do it for money⁶⁷.

⁶⁶ See, Weboga, (2014, January 24) My Books: Nigeria’s most reclusive Billionaire, Oluwo Antonio Deinde Fernandez.

⁶⁷ Unicef estimates that human trafficking is more lucrative than any other trade in West Africa except guns and drugs. The streets of Nigeria are teeming with trafficked children. Of the hundreds of thousands of street kids living rough in Nigeria’s oil rich cities, perhaps 40% have been bought and sold at sometime. The girls most frequently sold into domestic service, or

Though decadent, but will go on as long as they could get way with it. The point is that there is poverty in Nigeria and it is getting worst every day. This country is in a big mess and there is unemployment, so some people must survive either through legal or illegal means, inclusive cocaine trafficking.” (Returnees’ descendant Antonio: Lagos, 30-08-2011)

Whereas slavery persists indirectly in Nigeria, the new trend illicit cocaine trafficking continues because such youth constitutes a pool of would-be traffickers exploitable by worldwide connection of Nigerian cocaine traffickers. I was asked, *is there any country where Nigerians do not live?* It was pointed out that if you travel to a country and there is no Nigerian found living there, it means that the place is not adequate for human beings. An important factor that contributed to this is the slave trade itself. The trade fostered widespread of Nigerians descendants or offspring in Latin America, Caribbean, North America, Europe, and Asia. The learned respondent Tunde added:

“Cocaine business is about linking people and getting ‘it’ across. They will not tell you that it is a criminal thing. They see it as a business and it’s left for you to figure out the question of legality or illegality. Do you understand? Hunger and poverty can frustrate some to taking risks and doing all sorts of things for money. What matters is being able to survive. Europeans did it by all means. But cocaine trafficking should not be punished with death.”⁶⁸ (Businessman Tunde: Lagos 30-08-2011)

Nigerians are open about other current issues concerning international cocaine trafficking that make headlines. However, by maintaining that cocaine trafficking in Lagos or Nigeria at large is as in the Netherlands, England, USA, Brazil, etc., demonstrates the mentality that keeps the illicit trade in place.

4.3.5 Bridging the gap

Conclusively, most returnees set their goal towards entrepreneurship because of the desire for financial independence. However, it remained a contribution at the micro level that did not transform Nigeria into a sustainable economy. Many returnees have done well, but the following generations have not been as successful. Firstly, because most descendants of the returnees were privileged people who did not experience poverty, which meant they are not as desperate for success as the natives. Secondly, they are still culturally different because most of them are Christians and westernized. They were not close to the native traditions and ethnicity, which often causes them to feel displaced.

Recalling that when Nigeria was about to become independent, the returnees could not compete with the locals because they never had the desperate determination the natives brought to the fight. As descendant Dr. Pears puts it, “They often asked themselves, what am I killing myself for?” The same is seen in some of their children today. They start depending on their name and old glories that do not account for much anymore (Pears: Lagos 02-09-2011). In this area, despite being privileged and having access to public funds, where some returnees’ offspring succeeded, most went astray, carried along by the Nigerian state crisis that fosters the illicit trade.

prostitution, the boys into labor in plantations, or to hawk fruit and vegetables for 12 hours a day in an open air market. See Little (2004, April 17)

⁶⁸ In 1984, the Special Tribunal Decree No. 20 was promulgated by General Mohammadu Buhari’s regime, made retroactive and applied on three Nigerians: Bartholomew Owoh, Lawal Ojulope and Bernard Ogedengbe who committed drug offence before its promulgation. They were publicly executed on April 10, 1985 after being found guilty (Momodu, 2015).

Nevertheless, the returnees remain instrumental in grounding the flourished trader between the two countries. Contemporarily, Brazil has shifted outwardly in position as Nigeria's fourth main export destination after the U.S., EU and India. The total trade between the two countries recorded growth of 381.0% between 2003 and 2011. Brazil's exports grew by 153.8% and 451.1% imports during the period.⁶⁹ The illicit cocaine trade is entangled in the conventional trade. Based on the market forces of covert demand and supply, it is capable of inducing its actors in taking an ethical holiday.

4.4 Nigerian cocaine trafficking in São Paulo

Police at São Paulo airport arrested 24 male cocaine couriers trying to board a flight to Luanda, capital of Angola. All were carrying Nigeria passports... in less than a month after 23 other Nigerians were apprehended prior to departing for Luanda (Stone: 2011, August 3)

4.4.1 Prologue

The above news headlines are just a few of many regarding activities of the Nigerian international cocaine traffickers, including both production and transit countries. This part focuses on their participation in the areas of brokerage and exportation of South American cocaine from Brazil. Many publications exist on drug trafficking in Brazil and Latin America, and its socio-economic and political relations with the society.⁷⁰ Nevertheless, no substantial work is available on the nature of Nigerian involvement in the international cocaine trafficking that represents a drift in this area. As ethnography studies point out the importance of fieldwork, observation and data collection in gathering information close to the source provides the most comprehensive understanding (Ferrell, 2005; Zaitch et al., 2010). Engagement in São Paulo (SP) seeks to demonstrate unprecedented potential in providing discernment in the nature of Nigerian involvement in the international cocaine trade.

Next we shall discuss the influx of Nigerian traffickers, their involvement in cocaine and related crimes, their modus operandi, and their relationship with local partners. Nigerian cocaine traffickers refer to Brazil and other countries the region with the Igbo language mystic expression, *Benmuo* (Spirit's home) that underlines the risk involved: lengthy imprisonment, death due to bursting of ingested drugs, and attack or murder by criminal gangs. Nonetheless, it remains clear that Nigeria and Brazil are connected both in terms of continental drift theory or that of Global connections.⁷¹ Both countries found themselves as global hot spots for on-wards forwarding of Latin American cocaine to its lovers wherever their services are in demand; be it in Lagos, Johannesburg, Amsterdam, London, Toronto, and Guangzhou among others.

⁶⁹ See, Nigeria Brazil Business Summit 13th to 15th August 2013 in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

⁷⁰ See for instance Arias (2010, 2006); Penglase (2010); Mingardi (2001, 1999), Feffermann (2006).

⁷¹ The theory of continental drift asserts that Brazil and Nigeria were once plainly linked, before plate tectonics drew them apart. See, Stoneley (1966) in "The Niger Delta Region in the Light of the Theory of Continental Drift". See also Han's (2010) "Global Connections: What's up with Brazil and Nigeria?" Suggested in the theory is that, as the base of the contemporary geology, it could explain as seen on an atlas, that part of Brazil's fits tidily into the Africa continent. Also, it could clarify the fact that Brazil found oil offshore at the spot on facing side to Nigeria's oilfields. Furthermore, other similarities between the two countries include the fact that: both nations are federally administered, but with a strong presidency; share a strong warmly, friendly, and strong relationship; were already governed by military rulers and corruption and poverty is rampant in both nations; Brasilia and Abuja were built from scratch especially for the purpose of being their respective country's capital city.

4.4.2 Nigerian traffickers and São Paulo

According to several Nigerian traffickers, ‘their activities’ are happening in São Paulo (SP) more than in Rio. While SP lacks the natural charm of Rio, “it is precisely the Paulista economic dynamism that serves as the civic identity and pride of place,” but its rapid economic growth is unevenly spread among its population leading to deep-rooted social and economic disparities (Wu, 2012; Caldeira, 2000). Nonetheless, as interviews suggest, SP remains a bubbling city for both Nigerians (Ibo, Yoruba, Edo, Benin and so on) and other Africans from Ghana, Angola, Cameroon, South Africa or Congo. The actual number of Nigerians in SP or Brazil remains unknown. For instance, the Nigerian Community director told me that there are about 5,000 Nigerians living in SP (Kingsley Ikechukwu: SP, 10-01-2013).

However, due to the nature of the illicit trade and media attention it attracts, their number appears larger than reality. Contrary to the dominant view, Nigerians do not form ethnic enclaves in SP because they still maintain a small minority group. They are in a position of being neither predominantly proletarianised in the mainstream economy like the Japanese nor having a fully developed ethnic enclave economy as the Lebanese. This evokes some of the peculiarities of middlemen minorities described by Bonacich and Modell (1980) like strong ties with their homeland, visible levels of ethnic solidarity, urban favorites, low political participation, travel experience, hostility from the surrendering societies, and in some instances, the concentration of trade and entrepreneurial activities held in contempt by conventional economy. Furthermore, they lack other key aspects of middleman groups because they do not perform as real brokers between local elites and subordinated groups. In reality, Nigerians in SP are far from the “trading people with a history of traditional capitalism” (see Bonacich, 1973, pp. 591–592). They lack the language skills attributed to middlemen, and they push for assimilation through intermarriage or the education system, with relative success. A heterogeneous class and ethnic composition within the group often limits solidarity to level of kinship or locality of origin (see Zaitch, 2002).

4.4.3 Influx of ‘new generation’ Nigerians into São Paulo

My fieldwork shows that the recent trend of immigration to Brazil started in the early ’70s and ’80s, and has increased since then for many reasons. First, the Nigerian Federal government scholarship scheme that sent students to Canada, Poland, the USA, Italy, and others in late the 1970s, also brought some students to Brazil. From those that benefited, when finished, most stayed in Brazil, working professionally as lecturers, doctors, engineers, lawyers, etc. Among Nigerians in SP, it is said that they look at themselves as elites that do not want to associate with others. The teacher, Ropa stated:

“These new guys in town have something else in mind. Apparently there are here for a special reason and that’s totally different from our mind-set and behavior. So I do not want to identify with them in order to stay away from troubles. They do not give a damn, very loud and fighting opening and doing all sorts of things in the name of business, than doing normal work.” (Nigerian teacher in SP, Ropa: 15-12-2011)

To most Nigerian traffickers, the nostalgic world Ropa refers to is changed. It evokes Hutton’s (1995) notion that the shift from Fordism to Post-Fordism characterized by disentanglement of the world of work where the primary labor market of assured employment and safe careers decreases, the secondary labor market of short-term contracts, flexibility and insecurity increase, as well as the development of a larger lower class. To live in a world of high modernity, Giddens states, “has the feeling of riding a juggernaut” (1991, p. 28). It also

recalls Meagher and Yunusa's (1996), work that such alteration resulted in series of macro-economic policies changes that affected adversely the lives of the masses in Nigeria such as currency devaluation, trade liberalization, downsizing of the public sector, fiscal and governance reforms as discussed earlier. The persistence of this state crisis as ulterior part of experiences of late modernity, presents itself to Nigerian cocaine traffickers not only in the form of a chaos, reward, and identity, but also in the form of an incoherent sense of unfairness and ontological insecurity: a powerlessness to meet the heightened metanarratives of meritocracy and self-fulfillment, as emphasized by Young (2007, p. 59). Because the world is not what it used to be is perhaps the reason why the trafficker, Monkey No Fine (MNF), does not understand other Nigerians like Ropa who do not mind their business. MNF expressed:

“When we came here, I had plans for studying and seeking for a respectable life but not trafficking drugs. However since it became too difficult to survive without job, a friend suggested trying cocaine trafficking. That is how I started”. (Nigerian trafficker MNF: 20-12-2011)

Having discovered a way out, MNF calls upon close susceptible others to join the influx. Similarly, referring to migration of Brazilians into Japan, Higuchi (2006) emphasized that migrants from a certain village are canalized to a certain district of the destination through chain migration, which brings ‘transplanted’ social relations as well as residential concentration at destinations (Bodnar, 1985), and more or less continuous social relations that foster daughter communities in receiving countries (Massey, Alarcon, Durand, & González, 1987).

Furthermore, internal migration literature recognizes the important role played by close others, and family in chain migration (Mincer, 1978). In this way, the number of Nigerian traffickers increases in SP. Interviews with some Brazilian law enforcement agents confirm that in the last decade the international cocaine traffickers in the country included nationals from Nigeria, Kenya, Lebanon, Mozambique and Angola among others, however on the whole Nigerians are most primarily noted. The illicit trade flows along the conventional one. As such, Nigerians established trading networks that fill in the increasing gaps in the nations’ informal economy through the development of local and global linkages.

4.4.4 Sub-cultural influences: Apprenticeship and distance inheritance

There are several sub-cultural peculiarities that interact together to underpin the new trend illicit cocaine trafficking. Whereas those related to traditional belief in witchcraft will be discussed later, let us highlight the informal economy related apprenticeship and distance inheritance system that frustrate many young Nigerians into cocaine trafficking.

In this regard, the dynamic enterprise clusters of Nigerian entrepreneurs in SP include particular individuals who the illicit trade attracted. They see it in terms covert supply and demand drawing from others in the existing trans-national black markets in Africa, encouraging a tendency toward illegal activities. Due to the Nigerian state crisis as discussed in the previous section along with procedures of deregulation, globalization, and weakening states, informal forms of economic organization have turned out to be so pervasive. Several publications exist on informal economy in Africa and Nigeria⁷² and a dominant view is that informal African economies are impenetrable to social scientific investigations, and informality has been conceptualized as an alternative terrain of regulation operating outside the framework of the state. Instead, this work is geared towards providing insight into one of

⁷² Including those of Harnett-Sievers (2006), Silverstein (1983), Afigbo (1981).

the important new trends of the informal economy in Nigeria. In 2009, Africa's drug trafficking market was worth approximately \$3.2 billion U.S. dollars (USD), most of which went to Nigerian organized crime groups (UNODC, 2011). World Bank's analysts estimate Nigeria's informal economy at 58% of GNP, slightly exceeded only by Zimbabwe and Tanzania, but with an economy of over five times as large (Schneider, 2002). Drawing from works of other researchers, Meagher (2010) expressed that the meaning of informality has settled on the notion of "extra-legality," resulting in diffusing the accepted definition of the informal economy as "income generating activities that take place outside the regulatory framework of the state" (Castells & Portes, 1989, p. 12; Feige & Otti, 1990). However, from the global drug trafficking that attracted the attention of Nigerians or Africans in the last decades and commodity chains to 'conflict diamonds,' recent works illustrate how goods from unregulated or illegal third world context are integrated into formal sector production and distribution system, signifying the emergence of "an economy in which interrelationships rather than distinct sectors are the norm" (Klein, 1999).

In this regard, a number of scholars questioned the relevance of the concept of informality to the complex structure and contracting states (Roitman, 2004; Hart, 2006). Highlighting that deregulation has erased the division between formality and informality, emphasizing "where the state does not regulate anything because it is at the mercy of the market forces; there is no formal economy (Portes & Haller, 2005, p. 409). On the contrary, the realities of economic crumple and state failure in several developing countries, turns the state and the informal economy into increasingly 'fuzzy concepts' (Elyachar, 2005). Equal to the above views, published works of several experts point out that informal economy is now more relevant than ever. See for instance, Maloney and Chen.⁷³ As the forces of the world systems theory recall those of globalization, the shift from Fordism to Post-Fordism, and the increasingly questioned relevance of the concept of informality to the complex structure and contracting states. That generates antipathy not only amid the helpless masses, but also amongst those at the middle of the economic classification, since the comparison of merit and reward has shifted in late modernity from an accent on merit to focus on reward. As highlighted by Young (2007), effort, delayed gratification, and meritorious progress towards a goal have given way to immediacy, instant gratification, and short-term hedonism. Interlaced with formal economic structures that the old concept of an informal sector or informal economy has been called into question (see Chen, 2006; Meagher, 2010).

Meaning that the long existing illicit trade mentality shows its potential of attraction informal traders that follow the cocaine. Many Nigerian cocaine traffickers have been frustrated into the illicit trade to raise capital for starting a private business. Several publications exist on apprenticeship and entrepreneurship in Nigeria.⁷⁴ The Igbo had well-developed institutions of apprenticeship, which give Igbo entrepreneurs a comparative edge over other Nigerian groups, even today (Eusbius & Chigbo, 2014; Meagher, 2001). To engage youth in apprenticeship involved parent hand over their youths who they could not train beyond the elementary education level to master a trade. In this agreement, some times without a formal agreement and tutelage, the master craftsperson commits to training the apprentice in all the skills relevant to his or her trade over a significant period of time, usually between three and five years, while the apprentice commits to contributing productively to the work of the business.

Whereas this concept was envisaged to help, fieldwork information indicated that in this day and time, this supportive thinking has crumpled in both the quality and duration. Similarly, Meagher (2010) found in her research that amongst shoe and garment traders in Aba market in eastern Nigeria their masters had settled less than 10 percent of the apprentices

⁷³ "Informality Revisited" (Maloney, 2004) and "Rethinking the Informal Economy" (Chen, 2006)

⁷⁴ For instance see, Nafiu and Orugun (2014); Dike and Ekejiuba (1990; ILO (2012); Ogunrinola (2011).

in 2000. Several reasons have led to this situation. One reason is, masters attempt to maximize the use of cheap apprentice labour while increasingly breaking their promise on the financial and training obligations. Whereas a dominant view is to become an apprentice under relatives and townspeople with the hope of been settled at the end of stipulated period. Another reason is that apprentices attempt to minimize the time spent under the control of the master, in an effort to capture the benefits of their own income generating potential. Most apprenticeship contract terms are legally unenforceable because they contravened the provision of Nigerian Labour Code (Federal Government of Nigeria 1974: Sect. 49–53, 59–60), which states that no apprenticeship is valid unless it involves a written contract signed by a labour officer, a formality that is rarely, if ever, observed (*ibidi.*: Sec.50), and which prohibits apprentice from working more than eight hours at a stretch and at night time. Both of which are violated by prevailing norms of service in Aba's small shoe and garment firms (Meagher, 2010). This is why Kodo had to risk, as a courier to raise about \$12,000 USD to start his business. Kodo stated:

“It a horrible feeling that makes most young men into drug trafficking. Igbo must stop this wide spread problem. My boss gave me equivalent of about \$400 USD only after eight good years of apprenticeship under him. He also owned a good cosmetic distribution business in Idumota, and two buildings in Lagos. They will exploit you and dump you at they end. The reason he gave me was that his containers of goods were stolen from the Apapa port and that business is bad. They always come up with one reason or another. When you do not have any one to help what do you do?” (Cocaine trafficker Kodo: SP, 29-12-2012)

This is a view expressed by several. In emphasizing the effectiveness of the apprenticeship system and in addition to skill training, apprenticeship provides start-up capital at the end of the training period and socializes the trainee into the intrinsic worth of denial, hardship, and discipline, seen as crucial in business success (Forrest, 1994). The end result is that most apprentices like Kodo and the likes became victims of exploitation by the very system that was meant to set them free.

Another mechanism characterizing the enthusiasm around cocaine trafficking is embedded in a traditional inheritance system, which served to concentrate resources in the hand of the oldest son in most parts of Nigeria, including Igbo land. By so doing, an effective base for capital formation is created, but only for a single person. The result is that subsequent sons were forced to seek their own living in crafts or trade.⁷⁵ Consequently, deprived of promised starting capital after apprenticeship, and with no help elsewhere, several young Nigerian males are lured into radical experiments in self-actualization through deviancies, which in the contemporary globalized world cocaine trafficking is one of the alternatives. Mipo stated to me:

“I am the last of four boys of my father who is a famer. I inherited nothing. Master, Sraf, was a thief! He gave me nothing after seven years. I turned a street ‘Area Boy’ in Lagos. I risked cocaine trafficking and succeeded because I used the money to start my business. I had to survive!” (Ex-cocaine courier Mipo: SP, 30-12-2012)

In line with Agnew's Strain theory (Simpson, 2000, p. 109), bad treatment made affected Nigerians feel angry, frustrated, depressed, and anxious. One way to respond to these emotions is to engage in international cocaine trafficking, especially in the Nigerian context, where the cost of crime is low and the reward is high. Involvement in cocaine trafficking or

⁷⁵ See Forde and Jones (1950, p. 21); Meagher, (2010)

the production side of deviant globalization represents a survival strategy for Kodo and the like. The underprivileged and uneducated are without a simple way into legitimate opportunities in a country with ineffective or corrupt institutional support for mainstream business. “Even for the line workers in deviant industries, the money accumulated over a few years can often form a nest egg of capital to start more legitimate businesses” (Gilman et al., 2011, p. 7). As UNODC (2013, p. 16) expressed, Nigerian traffickers tend to move into less hazardous areas of business once they have accumulated a start-up stake.

4.4.5 Extensive networks

I found that knowing who performs which task best remains conversant amid Nigerian traffickers in SP. Some people are called wizards for concealing cocaine, others in wrapping cocaine pellets, quite a few have contacts for industrial packaging and several have contacts with cocaine wholesalers. Knowing whom to meet for what is the key. Some Nigerian international cocaine traffickers have moved a step forward into specialized activities and using weak ties. Interviews suggest that successful traffickers are regarded as ‘witches,’ having mysterious powers assisting them to make contacts and money from smuggling cocaine. Witches are also believed to use power from Satan in their evil ability. In a complex way the power lying behind witchcraft is none other than that of malevolent ancestral spirits (Harries, 2010, p. 142). Implying that Nigerian traffickers in their interactions deploy these beliefs in several ways, calling on the powers of God to achieve success, or Satan to condemn when jealous of one another. I will return to this point later. They avoid attention by not frequenting the streets of SP like the novices. Instead, thriving Nigerian traffickers maintain good contacts with associates from Brazil, Venezuela, Argentina, Bolivians or Colombia that deliver good cocaine at the best price. The novice would want to be like these role models.

It is performing their parts well despite uncertainty, distrust, and anxiety that characterize Nigerian cocaine trafficking. Yet people pay in advance for ad-hoc deals. Contrary to the dominant view that Nigerian traffickers enjoy a closed-up and opaque group, it is actually a network that transcends co-ethnicity, involving partners from various countries globally as their activities in SP evidences. Their ability to evade parochialism is a strong characteristic fostering their success. It emphasizes that networks are epitomized by some schools of thought as informal organizational structures that curb opportunism through “embeddedness” in “strong ties” of communal solidarity, reciprocity, and social sanctions (Coleman, 2000; Granovetter, 1995) or as anti-structural properties of networks, viewed as “weak ties” that operate across social cleavages to promote agency and provide access to new sources of information and resources (Burt, 2005). But, effective network governance has more and more been seen as a balance between norms of groups solidarity and more instrumental linkages across social cleavages, what Woolcock and Narayan (2000) refer to as “getting the social relations right.” Akin concepts of “bridging and bonding” ties (Narayan, 1999) or “fragments and flows” (Geschiere & Meyer, 1998) accentuate the dependence of effective network governance on appropriate combinations of ties. In this way, several Nigerian international cocaine traffickers represented in this work, have focused on ‘bottom up’ cultural networks to weak ties with outsiders, connecting groups into new information and markets. It demonstrates the aptitude to establish effective ties is perceived as a production of cultural competences for cooperation and intergroup relations, instead of hanging on the formal institutional environment in which those networks are embedded as indicated by Schmitz and Nadvi (1999). This explains the reason why several traffickers in SP are questioning the effectiveness of working mostly within the Nigerian strong ties, an informal regulation based on personal relations such as kinship, friends or co-ethnicity (Roberts, 1994, p. 8). The trafficker, Monkey No Fine (MNF) stated:

“Working with fellow Nigerians mostly is not good. It does not work because it causes fighting among ourselves because of who we are. Then the ‘python’ (meaning police) will round us up easily”. (Nigerian trafficker MNF: 20-12-2011)

Research explains that economic efficiency could be suffocated by too much embeddedness. Evading excessive enmeshment in communal ties is believed to depend on “cultural tool kits” relating embedded work ethics and associating norms that foster entrepreneurial development (Portes & Landolt, 2000). Nigerian traffickers working primarily with co-nationals have a lot of time at their disposal for arguing and quarrelling due to jealousy, cheaters, debt settlement, or circumstances arising from for instance a disappeared courier. For these reasons, experienced traffickers like MNF would rather avoid them. He only has contact with one or two individuals, since economic strength of social networks are disrupted by the inability of some social groups to form weak ties across cleavages, leading to the formation of closed parochial networks and a propensity to communal violence as pointed out by Catells (1997).

Furthermore, a society’s social capital “concerns not the internal cohesiveness of groups, but rather the way in which these relates to outsiders” (Fukuyama, 2001, p. 14). I observed that some innovative thinkers within the Nigerian traffickers in SP are succeeding by adhering increasing to tactics and strategies like living outside areas usual to other Nigerians, keeping to appointments with local partners, and expressing themselves in local accents; that enhances having good partners outside their co-nationals because, where cultural norms restrict inter-communal ties, efficient networks require exit instead of enmeshment. This assists their extensive international cocaine trafficking networks. Arrests of Nigerian nationals have occurred in at least 45 countries since 2000, including areas not normally associated with African migration, such as Afghanistan, Finland, Kyrgyzstan, Indonesia, and the Republic of Korea. Rather than contesting markets already well served by local trafficking groups, these networks are highly adaptive, addressing markets overlooked by others or working in cooperation with established organizations (UNODC, 2008, p. 24).

The deployment of extensive network concepts has assisted Nigerian traffickers to strategically settle in cocaine production and transit hubs, delivering good quality and high quantity of cocaine shipped to transit countries in sub-Saharan Africa where Nigerian traffickers dominate the market. Most are residents in the countries where they operate and make use of local partners who provide access to needed travel documents through corruption. Due to membership to the free movement of people and goods throughout the Economic Community of West African States region, cocaine concealed in goods entering any country could go to another without passing through border controls. Driving from Accra in Ghana through Cotonou (Benin) and Lome (Togo) to Lagos is less than 500 km is easily accomplished in one day (UNODC, 2013). This is demonstrated by arrests made by law enforcement agents. For instance, In January 2013 Ghanaian Narcotics Control Board (NACOB) officials apprehended two Nigerian international cocaine traffickers of 53 and 47 years old for importing about 200 kilograms of cocaine from Bolivia to Tema Harbor. The cocaine was concealed in a 40-foot container loaded with 1,946 boxes of shampoo. The arrested trafficker had in his possession four Nigerian passports with different names. He was described by international law enforcement agencies as a notorious drug baron who had been involved in several drug seizures in Brazil and Bolivia⁷⁶.

Additionally, by switching their production focus to liquid cocaine, Nigerian traffickers have demonstrated their ability in innovating the trend. As observed during fieldwork, they claim to have associates in various towns in Latin America and call each

⁷⁶ See, *Street Journal* (2013, February 25) two Nigerians Nabbed in Ghana for Importing 200 kilograms of Cocaine 2
Nigerians Nabbed In Ghana For Importing 200 kilograms of Cocaine.

other to exchange information. Equally important are contacts in Angola, Guinea-Bissau, or Equatorial. Nigerian traffickers claim that presence in Portuguese speaking countries in Africa is crucial as their local partners enjoy easier communication and friendly business access in Latin Americas. As experts emphasized, this offers them the opportunity to gain profits and innovate best practices.

Buying cocaine cheap

Good entrepreneurs aim to get their goods from cheap sources, and Nigerians cocaine traffickers demonstrate awareness in this area as they are found in cities across South America. Some claim that they could buy it at the price of about \$1300 USD per kilo from their Latin American friends at primary source in Peru and Bolivia. This is what experienced Nigerian traffickers target. Not only exporting cocaine themselves but they make profit by selling to others in SP at wholesaler priced between \$5.200 to \$5.500 USD as of January 2013. Experts express that a kilo of cocaine has a commercial value of virtually €1.200 Euro for a broker in the producer country. That same kilo, while in transit, has a wholesale price of between €12.000 and €15.000 Euro. This kilo of relatively pure cocaine, later tailored with additives, sells on the streets of Madrid for €80.000 Euro, depending on the purity and the number of doses (Brombacher & Maihold, 2009).

In all, the success of Nigerians in the illicit trade is reflected in their ability to construct extensive network in producing and consuming hubs globally. Proponents of the “weak ties” thesis (Granovetter, 1983) uphold that strong ties are weighed down by parochialism, while “weak ties” facilitate the enlistment of new resources and information in response to changing circumstances like in the international drug trafficking. While strong identity based ties have been celebrated as an important source of popular entrepreneurship, their aptitude to advance economic growth in fast altering conditions remains a concern. Analysis of my fieldwork information expresses that an increasing number of Nigerian illicit cocaine traffickers in Brazil and Asia portrays a shift from strong to weak ties, and balancing it as development underscoring their achievements.

4.5 Method of exporting cocaine from São Paulo

Nigerian traffickers in SP are brokers forwarding the illicit Latin American cocaine to transit and consuming nations globally. They connect their co-nationals amongst other buyers to counterpart sellers against payment in cash or cocaine. They export small and medium quantities to contacts in Nigeria or elsewhere using couriers, concealments in various goods forwarded by cargo and container shipments, and deployment of conventional post services. The first two methods, courier and cargo, will be discussed next whereas the last, postage, in chapter 7.

4.5.1 Cargo and container packaging

Concealment in travel baggage or in varied items sent by cargo or container is a method used by Nigerian traffickers to forward cocaine from Brazil to counterparts in destination countries including Nigeria. They are capable of handling small quantities up to 10 kilograms and medium quantities up to 250 kilograms. Whereas small traffickers are busy with one or few kilograms of cocaine, financially buoyant ones focus on bigger deals while also sponsoring couriers trafficking small quantities. As observed during fieldwork in several settings, traffickers exchange views on latest scanning technologies used in various entry ports in Africa countries. While such forethought is ongoing, telephone calls are made to associates in some countries for clarifications. São Paulo is home to perhaps the largest Nigerian

community in the region, and according to the Brazilian authorities this group has been progressively taking control of cocaine exports from Brazil, leaving the domestic market to local gangs. Observers indicate that Nigerian groups organize up to 30 percent of the cocaine exports by ship or container from Santos, Brazil's largest port, up from negligible levels a few years earlier. In 2010–2011 about 2093 kilograms of cocaine was seized from shipping containers related to West Africa (UNODC, 2013).

Fieldwork reveals that Nigeria traffickers cannot control export market of cocaine, but they participate. Research points out that various types of groups perform such activity, first, by local groups with access and control over those local resources, such as First Command of the Capital (PCC) criminal faction, Mafiosi, legal entrepreneurs, or officials; second, by local illegal entrepreneurs protected by them, third, by ethnic minority groups from source, transit or destination countries with their own local infrastructures, and finally by partnerships between all three mentioned groups (Zaitch, 2002). With such solid weak tie connections, Nigerian traffickers' participation is often crowned also due to difficulties in examining bulky goods at departure and entry points. In this regard, as already discussed in chapter 4.7.4, Brazil is no exception.

In addition, Nigerian traffickers like to export concealed cocaine choosing the right place or country of origin for the cargo. A cargo from Colombia, Venezuela, or Ecuador would be checked 100 percent. Most expressed that better choices Argentina and Paraguay or Uruguay, transiting ports in Europe where it will not be checked prior to arriving desired seaport in sub-Saharan Africa. Nigerian traffickers are aware that without supplied foreign intelligence, they could celebrate their big catch using local enabled 'means.' Successful trafficker Monkey No Fine (MNF) stated:

“They got my consignment by chance because someone speaks out. That is why I went to jail in Brazil. Caught because that motherfucker collaborator told the *Koti* (meaning police). If not they are unaware. Deals will keep on moving!” (MNF:08-01-2013)

Financially buoyant Nigerian traffickers rely on having dependable partners, especially individuals working in manufacturing and wholesale companies licensed to export goods out of Brazil. They exploit every opportunity to conceal small and medium quantity of cocaine in goods to various destinations in sub-Saharan Africa. For instance, they purchase thousands of U.S. dollars worth of goods from a wholesaler, which are directly shipped or sent by cargo from the company after packaging. They are aware that companies treasure and maintain good business relationship with valuable customers. With such atmosphere, goods are bought and assembled in the warehouse of the company. This gives traffickers a chance to switch some goods bought through the company with identical others that kilos of cocaine concealed in them without anyone noticing. On the other hand, where they have insider contacts in a manufacturing company, industrial concealment of cocaine in various items becomes a “gentleman's” agreement. Then the whole goods are packed and transported directly from the company to the airport or seaport to desired destination. Since it is coming directly from the company with a reputation, export procedure is expedited and relaxed. This way, a small or medium—but steady—quantity of cocaine finds its way out of SP and Brazil to varied places. They evade constant harassments from the anti drug agents, fake police, and robbers in SP by deploying their Brazilian counterparts for picking up and delivering purchased cocaine. The analysis of fieldwork reveals that against payment of about BRL500 to 1000 Brazilian Reals (about 250–500 USD) reliable Brazilian contacts are available for picking up parcels of kilos of cocaine and delivering it to expert artisans who will work it into a desired goods—be it spare parts, household, personal care, and other items for export. Such expert artisans or engineers in SP and environs are available. They could open up whatever component,

construct a lookalike, and reassemble it after having loaded some small packages of cocaine in the cavities or object. The traffickers Sharpi added:

“My local “engineers” can rework cocaine into any object. He becomes worried if I do not have job for him. It’s big income because he could make 2000 USD in 10 days.”
(Nigerian trafficker Sharpi: SP, 12-01-2013)

Without the collaboration of local artisans, transportation services, and manufacturing and retail sectors it would be difficult for Nigerian traffickers to excel in this regard. However, whereas the cargo and container packaging method remains prominent, Nigerian traffickers capitalize from individual mules with small quantity of cocaine. Though detailed already in Chapter 4.7.4, I will highlight some particularities in Brazil. They traffic through the major air hubs, continuously adapting in finding new routes and partners that might be available.

4.5.2 Drug courier approach

Deployment of drug couriers underpins the new trend illicit cocaine trafficking in which Nigerian citizenry lead them. Evidenced by arrested⁷⁷ and convicted offenders serving time in various jails, for instance in *Itai* maximum-security prison near SP, most of the 500 Nigerians cocaine trafficking offenders currently imprisoned in Brazil are males. Interviewees show that several Nigerian male couriers ingest pellets of cocaine that weigh about 20–22 grams, while women couriers swallow between 10–15 gram pellets.

I observed that some male couriers want to make it quickly by taking more risks of swallowing 2.5 kilograms of cocaine pellets or more. Sometimes the risk is not observed, especially by Lagos street dealers. Couriers from such backgrounds view cocaine trafficking as good opportunity for making money and ending suffering. For instance, Ehi brags about swallowing 2 kilograms (120 pellets of cocaine) and ‘Let Go’ ingest 2.6 kilograms without problems. They find it offensive if the net content of their cocaine pellets and total quantity are tempered with. In one setting for example, turning to the guy next to him who will prepare the cocaine pellets, Let Go warned:

“Please make them complete. I do not want nothing less than 2.6 kilograms in total and 20 grams each pallet of cocaine. I am ready for it. I am warning you (*slightly pulling his right ear with his two right fingers while stressing his point to the guy who will prepare the pellets*). Let it be complete and in case you are not aware, I am alias Lama (as cow is popularly called in Nigeria). I have suffered enough as truck-pusher. Further as a physic hard worker, I am use to taking cows medicine in Nigeria. Please do not let me remember that I was a gravedigger in my village prior to working in Lagos as “area boy” (meaning street boy) and a day paid laborer. So I will succeed because *Jehovah is King, in Jesus name*”. (Let Go: SP, 27-12-2012)

There are many that think like Let Go. Couriering is judged as an acceptable risk. It is once in a lifetime opportunity to make money fast. They feel that if they are caught and imprisoned in Brazil, it is better than working with motor packs and spending the little earned buying painkiller tablets like Ephedrine, Ehi recalled, “My brother you are right. It is a do or die thing. As a man, I have decided to swallow 2 kilograms this time because it is women that do 1 kilograms these days” (Ehi: SP, 27-12-2012).

The majority of Nigerian female inmates in Brazil are in the Womens Penitentiary of

⁷⁷ Abu Dhabi Police arrested five Nigerian male couriers who ingested a total of 441 cocaine capsules, weighing 9.340 kilograms. All were in the same flight from São Paulo Airport to Nigeria, transit in Abu Dhabi (see Khaleejtimes: Staff Reporter, 03-02-2014).

the Capital, (PFC) located in SP city. I interviewed 14 of them in December 2011 during fieldwork, including the 60-year-old Mrs. Chi jailed for five years and 11 months, and the 74-year-old Mrs. Hafsat Awosade (popularly called mama or Mrs. Balogun at PFC). She died prior to been sentenced.⁷⁸ After introduction, the gray-haired grandmother told me of her struggles in prison and how she came to be involved in cocaine trafficking. The death of her son left her responsible for his four children. Sometime afterward, a family friend residing in South Africa offered to take her to Brazil for medical treatment of her high blood pressure and acute back pain. After 12 days in São Paulo her friend asked her to assist carrying some load when traveling back to Nigeria. She added, “We went to the doctor but he was not around and they said I should come back next week. But I told them that I want to go back because nobody was looking after my grandchildren.” She did not know how many kilos of cocaine were found in her luggage. “The judge has not yet sentenced me. I heard people saying that they should not judge someone over 70 years old. They should not let me die here. It is with God, I hope they consider my age,” said Mrs. Awosade (December, 2011). Some individuals could be unaware of the risks involved when drawn to cocaine trafficking by relatives and friends. They are often misinformed about the risks. As a wage earner in such a difficult context as Nigerian society, most are left to raise their children singlehandedly, under great pressure to feed, clothe, and educate them.

Research carried out in the USA found that indeed, mules may be sufficiently desperate that they do not even demand to be informed about the exact nature of what they are carrying.⁷⁹ Most Nigerian women told me they got involved in the drug business out of desperation, claiming that it had to do directly with poverty and hardship in Nigeria. The only alternative was prostitution and the risk of AIDS. However, Nigerian female inmates I interviewed claimed been tricked into trafficking cocaine and/or due to financial pressure to save their family. They differ from other female couriers who were clearer on their reasons for involvement in the illicit trade.

Age is not a problem

Nigerian international cocaine traffickers and associates in SP had varied views concerning involvement of the elderly in the new trend illicit trade. Regarding the 74-year-old woman, most alleged that she knew what she was doing but her strategy failed because she was apprehended. They blamed the Nigeria ‘state crisis,’ that is bad governance, the elite and their foreign associates plundering the economy and the ‘Nigerian Dream’ as the primary reason the elderly are frustrated into drug trafficking. They assert that most couriers are aware of the risk involved, accepting the financial benefit when successful, but rebuffing responsibility when things go awry.

Members of the Nigerian traffickers tend to believe other realities. For instance, that people below or above a certain age should not be imprisoned or should at least be sentenced lightly. In another setting during fieldwork, I came across a 16-year-old girl from Mozambique sent by her relative, to carry 2.5 kilograms from a Nigerian contact in SP. While she was confident she would succeed, should things go wrong or if caught, she hoped be treated as underage in prison and have the chance to live in Brazil upon completion of her jail sentence. Yet Mana, an interviewee and Greek courier from a middle-class family told me she ran the cocaine trafficking with her Nigerian boyfriend and shared the profit equally. Their courier was a 50-year-old white man, who brought back 5 kilograms to 8 kilograms of cocaine from each trip to SP. Dressing in corporate attire and flying business class complemented his race advantage, allowing him to evade control at departure and entry

⁷⁸ Nigerian female drug suspect, 73, dies in Brazil. Mrs. Hafsat Awosade, a grandmother, was held early last year by Brazilian security authorities with illicit drugs. She died last week of high blood pressure (see Ndiribe, 2012).

⁷⁹ See, Bjerk and Mason (2014, p. 4). The Market for Mules: Risk and Compensation of Cross-Border Drug Couriers.

points. As a university undergraduate of French and Literature that speaks Greek, German, Italian and Portuguese, she understood the importance of research stating that, “I want to collaborate fully with your research so that people interested could learn from my mistakes; I am not afraid, you can mention my name” (Mana: SP, 24-12-2011).

Still, she remains anonymous in this work. Lajo from Philippines told me that some girlfriends knew she was in jail still asked her for contacts that would send them as courier to Brazil. They were hopeful to succeed, or otherwise go to jail and begin a new life afterwards in Brazil. The 19-year-old Tapa from a middle class Asian family,⁸⁰ told me she was already dealing drugs while in college. She opted to partner with her Nigerian boyfriend in the cocaine business. Also several stated clearly that they joined the trafficking trend willingly, contrary to the perception of deceit by Nigerians. Tapa told me:

“It’s not a matter of age! Of course they knew, adult and old. I have always informed my couriers about what they were going for. Nobody was forcing them, they could say No. It was their choice and it is their money. None of my couriers stopped.” (Thai female convict Tapa: SP, 25-12-2011)

Tapa is experienced in cocaine and heroin trafficking. This was not her first imprisonment, she said. For instance, in 2006 Tapa was released from jail in X country, after a deal was made with a jailed local female courier and a Nigerian mule that worked for her. They took tens of thousands of U.S. dollars for admitting she was not involved in the deal that landed all three in jail in the first place. Few weeks after, she called her Nigerian and Indian contacts to arrange ‘things’ in India. Tapa added:

“We worked together with some guys who own a travel agent, and an immigration officer at an airport in India. They also arrange a friend’s flat where the couriers stay while there. The immigration guy waits for my girls and pass them easy, against payment of \$1000 USD per courier for this service. Couriers were easy to get because those who traveled help in getting others that wants to travel. That is how I got the three girls and I traveled to meet them there. I gave each \$50 USD to make their passports. Then ticket was about \$1000 USD. The deal is risky but the money is good because each of them was paid \$3000 USD for delivering 1 kilograms heroin they swallowed in Guangzhou in China.” (Tapa: SP, 28-12-2011)

Several works exist on issues regarding pay for those in the drug distribution business. These include those of Levitt and Sudhir (2000), and MacCoun and Reuter (1992) that sought to understand how policy enforcement affected the drug market through altering the eventual price of drugs to consumers. Bjerk and Mason (2014) evaluated among the drug mules caught at the California ports of entry in the U.S., the extent to which pay corresponds to sentencing risk. Specifically, are mules paid more for carrying loads with higher expected sentencing risk? They found that mule compensation varies with load characteristics. Couriers are paid on the order of about \$1,200 USD for an additional year expected sentence if caught, at least for cocaine and methamphetamine smuggling. Underground labor market generally acts like a competitive labor market where a risk-sensitive, reasonably well-informed and relatively elastic labor force is compensated for higher risk tasks. In an unregulated and illegal market such as the one for drug mules, basic predictions of competitive labor markets appear to hold—on average, mules appear to be generally knowledgeable about what they are carrying

⁸⁰ Tapa is one of the eight female couriers interviewees from varied countries in Asian inclusive Malaysia, Thailand and Philippine serving long jail sentence in SP. Countries where Nigerian illicit cocaine traffickers are prominent. Tapa was sentenced to about eight years imprisonment for carrying about two kilograms cocaine. She knows about 30 other female couriers from her country and many more from varied Asian nations convicted in SP for the same offence.

and competitive forces lead to a compensating wage premium being paid to those carrying higher risk loads. This suggests that efforts to increase drug detection at border crossings can affect the revenue stream going to drug cartels not only through lessening their ability to get drugs into the U.S., but also by increasing their labor cost for couriers, as concluded by Bjerk and Mason (2014). But if it is not a matter of age, it's about the push and pull factors as discussed in this work that drive also increasing number of women into the illicit trade.

This recalls Sykes and Matza's (1957) techniques of neutralizing that diminishes the efficacy of social control and enables offenders to become felonious or rationalize deviant behavior, as discussed in chapter 3. Arrests of elderly, adult, underage and pregnant couriers at the international airports make headlines in Nigeria.⁸¹ Remarkable is that all 30 plus female courier interviewees (South Africa, Brazilian, Europeans and Asians), and 16 Nigerians claimed to have been jailed because of their direct or indirect involvement with the Nigerian international cocaine traffickers in their respective countries. It recalls that these women were, in broad terms, from a lower or lower-middle class background, poorly educated, under- or unemployed adults (25/40 years old), alone with many children, and often victims of pressures, threats, violent situations and financial calamities (del Olmo, 1990). I found that several couriers are also desperate young men and women of urban areas to rather well-established migrants in destination countries; from friends and relatives of Nigerian cocaine traffickers and couriers to low and middle class adults willing to move upwards; from Christians to Muslims, adventurers to staff of mainstream institutions, businesses and students.

4.6 Resilient Nigerian trafficker

The persistence of Nigerians in the illicit trade is demonstrated by portrayals in the local media of recurrent arrests at the international airports and during frequent police raids or stops and search operations. For instance, the apprehension of 24 Nigerian couriers at São Paulo airport in less than a month before 23 others from Nigeria⁸² recalls the distinctive *battlefield or shotgun approach* discussed in Chapter 3. Yet others are re-arrested as in September 2012 during fieldwork in SP, my contact received a call that his friend, who ingested about 2 kilograms of cocaine pellets, was arrested in Morocco while on transit to Lagos. Also Chuba was apprehended in South Africa in June 2012 with about 1.2 kilograms of cocaine. They happened to be among those I came across in several settings the previous year during fieldwork. Sharpi jokingly asserted:

“Ah! What does that mean to Chief? He has gone to relax again because he had previously served years in different countries Portugal, South Africa, Nigeria, and Mali.”
(Nigerian trafficker Sharpi: SP, 29-09-2012)

Lighthearted or not, what is emphasized is the resilience amid Nigerians traffickers attempting to reach markets in Africa and Europe in particular. Among the several reasons for this includes the possibility of drug couriers evading control at the busy SP airport.

According to airport officials, on any given day 250,000–300,000 people pass through the terminals. SP International airport averages approximately 830 flights per day (Alves, 2014). Combined with availability of cocaine in SP, these facilities have assisted Nigerian traffickers in São Paulo to be accredited with being in control of cocaine exports by

⁸¹ Two drug traffickers arrested NDLEA at Abuja International Airport will spend the next 14 years in jail. Stopped for control on her way from Sao-Paulo, Susan (aged 38) claimed that she was three months pregnant, cautioning that being inspected scanning machine could harm her unborn baby. However, when placed under observation, she excreted 51 pellets of cocaine weighing 900 grams (see Etegehe, 2012).

⁸² See, Brazil Arrests Point to Southern Africa Cocaine Trade (Stone, 2011).

commercial air courier because, experts say drug mules are easy to find, but difficult to catch. The UNODC points out that mules couriers cocaine are found on flights from Brazil to Luanda, Lagos, Doha, South Africa and Europe, and that 90 percent of those arrested at the São Paulo international airport claim they got their cocaine from Nigerian groups. On two flights from São Paulo to Luanda in 2011, the Angolan authorities screened every passenger and found more than 20 cocaine couriers on each flight. After providing for consumption in Southern Africa, the remainder is couriered from these countries to West Africa or directly to Europe (UNODC, 2013).

Nigerian cocaine traffickers persist in SP not only because they are aware that interdiction is problematic because of a huge amount of people and cargo to be screened, but also they want to export ‘cocaine currency’ using their preferred courier method to send cocaine to contacts in destination markets directly from SP. They have become fully global by creating demand at the small-scale trafficking level. They have established their presence in the retail in Europe and as a result are now touch bearers for other Africans in the European market. The largest European markets for cocaine remain the United Kingdom, Spain, Italy, France, and Germany, which together account for more about three-quarters of total market, and Nigerians are prominently in all of these markets.⁸³ This explains why most of the African ‘mules’ arrested in European airports come from Guinea, Nigeria, Mali, and Senegal. More than half of the airborne drug traffickers are of Nigerian origin, even on flights that do not originate in Nigeria (UNODC, 2008, pp. 3–4). Nigerian traffickers want to keep the control of small quantities in their hands. Delivered to trusted associates directly due to their ability of effective network governance. Balance between norms of groups solidarity and more instrumental linkages across social cleavages, “getting the social relations right” to enhance their achievements.

4.7 Summary

This chapter has bridged the knowledge gap concerning the connection between Nigeria and Brazil, and the enthusiasm of the Nigerian cocaine traffickers over the country. The two countries are trade partners dating back centuries, brought together by the illicit trade in slaves, to the present day business in natural resources and manufactured goods.

Another factor was that the Catholic Church declared a ‘holy war’ in 1452 to justify the capture and supplying of African slaves to meet the needs of labor demand in the sugar plantations of the new world (Shareef, 2005; Harris, 1995). The pioneers of this trade were not concerned with the moral element of the business. The ultimate goal was monetary accumulation and acquisition of power at all means.

Brazil and Nigeria are not only linked together by economic forces but also by socio-cultural, religious and political features. On return to Nigeria after the abolition of slave trade, the returnees introduced to the society they returned to various ‘Brazilian flavors.’ For instance, they popularized the widespread of the agricultural product cassava, Brazilian architectural designs, foreign surnames, important celebrations and religious traditions. Returnees were also advanced and skilled, following their exposure to western cultures. Most became professionals in various fields like lawyers, doctors, and politicians. Furthermore, Brazilians returnees were good entrepreneurs and artisans. Many were already in business in Brazil prior to coming back to Nigeria. They brought money back and made more through investment.

⁸³ Looking at the latest data on Spain, Italy, and Germany, Switzerland, and Portugal, just fewer than 2,000 West Africans were arrested for cocaine trafficking in recent years (either 2010 or 2011). If one in 10 of the active traffickers were arrested, this would suggest some 20,000 West African cocaine traffickers in just these five countries (UNODC, 2013).

Contemporarily, Brazil is Nigeria's fifth export trade partner. As emphasized already, the illicit cocaine trade is entangled in the conventional trade. Based on the market forces of covert demand and supply, it is capable of inducing its actors in taking an ethical holiday as regards the illicit cocaine trafficking. São Paulo is central in regards to the nature of Nigerian involvement in the international cocaine trade.

Nigerian traffickers in São Paulo operate as brokers forwarding mainly small and medium quantities of cocaine from Brazil, especially to transit countries in sub-Saharan African countries and consumers globally due to their extensive network. Brazilian authorities confirmed the active part played by Nigerian international cocaine traffickers in this area. The new trend cocaine smugglers see themselves as international 'traders' of a comparable luxury commodity based on the covert market supply and demand.

Their success in the illicit cocaine trade is reflected in ability to strategically construct extensive network both in producing and consuming hubs worldwide. Nigerian illicit cocaine traffickers in Brazil portray a shift from strong ties to weak ties and deploying effective network governance necessary for 'getting the social relations right' to foster their achievements. This has given Nigerian international cocaine traffickers access to quality products and good price at sources and destination markets.

The resilience of the middlemen often paid off in small quantities of cocaine or 'cocaine currency' for connecting deals, transportation, merchandise-delivery, and transfer services. Tactically they have created demand at large and medium levels with their associates. At small-scale level they have created demand for couriers to smuggle cocaine directly to partners in various consuming hubs.

Deployment of cocaine couriers is the most diffused smuggling method enhancing the success of Nigerian trade. They realized the method's openness in attracting individuals of all background, class, races and age. Remarkably, the number of women participating in the cocaine business increased.

Nigerian traffickers are aware that 'Big brother' is watching, but they enhance their achievements. Firstly, failure to give apprentices a starting capital to commence a private business. This has frustrated many young Nigerian men to seek alternative income through cocaine trafficking. Drawing on sub-cultural eating habits and religious beliefs, some Nigerian couriers negotiate the physical 'edge' of daring, swallowing up 2.5 kilograms of cocaine. Secondly the slums in Brazil or elsewhere globally, maintain an army desperate unemployed of would-be traffickers exploitable. These also see drug trafficking as a way of making ends meet. Once recruited, they become part of the *shotgun approach*, accredited to Nigerian international cocaine trade. Nigerian traffickers in their countries sent majority of non-Nigerian courier interviewees I encountered in São Paulo. Thirdly, São Paulo's excellent air, land, and sea infrastructures combined with availability of cocaine have assisted Nigerian traffickers to attain their accomplishments. Inter alia, they are adamant because interdiction is problematic due to the secretive nature of illicit cocaine trade, which is embedded in contacts, cultural barriers and the huge number of people and cargo that cannot be screened. This is a major reason why so many drug traffickers go undetected.

In the wake of this reality, the next chapter will discuss the Brazilian reaction to Nigerian crimes. The majority of convicts and ex-convicts I came across during this research were in prison because of their involvement with activities of Nigerian illicit cocaine traffickers.

Chapter 5

Brazilian reaction to Nigerian cocaine traffickers

5.1 Introduction

This chapter will provide insight into the criminal justice and anti-drug control agents' response to the cocaine trafficking phenomenon. As indicated by Transnational Institute drug and Democracy (TNI), drug crimes fall under "Heinous Crimes Law" (8.072 of 1990) that classify it as serious offenses; therefore, several rights and benefits of the accused are suspended such as freedom pending trial. The Drug Law of August 23, 2006 (Law n.11.343/06)⁸⁴ made considerable improvements, having decriminalized consumption, disallowed incarceration for drug users, and alternative consequences through its Article 28. However, critics have averred that drug crimes are classified as severe crimes comparable to murder, rape, and kidnapping, without taking into account the degree of participation. Another factor is that preventive detention is not compulsory in the country. Courts apply it fairly frequently in the case of drug crimes—regardless of the gravity of the felony—making it among the principal causes of overcrowding in prisons. For instance, in 2012, almost 40 percent of the prison population had not been sentenced and one quarter was imprisoned for drug charges (TNI, 2015).

It has called into question the ongoing war on drugs as observers view the phenomenon to be similar to a stationary bike. "You look around and it's the same...the problem remains" (Glickhouse, 2012). It is a situation that increasingly evokes alternatives. For instance, Uruguay's president presented a bill to legalize and regulate marijuana sales and production, and Colombia's Constitutional Court ruled in favor of decriminalizing limited quantities of marijuana and cocaine because despite prison overcrowding, drug trafficking and the efforts to stop it have generated increased violence. In this area, Arias (2010) pointed out that the consequences of this rise in violence are that repressive policing policies are justified and the poor are forced to rely on criminals and corrupt police for protection. It is also the result of highly organized, politically connected drug dealers feeding off the global cocaine market, as well as the rising crime rate prompting repressive police tactics and corruption running deep in state structures (Arias, 2006). Commenting on the issue, the Brazilian ex-president Fernando Henrique Cardoso, a strong advocate of drug decriminalization, expressed that "Treating drug use as a police case is useless and disastrous; and that mandatory internment (of addicts) has been internationally condemned as inefficient, stigmatizing and a violation of human rights."

Contrary to more drug decriminalization changes civil society groups, academics and health workers in Brazil have been expecting, the Brazilian House of Representatives passed a law on 22 May 2013 that amended several portions of Brazil's 2006 drug law. Among these includes the mandatory treatment of problematic drug users, federal funding for "therapeutic" treatment centers, and the implementation of a minimum mandatory sentence for drug traffickers—five to eight years in prison (Bateman, 2013). It is a move that calls for finding new spaces to utilize as prisons. However, what is needed is a holistic approach that would change the dominant public opinion about imprisonment and lead to less people in prison.

⁸⁴ See, Brazilian Drug Law, LEI N° 11.343, of 23 August 2006.

5.2 ‘Othering’: Every African Nigerian

The number of Nigerians in SP is uncertain, unofficially about 500, according to Kingsley Ikechukwu, the Nigerian Community director. Even though it remains insignificant in a city of about 11.2 million people (World Population Statistics, 2013), their presence is noticeable. Analysis of my fieldwork data reveals that most Brazilians refer to every African as Nigerian. As long as one is dark skinned and non-Brazilian, he/she is a Nigerian, and also almost certain labeled as a drug trafficker. Reasons for this include: first, that most people knew less about Africa. As expressed by Arísia Barros, the coordinator of the *Instituto de Raízes de Áfricas* or Institute of the Roots of Africa, Brazilian Law 10.639/2003 that obligates schools in Brazil to teach African/Afro-Brazilian History is yet to be fully implemented.⁸⁵ Second, some Nigerians are frequently seen in the inner city speaking in uncommon languages and in an aggressive manner. One Brazilian respondent stated:

“They are always seen in groups hanging around *Republica* Square in SP talking mysteriously, loud and quarrelling or fighting. They give the impression of doing something incorrect, drug deals, otherwise why must they be fighting each other frequently?” (Brazilian female lecturer: SP, 10-12-2011)

They are seen as a group having defective standards, which contradict those of the normal majority. This perspective of othering, or essentialising the other, seeks to transfer the problem area, “to purge impurities, to wall off the stranger” (Gitlin, 1995, p. 233). Nigerian cocaine traffickers contribute to the conversation about crime in São Paulo and everyday narratives, commentaries, and even jokes that have crime as their subject. The talk of crime provokes perpetual feelings of fear that in turn create stereotypes that exacerbate the divide between ‘good’ and ‘evil’ (Caldeira & Holston, 1999, p. 698). Comments reverberate on the streets in SP. The arrest of some *traffícantes Nigerianos* (Nigeria traffickers) makes head news in SP, as demonstrated in various parts of this work. The negative attention of Nigerian cocaine traffickers’ portrayal echoes the disembeddedness of the late modern society, the upset of pluralism and insecurity. One solution to such a loss of firm identity is discrimination toward the constructed or ‘invented’ other. As Hobsbawm and Ranger (1983) explain this concept, it is a fixed identity centered on the idea of cultural essence that is affirmed, rediscovered, and elaborated upon. This essentialising of the self, the allocation of oneself and friends and relatives, firm virtues entrenched in one’s culture goes unavoidably associated with essentialising and denigration of the other; a black and white of moral photography (Young, 2007).

Often due to the nature of their activities, some Nigerian cocaine traffickers opt to settle issues in their own way. When disputes get out of control, they fight among themselves, thereby attracting the attention of the public and law enforcement agents. A major contributor to their frustration is that life in SP is expensive, and most of them encounter problems sooner rather than later due to unforeseen delays and circumstances. For example, the courier ‘Big Papa’ planned to stay 10 days in SP, but ended up spending 20 days due to scarcity of quality cocaine. Doubts and frustrations about uncertainties of delivering the cocaine, paying the hotel bill, eating, and similar expenses led to aggressive disputes that attracted attention. My contact person Sharpi stated:

“These Nigerians have no wisdom. Coming in, they realize that things are hard. Then they face it with annoyance and frustration. It leads to quarrelling, fighting, and violence.

⁸⁵ See for instance Barros’ (2013) *Black Women of Brazil*.

Then every thing spoils because it brings in the police. That is how Big Papa and two others were arrested and jailed when police found 5 kilogram in their flat and they could not pay \$5,000 USD each to “settle” (meaning kickback) the police”. (Nigerian trader, Sharpi: SP, 24-12-2011)

Sharpi and I met ‘Big Papa’ during temporary exit from prison in December 2012. Reflecting back on what happened, Big Papa said, “I am already seven years inside and I must do another three years in Itai prison, it is almost finished. I regretted fighting on the street” (Nigerian inmate, Big Papa: SP, 24-12-2011). Yet the street remains attractive to many. As one Nigerian trafficker described it, “sometimes you do not see someone again, but after some years the person reappears like a spirit or ghost, during temporary exit.”

5.3 ‘Students’ on *Saidinha* (Inmates on temporary outing)

My fieldwork in SP was planned to coincide with a period when eligible inmates on semi-open and open prison regimes are granted temporary outing or *saidinha*.⁸⁶ I met many of them in the Galleria mall located close to Republic Square in SP. The mall could be seen as the Canal market malls (nicknamed “Little Africa”) in Guangzhou in China or the Chunking Mansion in Hong Kong. Also known as *Galeria Presidente* or *Galeria De Sotto*⁸⁷ it is home to hundreds of Africans and Nigerian businesses where various articles like African clothes, craftwork, food and conservable foodstuffs, music and the likes are sold.

Some refer to this sprawling edifice of about six floors as the São Paulo’s *Ajgunle* in Apapa or *Oluwole*, a suburb of Lagos Island notorious for crime. Others say it’s more than that. It’s a melting point for Africans—especially Nigerians as it offers commerce, relaxation, and sometimes confrontations with the law. People go up and down floors making calls from their mobile phones and chatting up associates regarding earlier transactions or expected ones. They speak in Nigerian languages like Igbo, Yoruba and Benin. Deals involving millions of dollars are closed by pure verbal communication, as Zaitch (2002) observed when researching Colombian cocaine traffickers in the Netherlands. One shop owner stated:

“That is the way it is here. At the end of the day, some will go into “certain things” they do not even know how they got into it and consequently the prison is filled up with Nigerians.” (A shop owner in Galleria mall: SP, 22-12-2011)

Galleria is also a place where couriers seek jobs. For example, waiting on the last floor of the mall for an interviewee, I was approached by two Polish men (as introduced), in their early 40s. They had finished serving jail sentences, convicted for trafficking about 6 kilograms of cocaine each. They inquired whether they could courier for me or for a friend to Europe. “We have good passports and we can depart from Argentina because we have better connection there,” they told me. I made it clear that I am not interested in drug trafficking, but in research. This demonstrates how contacts are made at the Gallery. Also, the drinking bars and nightclubs create good ambience for recruiting couriers. The Nigerian traffickers ‘Monkey No Fine’ (MNF) expressed, “It is in SP one sees that Nigerians send people from the whole world into prison. It does not matter from which country; it is because of Nigerians and cocaine” (MNF: SP, 28-12-2012).

The temporary outings permitted in SP remains unique in confirming the borderless collaboration between Nigerian traffickers and associates internationally. Standing beside the

⁸⁶ For instance, during 2011 Christmas 23,639 inmates were granted temporary leave privileges in SP (Bocchini, 2012).

⁸⁷ Named after “Sotto” or Mr. Sunny Izomiwu, the 53 first Nigerian businessmen to rent a shop in the mall in 1994. Currently he owns about four shops there. Nigerians own about 200 out of about 245 shops in the mall and other owns the rest, Africans and Latin Americans.

entrance of Butanta Female Prison in SP, I watched several hundreds of inmates come out during the temporary outing in December 2012. Most were Brazilians. In-depth conversation with some inmates revealed they were poor slum residents, jailed because of drug trafficking. It is an indication that the slums offer a pool of would-be couriers, as most Nigerian traffickers asserted. According to the 2010 *Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística* (IBGE) Census, about two million people live in Favelas or slums in São Paulo. Rooted in Brazil's history of slavery and military dictatorship, the slums are ever-present symbols of poverty, social inequality, marginalization and drug trafficking. Several researchers have covered extensively the nature and impact of crime in these communities.⁸⁸ In this area, Jaguaribe expressed that "The mappings of social disarray tend to locate the favelas, the main terrain of the drug trade and a zone of scarcity, as crucial areas of violence" (2009, p. 220). Most of Brazil's middle- and upper classes view the slums as loci of violence and sources of criminality. State officials and law enforcement spread this view with "repressive action, from the almost daily police raids to the removal of entire populations and the razing of shacks... often justified in the name of the fight against crime" (de Santos, 1995, p. 162).

Whereas the othering and demonization persists, the slum dwellers in SP as in Lagos, assert that drug trafficking remains a potential alternative because of the withdrawal of the state (see Wacquant, 2004, 2008, 2009). Essentializing is common due to the dominant crisis of identity, the very contrary of the merits of the included that throw the social world into the dual mold. As Jock Young emphasized, if the chaos of reward creates ready hostility towards the underclass, the chaos of identity rasps upon them as an aberration with all the opposite characteristics of the world of the honest hardworking citizens. Yet the poor resembles more the wealthy, at the same time they are 'othered' by them; the extent to which the poor become more like the rest, the more they resent their exclusion (Young, 2007). The underclass offends all the cherished values of the majority while clinging to them and desiring the same joys of consumer life as other people boasted to have earned. In other words, what the Americans hold against the underclass in their midst is that its dreams and the model of life it desires are so uncannily similar to their own (Bauman, 1998b, p. 73).

What's common with these concepts is its applicability everywhere as the activities of Nigerian international trafficker are borderless one. Be it in Nigeria, Brazil or China its push and pull features remain. In various settings I observed cocaine traffickers evoking Bob Marley's (1976) *Rat Race*, that in the abundance of water, only the fool is thirsty. They cared less about the consequences of the illicit trade when convicted. Neither worried about the lengthy jail sentence in Brazil nor in China where it attracts capital punishment, as we shall discuss in section 3. Hitherto, Nigerian cocaine traffickers remain unaware that in the era of proactive policing, making illicit money and having good standard of life while having no legal job leads to the inquiry, *how did you make the money?* The general feeling that those who work little or not at all are getting an easy ride on your back and your taxes. In this area, Young (2007) expressed in relative deprivation downwards that the 'contented' middle class could feel sympathy towards the lower class because their relative satisfaction could decipher into feelings of charity. But whereas the larger constituency of dissatisfied are more likely to demand a stamp down on dole 'cheats' but not punitive rationality, tied to such a quasi-rational response to a violation of meritocratic principles are those that seeks to redress a perceived reluctance to work; punish, demean and humiliate (Hallsworth, 2000; Pratt, 2000).

Among the multitude of explanations for the elevated levels of drug trafficking and violence in Brazilian favelas includes a combination of government shortsightedness, police unaccountability, and scarce opportunities for favela youth, as emphasized by Wu (2012). With the escalation of the drug trade in the 70s and 80s, drug traffickers fill this vacuum left

⁸⁸ See, Zaluar (1995); Adorno and Nancy (2007); Human Rights Watch (2009); Perlman (2010).

by the absence of the state. Despite the fact that social programs have attempted to restore rights to residents of the slums, rampant police and state corruption undermine these same rights. In this regard, Dowdney (2003) highlights a power legitimized by community acceptance or neutrality, in which drug factions enforce social order in the community through a series of behavioral codes that serve both their needs and those of the community for ‘law’ and ‘order,’ which has led to ‘narcocracy or narco dictatorship.’⁸⁹

Furthermore, as in Nigeria, Brazil experienced a serious economic crisis, in which hyperinflation and then a collapse in economic growth impoverished millions of Brazilians.⁹⁰ Not only did Brazil experience growth with an inconsistency that left the society stratified into what is contemporarily considered among the most unequal countries globally, but also a dramatic social change, which transformed it from an overwhelmingly rural to a predominantly urban society within a few decades. In addition, increased demand for labor and higher demographic growth rates promoted further migration and rapid urban growth. Available data shows that due to the intensification of rural–urban migration, Brazil now has more of its total population living in towns and cities than do most European countries. According to the 2010 Demographic Census, over 84 percent of its population resided in urban areas, with large segments of the population inhabiting poorly located and ill-served informal settlements (McGranahan & Martine, 2014, p. 6).

In all, the realities in the slums, inequality, and poverty are features that could frustrate many chanceless slum dwellers into drug trafficking and collaboration with Nigerian traffickers. The frustrations that goes with the illicit trade maintains the status quo Nigerian traffickers face, much to the advantage of the law enforcement agents and those willing to exploit the chances.

5.4 Criminal justice response to Nigerian cocaine trafficking

Recognizing the problem, the Brazilian government enacted legislative policies and combat measures to curtail drug trafficking.⁹¹

5.4.1 Legislative measures

For Nigerian cocaine traders, the punishment applied by the contemporary law requires extremely stringent criminal handling:

Article 33: to import, export, refer, prepare, produce, manufacture, obtain, sell, expose to sale, offer, store, transport, carry, keep, prescribe, administer, or deliver for the consumption or supply, narcotics – even if for free – without authorization or in violation of the legal or regulatory norms. Punishment: Imprisonment for five (five) to 15 (fifteen) years and payment of 500 (five hundred) to 1,500 (one thousand five hundreds) days fine. (TNI, 2015)

Envisaged was the idea that such harsh legislation should not only deter Nigerian international cocaine traffickers, but also deter narcotics reaching a booming market of between one to two million cocaine users in Brazil, the world’s No two market as indicated by UNODC (2013).

⁸⁹ In this area see also Zaluar (1983, p. 25).

⁹⁰ For instance, between 1980 and 1990 the real minimum wage decreased by 46 percent and per capita income dropped 7.6 percent in what is often referred to as the ‘lost decade.’ Between 1870 and 1980 Brazil’s economy growth led to its popular President Juscelino Kubitschek pledged his country would achieve ‘fifty years in five’ and created a brand new capital city, Brasília, in the country’s interior. Unsustainable due to inflationary pressures and high public debts amongst other features, the country was bankrupt by 1983 (See, Luna & Klein, 2006, p. 40); International Bar association -IBA- (2010, p. 31).

⁹¹ For the overview of drug laws and legislative trends in Brazil, see TNI’s (2015) Drug Law Reform in Latin America. Brazil.

In this area, observers point to a number of positive initiatives including the 2011 amendments to the Criminal Procedure Code: (1) stipulating that preventive detention is to be considered a last resort and applicable to those who have committed crimes with less than four years imprisonment. (2) providing alternative measures to deprivation of liberty as the Law of Penal Execution provides benefits such as reduction in prison sentences if the prisoner took the initiative to pursue education. And (3) implementation of the task force of the National Council of Judges, which visits prisons and assists in releasing many of those who were illegally detained (see UNHRC, 2014).

However, despite these recent improvements, drug trafficking is a crime that most express disapproval of in Brazil as the public campaign, “Drug Law: It’s Time to Change,” exceeded expectations when the target 50,000 signatures were collected in just three days of the campaign rather than the first 30 days as averred by Open Society Foundations (César, 2012). They recent increased prison population,⁹² shows the influence of a criminal system based on harsher legislation, the limitation of guarantees, and a focus on repressive combat that directly or indirectly increases the number of prisoners in Brazil.

5.4.2 Combat: Paddling the streets

Allegations of arbitrary arrest and extortion during stop and search operations carried out by some civil police and military police agents or by fake undercover police remain conversant amid Nigerians in SP. They claim that preparation of the 2014 Football World Cup stepped up the control against drug trafficking not only within the cities as the boundaries.

In this area, effective stop-and-search and following-the-money concepts are strategies for crime prevention including drug trafficking. Money laundering is the lifeblood of transnational organized crime. However, though nations have prioritized following the money to identify criminals and deter citizens from turning to crime, Nigerian international cocaine traffickers launder the proceeds of the cocaine trafficking mostly through purchasing of consumer goods exported to Nigerian and African markets. As averred by the Global Regime for Transnational Crime, “Ultimately, anti-money laundering tools, which were designed to combat organized crime, have been ineffective,” according to a ten-year review of the Palermo Convention. The report emphasized that less than one percent of illicit financial flows globally are seized and frozen. This takes away much of a nation’s necessary resources and allows criminals to profit illegally and remain at large (see, Council on Foreign Relations CFR: 25-06- 2013).

Likewise, while the stop-and-search strategy aims for proactive crime prevention including drug trafficking,⁹³ it could be misused by dishonest police officers in extorting money from the arrested. Otherwise, the person is apprehended and charged, thereby exacerbating the problem of prison population and overcapacity. For instance, in an in-depth conversation, Otiyo explained his encounter with the civil police agents in SP: He had been ordered to stop by four undercover police agents who yelled, *Voce Africano!* (You African). Caught at the international airport in SP with 1.5 kilograms of cocaine he ingested, Otiyo was convicted and spent three years and 10 months in jail. He was framed because they assumed

⁹² The total number of prisoners in Brazil stands at about 548,000 inmates, out of which about 133,946 convicted for drug offense (TNI, 2015)

⁹³ Stop and Search is used in places where ‘intelligence’ relates that offenders are operating or where it is known that crimes are being committed including drug offences. On occasion Police Officers use their professional judgment to decide if necessary to carry out a ‘Stop and Search.’ Accurate recoding provides officers an understanding of where, when and on whom to search. This is important to enable police to identify disproportionality and dispel any myths, allegations or perceptions of disproportionality taking place. “We treat any misuse of the powers or related complaints seriously. All Officers are trained in the lawful use of ‘Stop and Search’ and Officers must treat those they search with respect and dignity” (see Hertfordshire Police & Crime Commissioner, 2012).

that as an ex-convict of trafficking he must have drugs and was forced to take them to his residence. Searching his room, they found about two thousand dollars and five hundred euro notes. Explaining that it was money from someone to buy goods and send to Nigeria, the police said it was drug money and threatened him with formal arrest and imprisonment. Despite taking the money, they demanded extra \$5,000 USD to let him go. Terrified, Otiyo agreed stating, “I said ok even though I did not have the money. So they let me go. That is how I did not get back to jail. But I am now in-debited” (Ex Nigerian trafficker Otiyo: SP, 23-09-2012).

It is up to the arresting police officers to make the distinction between trafficker and user. Being classified as a drug trafficker is largely dependent on race and social class rather than the quantity of drugs in possession or the existence of evidence that there was any intent to sell (Bateman, 2013). Nevertheless, in a demonstration of willful extortion, the involved police officers called back repeatedly demanding the five thousand dollars. Otiyo stated:

“I changed my telephone number and moved to another address in town. Yet they found my number, called and told me my new address. It was horrible for me because they threatened they knew my new address and that I should bring them money. I said I do not have such money. But they said I should borrow from friends. So I believed they had a Nigerian informant. These police guys are robbers in a way. They use the arm and uniform to rob! So I am afraid of them. I hope not to meet them again. I am sick of this kind of life. That is why I am looking for a normal work. Why are these police allowed to continue doing this?” (Ex Nigerian trafficker Otiyo: SP, 23-09-2012)

While the inquiry lingers, his fear is reasonable because police extrajudicial execution by police is rampant in Brazil. In this area, Dom Phillips writes that Rio police killed two teenage boys alleged of drug trafficking. The boys were picked up from the street and short in a nearby forest.⁹⁴ In 2010, U.N. Special Reporter Philip Alston condemned Brazil reporting that extrajudicial killings remain widespread and that few of the perpetrators are prosecuted or convicted, especially when they are police officers (see UNHRC, 2010). Critics point out the paradoxical situation—neo-classic notions of equality of citizens in the face of the law, but on the streets policing remains indubitably biased in terms of race and class as emphasized by Mooney and Young (2000). Furthermore, Young expressed that the bulimic nature of late modern societies could assist to shed more light on the nature and tone of the dissatisfaction of those at the underside of the society or the system, rooted simply in the contradictions between the thoughts that legitimize the system and the reality of the structure that makes it up (Young, 2007). In the wake of this, Otiyo and others that have nothing to do with trafficking remain scared of being set up by corrupt police agents. It evokes Jock Young’s expression:

“Both the punitive anger of the righteous and the burning sentiment of the excluded occur because the demarcation lines are blurred, values are shared, space is transfixed and the same contradictions of reward and ontology exist throughout society.” (Young 2007, p. 34)

The decision to opt for repressive penal responses to drug trafficking contributes to the increase of the Brazilian prison population. The prisoners are mostly small-time drug dealers sentenced to long prison terms that serve to reinforce the marginality and the stigma to which Otiyo and the likes are subjected. Deployment of intimidation and threat of arrest as a

⁹⁴ Rio De Janeiro — The footage of the two officers chilled viewers of the prime-time Brazilian TV show “Fantástico.” The officers had driven the boys to a nearby forested, hilly area; the video captured them nonchalantly discussing “discharging the weapon a little” (see Phillips, 2014).

bargaining tool for extortion have serious corollary, since police have the aptitude to determine who is tried and what the person is tried for. A first offense in trafficking comes with a much harsher penalty of three to fifteen years in prison (Zaluar, 1995, p. 100). With such ample freedom and power, police could determine someone's judicial outcome, especially since they could 'provide' all evidence.

Several experts emphasized the widespread symbiotic relationship between corrupt police officers and organized crime drug traffickers and its related violence in Brazil. It is a relationship that remains a subject of debate. For instance, the connection constitutes an "illegal network" (Arias, 2006, 2010), "symbiosis" (Mingardi, 2007), or "parallel power" (Leeds, 1996). It is a problem that stems from the traditional exchange-based politics, and clientelism in the Brazilian political economy.⁹⁵ Emphasized here is that the powerful-organized crime group such as the Primeiro Comando da Capital (PCC) control large parts of the urban periphery and exert pressure upon a police system suffering from organizational weaknesses (Willis, 2014). The influence of PCC is diffused in space and this affects policing and society for several reasons. Firstly, street-level police officers, both civil and military, are often residents of the same low-income communities controlled by criminal groups. Secondly, severing ties between police and criminal elements or armed groups is difficult, whether these ties emerge at the place of residence or the place of employment or are carried between the two. Because the divided organizational structure of the Civil Police, which firmly distinguishes between education levels and career advancement prospects for investigators, prison agents, registrars, and delegados (police chiefs), means that most police are not upwardly (or spatially) mobile. This situation, combined with dependence on a secondary source of income, leaves police susceptible to illegality.

In this regard, a common reason for self-centeredness and susceptibility of unscrupulous officers to street corruption is that both military and civil police in Rio and São Paulo have very low salaries that do not reflect the challenging nature of their jobs. In São Paulo for instance, starting salaries ranged from \$900 (USD equivalent) for a prison agent to \$1,600 a month for Police chiefs (delegados). Since 2011, the governor of São Paulo has raised salary levels considerably, by more than double for some. They now range from \$1,900 to \$2,900. Police complain that with deductions the difference in take-home pay is almost negligible (Willis, 2014). On the one hand, Klitgaard (2010) and Tanzi (1997) highlighted that an increase in the average wages—especially in the public sector—contributes to reduced corruption. Attractive wages in the public sector reduce the incentives to engage in corrupt transactions by reducing the corrupt agents' utility as outlined in the impact of public transparency in fighting corruption in Brazil (see Vieira, 2013, p. 82). On the other hand, the symbiotic relationship between corrupt police officers and organized crime drug traffickers persists. One reason for this is due to the existence of a criminal authority, which reflects the existence of powerful criminal actors and organizations, the relative weakness and exposure of street-level police, and an asymmetric balance of power between the extralegal spaces occupied by coercive criminal groups and the formal legal space of law and state power. As Willis (2014) points out, the police are pragmatic and relatively autonomous actors that (must) find ways to navigate this asymmetry. Off-duty police are also implicated in death-squad and militia activity in several parts of the country, and 'extortion groups' or police forces commonly demand their share of the profits or extorted cash under threats of arrest,⁹⁶ as most Nigerian traffickers stated. But while the fate of the Nigerian trafficker Otiyo depends on his ability to hide, the *eke* or python (as the police is known amid Nigerian traffickers) seek out the next, exacerbating the phenomenon it was meant to deter.

⁹⁵ For instance, see Wu (2012), Penglase (2010), Caldeira (2000), Zaluar (1995).

⁹⁶ For details in this area see for instance Human Right Watch Lethal Force (2009).

5.4.3 Law enforcement: Incursion, shops, and homes

Another repressive move meant to combat cocaine traffickers is the unexpected bust of those suspected of involvement in the illicit trade. Some Nigerian petty shop owners and businesses in SP could become victims of raids for extortion by police officers and their cronies. An example is Saka's case that happened in December 2011 and again in January 2013 during my fieldwork. It took place at the Centro Commercial 116, Galleria shopping mall. Some unscrupulous police officers would go there, present some drug to the individuals and demand monetary settlement; otherwise the subject is threatened with arrest and jail. Saka explained to me:

“It happened on a Friday when five armed police showed me their ID quickly and put it off. They blocked my shop, a business center for Internet browsing and making international calls. My Thai worker was here and also present were technician Simon that was repairing computers, and other customers. One police told me to open my drawer. While opening it, another one dropped a small bag of marijuana behind the step and called me to come and see something. I laughed at them and said that it is not from here because marijuana is never sold or used here. They searched all and found nothing. They took a mobile phone that belongs to a customer because I could not give them receipt of the phone. They also took two Lap Tops computers and my iPad. Then they made a phone call to their informant, a Nigerian I guess, who knows where I keep money. Because thereafter the police went to the toilet and collected 20.000 Brazilian Reals (about \$10.000 USD) from that specific place.” (Shop owner Saka: SP, 12-01-2013)

The police also attacked another Nigerian and got about 30.000 BRL. Suspecting these as corrupt officers, Nigerian traders in the mall overwhelmed them and freed the handcuffed Saka. Whereas some Nigerians offered to ‘settle’ (meaning bribe) with money, the majority refused, demanding that the Policia Military (PM) must be called to intervene. On arrival, the PM seized the gun from the officer and took him away. Saka did not report the case officially. He added:

“My lawyer asked me to wait. But let me be plain, actually, I do not want any problem because I suspected that those guys were police friends. Police work together with some of our guys. Let them go! My life is more important and I pray that God takes control.” (Shop owner Saka: SP, 12-01-2013)

During interview, a “Deligado de Policia” (Inspector of Police) told me to persuade Saka to come and make official report, but he refused. A cursory glance at the issue shows that even though many Nigerians have spent years in, it seems they are not fully integrated in society, as they frequently face police harassment. Dede told me that being treated this way could be frustrating but SP remains an agreeable place to reside when you find your level and gain your ground. Due to involvement of some Nigerians in cocaine trafficking, living in SP is not as assuring as it should be. For instance, most Nigerians recalled that two years ago close to one hundred Nigerians houses were raided, and many residents are still detained. These raids are not limited to Nigerians only; other foreigners such as Angolans or Chinese also experience such. Several Nigerians told me that raids are not a problem. It makes Brazilians exit the shopping mall, creating more chances for Nigerians and Africans to move in. Another reason why most Nigerians would not make official report is due to fear of being harmed. For instance, one shop owner stated about Saka's shop incursion:

“The police can do any thing they want. They will detain, beat and torture hell out of you or waist someone and nothing will happen. Do not forget that this is Brazil. Don't you see

the rampant killings shown on the TV? Yes he could make the report and then? Who will save him if they come after him? Even it is better to pay them and go your way.” (Nigerian shop owner: SP, 12-01-2013)

During fieldwork in early October 2012, undercover police allegedly busted the flats of three Nigerians in connection with drug trafficking. Though few kilograms of cocaine were seized, the three men negotiated ‘settlement’ and paid \$5,000 USD each in order to avoid arrest. Holloway expressed that “beatings and arbitrary arrest were contemplated to be a basic part of the police’s strategy of deterrence and punishment in Brazil. Their deployment continued even after the judicial authority to administer correctional detention and corporal punishment was removed from the police rights in 1871” (Holloway, 1993, p. 284). Should this claim be true, it demonstrates that those engaged in drug trafficking could pay kickbacks to carry on with the illicit activity. Where some fail to make official reports, several said they would because they not are involved in drug trafficking. For instance, Pastor John told me that anti-drug control agents busted the flat of Pastor John and held him and his family under gunpoint while they ransacked the rooms. Having no drugs or money, John made an official report to the police to prove his case. He stated, “I take the risk to bring the issue to the attention of the authorities” (Pastor John Okorie: SP, 12-01-2013). By making an official report, John would not only disprove rumors but also prove that as pastor he was not involved directly or indirectly in the illicit trade.

Military Police have a reputation for being trigger-happy; they shoot first and ask questions afterwards. Four hundred seventy eight people were killed in confrontations with police during the first nine months of 2014—an almost 100 percent increase compared to the year before.⁹⁷ Despite the issue of legitimate use of force in real threats of violence from gang members, police can usually get away with oppression, as the victims are afraid of the police and therefore do not report them. A study conducted by UNHCR 2010 outlines the impunity of rampant police killings conducted in Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo, usually without any negative repercussions for the police involved.

Critics assert that conflict of interest and rivalry amid Brazilian civil and military police groups not only renders investigations generally perfunctory and ineffective but also hinders uniting the two forces.⁹⁸ The practices of violence and arbitrariness have been constitutive of the Brazilian police to varying degrees since its creation. Policing has largely been aimed at controlling the poorest and most vulnerable sections of Brazilian society. Such practices were permitted to continue because the weakness of Brazilian democracy meant their victims were largely powerless, while the affluent Brazilians remained unaffected (IBA, 2010, p. 29). While this contention continues, traffickers use the language of money to keep their businesses running smoothly (Huguet & de Carvalho, 2008, p. 101), and the police use suppression as a menace and take kickbacks, which allow Nigerian traffickers to excel in their activities.

5.5 Police culture: Corruption and extortion

Brazil and Nigeria have much in common not only in the noticeable difference between rich and poor but also regarding corruption. I observed that in both countries there is a police culture of accepting kickbacks, bribery, and street corruption of collecting money on the streets from cocaine traffickers. On the one side of the Atlantic, in Nigeria for instance, Transparency International’s Global Corruption Barometer (2013) averred that corruption is

⁹⁷ See, National Broadcasting Company –NBC- (2014, October 28).

⁹⁸ For details in this area, see the International Bar Association Report (2010) and Willis’ (2014) Antagonistic Authorities and the Civil Police in Brazil

pervasive throughout all levels of society, from petty corruption to cases of high-level government officials. For example, whereas 69 percent of surveyed citizens considered public officials and civil servants ‘corrupt’ or ‘extremely corrupt,’ 92 percent of respondents perceive the police as ‘corrupt or extremely corrupt.’

In Nigeria, corruption in the police is rampant, particularly involving the traffic police at highway checkpoints. Police routinely stopped drivers who had committed no traffic infractions, refusing to allow a car to continue until the driver paid a bribe.⁹⁹ Extortion is the unlawful use of one's position or office to obtain money through coercion or threats. Another example would be when customs officials request undue ‘customs duties’ from importers as a condition to clear their goods. In Nigeria 72 percent of those surveyed said corruption has increased considerably over the past two years and 92 percent considered police as the institution affected by corruption. More than three-quarters admitted to paying a bribe to the police in the last 12 months.¹⁰⁰

The Nigerian police force is accredited more for terrorizing people than protecting them and enforcing law and order. Ebe (2012), and Shaw (2003) averred that at its foundation, the National Police Force was intended to only protect the colonial masters that set it up, which underlines its contemporary attitude to policing. The stringency, disdain and brutality with which most have discharged their duties over the years has worked to the detriment of the society at large, robbing it of an ability to sustain public confidence in the forces of law and order. It is a consequence of decades of neglect by military governments, which marginalized the police to prevent them from competing with the military. During an in-depth conversation with about 10 Nigeria police officers, they told me that they must collect bribes to survive because their salary is insufficient to take care of nuclear and extended families.

Likewise, successful Nigerian cocaine traffickers claim that they have the ‘right’ social capital within the police in SP that foster achievement in the illicit trade. They buy confiscated cocaine from police in Brazil. Nigerian traffickers MNF expressed:

“SP is like Nigeria. Regular quality cocaine comes from my good paddies within the *Eke* (or Python meaning police). They have dream like any other and how could they meet up. I give my guys cash handout even when without giving me ‘market’ (cocaine). Apart from maintaining family, the need to maintain their lovers. I invest in the friendship, we help each other.” (MNF: SP, 20-12-2011)

MNF is no exception. Several assert that their success in the illicit trade is the existence of kickbacks and collaboration with the “right” police officers. Such collaboration delivers cocaine at somewhat lower than market price, as the officers want to dispose seized cocaine quickly. In this regard, the same mechanism that paves the way for successful drug trafficking in Nigeria or sub-Saharan Africa also works in Brazil. For this reason, transporting illegal ‘goods’ by road from one end to the other is achievable often not only by Nigerian traffickers themselves but by their locale associates.

Respondents in the Global Corruption Barometer 2013 perceived the Brazilian police to be one of the most corrupt institutions in the country, and 70% consider the police either “corrupt” or “extremely corrupt”¹⁰¹ (Transparency International, 2013). As such, it is a

⁹⁹ As indicated by World Economic Forum (2013-2014), Business executives give the reliability of Nigeria's police services to enforce law and order a score of 2.9 on a 7-point scale (one being “cannot be relied upon at all” and seven “can always be relied upon”); and according to Afro Barometer 2013 Summary of Results Nigeria, 78% of respondents perceive most or all of police to be involved in corruption; 53% of respondents trust the police “not at all,” and only 4% respond that they trust the police “a lot.”

¹⁰⁰ See, Transparency International, GCB (2013); and Business Anti-Corruption Portal (2014).

¹⁰¹ Citizens give the police a score of 4.0 on a 5-point scale (one “not at all corrupt” and five “extremely corrupt”), and gave public officials/civil servants a score of 3.3 on a 5-point scale (one “not at all corrupt” and five “extremely corrupt”). See Business Anti-Corruption Portal, Country Economic Profiles, The Americas-Brazil, May 2014.

noxious state of affairs in which the establishments supposed to combat corruption are infected and distrusted. This recalls that the Military Police, trained and organized by the military, are responsible for policing and patrolling the beat. The plainclothes Civil Police are the bureaucratic arm of the public security system. Both forces may arrest suspects caught in the act of committing a crime or pursuant to an arrest warrant issued by a judge (see IBA, 2010).

A three hour, in-depth conversation with a co-passenger and Brazilian civil police officer I met on an Air France flight on return trip from SP to Paris in 17 January 2013 enlightened more on this aspect. He explained that some Brazilian police officers are vulnerable to taking kickbacks to meet up family financial responsibilities from cocaine traffickers because of insufficient salary. Secondly, there is a paradox that those doing it might be compelled in a sub-culture where it will be difficult to be an exception because others are doing it. They cannot take bribes, collect, or extort money because there is social control over the police. There are other officers watching them, a conduct that attracts disciplinary action within the police establishment.

On arrival in Paris during control, the French police took him to identify his luggage for further searching. Mingardi's (2001) work typifying the types of relationships between foreign criminal groups involved in drug trafficking and local Brazilian criminal organizations. In this view, the Nigerian international cannot manage without the cooperation of people with influence locally, whether they are criminals themselves, state officials, or employees. It reveals the same mechanism fostering the success of Latin American cocaine traffickers in Nigeria and West Africa is an opportunity that Nigerian traffickers exploit in Brazil. Trafficker Celense stated to me:

“It is good that there is ‘long leg’ (meaning corruption) in Brazil and other Latin American countries. It makes things happen because I got my original Portuguese passport here. It is available with connections against payment of \$10,000 USD. Issued in Rio and official.” (Nigerian trafficker Celense: SP, 01-10-2012)

Owning authentic foreign passports allows for unlimited traveling for a Nigerian drug trafficker. It evokes that high-level politicians and bureaucrats often do not have effective control over low-level government agents, thus some police and bureaucrats take kickbacks or work with drug traffickers to achieve personal goals.

In all, I observed that the achievement of Celense or MNF and the like results from the existence of a police culture of accepting kickbacks, bribery, street corruption and extort from unscrupulous law enforcement agents. Nigerian international cocaine traffickers succeed in SP because some people entrusted with controlling the new trend illicit trade assist to keep it in place. However, as an interview revealed, having the ‘right’ passport does backfire because a Nigerian female trafficker returning from Argentina was apprehended on the boarder. She raised suspicion as could not speak Portuguese. She was subsequently convicted and jailed.

5.6 Inside ‘school’

In the past 20 years Brazil's population has grown by 30 percent while that of its prisons and police cells has almost quintupled to over half a million, which is the fourth-highest in the world behind only the United States, China, and Russia (TNI, 2015). Most of the Nigerian prisoners in Brazil are held in SP prison system, where there are about 131,000 people. Every month the number increases by 1000. The majority of prisoners are low- or medium-risk offenders who are forced to share cells with violent professional criminals. According to official list from Penitentiary Administration Secretary of São Paulo State Government, as at

December 2011 there were 272 (233 men and 14 women) Nigerian prisoners, most of them convicted for cocaine trafficking offenses. Their number has increased to 361 as Nigerians top the list of foreign inmates in Itai prison, followed by Bolivia with 133 and Peru 122 inmates,¹⁰² where the number of people per room varies depending on the influx of prisoners. For instance, the Nigerian inmate OB stated,

“I am in ‘school’ (meaning jail) since 2008, I share room meant for six with ten inmates from various countries (Angola, Bolivia, Peru, Colombia, Yugoslavia, Spain, Italy, etc), with four people sleeping on the floor. For the so-called bed, it is first come first serve.” (Nigerian inmate OB: SP, 28-12-2012)

These shortcomings reflect a paucity of legal advice that would enable inmates to benefit from Brazil’s theoretically world-class laws on parole and alternative sentences like community service. With too many prisoners flowing in, and not enough flowing out, a cesspool festers in the middle. On paper, Brazil’s prisons are a paragon of modernity. In practice, says Marcos Fuchs of *Instituto Pro Bono*, a human-rights group, they are medieval. These deficiencies are problem widespread in Latin American countries, with an excess of provisional prisoners that make up 45 percent of the contemporary national prison leading to terrible conditions for inmates. Sluggish justice systems imply that many Nigerian prisoners are on remand like the yet-to-be-convicted 73-year-old Hafsat Awosade, who died in prison, and was denied rights to progression and good medical attention as discussed below.

5.6.1 Arbitrary arrest and denied rights to progression

Critics highlight over-representation of blacks in Brazilian prison can be attributed to the biases of the arresting officer. As summed up by the Conectas Human Right Group (13-01-2014), “A light-skinned yuppie smoking pot on the beach is a user and left in peace, a dark-skinned slum-dweller lighting a spiff on the street is a peddler and thrown in jail.” The penal system is intrinsically elitist, which is one reason why pressure for prison reform has been scarce, as not all of Brazil’s incarcerated population suffers equally. Those with a university diploma and social capital are often issued separate cells and better conditions. The poor are seldom afforded such treatment. Additionally, more than 80% of prisoners could not afford to hire a lawyer and there are no public defenders in more than 70% of all judicial jurisdictions. These are all circumstances that also affect Nigerian inmates in Brazil.

Furthermore, several Nigerian inmates in both Itai and PFC prisons complain about the lengthy sentences, as well as the denial of rights of progression in prison. For instance, there are Nigerians jailed for 34 or more years in Itai prison, according to official list from Penitentiary Administration Secretary of São Paulo State. A recurrent complaint was that penalty applied to foreigners is higher than those of Brazilians for same drug trafficking offense. According to information from reliable sources such as Legal Aid, criminal lawyers, Drug Prevention Office in SP, and a seminar on drug related issues in SP attended during my fieldwork; there are differences in Federal and State laws in Brazil. Drug trafficking falls under the State’s laws, while international trafficking falls under the Federal laws. Federal laws are more severe, which affects Nigerians and other foreigners. International drug trafficking that affects Nigerian offenders attracts higher jail sentence because it has the offense of criminal association, which increases the sentence for an offender (IBA, 2010). At PFC prison in SP *all* 12 Nigerian female inmate interviewees were affected by denial of rights of progression. For example:

¹⁰² See, Lissardy ‘s article on BBC Mundo, Brasil. Itai, la torre de Babel de las prisiones en Brasil. Nigeria es el país con más presos en Itai. 361. El segundo es Bolivia con 133 y el tercero Perú con 122 [translated] (Lissardy, 2013).

“I was told that I would be inside for three years and two months. I have been working for two years and two months now. It means I have remission. But I am already three years and two months inside. So why am I still here? Where is my remission, and why have I not been on semi-open regime outside?” (Nin: SP, December 2011)

This situation arises because an effective criminal justice lawyer needs to gain access to Nigerian offenders after arrest, offer advice during interrogation, and guarantee that their constitutional safeguards are not violated in detention. Whereas public defenders do not lack the necessary competency and qualification to carry out their responsibilities, the overwhelming workload they have to manage remains a major hindrance. As expressed by UNHCR Working Group on Arbitration Detention (2014) the deficiency in obtaining effective legal assistance has constrained *pro bono* services, which are often unavailable to detainees, such as in the State of São Paulo. In some places, there are insufficient judges to deal with criminal cases. In addition, *pro bono* service is also aggravated by hindrance like lawyers only paid R\$500 per case, which is a small fee, given the amount of time that is usually involved in representing someone in a criminal lawsuit. It results in lawyers being less likely to devote sufficient time to conducting a professional job.¹⁰³

For Nigerian inmates, this is compounded by difficulties to provide needed documents required by law to granting such permits. These documents would prove they could support themselves, have a place to live and means of sustenance. It evokes that the release of foreign prisoners could ironically imply the loss of a certain social security and documental legibility provided by the prison institution. In this area, Padovani (2013) found in her research that São Paulo criminal justice agents like public defenders, prosecutors and judges, require that foreigners who leave the prison system provide documents and prove their financial means to rent a home or a room, which most members of Nigerian cocaine traffickers outside are unwilling to do because direct and indirect involvement in the illicit trade. They're afraid because Nigerian inmates must obtain the documentation needed to establish an identity, such as proof of residence, the name of a father or mother, or a birth certificate.

Compared to their Brazilian counterparts in terms of accommodation and work contract, Nigerians generally do not have to provide all these documents. Most Nigerians outside are afraid of involving themselves due to the fact that most are not necessarily innocent, and don't want to risk guilt by association. In other words, they might also be directly or indirectly involved in cocaine trafficking. In this view, it is less that the authorities make it difficult for Nigerian, and more because they could not provide the needed documents necessary for allowing parole.

5.6.2 Lack of good medical attention

Another shortcoming affecting Nigerian inmates is the lack of quality medical attention. Claims that poor health services resulted to deaths in Itai and PFC prisons remained conversant amongst Nigerian inmates and incarcerated couriers sent by Nigerian cocaine traffickers in various countries. It is usual to see obituaries in Galleria mall where Nigerian

¹⁰³ Observers indicate that the key function of Defensoria Pública is to offer free legal assistance to those that are not able to afford private lawyers, an estimated 70 million Brazilians, defined under Brazilian law earning up to three minimum salaries. However, Brazil has approximately 4,000 public defenders contrasted to 12,000 public prosecutors and almost 16,000 judges. Meaning that in São Paulo, for instance, there are 1.48 public defenders for every 100,000 inhabitants as compared 4.22 and 7.7 of judges and public prosecutors correspondingly. According to Brazilian Ministry of Justice, about 80 percent of prisoners cannot afford a lawyer need to be provided with the legal representative services at public expense (Defensoria Publica, Diagnostic II: 2006, p.106). But in practice, there are too few public defenders to perform this task effectively (see IBA, 2010, pp. 48-49).

traders gather to pray for co-nationals that died in jail. The death of female courier Nke, which happened in mid 2011 in PFC, is an example. Inmate Lita called her Nigerian ‘business associate’ to send a courier to SP. Resulting in Nke being sent to carry about three kilograms of cocaine. However, Nke was arrested at the SP Airport, was convicted, and got a six-year imprisonment, meaning that the sender and her courier ended up in the same prison. Whereas Lita knew this, Nke did not. First, this enlightens the working of Nigerian traffickers from inside a Brazilian jail. It also explains the role of strikers in the trafficking chain, wherein the recruited courier Nke did not know for whom she worked. Despite becoming friends in jail Lita concealed the facts from her. Lita stated, “I did not want her to know; it is the nature of the business! But it matters nothing any longer because Nke died in prison about four months ago” (Inmate Lita: SP, 26-12-2011).

Nke went to the church, came back to the pavilion, and thereafter collapsed. Taken to the ‘clinic,’ the doctor was unavailable and medicine was out of stock. She got the painkiller *Paracytamol (Gipirona)*, but Nke died. Because the cause of Nke’s death could not be determined, inmates believed she died of Voodoo and witchcraft. Lita added:

“I think so because she did African traditional religious believe *Macumba* or *Voodoo* in prison. She tried everything just to get out of prison safe, having being denied progressions. One time I saw four plastic knives tied together with a red piece of cloth in our cell. It was smelled like shit. I do not know how it came in there. I called Mari and other girls. I also called the inmate *Mama Africa* who after praying threw the symbol away.” (Inmate Lita: SP, 26-12-2011)

Mama Africa or Chi is a 60-year-old Nigerian amongst the inmates whom I interviewed in PFC. Inmates frequently accuses her of witchcraft. During our conversation where the late 73-year-old woman Mrs. Awosade was also present, Chi related developing mental problems, stating:

“I cannot stand these accusations any longer. When someone dies, they would say that me, *Mama Africa*, killed the person. Because of this, I do not sleep at night. They call me witch and all that.” (Inmate Chi: SP, December 2011)

Sick and weakened, the two elderly women could not work to earn money for supplementing food and other shortages, whereas others earn up to \$200 USD monthly in addition to remission. They asked if the Brazilian government could allow them send some money for school fees to their children in Nigeria. Whereas the two older women told me there are no witches even if they felt isolated by others, these relations provide insight into the role played by traditional beliefs amid Nigerian cocaine traffickers in Brazilian jails.

This displays that older women in African society are most likely to be accused of being witches, amongst others because there are often poor, troubled, rejected, or bereaved in this context by prison life. Witchcraft accusations usually occur when people suffer one or more material or intangible losses. In Nigeria illnesses, financial troubles and a range of other misfortunes are associated with witchcraft. Both the late Awosade and Chi were relatively powerless, emotionally vulnerable, and unable to fight back when accused of practicing witchcraft. They are widely imagined to be jealous, bitter and envious.¹⁰⁴ On the one hand, other inmates claim to support and encourage Chi, telling her not to listen to any body no matter what is said. On the other hand, the issue was that she hears voices and always complains that someone is disturbing her, even when on one is present. When asked to point to those disturbing her, she points to anyone nearby. Chi stated: “I have nightmare. I am

¹⁰⁴ See for instance Adinkrak and Adhikari, (2014, p. 317), Harries (2010, p. 142).

tortured mentally because my photo was regularly shown on the TV in Brazil for carrying cocaine. I hear voices about it always and critics” (Chi: SP, December 2011).

In this area, the penitentiary system established that inmates must possess required documents. It is difficult for Nigerians outside to provide an address necessary for granting inmates parole or partial freedom. Due to previous experiences, they do not want to attract the police to their homes. Most claimed that the law enforcement agents have robbed them. They also lose their residences. For this reason, most are afraid to give co-national inmates their addresses. The lack of quality medical attention and professional servicers causes more sickness amid those revalidation was meant to save.

Emphasized here is that Brazil’s national health system—*Sistema Único de Saúde* (SUS)—has been an outstanding success. This is culminated in the 1988 constitution, which enshrined health as a citizens’ right and which requires the state to provide universal and equal access to health services (World Health Organ [WHO], 2008). The first large-scale epidemiological study performed with the prison population in Brazil, revealed high rates of psychiatric disorders among men and women.¹⁰⁵ This remains a paradox in Brazils, a country that offers its citizenry one of the best medical health care systems in the world.

In this area, in the absence of real professional counseling, traditional beliefs take precedence. Nigerian inmates said they wait up to 12 months for a doctor’s appointment. In a confinement where good health care is lacking, some inmates turn to traditional medicine and rituals for aid. These interactions show the extended use of some African cultural beliefs become part and parcel of Nigerian cocaine traffickers at different stages in the trafficking chain, elucidating the implications of the illicit trade during lengthy years of imprisonment and alternatives solutions by inmates. What is missing is the training, primarily in terms of the Nigerian inmate’s reintegration, since the prison staff that work with them should acts as educators to socially recover them. Nonetheless whereas feeble inmates get weaker, the same environment represents a medium that reinforces others.

5.6.3 Stay in business in jail

In Brazilian prisons, communication is restricted for Nigerian inmates. During closed regime, inmates could be called once in six months, for the duration of about an hour. In a situation where most prison officials do not speak English, it remains difficult to communicate when family members call. Then the prison officer may send for the called person. For this and several other reasons inmates could pay up to \$1,400 USD in PFC for a cell phone or \$20,000 USD in Itai prison in order to stay in business while incarcerated.

This implies that prohibited items like mobile telephones, cocaine, and other drugs could be available for sale by inmates. Smuggled in and sold through the activities of First Command of the Capital (PCC) criminal faction in jails¹⁰⁶ or dishonest prison officers that collect kickback. Through this symbiotic relation between the legitimate and illegitimate world, the activities of the Nigerian cocaine traffickers and associates continue from prison. Rija stated, “I bought my phone for 1800 Brazilian reals. I hide it in my pussy mostly. One time I slept with it for 72 hours. Sometimes it was for weeks. It hurts like mad” (Rija: SP, 28-12-2012).

This is because the guards enter the cells regularly, use metallic detector to check or scan clothes and search inmates naked but not inside body cavities. Telephones are important because inmates want to remain connected with friends and relations whenever they have the

¹⁰⁵ In this area see for example Andreoli, dos Santos, Quintana, Ribeiro, Blay, Taborda, and de Jesus Mari, (2014).

¹⁰⁶ The PCC grew as a means to protect inmates from state and non-state violence within the prisons, and was remarkably effective. (see Mingardi, 2007).

chance. For instance, Lita arranged for the courier Nke to be sent to SP. Those who cannot afford a handset often buy a Sim-card and rent phone from others.

Inmates are careful about the right time to make calls. Those with phones remain alert because the warders can enter any time. Mana stated:

“They found my phone hidden in the toilet. They seized it and I was sent into ‘*castico*’ or isolation for 30 days. Long enough to think about how to buy another phone. My contact outside paid \$3,000 USD for each of the three cell phones I bought from Brazilian inmates. In prison you can buy everything including drugs.” (Mana: SP, 24-12-2011)

In this area, affluent Nigerian inmates claim that they succeeded in jail by collaborating with Brazilian and Latin American inmates. However, those caught are punished accordingly. They may lose their job and remission or place in school and might be sent to solitary confinement for a period. Meaning that contrary to easy circumvention of the harsh jail conditions, the offense has its short-comings. Because warders patrol the corridors, walking bare footed in order to listen to conversation of unfriendly inmates can betray Nigerian counterparts.

While cell phone could be bought for about a thousand U.S. dollars in the women prison, in Itai male prison it costs between \$7,000-\$20,000 USD. “Guys must stay in business!” I was reminded. MNF added, “One inmate paid \$20,000 USD for a cell phone (MNF: SP, 20-12-2011).

Whereas a Nigerian *Oga* or ‘Big man’ trafficker could afford it alone, several small-scale traffickers frequently contribute to buy a cell phone together. This motivates small-scale cocaine traffickers to work harder while inside. Most Nigerian inmates need to keep in touch with associates.

In this regard, it is a wishful thinking that inmates could not do their business from the inside. On the contrary, most tend to do their best in keeping what they had already established. In popular discussion amongst Nigerian international cocaine traffickers, steady deals carried out by inmates remain conversant. Being in prison, or ‘school’ as it is often called, robs inmates their freedom. At the same time, it offers inmates or ‘students’ the chance of reflection and meeting new friends from various countries and strengthen contacts.

In the Nigerian international context, being inside had little effect on those who had solid partners, relatives, and family members that run the deals. If the principal person is inside, his subordinates might cheat him but not in an absolute sense. He is updated with movements of ‘goods,’ prices and profits or losses. In this regard, successful Nigerian traffickers incarcerated direct their cocaine deals from inside. Prison offered them the chance of consolidating friendships with Latin American and inmate members of PCC in São Paulo. They stay in business because of the mutual relationship existing between them and the custodians.

5.7 Turning the page, a challenge

During fieldwork in SP, the arrest of corrupt law enforcement agents¹⁰⁷ remained a regular topic amid Nigerian traffickers in several settings. In spite of the persecution suffered, they are unhappy with arrest of those that assisted them. Discontented Sharpi said:

¹⁰⁷ For examples, an article in the newspaper Globo reported that several police officers from the Department for Combating Drug Trafficking (DENARC) in São Paulo were arrested for drug trafficking conspiracy, kidnapping and torture. Seven out of thirteen officers involved have been arrested. The officers received R\$300,000 (about \$150,000 USD bribe a year from drug traffickers in exchange for information about police operations against trafficking (see Latin American Current Events, 16-07-2013).

“Please let them release those ‘good’ corps. They are our type of guys. Their arrest spoils our business. *Wey tin be this, them wan turn page?*” (What is happening, do they (meaning the police force) want to turn page?). (Nigerian trafficker Sharpi: SP, 12-01-2013)

Sharpi and the like need the sub-cultural ‘good’ corps, their friend. He recalls cynically the paradox that underpins Nigerian international cocaine trafficking. Whereas the ‘bad’ corps arrest Nigerian traffickers, the ‘good’ ones are part and parcel of the illicit business. Those who accept bribes, assisting them in evading control or and arrest. Sharpi is touched because such arrest, when consistent, threatens his success in the international cocaine trafficking. Whereas they feel sorry for arrests of corrupt police officers, they resent Nigerians suspected of collaborating with some police to extort money from Nigerian traffickers. Seen as jealous of the successful Nigerian traffickers, as we shall discuss in the next chapter.

This shows that the relationship between corrupt police and Nigerian cocaine traffickers is much more intricate. Research illustrates that corrupt police often fail to do their duty by enforcing the law, provide traffickers with the details of police activity, and move their operations elsewhere so as to not interfere with the drug business. In these situations, bribes are paid not only to allow the business to continue, but also to provide favors as indicated by Arias (2004, p. 3). Nigerian cocaine traffickers like Sharpi are unhappy about the arrest of corrupt officers; such arrests demonstrate that it’s no longer business as usual. Simultaneously, it marks improvement to curtailing international cocaine trafficking. When certain law enforcement agencies are found to be corrupt, they are not made an example of by the government; for the most part, they are simply pushed aside and added on to the growing list of corrupt police officers. This “sweeping under the rug” by the government also encourages police to enter into the corrupt system of the drug traffickers (Holston, 2009, p. 14).

The involvement of corrupt police officers in cocaine crimes makes headlines in Nigeria. Despite having anti-corruption laws, authorities can point to only a few notable convictions. For instance, the Court of Appeal sitting in Lagos upturned the conviction of Bello Lafiaji, the former Chairman of the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA), was sentenced to 16 years of imprisonment for abuse of office and conspiracy involving \$164,000 USD drug trafficking money. It ruled that there was not enough evidence to convict Lafiaji and therefore quashed all charges of fraud and abuse of office against him.¹⁰⁸ These cases, however, remain the exception to the rule. High-level corruption that goes unpunished sends the message that cocaine traffickers can carry on with impunity in Nigeria. This sends the signal to the frustrated youth that participation in illicit cocaine smuggling would only attract lenient punishment as Nigerian traffickers boost in Brazil or China.¹⁰⁹ This is amid the reasons for the upsurge in the increasing number of offenders, as demonstrated by the regular arrest of Nigerian offenders. It recalls a new thinking not only in terms of decriminalization but above all in deploying preventive measures by providing opportunities for the chanceless and hopeless individuals to achieve good standard of life through mainstream activities.

5.8 Summary

The reaction of the host society to Nigerian international cocaine trafficking and related crimes has been discussed in this chapter, addressing the criminal justice response to the

¹⁰⁸ See Appeal Court Upturns Former NDLEA Chairman Lafiaji’s Conviction. Street Journal (2011, November 22).

¹⁰⁹ The inability of some judges to adequately punished drug offenders could enhance the illicit trade indirectly. Foreexample, Yusuf Hakeem Ajibola, an Ibadan socialite based in London who was arrested with 2.2 kilogram of cocaine on July 8, 2008, he paid a fine of 300,000 naira (less than \$2,000 USD) as an option as fine rather than spending eleven months in jail. Such easy sanction is seen as Nigerian cocaine traffickers as they could pay it without problem (see Udama, 2013).

phenomenon and interactions with the public.

The public reaction to dark-skinned or non-Brazilian individuals is that they could be generally labeled as Nigerian and/or almost certain as a drug trafficker, because most people know less about Africa. Nigeria's 'good imago' as well as the frequent arrests of *Os Nigeriani trafficantes* (Nigeria traffickers) reverberated on TV news compounds this. The portrayal of crime does not only cause unending feelings of fear, but also constructs stereotypes, essentially worsening discussions about 'good and bad' or 'offender and victim.'

The Brazilian government endorsed harsh legislative policies and combat measures to curtail drug trafficking. A criminal system based on harsher legislation, limitation of guarantees and a focus on repressive combat, directly or indirectly shows its influence in exacerbating the problem of prison population and overcapacity to which Nigerian inmates contributes to. The population of people incarcerated more than doubled to over half a million in the last decades, most chanceless Afro-Brazilians and indigenous people. Lack of good medical attention and professional services causes more sickness amid inmates that revalidation was meant to save. The result is that Nigerian inmates turn to traditional voodoo as alternative.

Brazil is the seventh best world economy in terms of GDP, but the huge gap between the rich and poor, relative deprivation, police culture of street corruption, kickback, and bribery are amongst important features that fuel the enthusiasm of Nigerian international cocaine trafficking in the country. A paradox in Brazil wherein some custodians of the law are among those that undermine it, creates a vicious circle that maintains the environment exploitable by direct and indirect actors of Nigerian cocaine traffickers.

The human and material costs of the contemporary harsh repressive measures brings to light the perception that prison is a medium exceeded in fighting drug trafficking, since in most case imprisonment only fosters the professionalization of the offense as demonstrated by the high recidivism. It has contributed to conspicuous over representation of small-time dealers of illicit drugs sentenced to long prison terms, which reinforces the marginality and the stigma to which they are subjected. Brazil's punitive penal system requires a shift in the public mindset. Prison conditions are generally bad; for example, Brazil grants its citizenry one of the best health services in the world, though its inmates lack the same treatment.

Brazil's formal commitment to liberal democracy and the honor to take its rightful position in the world implies a holistic approach to judicial reform together with tackling the issues confronting its penitentiary system. It should overhaul the justice system by looking not just at the official laws, institutions, and appraisal procedure, but also at how these establishments function practically and in the specific political and historical context in which they have developed. While at the central level, amendments in narcotic legislation could drastically reduce the nonviolent-offender backlog, states should be persuaded to embrace alternatives to pretrial detention, invest in preventive measures and non-custodial sentencing and rehabilitation programs.

In the chapter ahead I will focus on the discursive reaction from the target group—the Nigerian traffickers themselves—concerning the situation in Brazil.

Chapter 6

Response from inside

6.1 Introduction

This chapter will complete this section by focusing on the reaction from the Nigerians themselves, providing insight into their concerns and views for the future in the aftermath of involvement some co-nationals in cocaine trader. In this area, the various fieldworks in SP provided a good chance for observing the enthusiasm and disenchantment of both traders of the illicit cocaine and others that are not involved. It is a mixed feeling of attraction and resentment of the city and country that depends on the topic discussed.

Recalled from earlier sections, they're in an environment that labels almost every Nigerian as a drug trafficker due to negative image caused by involvement of some in cocaine trafficking and related deviant acts. Illicit cocaine traffickers I encountered talked about their long-term dreams for the big score while being able to maintain their daily small scores. This wishful thinking of an enclave that see themselves mainly as business individuals of particular type and not workers, gives less chance for their real integration in the host society filled with legitimate opportunities.

In this area nonetheless, the inquiry arises as to why Nigerians in SP prefer the status quo stigmatization, unlike their counterparts in Guangzhou, China who are transforming their image and correcting the dishonor. As observed in varied settings, the ingenuity to disproving their stigma remains conversant amongst those longing for a change and blends into a society, the world's seventh wealthiest economy (World Bank, 2014).

By setting up envisaged Nigerian Community in SP, as in China, the pioneers of this initiative will not only focus on rebranding their negative image but also they would assist in reducing participation in the illicit trade, prison overcapacity, and related cost to society. Where most see examples of scapegoats, others see examples to be emulated. Meaning that Nigerian see themselves from different points of view concerning varied issues, which I shall explore in the following sections.

6.2 No need to learn the language?

All through this research, the observation remains that Nigerians have found their way globally. It evokes that adapting or integrating is a personal choice, given the opportunity. It depends on the emotional or cultural baggage one possesses. For instance, many Nigerian traffickers do not speak Portuguese well, as this remains conversant in several setting during fieldwork. The overwhelming majority thinks of themselves as lazy for having resided in SP for over a decade without learning the language. Capturing the language that has the key to the Brazilian culture is fundamental for a new comer. One area that highlights the communication hindrance is when someone gets arrested and a legal representative is needed, where most do not speak English well. For a lawyer that does not speak English well, he or she has no option than to start imagining things. In this area, Nigerian activist Gil stated:

“The lawyers that I call for our boys, I invite here and take them to lunch as if there are my relatives. The reason is to explain things to them. Sometimes I seat them down and tell them that, “these people you see here are not the way they are. Maybe they are the only hope of their families back home.” That means that if you are working for them, please work to get results. Do not take it that you are just standing in.” (Gil: SP, 28-12-

2012)

This evokes the active and creative ways through which human beings give meaning to their experiences, because Nigerian inmates have problems accessing and communicating with lawyers and relatives. This is partially due to the absence of telephones or appropriate channels of communication, but is also because they do not speak Portuguese. The majority of Nigerian prisoners told me that they only met their public defender once, which can occur months after their arrest. In some cases, it took almost a year before one appeared in court. To contact one's lawyer, Nigerian inmates need to communicate through family members when they would visit. Since most did not have family, "contacting the lawyer to find out the information regarding one's case remains problematic for inmates in Brazil" (see UHRC, 2014). Underscored is that the need to learn the host language remains fundamental to integration, as it demonstrates certain level of inclusion in the society-inclusive prison. It is a situation affecting Nigerian inmates, as explained by a criminal lawyer, "Most Nigerians are unable to express themselves well in Portuguese language and many lawyers do not speak good English (CL: SP, 27-12-2012).

The lack of communication is further compounded by inability of most Nigerian cocaine trafficking offenders to hire a private lawyer/interpreter that would ensure good result. This limits the chances of meeting and discussing their case.

6.3 Insufficient means for good legal representation

The analysis of fieldwork information shows that most Nigerian arrestees and inmates do not want and/or are unable to pay lawyers and do not provide sufficient relevant information, thereby not motivating their efficient legal representation. According to a Nigerian criminal lawyer, apprehended Nigerians would want the service if it were free of charge. On the other hand, they do not provide enough valid backup materials for lawyers to build a case upon. For instance:

"Someone caught with some kilograms of cocaine, had to prove that before trafficking, he/she had a licit business or job. But, that's not the case with the most. If asked, what he does for a living? He would reply, 'I am an exporter.' What is the name of your registered business, seeing that you have lived in SP for decades? Then he lay back."
(A criminal lawyer: SP, 27-12-2012)

Those arrested often decline to provide information that will implicate them. In this area, one study found that more than 80 percent of prisoners could not afford to hire a lawyer. Making matters worse, there are no public defenders in more than 70 percent of all judicial jurisdictions (Muggah & de Carvelho, 2014). Not only are most Nigerians affected by this situation, but also by the fact that the law spells out the factors, which judges should consider in detail. These include the type of crime that the defendant is accused of—as well as the maximum punishment prescribed for it—and the particular circumstances of the defendant. Judges are required to take into account whether the defendant has any previous convictions, but also whether he or she has a steady job, a fixed address and other factors which might make him or her more or less likely to abscond (IBA, 2010, p 24). Not providing good response to such inquiry leaves the lawyer helpless. Some criminal lawyers also told me that Nigerian traffickers are unwilling to pay.

As Young (2007) indicated in relative deprivation downwards that the 'contented' middle class could feel sympathy toward the lowerclass, because their relative satisfaction could decipher into feelings of charity. On the other hand, tied to such a quasi-rational response to a violation of meritocratic principles is frequently a much more compelling

subtext that seeks not only to redress a perceived reluctance to work but to go beyond this, to punish, demean, and humiliate (Hallsworth, 2000; Pratt, 2000). Nevertheless, resentment is not limited to receiving a reward disproportionate to their merit, since the comparison of merit and reward has shifted in late modernity from an accent on merit to focus on reward. As highlighted by Young, effort, delayed gratification, and meretricious progress towards a goal has given way to instant gratification and short-term hedonism.¹¹⁰ This could justify the reason why the overwhelming majority of Nigerian traffickers think that learning Portuguese is less necessary in making fast money through cocaine trafficking. They recall that work may well be valued but hard graft is not because in their minds, the old values of hard work leading to a deserved reward has given way to one in which consumer is the archetype and impulsiveness is prominent.

Whereas most Nigerian arrestees are unable to pay for a private lawyer for good legal representation, they would not have enough relevant documents to backup their arguments and pleas. Most would claim that their lawyers did nothing for them while they themselves do not have legitimate business in Brazil. Those that have it in Nigeria may not want to say it because they are afraid of exposing themselves. In most cases the lawyers do not speak English, so how would they contact family members or anybody in Nigeria for the client? If lawyers call the client's friends in SP, everyone would turn off their telephones.

In all this is a helpless situation that leaves lawyers with little information available to them. Meaning that if there is not much backup, why should the lawyer be going to the court or clients always only to look at the file? They would then wait until the judgment day, go to the court and stand as a figure and try to argue anything. The Nigerian arrestees would conclude that their lawyers are not good and the paradox of Nigerian involvement in the illicit trade continues as their reactions reflect.

6.4 'Work legit': Contempt and conflict to graft

Contrary to the dominant view of blaming others for the misfortune of the illicit cocaine trade, few individuals decided to challenge this commonplace by attempting it differently. For instance, as discussed in the previous chapter, Otiyo agreed to pay five thousand U.S. dollars just to get away from dishonest police officers that held him for ransom. It is a situation that several Nigerian traffickers find themselves in, but Otiyo decided to turn his life around; he quit drug trafficking and got a legitimate job. This life change included limiting his cocaine trafficking friends, not hanging out on streets, and following a stricter budget, due to a monthly salary of between BRL800 and 900 Reals. Otiyo added,

“That is a disadvantage of going legit. You just don't make ends meet. The reality is that after paying 400 Reals monthly rent, and other fixed costs, I have just enough to manage to survive, talk less about having a girlfriend that cost a lot here. Brazilian girls does not just like money, they love it big time. Despite this, I am a bit happier, because I do not receive those phone calls from the police guys any longer. Today you happen to meet me in the Galleria mall because I came to see a friend. After an hour maximum, I am gone.” (Ex-Nigerian trafficker Otiyo: SP, 23-09-2012)

Afraid of the police or that Nigerian informants might see him, Otiyo did not want to stay long in Galleria, the melting point for Nigerians in SP. Limiting his cocaine trafficking friends does not mean he cut them all out of his life. The difficulty is not to be drawn back into trafficking. Having found a respectable job, Otiyo faces the challenging paradox of the financial constraint of a legitimate job, which evokes cocaine trafficking nostalgia. However,

¹¹⁰ See for example Young (2007); Gorz (1999)

the consequences of the illicit trade are the only deterrence. The financial limitations of legitimate work versus the consequences of cocaine trafficking is a major issue the new trend illicit cocaine traders face in SP.

Nigerian traffickers generally lack professional qualifications and work skills, which is the main reason certain jobs are so daunting. They associate low paid jobs with the very issue they are running away from—poverty and its connotation. They would rather belong to the rich and the middle class. Therborn (2011) points out inequalities in Latin America and (1985) to the ‘Brazilization’ of advanced capitalism with its threefold portrayal of society into the rich, the insecure middle, and the excluded poor. In his work, the poor has restructured itself as providers of services, servants and security for the rest of the society.

This is why the part-time trafficker, Mat, could not quit the illicit trade even though he works legally. He contributed \$500 USD for a ad-hoc, 1kg cocaine deal that a courier took into South Africa. “The risk is minimal because my portion is only few grams. My salary is small and I must supplement it,” said Mat. Unable to make ends meet on his low salary in Brazil, he remained vulnerable to cocaine trafficking. On the one hand, this evokes the Neutralization technique of Sykes and Matza (1957). On the other hand, it is captured by Beck’s (2000, 1992) world of work that at times is part of the formal economy but frequently informal and beneath the tracking system of the authority.

However, adapting to life away from cocaine trafficking lifestyle that should not be ruined for those few that follow it. The challenge remains taking opportunities to blend into the mainstream legitimate economy. During fieldwork, I asked a couple of Brazilian acquaintances and owners of small businesses about the minimum capital necessary for starting up. Whereas some suggested about thirty thousand U.S. dollars, others said about twenty thousand, and several suggested that about fifteen thousand could be enough to start. Then one has to build up the business gradually. On hearing this, the Nigerian inmate Aja stated, “Now I realized how much the police seized from me. I could have used it to go legit and avoid problems” (Aja: SP, 29-12-2012).

In this regard some are realizing they could be like other immigrants in Brazil—including the Portuguese, Italians, Dutch, Lebanese or Japanese—having established businesses and less like the Nigerians stigmatized for drug trafficking.

6.4.1 Undocumented alien, a picking

The advantages existing in Brazil for those willing to integrate into the mainstream society could be seen as second to none globally, according to many Nigerians in SP. Since this chance is available, one could think of a lack of awareness or reluctance as the reason why most Nigerians in SP remain undocumented and choose to exploit Brazil from the illicit international cocaine trafficking business.

Contrary to the rampant view of achieving legal status as being difficult, my fieldwork reveals that there are several avenues to get legalized in Brazil, according to article 75 of decree 98.961, which concerns "deportation of foreigners convicted of trafficking narcotics and related drugs" would only not occur if "the foreigner had: a Brazilian spouse from whom she or he was not divorced or separated, in fact or by law, and as long as the marriage had been celebrated more than five years ago." Also it establishes that deportation is not realized "when the foreigner has: a Brazilian child, that is proven to be under his or her care and depends on he or she economically" (Padovani, 2013).

Nevertheless, most undocumented Nigerians in SP need to learn that Brazil is more than the hob for illicit cocaine trade. A functioning Nigerian community that wants to re-orientate its members away from international cocaine trafficking could benefit from

activities of several organizations and institutions. For example CSP in Brazil,¹¹¹ which aims for social inclusion and reduction of social inequalities. In this regard, I came across several Nigerian traffickers that could afford to invest up to ten to twenty thousand U.S. dollars for ad-hoc cocaine deals, yet they believe they cannot enter into businesses than the cocaine trafficking business.

This phenomenon recalls Agnew's strain theory, which is present in the sub-culture of Nigerian traffickers. Because they are in the same surrounding where everybody is investing in the cocaine business, they feel uncomfortable investing in legal businesses. Not only are they low in conventional social support but also they are operating in situations where the costs of crime are low and the rewards are high. These types of strain make Nigerian traffickers invest in cocaine trade in line with Agnew's (1985) Strain theory (see Simpson, 2000, p. 109). Most are less concerned that involvement with CSP's entrepreneurial programs *Pechina impressa Grande negozio* (small-scale enterprising, big business) could lead to establishing legitimate businesses in SP. Increasing the chances for knowledge and skill acquisition becomes paramount for finding employment in a fast growing economy like Brazil, especially for those willing to work and distance themselves from cocaine trafficking. Pastor Patrick stated,

“For instance, with the assistance of some prominent Brazilian activist, two Nigerians girls sponsored by the State Government are now attending technical school that assures employment on completion.” (Pastor Patrick: SP, 24-12-12)

Higher education is out of reach for a large swath of the Brazilian population, only about 33 percent of 18–25 year olds in Brazil attend tertiary education, but a recent change in the admission process is that some public universities have begun to implement affirmative action programs over the past decade.¹¹² This is because Brazilian President Dilma Rousseff has introduced legislation that guarantees 50 percent of university places to public school students; the set aside seats will be dispersed amid black, mixed race, and indigenous students, proportional to the demographics in each state. Spots will also be reserved for students from families earning a monthly income of less than \$450 USD a month. While more than half of Brazil's population of 191 million is black or of mixed race, only 2.2 percent of Afro-Brazilians currently have access to universities (Frayssinet, 2012). Research on this program's efficacy demonstrates that the proportion of Black students has increased as a result of the quota (Francis & Tannuri-Pianto, 2012). Nonetheless, while the chance is available, several Nigerian traffickers chose to believe otherwise.

Ex-inmate OB claimed that payment of 300 Brazilian reais (BRL) for registration fees to higher institution was his problem, but Pastor Patrick assured him that the church would sponsor it. He declined. Patrick recalled that when the Brazilian government offered amnesty to undocumented aliens, many Nigerians that claimed not having money for school fees paid the charged fee of about 500 BRL to 1000 BRL without problem. These excuses reflect the paradox of a lack of motivation to work and the hope of making fast money through cocaine trafficking by those that do not believe in the worth of the little income offered by legitimate work.

In his book, *The End of Work* (1996), Rifkin highlighted a world where the vast number of persons would be jobless, due to automation and outsourcing in the contemporary

¹¹¹ See, European Commission, Brazil Country Strategy Paper 2007-2013. 14.05.2007 (E/2007/889)

¹¹² For details in this part for example Carnoy, Loyalka, Dobryakova, Dossani, Froumin, Kuhns, and Wang (2013).

globalization, which would make hundreds of workers permanently idle due to the shift from manufacturing to service economy and the increase of a service class of professionals, scientists, and technicians. Equally, Ritzer's *The MacDonaldisation of Society* (1993) draws attention to the rise of lower category service sector, a re-surfacing of considerable servant sector. Whereas on the one hand, it is not the lack of work that causes the problem, but lack of willingness to work that creates dependency as indicated by Murray's *Losing Ground* (1984), and *Rejoinder* (1996). On the other hand, Loic Wacquant inquired what good would it be to take the 'legit route' when the resulting rewards are so meager and almost as uncertain as those more immediate and palpable even if they come at high risks, the street economy?¹¹³

However, recalled is the social collective meaning and beliefs most Nigerian cocaine traffickers have in confronting the problems of everyday life: the Nigerian dream and moral issues, myths, and creativity streaming from criminogenic features underpinning the new trend initiatives. They believe that the cocaine trade is a luxurious product, based on covert demand and supply. This is similar to the Durkheim's expression (1965, p. 43) that deviance arises from the cultural rules that forbid. Furthermore, it recalls Matza's (1969) capacity to transcend even in the direst of circumstances or Bourgois's (1995) *In Search of Respect*.

Furthermore, successful cocaine traffickers are good role models in Nigeria. They are admired for their wealth. They become elected community representatives, senators, and local government chairmen of political parties. This could explain the why, as observed in several settings, most Nigerian traffickers spend money lavishly boozing and entertaining, while also insisting that about 300 BRL enrolment fee to learn Portuguese was a problem. By so doing they either intentionally or unintentionally miss the opportunity to integrate and work legitimately in such an emergent and vibrant economy as Brazil. If those willing to acquire skills and knowledge should take advantage of such opportunities, when they finish and get employed, they will serve as role models.

6.4.2 Two traffickers' families, two approaches

Engaging several Nigerian traffickers during fieldwork in 2011, I came across a few that visit their husbands, relatives, or friends imprisoned in SP. One such person was Maka that visits his brother in Itai prison, who was jailed for cocaine trafficking. While he expressed his dissatisfaction that Nigerian government and embassy cared less about its citizens, he was appreciative that few Nigerian pastors and individuals visit inmates. However, during subsequent fieldwork, I found out that Maka got involved in cocaine trafficking and was jailed in the same prison as his brother.

As observed in several settings, Maka's story became a joke among Nigerians. This evokes the case of two Nigerians, Ajet and UZ serving time also in Itai prison, jailed about thirty years each in 2011. Ajet is a man in his late 60s suffering from diabetes and is almost blind. Ajet and his associate UZ were jailed after having been found guilty of cocaine trafficking and for having contacts at the airport that facilitated trafficking. Their case is interesting because an activist engaged them for the need of a legitimate business and contributing to mainstream social welfare. While both initially embarked on it, after a year, Ajet stopped paying contributions because friends that saw it as waste of money and time advised him. UZ continued to pay his tax, thereby contributing to the social welfare of the mainstream economy.

This recalls the concept that on the one side, large parts of the population are subject to relative deprivation and ontological uncertainties and on top this, the pressures and restraints necessary to function exacerbates this even further. While on the other, to survive in

¹¹³ See, Wacquant's hustler (1998, p. 13).

the present world requires much effort, self-control, and restraint summarized as follows: increased working hours, intensity of work, commuting, and generally a dual career family (Young, 2007, p. 43). Furthermore, it calls in the concept of part-time traffickers and ad-hoc participation in the illicit trade open to whoever wishes. It exposes the use of frontline business that camouflages the drug trade. When they got into problems due to ad-hoc participation in international cocaine trafficking and jailed, the wife and children of UZ got assistance from the system's social security because he paid his dues. Their children could utilize his social security benefits until 21 years of age. Assuming they were studying, they could use it until they finished their studies, whereas Ajet's family is left to survive on their own.

Since the majority of traffickers are not fully integrated in the system, their families left behind find it hard to make ends meet. Often handouts from friends and acquaintances become the only means to survive in SP. For instance, one of those was Mrs. D that approached me during fieldwork in Galleria mall, while I was chatting with some Nigerians. She was begging for money. Having no work, she and her two children are in financial difficulties following her husband's 8-year imprisonment in Itai. He was arrested a couple years ago at the Guarulhos International Airport for ingesting of about 2kg of cocaine. This helpless situation leaves Mrs. D and others in her situation no option other than street hustling in the struggle to feed her two children. Mrs. D told me, "I do not have valid documents, but I am ready to leave my kids with a friend to work wherever, in restaurant or private homes, for one U.S. dollar per hour, but where is the job?" (Nigerian Mrs. D: SP, 23-09-2012).

For Mrs. D, even the diminutive job is not available. Frustrated as she is, any work is better than no work. But as a member of this contemporary society, being included means being in work, and useful work means paid work (Levitas, 1996). In addition, for Mrs. D, the perception that such work provides a good example for the children is far-fetched. It is much more likely that they will participate in crime and the illicit market of drug dealing. If they are involved in crime, as Katz (1988) indicates, then these involvements are all the more appealing given the desolation of the options. While I was chatting with Mrs. D, a woman in her early 30s walked by. Raising her left hand, she gave Mrs. D sign to come. Excusing her self for a while, my contact Sima had this to say:

"That woman is Mrs. X's wife. She is *Ashawo* [prostitute]! She has two children. Her daughter is almost adult and already a prostitute also. The husband is serving almost 20 years jail sentence. She has no documents, what else could she do?" (Sima: SP, 23-09-12)

This situation is not particular to Brazil because the same is observed all through this fieldwork in different countries including the Netherlands, Italy, China, and Malaysia. The involvement of Nigerians in the illicit cocaine trade has torn some families apart. Some wives have resorted to periodic prostitution or domestic workers, hurrying from one home to another, yet hardly could they let ends meet with small salaries. In this area emphasized is that, less often discussed than the lack of work, but not less important, is the effect of overworking in poorly paid jobs on the capacity of parents to provide a nurturing and competent environment for childrearing and on the capacity of communities for self-regulation and maintenance of networks of mutual support and care (see Currie, 1997, p. 155).

However Nigerian cocaine traffickers portray their activity as stemming from the widespread Nigerian informal economy mentality, embedded in the contemporary mechanism of blurred supply and demand. The country's unstoppable informal economy has gained global significance less through its developmental accomplishments than through the rise of crime. Disillusion about the distribution of the country's oil and gas wealth and crimes of the powerful are among the reason why unaffected youth turn to deviant activities including

prostitution, financial fraud 419-scam, kidnapping, and the illicit cocaine trade as dissent and alternative livelihood strategies. Nigerian cocaine traffickers contribute to the growth of the Brazilian economy by renting flats and homes, spending money on daily needed items, telephone calls, and by using taxis and other forms of transportation. Above all, they siphon the financial proceeds of the illicit trade back to Nigeria using not only mainstream banking institutions but also Nigerian underground banking. They maintain families and relatives in Nigeria, as well as creating jobs by investing in all sorts of commercial activities like trading, hotel, and transportation businesses. They are held in high esteem because they fill the gap the government left. Seen from this angle, Nigerian cocaine traffickers are also successful businessmen and women who claim to hold the development of Nigeria more in their hearts than the leaders of the country.

Until now, the Hobsbawm's Golden Age in *The Age Of Extremes* (1994) granted social embeddings, strong certainty of personal and social narrative, a desire to assimilate the deviant, the immigrant, and the stranger; whereas *The Exclusive Society* of Young (1999) pointed out that late modernity generated economic and ontological insecurity, a discontinuity of personal and social narrative and an exclusionary tendency towards the deviant. Yet, the bulimia of the social system, the binary of inclusion and exclusion, points to a society which choruses the liberal mantra of liberty, equality and fraternity in the job market, on the streets, in the day-to-day contacts with the outside world, practices exclusion as indicated by Young (2007, p. 25).

Therefore, whereas the family of UZ is saved by the system, following integration into Brazilian society, many others remain an illegitimate part of the system in SP. Whereas the failure to establish a functioning community is attributed to political disunity in Nigeria, the small enclave of 30 thousand Nigerians in Guangzhou have succeeded in establishing a Nigerian community worthy of emulating the part that is distancing itself from drug trafficking. By so doing, they have refused being stigmatized as drug or cocaine traffickers who make themselves the scapegoat. This remains the challenge for most Nigerian traffickers in SP.

6.5 Temporary outing, escape or back prison

As previously mentioned, one of the principal reasons why it remains difficult for granting temporary freedom to most is the anxiety that they will not return. Contrary to the dominant view, most inmates returned to prison from their temporary outings. All Nigerian inmate interviewees told me they did not want to run away. For instance, during temporary outing of December 2012/2013 I met about 10 Nigerian inmates who said they would go back to prison on time. Information from reliable sources such as Legal Aid, criminal lawyers, Drug Prevention Office in SP and seminars on drugs issues I attended during fieldwork express that yearly about 4–8% of inmates do not return back to the prison following temporary outing, the majority of which are Brazilians. For instance, according to an article published by Infosurhoy, during Easter of 2011, a total of 20,746 prisoners were granted leave privileges, out of which 2,514 was assigned electronic anklets. Out the total number, 1148 inmates or 5.5% did not return back to prison. Out of the group electronically monitored, 98 people or 3.89% of the total did not return to their correctional facilities (see Oliveira, 2011). However, considering that 5.5% of the total number of inmates did not return, this could be considered favorable because it shows that about 94.5% had been rehabilitated.

Curious over issues concerning Nigerians inmates that ran away, I engaged representatives of several Nigerians enclaves in SP, some cocaine traffickers and others that have nothing to do with it. These included individuals from various professions engaged in legitimate jobs such as lecturers, teachers, traders, and heads of Nigerian churches. One of

those was Pastor Patrick that during the last temporary outing assisted about 10 inmates who went back to the prison thereafter. Interviews suggest that to date, about five Nigerian inmates did not return back to prison. Generally, Nigerians do not want to escape for several reasons. First, they do not want run back home for good due to the deteriorated standard of life in the country. Rather, most inmates told me they would stay back in SP and build up a future. Second, Nigerian churches in SP advocate completion of jail sentence to inmates in order to avoid further complications. None of those five inmates who escaped was active member of the 13 Nigerian churches in SP, according to pastor Patrick.

In addition, inmates continue to receive such orientation from pastors John and Patrick who visit them regularly in prison, in attempt to deliver humanitarian service gap left by Nigerian Embassy. Pastor John Okorie, the head of NGO *Mission for Africa* told me that the Embassy should do more to help Nigerian inmates. “There are more than 1000 Nigerians in various prisons in SP. A lot of them are sick. Most people back home took it either their spouse or family is deceased not knowing they are in prison in Brazil. Generally Nigerian embassy claims to be doing its best” (Pastor John: SP, 29-12-2012).

Another important reason why Nigerian inmates do not run away is that church members contribute money for inmates on temporary outing to buy some needed personal items to take back to prison. This way, they feel part of the community and appreciate it. Patrick added:

“It is a way of connecting with them and re-orientating them. We advise them to persist and finish for their own advantage, because assuming that those five that ran away were caught, they would go back to the harsher closed regime in prison, among other punishments.” (Pastor Patrick: SP, 28-12-2012)

Nigerian traffickers in SP would rather complete serving prison sentence than become fugitives. Also they would avoid using violence.

6.6 Reaction to violence, secrecy and trust amid Nigerian traffickers

As interviewees suggest, escapees Atene and Nwa Mou were murdered in Bolivia in mid 2010 following drug deal disputes with Yugoslavian associates that also escaped from prison. Despite these two, violence amid Nigerians traffickers in SP is less compared to those in Guangzhou in China, prior to the establishment of the present New Nigerian Community there. Although Nigerian traffickers fight and stab each other on the streets, the greater concern is the animosity between the Nigerians and Brazilians. The anxiety persists as several recalled that a few years ago, four Nigerian drug traffickers were robbed of their money and killed by Brazilians.

It recalls the very nature of the illicit trade because members of the Nigerian international cocaine traffickers have specific skills, develop important contacts, and take initiative in coming together as small group of friends for an ad-hoc cocaine business. This evokes the work of several researchers on the role of violence secrecy and trust in the illicit enterprises or organizations involved. For example, with respect to secret societies, many works have highlighted the symbolic nature of these aspects as rituals for internal cohesion, identity construction and social reproduction (Blok, 2000, p. 87). Regarding drug entrepreneurs and organizations, violence, secrecy, and trust have also been analyzed as highly strategic resources subordinated to economic needs and considerations (Gambetta, 1996; Thoumi, 1995; Arlacchi, 1986; Zaitch, 2005). Furthermore, strong symbolic dimension often attached to physical violence as power language of honour and respect, reputation and status, identity and group solidarity or masculine construction, are expressed by Blok (1991b).

Nevertheless, as Nigerian international illicit cocaine traders aim to make profit, risk-minimizing strategies are necessary—meaning they seemingly resort to violence in the dearth of external regulating devices, relying mostly on trust in the absence of written agreements and keep their activities secret to avoid detection. Yet during my fieldwork I soon became amazed about the amount of conflict that did not lead to physical violence and how open Nigerian cocaine traffickers disclose information to individuals that have nothing to do the illicit trade. As I expressed in Chapter 2, it was a question of time, familiar background, and particularly common sense to become trusted by Nigerian traffickers and informant.

Notwithstanding, Nigerian traffickers must act not only in accordance with the anticipations of outsiders but also with those of inner-circle associates. Implying that some built violent reputations against their will, made promises that were not going to be kept. In addition deploying violence minimally, secrecy, and trust, Nigerian cocaine traffickers frequently ‘acted out’ these resources tactically as a form of manipulation and as a way to construct their social ethnic identity as other researchers found studying other groups.¹¹⁴ They dispense responsibility for specific tasks like provision of security, the identification and running of storage facilities, the cultivation of contacts and of course the distribution and sale of cocaine. “This partition of assignments may be fluid or some individuals may acquire specific expertise in it, thus being approached by others to complete a ‘job’ for them” (Shaw, 2003, p. 34). As is the nature of the illicit cocaine trader, Nigerian traffickers watchfully deployed violence, secrecy, and trust. They managed these three social resources by exploiting them, evading them, and acting on them. Resulting in a situation in which these resources are in ambiguous way to book success in cocaine trafficking that has the potential of confirming them. However, violence is becoming normal amongst the Nigerian international cocaine traffickers. But unlike in Guangzhou, kidnapping is employed in SP. It boils down to ‘sequestering someone’ for owing money or cocaine and obligating the person to pay back before being released.

6.7 Impact socio-cultural factors

It is often reported by Nigerian traffickers in SP that some individuals amid them are ‘witches.’ A witch could refer to a successful cocaine trafficker seen as possessing some magical means that foster his achievement. It could also mean jealous Nigerian traffickers who use associates within the Brazilian organized crime group like First Command of the Capital (PCC) criminal faction in SP or the services of corrupt police friends to rob others.

6.7.1 The ‘Witch’ is coming

Some individuals amid Nigerian traffickers are referred to as ‘bad guys’ who set up others, which is the primary reason they are not to be trusted. Whereas these individuals are also traffickers, they conspire with dishonest police officers ready to misuse their position and the law at fitting times, to confiscate drugs and money from Nigerian traffickers. Having organized the ‘job’ he gets 10% of what is recovered.

Evoked is the African cultural concept of witch and witchcraft. The ‘Supreme Natural Power’ witch as vital force, mystical power or God. Witches are considered to use power in their evil arts, in this context the power arising from Satan. In a complex way the power lying behind witchcraft is none other than that of malevolent ancestral spirits (Harries, 2010,). Kata added, “Some guys are too jealous of those doing well. I avoid them by not going to Gallerie” (Nigerian trafficker Kata: SP, 05-01-2013).

¹¹⁴ See for example Siegel and Bovenkerk (2001); Bovenkerk, Siegel and Zaitch (2003).

Successful Nigerian cocaine traffickers like Kata have useful contacts amid Brazilians, Arabs, Bolivians, and others. Interviewees said that he could arrange any quantity of cocaine for contacts through local messengers. Several Nigerian traffickers have been busted as a result of information passed on to by jealous Nigerian traffickers. These included those of 180kg of cocaine in 2010 and 140kg in 2011 suffered by Kata's friends. However, information passed on by reliable contacts sometimes results in busts in which the cocaine has been confiscated, but no arrests were made. For instance, "in September 2011 the police busted a flat and seized about 60kg of cocaine while he was away," stated Adaka. Pointing to a co-national, he added:

"That guy is one of them. Witches are known and watched but Nigerians in SP do not know what to do with them because they are like a mosquito sucking on the testis, the problem is to smash or not to smash." (Adaka: SP, 09-01-2013)

Adaka and Kata are envied. Believed to have magical power or voodoo that assists their success. Further strengthening this opinion is the fact that they do not show off in Brazil even if they have the money. The less successful try to use the organized crime 'witches' to rip off cocaine or some of the profits of the illicit trade.

6.7.2 'Work' in Brazil invest in 'Naija'

A dominant view amid Nigerian traffickers is that successful ones are too secretive in their interactions with others. This is because they hide their contacts, experience, and wealth from the knowledge of others. They invest in *Naija* (as Nigeria is popularly known) where they show off wealth. Not surprisingly, when amid Nigerian traffickers in SP, the belief persists that due to strong ties, 'wealth' can be considered available to close others. This evokes that in situations where 'goods' are in restricted supply, possessions and wealth from the illicit trade connotes failure for another. Resulting in, for example, Kata not wanting to be held responsible or to hold others accountable, fear of wealth, and a love of the appearance of poverty. The reason he avoids others is because they are not only jealous, but also could harm him, emphasizing that "when information is kept secret to third parties, they can be protected against needless 'guilty knowledge'" (Siegel, 2012, p. 4). On the other hand, "secrecy can also be dangerous, because [...] it can lead to misunderstandings about the activities and aims of the individuals involved and to negative stereotyping and speculation" (Siegel, 2011, p. 109). Because Kata and the likes do not make available their knowledge regarding their success, prejudice and myths prevail, which could lead to misconceptions resulting in varied categories of 'risky individuals' being constructed.

In this context, envy stemming from the concept of witchcraft remains strong among Nigerian cocaine traffickers. Frequently heard is that certain individuals are anxious with trying to bring down others that appear to be more successful than them. As Maranz (2001, p. 20) outlined, "the people most likely to be accused of being selfish by the jealous are those who have accumulated wealth through their own efforts. Means of investment that are indivisible are much desired, to avoid the social obligation to share one's wealth" (see Harries, 2010; Ntloedibe & Seratwa, 2007).

In this view, Kata, MNF and others would rather not invest in Brazil. They would not show off either, because it attracts negative attention. Wealth made through the illicit trade could be confiscated easily in Brazil, but not in Nigeria. This is why most successful Nigerian cocaine traffickers in Brazil, the Netherlands, or China would prefer to invest back home. Due to the receptive environment created by Nigerian state crisis, such investments are

assured, at least a great part of it, if not all.¹¹⁵ But if busted in Brazil, Nigerian traffickers generally lose everything. Nigerian cocaine traffickers think that this practice is justified as Nigeria's national wealth siphoned by their leaders is 'protected' in various countries globally. They argue that money invested in Nigeria set examples of what the stakeholders fail to do.

Later the Guangzhou experience will show that violence is counter-productive as it attacks the attention of the law enforcement agents. Contrary to the view of organized group working in harmony Nigerian international cocaine traffickers also cheat themselves.

6.7.3 A chat with Olili

A frequently heard expression amid Nigerian illicit cocaine traders in SP is that Brazil is like Nigeria because it is survival of the fittest. They greet each other with the slogan in Igbo "*Ife ana eme odikwa nu easy*" [*Translated; "what we are doing here, is not easy"* (illicit cocaine trade in a country where some have been jailed for 34 years)].

This evokes that the Nigerian illicit cocaine trafficking remains a social problem that requires a criminological *verstehen* sociological approach. Edgework and the adrenaline rush that defines it are extensively constructed collectively, largely from the sub-cultural participants' common experience and from the shared cultural codes of criminal groups (Lyng & Snow, 1989). Their meaning is likewise constructed linguistically, as Nigerian traffickers give shape to their experiences by engaging in the collective meaningful argot of the subculture. This recalls that what might first appear as isolated, individual, or impulsive experiences, reflect a shared 'vocabulary of motives,' a repertoire of meanings common to those involved in them. Ferrell (2005) averred that the practice of criminological *verstehen* does not require that criminologists somehow mystically penetrate the criminal's heart or mind, but rather that they also engage in sociological research and participate in the collective experience, emotions, and meanings of those they study. The ability to communicate this way makes the best out of our conversation and enriches the findings of this research.

Because what they are doing is not easy, Olili mediates to settle cocaine disputes amid Nigerian traffickers from turning deadly. But others said that he and the likes are 'bad guy' witches. In several conversations, Olili told me that he does not have enemies in SP, where he has been living for decades. "When things get rough some Nigerians would call upon me," he said. For example: One guy was duped \$50,000 USD in connection with a cocaine 'deal,' which was not delivered. Olili and friends were called to intervene. The two guys boasted that if touched, friends would retaliate either in Brazil or in Nigeria. That scares Olili less. Instead, he organized his 'guys' who picked them up. They are still serving jail sentence. He added, "I am also strong in Brazil and Nigeria. So let them go to jail. He sold the deal to someone else and seized the money. We made his family pay back with his land property in Nigeria" (Olili: SP, 19-12-2011).

Within Nigerian cocaine trafficker's sub-culture in SP, Olili is respected and envied. Meaning that whether one is into cocaine or into real trade, what Nigerian traffickers need in SP is to educate them. In another case the Nigerian traffickers, Pilu, a member of *Ogboni* secret cult was duped \$80,000 USD in a deal. Called to intervene, Olili and his boys mediated

¹¹⁵ The former NDLEA Chairman was convicted by the Lagos High Court in 2010 after the Independent and Corrupt Practices and other related offences Commission (ICPC) dragged him and his Special Assistant, Usman Amali to court on a seven count charge of abuse of office and conspiracy. Back then, the ICPC had alleged that a sum of €164,300 pounds seized from one Ikenna Onochie, a drug suspect was diverted by Lafiaji and his aide. Samuel Gadzama, an NDLEA officer testified that Lafiaji instructed him to release Onochie and his confiscated property the same day he was arrested while he was also instructed not to document the arrest and seizure on the ground that the suspect was a friend of the NDLEA (see Street Journal: 22-11-2011).

to settle the dispute. But Pilu refused to pay the promised 10% commission. Olili had this to say:

“So that is our guy too! You will help them out and they will not pay as promised. Why shouldn’t something happen to them? This is lack of trust and deceit! He must pay it in cash or ‘market’ (meaning cocaine). Here is Ok if you can find way. But some guys are stupid and too greedy. There belong to Ogboni and all that. Well we all then! Some motherfucker Nigerians claim to know too much. There is need for mediation! My guys and I do that [*laughs*]...” (Olili: SP, 19-12-2011)

Admired, but also feared, Olili and the likes have deadly connections, as fieldwork information reveals. He maintained that they do not rob other Nigerian traffickers of cocaine and money. In their view, they try to mitigate disputes amongst Nigerian cocaine traffickers from escalating.

This evokes strain on the ‘Nigerian Dream.’ Cultural expectations and the desire to succeed economically, regardless of means has caused several Nigerian traffickers to become members of secret societies or traditional organized crime groups, which guarantee members wealth and prosperity. These include ‘wealth-oriented secret’ societies or *Ogboni* dominant amid the Yoruba in Western Nigeria and ‘untouchable (*osu*)-sorcery societies,’ popular particularly amongst Igbo in the East. Several works exist in this area.¹¹⁶

In Nigeria, the ‘wealth-oriented secret societies’ are known for their satanic cult ritual including human sacrifices. Members will do anything to accumulate wealth in their business enterprises. Extensive deployment of ‘reversed social capital’ aids them to run all kinds of businesses, both legitimate and illegitimate, without any government interference. Unlike the former, the ‘untouchable sorcery society’ evolved from the hereditary outcasts or *osu* group. They are not free by birth because their ancestors committed atrocities and were dedicated to the gods. The grievance of being punished for the crimes of one’s ancestors resulted in their claim to use witchcraft to fight against the freeborn. As averred by Ebbe (2012) many Igbo believe that members of the ‘untouchables’ equally use witchcraft and gangs to pledge all kinds of atrocities against them and destroy their businesses.

In this regard, Olili and friends operate within and between these organized groups at different levels within the cocaine trafficking chain, deploying their social and traditional religious capital at fitting times to enhance the new trend illicit cocaine trafficking. They claim it is needed because some Nigerian cocaine traffickers have experienced disappointments. Disputes have led to several arrested Nigerian cocaine traffickers paying thousands of dollars as bribe to avoid conviction, but still got convicted and jailed. Interviews reveal that a few years ago one arrestee paid 50,000 BRL to his lawyer to buy off his case, but he was jailed for 15 years, and the money was lost. This is because Nigerian traffickers take for granted that the Brazilian system should be like the Nigerian system, whereby you could corrupt the system and get away at all times when they are asked to pay a large amount of money, they pay it thinking the lawyer would use it for kickbacks in order to free them. This is the reputation Olili wants to be dropped. That lawyers are not to be trusted is a regular comment amid Nigerian traffickers.

¹¹⁶ See, Siegel and van der Bunt (2012); Ebbe (2003); Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada [IRB] (2012); Ibenwa (2014).

6.8 After jail life: Uplift or relapse

It is suggested that once Nigerian inmates have served their time, the majority are immediately deported.¹¹⁷ On the contrary, analysis of my fieldwork discloses that on completion of prison sentences ex-convicts are not deported immediately. In a situation where they could not find work, neither better informed about possibilities for a normal life in Brazil after prison, hustling for survival is the way they live. As such, many likely end up in prison again. Feti is one of the Nigerian couriers that I interviewed in 2012 during a temporary outing. Freed after completing her sentence, we had in-depth conversation in January 2013 when I came across her, this time on conditional freedom. Feti stated:

“On the whole it is not good to be in prison talk less of in a foreign country, particularly in Brazil; because the country is difficult when it comes to laws and foreign prisoners, for the fact that what they say is not what they are doing. Firstly it was very difficult for her to be out on temporary outing, because of the excuses that she would run away. Secondly, she was told they would deport her immediately on finishing my sentence. However, the Federal Police picked her up to their office and she thought she was to be deported right way. After signing some papers for her freedom in which it was stated that she was expelled from Brazil, Feti asked, “aren’t you going to send me home?” The officer responded, “No we are not going to deport you. The day you want to go, just buy your ticket and go home.” So I was surprised the law is not doing what it states and the judges just do as the feel, she concluded.” (Ex-convict Feti: SP, 03-01-2013)

The Nigerian trafficker, Belo, who was freed from Itai prison in April 2011, had this to say, “I was asked to go and meet other Nigerians. You have been given ‘expulsion’ they said. But I was given no air thicket. It is very good because I can stay back in SP. Seeing in this way Brazils is a good” (Belo: SP, 22-09-2012).

Several ex-inmates report that they were not deported on completion of their sentences. Instead, they have remained in SP. They cannot leave Brazil because it takes several months to get back their passport, and also they have to acquire their own flight tickets.¹¹⁸ Otherwise, they have to wait approximately 18 months before appearing in court to plea to the government to pay for the deportation. Many appreciate the fact that nobody is forcefully deported on completion of jail sentence, as it offers them the opportunity of surviving in Brazil and continuing life. This demonstrates that the release of foreign prisoners on parole in Brazil, could imply the thumping of a certain social security and documental legibility provided by the prison institution. Exiting the penitentiary gates entails risk of involvement in a network of illegalities, illegitimacies, and irregularities because Nigerian (ex)inmates are not in a position to be easily employed as a former prison inmate. Next to being labelled as ex-inmates, they are stigmatised twice over. They report being discriminated due to their ethnic background or the negative image Nigerians have globally next to their criminal stigma. It can be said that the race stigma doubles that of criminals (LeBel, 2012; 2008).

Often the alternatives left would be to create a base of false documents, carry drugs, or work as a prostitute. Nigerian female inmates Omoge and Ada worked as prostitutes during the temporary outing to save money to buy false pay slips and receipts from the owner of a cafeteria. Document that show she was working legally, whereas in the actual sense it was one that authorized her to spend more time in the street. She took on more hours of

¹¹⁷ For instance see, the article ‘Policing by Consent’. (Jimmy, 2011).

¹¹⁸ For instance, the Nigerian ex-convict OB was still waiting for his Nigerian passport eight months after application, a delay known to most Nigerians.

prostitution to make up the money needed for the production of documents, ballast of legality, and legibility.

Outlined by Das and Poole (2004), Omoge and Ada plotted at the ‘margins of the state’ arming themselves with legality, mixing the licit and illicit in what is expressed a single ‘*caminhada*’ or walk and ‘*correria*’ (a scheme, in this context). These are terms used in prisons facilities in SP implying from where and to where the inmates frequent. From where and to where they pass, walk, run, and scheme. Furthermore, whereas ‘*caminhada*’ refers to an inmate's history, background, and behaviors or a thief's prior history. The ‘*correria*’ is the activity, that which must be done to achieve the objective (Padovani, 2013).

6.8.1 Back to prison

Whereas some Nigerian ex-inmates could find a way to legalize their stay in Brazil, others become homeless and risk dying from malnutrition. Meaning that non-immediate deportation represents extended nightmare for those wanting to return home. If family members could not afford a return ticket, the alternative is raising money often through illicit activities including cocaine trafficking, a risk that could send them back to jail. The list is many as I came across several Nigerian traffickers who have served jail sentences many times in SP. Miyi stated:

“My girl friend, LT, was frustrated to raise money for her flight ticket. Because she missed her kids and family, she risked delivering some kilos of cocaine to raise money. Caught and convicted, she was sent back to prison in 2013.” (Ex-convict Miyi: SP, 03-01-2013)

In this area, Young (2007) points to the multi-dimensional nature of social exclusion that involves political, economic, and spatial exclusion, as well as lack of access to specific areas such as, medical provision, information, housing, policing, and security. Largely, they involve exclusion in what are seen as the normal areas of participation of full citizenship (Percy-Smith, 2000a); and it is a social not an individual problem. It has a global root rather than being a confined local issue, and carries with it the imperative of inclusion. It evokes the basic notions of social exclusion that involve firstly, blaming the persons concerned for their lack of motivation, their self-exclusion from the society even if the final responsibility for this is placed at the door of the Welfare State viewed as prompting a state of dependency where, it is presumed that the jobs are available while the lowerclass does not want to take them (Murray, 1984; 1996).

Furthermore, whereas direct exclusion due to discrimination and racism is ruled out as primary reason for social exclusion, it depicts the problem as a kind of failure of the system to provide jobs that leads to the situation of social exclusion wherein people lose, not the motive to work, but the capacity to find work due to lack of positive role models as shown by the work of Wilson, *The Truly Disadvantaged* (1987) and *When Work Disappears* (1996). Also, attention is drawn to the works of other experts that express the active rejection of the lowerclass by the society: through the downsizing of industry, the stigmatization of the workless, and the stereotyping of an underclass as criminogenic and drug-ridden, with images which are frequently radicalized and prejudiced.¹¹⁹ The above views expressing motivation, capacity, and opportunity are essential part of the process of social exclusion because they are fundamental components of the relationship between agency and structure. Bauman pointed out that in the process of exclusion, the excluded themselves are cast as the principals, perhaps the sole agency, and that being excluded is presented as an outcome of social suicide, not a social execution (2000, p. 25). Nevertheless, Young emphasized in the concept of

¹¹⁹ In this area see Rose (1999), Parenti (2000), Bauman (1998b, 2000).

bulimia that it is not exclusion but inclusion/exclusion, highlighting a society that choruses the liberal mantra of liberty, equality, and fraternity, yet systematically in the job market, on the street and in the daily contacts with the outside world practices exclusion (Young, 2007, p. 25).

In this area, contrary to the view that Nigerian Government is insensible to the sufferings of its citizenry jailed in various countries globally, President Goodluck Jonathan is making efforts to expand agreements on prisoners swap with several countries inclusive possible repatriation of 377 Nigerian prisoners in Brazil.¹²⁰

6.9 Challenge for Nigerian traffickers

“The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is that good men should do nothing.”

*Edmund Burke, the Irish statesman and philosopher (1729–1797)*¹²¹.

As observed in Galleria mall in SP for instance, Nigerians are known for relentlessly quarrelling and incessant aggressiveness. They break each other's heads with beer bottles. Whereas there are several incidences, the one that took place in a Bar in Rue Victorio at the juncture with Rio Branco in SP few years ago resulted in a Nigerian being stabbed to death with broken bottle during dispute that turned violent. As this affects them negatively, every one complains, in particular the leaders of the fragmented Nigerian communities. As Pastor Patrick commented:

“We are shouting that the government should do this or that for us, but the question is, who are the government? We are the government. We should take care of our selves here. We should look at ourselves first. I lived in Italy and England for a total of 20 years prior to Brazil; but to be franc, I have nowhere seen a country like Brazil. Could you tell me to which western country you could go and have the conditions and opportunities Brazil is offering? No other!” (Pastor Patrick: SP, 28-12-2012)

This evokes the concept of social control that expresses the ability of the community to restrain some human behavior, as discussed in Chapter 1. Those that see it differently have started questioning it and accepting responsibility. For instance, Nigerian courier Aki was arrested for carrying 2kg of cocaine at the airport a few years ago. Appearing in court thereafter, he simply told the judge that he was at fault. Aki added,

“I acknowledged the 2kg of cocaine and asked the judge not to waist time with judgment, because I would prefer not to waist their time and money. I pleaded, “Please sentence me to jail but have mercy on me. I did it due to financial hardship in my country.” Things are very difficult in Nigeria.” (Ex convict Aki: SP, 29-12-2012)

Aki realized that it was unnessecary to hide or keep squandering money to pay lawyers. He took the initiative to quit drug trafficking after serving more than six years imprisoned. He now has a respectable job. This demonstrates that taking initiative is about being proactive and using individuals' innate power of self-choice. It is not only individuals that have the ability to choose how they will respond to any given stimulus. As a community, Nigerians also have this ability, which is vital for not succumbing to the victim mentality. For the touch bearers, it implies that giving up their communities in SP to drug trafficking is giving up on

¹²⁰ See, Nigeria, Brazil Hod Talks to Strengthen Bilateral Relations in Defence and Security, Intelligence Sharing... (Beegeagle's Blog: 27-11-2013).

¹²¹ See Quote Investigator (2010).

ability to adapt and change. They could choose to better their image by reducing the number of Nigerians participation in the illicit trade in SP significantly.

As Covey (2008) suggested in a whole new mind-set on fighting crime, every transformed community in his research has taken some great proactive initiative, an individual or group decided to make a change—sometimes subtle, sometimes bold—toward a safer, more civil society. The common line was that people took the initiative, meaning they created a plan and then got to work, as it happened with Nigerian in Guangzhou China.

It evokes Fox, Albertson and Wong's (2013) concept of Justice Reinvestment (JR) and its potential contribution to criminal justice reform. With respect to crime reduction and prevention, they emphasized that what is required is the development of a theory of JR, which emphasizes the 'economic' approach, but overcomes the limitations of narrowly constituted economic theory. In this area, the neo-liberal models, for example Becker's model, suggests a system of deterrence through detection and incarceration as the social response to crime, where in deterrence is modeled as fear of punishment (Becker, 1968). In contrast, a more holistic view of economics suggests humans may abstain from crime through intrinsic motivation. Fox et al. (2013, p. 42) emphasized that communities have a role, building and mobilizing community capacity to help reduce re-offending should be a key strategy. The implication for crime reduction is that investment in prevention will include measures that build community and individual resilience. In this model, the emphasis is on support of communities and (potential) offenders to reduce both offending and reoffending, as we shall see with the Nigerian community in Guangzhou, China.

Although the attractiveness of cocaine through its gross financial reward when successful remains one of the principal features pushing many people into the illegal trade, currently it seems most undocumented Nigerians in SP engage in drugs if they want to survive. But analyses of fieldwork reveal that an increasing number of them would like to quit the illicit trade. Whereas the proposal for amnesty by the authorities to regularize undocumented aliens in the country remains relevant on condition they employ a legitimate and respectable way of making a living than drug trafficking. Few selected Nigerians that are not involved in illicit trade should take the initiative to establish a New Nigerian Community in SP with the following main mandates:

- Unifying NIDO (Nigerians in Diaspora Organization, which tends to portray an image of been alone for Nigerian professional in Brazil.) and Nigerian community to form the New Nigerian Community that becomes an organization to which every Nigerian should belong.
- How to limit influx of Nigerians into Brazilian prison, and to help Nigerian inmates inside by assisting them regarding temporary freedom grantee. In this area, recommended is that the Nigerian Government should start the process of prison transfer to allowing them served remaining sentence in Nigeria.
- Integration of Nigerians into the mainstream legitimate economy instead of considering themselves transit in Brazil, and remaining unaware of the varied potentials offered by the host culture.

With a well-functioning community, creating awareness would be fundamental towards a new mindset to understand and internalize why things must be done differently, rather than the widespread 'Nigerian smartness,' which has turned into a habit with its boomerang effect working against them. Challenging this in the widespread sub-culture of informal economy amid Nigerians.

There is the need to keep creating awareness during town meetings and social gatherings, explaining that drug trafficking and repeated imprisonment is not the future, as several of them have been there. Some ex-convicts told me they cherished working for few hundreds of Real per month while in jail. They learned to build things up slowly rather than the mentality of making it fast. Most fall back to cocaine trafficking because they simply fall back to the same crowd that sees it as the only alternative. Aki and Otiyo have distanced drug trafficking and engaged legitimate job and with persuasion, gradually others will join.

In addition, it is necessary to keep explaining properly, from the legal point of view, the consequences of falling back to drug trafficking. Those who choose to go that way will face the consequences for derailing. Because opportunity for orientation is lacking currently, for many hanging on the street and wishfully thinking for quick financial proceeds from cocaine trafficking remains attractive. Assisted instead, they could have learned some skills, exploited their talents and become useful to the host society where there are opportunities and no real racial detestation as most Nigerian traffickers say it themselves.

This evokes that most Nigerians in SP are ignorant of these opportunities in Brazil. Because on arrival, the first people they meet are those that embraced cocaine trafficking and the dream of making easy money immediately, becoming a good courier that could swallow 2kg of cocaine and so on. So the way forward is to organize, call on people who are capable to initiate this move, as it happened in Guangzhou, China. If this could be done, there is no doubt that the problem might decrease.

It all boils down to community building and creating awareness because Brazil offers lots of good opportunities that are not comparable to many countries globally, as Nigerian traffickers suggest. However, as observed in several settings during fieldwork, there was plenty of talk about making money fast and emigrating to other places. But what they are longing for in Europe and the USA is in Brazil for those that know how to grip it and work hard. In this regard, whereas most Nigerians elsewhere have understood this concept and deploy it for advancement in their various professions and endeavors, in SP and Brazil, there is need for a lot to endeavor in self-inclusion instead of aiding alienation.

6.10 Summary

The ‘response from inside,’ shows that for many Nigerian traffickers, it is a wishful thinking achieving a successful life through legitimate opportunities. Although these good opportunities in Brazil are not comparable to those in many countries globally, a crucial challenge they face is the paradox that the financial constraint of legitimate job lures big money from cocaine trafficking when successful. Generally, they also lack adequate professional qualifications and work skills in a fast changing world.

This chapter emphasizes the ingenuity of some Nigerians wanting a change, a view to blend into the mainstream economy, which need to be encouraged. Brazil offers good opportunities for undocumented aliens to regularize, build a future and live a respectable life. To change and archive an acceptable degree of ‘integration’ in the mainstream economy, first and foremost, it is important to learn the host language, acquire a good education, and work hard. Nigerian traffickers deploy these beliefs in varied degrees to mitigate violence and distrust.

Order in society is needed, instead of blaming others for the misfortune in illicit cocaine trade. By so doing, Nigerians in Brazil will strive to change the status quo of stigmatized cocaine traffickers and Nigerians at large. Secondly, this will reduce the general feeling that those who work little or not at all are living at the expense of the taxes payers. Thirdly, it will assist to decrease influx of Nigerians into prison and its costs to society.

Nigerians are among the highest number of foreign inmates in Brazil. Most prisoners

are denied rights as stipulated by international standards. Nigerian inmates could not afford to hire a lawyer and most do not meet requirements for granting them progression and parole. This is partly because of anxiety about the escape of inmates. Although in general Nigerian inmates or ex-prisoners do not want to run away, they remain in Brazil. They do not want to run back home due to the deteriorated standard of life in the country. What's more is that most Nigerians outside are reluctant to stand guarantee for them. They avoid coming in contact with the criminal justice system. For the Nigerian inmates I interviewed, this means that they are placed consequently in a state of dual stillness—on the one hand trapped in jail and on the other, distanced by co-nationals.

Having discussed in the previous chapters the Nigerian international cocaine traffickers' brokerage activities and reaction from the host society in addition to this, the next section will enlighten the relationships between Nigerians and associates in a consuming country like China.

Section 3

Things happen in China

Chapter 7

Following the goods: Nigerian traffickers' novel environment

7.1 Introduction

This chapter will attempt to provide insight into the nature of the involvement of the Nigerian traffickers first by highlighting the background and influx of African and Nigerian traders into China, the hub of which is Guangzhou.¹²² Following the “termination of super power competition and emergence of economics as a key determinant of foreign policy” (Payne & Venev, 1998, p. 867), with the growing Sino-Africa trade interests, China and Guangzhou attracted in the 1980s and 1990s a sizable amount of Africans, with Nigerians topping the list.

Globalization processes enhance migration of peoples to places where they may have opportunities for a more comfortable life including Nigerian international cocaine traffickers. Enthusiasm toward the new trend of illicit cocaine traders is made worse not only by the escape from poverty and economic hardship, but also by the perception that many Nigerians have about the West, and now Asia, as countries where financial success comes easily.

Throughout the interviews, the possibility of travelling abroad was often cited as a reason for becoming a cocaine courier. Otherwise, some individuals borrow money to pay smugglers as indicated by UNODC (2013). Wishful thinking for a multicultural society exists as newcomers are faced with legal status issues, complicated (or impossible) integration processes and financial problems (Bovenkerk & Yesilgoz, 2004). Consequently, whereas some might become integrated, many others do not, resulting in difficulties to make ends meet in the new society through accepted formal channels. Due to the negative effects of some specific governmental policies that put significant restrictions on immigrants, many become marginalized and are passively pushed into illegal activities as a means of survival (see Bovenkerk & Yesilgoz, 2004). Faced with survival issues and pushed into debt in Nigeria, for some, cocaine trafficking becomes attractive option that delivers quick monetary rewards.

Nigerian cocaine traffickers follow the goods—illicit cocaine. Placing themselves strategically, not only in production areas, but above all in the major transit country Brazil—the world's number one exporter of cocaine (UNODC, 2013). As followers of the ‘commodity,’ Nigerian traffickers equally placed themselves in the new Asian markets. China is essential for several reasons that include its population of millions and its growing wealthy middleclass. Cocaine is a recreational product for the individuals of the upperclass, which are not only increasing in number in China, but also are appreciative of Western life style in this respect. With an increase in cocaine trafficking and consumption, control will be difficult. China holds an important place in the international commerce in Africa and in Latin America, which are transit and production hubs of cocaine respectively.

In this regard, we will look at the Nigeria's ‘old school’ and ‘new generation’ relationship with cocaine trafficking in Guangzhou. Most old school traffickers recall how they were nicely welcomed and respected then, compared to the stigmatized image they suffer followings new arrivals since early 2000s.

¹²² Contrary to the dominant view of been novice, Africans in China could be traced to Tang dynasty (608-907), when slave trade from east Africa to China was ran by Arabs and other Muslims; and through the Ming dynasty (1368-1644) when the Chinese sent maritime expeditions to East Africa (See Morais, 2009; Wilensky, 2002). In recent times, China's cooperation with Africa could be traced to the Bandung Conference of April 1955 (see, Ismael, 1971, p. 507); and subsequently the relationship has undergone interesting phases in an almost cyclical manner (Ngomba, 2007)

Further, this chapter will uncover Nigerian traffickers' social practices, which say much for the research. We shall also discuss their involvement in cocaine trade and related crimes within these contexts from traffickers themselves, since they have the ability to both corroborate as well as contradict published information by researchers and law enforcement officials.

7.2 Sino-Nigeria: Allies and new interest

Though some academic works and publications exist on the dynamics of African traders' mobility and African migrants in China,¹²³ no specific work has focused on the involvement of Nigerian International illicit cocaine trade in China and in one of its global commercial hubs, Guangzhou, which has attracted African traders since the 1990s. In this regard, Guangzhou could be seen as meeting point for these traders, as China is Africa's biggest trade partner, which exceeded the U.S. in 2011 (Wonacott, 2011). China is also seen a strategic partner providing foreign direct investments in resource-rich countries such as Nigeria, Senegal, Tanzania, Zambia, and others. Sino-African relations are not limited to trade and resource extraction. Nearly one million Chinese migrants have relocated to Africa, establishing Chinatowns in various cities including Mombasa and Lagos (Spring & Jiao, 2008).

More than 17,000 Chinese are said to be legally residing in Lagos and neighboring Ogun State, but the true figure is certainly much higher. According to the head of the Immigration Service, David Parading, many Chinese come into Nigeria on "visiting, tourist, or business visas" and remain illegally.¹²⁴ On the one side, the Chinese population in the country is just a drop in the bucket compared to Nigeria's own population. Analysis of fieldwork reveals that although most Nigerians see the Chinese as decent trade partners, others remain concerned. Because the volume of bilateral trade between China and Nigeria grew to \$6,37 billion USD in 2009, signifying China's increasing influence on the Nigerian economy, the balance of trade is negatively skewed against Nigeria, which exported goods worth \$897 million USD to China, leaving Chinese imports to the country at a staggering \$5,48 billion USD.¹²⁵ It is a situation that Nigerian traders and members of the new trend cocaine trafficking in Guangzhou contribute to, as they feel gaps in the import-oriented economy.¹²⁶ The Nigerian community president, Emma Osy, added:

Osy: Some traders carry up to one million dollars on business trips to China. But it is unfortunately that some get involved with drugs trafficking too. There have been cases, which are not reported on the media.

Me: Carry drugs?

Osy: Yes, there are always few 'bad apples that spoil the whole bunch' (Emma Osy: Guangzhou, 20-05-2011).

This recalls that African traders fill suitcases with 'literally millions' of U.S. dollars to move their profits back to China once the goods have sold. A reason for this is that many Nigerians claim that they do not trust most Nigerian banks due to frauds and that to open a current account in Guangzhou is difficult. Instead, they carry it; if undeclared the money could be

¹²³ See for example the works of Castillo (2014); Bodomo (2014, 2010); Haugen, (2012); Mathews and Yang (2012); Mathews (2007); Li, Lyons and Brown (2012), Bertonecello and Bredeloup (2009).

¹²⁴ See Nigeria's China Connection. (Pearce, 2014).

¹²⁵ See Nigeria Records \$ 5.48BN Trade Deficit With China. (Dada, 2010)

¹²⁶ Nigerians top the list of Africans traders in Guangzhou. They have contributed to direct exports of goods (phones, textile, spare parts, motorcycles, and machinery among others) from Guangzhou to African countries, which have risen from about \$165 million USD in 1996 to \$2,1 billion USD in 2010 (See Li et al., 2012, p. 57).

confiscated,¹²⁷ mistaken for illicit money laundering or proceeds from drug transactions.

7.3 *I dey go Chinco (I am going to China)*

Contrary to the widespread view regarding the influx of Nigerians into China, interviews reveal that Nigerian traders were sought out by their Chinese business partners to come to China for long-term business relationships. For instance, the entrepreneur Joe expressed:

“The Chinese sought out Nigerian importers of various goods those days. It was normal for Chinese embassy staff coming to my office and persuading me to come and take visa to China. For instance, my first visa to China was valid for one year and I could come whenever. Like wise other importers were persuaded to collecting Chinese visa and influenced to import goods directly from China rather than from HK or Taiwan. Chinese entrepreneur traced my telephone number from my partner’s company in Taiwan and called me. I invited them to Lagos, tried the products, and that was how I started importing their goods to Nigeria. Because, I designed shoes and sandals, and they produced it in China. This led my having joint venture business with my partner.” (Entrepreneur Joe: Guangzhou, 20-05-2011)

In this area, the influx of entrepreneurs from Taiwanese Hong Kong and Mainland China into Africa from the 1960s through the 1990s has been covered in several publications.¹²⁸ Commercial activities linked to this influx of Chinese into Nigeria, or Africa more broadly, resulted in what has been expressed as a ‘tsunami’ of Chinese goods—‘made in China’ products are now ubiquitous in the markets of most African cities (Zhang, 2008, p. 388).

7.3.1 China Town Lagos

A glance at the extensive China town at Ojota in Lagos (figure. 5) displays the red antique citadel crenellated Great Wall of Beijing, with the Nigerian and the Chinese flags swinging creates a welcoming view. Interviewees suggest the Chinese business complex is home to about 180 shops.



Figure 5. China Town Ojota Lagos

¹²⁷ For instance, the Nigerian Customs Service (NCS) arrested Mr. Ikebude Akoma, for being in possession of \$456,000 USD in cash en route China. Akoma did not declare the money and had no proper document like exchange bureau de change or bank slip covering the money (See Naija Gist: 25-12-2012).

¹²⁸ See Mathews and Yang (2012); Spring and Jiao (2008); Castillo (2014).

Though China town is a mixture of Chinese and Nigerian ambience, most of the staff in the Chinese shops was Chinese. The shops offered assorted types of cheap goods ranging from textiles, shoes, personal care and household items, as well as authentic Chinese food. Chinese trader Chen expressed, “Nigeria was better. Business is slow these days. This store is only for display. If you want big quantity I have wholesale warehouse. I can supply many goods” (Chen: Lagos, 14-12-2013).

A walk around the complex reveals that some shops are closed, as many Chinese claim they face strong competition with markets in various parts of Lagos, such as the Computer Village Ikeja, Alaba International Market for electronics, as well as extensive street-hawking. But Nigerian traders say that the Chinese are into big businesses, wholesale markets, manufacturing and trade zone establishments. For instance, the Ogun Guangdong Free Trade Zone (FTZ) in Igbessa near Lagos. During in-depth interview the president of the FTZ, Mr. Junxiong Wang, stated:

“I have business partners in Nigeria. We are building industries in Ogun State Free Trade Zone, which offers employment opportunity for Nigerians. By partnering with Nigerians, we create a win-win situation. Nigeria has a big potential for develop and with hard work it will be archived. Nigeria of today is like China of 30 years ago. With the entrepreneurial cooperating, both countries can learn a lot from each other.” (Wang: Hargeisa 27-12-2013)

Contrary to the idea of providing a ‘tsunami’ of cheap goods, interviewees suggest Chinese entrepreneurs deliver quality products, depending on the customers’ purchasing power. Castillo (2014) averred that this ‘tsunami’ has spurred scores of traders to develop their own transnational trading strategies in an attempt to outdo their Chinese competitors. A first step in these strategies is often journeying to Guangzhou (Bertoncelo & Bredeloup, 2007). Whereas some fold up or handed over their stores to subordinates and made their way to countries like India, Thailand, or Malaysia, others took their businesses to China.

On one hand, as many Chinese intellectuals say, “[they] are just trying to do something good” about their country’s political and financial interest in Africa (Ngomba, 2007). On the other hand, all-pervading global media accounts about the ‘rise of China,’ as well as word-of-mouth accounts about ‘greener pastures’ and ‘new land of opportunity’ continues to attract many Nigerians inclusive members of the new trend cocaine trafficking to Guangzhou. These portrayals of China are further influenced by the growing ‘soft power’¹²⁹ that the People’s Republic has been disseminating across the continent. The emergence of Sino-African media outlets such as CCTV Africa, and projects such as ‘Xinhua Gallery,’ a 2011 photographic exhibition depicting the lives and works of ‘Africans in China’ (which kicked off simultaneously in 18 African countries), are good examples of this (Castillo, 2014). Nonetheless, critics express that China could be a “smiling dragon with arms stretched to Africa, at once welcoming, friendly and yet dangerous” (Spring & Jiao, 2008, p. 58).

7.3.2 ‘Coke enters’

It would be incorrect to say that China only attracts established shop owners. Amongst Nigerian traders in Guangzhou, I came across several university graduates and dropouts,

A country may obtain the outcomes it wants in world politics because other countries - admiring values, emulating its example, aspiring to its level of prosperity and openness - want to follow it. See Nye Jr. ‘s (2004, p. 5) *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics*.

former street hawkers, and members of Nigerian cocaine traffickers that followed the ‘good’ cocaine: small-scale, strikers, and dealers. China provides good possibilities for Nigerian traffickers in continuous search of new markets and new clients in order to increase the supply, recalling notions of globalization of crime and drug trafficking (see Galeotti, 2012; Paoli, Greenfield, & Reuter, 2009).

Similar to the way migrating to Western countries was popular in Nigeria; Asia became a new attraction. Interviews suggested that some had a small amount of capital raised by family or relatives who sold property; others borrowed directly from close friends and acquaintances under various agreements, yet several knowingly or unknowingly risked engaging in the illicit cocaine trafficking through friends and contacts that arranged the trip. In this regard, getting Chinese visas through *man know man* or *long leg* (Nigerian expression for the unofficial way) remains conversant amid Nigerians in Guangzhou. The shop owner Yadu stated:

Yadu: Do not forget China resembles Nigeria in some ways. It is true Chinese visa became a bit difficult since few years, yet it is easy, because there are agents that will arrange it for you. China is a business country and it is a question of money. One can apply and get it if you have all documents complete. But for those who do not, “connection man” is there to arrange it. Even, they will arrange it good starting from here [Turning to another trader sitting next to him, he asked] Chairman, correct?

Chrmn: Yadu, it is correct! The ‘connection man’ here has ‘connection man’ in Nigeria, and together they will connect all; China “L” visa is available for about 300,000 Naira (about \$2,000 USD), single entry. (Yadu: Guangzhou, 21-05-2011)

Entering China’s economy has its challenges. In this area, Mathews and Yang (2012) highlight the concept of “high-end globalization” and “low-end globalization.” Whereas the former are Westerners, Japanese, and other developed-world citizens, they are often representatives of large corporations, largely working within the ‘law;’ nevertheless, these agents of high-end globalization are probably outnumbered in China today by members of the latter. These could be as distinct as the transnational flow of people and goods involving relatively small amounts of capital and informal, sometimes semi-legal or illegal transactions commonly associated with the developing world.¹³⁰ Furthermore, it recalls to mind the notion of blurred borders of formal and informal economies as discussed in chapters on Brazil. It implies that the informal economy is to the formal economy what low-end globalization is to high-end globalization. In today’s world, the latter terms are more appropriate than the former terms because the world is becoming increasingly linked, and national economies cannot be seen as separate entities anymore. There are no autonomous national economies, but rather a single global economy (Arrighi, 2005).

China’s opening-up policy evolved into a combination of ‘Bringing in’ and ‘Going out.’ China has not only attracted Foreign Direct Investment from developed countries, but also has encouraged and supported outbound investments from its public and private sectors in developing countries (Spring & Jiao, 2008, p. 57). Perhaps emphasis by Suzhou Industrial Park Administrative Committee (2004) recollects this view, that during the process of attracting capital, advanced technologies, and management experience from foreign countries, China also took in some corrupt Western ideas and lifestyles with corrosive and damaging effect upon the Chinese society. Some leaders and people failed to see clearly the propriety of reform and opening-up policy, and some even debated which to follow, socialism or capitalism. Then Deng Xiaoping, known as the general designer of China's reform and opening-up, gave his firm and inspiring reply to the question. When you open the window, he

¹³⁰ For example see Mathews (2011, pp. 19-20), Mathews, Ribeiro, and Vega (2012).

said, you'll let in air as well as flies and mosquitoes, but there are ways to handle this. The Singapore model, for instance.¹³¹

7.4 Old school and new generation influx

Africans and Nigerians are an outstanding group of foreign residents and transitory populations in Guangzhou. There is a lack of reliable data regarding their numbers, nationalities, and activities. The publicity regarding 'Africans in Guangzhou' has led varied claims in figures,¹³² which range from 1,500 to 200,000. It is an influx that is influencing certain areas and changing the fabric of Guangzhou, as some residential and business areas of the city, like Dongpu, Dengfeng Jie, and Yongping Jie have been designated 'Chocolate Cities,' in a clear allusion somehow reminiscent of so-called Chinese 'ethnoburbs'—a term first coined in 1997 by Wei Li in a paper on the Chinese in Los Angeles (Li, 1998; Morais, 2009).

Pioneer Nigerian traders living in Guangzhou, as from the 1990s, refer to themselves as the old school, in order to differentiate from those who arrived in the mid 2000s, as we shall discuss in Chapter 10. This recalls Castillo's (2014, p. 10) concept that, it is possible to identify at least three types of trajectories amongst Africans that live in, recurrently visit, and pass through Guangzhou: the 'more established,' the 'itinerants and semi-settled' and the 'newly-arrived.' Most discuss how they were nicely welcomed and respected then,—compared to what is experienced presently—and their intention to established small-scale industry in Nigeria. A dream undermined by a lack of infrastructure, namely: a steady power supply, good network of roads, and all favorable conditions attractive to foreign investors, as discussed in section one. Equally conversant is the disillusion witnessed in 2003 following an influx of some Nigerians that changed their reputation in the city. As the number of those overstaying visa validity increased, some were pushed to survival as illegal aliens—cocaine trafficking being a prominent means of this. Interviews suggest that some individuals formed cult gangs alleging to decrease crime amid Nigerians in Guangzhou, whereas they themselves are the criminals. This situation became worrisome for law-abiding Nigerians at large, who suffered stigmatization. Shop owner Kedu stated:

“We fought for Nigeria Community to exist today because new comers wanted to take it over as a base for their criminal activities. They formed gangs such as *Bagger* and *Eiye* with which they engage drug trafficking, extortion, armed robbery, kidnapping, and murder in Guangzhou. I am not happy these guys are messing things up for all Nigerians. They even sell cocaine of the streets here.” (Nigerian shop owner in Guangzhou: 20-05-2011)

A reliable source within the law enforcement said that Nigerian street dealers were a nuisance in some places like in suburbs such as Dongpu, and SanYuanli of Guangzhou. Likewise, Nigerians in Guangzhou are also aware of the extent to which drug trafficking by few has stigmatized them, despite the illicit trade in heroin, which was occurring in China prior to their arrival. This evokes the works of Lo and Kwok (2012) on how triad societies respond to socioeconomic change. The booming drug trafficking business in China could be

¹³¹ The late Chinese leader Deng Xiaoping expresses during his visit to Singapore and southern inspection tour in 1992 (January 18 to February 21) that "Singapore's social order is rather good. Its leaders exercise strict management. We should learn from their experience, and we should do a better job than they do." The experience of Singapore provided a role model for China's reform and opening-up, which subsequently create a brand-new mode of Sino-foreign economic and technological cooperation of mutual benefit. See, *New Mode of International Cooperation, Opens a New Chapter in Reform and Opening-up* (Suzhou Industrial Park Administrative Committee, 2004).

¹³² See, Mathews and Yang (2012), Castillo (2014).

attributed to two main factors. First, a sizeable domestic drug consumption market that emerged. By the mid-1980s, drug addiction was no longer restricted to the border areas. The Chinese government publicly acknowledges the phenomenon in all provinces and major urban areas. China is no longer just a transit country favored by transnational criminal organizations; it has a sizeable addict population of its own (Chin & Zhang, 2007; Ting, 2004). Research shows that the new millennium has seen an increase in the proportion of youngsters taking cocaine in Hong Kong. According to the Central Registry of Drug Abuse (CRDA), the number of cocaine users above 21 years old increased from 31 in 2000 to 696 in 2007. Yueying, Wing and Keung Fai indicated that “with the overall number of reported drug abusers falling in the past several years in Hong Kong (HK), this pattern of rise in cocaine abuse is alarming” (2008, p. 1).

Second, drug traffickers developed alternative routes through China (mostly along China’s southern provinces—Yunnan, Guizhou, Guangxi, and Guangdong) in response to changes in the regional drug trade (Chin & Zhang, 2007). For instance: the largest cocaine seizure in Lagos involved two Chinese entrepreneurs as discussed in Chapter 3. In one of the several drug busts, HK Police seized about 567kg of cocaine in various places in Tuen Mun and Yuen Long localities. Traffickers used varied methods to avoid dictation including concealment in engine oil and brake fluid containers. The arrest of eight offenders comprised of an American, five Mexicans, a Colombian woman and her Chinese husband demonstrates the transnational nature of Chinese participation in the global cocaine trade. In April 2010, the disappearance of a Dutch-Chinese man led to the confiscation of 372kg of cocaine from a village house in HK.¹³³ However, confiscation of cocaine is not limited to HK as the authorities seized 70kg of cocaine in Shanghai. The U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) tipped off Chinese officials that a container departing from Peru and transiting through Mexico was suspected of containing drugs. The ministry of Public Security admitted that cases of cocaine entering China from South America have been on the rise, and has strengthened cooperation with foreign anti-drug control agencies (Bacchi: 29-08-2014).

Likewise, analysis of fieldwork information in Nigeria, the Netherlands, Brazil, Hong Kong, and Malaysia, indicated Nigerian cocaine traffickers in these countries talk about their counterparts in China. I relied on my Nigerian contacts including Scata, Kele, and Tizu who could speak Chinese, but also on my Chinese contacts such as Kevin and Roby who speak English. In addition, I carefully chose contacts with whom I closely associated, and through them I met some direct and indirect participants of the illicit trade. The Nigerian cocaine traffickers Tizu stated:

“I do not want problems. I know some guys doing it. But for me, I prefer doing petty trading business I am engaged with. I do not want the python (as the police is popularly called among Nigerian cocaine traffickers) to be following me. I do not want to bring myself into nonsense troubles because this country could be very frightening. They have killed not quit few guys who were caught with it (cocaine or drugs). My brother, China doesn’t joke!” (Tizu in Guangzhou: 26-05-2011)

Tizu is not alone in emphasizing China’s capital punishment for cocaine or drug trafficking. Kele, Scata, and many other Nigerians I encountered during my fieldwork in China are of the same opinion. Notwithstanding, several others are still attracted to drug trafficking, as the arrest of Nigerian cocaine traffickers demonstrates. However, before we go into the activities of the direct and indirect players, let us see what happens in some socializing environments where Nigerian and other African get together to discuss their work.

¹³³ For example see Lo and Man (20-09-2011).

7.4.1 'Open talk' cocaine

Nigerian traffickers find it important to frequent some of the several popular locations where Africans entertain themselves in San Yuan Li, Dengfeng or the surrounding Xiaobei. The area is a site where transnational African flows meet with Chinese from various provinces and ethnic groups. It is a neighborhood where the local and the transnational converge.

When not threatened by the presence of law enforcement agents, Nigerian cocaine traffickers talk freely about their activities. They call relatives or business partners in Nigeria, Ghana, Uganda, South Africa, and Brazil. From an ethnographic point of view, spending time with my contacts in informal settings such as dance clubs and bars gave me the possibility of being around relevant direct and indirect players of the illicit trade. Because Igbo is my mother tongue, I was able to participate in discussion and apprehend the gist of conversations.

The centrality of conversation has connections to issues related to my research. Intentionally or unintentionally with jokes, boasting, quarrels, and threats, Nigerians traffickers expose what they do, how, with whom, when, where, and the price. On the one hand, they know the implications because they say it themselves, revealed by ex-convicts' participation in conversation or from those who heard the stories from others. Conversely, when things are said in Pidgin English, the topic of conversation changes when someone who is not trusted approaches. For instance, while Aki was talking about taking precautions regarding 'runs and scores' (meaning cocaine deals), he did not hear when Azu asked to change the topic because a Chinese couple stood close by. Nigerian trafficker, ex-inmate Azu cautioned:

“Brother, continue the story in Igbo please. Did you not hear what I asked you? *Basket Mouth!* Please change the story because they are around (Turning his head towards me, he pleaded; brother, please could you pass the whisky? After the purring somewhat in his glass and lighting up a cigarette, he continued with Aki) Are you a “like a bike without brakes?” Here is not Europe; we are in China, *you wan wahala*¹³⁴?” (Azu: Guangzhou, 26-04-2012).

Azu tried to remind Aki that he should be careful talking openly about cocaine dealing because of the presence of outsiders. I was trusted because my contacts introduced me to them. They know I was not a threat as discussed in Chapter 2. All through my fieldwork, I could hardly recall encounters with Nigerian traffickers both in the Netherlands, Italy, Germany, Nigeria, Brazil, and Malaysia, without some ex-prisoner talking about his experience in the drug trade. They often don't realize how much information they disclose to individuals who have nothing to do with the illicit trade.

For instance, Azu told me his was expecting a call from his brother jailed in London. When I inquired if his brother had called, he replied, “not yet, but when did I tell you about it?” This evokes my conversations with the American Sociologist Stuart B. Foster, released on 14 December 2013, after serving eight months in White Cloud District Detention Centre (WCDC) in Guangzhou for taking a large sum of money from a colleague at the Guangdong University of Foreign Studies, where he taught. In several extensive interviews via Skype and email correspondences, Stuart Foster told me about his unique experience with Nigerian inmates incarcerated for drug trafficking offences in WCD. He was not trusted initially. Stuart stated:

¹³⁴ Translated: Do you want Wahala? The word “Wahala” is an expression used among Nigerians meaning ‘trouble’ which became popularized in other African countries.

“My Nigerian friends were leery at first. Being American that speaks Chinese, they thought I worked for the police. But later that will ease; they opened up because my close Nigerian friend ‘AA’ told them, “You can trust Mr. Foster.” For example, ‘DD’ felt quite accomplished after having come from such a challenging background. From a ‘mule’ swallowing and carrying up to 1kg of drug in his stomach he had saved enough money to purchase his own stock and developed a lucrative customer base of users and smaller dealers. He maintained and pursued his dream of being a drug kingpin while in WCD.” (Stuart: Skype video interview, 06-12-2014)

Because they spent eight months together, they had enough time to know each other well establish a sense of trust. They talked freely with Stuart when not threatened by the presence of outsiders.

In several settings during fieldwork, Nigerian traffickers talk about experiences and boast to elevate their status as tough guys, who have survived the hard life of prison. In such occasions, those without jail experience are somehow belittled or not taken seriously when they speak. Nevertheless, they try to share their experience by telling stories of friends, acquaintances, friends-of-friends, or sometimes of relatives. This way, they contribute to conversation, but it’s not the same as someone with direct experience. The more they converse together, the more they risk divulging to outsiders.

7.5 Involvement in cocaine trade and related crimes: Recruitment, travel, control and delivery

The involvement of Nigerian traffickers in relation with China is demonstrated by the arrest of offenders being made public.¹³⁵ It highlights the extensive network of the Nigerian drug traffickers operating in China. All through my fieldwork, Nigerian traffickers talked about their counterparts in Guangzhou. Stuart Foster stated to me:

“I had large amount of extended interaction with Nigerian's while incarcerated, majority involved in the heroin trade. I encountered a variety of ‘Igbo’ involved in all facets of the drug trade from local to international—from simple to death penalty cases. Two out of ten I know well are serving death sentence. While in Army hospital for three weeks, I met several others from Detention three where there are about 300 Nigerians. In the hospital they brought people from the airport suspected of swallowing cocaine or heroin. I spent my entire days with them talking. They helped me and helped them too. Together we helped ourselves in the brutal detention centre.” (Stuart: Skype video conversation, 29-11-2014)

The Nigerian ex-convict who was freed in early 2015 after serving about 2 years sentence in different jails in Guangzhou, told me that there are more than 400 Nigerian inmates in Detention there and WCD. Several are young boys in their early twenties. “I know at least 5 guys who are on death row” (AA: Skype video/telephone conversations, 17-09-2015). To whatever degree, Nigerian cocaine traffickers use various methods in the illicit cocaine trade, which involves different kinds of players from largescale importers to smallscale traffickers, as well as ‘strickers,’ couriers, and part-time couriers who only occasionally involve themselves in trafficking. Interplay between these participants in Nigeria and in several production and transit hubs provides a steady supply of cocaine to their associates in China.

¹³⁵ For instance, according to V2 Chatolic.com, HK authorities arrested two men from Nigeria for cocaine trafficking offence on May 14, 2014 who arrived from Lagos. When John Wotherspoon met one of them in a detention center in HK, he told him that he swallowed 31 capsules of cocaine, and that six other drug mules had boarded a plane for Hong Kong.

7.5.1 Courier approach: ‘My darling’

Interviewees suggest that Nigerian international cocaine traffickers have the potential of recruiting drug couriers at any time, as discussed in Chapter 5. Despite deployment of non-African couriers, they also engage females from several African countries including Tanzania, South Africa, and Zimbabwe because they have easier access to entry visas to China. For instance, the Nigerian trafficker Aki alleged that in February 2012 undercover police in Guangzhou traced and arrested a Nigerian cocaine trafficker. Aki stated, “His Ugandan female courier arrested at the airport implicated him. His wife from a Southern African country recruits female couriers” (Aki: Guangzhou, 27-04-2012).

Also reported was that in March 2011, the Chinese wife of one Nigerian in Guangzhou was arrested for drug trafficking. Also arrested was the wife’s sister. He took his Chinese fiancée to Nigeria to marry her there. Accompanying them was the spouse’s sister. On their return trip, he concealed cocaine in their luggage. Using business appointments as an excuse, he got off in Singapore whereas his wife and her sister that proceeded were apprehended at the airport in China. The two ladies claimed they did not know about the packaged drugs in their luggage. The husband had intentionally stayed in Singapore waiting to return when the deal was completed successfully (Noko: Guangzhou, 27-04-2012).

Then in May 2011, while having drinks with friends and bragging over making quick money for his plans in Nigeria, Noko disclosed his Chinese girlfriend brought in some ‘market’ from Malaysia five days ago. Noko added:

Noko: She brought back cool 3.5kg of ‘white’ (meaning cocaine) concealed in bottom bag. My *Nde muo* (meaning ‘Spirit,’ or a Chinese friend) picked it up from the airport and brought her to my place. Oh, I love. My honeymoon ‘*Oyoyo*’ (beauty).

Sibe: You again! You only do your things. Please I have some ‘show’ (meaning, a deal), so I need you because she has to be assisted at the airport?

Noko: Sibe, take it easy. Do not rush things. Let’s talk about later because we have to be careful. This is a public place (Noko and Sibe: Guangzhou, 22-05-2011)

Realizing that others could hear, he decided to quit the topic, but soon after, Noko took another call, shouting “Oh God! Another one?” After, he said things were bad in *Ala Muo* (meaning a country in South America, it could Brazil or any other) and simply closed the topic. Noko became dismayed, which happens when Nigerian traffickers get information about a loss of cocaine because their couriers were arrested, a dishonest partner disappeared with either the drugs or money, or family members misused the money they earned. The tension between pros—such as quick money, comfort, celebration, and enjoyment—and cons—like insecurity, uncertainty, and risk—remains a paradox. Though Noko did not want to talk further, my contact later informed me that his courier had a ‘problem’ (meaning he was arrested) in a neighboring country. In addition, Noko forgot he told me when I met him a year prior, that he had reliable contacts in Brazil and in several drug hot spots in Asian including Thailand, Malaysia, Macao, and Hong Kong where his associates are active. For attractive financial reward, there are couriers available. Noko expressed:

“I pay my courier \$6,000 USD per kilo to bring it from Brazil. She makes 10K if she brings in two and that is much as they could earn in years in China. I pay her half of the money up front and the rest when she delivers. I treat her good! She has mastered it well because she takes antidiarrhoea medicine to prevent going to toilet during the trip” (Noko: Guangzhou, 22-05-2011)

In this regard, Noko’s girlfriend recruits others willing to risk taking the job. His couriers are

not only Africans or South Americans but also Chinese and Thai or Philippino. Analysis of fieldwork information reveals that some female couriers willingly opted to take the risk for the money while their Nigerian boyfriends deceived or sweet-talked others. Deployment of drug couriers is a dominant pillar underpinning Nigerian traffickers' activities globally, as already discussed in Sections one and 2. It shows that similar conditions that frustrate some individuals into the illicit trade in Nigeria are equally found in societies around the world. In this aspect, China is not unique, except when things go wrong.

In this area, Lo (2013, February 26) emphasized that Hong Kong authorities bettered control as the number of drug busts made at Chek Lap Kok airport in 2012 increased. Due to a system that picks out passengers likely to be smuggling narcotics, it foiled 204 drug-smuggling attempts, compared to 140 in 2011 and 161 in 2010. The haul led to the arrest of 142 traffickers and seizure of HK\$151 million worth of drugs. The majority of couriers arrested at the airport last year were from West Africa or South America¹³⁶. Nigerian traffickers frequently talked about their counterparts in China, Hong Kong and Malaysia to mention but a few. As discussed in section two, whereas they collaborate with couriers sent by associates in various countries, the illicit trade remains attractive to those who wish to participate.

Nonetheless, accounts of those executed in China or elsewhere seem no reason to quit cocaine trafficking for traffickers and their associates. The nature of involvement of Nigerians in the illicit cocaine trade is like a jungle. The wonder hidden within becomes the reason to keep going under and exploiting the various methods utilized therein.

7.5.2 Postage method: Try your luck

Interviewees suggest that Nigerian traffickers in and other countries in Latin America deploy the postage method to smuggle small quantities of cocaine concealed in various items using private or institutional mailing services. With the varied improved measures of controls like X-ray machines, special scanners, and sniffer dogs, interception rates for this method of transporting the drug are uncertain. Usually the quantities sent are relatively small, which is the reason Nigerian traffickers refer to it as the 'try your luck' method. This evokes, as averred by UNODC (2013), that the -based Nigerian groups are responsible for a very large share of the postal shipments of cocaine leaving the country. However, while many succeed, some are discovered, as some Nigerian traffickers in China. That is what Ndi did.

One afternoon in April 2011, the telephone rang and it was a contact in China who gave me the surprising news that the police apprehended Ndi for cocaine trafficking. This happened about six months after another Nigerian, Fefe, was arrested in November 2010, as we shall discuss later. These cases were extra motivation for the fieldwork in China as in May/June 2011. In his late twenties Ndi entered China in the mid 2000s and was lucky to have contact with respectable people that assisted in securing a teaching job for him in a school in Southern China. He received a salary of about 5,000 Chinese yuan [CNY] (about \$780 USD) monthly. Kele had this to say:

“Surprisingly Ndi was talking about couriers coming and going. I warned him to stop and not to think about drug trafficking. Otherwise he must stop coming to me. He assured me he was not into it. So, I was shocked when his cousin informed me Ndi was arrested because of cocaine posted from Malaysia to a Chinese girlfriend's address. I was speechless.” (Kele in Guangzhou: 28-04-2012)

¹³⁶ Drug-busting computer at Hong Kong airport foils smugglers. See Lo, (2013, February 26).

He subleased a room in his flat to a man from a West African country, who had been in China for about two weeks. Ndi asked him to collect a parcel from his (Ndi's) Chinese girlfriend's home address. Unaware the parcel contained hundreds of grams of concealed cocaine sent by Ndi's associates in Malaysia, he was lucky as he could not trace his way to the address. Ndi decided to collect the parcel himself. Unaware of the girlfriend's undercover police activity, Ndi was arrested for the act. His family asked Kele to contact a good lawyer for Ndi. Kele added:

“I refused to do it. I asked the guy if he could imagine what a disgrace at school where Ndi was teaching? In addition, I reminded him we have discussed many times with Ndi about Fefe or others arrested for trafficking. So I really could not take it, they knew the consequences. Ndi was not supposed to derail, even though he complained of financial problem at home. I think that something blindfolds these guys or what?” (Kele in Guangzhou: 28-04-2012)

This evokes that it's often hard to find someone with that special something that draws you towards him or her. But that's not always the case for some Nigerian traffickers. They knew what they were looking for in a girlfriend—a drug courier. As expressed by the lawyer Jian Bang “they deliberately sought Chinese women as girlfriends and lured them to trafficking cocaine” (Jian Bang: Shanghai, 06-04-2012).

According to the Chinese law, people convicted of smuggling, selling, transporting or producing more than 50g of cocaine or heroine can be sentenced to death in China, according to Jian Bang. One contact in Guangzhou informed me that law enforcement agents in Xiamen in mid June 2013 arrested his acquaintance, a Cameroonian teacher, in connection with about 290 grams of cocaine. Their plans didn't work, as the clothes filled with cocaine, parceled from Brazil using the girlfriend's work address, were uncovered. He was arrested in Xiamen University's foreign students' apartments. These interceptions show the perseverance of Nigerian traffickers and partners using this method to smuggling small but steady quantities of cocaine and other drugs.

It is a method used by small-scale exporters, amateurish adventurers or even by local consumers with friends or contacts in source countries. Risks can be lowered by many simple measures: faking the sender and the origin country, concealing the cocaine within protective materials or disguising it with special products, faking the recipient by writing a false name, simulating ignorance or using the safer addresses of employers or friends who are unaware of the illicit content (Zaitch, 2002). The activity of Nigerian traffickers in China is not limited to trying their luck through the postage method.

7.6 Nigerian street dealers: ‘Your happiness is my business!’

Nigerian cocaine traffickers are involved in ‘street pharmaceuticals’ as they call it, or, more formally, selling petty quantities of cocaine in Guangzhou and beyond. Analysis of fieldwork information shows that after the police cracked down in 2009, as we shall discuss in Chapter 8, the phenomenon was displaced and dealers went low profile. The Nigeria trafficker, Ach, is one of those I interviewed. By invitation, I met Ach and his three Chinese friends in a busy bar in Guangzhou. Around the bar districts, it's normal for Nigerian and African drug dealers to chat up potential foreign customers. Similar to conventional business practices they give out business cards with names and phone numbers printed, as I witnessed in several settings. Reliable local and foreign contacts in Guangzhou, Hong Kong, or Macao are essential to Ach's success. As Stuart Fosters confirms, “It's rampant. For instance, apprehended from the street during stopped and search operation for passport control, a Nigerian inmate was taken to the police station where police found less than 20 grams of heroin in his top pocket.

Though he claimed it was personal, but he got at most two years incarceration.” Nigerian cocaine traffickers often perform deals inside the clubs, as I observed during fieldwork. They generally started with soft drugs they claimed were for personal use as strategy to start conversation, and later informed the others that cocaine and/or heroin were available. One conversation went as follows:

Stuart: In certain clubs, sometimes I would be seating with a group of friends. They would come and first put two or three grams of hash in the middle of the table as a gift or sample. Even some had business card printed, with name and phone number. Some had their name cards printed, with phone numbers on it. One said to me, “Mr. B, your happiness is my business.”

Me: While in jail, what did Nigerian inmates tell you were their reason for taking such risks knowing that if caught they could be executed?

Stuart: Of course every person is different. I cannot speak for everybody. In most cases I do not know. But I will tell you about one guy. He put it to me like this “that if I am successful I have the chance to send my children to school. If I do not may be my family is in poverty for many generations.” It’s that simple. To me they would have to know because it was so open ” (Stuart Foster: 06-12-2012).

In one setting the Nigerian cocaine traffickers Ach said to Kele:

Ach: I noticed you called me yesterday. I went to meet my *Nde muo* (‘spirits,’ as Nigerian traffickers refer to their customers) in Shenzhen. Man must keep hassling. I put my telephone off because I did not want guys to disturb. Only my Hong Kong telephone was on

Kele: Yes I called to arrange seeing you. Ach, you and hassling! I saw you were rushing often to toilet like someone suffering from running stomach. Did she give you or you gave her?

Me: He or she? Once I noticed Ach went to the toilet twice in few minutes and thereafter his friend who stood next to him.

Ach: [Laughing] that is life, my brother! I went to settle some matter. It is the more you look the less you see, because I collected from a female courier who carried it in her private part, and handed it over to my customer. That is it! The hole from where she brought in the toilet is not important, the money is. [Pushing Kele slightly on his head]

Kele: [Laughing] Please do not touch me with that your hand! (Ach: Guangzhou, 28-04-2012)

While laughing, Ach said his friends are seasoned dealers that have contacts for local couriers. Even in a dancing bar, between drinks, dancing, and conversation, transactions are completed. Interviewees claim that marijuana grows wild like weeds in some rural areas in China. Hashish has long been a favorite with the pipe-smoking elderly. Cocaine and designer narcotics like ecstasy are increasingly available at disco, whereas karaoke bars are hot spots for methamphetamines and the popular horse tranquilizer/party drug, ketamine. These examples demonstrate that the globalization, invasion of the Western lifestyle into China, the growing Chinese economy, and income enjoyed by expanding China's middle-class have influence on illicit drug use that has risen in recent years. In this area, president Xi Jinping launched a tough crackdown on illicit drug use. As we shall discuss in the next chapter, not only foreign offenders have been apprehend. Several celebrities, including the son of movie star Jackie Chan and actor Kai Ko, have been arrested on drug charges (see Bacchi, 29-08-2014). China is becoming increasingly popular as a destination for foreigners. For instance, a survey of global expats in October 2014 found that China was ranked as the third most popular destination for expats in the world, exceeded by Switzerland and Singapore. Experts attributed the increasing popularity to the growth of China's national strength and improved

global image. One major reason for this includes the move from attracting financial capital to attracting human capital, in line with China's national talent plan. The plan calls for more foreign students to study in the country, and to increase the number of foreign permanent residents in China.¹³⁷ Furthermore, the Chinese economy is the second best world economy and China's middle class today is already large in absolute terms—at 157 million people; only the United States has a larger middle class, as Kharas (2010, p. 30) writes, this is why so many retailers and businesses are already eager to penetrate the Chinese market. Economic booms goes together with increase in consumption of recreational drugs and cocaine is no exception, as it happened earlier in other countries like Spain, Italy, or the U.S..

Beginning in the late 1970s, there was a rapid growth in commerce and population migration inside China. A result of this economic development is that the cross boarder drug trade along the Myanmar-China border opened up extensively (Chin & Zhang, 2007). The Nigerian trafficker Ach and associates are successful because they follow in the footsteps of existing drug trafficking businesses and wholesale markets, which have become increasingly fragmented. They work with counterparts who recruited couriers, and paid them about \$350–\$600 USD.

The poor 'mules' undertake the riskiest tasks in the trafficking business, and are thus most likely to make mistakes that lead to their arrest. The employers behind the scene who hire the mules and coordinate trafficking operations are undoubtedly better insulated from the actual trafficking activities (Chin & Zhang, 2007, p. 30). Ach and his associate choose a busy place to distract attention, and agree upon signs to communicate and transact deals. To further minimize the risk, they choose the place for ad-hoc appointments carefully, away from CCTV-cameras.

7.7 Arabanko Guangzhou (Maximum enjoyment Guangzhou)

Although Nigerians have been stigmatized as cocaine traffickers in Guangzhou, it is conversant in various settings that some Sub-Sahara Africans from countries like Cameroon, Angola, Uganda and South Africa among others are equally represented. Whereas these participants are more prudent, Nigerians tend to challenge the risk, calling themselves “shock absorbers.” My ability to communicate to a reasonable extent in French and Portuguese, and fluency in Portuguese Creole in addition to Italian, Dutch, Igbo, Broken or Pidgin English, and English allowed me to connect with people from various cultural backgrounds. Talking about my past experiences during international engagements in Africa, South East Asia, Australia, Asia and Europe enticed participants to chat freely. Also, recalling the concept of globalization discussed in section one, I met a number of Nigerians who spoke French or Portuguese, because they either have lived in other African countries prior to re-immigrating to China or were established and operating from there. In various instances, I observed people from different cultures chat and gossip about drug trafficking.

7.7.1 Chic parties, escort and cocaine

Introduced by one of my contacts, Titi and Raka were East African sex workers in Guangzhou, who gradually built up the confidence for in-depth conversation with me in June 2011. Lured into prostitution like several others from Rwanda, Uganda, Tanzania, Cameroon,

¹³⁷ In this area, from 1978 to 2009, the number of foreign students from 190 countries studying in China reached 1.69 million/times (Wang, 2011). According to Wang, the president of Center for China & Globalization, from the time China launched a program to attract highly qualified foreign talent in 2008 up to May 2014, a total of 1,306 foreign experts and their families have been approved to receive Chinese "Green Cards" (See CCG, 19-03-2015). The total number of China green card holders was 7,356 as of 2013 (Lie, 2015).

Burundi, etc., they arrived in China a few years before our meeting. Why would such sex-workers risk drug trafficking? The two ladies alleged being frustrated into drug trafficking to pay off racketeers.¹³⁸ Raka added:

Raka: You are right brother, no problem. I had to pay my madam at least 300 CNY per week till I finished \$6,000 USD debt. This is a pressure that caused me to risk drugs especially when I saw someone who did it coolly and made money to upset her debt. Also I have been asked severally by some guys to do it

Titi: Look it is a common thing here in Guangzhou for girls like us to be approached by some Nigerians or Ghanaians or who ever, for that. While socializing, guys will buy you drinks and food and all that. You get to know each other and that is how it starts. Then they will ask if you have visa and when it will expire and so on. When my friend (meaning Raka) was travelling to Beijing two weeks back, one guy approached her for it and she refused. Also they have tried me many times. They will always ask you to carry it to places like Shanghai, Shenzhen, and Beijing among others (Rake and Titi: Guangzhou, 27-04-2012).

Summarized, Titi expressed that at least five men approached her in 2011 to carry drugs but she refused. However, about three months prior to our discussion, she fell in love with the Nigeria boyfriend she met at a bar in Guangzhou. Titi said, “I know he has money, but I was not sure how he makes it. I doubted if it was only from sending some goods sometimes to Nigeria, as he claimed. But at a time, it did not matter any more. He was buying good clothes and other things for me. I so much liked the guy that I was in love with him. Maybe he had used voodoo on me, or what?” However, while having dinner with his Chinese friends in a chic restaurant one day, he asked if she ever heard about cocaine. Naïve Titi responded yes, but that she had never seen it or touched it before. “You can make fast money by collaborating with a local female courier in delivering ‘something to some people,’” he told her. Titi stated, “this is another point that weaken me because I thought, if local woman does it, why couldn’t I?” (Sex worker, Titi: Guangzhou: 27-04-2012).

In the vanguard, these part-time couriers felt comfortable talking with me because I highlighted my encounters in Kuala Lumpur, Hong Kong, Shanghai or Beijing for instance. I recalled my observation in the busy streets of Sanlitun, a renowned good time and nightlife hot spot in Beijing. Whereas the lively streets, bars, and clubs offering mainstream American pop hits remixed from the ’70s, ’80s and the 2000s are melting points for most foreigners and charming beautiful girls. However, there are also locations for covert drug dealers offering their services to their clients. At least two Philipinos and a Chinese girl I met through contacts said that their Nigerian friends had approached them to carry cocaine to Shanghai. Chatting with three Nigerians, two South Africans and a Cameroonian, I observed that dealing drugs, including cocaine, is a way to make ends meet for some that seemed willing to accept the risk. In this regard, Beijing, Hong Kong, and Shanghai are similar to Kuala Lumpur and others in that they are outlets for Nigerian illicit cocaine entrepreneurs and associates. This evokes some concepts of deviant globalization, as already mentioned in Chapter Five. It is an economic, moral, and legal concept that flourishes at the node of ethical difference, regulatory and law enforcement inefficiencies.

As averred by Gilman et al. (2011), wherever there is a fundamental disagreement about what is right as well as a connection to the global market, deviant entrepreneurs arise to

¹³⁸ Interviews suggest that pioneer conational experienced in this business recruits several East African sex workers in Guangzhou and Hong Kong. These selected good looking ladies in their twenties and thirties are sponsored by the “madam,” who then exploit them until they finished paying back agreed amounts. Contrary to their presence in European countries, Dubai, and Kuala Lumpur for instance, I did not encounter female Nigerian sex works in Guangzhou. Interviewees suggest; a reason for this could be perhaps due to the Chinese selective visa issuance to Nigerians base on business, and not long existing colonial and immigration relationship as compared to Western countries.

meet the unfulfilled demand. They emphasize that in meeting our collective desires, deviant entrepreneurs see the differences in notions of public good, morality, and health as bankable market opportunities. Neoliberalism's wide-open, market-oriented rules might govern globalization, but the game gets played on a morally inconsistent field. Contrary to some mainstream theories of globalization, which depict it as a process that annihilates differences across space;¹³⁹ deviant globalization underscores the continued importance of spatial differences in the structure of the global economy.

Also the pathways of its flows are established not only by border security and state authority, but also the particular factor endowments (that is, the amount of land, labor, capital, and entrepreneurship that a country possesses), which generate comparative advantages and arbitrage opportunities for deviant entrepreneurs. As Gilman et al. writes, they move through cities—in a de facto archipelago that runs from the inner metropolitan cities of the United States to the *favelas* of Rio de Janeiro to the *banlieues* of Paris to the incessant urban slums of West Africa from Abidjan to Lagos. They move through towns and villages—along the cocaine supply route that links the mountains of Colombia to São Paulo and the waterways of West Africa to noses in the Netherlands; and through the ‘global nodes’ that make up the world’s financial infrastructure—from Wall Street to London to Tokyo’s Nihombashi District. It is possible to find manifestations of deviant globalization in almost every city, every household, every shipping lane and port, as well as almost every IP address connected to the global economy (See, Gilman et al., 2011, pp. 5-6).

Notwithstanding, part-time couriers Raka and Titi underestimated the risk by delivering cocaine pellets body-packed in their vaginas to contacts at private parties. When asked how many times she has risked delivering cocaine, Titi replied:

“Ha ha! You want to know every thing. Should I tell you all this? Any way, I did it about four times to finish my bills. Then I stopped because enough was enough. That is why I am telling all this now. One day, the lady and I were on our way to deliver. But the police stopped the taxi driver for alcohol control. I had the “thing” in my private part. I was uncomfortable because it was causing some pains. So, I was praying to get to the destination quickly and offload it. Believe me, I was almost dead when the police asked for my passport. Luckily my visa was OK. That was it for me!

That was enough! Nonetheless each time I got the money, I could not believe it. One time, I got paid \$1,000 USD for delivering 100 grams. In fact, I could not think of how many men I had to fuck to be able to make that much. Each time I did it, I totally refused to think at that moment. I kept praying and God helped me, because some individuals from my country were executed for it. However, one thing was that, it did not happen often. Because the guy I worked for sometimes disappears for months and then reappears again.” (Sex worker, Titi: Guangzhou: 27-04-2012).

Referring to the increase in foreign drug traffickers trying to break into the Chinese market, it is estimated that drug cartels in Colombia and traffickers from Latin America smuggled several kilos of cocaine into China to test the market and see if they can find a native citizen (Chin & Zhang, 2007). Nigerian traffickers claim they collaborate with Latin American and local associates in Hong Kong and Guangzhou. Whereas Guangzhou continues to pull in big-time smugglers because of its vibrant commercial activities and new trend life style, small street dealers maintain the distribution of small quantities of cocaine.

¹³⁹ See for example Tomlinson (1999), Papastergiadis (2000).

7.7.2 Body package: Front and back

Body-packing of small quantities of cocaine up to 10, 20, 50, or 100 grams for instance, remains attractive to those females willing to risk it, be they from Uganda, Tanzania, Ghana, Angola, Cameroon, China, Macao, Thai, Philippine, Malaysia, Vietnam, Indonesia, etc. They function as cocaine couriers in Guangzhou and beyond. At a party comprised of people from various cultures, which was, organized by Asian friends of Titi and Ach, I came in contact with a female courier from the Philippines that stated,

“Make sure it is well packed and take it in front or back, for a short distance delivery. God has made private parts, vagina, anus, etc. So use it! When you are frustrated and desperate, it could be way out. You just do not think to be unlucky because it is a life and death kind of feeling. I did it because it got to the point of no return.” (Lies: Guangzhou, 22-05-2011)

In this regard, it is about making ends meet and staying alive. Dealers are only concerned with delivering the product to its users, regardless of how it was transported by the couriers. What is important is that it finds its way into right clubs and other places where it is in serious demand. In addition, when African ladies are desired, Titi and her friends arrange for additional part-time sex workers who also function as couriers under calculated circumstances. One African sex worker stated:

“They pay us well, so why not? Western and Chinese men like African girls too. Guys are guys no matter from which country. They drink and they like having fun. In such places some use cocaine or other type of drugs in tablet forms and some smoke marijuana. Before, I thought ganja (marijuana) was something Afro only. But no way, they like it here too. Thereafter, all they desire is maximum enjoyment; they give us money to fuck them in all sorts of ways. But with condom ha ha ha!” [Laughing] (Afse: Guangzhou, 22-05-2011).

Several publications exist on African Diaspora in Guangzhou and their relational life with Chinese people. These include those of Bodomo (2010), and Anthropologist Gordon Mathews (2007) who assisted me with contacts and in-depth interviews with university students and Africans during my fieldwork in Hong Kong (HK) in April 2012.

Whereas Guangzhou has a ready market, interviewees suggest that getting cocaine over to HK pays better as customers are readily available. To the inquiry about how much he sells 100 grams of cocaine for in HK Ach stated:

Ach: About \$8,500 USD .The money is sweet!

Me: How come you are not afraid? After all some individuals have been apprehended and executed?

Ach: This is internal deal. Crossing international boarder and all that is riskier without pre-arranged contacts. It is less risky with local couriers, because they are less noticeable. But internal is cooler and deals are run underground, calculated and well packaged to the “spirits.”

Me: Why are they called spirit?

Ach: Because they could be unnoticed. They come, do it sharp sharp and disappear like spirits. Everybody talk about Nigerians and all that, but not about the big guys, Chinese and Westerners or Asians. They do it in big quantities. Guys are ready to pay whatever to have good stuff. So they are spirits and we are servicing them! Though this country is awful with punishment, settlement with cash instantly is also possible with some koti (police).

Me: Do you mean kickbacks work here?

Ach: Bros, what happens in Naija (Nigeria) in this sense, happens here too! But what we are doing is like a battlefield. I want to stop it by Gods grace.

While standing in front of Chungking Mansions in HK late one night in April 2012, despite the CCTV cameras, I was approached by several tourists inquiring if I had ‘white’ or ‘tablets’ to sell. I replied that I do not sell drugs. While chatting, some told me they were from Australia, others U.S., or England. Ach is no exception in alleging that some Chinese police could be as corrupt as their counterparts in Nigeria. Their activities could continue partly thanks to some dishonest enforcement agents that accept bribes.

While this allegation lingers, Nigerian cocaine traffickers maintained that Guangzhou is like Lagos where all sorts of drugs are available, based on personal experience with the cultural diversity and drug use amongst foreigners and Chinese upperclass in some classy bars or chic private parties in Guangzhou and beyond.

Guangzhou’s similarity to Lagos portrays an ulterior part of the features exploited by the Nigerian traffickers covertly supplying small quantities of cocaine to its users. In this way, the city also resembles Beijing because Nigerian traffickers maintain that regardless of crackdowns, street dealing still regenerates. A stroll down Beijing's trendy nightclub district in Sanlitune panoramically reveals an intimate and concentrated network of Nigerians brazenly peddling narcotics without fear of arrest, both an affliction and convenience to foreigners patronizing the busy boulevard. I observed that in this atmosphere, small quantities of cocaine ranging from 5–20 grams are tightly sealed and sold. It is delivered to cocaine users in different ways including: body-packed in the anus or vagina, worked into ladies handbags, wigs, and removable shoe-heels, to mention just a few.

Delivering small quantities is judged to generate a lot of money at minimum risk because it does not involve international movement. In this regard, female couriers delivering cocaine from one place to the other are available within the traffickers’ network. These include Chinese, Vietnamese, Philippine, Africans, among others. However, it is not the country that matters, it is about having a reliable person that understands the ‘game,’ assessing the situation and making the fast money at that moment—a transaction that can take place without much hassle.

Therefore, it is a misleading notion that the phenomenon disappeared following crackdowns. The strong repression made the Nigerian traffickers act more carefully in dealing with the dangerous commodity because its demand perseveres. Dealing might no longer happen rampantly on the streets, but it still occurs covertly in private environments. In this area, individuals from several countries in Africa, South America, Europe and Asia are equally active. In these circumstances, it is not hard to imagine that in the right circle, cocaine is demanded and supplied.

Whereas the participants allegedly enjoy the protection umbrella of certain deceitful public officers, cheating, resentment, jealousy, betrayal, conflict, and murder of couriers amongst Nigerian traffickers are now trademarks that expose the nature of their illegal cocaine trade in China. They killed several Nigerian drug couriers and a South African mule was dismembered. After dumping the bodies in the swamp of River Nanhai, the crime was uncovered when people saw the two large travelling suitcases and alerted the police, as will be discussed later.

7.8 Summary

Drawing within the context of China's increasing relationship with Africa and Nigeria, this chapter has provided insight into the activities of Nigerian illicit cocaine traffickers in China—Guangzhou in particular. Targeting the huge Nigerian market, Chinese entrepreneurs lured Nigerians traders to come to China for long-term business relationships. Global media accounts about the 'rise of China' and its 'soft power,' as well as word-of-mouth accounts about the country as a 'new land of opportunity' attracted many.

Expanding China's economy has its challenges: during the process of attracting capital, advanced technologies, and management experience from foreign countries, China also took in questionable ideas and lifestyles with detrimental effects. Nigerian international cocaine traffickers follow the 'goods' and a business model entangled in the mainstream economy. China is crucial due to its growing importance in the international trade with Nigeria, Africa and Latin America, which are transit and production hubs of cocaine.

As brokers of Latin American cocaine, Nigerian traffickers sell their 'merchandise' in China and recycle the proceeds through exportable goods. Nigerian traffickers adhere to flexible and adaptive networks that expand and contract to deal with the uncertainties of the criminal enterprise, a fleeting alliance of bold risk takers who grab opportunities to make large takings on investments.

Nigerian cocaine traffickers succeed in their new host society for a number of reasons. First, their extensive network in Asia. Second, China remains important due to the existence of a sizeable domestic drug market and consumption in the country. It has a growing wealthy middleclass and rich upperclass that appreciate Western life style and cocaine as a recreational product. This means that the involvement of Nigeria and China might lead to increased cocaine trafficking and consumption, which could make international control difficult. Third, drug traffickers developed alternative routes through China in response to changes in the regional drug trade, and involvement of Chinese Diaspora in the illicit cocaine trade. Success is achieved also because certain corrupt law enforcement agents will ignore anything for a price.

The paradox remains that in the right environment, Nigerian traffickers are likely to expose themselves. Among the methods underlining their achievement in bringing in small but steady quantities of cocaine, using extensive webs of connections in Africa, Latin America, and Asia, includes deployment of drug couriers and postage through conventional mail services. Inside China, delivering small, body-packed quantities is judged to generate a lot of money at minimum risk of apprehension because it does not involve international movement. As my analysis of fieldwork information confirms, the dealers in Guangzhou's 'street pharmaceutical' business say that the happiness of their clients became their business. They are servicing the 'spirits' in search of maximum enjoyment, which evokes the concept of deviant globalization.

On the one hand, cocaine is entertainment consumed by people that would pay whatever to have it. On the other hand, those who partake have chosen to down play the risk involved. In spite of its harsh punishment for offenders the illicit cocaine trade in China remains attractive, as will be addressed in the following chapter.

Chapter 8

Sweet and sour Guangzhou: Chinese reaction to Nigerian crimes

8.1 Introduction

Chapter 8 will bring focus into the restrictive criminal justice policy measures and combat, in reaction to the challenges posed by the Nigerian international cocaine traffickers. By discussing the Nigerian cocaine trafficker Fefe, this chapter shall not only highlight a drug trafficking hearing in a Chinese court, but also the chronic tendency towards repetition amid Nigerian cocaine traffickers, thereby recalling the concepts of edge work, the emotions of crime and the neutralization approach deployed.

Just as Chinese immigration abroad has exacerbated recent social tensions in Africa and other places, the influx of large numbers of foreigners, particularly Africans, into China is not only altering the social fabric of cities like Guangzhou, Hong Kong, or Macau but it is proving to be a headache for authorities (Morais, 2009).

In this area, the social construction of deviance (Goode & Ben-Yehuda, 1994) and policing the crisis (Hall, 1978, 1991) are some expert works regarding the concept of negative attention. This evokes that examining the way in which the media fashions certain episodes, several characteristics were emphasized, which includes: volatility, particular values, and exaggerations. The involvement of few Nigerians and their associates in cocaine and other drug-related offenses made headlines, giving a negative image to other African immigrants and the Chinese. For example, it caused uneasiness among locals as some neighbourhood committees banned Africans from living in residential complexes.

However, the majority of Nigerians in Guangzhou also condemn the activities of the criminals. They do not deny the wrong doings of those they are associated with because of nationality. Denial could be seen giving too little importance to the problem. They are not against taking sides, but they are critical of the act or phenomenon of cocaine trafficking and related crimes, as turning a blind eye is a risky process. "We are immersed in reality but we choose to ignore it when it is convenient to do so," said one Nigerian trader in Guangzhou. Nonetheless, as bad news spread quickly subsequent to the negative activities of Nigerian cocaine traffickers and with such a record, Nigerians endured attention of the law enforcement agents and restrictive policies.

8.2 *Yeye Naija* (Delinquent Nigerian)

The illicit drug trade and other offenses committed by few Nigerians, which includes illegal overstay of visas, engagement in the commercial sector without valid permits, murder, and vandalism attracted the attention of the public and law enforcement agents as demonstrated by the number of arrests made public. Analysis of fieldwork information showed that in 2008 through 2009, Nigerian traffickers were openly selling cocaine on the streets and molesting people. They fought and stabbed each other, scattering cocaine on the streets in the Dunggpu area of Guangzhou, amongst other places. All passers-by were at risk of assault and violence, and young women were at risk of being sexually assaulted. This violence has subsided following the 2009 crackdown by the law enforcement agents.

There were several instances in Guangzhou when we were unable to hail a taxi. I asked my contact what the reason could be. The explanation was that some taxi drivers prefer not to lift Africans for fear of either being beaten up, receiving counterfeit money, or gang members running away without paying. Because these things happened frequently in

Guangzhou, the Chinese became unaccommodating toward Africans. Furthermore, I observed a number of instances when the police did not intervene upon seeing two Nigerians fighting in San Yua Li. They only stopped if the dispute or fighting involved Chinese, I was told.

Curious about opinions concerning Africans, and Nigerians in particular, I engaged several Chinese individuals who speak English, including owners of bars frequented by Nigerians, waiters and waitresses, traders in the Tangqi mall and other store keepers, university students and lecturers, taxi drivers, and tenants in gardens or estates where my contacts live. Apart from intense dislike for drug traffickers, several found Nigerian culture of a flat harboring many people disturbing, generally being noisy, disobedient and playing music audibly. They also could not understand the Nigerian lifestyle of fighting on the streets, in hotels, bars and clubs, or the habit of drinking outside until the early morning hours. Their attitude and crimes did not only irritate the Chinese, but fellow Nigerians as well. Didi asked:

“Why wouldn’t the police handle us otherwise? Should you expect the public to give *yeye naija* drug gangs a red carpet treatment? Those who carry guns and machete to kill themselves and murder others, cut into parts and put in the fridge?” (Didi: Guangzhou, 28-11-2009)

In this regard, interviewees recalled that there were at least eight known murder cases and several unknown, committed by cultish cocaine traffickers. A courier was killed, cut into pieces, and packed in a fridge. The perpetrators locked the flat and disappeared. Another courier was found dead with broken a head, after the killers took the drugs and left the flat. In early February 2011, the body of a South African cocaine courier was dismembered, packed in suitcases and dumped in a Nanhai swamp, as we shall discuss in the next chapter. The killing was not limited to Nigerians or Africans; a Chinese lady also became victim. This was a killing that changed things for all Nigerians in the city. My contact, Didi, stated:

“Bros! things dey happen for Chinco! You sabi say Naija killed one Chinese woman, some years ago? Dem wan parcel am to Naija for ritual. Na that one make Chinese hate us and police de panel beat Naija man like a car wey get accident.” [Translated: Brother, things happened in China! Did you know that some Nigerians killed a Chinese woman some years ago? They wanted to parcel her to Nigeria and use for ritual, it’s rumored. This case made the Chinese here to hate us; and it is reason why the police choose to panel-beat us like a car that got damaged in an accident] (Didi: Guangzhou, 29-11-2010).

Subsequent to these situations, in a city that would host a major international sports event like the December 2010 Asia Games, things became much more difficult for Nigerians as they were confronted by the law enforcement agents.

8.3 Restrictive policy measures

Several publications point out that immigration policy has become very outstanding in many wealthy countries and that the issue of allowing in and absorbing existing immigrants remains controversial.¹⁴⁰ Critics suggest that policies in rich countries concentrated on attracting mostly highly skilled individuals from the rest of the world and leaving low-skilled migration to market forces or to irregularity (Castles, 2008). The emphasized message remains that immigrants have correlated utility, a selected group within destination countries. In this regard, the Law of the People’s Republic of China on Control of the Entry and Exit of

¹⁴⁰ See for example Lefkowitz (2013), Mathews and Yang (2012), Ortega and Peri (2012), Cohen and Kennedy (2000).

Aliens promulgated in 1985 is the fortitude of Chinese immigration legislation.¹⁴¹ The law has been amended to introduce harsher regulation and penalty, which led to police crackdowns in cities like Guangzhou and Beijing on the ‘three illegals’ by foreigners: unlawful entry to China, unauthorized employment and illegal residence in China. The campaign is being publicized through posters showing a clenched fist ‘striking hard’ on illegal activity (Lefkowitz, 2013; Chodorow, 2012).

As highlighted by Misra, Woodring, and Mertz (2006), contemporary immigration policies in wealthy nations favor accomplished immigrants and female care and service workers. On the one hand, Hong Kong (HK) protestors demand democracy, but not for their domestic workers.¹⁴² But on the other, the protestors would like to take initiative and be proactive. The paradox remains that they would like to see foreigners have same rights as Chinese residing overseas. Because in its landmark judgment, HK’s top the Court of Final Appeal ruled that a “foreign domestic helper is obliged to return to the country of origin at the end of the contract and is told from the outset that admission is not for the purposes of settlement and that dependents cannot be brought to reside in Hong Kong” (Kelly Ip, 2013).

Dissimilar to Western countries that have distinctive laws to regulate the management of transnational immigrants, regulations only sporadically appeared in Chinese legal instruments concerning entry and exit administration and the use and invitation of foreign investment. As expressed by Zhang Jijiao, a researcher with the Institute of Ethnology and Anthropology of the China Academy of Social Sciences (CASS):

“This reflects how China’s transnational migration management has long been focused on the legitimacy of entry and exit out of economic considerations. In the long run, however, it is far from enough as immigrants into the country also have other demands that need to be addressed, especially relating to ethnic culture and customs, employment and education.”¹⁴³

The Chinese permanent residency permit is called the “hardest to get in the world” (Lefkowitz, 2013), as it targets attracting exclusive highly qualified foreign talent. This implies that disadvantaged African traders in Guangzhou without higher education and valued professions bump into soaring barriers and discourses that frame them as a threat.

Critiques points out that the barriers designed to reduce or prevent African migration in a ‘borderless world,’ have more to do with hegemonic politics, and less to do with any real danger (Obi, 2010). The Chinese People’s Consultative Conference (2008) pleas for a strong control on immigrants in Guangzhou, pointing to the way foreigners with poor manners and low “quality” (*suzhi*) or values cause anxiety among urban Chinese. Such framing underlines the reason why a high number end up stranded or ‘immobile,’ with difficult migratory statuses and a reliance on community networks to survive, as captured by Haugen (2012) and Castillo (2014). Called to mind is the phenomenon of negative attention directed against Africans seen as causing a social problem. As a concept, social problems and reactions have

¹⁴¹ Adopted at the 13th Meeting of the Standing Committee of the Sixth National People’s Congress, promulgated by Order No. 31 of the President of the People’s Republic of China on November 22, 1985, the law was effective as of February 1, 1986. Its implementation falls under the responsibility of The Ministry of Public Security and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, enforced by various local authorities in the country (for details visit, <http://www.china.org.cn/english/LivinginChina/184929.htm>).

¹⁴² Citing Hong Kong government statistics, there are almost 321,000 domestic workers in the region of about 7 million. About 97 are mostly female domestic staff excluded from the law that allows people to obtain Hong Kong permanent residency after living in the region for seven years. Whereas, up-keepers of the exclusionary policy have been accused of discrimination, the director of the Hong Kong Employers of Overseas Domestic Helpers Association, Joseph Law Kwan-din, expressed that, “We appreciate foreign helpers’ contribution, but conditions of service and salary should be the only rewards instead of the right of abode to become a permanent resident” (Hayoun, 2014).

¹⁴³ See The Economic Times (2010, May 23).

attracted attention of several writers.¹⁴⁴

Waller averred that the term *social problem* implies a value judgment that indicated not merely an observed phenomenon but the state of mind of the observer as well (1936, p. 922; Buckingham & Jensen, 2012). Becker's term 'deviant career' in his classical text *Outsiders* (1963, p. 25) emphasizes that deviance lies not in the act itself, but in the process by which society labels certain acts as deviant. He further elucidated in moral entrepreneurs the notions of 'rule creators' and 'rule enforcers' as well as the double-blind facing rule enforcers (Becker, 1963, p. 157)—in order to justify the agency's existence and their employment, they must demonstrate to others that a problem exists, but also show that their attempts at enforcement are effective and worthwhile. I take up the role of moral entrepreneurs, or *claims-makers* as expressed by Loseke (1999, p. 28). When these values are transgressed, it invokes the social problem games and strategies for solution. They describe it as an episode, often triggered by alarming media stories and reinforced by reactive laws and public policy, of exaggerated or misdirected public concern, anxiety and fear or anger over a perceived threat to social order—for instance, from Nigerian cocaine traffickers and undocumented individuals engaging in unregistered commercial activities or informal economic activities in Guangzhou.

They exaggerate the problem to make local events seem like those of pressing national concern, and an index of decline of morality and standard. Best (1997, p. 74) highlighted that the media does not only restate the claims. News stories are constructed in line with conventions, restraint, and agendas of the media. These factors vary across time and settings (Cottle, 1995). Resulting in stepping of control that leads to further marginalization and stigmatization of deviants which, in turn, leads to more call for action, more police action and so on into a deviancy amplification spiral (Cohen, 1972). Whereas it diminishes portrayals of China and its growing "soft power" in Africa—as mentioned in the last chapter—it also calls to mind the concepts of othering and Young's conceptualization of inclusion and exclusion. It justifies some tougher measures. For instance, a fine of 5,000 to 20,000 CNY to a foreigner who works illegally; imprisonment from five to 15 days in serious cases, whereas prior rules allowed fines not exceeding 1,000 CNY but not detention. The Public Security Bureau (PSB) carries out inspections for immigration law compliance, without giving the employer prior notice. A fine of 10,000 CNY may be imposed for every foreigner illegally employed, up to a maximum of 100,000 CNY. Prior rules allowed for fines not exceeding 50,000 CNY (Chodorow, 2012).

Also, the PSB of Dengfeng has bilingual English-Chinese notices in restaurants, cafés and hotels where foreigners congregate, warning visitors about the penalties for drug trafficking, violence, robbery, and prostitution. As these notices are difficult to find in areas of the city hosting significant non-African foreign populations, it strengthens the view of structural discrimination and racism amid Africans in China.¹⁴⁵ For instance, recalling a dominant sentiment amid Africans in Guangzhou, Bodom (2012) averred that cases of overt discrimination against black people are common, particularly in interactions with the police. Resulting in crackdown by Beijing police and Guangzhou's, where the provincial government introduced a regulation in May 2011 to encourage the public to report violations involving foreigners, including illegal entry, overstaying, working without permits or doing business without licenses. They asserted that foreigners who did not have permanent residence and a job were more likely to engage in illegal activities.

¹⁴⁴ See for instance Buckingham and Jensen (2012); Klocke and Muschert (2010); Critcher (2009); Cohen (1971); Hall (1978, 1991).

¹⁴⁵ Emphasized remains that "Chinese women in marriages or relationships with Africans are socially marginalized and some form exclusive support groups among themselves. It was shocking to this group of women when Lou Jing, an African-Chinese girl born and raised in Shanghai, went on a television singing contest and subsequently suffered heated racist remarks from Chinese audiences" (Mathews and Yang, 2012, p. 114).

8.4 Control: Drug traffickers and undocumented Nigerians

In preparation for the 16 December 2010 Asian Games held in Guangzhou, there were frequent police raids and arrests of Nigerian and African illegal aliens and drug traffickers. According to the Nigerian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Minister of Youths Development, as of March 2012, there were approximately one thousand Nigerians detained in various prisons in China, the majority of which were imprisoned for drug-related offenses. Nigeria nationals accounted for the greater part of the crimes by Africans in China, as indicated by a Nigerian Ambassador to China.¹⁴⁶ During my fieldwork in 2008 through 2012, Nigerians who died following police raids in Guangzhou were rampant. These deaths were discussed anywhere people gathered such as markets, hotels, private houses, during church services, etc. My informant, Suka, stated:

“It was too much here! One guy jumped and died in early 2008 and another in Quinchao close to Mawu Sanyuali middle last year; in 2009 one person was beaten to death by a security man in Golden Dragon building, and yet another Nigerian was found murdered in Nanhai brutally stabbed to death. But that of 15 July 2009 involved two guys I know, Ndubuis and Chigozie, and it caused a riot in Guangzhou. Nigerians gathered and confronted the police same afternoon, because, the situation was getting out of control due the rate they were killing Nigerians directly or indirectly”. (Suka: Guangzhou, 29-11-2009)

Suka was no exception in expressing that undercover officers raided streets, flats, and shopping malls, such as Tangqi market or Canal market in search illegal aliens. Interviews suggest that in one raid, a Nigerian street dealer was knocked dead by a lorry and this prompted a serious protest by Nigerians in the city. An angry crowd of Nigerians carried dead bodies to the police station, stopping traffic, and sparking an extremely rare foreigner-led protest in China. There was harassment by law enforcement agents and maltreatment during arrest, in detention, or prison, as we shall discuss, are amongst the reasons why several people attempted to avoid being arrested, or tried to escape if apprehended by the police. Didi added:

“It was terrible to the point that police arrested and handcuffed a Nigerian in San Yuan Li. On the way to the police vehicle, the guy jumped from a bridge of about 7m high in Guang Yuanxi Lu to the railway line and escaped. When friends cut the handcuff later, the guy declared that he did it *alla Bruce Lee*. Following this incident, the Chinese refer to Nigerians as *African tigers*, wondering why Nigerians are fearless and so determined.” (Didi: Guangzhou, 23-05-2011)

This recalls the memories of the popular Chinese actor, Bruce Lee, whose films are appreciated amid youths in Nigeria. The films are watched avidly, despite not being translated into English. What appealed to most was his obstacle jumping, and fighting skills. In this area, as the Chinese recalled the African tigers, Nigerians evoked the astonishing actions of the Chinese actor. Nevertheless, those were fictions. The events in Guangzhou were real. Whereas those who were ‘unfortunate’ got paralyzed, the ‘fortunate’ died on the spot or later. Furthermore, Nigerians of all stations, have been known to have the ability for queer representation at home and abroad, as indicated by Didi:

¹⁴⁶ Daily Independent: 400 Nigerians awaiting execution in China over drug; Nigerian government is called upon to intervene (Daily Independent: 03-12-2013).

“In December 2009, we went to Nigeria Embassy on a meeting with some officers from Guangzhou local authority. During meeting, Nigeria government was present a list of about 35 dead Nigerian men lying in various hospital mortuaries in Guangzhou. Embassy was requested to collect them urgently or they will be cremated.” (Didi: Guangzhou, 23-05-2011)

Nonetheless, while the Nigerian government mulled over its deeds and convicts in China since 2009, in the meantime the list may be getting longer. However, jumping from high raised buildings by some Nigerians in attempt to escape arrest was not an activity limited to China. In the course of this research in the Netherlands, Brazil, and Malaysia, I came across several such incidents.¹⁴⁷

Why would certain Nigerians risk their lives in this manner in the Netherlands, where the death penalty is not applied? One prevalent reason is that they feared deportation to the frustrated life in Nigeria, engulfed by the ‘Nigerian state crisis’ and ‘Nigerian Dream’ as was previously discussed in Chapter 2. They feared mockery in a society that views them as unintelligent, idle, faithless, unmotivated, and individuals unsuccessful of fulfilling the social commonplace of amassing riches from overseas. It recalls the concept of a “society value placed on acquisition of wealth irrespective of the source,” as captured by Klein’s article *Trapped in the Traffick: Growing Problems of Drug Consumption in Lagos* (1994, p. 661; Akyeampong, 2005, p. 446).

It implies that many are stuck in China, Brazil, or the Netherlands because the affluence they are anticipated to return to Nigeria with has not been collected. They would rather die in humiliation abroad than return penniless and be ridiculed. Whatever the justification, the reality remains that some people dare to jump from high-rise buildings in attempt to escape arrest by all means, frustrated by Chinese policy and combat.

8.5 Police’ street culture: *China gives China takes!*

Standing opposite Tong Tong shopping mall while chatting with one respondent, Osina, on a late evening in April 2012, about eight undercover police apprehended Africans on the street and inside the McDonald’s restaurant in the mall. While Nigerians and other Africans without valid documents fled the scene, Osina did not because he is legal alien in China. He called friends to alert them of the raid so that people could stay inside their stores or hide. Stopping and searching individuals, I heard some police officers shouting “You, paspor? You visa? Paspor? No visa, go office la!” [Translated: Your passport? Your visa? No visa, go to office!] (PN: Guangzhou 26-04-2012).

Two African ladies were apprehended. One Nigerian escaped from the McDonald’s restaurant by jumping the steps. Thereafter, I inquired what was the problem to a police officer rushing to join his colleagues. He replied, “Nigeria man problem, visa finish, drug!” However, his statement was exaggerated because as ex-inmate interviewee Stuart Foster stated, a raid by Guangzhou police in the Yuexiu District at Dragon Hotel in mid-August 2013 brought into White Cloud Detention Centre some of the approximated 168 Nigerians suspected of drug trafficking and illegal over-stay but “several individuals detained had nothing to do with drug trafficking” (Stuart: 06-12-2014). Despite targeting real offenders,

¹⁴⁷ In the Netherlands for example, a Dutch media reported; ‘*Oproer in Bijlmer na politieactie*’ (Translated. *Revolt in Bijlmer after police action*). People protested against a police raid of a flat in Bijlmer, a suburb South-east of Amsterdam; which led to death and injury of several Nigerian cocaine traffickers. They arrested several offenders and seized tens of kilos of cocaine, mixing substances and tens of thousands of euro. During the action, falling from a ninth floor balcony of a high-rise building, one Nigerian died while 3 that jumped from fifth-floor were hospitalized, seriously injured. Protestors also voiced out their feeling of being marginalized by the authorities (Parool: 14-05-2009)

normal traders could become victims of unscrupulous law enforcement agents. Aki, who rented a store in the market through his Chinese associates for 2,000 CNY per month added:

“Though there are few bad apples amongst us still engaged in drugs and all that, majority of us are good. These guys should stop raiding everybody for God sect. These days, they stop cars to check and arrest Nigerians, despite Nigerian community’s efforts to prevent crimes amongst Nigerian and achieving good results. They just take money from us. Oh Nigerians! What prisoners we are! First our so-called leaders lash all sorts of violations and hold us as prisoners in the country, and now Chinese also treat us the way they want.” (Nigerian trader Ake: Guangzhou, 21-05-2011)

Ake’s dismay is often heard amongst Nigerians. Chaki is another trader who stated:

“I ran away when I saw them coming even if my visa is still valid for one month. Some of them are false. They are making money from us by asking for immediate settlement. Some will arrest you even though you have visa. They will tell you, *China give, China takes!* They will find one way or the other to take you away and ask you pay before getting to the office. Threatening your visa will not be renewed and claiming that you could be selling drugs, you are put under pressure to negotiate settlement with them. Then they will ask you to call your friends to bring money. Even one of them gave me his telephone to call my friend with. I paid 3,000 CNY to free myself. On the way back, I was rearrested by another group of undercover police and had to pay another 2,500 CNY after they refused to set me free. This is China, some times worse than in Nigeria.” (Nigerian trader Chaki: Guangzhou, 27-04-2012)

Chaki’s claim is not unique. It emphasizes that if an overstaying trader is caught, he will often attempt to bribe the policeman, sometimes to no avail, usually offering 10,000 CNY (Mathews and Yang, 2012, p. 113). This implies that life for Africans is becoming more complicated. A sense of fascination with the newcomers has given way to instances of racism, police harassment, and an increasingly stringent and corrupt visa system that has contributed to a rise in illegal immigrants. Whereas entry visas are easier to get in Nigeria, a combination of tighter regulations and corruption has made visa renewals more difficult and expensive in China. Most Nigerians assert that Chinese agents and middlemen whose commission has inflated the cost of renewals to about 35,000 CNY or \$5,000 USD dominate visa renewal. The reason why most limit their movement to and from their shops as an uneven and arbitrarily implemented legal framework concerning immigrants in China creates opportunities for corruption. Solicitations for money from police on or off duty who checked passports and visas are referred to as a common nuisance (Haugen, 2012). In this regard, events happening in China evoke incidents that go beyond corruption in Malaysia, Brazil, or China, and these claims are not only made by Nigerians:

“Regularly the police would do ‘passport sweeps’ checking all foreigners passports. In practice they checked mostly people with dark skin. Same thing with urine tests in clubs. It was clearly racist.” (Ex-inmate, Forster: Skype video interview, 29-11-2014)

In one incident, police raided and arrested a trader in Canal Market, San Yuan Li. A crowd of Nigerian traders confronted them and rescued the handcuffed boy. Whereas some suggested taking him to Nanhai to cut the handcuff, others preferred he be taken to the Nigerian community representative that pleaded “no more fighting police, please.” He suggested instead that they should have paid the fine or allowed the boy to be taken the police station as required by law. Evoked here is the importance of remaining law abiding, which we shall

discuss further in the next chapter. In this regard, most pointed out to Chinese in Nigeria who are treated differently. Dadi stated:

“The irony is, Chinese have spoiled business for our people at home. They also own shops in the markets in Nigeria. If a trader brings moving sample of goods and orders a quantity, Chinese sends five container loads of the same to his partner in Nigeria, who will then sell the item cheaper. Thereby displacing even those coming to buy here. This is why Nigerians raise their voices. In addition my friend, Uhe was arrested one month ago. First they beat him up because he tried to run anyway and they jailed him. He complained hunger always. They do not give them enough food. Yet another friend Jex was arrested two days ago. Jex has a shop. He was arrested when he went to deliver a sample of goods to be produced. Since then he has been inside unless fine paid and deportation ticket provided, but we do not have the money.” (Dadi: Guangzhou, 29-11-2010)

Most traders felt as though the issue of paying fines could be eluded if the transgressor was deported back to Nigeria. One shop owner shared his experience:

“The immigration man came inside and ask them, do you have some one to pay your fine and ticket? If yes, he collects the money for the fine and thicket and release the person.” (Kani: Canal Market: 20-05-2011)

Should these claims be correct, it highlights a certain degree of interplay linking legality and illegality in the give and take relationship that simultaneously benefits and harms Nigerians. In this view, it is not hard to imagine escalations of smaller cases. For instance, on 18 June 2012 the 24-year-old Celestine Elebechi was mob beaten by a group of Chinese during a dispute with an electric bike driver over his fare. He died later in police detention in Guangzhou.¹⁴⁸ This implies that the more things change, the more they remain same, because these allegations persist. A Nigerian businessman was brutally murdered by security officers who demanded to see his passport while living in a hotel in San Yuan Li, Guangzhou. During the dispute, he was battered with steel pipes and later died in the hospital (Nairaland Forum: 09-10-2008). Nigerians try to run away because of what ‘*China give, China take*’ implies. If the police get away with beating someone publicly this way, then what could happen in detention and prisons? In all, the irony remains that Chinese media reported that around 70 of the 100 Chinese citizens arrested for living or doing business in Nigeria illegally have been released after negotiation with the Nigerian authorities. As averred by an article on China Daily (2012-05-24), in the course their repatriation, the Chinese embassy urged an estimated 20,000 Chinese citizens are resident in the country to become more integrated into Nigerian society by observing local laws and communicating more with local people.

8.6 Corruption: Two to tango

I observed three Nigerians having a dispute over sharing of money one evening in April 2012, close to Huanshi Dong Lu in Guangzhou. While a fourth man was trying to mediate the quarrel, I heard one of them saying loudly to two others about to step into a three-wheel taxi, “I will show you that I am a street guy. Share the money and ‘market’ alone (meaning drugs). Guys will deal with you in KL (Kuala Lumpur),” he warned as he stopped motorcycle-taxi and went in the same direction. The fourth man stated to me:

“I just tried to stop them from fighting. They are a disgrace to us all. I do not know them otherwise I could report them to the Nigerian community for fighting on the street. I think

¹⁴⁸ His death led to another protest by crowds of African (China Daily: 21-06-2012).

the dispute was about sharing drug-money, as you must have heard too. The other one told me that they were renting a flat together, which they lost because they could not pay the rent. They were almost busting each other here and I do want that to happen in my presence.” (Ata: Guangzhou, 25-05-2011)

The comment above resonates those from other scenarios. Engagement in ‘street pharmaceuticals’ by Nigerian international cocaine traffickers is conversant not only amid foreigners in Guangzhou. Interviewees, Jian and Lee, told me that while walking alone the Garden Hotel in Guangzhou with their European visitors, Nigerian drug traffickers approached them asking if they wanted drugs—cocaine, ecstasy, or marijuana. This remained a frequent comment amid some English or German tourists I met in Guangzhou during fieldworks.

I observed few Nigerian dealers asking their customers if they wanted cocaine, tablets, and/or cannabis in some clubs and dancing bars. They fearlessly promoted themselves by giving out cards with their telephone number. “Let me know what you want,” said the guy to two Europeans standing close to me in a club. Some Nigerian dealers are intrepid enough to basically challenge death against all odds; this is observable in the right environment with certain individuals. Their attitudes attract all sorts of commentary and aversion not only in Guangzhou. Commenting on the article about Chinese drug addicts in Shenzhen, commenter Mao420 noted that, “every night Nigerians are selling all kind of drugs opposite Garden Hotel in front of policemen. I have seen with my own eye. They openly ask any foreigner on the street. Someone should go and make a blog about this. I asked one Nigerian how he manages to sell his drugs without police interference; he said they get their cut. So it is always the police who are the culprit. Why don’t they get executed?”¹⁴⁹

This evokes that those involved in moments of illegal edgework and adrenaline could construct resistance doubly. They can combine instances of soaring risk with precise skills and practical artistry to invent an identity a sense of skilled self that refuses to accept the usual humiliation of inferior status and deskilled estranged labor. With the movements getting too dangerous due to the campaigns of criminalization and enforcement, they may find an enhancement and amplification of the edgy excitement they provide, and through this way, transform political pressure into personal and collective pleasure (Lyng & Matthews 2007, Lemert, 2000). Furthermore, the comment above does not only expose the realities of drug dealings where foreign meets local, but also the alleged relationship with dishonest law enforcement agents, as China is no exception regarding endemic corruption and embezzlement. Firstly, in what recalls Nigerian experience, in June 2011, the People’s Bank of China reported that between 16,000 and 18,000 public officials had embezzled and smuggled abroad almost 800 billion CNY [C\$ 125 billion (XE 24 Aug. 2012)] between the mid-1990s and 2008 (UNHCR, 2012). Secondly, as in Nigeria and Brazil, organized crime including drug trafficking and corruption in China has attracted international attention and publications.

A number of sources point to links between organized crime groups and local government public servants, criminal justice officials and police in China.¹⁵⁰ During fieldwork several players alleged kickbacks were part and parcel of the illicit trade, suggesting this might be a complimentary feature underpinning the edgework of cocaine trafficking in the country. Sonny Shiu-Hing Lo, in his book, *The Politics of Cross-Border Crime in Greater China*, pointed out that the most vexing problem plaguing the mainland

¹⁴⁹ See, *China Smack*: 09-08-2011.

¹⁵⁰ See China Operational Guidance Note (Home Office, 2013).

Australian Government Migration Review Tribunal (2013), Lo and Kwok (2012), Broadhurst (2012, 2011), Stratfor (2008), Chin and Godson (2006).

police is corruption. Because organized criminals use bribery or threats to entice government officials to partake in syndicate activities or to obtain protection from them in order to take control of a particular trade amid other interests. The result is the existence of a ‘protective umbrella,’ meaning as Lo and Kwok expressed, that criminal syndicates connect with officials through the offer of a range of interests, such as luxurious gifts including overseas travel and simple bribery in exchange for protection in legal and illegal business activities. Because of the absence of the rule of law and the prevalence of *guanxi* and corruption, protective umbrellas have developed rapidly alongside China’s booming economy (Siegel & van de Bunt, 2012, p. 78). This hinders anticrime efforts as the patron-client networks connect high-ranking police officers, local officers and some corrupt court judges with criminal elements.¹⁵¹ Stratfor Global Intelligence (2008) indicated that organized crime was practiced in Shanghai in the early 20th century when the city's leaders were the police chief and director of the office in charge of confiscating opium. At the highest level of political corruption is the practice known as ‘*maiguan maiguan*,’ or the selling of government posts to criminals or action by government officials to protect criminals. Because organized crime has a grip on local politics in China and because local politics control law enforcement and communication to higher-ups in the Chinese bureaucracy, the central government has found it difficult to crack down on criminal groups. This is compounded by the principle of “*Guanxi*” in which organized crime in China largely depends, a standard in Chinese culture that puts personal relationships and commitments above everything else, including the law. Lo and Kwok (2012) defined *Guanxi* in China as the “personal relationship and reciprocal obligation developed through a particular social network” (Lo, 2010, p. 853). In Williams and Godson’s view, *guanxi* relationships “provide a basis for the global activities of Chinese criminals” (2002, p. 330). As averred by Stratfor (2008, p. 10), since it is considered pragmatic and logical, criminal organizations stay fluid, informal and hard to catch because the base of the group is not a hierarchy, but a web of personal relations that define loyalty. This implies that similar to its counterparts in Nigeria or Brazil, the Chinese justice system is not immune to reform shortcomings within the public security bureau and the police, which could undermine its work.

This is captured by Wu and Goodrich’s (2014) “A Jail by Any Other Name: Labor Camp Abolition in the Context of Arbitrary Detention in China.” They pointed out that hardly unique to China, policing is the quintessential example of an administrative activity that is extremely difficult to monitor for local abuses. The vast power enjoyed by regional and local public security forces streams partly from the official Communist Party’s policy of encouraging decentralized control over the police. A practice rooted in Mao Zedong’s directive that security work must emphasize Party leadership and accept direct leadership by Party committees.¹⁵² Although the *tiao-kuai* system¹⁵³ theoretically vests vertical (*tiao*) power in higher level public security administrative bodies, superior police departments one level up are only permitted to ‘assist’ local governments by making ‘suggestions’ that officials are supposed to ‘consider.’ Public security departments are strictly bound by horizontal (*kuai*) power exercised by Party committees. As a result, the central government has less control over local police forces than it does over other administrative agencies governed by binding vertical (*tiao*) power. The reality of public security officials serving almost parallel to powerful government officials further exacerbates problems of accountability.¹⁵⁴

¹⁵¹ See for instance Shiu-Hing Lo, 2009, p. 29), Broadhurst (2011, p. 10).

¹⁵² For details see Tanner and Green (2007).

¹⁵³ *Tiao-kuai* governance: an interlocking system of vertical (*tiao*) control from higher-level administrative bodies and horizontal (*kuai*) control from local Party committees (Wu & Goodrich, 2014).

¹⁵⁴ See, Wu and Goodrich (2014, pp. 4-5).

Nevertheless, China is restraining the phenomenon as outlined in a December 2010 white paper entitled *China's Efforts to Combat Corruption and Build a Clean Government* (UNHCR, 2012). Whereas reforms are envisaged, the issue is not due to lack of personnel and budget. But given its size, there are other pressing priorities that need money in China. Observers point out that it would be unrealistic to ask the government to spend all its money on drug enforcement activities. Nationwide, there are about 17,000 police officers assigned specifically to drug enforcement details. Each provincial police agency typically has its own drug enforcement division, and so do most large municipal or county police agencies. Small county police agencies normally fold their drug enforcement functions into their criminal investigation divisions. However, regarding official corruption in drug enforcement, Chinese officials acknowledged its share of the problem, but claimed that in comparison to other developing countries, particularly those in Latin America, China is running a relatively clean operation (Chin & Zhang, 2007). This recalls the inquiries of whether the achievements of the Communist Party's Central Commission for Disciplinary Inspection (CCDI) is capable of jailing thousands of individuals, including top government officials, is possible in Nigeria.

This symbiotic relationship between the underworld and dishonest individuals in the mainstream institutions at the macro and meso-levels enhances the activities of the Nigerian cocaine traffickers and their partners at the micro level. On the one side, it assists them in making quick money and believing the false reality of drug trafficking and on the other side it stigmatized the whole community, as it is disrespectful to many Nigerians in Guangzhou or China having nothing to do with drug trafficking. Suggested here is that wholesale traffickers sponsor and import Nigerians and South Africans, picked for their fluency in English, to sell cocaine on the streets of Sanlitun in Beijing. Whereas Chinese nationals face the death penalty, Africans caught selling drugs are just deported.¹⁵⁵ Equally misinformed are claims from some female couriers I countered during fieldwork that they used their charm to entice friendly police officers to avoid arrests or prevent severe punishment. This evokes that by and large, the assumption that foreign drug traffickers could be taking advantage of some weakness. For instance, it suggests that some Chinese police officers take it easy on foreigners because of language and cultural difficulties or consideration of cases as sensitive and not worth the trouble due to the Chinese adage that “nothing is trivial when it comes to matters involving foreign countries.” As averred by Chin and Zhang (2007), stricter procedures are pursued regarding foreigners apprehended in trafficking drugs in China and that death penalty for a foreigner is reviewed with far greater scrutiny than that for a Chinese citizen. But despite increasing diplomatic relations on the continent, when it comes to sentencing Africans for drug offenses, drug trafficking attracts harsh punishment.

However, having focused on the restrictive and combat measures deployed in trying to curtail the activities of Nigerian law offenders in Guangzhou, let us highlight a case that sheds more light on the nature of Nigerian involvement in the illicit trade and reaction from criminal due process.

8.7 Nigerian cocaine trafficker Fefe

In November 2010, a Nigerian who used his Chinese girl as couriers, was arrested for trafficking 903.36g of cocaine via mailed post. Having been traced, the International Criminal Police Organization notified the Public Security Bureau of Amoy, about drug smuggling activities of African criminal network to Shanghai, Taicang, and other places in China to which Fefe was part of, as reported by Chinese PTV.¹⁵⁶ During my fieldwork in

¹⁵⁵ See Expat-Chronicles' Tweets from Beijing, China (Colin, 2010).

¹⁵⁶ Translated by my Chinese contacts, the reportage aired in Chinese shows undercover officials tracing Fefe's and his arrest. It was directed to the Chinese public, especially girls and women. Through this way, people were warned to be aware of

China in 2009 and 2010 for instance, I observed how Fefe and the likes chattered and contradicted themselves on issues of capital punishment and co-nationals executed in China, the consequence of cocaine trafficking to family members and girl friends or landlord, and, to quit or stay involved in the trade after having made a decent amount of money. In such settings, blindfolded by social construction of their reality, when confronted by friends and acquaintances that foresaw the risk, they downplayed its consequence stating nothing would happen. My Chinese contact attended the court hearing in Shanghai. What follows is analysis of fieldwork information regarding this direct participant of Nigerian international cocaine trafficking.

8.7.1 Good lawyer, save my *pikin* (child)

One afternoon in late 2010, my telephone rang. It was an update call because in trying to keep current with happenings regarding Nigerian international cocaine traffickers in Lagos, Guangzhou, and Kuala Lumpur, I regularly made telephone calls to contacts and informants. For important cases, I asked to be paged so that I could call back immediately, as in this case. Fefe was to travel to Indonesia to visit his girlfriend, who recently relocated back home on completion of her studies in China. Not able to reach him, she called Kele, who stated:

“I told her I was with Fefe last weekend, and that I will reach her back. But not been able to reach him, I called a couple of friends to inquire. ‘Abu’ related that Fefe went to collect his ‘market’ (meaning cocaine). Then I called another guy that told me Shanghai police arrested him. After I confirmed it from another Fefe’s girlfriend in Shanghai, I informed the one in Indonesia. She was silenced. Fefe is very stupid guy.” (Kele: calling from Guangzhou, 29-11-2010)

His arrest came unexpectedly, but not surprisingly, as is the tumultuous life of a cocaine trafficker. Neither was it unique because in the course of this research, such was the case amid several Nigerian traffickers in other countries like Brazil, Italy, Nigeria to mention but a few. When he was arrested, his parents in Nigeria and friends contacted me to look for a good lawyer in attempt to save his life. This evokes that:

“A Nigerian man served 18 months in White Cloud Detention Centre in Guangzhou and was released mid 2014. He was part of a scam where they ticked someone to wire funds to an account and he went to the bank to collect. The lawyer his friends hired was denied access because of in China only family members are allowed to arrange lawyers for convicted inmates.” (Foster: Email interview, 04-12-2014).

A wide held opinion among Nigerians in China is that finding a good lawyer to defend arrested offenders is very difficult. This feeling comes from the high expectations, disappointments, and wishful thinking, based on past experiences where state appointed advocates did not succeed in preventing long prison sentences or execution apparently. The court hearing took place almost a year later. Contrary to claims, a Chinese English translator was provided by the court in order to enhance communication. According to the Criminal Law of the People’s Republic of China, Fefe shall be held criminally responsible for crime of drug smuggling, trafficking, and illegal possession.¹⁵⁷ He was indicted for deploying two

foreigners or Africans in particular, trying to lure them into drug trafficking (TV People, 2011).

¹⁵⁷ - The sitting that lasted about 4 hours was divided in eleven parts during which the followings were addressed: Part 1, the basic information such as identity, nationality, and so forth and the Confirmation of Fundamental Rights. Part 11 The Indictment. Part 111, Prosecutor’s Inquiry. Part IV, The Advocate’s questions. Part V, Supplemental inquiries by the prosecutor and the advocate. Part VI, The chief judge’s inquiry. Part VII, Prosecutor’s burden of proof. Part VIII, The

Chinese girls to receive posted parcels containing concealed cocaine. Caught on the spot with 50 grams of cocaine, the police searched his temporary accommodations in different towns and seized a total of 3000 grams (3kg) of cocaine. As shown in the video that was made public, police recovered other personal belongings of Fefe's including a stethoscope, telephones, bus and train tickets, banknotes of CNY and U.S. dollars, several credit cards, laptops, watches, to mention but a few. What follows are some inquiries and responses during the hearing that might be interesting in providing insight into the working of the Nigerian international cocaine trafficking through the contradictions and offender's social construction realities, in line with certain aspects of some criminological concepts, namely technique of neutralization, edgework, and emotional arousal.

8.7.2 Considerations

“He talked about having “markets” (meaning cocaine) in his flat often. I warned him of the consequence, to think about the punishment and putting people that rented the flat to him in problem. I asked him to quit cocaine trafficking; after all, he had made money from it. “Nothing would happen, I know what I am doing,” he said”
(Reaction from a respondent very familiar with Fefe: Guangzhou, 26-05-2011).

The 33-year-old Fefe entered China in 2006 as a businessman, using a Ghanaian passport and a fake name. Confronted by the prosecutor, he admitted not being a Ghanaian citizen. This is in line with Nigerian cocaine traffickers using passports from other countries. This evokes that there is a dark number involved referring to the actual figure of Nigerians and inmates in China or elsewhere. Zaitch (2002) found in similar research on Colombian traffickers in the Netherlands that dark numbers are by definition difficult to trace, but calculations in such cases are even more problematic for several reasons. Firstly, no study of any sort has yet been conducted on this specific involvement. Secondly, the number of illegal Nigerian ‘immigrants’ in China or Brazil, for instance, is a matter of rough estimation. Thirdly, secrecy, flexibility, and imperfect information signify lies at the core of any drug transaction. Due to

prosecutor introducing the incident. Part IX, Other evidence. Part X, The Court Debate, and Part XI, End of The Debate and The Final Statement.

- Section 7 Crime of Smuggling, Trafficking in, Transporting or Producing Drugs (Article 34 to 357).

Article 347: A person who smuggles, traffics in, transports or produces drugs, regardless of the quantity, shall be demanded for criminal responsibility and imposed criminal punishment. A person who, under any of the following circumstances, smuggles, traffics in, transports or produces drugs, shall be sentenced to fixed-term imprisonment of fifteen years, life imprisonment or death and concurrently to confiscation of property:

1. To smuggle, traffic in, transport or produce opium of not less than 1,000 grams or heroin or methyl benzedrine of not less than 50 grams or any other drug of large quantity;
2. To be a ringleader of a gang engaged in smuggling, trafficking in, transporting or producing of drugs;
3. To shield with weapons the smuggling, trafficking in, transporting or producing of drugs;
4. Violently to resist inspection, detention or arrest with serious circumstances; or
5. To take part in organized international drug activities.

A person who smuggles, traffics in, transports or produces opium of not less than 200 grams and not more than 1,000 grams or heroin or methyl benzedrine of not less than 10 grams and not more than 50 grams or any other drug of relatively huge quantity shall be sentenced to fixed-term of imprisonment of not less than seven years and concurrently to a fine.

A person who smuggles, traffics in, transports or produces opium of not more than 200 grams or heroin or methyl benzedrine of not more than 10 grams or any other drug of small quantity shall be sentenced to fixed-term imprisonment of not more than three years, criminal detention or public surveillance and concurrently to a fine; and if the circumstance is serious, to fixed-term imprisonment of not less than three years and not more than seven years and concurrently to a fine. If a unit commits a crime under paragraph 2, 3 or 4, the unit shall be sentenced to a fine and concurrently; the person-in-charge directly responsible and other persons directly responsible of it shall be sentenced in accordance with the provisions of the relevant paragraph.

A person who uses a minor or aids and abets him to smuggle, traffic in, transport or produce drugs or sells drugs to the minor shall be sentenced heavily. If a person who smuggles, traffics in, transports or produces drugs for many times does not been sentenced, his quantity of drugs thus involved shall be computed accumulatively (source: http://www.procedurallaw.cn/english/law/200807/t20080724_40992.html).

the illicit nature of cocaine business, some travel under falsified identities. A Nigerian trafficker arrested in Mumbai had fake money, seals, visa stickers, and up to 155 passports from different countries including Lesotho, Ghana, Botswana, UK, Germany, South Africa, and China (Goel, 2012)

This links Nigerian cocaine traffickers to other crimes. Likewise, as interviewees suggest, Fefe cheated several individuals in Hong Kong and his Chinese girlfriend out of approximately 260,000 CNY, or about \$40,000 USD, in early 2010. As discussed previously, in the right atmosphere, the Nigerian international trafficking activities remain an open secret, even in countries where the offense attracts capital punishment. This evokes a criminological concept of great importance grounded in the field of psychology and the sociology of deviance. The Emotions (of Crime), which are distinct as “the study of particular emotions associated with crime—such as fear, shame, anger, contempt, disgust or excitement,” as mentioned in Chapter 6.

In *The Seductions of Crime*, Katz (1988) emphasized the aesthetic and emotional appeal of the criminal experience, challenging the dominant theories of crime including routine activities theory, control theory, and rational choice theory, which take for granted offender motivation. These theories appear to lack curiosity and conceptual resources needed to adequately understand how and why people are compelled to commit crimes (Haan & Loader, 2002). Katz considered extensively the ‘foreground’ of criminality: the immediate, interactional interplay through which a deviant activity takes shape and the ‘magical’ excitement of committing crimes to which the Nigerian global cocaine trafficking is no exception. In this view, motivations for criminal behaviour lie in the ‘foreground’ of immediate experience like luring and compelling, which are intrinsic in cocaine trafficking. Interactions and micro dynamics leading up to them have more to do with the rewards of the crime experience itself than the ‘background factors,’ like deviant material and social conditions, their psychological development and life events (Lyng, 2004; Lyng & Mathews, 2007; McLaughlin & Muncie, 2005).

In other words, to comprehend the actual thrilling of criminal arts, one should grasp how deviants in and through the frequently stylized artistic of specific deviant arts, try to deal with and/or overcome certain moral emotions like disgrace, arrogance, mockery, righteousness, defilement, scepticism, and vengeance (Katz, 1988). However, the effects of the criminogenic environment are push and pull factors that frustrate many hopeless individuals into cocaine trafficking. In this regard, it is not surprising that interplay between these concepts are propelling forces for actors of the Nigerian international cocaine traffickers.

As stated by various interviewees, people engage in the illicit activity propelled by varied circumstances and reasons. The Nigerian context has fostered the new trend cocaine trafficking in line with Lemert’s (1951) and Becker’s (1963) “important advances towards a full social theory of deviance” (Taylor, Walton, & Young, 1973, p. 139) by concentrating on the interaction processes between those who commit an act labelled as deviant, and the reaction of society to that behaviour and the deviants themselves. Lemert averred that societal reaction to an initial act of deviancy (*primary deviantion*) is crucial to the subsequent self-definition and behaviour of the deviant and can lead to *secondary deviation*. I observed severally that some Nigerian traffickers neutralize their stigmatized image by accepting it and using it as motivation instead. Self-fulfilling prophecy is the danger that as a negative label or reputation become strongly and overtly applied to an individual, it may develop into part of that individual's identity. This is a strong societal reaction that creates further deviance due to resentment not only of the norms being violated but also the social structures themselves levying the penalties. When a person begins to employ deviant conduct, or a role based upon it as a means of defence, attack, or adjustment to the overt or covert problems created by the

consequent societal reaction to the individual, this deviation becomes secondary (Lemert, 1951, p. 76), as is the case with many Nigerian cocaine traffickers.

As one respondent puts it “if people always call me the chick robber, I will then steal a big fowl.” Having learned the techniques to neutralize and found the adequate emotions, the individuals involved move in and out the brink, uncovering it to friends. Didi stated:

“Brother, as you are aware of, I am one of the two persons close to Fefe, outside his criminal friends. He used to come and seek advice concerning non-criminal things like renewal of visa or resident permit and so on. He tried to talk me into 419 scam and cocaine trafficking, but I refused. In reply he said I was *mugu* (stupid) that did not want to make money, and I asked him, “If I was *mugu*, why do always come to me for advice?” [Laughing] (Didi: Guangzhou, 23-05-2011)

In this view, he is not unique, as drug traffickers tend to be arrogant, and most claim they know what they are doing. It is also not surprising that he went from scamming to cocaine trafficking. Previous work on the Nigerian Advanced Fee Fraud in Transnational Perspective highlights the link between scammers and cocaine trafficking, in which some 419 scammers in Amsterdam Bijlmer in the Netherlands were found to be involved in cocaine trafficking (Oboh & Schoenmakers, 2010). In this regard, by examining more closely the nature of Nigerian illicit cocaine trafficking, it unveils its intricate linkage emotions, sentiments, ambiguity, Internet, mobility, trust, distrust, reprisal, and contemporary mainstream and private businesses.

8.7.3 Striker’s game, expensive shit

A principal underlining feature of Nigerian international cocaine trafficking is the role of the middleman function, as discussed previously. As a broker in China, Fefe arranged supply from his contacts in a country in South America and kept his local distribution and selling channels intact. During fieldwork in Brazil, members of the Nigerian traffickers talked about associates in China, Guangzhou, Hong Kong, and Malaysia. Fefe gave his girlfriend’s address to a contact in South America who dispatched several packages containing kilos of cocaine concealed in wooden photo frames to his girlfriend. On receiving the parcel, he would forward it to a third person in Nigeria, a business associate. It would be troublesome enough had the packages been sent straight to Nigeria from there. When asked what kind of business the contact was doing in Nigeria; he replied, “I don’t know because he only told me he comes to China to do business with Chinese partners.” However, indicated from fieldwork information, it is known that using his networks, he sold cocaine to his customers in China despite being aware of its consequences.

In his work *Crime, Edgework and Corporeal Transaction*, Lyng (2004) emphasized that edge work refers to emotionally-charged and adrenaline-fuelled acts and offenses (criminal activities, base-jumping, and motorcycle racing, etc.) where someone thoughtfully tries to arrive at and negotiate the physical ‘edge’ of daring and endurance, hoping to arrive beyond social strictures and reflective consciousness and to accomplish, through senses and emotions, a certain degree of self actualization (Lyng, 2004). Furthermore, the work of Matza’s *Becoming Deviant*, draws attention to the boundary circumstance which offenders face in illicit situations, “the ‘invitation edge’ that splits the ‘outside’ and ‘inside’ of a deviant activity” (1969, p. 147).

Likewise, an additional explanation of this phenomenon is offered by Lofland in his book *Deviance and Identity*; emphasized is that “playing with the invitational edge of deviance often carries a ‘positive sense of adventure, excitement and enchantment” (1969, p. 104); Also Lofland asserts that deviant acts characterized by “[an] uncertainty,

unpredictability, threat, fear, frustration, anxiety and the like—felt to contain little possibility of overwhelming the organism—appear to be labeled by human beings as excitement, challenge, fun or adventure” (1969, p. 105). Furthermore, it is stressed that individuals involved in moments of illegal edgework and adrenaline construct resistance doubly. In the first place, by combining such instances of soaring risk with precise skills and practical artistry, actors involved invent an identity, a sense of skilled self that refuse to accept the usual humiliation of inferior status and deskilled, estranged labor. Secondly, to succeed in extremely harsh and dangerous contexts of criminalization, offenders find an enhancement and amplification of the edgy excitement that illicit activity such as cocaine trafficking in China.

In this area, drawing from Katz's (1988) works on exploration of the sensually seductive ‘foreground’ of criminality, cultural criminologists like Lyng (1998), Ferrell (1996), and Lyng and Bracey (1995) deploy verstehen-oriented methodologies to document the experiences of ‘edgework’ and ‘the adrenalin rush’—immediate, incandescent integrations of risk, danger, and skill—that shape participation and membership in deviant and criminal subcultures. Nehring (1993, p. 7) emphasizes the ‘outlaw emotions,’ which define both moments of cognitive insubordination and various deviant or insurgent subcultures. Tunnell (1992, p. 45) indicated the relevance of criminal operating within a rationalized “criminal calculus.” Wright and Decker (1994, p. 117), drawing from Lofland (1969), expressed that many criminals are “committed to a lifestyle characterized by the quest for excitement and an openness to illicit action,” which makes it more exciting.

Seen from this angle, the resilience of Nigerian cocaine traffickers in China implies that these concepts’ intense and often ritualized moments of pleasure and excitement define their experience of sub-cultural membership and seduction into continued participation in a context where the drug trafficking attracts capital punishment. While edge work pushed offenders to the deviant act, denial techniques allow them to relinquish acceptance and responsibility of the act. In line with these concepts, when confronted by the prosecutor after being found with over 3000 grams of cocaine, the defendant Fefe and his advocate had the following reactions:

Chief Judge: The defendant, you can defend yourself, as well as be defended by the advocate. Do you understand?

Defendant: Ok. I have never been selling any drugs in China, and I never want to do this as well. For my friend in Shanghai, we were merely friends and I had never been doing any business with him. I’ve been to his place for only twice. I’m not his boss at all. Those packages are not mine; I’ve already told the police.

Advocate: In my opinion, the defendant’s action should be considered as “illegal holding drugs,” instead of “drug smuggling.” In addition, I want to remind the court, the doubtful point of the source of the 3000grams cocaine in his room in Wenzhou. Were all the drugs belonging to the defendant?

Chief Judge: So from your point of view, the amount of the drugs the defendant had been illegally holding is 3000grams?

Advocate: No. Only the drugs seized on the spot; not including those in the house in Wenzhou.

An important strategy is the ability of recruiting couriers. As discussed earlier, while paid strikers for recruiting couriers are normal, anybody who provides couriers is remunerated financially. In the course of fieldwork, conversant was that several traffickers deploy their girlfriends and their acquaintances as couriers because they are perceived as naïve and they do it for little payment. In this regard, the prosecutor pointed to the testimonies of his Fefe’s girlfriend. When she inquired what the packages contained, Fefe responded in line with the denial of injury that, “if the stuff were prohibited goods, they could not have been mailed.”

His girlfriend's colleagues at work also assisted her to receive some packages. For instance, as testified by the accounting staff, "I helped her once to receive the packages." Another colleague declared, "I helped her to receive the packages once." One more stated, "there were lots of foreign packages here signed by his girlfriend." Despite the above testimonies, he tried to deny these statements:

Chief Judge: Can you understand the foregoing evidence?

Defendant: Yes.

Chief Judge: So what's your opinion?

Defendant: My girlfriend never gave my friend in Shanghai any samples, and also I never opened any package in the presence of my friend in Shanghai

Chief Judge: The advocate?

Advocate: No objection.

Whereas his girlfriend admitted to receiving parcels, and acknowledged paying about 300 or 300 Yuan a total of six or seven times, Fefe denied responsibility. He refuted having any knowledge of the cocaine contained or having sent her to receive packages of smuggled items. Another crucial feature highlighted is the prominent role played by modern technology in enhancing the activities of the Nigerian international illicit cocaine trade by linking the underworld to the contemporary mainstream world. They met through the Internet, and she has a formal job in a company. This is a widespread strategy amid Nigerian traffickers.

By having girlfriends employed in formal jobs, or enrolled as students, his illegal activity could be executed without much suspicion. Claiming to be living in Hong Kong where he does business was another reason why he needs them to help receive some 'samples' from abroad. Therefore, in exploiting the grey area, he gave the girlfriend's address to his partners in South America and secured a safe landing for the parcel in China. However, receiving repeated packages through a recipient company not in possession of adequate license drew attention of the authorities.

An additional important aspect underlining the activities of the Nigerian international cocaine trafficker is mobility, and having as many addresses as possible. A good Nigerian trafficker should distinguish his residences as a 'job' place for hiding drugs and another for keeping money. This is to avoid losing every thing in case of police bust or robbery from dishonest acquaintances or customers, as experienced by Nigerian traffickers in Guangzhou, Amsterdam, and Kuala Lumpur. On the way to the market in the Guang Yuanxi Lu area during fieldwork, pointing at one of the hotels my contact Didi stated:

"Here was a starting point for Nigerian traffickers. In this hotel they have raided, hijacked, arrested Nigerian cocaine traffickers with drugs as well as killed them and made way with their drugs and money. So this is why the guys shifted to other area in up town. They moved two to three years ago." (Didi: Guangzhou, 28-04-2012)

Guangzhou is not unique, as some Nigerian cocaine traffickers were armed-robbed and murdered in Amsterdam. Nonetheless, confronted about renting multiple places in different cities, Fefe declared, in line with neutralization technique's condemnation of condemners: firstly, that it was his friend in Shanghai who framed him up; secondly with the appeal to higher loyalties, that he rented the room in Wenzhou, just for solving his friends stay permit problem. Furthermore, in order to divert attention and avoid dictation, he made use of his people having formal job or in legal trading activity. For instance, despite his girlfriends in Shanghai or Guangzhou, his friend in Wenzhou is a businessman that deals in industrial chemicals.

In all, he arranged his drug trafficking well, having sought out supply on the one hand and sales and distribution on the other. Using his network of associates and subordinates within China and surrounding countries, he sold cocaine to local customers and others in Hong Kong. As highlighted earlier on, in the right circle, illicit cocaine trade is an open secret because participants discuss what they do, with whom, and how. In this way, some people around them are aware of their activities. In the Nigerian context, revealing such information to official institutions is seen as a personal attack on the trafficker and not on the act of drug trafficking.

8.7.4 Narrow escape: Enter the dragon

Recalling the ‘Nigerian Dream,’ Fefe and those like him spent money at will while having no formal job or real trading business in Guangzhou. He proudly talked about his house in his town and his plan to complete a four-story building in Nigeria by December 2011. He also discussed how he sends \$15,000 or \$20,000 USD through traders on business trips to China and told friends about a four wheel-drive vehicle he bought for his mother in Nigeria. Interestingly, he said that he spends about 50,000 CNY on kickbacks yearly on renewing his stay permit in China. His openness about cocaine trafficking and his achievements, regardless of the consequences, recalls Reimer’s (1981, p. 39) view on traditional conceptualizations that deviance has “rarely...been considered a spontaneous, ‘just for the hell of it’ activity. In which the participants engage simply for the pleasure it provides.” O’Mally and Mugford’s (1994, p. 209) view that even where pleasure has been considered, it “has appeared in traditional criminologies as perhaps ‘obvious’ explanatory variable on the category and experience of pleasure in enhancing criminal arts.” Nonetheless, things fell apart for him as the hearing ended:

Chief Judge: Stand up the defendant! According to the Criminal Procedure Law of China, You have the right to make a final statement. What would you want to say?

Fefe: I have been to a lot of countries, and China is only one of them. I have never been selling any fucking drugs and committing other crimes. I just come to China for doing my business. Those drugs founded in my bag were just for my own to use. But I had not taken them yet. If I really did something wrong, I beg for the court’s forgiveness.

Chief Judge: Now the judgement is ended. Bring the defendant back to jail.

In this regard, he was a fine scholar that applied the neutralization technique even through the last minute of the court hearing. Firstly, he employed a denial of injury tactic, indicating that no one was hurt, because the cocaine was for his personal use. Secondly, he denied the existence of a victim, by expressing that he had not taken them yet. Lastly, supporting this is the fact that offenders frequently show remorse or shame for committed acts with respect for those who obey the law (Sykes & Matza, 1957). In February 2012, the verdict concluded Fefe’s penalty, “the death penalty was suspended for two years”. Whereas Taiwan recently abolished the mandatory death penalty, China executes prisoners for 68 different offenses.¹⁵⁸ Fieldwork information on the reactions among Nigerians revealed that, people are happy Fefe escaped execution, unlike many others, and hope that he will be freed at some point in time. His lawyer performed well because Fefe’s family spent tens of thousands of dollars on his defense. Otherwise, a state lawyer could have not achieved same result as some people claimed.

¹⁵⁸ A suspended death sentence means that with good behavior over the next two years, the punishment will likely be commuted to life in prison with the possibility of further reductions in the length of detention (Branigan, 2012).

Likewise in Nigeria, Brazil, and Malaysia, those who could not afford reputable lawyers are destined to lose their hearings. As Stuart told me, among the invaluable service that the U.S. Consulate rendered to him is assisting in the securing of competent legal representation. He stated:

“Good legal representation was absolutely necessary because translations are erratic, and any attempt at correction or to clarify the PSB turned to intimidation stating any discrepancies would lead to problems. As calmly as possible I stood my ground but later learned my clarification never entered their official Chinese version. Such help would cost, at least, \$10,000 USD to get a competent firm, to start, and the total could easily rise to \$30,000 USD Furthermore, even if inmates are allowed 500 CNY, my lawyer Danny produced a receipt dated the day after my intake (4/15) showing where my University had deposited 500 CNY. I had asked everyday about these funds and had been told they didn’t exist.” (Foster: Skype video interview, 06-12-2014).

Whereas visiting a Nigerian inmate in China was impossible for me during fieldworks, the 40 year-old ‘KT’ I interviewed in Sungai Buloh Prison (Jalan Kuala Selangor-Sungai Buloh, Malaysia) in May 2012, was one of the 400 Nigerians incarcerated there, as averred by the prison Director during in-depth conversation. Convicted for drug trafficking, he could only be hopeful of evading death in a country where many co-nationals have been executed. KT had a message:

“I regret drug trafficking. Bros! I have so many things to say but there was no time left as the 30 minutes quickly goes by. However, tell my people that I love them all. I have made my mistakes, but must I pay with my life? Guiltiness will rest on their conscience. But I know my lawyer is doing all possible to set me free. He demanded 40,000 Malaysian Ringgit [MYR] but I have already paid 5,000 MYR. He has been to court five times for my case. Next week will be the 6th times. I am still awaiting trial here in Sungai Buloh. But I do not know if I am waiting in vain. God let me not wait here in vain. I really do not want to wait in vain, Bros pray for me.” (Nigerian inmate “TK.” Sungai Buloh Prison, May 2012)

I assured KT I would deliver his message, but I could not help to pay for his food, from my own tight budget. Fefe is now one of the many Nigerians in China’s prison convicted for drug offenses. He demands money be sent each time he calls friends like Mk and DK in Guangzhou. He needs money in order to be fed because upon arrest his money and possessions were confiscated. Interviewees said Fefe was quiet when the news of the verdict reached him.

8.7.5 His take: A harsh prison life

Somehow similar to life in Brazilian prisons as already discusses in previous section in terms of overcapacity and pre trial detention, conditions in Chinese detention centres and prisons are much worse. For instance, Stuart Foster told me that he was in a cell as big as a handball court with zero furnishings (the toilet was a hole in the corner) with about 30 prisoners, all sleeping on the concrete floor without blankets or pillows. The room was so crowded that most inmates slept on their sides with arms draped over each other. There was no bail, no visitors, and no communication. The heat, hunger, and harassment from Chinese inmates was harsh. For instance, the Nigerians “Ndy” and “Ropa” had death penalty cases. The former is imprisoned, alleged to have paid a Chinese national to smuggle drugs from Nigeria. Whereas no solid proof was provided, he had still been in detention for two years—one year until court and then after another year, still with no judgment. Ropa was caught with 2kg of heroin and a

homemade gun. The age on his passport was disputed, after seven years he had his case in the appeal system and hoped to have his sentence commuted to life instead of death.

Fefe, TJ, Rope, and many others incarcerated in China—as several Nigerians in the Netherlands, Italy, Germany, Brazil or Malaysia—used passport from other African countries, a phenomenon that turns the Nigerian smartness deadly. For instance, four of the eight male drug traffickers executed by Indonesian government on 29 April 2015 were Nigerians. Two travelled on false passports, from Ghana and Spain.¹⁵⁹ Stuart Foster added:

“I was told by my Nigerian inmate friends that the reason most Nigerians use other country passports is because the Chinese Government limits the number of passports to Nigerians due to a patterned history of illegal activities. That was the reason given—although ‘TJ’ mentioned some may be hiding their identities because of drug crimes in other countries. In one setting when drug trafficker inmate ‘XX’ inquired about his case, the *Zhu Guan* (the guard) standing tall affirming total control stepped toward him. Looking down not revealing his feeling, or what would come next, he mercilessly stated, “Mr. ‘XX,’ you have no country! I’m the only one who can help you! I am your GOD!” I thought to myself—surely, he said, “I am your Guard!” If not, in such desperation we both would have laughed out loud. He went on to state that the Niger Embassy had denied his being a citizen and thus he had no embassy aide. ‘XX’ was silent and in the only demonstration of ‘weakness’ I ever saw a few tears shed, running parallel with his tattooed cheek.” (Foster: 06-12-2014)

Be it in the Netherlands, Brazil, or China, despite knowledge of the local language, nationality test questions generally involve asking someone to describe where he grew up in the country, sometimes via a phone call. A patterned history of illegal activities underscores the power of the Nigerian state crisis in fostering crime as discussed in Chapter 2 and demonstrated in this work. As every country has a government it desires, due to these lapses Nigeria cares less for its citizenry, and its Embassy remains credited with denying needed assistance where it should. Normally, embassies and consulates serve as a means to notify families and supporters of inmates. With almost zero communication, many do not remember telephone numbers of beloved ones or their home address. According to Stuart, Africans who predominantly were in China on fraudulent passports, are denied Embassy services and were totally cut off from loved ones or possible support. Small countries such as Palestine have only a small embassy in Beijing with limited resources. Inmates from such small countries are lucky to get a phone call from their embassy in Beijing, which the WCD intentionally made problematic (Foster: 06-12-2014). In contrast, being an American spared Stuart Foster the harshest of punishments. Other foreigners, such as Africans, sometimes waited for over a year without a court date or outside communication. Likewise, most of the Chinese prisoners had simply disappeared from the outside world without their family knowing if they were dead or alive. “A Nigerian ex-convict stated, “Prisoners on death row are shackled. Sometimes they just pick someone up and you will not see the person again” (AA: Skype video/telephone conversations, 17-09-2015).

Interviewees revealed that in WCD, Nigerian prisoners begin working on their first day of detention regardless of the circumstances. Each person was required to assemble at least 3000 Christmas lights working up to 10 hours a day without payment. This maltreatment is supplemented by beatings not only from prison guards, but also from cell gang leaders who pushed work production through a series of rewards and punishments.¹⁶⁰

¹⁵⁹ See Cochrane (2015, April 28).

¹⁶⁰ ‘*Kuai-dian*’ (means ‘faster’), anything from slow work production to a ‘wrong look’ results to a slap to the head or kick to the ribs. If slow production persisted or a prisoner back-talked, the regime would bring them to the front of the cell for a series of kicks, blows and punches. Most common punishment was withholding the daily ration of two hand-rolled cigarettes

As averred by Wu and Goodrich (2014), drawing upon the Soviet Union's infamous gulag, Mao Zedong established "laogai" (reform through labor—RTL) labor camps to punish convicted criminals; and "laojiao" (re-education through labor) labor camps to incarcerate alleged class enemies and petty criminals without the time and evidentiary burdens of a trial. In response to the pressure to eradicate RTL, Chinese Government acknowledged official plans to abolish the lao jiao labor camp system following the Third Plenum of the 18th Party Congress held in November 2013, yet exploitation of inmates under horrific conditions remain widespread.

8.7.6 Business as usual

If the primary essence of imprisonment should be rehabilitation and reduction of recidivism to crime, then contemporary exploitation of inmates in Chinese prisons, or in another places, seems to have the opposite effect. Nigerian inmates and others worked for free, producing Christmas light sold globally. According to Reform of Criminals through Labor, reasons for using forced labor as means to reform criminals who are able to work includes: First, assisting criminals to realize that social wealth does not come easily. It fosters a more productive work ethic. It helps inmates overcome bad habits like sloth and hedonism. It gives them a sense of social responsibility and law-abiding spirit in addition to improving self-discipline. Second, despite enhancing physically fitness, work helps inmates overcome depression, indolence, and thoughts of escape or suicide, common to monotonous prison life. Thirdly, not only does work serve as deterrent to committing crimes, it is a means to acquiring productive skills and knowledge necessary for adapting to normal social values and earning a respectable living for inmates after prison life.

These products are produced by prison labor mainly to meet needs occurring within the reform-through-labor system. Only small portion of such products enter the domestic market through normal channels. On October 10, 1991, the Ministry of Economic Relations and Foreign Trade and the Ministry of Justice jointly issued a circular entitled "Reissue of Regulations Prohibiting the Export of Products Made in a Reform-through-labor Programme." The Chinese Government is strict on this point and any violations of these regulations are dealt with severely.¹⁶¹ Critics highlight that Chinese prison inmates are brutally exploited for big business generating billions for multinational enterprises.¹⁶² But on the one side it is asserted that the Chinese basic principles for criminal reforms reduce recidivism to among the lowest in the world, about six to eight percent.¹⁶³ On the other side, what's indicated remains that failed businessmen and ex-convicts are prominent in illicit trade in China (Chin & Zhang, 2007, p. 36).

Brazil's criminal code includes neither the death penalty nor a life sentence for drug trafficking. In theory, every inmate will re-emerge into the outside world. Most do so brutalised, lacking skills and ostracised by a society with a punitive attitude towards criminals. That pushes recidivism rates above 60%, starting the ghastly cycle anew (IBA, 2010). On the other hand, research has found that prisoners, who gain professional skills while in prison and those who earn a decent wage for their work, are far less likely to end up

and food rations cut in half. Such prisoners were solitary confinement, chained to the floor, flogged with Christmas light cords and left for 2 to 3 days without food (Foster: 06-12-2014).

¹⁶¹ See, Criminal Reform in China. (Xinhuanet.com: accessed, 13-04-2015).

¹⁶² Australian Financial Review reported Dongguan's forced labor under cruel conditions; exploited by amongst others Qantas, British Airways, Emirates, Swedish giant Electrolux and Fortune 500 Company Emerson. Annual output value of prison labor in the reform-through-labor system for 1990 was 2,5 billion CNY, which is about 0.08 percent of the nation's total industrial and agricultural production output value for the year. Equally Emerson, a New York Stock Exchange-listed company, has 135,000 employees and had worldwide sales of \$24,4 billion USD in 2012 (Murray & Grigg, 2013).

¹⁶³ See Criminal Reform in China. (Xinhuanet.com: accessed, 13-04-2015).

back behind bars, especially in a country with zero social safety-net programs to compensate for the missing income. Their recidivism rate is less than seven percent, compared to 64 percent of the state's general prison population (Friedmann, 2014).

Whereas Nigerian inmates in Chinese WCD work for free, counterpart interviewees in PFC prison in earn about BRL466.50 or U.S. \$229.65 monthly. They asked if Brazilian government could allow them to send some money to pay children school fees in Nigeria. That makes a big difference in preventing future deviant generation. What the exploitative jobs of inmates in China didn't provide was a wage substantial enough to support their families and gather some savings for post-prison life, or job training that would aid pursue the goals established while working in jail. With a criminal record, obtaining significant job experience beyond what they went in with and not even enough savings, life becomes notoriously difficult.

8.8 Summary

Following the 'goods,' the activities of Nigerian international cocaine traffickers and offenses of co-nationals and other Africans like illegal overstays of visa, engagement in commercial sector without valid permits, and vandalism cause crime rates to rise in their host society. They also contributed to altering the social fabric of Guangzhou, providing difficulties for the authorities. By zooming into these challenges, 'Sweet and Sour Guangzhou' has discussed the criminal justice system's harsher restrictive policy measures and combat.

China's transnational migration management is focused on the legitimacy of entry and exit of economic considerations, which is far from enough as immigrants in the country demand international standards enjoyed by Chinese in other countries. Unintentional negative effects of shifts in Chinese policy fluctuations—in regard to immigrants—frustrate many Nigerians into illegality and survival activities, which exacerbate the problem it was meant to discourage. They do not get visa extension privileges afforded to citizens from other African countries. Whereas a Nigerian may get only a month-long visa, a Ugandan or Angolan could get a three-month visa easily. Due to Nigeria's patterned history of crimes.

Still, combat remains a significant challenge because of corruption. Nigerian traffickers assert that they could pay unscrupulous law enforcement agents to turn a blind eye to their activities. Harsh repressive policy measures and combat claimed several lives, hospitalized many, and incarcerated about 1000 Nigerians in China. Their number is far higher because some Nigerian inmates in jail used passports from other nations in Africa. Because such documents are easily obtainable, it remains one of the major features underscoring their success.

Analysis of the Nigerian trafficker, Fefe's situation has not only provided insight into the nature of their activities and modus operandi, but also the working of due process concerning such offense in a Chinese court hearing. Also, it enlightens the relevance of several criminological concepts like edge work, emotions of crimes and neutralization approaches deployed. Securing a competent legal representation is a necessity. Due to language and communication shortcomings, translations could be erratic and any attempt at correction or to clarify the Public Security Bureau officer could turn to intimidation.

The trafficker Fefe escaped execution. He was sentenced to "the death penalty suspended for two years." Most Nigerians in Guangzhou averred that his lawyer performed excellently because his family could pay tens of thousands of U.S. dollars. He flees execution unlike many others, but his take became a harsh prison life. Now he is exploited, working in a production process, with little or no reward, to enrich connected mainstream multinational. "Business as usual" is a paradox where the system creates a unfavorable situation, where it

tells those involved to do the right thing and turn their lives around and then actually incentivizes future violations of the law.

Despite the death penalty and life imprisonment threats many recidivate recalling these as a medium exceeded. The next chapter will draw attention to the unprecedented alternative response from the Nigerian Community China to the activities of Nigerian international cocaine traffickers.

Chapter 9

Redrawing the line: Nigerian Community's retort

9.1 Introduction

This Chapter will focus on the Nigerian community's response to Nigerian international cocaine trafficking. It provides insight into alternative measures they took by engaging the local authorities in a constructive dialogue, which opened up opportunities for its members to achieve a respectable life through commercial activities, thereby preventing Nigerian cocaine traffickers' related crimes and reducing would-be drug traffickers.

I observed in several settings that most Nigerian traders discuss their dynamic situation in Guangzhou. On the one hand, Nigerians were bitter due to stigmatization and the negative image caused by their co-nationals and other Africans involved in deviant activities.¹⁶⁴ On the other hand, they felt the increasing desire to feel at home in the city, even if there were still many hardships to overcome.

The businessmen and women I encountered talked about their appreciation for changes that had been made in the city. They could now work freely without being harassed by Nigerian street drug dealers and delinquents. In this sense, many in Lagos are no longer skeptical of visiting Guangzhou. With its sub-tropical and tropical climate, touristic appeal, and flowers and trees on the pathways of San Yuan Li streets where most of them do business, the environment of Guangzhou exemplifies the attractiveness they would love to have in Nigeria. Nonetheless, there are still many strains on their relationship with their host society, and one wonders what is behind this feeling and transformation? Some Nigerians have taken the initiative to disprove the stigma that Nigerian people are all cocaine traffickers.

By setting up a new Nigerian Community in China, the pioneers of this initiative took it upon themselves to work on disproving the negative Nigerian reputation by constructing a new image that will represent a tradition to be emulated and kept by other Nigerians in the legendary Ram City,¹⁶⁵ capital of Guangdong Province. This initiative was undertaken to exert a level of social control, with hopes of lowering deviant activities in the society. Guangzhou is not unique; Nigerians everywhere expressed that those representing them abroad are disconnected with Nigeria's own citizens. It is a mind-set that will not change unless the government itself changes the attitude in Nigeria.

In this area, some in Guangzhou such as Emmanuel Osy, Dadi, Mark, and others felt the then-existing Nigerian Community in China (NCC) formed in 1999, was badly stigmatized following bad reputation of some members.

The Nigerian community faced this situation by engaging a practical dialogue and plan to refute the bad reputations caused by Nigerian drug dealers, forming a vigilant group that sent dealers off the streets and curtailed cultism and violence amid Nigerian traffickers, and fostering renewed opportunities and choices for unbundling the "immobility state" that pushed some Nigerians into cocaine dealing. This shows at the micro level the relevance of the Nigerian community's alternative approach, which could impact policy on a macro level.

¹⁶⁴ See Castillo (2014), Mathews and Yang (2012), Haugen (2012), Chin and Zhang (2007).

¹⁶⁵ Guangzhou is also known as the 'Ram City' (Yang Cheng) or 'Rice Ears City' (Sui Cheng). For details see Travel China Guide, accessed 22-03-2015).

9.2 Strike to bad reputations: A survival strategy

Contrary to the view that sees Nigerians as an incoherent people, several persons saw it differently. Having made the right contacts with the authorities in Guangzhou, they opted to redeem the Nigerian community for the benefit of all, despite opposition from some Nigerians standing in their way of reform. Why should some Nigerians stand against reforming the community and curbing deviant activities? These were direct and indirect members of the Nigerian cocaine traffickers who profited from the atrocities committed by their cult gangs. However, pioneers of the initiative persisted to the desire to metamorphosing to respectful and respected.

Realizing how important their business relationship with the host country was to them, they saw the law enforcement crackdowns in 2009, to get Nigerian dealers off the streets in Guangzhou, as a chance to collaborate with the authorities and improve their status and livelihood. The crackdowns did not only result in death, but it also displaced the phenomenon as dealers moved to other areas. Also, it pushed many Nigerians into survival mode, thereby fostering the problem it was meant to solve. The pioneers of the community were aware that among them were Nigerian cocaine traffickers because the world-manufacturing centre attracted not only ordinary Nigerian traffickers. Similar to their predecessors like the Dutch, Italian, German, English, and Chinese, Nigerian traffickers are merchants who treat cocaine as hard currency to buy other things. Cocaine is smuggled into China mostly in exchange for money to purchase and export consumer products back to Nigeria and beyond. The new trend illicit cocaine traders have figured out that a quick and convenient way to acquire hard currency is through drug trafficking. With this acknowledged, authorities in Guangzhou expressed that they have arrested quite a few Nigerian traffickers. “Although there are increased efforts to monitor the movement of foreigners living in Guangzhou, in reality there is little we can do” (Chin & Zhang, 2007, p. 39).

In this area, the initiative of the Nigerian community evokes Castillo’s (2014) emphasis on three issues crucial to sense-making in the city, namely place-making processes: the ways in which Africans intersect with Chinese on a spatial level, structures of belonging, that they are built through organizations and communities, and strategies for settlement and mobility. These ideas were developed to counteract what is perceived as institutional barriers to their presence in China. Confronted with these processes, delegation was sent to the Nigerian Embassy in Beijing to discuss. This included officers from the Immigration Office of Guangzhou. The result was a formation of a new Nigerian community in Guangzhou. Engaging official law enforcement officials in the conversation underscores the view, as Covey pointed out in the article “A Whole New Mind-set on Fighting Crime” (2008), that communities must make a conscious moral choice to end crime. That choice can be very difficult. As writer Maurice Maeterlinck said, “at every crossroads on the path that leads to the future, tradition has placed 10,000 men to guard the past.” Letting go of crime-fighting methods that are not working can be difficult. Those attempting it must be prepared to face harsh criticism from others who are bonded to the old ways. Many of the methods that once produced results are failing now, not because of any one person’s inadequacies or incompetence, but simply because the problems themselves have changed. Historian Arnold Toynbee once said, “Nothing fails like success.” So it is with fighting crime and violence. Covey writes:

A raft of overwhelming social issues: drugs, violence, welfare, and homelessness besiege our communities, which collectively affect everyone’s prosperity. Since 1965, [the United States] has spent well over a trillion dollars providing services into our communities to address these issues that have all failed—the issues continue and grow in scale. Doing more of the same is obviously not the answer. A new approach is required if we are to have any impact on the social issues plaguing our communities. (Covey, 2008)

Braithwaite (2003, p. 3) recalls regarding Garland's work is in the Foucaultian (1977, p. 31) tradition of a "history of the present: the point is not to think historically about the past but rather to use that history to rethink the present" (Garland, 2001, p. 2). Through a constructive discussion, the new community to which all pledged to respect its constitution was reborn, electing Emmanuel Osy and other executives in 2007 to head it with a mandate. Their mission was not only to limit, but also prevent deviant activities committed including drug trafficking, fraud, armed robbery, kidnapping, and murder. As already discussed, not only did dealers fight, scattering cocaine on the streets during uncontrolled disputes and extort money by setting up traders with cocaine and threaten to report them to the police, but they also murdered several individuals.

These developments took the authorities by surprise underscoring that, criminal activities of Nigerians acting individually or in conspiracy with few others, devoid of formal organizations, were interpreted as activities of organized crime groups. This has affected efforts to control their activities in various countries. In addition, foreign governments and experts concerned with this new trend have failed to appreciate the economic, political, and social forces that have influenced a large number of Nigerians and their involvement in different economic crimes in their countries.¹⁶⁶ While the early 19th century model of a central police organization was, as Garland (2001, p. 31) pointed out, preventive. Over time it became not only increasingly focused on crime, but also on detection, in favor of punishment after the event, as opposed to prevention before the event. This was partly a Benthamite project of utilitarian rationalization and partly a political project of asserting central control over the disorderly populations of the industrializing metropolis where revolution was most feared. Such steps toward centralized punitive regulation of the poor through para-military police organizations were eventually taken almost everywhere, though often much later (Braithwaite, 2003, p. 8).

The Nigerian community instead embraced a proactive, problem-solving approach that focused on prevention, in which it is everyone's responsibility to promote safety. This change cannot be made without a plan. The four imperatives of leadership created to work against the negative effects of the new trend cocaine trafficking that affects all are to inspire trust, clarify purpose, align systems, and unleash talent. Running through each of the four crucial points are the three threads already discussed: initiative, partnership, and prevention (Covey, 2008).

Within this preventive view, the Nigerian Community representatives approached the local authorities for an alternative way of solving the problem. Locals felt that Nigerians could help in tackling the problem because they know themselves. After all, Nigerians constitute the majority of Africans in Guangzhou and have been labeled and stigmatized as championing African drug traffickers. It was an inside out approach to the problem.

9.3 Dealers, off the streets

Engagement with various representatives within the Nigeria community led to the formation of a vigilant group of market coordinators to curtail Nigerian street dealers of cocaine and other drugs. Advocating for volunteer membership, several people volunteered. At the Nigerian community's cost, a team of about 60 vigilantes drove the streets addressing Nigerian and African drug dealers to respect themselves and get off the street. They stressed the fact that there would be no hideout for dealers and that defiance would be reported to the police. They asked all to comply and to spread the news. The representative of the vigilantes, Igwe, stated to me, "They complied. People nodded their heads in agreement and gave their word. They got the message and above all, they knew we are all Nigerians, and that we knew who they were. *Naija*

¹⁶⁶ In this area see for example Shaw (2003, p. 10)

sabi Naija (Nigerian knows Nigerian) as it is expressed.” In regard to the fact that Nigerian cocaine traffickers did not seem to be worried about execution for drug trafficking, Igwe stated:

“That is their business. They are aware of the implication because every business has its risks. It seems they know how to deal with it because, it’s like armed robbers in Nigeria, who knows he/she will be short if caught; yet they do it. I don’t understand them, do you? We should not allow these *Yeye Nigerians* (delinquent Nigerians) to break our balls also in China! As traders, China allows us to partially establish here, so they should not make things worst. Here is not Europe or America where you become citizens. May be one day, ha ha ha [He laughs] *For me, here na home too oh!*” (Here is also home). (Igwe: Guangzhou, 27-05-2011)

This recalls the widespread reaction amid Nigerians and Africans entrepreneurs in Guangzhou regarding their feeling of ‘fluidity’ status in China and desire to attain immigrant status, as in most advanced countries, which China has become. Several publications exist in this area.¹⁶⁷ Aware that China is not an immigration country, the initiative taken by Igwe and pioneers of Nigerian community to create a permissive environment to live and function within their transitory status, contests geographically bounded notions of ‘at homeness.’ Sometimes ‘home’ becomes embodied—a project that is carried and reproduced on the move. That is to say, Nigerians in Guangzhou are contributing to developing constructions of their nation-state that encompass those residing abroad, ‘deterritorialized nation-states’ (Castillo, 2014; Basch, Schiller, & Blanc-Szanton, 1994).

By reflecting in terms of ‘transnational mobility’ instead of ‘migration,’ both the regularities and irregularities of human transnational movement are incorporated. Transnational mobility dares the telos of examination and methodological research in structural studies of migration, and resonates with the trenchant critiques of the bounded and static categories of nation (methodological nationalism), community, place, and state offered by several theorists.¹⁶⁸ A transnational mobility perspective could also portray convergence of previous theorizations on transnationalism, translocality, mobility, networks, and assemblages, as Nigerian and Africans in Guangzhou demonstrate. Their daily lives depend on multiple and constant interconnections across international borders, and their public identities are configured in relationship to more than one nation state. They forge and sustain simultaneous multi-stranded social relations that link together their societies of origin and settlement. They construct and reconstruct their concurrent embeddedness in more than one society (Schiller *et al.*, 1992a; Basch *et al.*, 1994).

Secondly, whereas Igwe’s inquiry recalls the discussion in previous chapters regarding the Nigerian state crisis, it further underlines that despite its financial proceeds, when successful, edgework, the emotions of crime, and neutralization techniques are part and parcel of push and pull features of cocaine or drug trafficking. On the one hand, this shows the zeal with which law abiding Nigerians wanted to curtail the bad image and negative consequences suffered due to the crimes committed by few co-nationals in Guangzhou. On the other hand, it demonstrates the resilience of Nigerian traffickers as they still sell cocaine in bar areas of Guangzhou. However, the Nigerian community wanted their interest and future protected. This evokes the discussion in previous chapters regarding ‘old school’ and ‘new-arrival’ Nigerians in Brazil. In Guangzhou where Nigerians are the majority, it is possible to identify at least three types of trajectories amongst Africans that live in, recurrently visit, and pass through Guangzhou: the ‘more established,’ the ‘itinerants and semi-settled,’ and the ‘newly arrived’ (Castillo, 2014, p. 10).

¹⁶⁷ See Li, Lyons and Brown (2012); Bodomo (2010); Li, Ma, and Xue (2009); Rojas (2009); Mathews, Ma, and Liu (2008).

¹⁶⁸ These include Appadurai (1996, 2006); Appadurai and Breckenridge (1989); Schiller, Basch, and Blanc-Szanton (1992a); and by those theorizing the formation of translocal identities and networks such as Castells (1997), and Hall (1991).

This implies that by and large, they are either those who are the most successful—having long-term Chinese visas (or permission to stay) and serving as brokers between African traders and Chinese factories from which they receive commissions—or those who are least successful, overstaying their visas and making a living while avoiding the police, who might arrest them at any moment and subsequently deport them (Mathews & Yang, 2012, p. 103). Engulfed within the context of archiving the ‘Nigerian Dream,’ the ‘newly-arrived’ are commonly younger individuals, would-be traders, that have been propelled toward China in multifarious ways. Many of them, lured by the ‘land of new opportunities’ discourse, collect funds among relatives and friends and set out for success by all means. Compounded by their restricted social and cultural capital, they end up in survival endeavors including cocaine trafficking.

However, belonging to the old or new generational group does not make one immune from cocaine trafficking, as the phenomenon remains open to whoever wanted to risk it. For instance, Fefe and those similar were well established. Nigerians incarcerated in China are comprised also of individuals with valid residence permits and married with children.¹⁶⁹ The negative consequence that affects all is what the new Nigerian community fights.

9.4 Cultism, cocaine and violence

In São Paulo the new trend illicit cocaine traders deployed Nigerian traditional secret societies to enhance their activities, whereas in Guangzhou they use cultism and cult-gangs that killed several couriers and businessmen. In this area, much academic work exists on traditional organized crime groups, cultism in Nigerian societies and educational institutions.¹⁷⁰ I found that school dropouts prominent amid Nigerian traffickers are members of the cults and gangs. This shows the new trend global cocaine trafficking potential in attracting this group. Drawing from the Nigerian state crisis, as discussed previously, traditional organized crime groups have metamorphosed into cults and gangs amid university students and traders as in the new trend illicit cocaine traffickers. They stream equally from the various ethnic militant groups including the Oodua Peoples’ Congress (Yorubas of South-West), Arewa Peoples’ Congress (Hausas of the North), Egbesu Youths (Ibos), the Bakkasi Boys (Bayelsa), and the Niger Delta Militants (South-South States).

Amongst the varied theoretical concepts elucidating the rise of this phenomena includes ethno-political theory, psycho-personality perspectives, frustration aggression hypothesis, and environmentalist perspectives (Arijesuyo, 2011; Adelola, 1997). In line with this school of thought, the emergence of the different ethnic militia groups was fundamentally motivated to engage state security agents in the quest to control the resources that come from their region and to canvass for fair treatment and equity among the states of the federation. Converse to the laudable objectives they were turned into theatre of warfare where primordial rivalries among groups and reprisal attack with display of violence. Prominent amid these cults include Buccaneers, Black axe, and Eiye confraternity.¹⁷¹ Among the challenges faced by the Nigerian community was to curtail the activities of Nigerian cocaine gang cults. Prior to the police crackdown in 2009 in preparation for the Asia Games which was held in Guangzhou in December 2010, many Nigerians could not walk freely with handbags on some streets in Guangzhou without been attacked by co-nationals. Surrounding the victim, some put cocaine on

¹⁶⁹ The list is long but for instance, “Ndy” is in White Cloud Detention Center in Guangzhou since 2 years, alleged to have paid a Chinese national to smuggle drugs from Nigeria. He had 2 restaurants in Guangzhou and married with a Chinese woman and 3 children. Also “AQ” was arrested during stop and search operation, though less than 20 grams of heroin in his pocket, police said he has a long history. AQ has valid permit, Chinese wife and kids (Foster: Skype video interview, 06-12-2014).

¹⁷⁰ See Siegel and van de Bunt (2012), Ebbe and Ubah (2012).

¹⁷¹ See Rotimi (2005), Marcel (2008).

the person's bag or pocket and accused him or her of drug trafficking. Several businessmen and women were kidnapped, robbed, and brutalized (see, Figure 6).



Figure 6. Photo: Nigerian cocaine traffickers' violence (Guangzhou)

One Nigerian stated, “Guangzhou was a hell because they killed more than a few Nigerians” (Emma Osy: Guangzhou, 24-05-2011). Nigerian cocaine traffickers to which Fefe belonged formed criminal gangs or cults like *Eiye*, *Bagger*, and *Tutu*. Showing that same cultism experienced mainly in Nigerian universities was moved into Guangzhou. Each had up to one hundred members. Although they themselves were traffickers, they were kidnapping, extorting money, and killing rival Nigerian cocaine traffickers and couriers in Guangzhou and neighboring cities.

Furthermore, all through this research the expression, missing couriers are a common topic among Nigerian cocaine traffickers in Lagos, Amsterdam, and Kuala Lumpur. Whereas some attribute the missing couriers to delays of departure or transit, several suspected he or she must have run away with the drugs, and others wondered if the police arrested the person. In such instances, they make phone calls to contacts at destinations or to the airline concerning clarification. Interviewees revealed that in Guangzhou several Nigerian drug couriers were killed and left in the flats. The ingested cocaine was robbed from their bodies. Whereas those went undetected in early February 2011, six Nigerian cocaine traffickers extracted ingested cocaine pellets by dismembering the body of a courier and dumping it in the swamp of River Nanhai. The crime was uncovered when people saw the two big sized travelling suitcases and alerted the police. Igwe stated:

“The law enforcement agents arrested a Nigerian entrepreneurs in Guangzhou, alleged that one of his workers was linked to the crime. The community took up responsibility to intervene because the police succeeded in arresting two out of the five suspects, whereas the rest escaped. Called upon its members to assist, the offenders were identified and apprehended by the vigilant team, interrogated and handed over to the police.” (Igwe: Guangzhou, 24-05-2011)

Interviewees reveal that the offenders did not only admit involvement but they detailed the modus operandi and personal background that enlightens more of the nature of Nigerian cocaine traffickers. Whereas some members are traders, others are school and university dropouts from middleclass families in Nigeria. For example, Ogy stated; “I have finished myself” (Recorded video, Guangzhou: Accessed, 24-05-2011). His father is a medical doctor in Nigeria. When telephoned about his son, he begged to give his son a second chance in life. The point is that his son has faced the consequences of his crime—murder and cocaine trafficking in China. Ogy and friends negotiated price for two days to do the ‘job.’ If they could not, other Nigerian traffickers were available. Nkam stated:

“Abu paid us \$8,000 USD in total. Nonetheless, because he did not have \$8,000 USD complete on that day, he promised to pay us next day. But that did not go down well with us, so they asked to be paid with “goods” (meaning cocaine) instead. So Abu paid us \$4,000 USD cash and gave us 11 pellets or balls of cocaine to make it up. Shared as follows; Oina got one ball of cocaine and 2,000 CNY for watching out. We shared the rest equal between us.” [Aky, Kis2, Ogy] (Nkam: Guangzhou, recorded video accessed, 24-05-2011)

On the one hand, whereas Ogy and the rest were handed over to law enforcement authorities in Guangzhou, on the other hand it evokes that tracing the perpetrators remained difficult as they diffuse within their relatives and friends. The offenders claimed that a lack of legitimate documents to work frustrated them into cocaine trafficking and related crimes, deploying Sykes and Matza’s (1957, p. 664) Neutralization Technique of denial of responsibility and the appeal to higher loyalties.

9.5 Renewed opportunities and choices: Unbundling ‘immobility’

The Nigerian community confronted the state of immobility of co-nationals by approaching the authorities in the neighboring town Foshan-Nanhai, which wanted a police crackdown similar to that in Guangzhou. They did not want to adopt raiding homes and shops of Nigerians as a preferred method of tackling the problem, but instead to document Nigerians and Africans in Foshan through recognizing membership ID-card issued to members. Since a lack of valid permits to engage in commercial activities was indicated as a major factor frustrating several into survival activities including cocaine dealing, the ID would allow them become legitimate. The authorities gave the proposal a chance. The majority responded to the initiative and is successfully earning their living as traders in Canal Market in Guangzhou. Igwe added:

“There are approximately 1000 individuals that participated and we are still busy with it. Each person goes into agreement with the community not to get involved in crime and to be his brother’s keeper in this sense.” (Igwe: Guangzhou, 24-05-2011)

Through this way, Ogy claimed the Nigerian community assisted in curtailing co-nationals from cocaine and drug dealers in Guangzhou.

It recalls empowering one’s existing or expanding initiatives in such a way as to get “unstuck” and move in the appropriate direction. The Nigerian community in Guangzhou has kick-started a community shift from hopelessness to expand horizons of new choices, shifting the social culture and assuring its entrepreneurial support—not just with words, but an altered culture.¹⁷² If someone commits a crime and there is evidence, the community would report the offender to the authorities. Ogy told me, “It is not our responsibility to control cocaine trafficking.” That’s for the police. Meaning they are contributing to reducing it, but Nigerian cocaine trafficking continues, regardless. Whereas some distanced themselves from dealing in Guangzhou, others continued, as discussed previously.

On the other hand, the bottleneck remains, as raids by the police continue in an effort to control crime. Authorities think in terms of catching people and jailing, but in the course of raiding, several innocent individuals are affected. This evokes Braithwaite’s idea that people are not born democratic and decent; civility is something we must learn in a structured way (Braithwaite, 2011). This is the reason the Nigerian community has adopted the strategy of giving drug traffickers the opportunity to quit and to engage in legal mainstream activity. Ex-Nigerian trafficker Atamu expressed:

¹⁷² See *Legacy XXI Institute* (2015, March 23).

“I joined Eiyee and sold cocaine, heroin and marijuana on the streets to survive. Eiyee cultist used to send them to kidnap cocaine couriers and traders rob their drugs and money. It was difficult to survive in Guangzhou, that’s why I was frustrated into joining cults. It was just as in Nigeria, isn’t it? Now things have changed in Guangzhou. I have a legal business and I like it.” (Atamu: Guangzhou, 25-05-2011)

Atamu and others who turned their lives around could become volunteer vigilantes of the community as a correctional measure. By so doing, the person offers an apology openly to the community and promises not to offend again.

This evokes the notion of shame management, which contends that restorative justice interventions are well suited to the task of managing and working constructively with the shame that all parties experience in situations of crime and conflict. It considers the degree to which offending is shamed and whether that shaming is reintegrative or stigmatic. Braithwaite (1989) defines reintegrative shaming as disapproval that is respectful of the person, is terminated by forgiveness and does not label the person as evil nor allows condemnation to result in a master status trait. The theory envisages that the practice of reintegrative shaming will result in less offending. Conversely, stigmatizing shaming is not respectful of the person, is not terminated by forgiveness, labels the person as evil, and allows them to attain a master status trait. Reintegrative shaming theory predicts that this latter type of shaming results in greater levels of offending. It focuses on the evil of deed rather than on the offender as an irredeemable individual (Braithwaite, 2003; Harris, 2006).

During fieldwork, I observed in some occasions as representative of the community and executives worked till early morning hours resolving issues. On reporting disputes, delinquent acts, and crimes to the community, the offender is called to report at the community headquarters at number 90 Jinfu Da Sha, Qifu, Baiyun, in Guangzhou. Otherwise the person is apprehended by the vigilantes, confronted, and sanctioned by the community.

I was also shown disturbing pictures of victims of gang members, as seen previously, pointing to one perpetrator, Igwe told me he used cocaine to set others up. They robbed a trader from Nigeria at a Guangzhou airport of \$450,000 USD in 2009. Igwe stated, “A Nigerian staff at ‘money transfer office’ in Guangzhou passed on information about the man’s arrival in Guangzhou, the gang traced from the airport and robbed him.” He added:

“This man, (showing me a disturbing images on pictures of a man with serious knife cuts all over the body) was taken home by a Chinese girl, who later same night called Eiyee cult members that accused the guy of cocaine possession, and of snatching their girl friend. They robbed the man \$3,000 USD. We have worst cases and pictures. As you aware off, we got the offenders and interrogated them here, and handed over to the authorities.” (Igwe: Guangzhou, 24-05-2011)

Glancing through the pictures, a lovely Igbo *High Life Music* on the background accompanied the dismay encapsulated in the images. The album is *Oloaka in China* by Boniface, who also was attacked by cult gangs. Wanting to verify things, I traced Boniface and interviewed him in Lagos in October 2011. Boniface added:

Boniface: They beat me up in Guangzhou for speaking out against their atrocities and rituals. They were cocaine traffickers who robbed and murdered. I was tied of Guangzhou, so I relocated to Nigeria, from where I continued with my music. I will be travelling to Guangzhou in within few days to release a new album. Guangzhou is different these days thanks to the new generation Nigerian leadership that curtailed the bad guys. Yet, some carry drugs to China, after undergoing all sorts of rituals.

Uche: Some believe that nothing will happen because they have voodoo or have done fasting and prayers, deceived by so called pastors. Bush shit! (Boniface and Uche: Lagos, 12-10-2011)

My in-depth conversation with Boniface and Uchenna recalls some aspects underpinning the Nigerian illicit cocaine trafficking: cultism, religious believe, the call on ‘supernatural power’ in pursuit wealth regardless of the (il)legality of the means.

Many Nigerians said that these crimes persisted because no one really stopped them, neither the authorities nor the community. In this area, the vigilante team rounded up about 126 cult members and handed them over to the authorities while others ran away to Nigeria, or other countries like Malaysia and Thailand. Having eradicated cultism and violence and reduced street dealing, the Nigerian community in Guangzhou mediates to prevent deviant activities.

9.6 Impact, policy relevance

In the course of the fieldworks in Guangzhou, I observed several arguments and disputes in connection with some traders who became victims of business encounters with Chinese or Nigerians through which often their only available capital was lost. Powerless, they had no option than a frustrated life, especially when the lost capital pushed them into debt. There was no place like Guangzhou to distinguish this in its working.

Without some knowledge of Mandarin, traders can be easily cheated as Chinese merchants blithely talking with one another about deceiving the oblivious African buyers before them.¹⁷³ The risk of fraud is high as Nigerians traders have few sanctions to apply against Chinese business partner that do not deliver (Haugen, 2012). Faced with such a situation, a number of individuals encountered turned the fight to another front. For instance, Aga related during our chat that he was frustrated into cocaine trafficking to payback debt after a Chinese agent duped him \$3,000 USD. Things did not work out well in China as imagined. After the \$500 USD he came in with ran out, Aga added:

“I hated myself in China! Left with \$3,000 USD debt an acquaintance introduced me to risk. I sold cocaine and brown (meaning heroin) and so on. I did it out of hopelessness. I saw it as the only chance because I could not go to the bank to borrow, neither from a friend none from my parents who have nothing. I made some money from it and paid off my debt. I made start capital. Now I have a good business. I thank God for saving me from troubles. I learnt my lesson in China!” (Aga Guangzhou: 25-04-2012)

His claim recalls several others that asserted lured to cocaine trafficking as means of repaying debts or raising capital for starting businesses, as discussed in Chapters on Brazil and Nigeria. Had it happened these days, the Nigerian community could have assisted through their official contacts. For example, pulling out a file from his bookshelf, the president of the Nigerian community pointed to two current cases been followed, which involved about \$80,000 USD and \$100,000 USD respectively. Things become difficult due to state of immobility cause by Chinese visas. Visas are easy to acquire in Nigeria but when one still has business to do, extending it becomes difficult. Cocaine trafficking is a risky way out for Aga and those in a similar position.

The trader Ejike stated:

“Thanks to intervention of the community representatives, plenty cases of cheating or incorrect business deals between Nigerians or Chinese and Nigerians, are been resolved

¹⁷³ See Mathew and Yang (2012, p. 113).

with dialogue instead of fighting. Before we did not have a place to take complains to, but it is different now because we report to the community leaders. It has saved many people from loosing money and being in debt, or even taking unwanted risks like cocaine trafficking in trying to build up financial capital afresh.” (Ejike Guangzhou, 27-04-2012)

The majority of Nigerians in Guangzhou have nothing to do with cocaine trafficking and drugs in general. They are law-abiding citizens who abstain from crime. They do not deny involvement of some co-nationals in cocaine trafficking, which gives them a bad image and identity, nor do they want to neutralize the responsibility. Previously denied realities must now be brought to realities and the danger exposed. They want a change of the elements that goes into the social problem of Nigerian international cocaine trafficking. As Stanley Cohen averred, denial is an inner psyche-process in which people catch over their identity. In his book *State of Denial*, it is understood as an unconscious defense mechanism for coping with guilt, anxiety, and other disturbing emotions aroused by reality. The psyche blocks off information that is literally unthinkable or unbearable. The subconscious sets up a barrier, which prevents the thought from reaching conscious knowledge. Information and memories slip into an inaccessible region of the mind (Hamm, 2003, p. 178). It is the Technique of Neutralization.

Through their initiative, Nigerian community pleas to avoid that the good suffers due to the activities of the few deviants. This initiative in Guangzhou has not only gradually influenced new thinking in their host society, but also in Nigeria. For instance, it is now possible for Nigerian traders to get a two-week extension for their visas to allow them round up transactions. In an unprecedented move, the present administration following the footsteps set by former president Olusegun Obsanjo has opened its consular in Guangzhou. Thereby closing the wide gap between Nigerians and the home government, alleviating the suffering of Nigerian businessmen and women as well as the illicit cocaine traffickers.

Nigerian community’s action draws attention to “Justice Reinvestment” concepts that have attracted the attention of several experts.¹⁷⁴ JR arises from the observation that, if there are more cost effective ways of reducing crime than what is currently on offer, the social resources saved from the implementation of a successful intervention will more than outweigh the costs, as stated by Fox *et al.* (2013). It is a multi-stage process providing a framework for local agencies to work together to identify and reduce the drivers of criminal justice costs (La Vigne et al. 2010).

Through its activities in this view, the Nigerian community sought out to assist the local authorities not only in developing measures and policies to “improve the prospects not just of individual cases but also of particular places,” but also adopting a strategic approach to the prevention of offending and re-offending by collecting and analyzing data to inform commissioning decisions (Allen, 2007). Their approach recognizes the potential to create a more law-abiding society in a more effective and less costly way than the traditional detect/convict/punish approach. Envisaged in this model is a reduction in the crime rate, as JR proposes moving resources spent on punishment of offenders to programs designed to tackle the underlying problems, which gave rise to the criminal behavior¹⁷⁵ (Allen, 2008). When one

¹⁷⁴ See for example Fox, Albertson and Wong (2013); La Vigne, Neusteter, Lachman, Dwyer and Nadeau (2010); Allen (2008, 2007); Tucker and Cadora (2003).

¹⁷⁵ Fox *et al.* in citing the UK Justice Committee (2009), highlighted four major stages to a JR approach namely; ‘Justice mapping’: Analysis of the prison population and of relevant public spending in the communities to which people return from prison; provision of options to policy-makers for the generation of savings and increases in public safety; implementation of options, quantification of savings and reinvestment in targeted high- risk communities; and measurement of impacts, evaluation and assurance of effective implementation. Chris Fox underscored that the overriding distinguishing feature of JR is its reliance for its validity on economic theory. It is this aspect, which has allowed some politicians to start to re- shape the debate about criminal justice. Ideally, the principles of economics may be employed to address the constraints raised by the ‘the silliness of politics’ (The Columbus Dispatch, 2008). By presenting and justifying efficient solutions, the political costs of being thought to be ‘soft on crime’, are attenuated and the policy debate is widened (2013, p. 35).

is placed into a state of immobility, illegal status leads to illegal actions. At the same time, they call on the Chinese reformists to assist this alternative solution to a societal problem. As Spring and Jiao (2008, p. 60) recall, whereas President Mugabe remarked that “we are returning to the days when our greatest friends were the Chinese. We look again to the east, where the sun rises...” (Alden, 2007, p. 64); former Nigerian President Obasanjo commented that China was a role model for Africa, “this is the 21st century and China will lead the world. And when you are leading the world, we want to be close behind you. When you are going to the moon, we don't want to be left behind” (Alden, 2007, p. 69).

However, it is Nigerians who have to help themselves as Nigerian community's effort demonstrated. The ideal of the ‘role model’ leadership is especially relevant in the involvement of Nigerians in the international cocaine trade, as effective modeling is essentially influenced by factors such as attention paid; the retention and reproduction of the act; and motivation of having a good reason to imitate or to take a moral holiday (Bandura, 1977). This has shaped the view of society. Given that this environment determined their moral compass, then it is not surprising that many might turn to a life of trafficking. Nigeria state has perpetuated role models who preach, ‘do what I say but not what I do.’ Several interviewees claim that this is a crucial push factor that gears up their involvement in the illicit trade.

But leadership is about sacrifice and practicing what is preached remains a necessity in a society in search of reputation as Nigeria. The Chairman and Chief Executive of the NDLEA, Ahmadu Giade, warned drug traffickers to realize that the financial inducement offered by drug barons is insignificant compared with the damage to their reputation and families, since the organization shall continue to expose their devices until they quit the criminal trade. As a deterrent measure the anti-drug agents in Nigeria adopted a naming and shaming strategy by publishing the names of arrested and convicted offenders (NDLEA, 2007). Is this effective? Recalling the notions of “othering the otherer” (Young, 2007, p. 203), whereas the Nigerian authority point to cocaine traffickers as criminals, these point back to them as iniquitous and the real bandits because leadership has failed its citizenry. This evoke that in a society as Nigeria, which is deprived of reputable headship, disintegrative shaming that isolate or humiliate the offender could lead to defiance as result (see Braithwaite 2011, 1989, p. 55).

In redrawing the line, Nigerian Community in Guangzhou explicates the relevance of adequate role model leadership and reintegrative shaming approaches in contributing to preventing cocaine and drug trafficking. However, their work is not to fight drug matters because it remains the job of the police. Despite the general consensus, if someone is attacked or hurt because of drug dispute, the community will intervene and report the offender to the authorities. Cocaine and other drug traffickers must no longer tarnish the image and reputation of innocent Nigerian traders in Guangzhou.

9.7 Summary

China is a major player as Africa and Nigeria's hope for participation and/or enjoying the fruits of globalization. This section deliberated the Nigerian community response to cocaine trafficking and other crimes committed by Nigerians in Guangzhou, China. They have demonstrated at micro and meso-levels the ability to provide answers to reduction of Nigerian involvement in cocaine trafficking.

Pioneers of the Nigerian community are creating a permissive environment to live and function within their transitory status, contesting geographically bounded notions of ‘at homeness.’ Although not blended into the mainstream society, these global entrepreneurs are becoming aware that cocaine or drug trafficking is short-term thinking. It compromises their

real interest in China—long-term trade. They have recognized the need to make a ‘home’ in China and recognize that they could exist as law-abiding individuals.

Communities can change with respect to crime because crime is sustained within it. If there is willingness to curtail cocaine trafficking amongst Nigerian in Guangzhou, it can be done from the inside out. This concept calls on the four imperatives of leadership: inspire trust, clarify purpose, align systems, and unleash talent. These are absolutely essential to making effective change. The Nigerian community’s actions have demonstrated that closely related to each of the four imperatives are three threads: initiative, partnership, and prevention. This means forming an executive body that engages the local authority in dialogue and volunteer market coordinators and vigilante peacekeepers to deal with the problem of street drug dealers.

Achievements of the Nigerian community in Guangzhou evoke the relevance of several criminological concepts. Drawing on the concept of situational prevention of crimes, the Nigerian community introduced discrete managerial and environmental change to reduce the opportunities of cocaine trafficking crimes to occur. Drawing attention to the “Justice Reinvestment” concept recognized the potential to create a more law-abiding society in a more effective and less costly way than the traditional detect/convict/punish approach. Reaffirms a community’s ability to re-evaluate dignity, respect and opportunity. By so doing, they shift to sustainable, renewed opportunities and choices.

Emphasized in this chapter is that people are not born democratic and decent; civility is something individuals must learn in a structured way, therefore empowering one’s existing or expanding initiatives in such a way as to get them ‘unstuck’ and moving in the appropriate direction. The Nigerian community approach to reducing cocaine trafficking and crimes amongst its co-nationals is an example to be emulated by others in Kuala Lumpur and Amsterdam, to mention only a few of the affected nations.

Rounding up this section, the approach in Guangzhou demonstrated that at macro level good governance and lenient policy could foster job creation in the private commercial sector not only for Nigerians, but also for the locals. The nature of Nigerian involvement in the international cocaine trade will be further explained in the conclusion of this work.

Chapter 10

Conclusion

10.1 Introduction

This thesis has addressed a number of issues with respect to the Nigerian involvement in global cocaine trade. It has principally paid attention to the genesis of cocaine in Nigeria and trafficking activities in the areas of brokerage and importation of cocaine from South America. Also highlighted was the role of onward trans-shipment and the distribution in China. This chapter summarizes the conclusions in relation to the formulated research questions. What is the role of Nigeria and Nigerians in the international cocaine trade? What are the mechanisms behind the success of Nigerians in the global cocaine trade? What is the involvement of Nigerians in a cocaine export country (Brazil) and in a destination country (China), and how can this involvement be explained?

This research was conducted based on the fact that much is known about Nigeria and its long and complicated history as a country, but very little information is available on the involvement of Nigerians in the cocaine trade outside the information provided by drug-enforcement agencies and the criminal justice system. Little is known about who the Nigerian drug traffickers are, how they became involved in this illegal trade and why they chose to enter into this life. The general consensus is that they have large criminal gang networks or are barons that work in partnership with South American cocaine cartels, but this is hard to demonstrate directly as Nigeria remains a no-go area for criminological researchers.

Attempting to bridge this knowledge gap, I used concepts coming from various fields of knowledge like criminological, economic, and sociological views, each of which inspired different parts of the thesis. In some cases, there are theories that refer to macro perspective in terms of economic political power, and in some cases it refers to micro level in terms of othering or social learning theories, as outlined in this work. These notions were instrumental as they assisted me to grasp and explain social processes and interactions that are directly and indirectly related to the Nigerian cocaine trafficking.

In this regard, the research method was implemented in line with the anthropology and sociology of deviance carried out by interviewing more than 150 people and observing participants in the criminogenic environment. Hence it was based principally on different types of qualitative data collected in Nigeria and in various countries abroad, including the Netherlands, Malaysia, Hong Kong, Mainland China, and Brazil. As in Chapter 1, this primary data that is based on empirical observations is complemented with secondary data in related fields: academic work, media publications, reports from various international institutions, and organizations on the Nigerian international cocaine traffickers.

My findings are different from the dominant surrounding images of 'Nigerian drug barons and their cronies' as patterning to sophisticated transnational criminals organizations, because it demonstrates that they principally engage in ad-hoc transaction operations that involve licit and illicit arrangements in which actors and businesses are connected in flexible and altering form. I found that the Nigerian cocaine trade engages a wide range of enterprises and persons, including legitimate companies, law-abiding family members or friends, and a pool of collaborators and service providers that are vital to the business as they are 'detached' from it. As a Nigerian researcher, my background allowed access to comprehend this development from the insider viewpoint. On the one side, I had insight into the social context and the different feature that contribute to the phenomenon in order to better understand its

workings both in Nigeria and abroad. On the other side, I did not always have distance from the group I studied, risking becoming assimilated and running the risk of ‘going native.’ This is consequently a blind spot, where self-evident practices or beliefs could develop. I have strived to advance an unbiased balance between the insider and outsider approach, by reminding myself of the difference between ‘understanding’ and ‘accepting’ the respondents’ truths, which remained crucial in achieving the insider perspective (Decorte & Zaitch, 2010).

Hence my work has hopefully contributed to the discussion by providing insights into the Nigerian involvement in the global cocaine trade, as well as its consequences to Nigeria and the world. It has discussed the illicit cocaine trade in Nigeria as in section one, and has traced Nigerian traffickers’ enthusiasm in Brazil and China—the giants of South America and Asia, as outlined in sections two and three.

10.2 The role of Nigeria and Nigerians in the global cocaine trade

The role of Nigerians in the international cocaine trade is the brokerage of small, medium, and large quantities of South American cocaine smuggled from Brazil especially, the main exporter nation (UNODC, 2013), into Nigeria and into international markets. This role is enhanced by the country’s accessible location, which in terms of movement, foster bulky transshipment of cocaine in several ways. Firstly, the geographical location of Nigeria and the sub region and its proximity to cocaine production nations across the Atlantic Ocean offer a comparative advantage for Nigerian and South American drug traffickers in terms of movement, as shipment from Brazil to Nigeria takes about nineteen days, and from South Africa to the Gulf of Guinea is about two days or a six hour flight (Carson, 2009).

Secondly, in terms of transshipment, I found that the role of Nigerians in the global cocaine business is based on a high number of potential participants. This thesis distinguished the major actors into six groups: (1) *Oga* (‘big man’) large-scale smuggler, (2) small scale traffickers of entrepreneurs deploying the services of strikers, (3) ‘suicide birds’ or couriers (4), part-time couriers/ ‘freelance’ traffickers (5), and (6) retailers. Actors can play roles in different stages of cocaine trafficking.

Elite of all sorts in public and private sectors, both indigenous or of foreign origins in the country make up the most powerful actors or large-scale smugglers. They have money or the connections to import and export large quantity of cocaine.

The second group is the small-scale traffickers. This is a large group because entrepreneurs importing up to 20 kilos of cocaine characterizes this cluster, suppliers of varied items in different markets. Amongst these are educated and uneducated, female and mostly male traders. These entrepreneurs also deploy the services of strikers and couriers to import and export cocaine from Nigeria or other transit hubs to consuming destinations in various countries.

Mostly experienced couriers, ex-couriers, and former inmates make up the third group, strikers. Decades of experience in cocaine and drug trafficking allowed them move up the rank.

The fourth, drug courier, primarily evokes exploited persons mostly poor, male and female individuals from the slums, school dropouts, disappointed ex-apprentices, and failed petty traders.

Part-time traffickers/couriers characterize the fifth group. They include despairing young men and women in Nigeria to considerably well-established migrants.

Last but not the least, are the retailers. Cocaine is no longer out of the reach of the common man in Nigeria. Street dealers retail tiny raps or grams of cocaine in Lagos, and crack is available for 100 Naira. Nigerian dealers are prominent in Guangzhou, China.

This invokes that the role of Nigerians is not only limited to Nigeria. I found that the social organization of Nigerian cocaine trafficking, network, and actors, existing in many countries in sub-Sahara Africa offer excellent transport and criminogenic environments for imported cocaine to be repacked and re-exported to markets abroad.

In all, Nigeria's location and proximity to cocaine production/export countries in Latin America across the Atlantic Ocean, contributed to involvement of Nigerians in illicit global cocaine trade, to be explained next. The data collected in this research shows that different actors either intentionally or unintentionally downplay its danger or see their activity as momentary trade transactions with risk that is estimated to be acceptable. With articulated entrepreneurial skill, they see the cocaine business as one that meets the demands of consumers, and a covert activity that is open to various participants from different backgrounds—On the one hand offering opportunity to persons that may otherwise have nothing available to them; and on the other hand, apply Sykes and Matza's (1957) technique of neutralization by denial of responsibility, denial of injury, denial of victim, condemnation of the condemners, and the appeal to higher loyalties, when things go wrong. It could be said that Nigerian traffickers hop from one country to another buying and selling the illicit drug, therefore called 'Cocaine Hoppers.'

10.3 The mechanisms behind the success of Nigerians in the global cocaine trade

Though the involvement of Nigerians in the illicit global trade is demonstrated by the resilience of Nigerian traffickers, I maintain that they are not the most successful people in the international cocaine trade more so than Colombians, Italians, Dutch, Spanish, or Portuguese. Nevertheless, Nigerians are relatively successful because they have some kind of advantages based on several historical, socio-geo-political, economic and cultural factors.

Historically, Nigeria's relationship with slavery and colonialism grounded the mentality of illicit trade as discussed in Chapter 3. British colonial authority in 1934 experimented with the cultivation of the coca plant in Nigeria. Hard drug trafficking through Nigeria to overseas markets that dates back to 1952, involved Italians and Lebanese groups (Ellis, 2009). Also Nigeria's connection with the new world resulted in globalized Nigerians' descendants. This explains why Nigerian traffickers are not out of place in the Americas.

The second set of indirect mechanisms concerns a number of socio-geo-political issues in Nigeria contribute to fostering crime, including the illicit cocaine trade, as shown in Chapter 2. To start with, Nigeria's inability to shake off neo-colonial mentality fostered a divisive society, with low levels of trust, solidarity, reciprocity, and empathy. This enhanced the development of strong local identities and feeble national identity. It may be asserted that Nigeria is a country, but not a nation in the logic of having an identity that generates cohesion among its citizenry. In addition, it resulted in political instability that plunged Nigeria into a civil war (1966–1970). Directed largely at the civilian population, this led to high levels of crime as its after effects ruptures the fabric of society and its institutions. Also, this research explicated that as geo-political factors are crucial to succeed in organized illicit activities, less as social problems, backwardness, poverty, wars, than in terms of social advantages—good natural resources, modern economic infrastructures, know-how and good connections (Bovenkerk, 2001) Nigerian cocaine traffickers thrive due to the availability of good infrastructure including roads, airports, and seaports; and because Nigeria's extensive borders and riverine waterways, as West Africa's borders of more than 2,600 miles of coastline, remain mostly unguarded and porous (Harrigan, 2009).

An additional mechanism underscoring the success of Nigerian cocaine traffickers is related to political factors that concern issues of governance and social control, which have affected the Nigerian political economy, productive structure, culture, and institutional

developments. This is characterized as discussed under ‘Nigeria State Crisis’ in Chapter 2, by dysfunctional institutions, organized crime, endemic corruption, and low law observations that resulted in ‘the Nigerian Dream.’

I argue that since Nigeria got its independence, democracy and leadership has not fared well in terms of sufficient governance, consequently resulting in disquiet dysfunctional institutions and myriads of socio-economic and political issues. Primarily, a weak-central state and civil society resulted that Nigeria’s problem became a failure of leadership, as also explained by Achabe (2012). It grounded institutions that lack the capacity to perform core functions of providing public goods effectively. This resulted in a continuous power struggle, sectarian violence, and terrorism among other problems, providing a criminogenic environment for development and success of the new trend cocaine trade. Furthermore, mechanisms behind the success of Nigerians in the global cocaine trade cannot be explained without economical features that made it possible. Nigeria’s richness in natural and human resources, economic mismanagement of the oil and gas revenues, failed structural adjustment programs, and continuous political contestation marked the decline of the Nigerian state, resulting in undiversified economy, non-inclusive economic growth, soaring poverty, inequality, unemployment, relative deprivation, and crime.

Next, Nigeria is a central state that cannot perform its statehood obligations effectively, intertwined with organized crime and endemic corruption. A reason for this is that inadequate role model leadership in Nigeria resulted in an economy of plundering. Discerning where official functions end and where iniquitous activities begin is difficult to do. This is because the power struggle in post-independence Nigeria resulted in the scramble for the country’s ‘national cake’ and embezzlement with impunity (Ebbe, 2012), as ruling elite enriches and empowers, and accumulation via pilfering of resources is thus transformed into political power. For instance, whereas Nigeria under Sani Abacha—who stole more than four billion dollars—typifies ‘captured states’ or a system of government by theft and bribery. Each member of the National Assembly earns up to 2 million U.S. dollars annually (Winsor, 2015), where the minimum monthly salary is less than \$100 USD and 70% of the populace live in poverty.

Nigerian traffickers’ success also relies on Nigerian organized crime’s criminal structure, which employs some basic principles of the Italian mafia and American organized crime (Siegel & van de Bunt, 2012). It is embedded in political, economical, socio-cultural, and external forces that resulted in four types: politicians, state ministers, federal government departments, and business organized crime. They draw on the fact that two or more persons could, with continuity of purpose, conspire to engage in committing various crimes including predatory crimes and the supply of illegal goods and services, as in the illicit cocaine trafficking. The implications of high-ranked officials and the Nigeria state under military regime in drug trafficking accredited Nigeria ‘the hub of African narcotics trafficking.’ The achievements of Nigerian international cocaine traffickers therefore draw on the mechanisms that institutionalized corruption; organized crime and society are linked, because the illegal world has a meaningful relationship with the legal world. In this way, Nigerian traffickers recall to mind Ruggiero’s (1996, p. 33) fundamental concept that organized crime can only reproduce itself if it develops external relationships with corporate crime, the state, street crime, and society at large.

The third group of mechanisms fostering the success of Nigerian cocaine traffickers concerns some cultural features that are related to social control, anomie and low law observations as discussed in Chapter 2, which engulfs other sub-cultural notions like ‘reversed social capital’ and ‘othering.’ In combination, these views interact to enhance directly and indirectly the adrenaline-fuelled new trend cocaine trade—as outlined in Chapters 3, 4 and 7—in pursuit of the Nigerian Dream or success by whatever means. Powered by the endemic

culture hooked on worshipping money, wealth, and status regardless of means, this dream draws on a state of ethical normlessness or deregulation pertaining to an individual or a society to show Nigeria's resemblance to situations of anomie, and Nigerians' adaptation to strain (Durkheim 1964, 1965; Merton, 1938). Findings from my interviews reveal that Nigerian global cocaine trafficking is reaction to perceived strain for several reasons. First, transformation in social structure and social ethos exalted individual competition and offered incessant and ever-retreating goals. Archiving this goal, as in the 'American Dream,' where the cultural emphasis on success at any cost, and limited opportunities create a strain (Merton, 1938, p. 24), push many hopeless and chanceless Nigerians into the international cocaine trade. It is an adaptation to strain through the innovative creation of new means to achieve cultural and material solutions to contradictions in the wide society.

Next, I contend that low law observation in Nigeria has resulted in economic crime being defined merely as activities that generate income and wealth. Because widespread informal economy and smuggling activities are common, breaking laws became patterned in Nigerian history. This implies that they are to a great extent socially acceptable and habitually encouraged, be it sending underage girls to prostitution abroad or the financial fraud known as 419. As demonstrated in this research, Nigerian cocaine trafficking flows along this mentality, showing its resemblance to 'Asia Drama,' the archetypal third world where breaking rules and flouting law is a cultural norm rather than exception (Myrdal, 1968). In other words, these were accepted as normal and justified because of inequality, poverty, social exclusion, and other rationales are accepted as part of Nigeria's development.

Another mechanism behind the Nigerian success in the global cocaine trade is that anti-drug laws and measures to combat them remains inconsequential if there are devoid of the political will and professional human capacity to implement them. The impunity enjoyed by Nigerian drug lords stem from their skill in neutralizing the work of law enforcement agents and the criminal justice system, as they use the 'language of money' in Brazil (Huguet & de Carvalho, 2008), 'protective umbrella' (Lo & Kwok, 2012) in China, and 'Long leg' as popularly known in Nigeria to keep their businesses running. My findings show that Nigerian cocaine traffickers do not operate in vacuity. They rely on the support from social groups and public officials. They bank on the criminal authority, which reflects the existence of powerful criminal actors and organizations, the relative weakness and exposure of street-level police, and an asymmetric balance of power between the extralegal spaces occupied by these coercive criminal groups and the formal legal space of law and state power. As Willis (2014) also found, the police are pragmatic and relatively autonomous actors that (must) find ways to navigate this asymmetry. As outlined in Chapter 3, through this way, Nigerian traffickers clear containerized goods with cocaine concealed and assist couriers to evade control against payment of bribe and kickbacks to unscrupulous law enforcement agents, public administrators, or 'middlemen.' I claim that a key mechanism behind the success of Nigerian traffickers remains that the offense hardly attracts punishment when it involves the elite, particularly in Nigeria. This is a mistaken gesture to the youth—that indulging in cocaine trade would only attract mild punishment, when someone is well connected. Findings in this work show that Nigerian traffickers succeed because, as shown also by Arias (2010), that unscrupulous law enforcement agents commonly demand their share of the drug profits or extorts cash under threats of arrest thereby exacerbating the problem they were meant to assist.

In addition, I argue in this thesis that the elite stakeholders' participation in cocaine trade did not only inspire Nigerian global cocaine traffickers, but also paved the way for vulnerable individuals to engage in illicit acts to raise money for achieving a political goal, as the Nigerian senator-elect wanted in the United States for drug deal was arrested (Faul: 23-05-2015). This research emphasizes that high rate of unemployed youths and delinquents or 'Area Boys' are visibly 'idle.' Disappointments from traditional apprenticeship and distant

inheritance systems leave young Nigerians deprived of capital to start private business. As a mechanism, Nigerian global cocaine traders turn out well because the pools of desperate anomic youth represent ‘shock troops’ of deviant activities. I found that relative deprivation suffered by Nigerian youth adds up to Fajnzylber et al. (2002) notions that poverty and unemployment could pave way for criminal behavior, as discussed in Chapter 2. I sustain that the lack of alternatives in Nigeria leaves the chanceless and hopeless anomic youth connecting with criminal networks including international cocaine trafficking, contributing as mechanisms behind the success of Nigerians in the global cocaine trade.

Furthermore, culturally, I assert that Nigerian delicacies and cultural eating habit of swallowing the staple food *fufu* is a paramount comparative advantage that makes it easier for couriers to ingest wrapped cocaine for air travel. Demonstrated in this research remains that the slums in Nigeria as in various countries—which results from economic and social disparities, governments’ withdrawal and vilification of a segment the population as a despicable underclass (Wacquant, 2004, 2009)—maintain an army of desperate, unemployed, potential traffickers. These also see drug trafficking as a way of making ends meet. Once recruited, they become part of the ‘shotgun approach,’ or placing as many as 24 couriers sent on a single flight accredited to Nigerian international cocaine trade. Besides, Nigerian cocaine traffickers frequently consult pastors for prayers/blessings, and Juju/voodoo ritual priests or fortune-tellers to invoke ancestral magical powers, as protective mechanisms to boost their luck, swear oaths of allegiance, and enhance mental and emotional mindsets to overcome the risk of fear involved in trafficking act. Therefore, I claim that as mechanism these features paramount aspects underpinning the achievements of Nigerian cocaine traffickers.

In this regard, as the ingenuity and entrepreneurial skills of Nigerian cocaine traders attracted the attention of smugglers wanting their services in South America and Asia, Nigerian illicit cocaine traders mastered the technique fast. For a good financial return, they adulterate pure cocaine with other chemicals available locally prior to re-exportation to markets overseas. Adulterants imitate some of the biological effects of cocaine to increase its perceived quality, and diluents act as simple fillers to enhance the bulk and consequently the profits of the drug dealer. I found that this is one reason why pure cocaine is in high demand in Nigeria. In addition, Nigerian cocaine traders have the ability to plan, coordinate, and execute numerous multifaceted responsibilities involved in business transaction and liquidity management.

Contemporary worldwide interconnectedness and technology enhanced the success of Nigerian cocaine traders in several ways. Travel is made is easy and cell phones are importantly characteristic of Nigerian traffickers, as Zaitch (2005) also found that paradoxically, a will to restrict its use for security reasons clashes with more objective needs. Because of unexpected changes and improvisation, they have to make calls to check, confirm, or repeat instructions. Deals involving thousands or even millions of dollars are closed by pure verbal communication, often in difficult to translate languages. Friends contribute money to make bulky orders of desirable goods that meets the target. Scanning a large number of travelers or bulky goods for illicit items remains difficult for law enforcement agents.

In all, I found that these historical, socio-geo-political, economic, and cultural factors amongst others interact in combination as mechanisms to foster the involvement of Nigerians in the global cocaine trader.

10.4 Nigerian cocaine strikers in Brazil and China

This research shows that the involvement of Nigerians in a cocaine export country (Brazil) and in a destination country (China) underlines their participation in the globalization of drug market; the idea that cocaine market that started as an American establishment, got expanded

to Europe and then to Africa and Asia. Though cocaine consumption remained and remains something for the Americas, Europe, and Oceania, as also noted by UNODC (2014), there is emerging cocaine use in Africa and Asia, which is related to the rise in trafficking through Africa and increased affluence in both continents. Nigeria, like Brazil, entered the trafficking equation first as a transit hub and later on as consumer nation, and China is becoming relevant in this area. This shall be discussed in the conclusions ahead.

10.4.1 Recall on the giant of South America

My findings show that the recent trend of immigration of Nigerians traffickers to Brazil started in late the 1970s, following Nigerian government's scholarship scheme that sent students to countries like the USA, Canada, Italy, Russia, and Brazil. I contend that this influx has increased since then for many reasons: First, whereas some succeeded, others dropped out, mainly due to the governments' inability for continued financing of the scholarship scheme. Primarily, because military dictatorship, economic mismanagement, and failed structural adjustment programs in the 1980s resulted in series of macro-economic policies changes like currency devaluation, trade liberalization, downsizing of the public sector, and fiscal and governance reforms, which almost bankrupted Nigeria. Furthermore, these factors interacted in combination with the negative effects of the Nigeria state crisis like endemic corruption and embezzlement to affect adversely the lives of the masses, as discussed in Chapter 2. This meant that most parents could not sponsor their children's education disappointed by the scholarship scheme. In addition, most students stayed in Brazil upon completion, not wanting to return to the deteriorated standard of life in Nigeria. I claim that, whereas most succeeded professionally as doctors, lawyers, and entrepreneurs, for some dropouts in pursuit of the Nigerian dream, cocaine traffickers became an attractive alternative, which engaged them as middlemen for Brazilian and Latin American cocaine traffickers. Among the explanations that fostered this include that cocaine trafficking and use became prominent in the region, especially in Brazil—the number one exporter of cocaine in the world (UNODC, 2013). Brazil's geographical location is close to the three main cocaine producing countries, Bolivia, Peru, and Colombia, as well as Brazil's large urban population and its growing trade with Nigeria, as discussed in Section 2.

Second, I maintain that having discovered a way out, Nigerian cocaine traffickers call upon susceptible family members and close others to join the influx through chain migration, which brings 'transplanted' social relations (Higuchi, 2006) and more or less a continuous social relation that fosters concentration of about 5,000 Nigerians in São Paulo, according to the Nigerian Community director, Kingsley Ikechukwu. Therefore, the flow persists because adaptation to strain to achieve cultural and material solutions to contradictions in the society, presents itself to Nigerians not only in the form of a chaos, reward, and identity, but also in the form of an incoherent sense of unfairness and ontological insecurity—a powerlessness to meet the heightened goals and self-actualization.

This research explicated that Brazil offers opportunity to integrate into the mainstream economy, as members of Nigerian traffickers say themselves. Dissimilar to China, Brazil is a multi-cultural society with historical link to Nigeria as outlined in Chapter 6. This means that Nigerians in Brazil are not out of place. Second, differing to the rampant view of achieving legal status as being difficult, I found that there are several avenues to get legalized in Brazil, according to article 75 of decree 98.961 and as Padovani (2013) also found, "deportation of foreigners convicted of trafficking narcotics and related drugs" would only not occur if "the foreigner had: a Brazilian spouse from whom she or he was not divorced or separated, in fact or by law, and as long as the marriage had been celebrated more than five years ago." In

addition, deportation is not realized "when the foreigner has: a Brazilian child, that is proven to be under his or her care and depends on he or she economically."

I argue that although these opportunities in Brazil are not comparable to those in many countries globally, it is wishful thinking achieving a successful life through legitimate opportunities for most. One reason behind this is that, whereas Brazil is not an ethnic close, it remains a meritocratic society equally affected by the disentanglement of the world of work, which resulted in decreased primary labor market of safe careers and increased secondary labor market of flexibility and insecurity. I assert that most Nigerian traffickers associate low paid jobs with the very issue they are running away from—poverty and its connotation. Instead, they would rather be affluent, as Therborn (2011, 1985) pointed out inequalities in Latin America and to the 'Brazilization' of advanced capitalism with its threefold portrayal of society into the rich, the insecure middle, and the excluded poor. I found that a crucial challenge Nigerian traffickers face is the paradox that the financial constraint of a legitimate job lures big money from cocaine trafficking when successful. Generally, they also lack adequate professional qualifications and work skills in a fast changing world, which is a reason certain jobs are so daunting. Another explanation is that, efforts to quiet the illicit cocaine trade are jeopardized as financial constraint to meet up extended family obligations makes some Nigerians vulnerable to part-time cocaine trafficking even though they work legally. For instance, a contribution of \$500 USD dollars for a 10 gram ad-hoc deal could deliver \$5,000 USD return, manifold modes of income often beneath the tracking system of the authority, as learned techniques and motives, drives, rationalizations, and attitudes which go against law-abiding actions (Sutherland, 1947), allow them to justify the act. Through this way, cocaine trafficking offered a risky but acceptable way out for many.

I found that professional, integrated Nigerians tend to distance themselves from new arrivals that the illicit trade attracted, as involvement in cocaine trafficking reinforces Nigeria's image and stigmatized all. *Os trafficantes Nigerianos* make news headlines. On the other hand, it is said that professional Nigerians portray themselves as elites that do not want to associate with others. Because othering, or essentialising the other, seeks to transfer the problem area, "to purge impurities, to wall off the stranger" (Gitlin, 1995, p. 233), Nigerian cocaine traffickers contribute to everyday narratives of crime in São Paulo. Through this way, they provoke perpetual feelings of fear that in turn create stereotypes that exacerbate the divide. This division widens the gulf amid two different groups of Nigerians having two varied vested interests. Whereas it is a mechanism for the respected professional Nigerians to protect their reputation and interest in the society, the division diminishes the chance of a coherent Nigeria community and the ability of the society to restrain some human behavior. On one side, there are individuals that believe effort, delayed gratification, and meretricious progress towards a goal has given way to instant gratification and short-term hedonism. On the other side, the upholders of quasi-rational response to a violation of meritocratic principles seek to punish receivers of reward disproportionate to their merit, as discussed in Chapter 5.

Different from the view of organized group working in harmony, I found that Nigerian international cocaine traffickers also cheat themselves. Some Nigerian traffickers become members of traditional organized crime groups and gangs—as the satanic and wealth-oriented secret societies or *Ogboni*, which guarantee members wealth and prosperity, and untouchable *Osu* sorcery societies that equally use 'witchcraft'—to foster achievements. I claim that they operate within and between these sub-cultures at different levels within the cocaine trafficking chain, deploying their social capital amid those willing to misuse the law at fitting times to enhance the new trend illicit cocaine trafficking. They claim it is needed because some Nigerian cocaine traffickers have experienced disappointments.

Cursorily, it seems most undocumented Nigerians in São Paulo engage in drugs if they want to survive. This research emphasizes the ingenuity of some Nigerians wanting a change,

a view to blend into the mainstream economy, which needs to be encouraged. I argue Brazil offers good opportunities for undocumented aliens to regularize, build a future, and live a respectable life. To change and archive an acceptable degree of ‘integration’ in the mainstream economy, first and foremost, it is important to learn the host language, acquire a good education, and work hard. I contend that Nigerian traffickers in São Paulo need to redefine success.

I found that whereas adapting or integrating is a personal choice, given the opportunity, the emotional or cultural baggage one possesses, the need to learn the host language remains fundamental to integration, as it demonstrates certain level of inclusion in the society-inclusive prison. One area that highlights the communication hindrance is when someone gets arrested and a legal representative is needed, where most do not speak English well. For a lawyer that does not speak English well, he or she has no option than to start imagining things.

My findings show that Nigerians are among the highest number of foreign inmates in Brazil. Whereas most prisoners are denied rights as stipulated by international standards, Nigerian inmates’ inability to hire a lawyer and to meet up requirements limits granting them progression and parole. Nigerians outside are reluctant to stand guarantee for them, because they avoid coming in contact with the criminal justice system, as they don’t want to risk guilt by association. For the Nigerian inmates I interviewed, this means that they are placed consequently in a state of dual stillness—on the one hand trapped in jail and on the other, distanced by co-nationals. In this view, I claim that it is less that the authorities make it difficult for Nigerians, and more because they could not provide the needed documents necessary for allowing parole.

I argue that Nigerians in São Paulo need order in society, instead of blaming others for the misfortune in illicit cocaine trade. By so doing, they will strive to change the status quo of stigmatized cocaine traffickers and Nigerians at large. Secondly, this will reduce the general feeling that those who work little or not at all are living at the expense of the taxes payers. Thirdly, it will assist to decrease influx of Nigerians into prison and its costs to society.

They will demonstrate that taking initiative is about being proactive and using individuals’ innate power of self-choice. It is not only individuals that have the ability to choose how they will respond to any given stimulus. As a community, Nigerians also have this ability, which is vital for not succumbing to the victim mentality. For the torchbearers, it implies that giving up their communities in São Paulo to drug trafficking is giving up on ability to adapt and change. Therefore, I claim that a functioning Nigerian community could benefit from Guangzhou’s experience, where integration was desirable but the opportunities were limited.

10.4.2 Recap in Asia’s giant

This research shows that China’s relevance is due to its prominent position in international trade, which is growing in Africa and in Latin America as well. Whereas the largest quantity of cocaine uncovered in Nigeria is linked to Chinese and Taiwanese traffickers and their Nigerian associates, the centrality of this work and why China calls to mind that China has millions of people demographically. I argue that if the cocaine trade and use grows in China, this could lead to increase in price, trafficking, and repression. For this reason, China is a good case, though is not yet a major consumer but it might be in the future, as Hong Kong is coming up as a transit hub in terms of quantity of cocaine seized as discussed in Section 3.

My findings show an enclave of Nigerian traffickers in a totally different environment despite an extremely high level of punishment in China. This makes it important to analyze why Nigerian traffickers are going there. I contend that Nigerian cocaine traffickers found a best match in their novel environment for several reasons: the participation of Chinese

nationals in international illicit cocaine trade, and the existence of the heroin trafficking tradition from the Golden Triangle, as highlighted in Chapter 7. The growing economy is the second best world economy and China's middle class today is already large in absolute terms—at 157 million people, only the United States has a larger middle class, as noted also by (Kharas, 2010, p. 30), this is why so many retailers and businesses are already eager to penetrate the Chinese market. Above all, the new millennium has seen an increase of cocaine users in Hong Kong, as Yueying et al. (2008) noted, according to the Central Registry of Drug Abuse (CRDA), the number of cocaine users above 21 years old increased from 31 in 2000 to 696 in 2007. Nigerian traffickers' activities in China evoke that economic booms goes together with increase in consumption of cocaine, which happened earlier in other countries, like Spain, Italy, or the U.S..

The explanation of the involvement of cocaine hoppers in Brazil and China can be found in the contemporary processes of globalization of the drug trade as afore mentioned. Nigerian and Brazil are historically linked with illicit trade. Whereas luring in Nigerian traders, China equally attracted the new trend illicit cocaine traffickers, as Spring and Jiao's (2008) argued, China's opening-up policy of 'Bringing in' and 'Going out' also took in inherent undesirable ideas and lifestyle. Endorsed here is the notion that crime results equally from direct or indirect dependency and exploitation by core rich countries of poor peripheral countries. Bovin's (2010) views that the world systems with respect to cocaine trafficking highlight an organized trade that inextricably links the developed and underdeveloped countries.

I assert that Nigerian cocaine traffickers are characterized by transnational mobility, they depend on multiple and constant interconnections across international borders, constructing and reconstructing embeddedness in more than one society. Essential here is the notion that by expanding existing networks or switching to other networks through the use of social ties, criminal groups are able to access new markets and discover new opportunities for criminal activities (Van de Bunt et al, 2014, p. 9; Oboh, 2011). Nigerian cocaine traffickers forge and sustain simultaneous multi-stranded social relations that link together not only Nigeria and host societies, but also with the developed-world representatives of large corporations and underdeveloped-world's transnational flow of people and goods involving relatively small amounts of capital and the blurred borders of formal and informal economies. As Nigerian traffickers show this relationship between 'high-end globalization' and 'low-end globalization' (Mathews & Yang, 2012), I claim that international drug trafficking is an enterprising activity both alike and very dissimilar to legal businesses. Its trading outline is comparable to that provided by luxury goods and leisure, affordable only by a select few at very high prices in a world where their activity has a global impact. Nigerian global cocaine traffickers follow the 'goods.' Where there is a fundamental disagreement about what is right as well as a connection to the global market, as Gilman et al. (2011) deviant globalization's entrepreneurs, Nigerian cocaine traffickers also arise to meet the unfulfilled demand. They emphasize that in meeting our collective desires, deviant entrepreneurs see the differences in notions of public good, morality, and health as bankable market opportunities. As discussed in Chapter 7, Neoliberalism's wide-open, market-oriented rules might govern globalization, but for the Nigerian cocaine traffickers, the game gets played on a morally inconsistent field.

I maintain that whereas Nigerian traffickers' role in Brazil is mainly forwarding cocaine from São Paulo to associates globally, in China they are also prominent in street dealing as discussed in Chapter 8. By strategically constructing extensive networks in cocaine exportation and destination countries, Nigerian traffickers have access to quality cocaine at a good price. They strike a balance between norms of group solidarity and more instrumental linkages across social cleavages, exemplifying as also noted by Woolcock and Narayan's (2000), effective network governance necessary for "getting the social relations right" to

foster their achievements. Contrary to NDLEA (2012), which sees them as formalized cartels or poly-criminal organizational groupings, I found that the new trend traffickers adhere to small, flexible, and adaptive ad-hoc networks. They expand and contract to deal with the uncertainties of the cocaine trafficking business in Nigeria and Brazil, and China. Because as foreign traffickers they cannot succeed without the participation of local partners, Nigerian traffickers flow with the concepts of enterprise model, alliances of bold risk takers who seize opportunities to make profits on investments.

Furthermore, my findings show that many Nigerian traffickers aim to make profit and protect their wealth by deploying risk-minimizing strategies. Recalling the role played by violence, trust and secrecy as shown by Zaitch (2002) and Siegel and van de Bunt (2012), Nigerian cocaine traffickers resort to kidnapping in Nigeria as Brazil and violence in China in the dearth of external regulating devices, rely mostly on trust in the absence of written agreements and keep their activities secret to avoid detection. This research explicates Nigerian cocaine traffickers that have mastered cocaine trafficking techniques fast. First and foremost, they built on the separation of functions between all levels; create compartmentalized and 'isolated' networks that deploy mobile phones to communicate in indigenous languages to secure their anonymity, impenetrability and self-protection; specialize in trafficking mainly small quantities of cocaine and control the couriers who deliver directly to associates in destination countries, rely on a mutual relationship with unscrupulous law enforcement agents and pool of would be traffickers, and launder financial proceed less riskily, recycled promptly through goods exported to Nigeria and African markets. Second, Nigerian cocaine traffickers in Brazil and China invest back home. Due to the receptive environment created by Nigerian state crisis such investments is mostly assured. They justify it as siphoned Nigeria's wealth is 'protected' in various banks globally. They contend that money invested in Nigeria sets an example of what the stakeholders fail to do. They contribute to local economies in Brazil and China, use underground banking and maintain families and relatives in Nigeria. They create jobs by investing in all sorts of commercial activities. They are held in high esteem because they fill the gap the government left. Evoking that they are not only poor couriers, they are also 'businessmen and women' who claim to uphold the development of Nigeria.

Amin's (1974) notion makes relevant clarifications concerning Nigeria's paradox situation, a wealthy but a poor country. Firstly, it emphasized goal mechanisms of incessant primitive accumulation of capital accumulated for speculative reasons. Secondly, unrightfully amassed assets in the hands of this class incapable of at last transforming this hoarded wealth into actual means of production and value added economy. This work underlines that government by bribery and theft has exacerbated inequalities and widespread irritations that resulted in militarized insurgences in the Niger delta or the Boko Haram terrorism, both groups linked to drug smuggling to finance their activities, as discussed in Chapter 2. This fosters cocaine trafficking because national wealth needed to develop the country is robbed and siphoned to countries where it creates development. Ironically Nigeria leaders borrow back as loan, meaning that the inability to invest and enhance the concept of added value to natural resources in Nigeria reflects the stakeholders' short-comings, as Amin's (1974) also noted, that relations between the formations of the 'developed' world and that of the 'underdeveloped' world are affected by transfer of value. This is because whenever the capitalist mode of production enters into relations with pre-capitalist modes of production, and subjects these to it, transfers of value take place as a result of the mechanisms of primitive accumulation.

This thesis equally claims that the new trend in cocaine trading is a product of a mentality that sees it as a 'legitimate' means of financial success in Nigeria. In contrast to traditional social capital theory, 'reverse' social capital encourages illegal and criminal

behavior as a way to advance in society. Resulting in networks that allow drug traffickers, police, custom officials, and politicians to both perpetuate and even encourage the Nigerian international cocaine trafficking. Because Nigerian traffickers, civic leaders, and state officials build connections to each other, they bring together, as Arias also wrote, functionally differentiated actors who have diverse skills and experiences that can contribute to ongoing criminal activity (2006, p. 318). I agree that Nigerian traffickers illustrated how goods from unregulated or illegal third world context are integrated into formal sector production and distribution system, signifying the emergence of “an economy in which interrelationships rather than distinct sectors are the norm” (Klein, 1999).

Additionally, the involvement of Nigeria and Nigerians in the global cocaine trade exemplify, as Klitgaard’s (2010) also asserted, that it is the collective actions or inactions of the people in relationship with one another in Nigeria that determines the economic outcome of such society. In a context in which corruption is the expected behavior (as evidenced in Nigeria) there will basically be no actors, by and large, willing to take on the role of controlling corruption. Cocaine hoppers’ achievements in Nigeria, Brazil and China elucidate how condemnation and acceptance coexist in a society.

In the dominant criminogenic environment in Nigeria, I found an explanation that perpetuates Nigerian society in a costly state of immobility. Involvement in the global cocaine trafficking confines Nigerian traffickers into recidivism, imprisonment and death. As mentioned in Chapter 1, for instance, four of the seven men shot by Indonesian police firing squads on 28th April 2015 were Nigerians. Deployment of fraudulent passport aggravates the dark number of Nigerian inmates globally, as highlighted in chapter 8. Desertion by Embassy and absence of family members place them in double state of immobility as seen in Sections 2 and 3.

10.5 *Naijas*’ (popular name for Nigerians) in Brazil and China: Same phenomenon, different pick!

Despite the threat of long imprisonments in Brazil, Nigerian traffickers persist in São Paulo. In spite of extremely harsh sanctions, Nigerian dealers remain prominent in bar districts of Guangzhou. Above all, I claim that their success in China, neglecting capital punishment, elucidates more the perseverance and resilience in trying to arrive at and negotiate the physical ‘edge’ of daring, endurance and hope to accomplishing self-actualization. They show that playing with the invitational edge (Ferrell, Hayward, & Young, 2008) of cocaine trafficking in Brazil and China often carries a sense of adventure, excitement, and enchantment.

Opportunities in Brazil are not comparable to those in many countries globally. Yet, Nigerian international cocaine traffickers ignore these ‘opportunities’ for undocumented aliens to regularize, built a future, and live a respectable life. I found that the reason for ignoring is the paradox of dealing with constrains of low-paid legitimate job on the one hand and huge financial reward from the widespread informal economies, and cocaine trafficking when successful on the other hand. Most Nigerian traffickers in Brazil pursue wishful thinking of achieving a successful life through the illicit trade. Whereas this recalls Robert Agnew’s (1985) view on low in conventional social support and operating in situations where the costs of crime are low and the rewards are high; it also evokes generally that they lack adequate professional qualifications and work skills in a fast changing world.

Contrary to Brazil, China offers little possibilities for Nigerian cocaine traffickers and undocumented individuals to engage in mainstream activities. Guangzhou is exceptional because awareness about the negative consequences of involvement of Nigerians in the illegal cocaine business activated a pragmatic Nigerian community’s leadership response to the

phenomenon. The constructive engagement of Nigerians with Guangzhou authorities resulted in orientating some traffickers to earning a respectable living through legal commercial activities, an alternative mind-set on fighting Nigerian cocaine trafficking. As a community they made a conscious choice that focused on prevention, where it is everyone's job to contribute to deter engagement in drug trafficking, as discussed in Chapter 9. Their good role model leadership initiative in Guangzhou has kick-started the Nigerian community and organizational shifts from hopelessness and despair to expand new horizons.

The Nigerian community used the widespread African concept of shame management, restorative justice interventions, and re-integrative shaming that resulted in less offending by not stigmatizing offenders. Their approach, which reduces participation of their co-nationals in cocaine trafficking, elucidates the relevance of implementing programs designed to tackle the underlying problems that contributes to the involvement of Nigerians in the international cocaine trafficking.

This thesis shown that Nigerians can change and Nigerian involvement in the global cocaine trade can be reduced by adequate governance and community-led interventions, which could be achieved through the initiative of a motivated Nigerian leader with heart, soul, and mind capable of altering the status quo. The Nigerian community in Guangzhou introduced change by creating 'a stairway to reform' from micro to macro level. I claim that this is an inside-out approach starting from below with 'role model leadership' to the top: 'a rebranded Nigeria;' grounded not upon solipsism, but rather on inclusive transformative politics based on adherence to the rule of law and delivering on adequate socio-economic public goods to enable people to achieve a good standard of life. When correctly followed, the 'stairway to reform' could contribute to mitigate the attraction of several chanceless and hopeless individuals to cocaine trafficking.

Development needs a mentality, which populace ought to learn in a structured way. The Nigerian community's approach to reducing cocaine trafficking and crimes among its co-nationals in China can be seen as an example to be emulated by other countries and communities facing the harms around illicit cocaine trafficking.

Samenvatting (Dutch Summary)

Inleiding

Dit proefschrift heeft een aantal kwesties met betrekking tot de Nigeriaanse betrokkenheid in de mondiale cocaïnehandel aan de orde gesteld. Het heeft voornamelijk aandacht besteed aan het ontstaan van cocaïne in Nigeria, drugshandelpraktijken op het gebied van tussenhandel en import van cocaïne uit Zuid-Amerika. Bovendien kwam de rol van verdere doorvoer en distributie in China aan bod. Dit hoofdstuk vat de conclusies ten aanzien van de geformuleerde onderzoeksvragen samen. Wat is de rol van Nigeria en Nigerianen in the internationale cocaïnehandel? Wat zijn de mechanismen achter het succes van Nigerianen in de wereldwijde cocaïnehandel? Hoe zijn Nigerianen betrokken bij een cocaïne uitvoerland (Brazilië) en bij een invoerland (China), en hoe kan deze betrokkenheid worden verklaard?

Dit onderzoek werd uitgevoerd gebaseerd op het feit dat veel bekend is over Nigeria en haar lange en ingewikkelde geschiedenis als een land, maar zeer weinig bekend is over de betrokkenheid van Nigerianen in de cocaïnehandel behalve de informatie afkomstig van drugswethandhavingsinstanties en het strafrechtstelsel. Er is weinig bekend over wie de Nigeriaanse drugshandelaren zijn, hoe ze betrokken raakten bij deze illegale handel en waarom ze voor dit leven kozen. De algemene consensus is dat zij grote criminele bendenetwerken vormen of dat ze baronnen zijn die samenwerken met de Zuid-Amerikaanse cocaïne kartels, maar dit is moeilijk direct aantoonbaar aangezien Nigeria een *no-go area* blijft voor criminologische onderzoekers.

Om deze kenniskloof te overbruggen heb ik concepten uit verschillende kennisvelden gebruikt zoals criminologische, economische, en sociologische inzichten, welke aan verschillende delen van dit proefschrift bijdroegen. In sommige gevallen refereren theorieën aan macroperspectieven in de zin van economische politieke macht, en in andere gevallen refereren ze aan microniveaus in de zin van *othering* of sociaal lerende theorieën, zoals uiteengezet in dit werk. Deze noties waren doelmatig omdat ze mij hielpen om grip te krijgen op en de sociale processen en de interacties te verklaren, die direct en indirect te maken hebben met de Nigeriaanse cocaïnehandel.

Op deze wijze werd de onderzoeksmethode uitgevoerd in overeenstemming met de antropologie en sociologie van afwijkend gedrag, uitgevoerd door meer dan 150 mensen te interviewen en door deelnemers in de criminogene omgeving te observeren. Zodoende was het voornamelijk gebaseerd op verschillende typen kwalitatieve data verzameld in Nigeria en in verschillende landen waaronder, Nederland, Maleisië, Hongkong, het vasteland van China, en Brazilië. Evenals in hoofdstuk 1, wordt deze primaire data die gebaseerd is op empirische observaties, aangevuld met secundaire data in aanverwante velden: academisch werk, media publicaties, rapporten van verschillende internationale instellingen en organisaties met betrekking tot de internationale Nigeriaanse cocaïnehandelaren.

Mijn bevindingen verschillen van de dominante beelden rondom 'Nigeriaanse drugsbaronnen en hun kompanen' als patronen van geavanceerde transnationale criminele organisaties, omdat ze aantonen dat zij zich voornamelijk bezig houden met ad hoc transacties waarbij legale en illegale regelingen getroffen worden waarbij deelnemers en bedrijven in een flexibele en steeds wisselende vorm betrokken zijn. In mijn onderzoek bleek dat de Nigeriaanse cocaïnehandelaar zich bezighoudt met een breed scala van ondernemingen en personen, inclusief legale bedrijven, wetgetrouwe familieleden of vrienden en een vat vol handlangers en dienstverleners die vitaal voor de zaak zijn omdat ze 'er los van staan'. Als een Nigeriaanse onderzoeker kreeg ik door mijn achtergrond toegang om deze ontwikkeling vanuit het gezichtspunt van de insider te begrijpen. Enerzijds had ik inzicht in de sociale

context en de verschillende elementen die bijdroegen aan het fenomeen om de werking ervan zowel in Nigeria als in het buitenland beter te begrijpen. Anderzijds bewaarde ik niet altijd afstand tot de groep die ik bestudeerde, met het risico dat ik opgenomen werd in de groep en het risico van ‘*going native*’. Hierin resulteert een blinde vlek waar vanzelfsprekende praktijken of ideeën uit voort zouden kunnen komen. Ik heb gestreefd naar een onbevooroordeelde balans tussen de insiders- en de outsiderbenadering, door mijzelf er aan te herinneren dat er een verschil is tussen het “begrijpen” van de waarheid van de respondenten en het “accepteren” ervan – hetgeen cruciaal was om het insiderperspectief aan te kunnen nemen (Tom Decorte & Damián, 2010).

Zodoende heeft mijn werk hopelijk bijgedragen aan de discussie door inzicht te geven in de Nigeriaanse betrokkenheid bij de mondiale cocaïnehandel en ook de gevolgen hiervan voor Nigeria en de wereld. Het heeft de illegale cocaïnehandel in Nigeria in deel één besproken en het heeft het enthousiasme van de Nigeriaanse handelaren voor Brazilië en China, de grootmachten van Zuid-Amerika en Azië opgespoord, zoals uiteengezet in deel twee en drie.

De rol van Nigeria en de Nigerianen in de mondiale cocaïnehandel.

De rol van de Nigerianen in de internationale cocaïnehandel is de doorverkoop van kleine, middelmatige en grote partijen van Zuid-Amerikaanse cocaïne gesmokkeld van in het bijzonder Brazilië, het voornaamste exportland, (UNODC, 2013), naar Nigeria en naar de internationale markten. Deze rol is vergroot door Nigeria’s toegankelijke ligging, die met betrekking tot verplaatsing, bulkoverslag van cocaïne op schepen op verschillende manieren mogelijk maakt. Ten eerste biedt de geografische ligging van Nigeria en de deelregio en haar nabijheid tot cocaïne producerende landen aan de andere kant van de Atlantische Oceaan, een comparatief voordeel voor Nigeria en voor Zuid-Amerikaanse drugsmokkelaars wat betreft beweging, aangezien het verschepen van Brazilië naar Nigeria ongeveer negentien dagen duurt en van Zuid-Afrika tot de Golf van Guinee ongeveer twee dagen of een vlucht van zes uur (Carson, 2009).

Ten tweede wat de overslag betreft, heb ik ontdekt dat de rol van de Nigerianen in de mondiale cocaïnebusiness gebaseerd is op een groot aantal potentiële deelnemers. Dit proefschrift onderscheidt van de voornaamste deelnemers zes groepen: (1) *Oga* (‘grote man’) groot-schalige smokkelaar; (2) kleinschalige handelaren van ondernemers die de diensten verlenen van *strikers*, (3) ‘zelfmoord vogels’ of koeriers (4); deeltijd koeriers/ ‘freelance’ handelaren (5); en (6) dealers. De deelnemers kunnen een rol spelen in de verschillende stadia van de cocaïnehandel.

Allerlei soorten elites in publieke en private sectoren, inheems of van buitenlandse origine in het land vormen de machtigste deelnemers ofwel de grootschalige smokkelaars. Zij hebben het geld of de connecties om grote partijen cocaïne in en uit te voeren.

De tweede groep bestaat uit de kleinschalige handelaren. Dit is een grote groep omdat ondernemers die tot 20 kilo cocaïne importeren dit cluster kenmerken, zij bieden verschillende spullen op verschillende markten aan. Deze groep bestaat uit geschoolde en ongeschoolde vrouwelijke en voornamelijk mannelijke handelaren. Deze ondernemers voeren ook de diensten van *strikers* en koeriers uit om de cocaïne in te voeren en uit te voeren naar en van Nigeria of andere doorgangsknooppunten naar de verbruikersbestemmingen in verschillende landen.

De derde groep, de *strikers* bestaat grotendeels uit ervaren koeriers, ex-koeriers en voormalige gedetineerden. Door tientallen jaren van ervaring in cocaïne- en drugshandel konden zij in rang stijgen.

De vierde groep die van de drugskoerier bestaat voornamelijk uit uitgebuite personen, meestal arm, man of vrouw, bewoners uit de krottenwijken, voortijdige schoolverlaters, teleurgestelde ex-leerlingen en mislukte kleine handelaren.

Deeltijd handelaren/koeriers vormen de vijfde groep. Deze varieert van wanhopige jonge mannen en vrouwen in Nigeria tot redelijk goed gesetelde migranten.

Last but not the least, zijn er de dealers. Cocaïne is niet langer buiten bereik van de gewone man in Nigeria. Straatdealers verkopen kleine wikkels of een paar gram cocaïne in Lagos, en crack is te krijgen voor 100 Naira. Nigeriaanse dealers zijn prominent aanwezig in Guangzhou, China.

Dit wijst erop dat de rol van Nigerianen zich niet beperkt tot Nigeria. Ik ontdekte dat de sociale organisatie van de Nigeriaanse cocaïnehandel, het netwerk en de deelnemers, die in veel landen van sub-Sahara Afrika bestaan, uitstekende transport en criminogene omgevingen bieden zodat geïmporteerde cocaïne opnieuw verpakt en geëxporteerd kan worden naar buitenlandse markten.

In het geheel droeg Nigeria's ligging en nabijheid tot cocaïne productie-/exportlanden in Latijns- Amerika over de Atlantische Oceaan, bij aan de betrokkenheid van Nigerianen bij illegale wereldwijde cocaïnehandel, wat vervolgens uitgelegd zal worden. De in dit onderzoek verzamelde data tonen aan dat verschillende deelnemers of opzettelijk of onbewust het gevaar bagatelliseren of ze zien hun activiteiten als tijdelijke handelstransacties met risico dat men acceptabel acht. Met uitgesproken ondernemingszin, zien ze de cocaïnebusiness als één die voorziet in een vraag van consumenten, en een heimelijke activiteit die open staat voor verscheidene deelnemers van verschillende achtergronden.— Enerzijds biedt het mogelijkheden voor personen die anders niets tot hun beschikking hebben; anderzijds passen ze volgens Sykes en Matza's (1957) neutralisatietechnieken toe door het ontkennen van verantwoordelijkheid, van letsel, van slachtoffers, het veroordelen van de veroordeler en een beroep doen op hogere loyaliteiten als dingen mis gaan. Men zou kunnen zeggen dat Nigeriaanse handelaren van het ene naar het andere land hopen terwijl ze de illegale drug kopen en verkopen, daarom worden ze 'Cocaïne Hoppers' genoemd.

De mechanismen achter het succes van de Nigerianen in de mondiale cocaïnehandel.

Hoewel de betrokkenheid van Nigerianen in de illegale wereldwijde handel aangetoond wordt door de veerkracht van de Nigeriaanse handelaren, blijf ik erbij dat ze niet het meeste succes hebben in de internationale cocaïnehandel zoals de Colombianen, Italianen, Nederlanders, Spanjaarden, of Portugezen. Niettemin zijn Nigerianen relatief succesvol omdat ze bepaalde voordelen hebben vanwege diverse historische, sociaalgeopolitieke, economische en culturele factoren.

Historisch gezien, gaf Nigeria's relatie met slavernij en kolonialisme de basis voor de mentaliteit van illegale handel zoals besproken in Hoofdstuk 3. Het Britse koloniale bestuur experimenteerde in 1934 met de verbouw van de cocoplant in Nigeria. Harddrugshandel via Nigeria naar overzeese markten dateert terug tot 1952, hierbij waren Italiaanse en Libanese groepen betrokken (Ellis, 2009). Ook door Nigeria's band met de nieuwe wereld kwamen er wereldwijd Nigeriaanse afstammelingen. Dit verklaart waarom Nigeriaanse handelaren ook op hun plaats in de Amerika's zijn.

De tweede set van indirecte mechanismen betreft een aantal socio-geopolitieke zaken in Nigeria die bijdragen aan het bevorderen van misdaad, inclusief de illegale cocaïne handel, zoals aangetoond in Hoofdstuk 2. Om te beginnen is dat Nigeria's onmacht om de neokoloniale mentaliteit van zich af te schudden die verdeeldheid in de maatschappij bevordert, met weinig vertrouwen, solidariteit, reciprociteit en empathie tot gevolg. Dit bevorderde de ontwikkeling van sterke lokale identiteiten en een zwakke nationale identiteit.

Men kan stellen dat Nigeria wel een land is maar geen natie in de zin van het bezitten van een identiteit die cohesie schept onder zijn burgerij. Bovendien, resulteerde dit in politieke instabiliteit die Nigeria in een burgeroorlog stortte (1966–1970). Deze was grotendeels gericht op de burgerbevolking en leidde tot hoge misdaadniveaus omdat de na-effecten ervan de opbouw van de maatschappij en haar instituties kapot maakt. Dit onderzoek heeft uitgelegd dat geopolitieke factoren cruciaal zijn om te slagen in georganiseerde illegale activiteiten, minder in de zin van sociale problemen, achterstand, armoede, oorlogen, meer in de zin van sociale voordelen—goede natuurlijke hulpbronnen, moderne economische infrastructuur, kennis en goede connecties (Bovenkerk, 2001). Nigeriaanse cocaïnehandelaren floreren vanwege de beschikbaarheid van een goede infrastructuur zoals wegen, vliegvelden, en zeehavens; en vanwege Nigeria's uitgestrekte grenzen en fluviale waterwegen, aangezien de West Afrikaanse grenzen van meer dan 4184 kilometer kustlijn, grotendeels onbewaakt en poreus zijn (Harrigan, 2009).

Een bijkomend mechanisme dat het succes van Nigeriaanse cocaïnehandelaren benadrukt, hangt samen met politieke factoren zoals bestuur en sociale controle, die de Nigeriaanse politieke economie, productiestructuur, cultuur, en institutionele ontwikkelingen beïnvloedt hebben. De kenmerken hiervan worden besproken onder “Nigeria State Crisis” in Hoofdstuk 2, zoals disfunctionele instituties, georganiseerde misdaad, endemische corruptie, en weinig wetnaleving resulterend in ‘the Nigerian Dream.’

Volgens mij is het in Nigeria sinds haar onafhankelijkheid niet goed gesteld met democratie en leiderschap in de zin van voldoende bestuur, met als gevolg disfunctionele instituties en talloze sociaaleconomische en politieke vraagstukken. Ten eerste zorgde een zwakke centrale staat en burgermaatschappij voor Nigeria's probleem van gebrek aan leiderschap, zoals ook door Achabe (2012) uitgelegd werd. Het legde de basis voor instituties die niet in staat zijn de kernfuncties van publieke goederen effectief te vervullen. Dit had een voortdurende machtsstrijd, sektarisch geweld en onder andere terrorisme tot gevolg, waardoor een criminogene omgeving ontstond voor de ontwikkeling en het succes van de nieuwe trend van cocaïnehandel. Verder kunnen de mechanismen achter het succes van Nigerianen in de wereldwijde cocaïnehandel niet verklaard worden zonder de economische kenmerken die het mogelijk maakten. Nigeria's rijkdom aan natuurlijke hulpbronnen en menselijk potentieel, economisch mismanagement van de olie- en gasbaten, falende structurele aanpassingsprogramma's, en voortdurende politieke twisten markeerden het verval van de Nigeriaanse staat, met als gevolg geen gediversifieerde economie, uitsluitende economische groei, sterk gestegen armoede, ongelijkheid, werkeloosheid, relatieve achterstelling, en criminaliteit.

Vervolgens is de centrale staat die haar verplichtingen niet effectief kan vervullen verstrengeld met de georganiseerde misdaad en endemische corruptie. De reden hiervoor is dat het tekortschietende leiderschapsrolmodel in Nigeria leidde tot een plunderingeconomie. Het onderscheid tussen waar officiële functies eindigen en waar oneigenlijke activiteiten beginnen is moeilijk te maken. Dit komt doordat de machtsstrijd in het Nigeria van na de onafhankelijkheid een gevecht om de “nationale cake” tot gevolg had en de verduistering hiervan ongestraft bleef (Ebbe, 2012), daar de heersende elites zichzelf verrijken en machtiger worden, en dit rijker worden door het ontvreemden van de hulpbronnen wordt zodoende omgezet in politieke macht. Bijvoorbeeld, Nigeria onder Sani Abacha—die meer dan vier miljard dollar gestolen heeft—is een schoolvoorbeeld van *captured states* ofwel een systeem van bestuur door diefstal en omkoping. Elk lid van de National Assembly verdient tot 2 miljoen U.S. dollar per jaar (Winsor, 2015), terwijl het minimumloon per maand minder dan \$100 USD is en 70% van de bevolking in armoede leeft.

Het succes van de Nigeriaanse handelaren steunt ook op de structuur van de Nigeriaanse georganiseerde misdaad, die enkele basisprincipes van de Italiaanse mafia en de

Amerikaanse georganiseerde misdaad toepast (Siegel & van de Bunt, 2012). Deze is ingebed in politieke, economische, sociaal-culturele, en externe krachten die resulteren in vier soorten: politici, ministers, federale overheidsinstellingen, en zakelijke georganiseerde misdaad. Zij zijn gebaseerd op het feit dat twee of meer personen zouden kunnen samenzweren, met een continue doelstelling, om verschillende soorten misdaden te plegen inclusief berovingen en het aanbieden van illegale goederen en diensten, zoals in de illegale cocaïnehandel. De implicaties van hoog geplaatste ambtenaren en de Nigeriaanse staat onder het militair regime in de drugshandel bezorgde Nigeria de naam van ‘het knooppunt van de Afrikaanse drug handel’. De prestaties van de Nigeriaanse internationale cocaïnehandelaren putten daarom uit mechanismen die corruptie institutionaliseren; de georganiseerde misdaad en de maatschappij zijn met elkaar verbonden, omdat de illegale wereld een betekenisvolle relatie heeft met de legale wereld. Hierom doen de Nigeriaanse handelaren denken aan Ruggiero’s (1996: 33) fundamentele concept dat georganiseerde misdaad zichzelf slechts kan reproduceren indien het externe banden ontwikkelt met bovenwereldcriminaliteit, witteboordencriminaliteit, de staat, straatcriminaliteit, en de maatschappij in zijn geheel.

De derde groep mechanismen die het succes van de Nigeriaanse cocaïnehandelaren bevordert betreft enkele culturele kenmerken die te maken hebben met sociale controle, anomie en weinig wetnaleving zoals besproken in Hoofdstuk 2, die zich mengen met andere sub-culturele noties zoals ‘omgekeerd sociaal kapitaal’ en *othering* of ‘het construeren van de ander’. Wanneer deze opvattingen samenkomen, vindt er een samenspel plaats dat direct en indirect de door adrenaline gevoede nieuwe trend van cocaïnehandel bevordert—zoals uiteengezet in Hoofdstuk 3, 4 en 7— de Nigeriaanse Droom najagend ofwel succes op welke manier dan ook. Gevoed door de endemische cultuur verknocht aan het aanbidden van geld, rijkdom en status ongeacht de wijze waarop dit bereikt wordt, is deze droom gebaseerd op een staat van ethische normenloosheid of deregulering behorende bij een individu of een maatschappij om Nigeria’s gelijkenis te laten zien met situaties van anomie, en de aanpassing aan spanning van de Nigerianen (Durkheim 1964, 1965; Merton 1938). Mijn bevindingen uit interviews brengen aan het licht dat de Nigeriaanse mondiale cocaïnehandel een reactie is op ervaren spanning vanwege diverse motieven. Ten eerste verheerlijkte een verandering in de sociale structuur en sociale ethos individuele wedijver en bood onophoudelijke en steeds terugtrekkende doelen. Het verwezenlijken van dit doel, zoals in de ‘American Dream,’ waar de culturele nadruk op succes hoe dan ook, en beperkte mogelijkheden voor spanning zorgen (Merton 1938: 24), duwen veel hopeloze en kansloze Nigerianen naar de internationale cocaïnehandel. Het is een aanpassing aan spanning door innovatief nieuwe middelen te creëren om culturele en materiële oplossingen te bereiken voor tegenstellingen in de bredere maatschappij.

Vervolgens stel ik dat de lage wetnaleving in Nigeria er toe geleid heeft dat economische criminaliteit slechts gedefinieerd wordt als activiteiten die inkomsten en rijkdom genereren. Omdat een wijdverbreide informele economie en smokkel veel voorkomend is, werd het overtreden van wetten gemeengoed in de Nigeriaanse geschiedenis. Dit betekent dat het voor een groot deel sociaal acceptabel is en gewoonlijk aangemoedigd wordt, of het nu minderjarige meisjes betreft die voor prostitutie naar het buitenland gestuurd worden, of de financiële fraude bekend als 419. Zoals ik in dit onderzoek heb laten zien, drijft de Nigeriaanse cocaïnehandel op deze mentaliteit, hiermee lijkend op het ‘Asia Drama,’ de archetypische derde-wereld waar het overtreden van de regels en het aan de laars lappen van de wet eerder een culturele norm dan een uitzonderling is (Myrdal, 1968). In andere woorden, dit werd geaccepteerd als normaal en gerechtvaardigd vanwege ongelijkheid, armoede, sociale uitsluiting, en andere beweegredenen worden geaccepteerd als een onderdeel van Nigeria’s ontwikkeling.

Een ander mechanisme dat een rol speelde bij het Nigeriaanse succes in de wereldwijde cocaïnehandel is dat antidrugswetten en –maatregelen geen consequenties hebben als ze niet samengaan met de politieke wil en professionele bekwaamheid om ze in de praktijk te brengen. De straffeloosheid die de Nigeriaanse drugsbaronnen genieten komt voort uit hun vaardigheid om het werk van wethandhavingsinstanties en het justitieapparaat ongedaan te maken, omdat ze de ‘taal van het geld’ gebruiken in Brazilië (Huguet & de Carvalho, 2008), ‘de beschermende paraplu’ (Lo & Kwok, 2012) in China, en ‘het lange been’ zoals het in de volksmond in Nigeria heet om hun zaken te blijven runnen. Uit mijn onderzoek blijkt dat Nigeriaanse cocaïnehandelaren niet in een vacuüm opereren. Zij rekenen op de steun van sociale groepen en ambtenaren. Zij vertrouwen op de criminele autoriteit, hetgeen het bestaan van machtige criminele deelnemers en organisaties, de relatieve zwakte en de blootstelling van de politie op straat en een onevenwichtige machtsbalans tussen de buitenwettelijke ruimtes die deze dwingende criminele groepen innemen en de formele legale ruimte van wet en staatsmacht reflecteert. Zoals ook Willis (2014) ontdekte, is de politie een pragmatische en relatief autonome deelnemer die zijn weg (moet) vinden om tussen deze asymmetrie door te navigeren. Zoals uiteengezet in Hoofdstuk 3, lossen Nigeriaanse handelaren op deze manier containergoederen waarin cocaïne verborgen zit en helpen ze koeriers om de controle te omzeilen op het betalen van steekpenningen en smeergeld aan gewetenloze rechthandhavingsagenten, ambtenaren of bemiddelaars. Ik stel dat een sleutelmechanisme achter het succes van de Nigeriaanse handelaren blijft dat een strafbaar feit nauwelijks bestraft wordt als het de elite aangaat, vooral in Nigeria. Dit is een fout gebaar richting de jeugd—dat het zich bezig houden met cocaïnehandel alleen milde straffen zou opleveren, als iemand de juiste connecties heeft. Dit werk laat zien dat Nigeriaanse handelaren succes hebben omdat, zoals ook Arias (2010) aantoont, gewetenloze rechthandhavingsagenten gewoonlijk hun deel vragen van de drugswinsten of ze dwingen geld af onder bedreiging van arrestatie zodoende het probleem verergerend dat ze geacht werden te verhelpen.

Bovendien stel ik in dit proefschrift dat de participatie van de belanghebbenden uit de elite in de cocaïnehandel niet alleen een inspiratiebron was voor Nigeriaanse mondiale cocaïnehandelaren, maar het ook de weg vrij maakte voor kwetsbare individuen om zich bezig te houden met illegale activiteiten om aan geld te komen om een politiek doel te bereiken, zoals de arrestatie van de Nigeriaanse gekozen senator die in de Verenigde Staten gezocht werd voor het dealen van drugs (Faul: 23-05-2015). Dit onderzoek benadrukt die hoge jeugdwerkeloosheid. Een grote groep jeugdige delinquenten of ‘Area Boys’ hebben zichtbaar niets om handen. Teleurgesteld door traditionele scholing en verre overervingsystemen blijven jonge Nigerianen zonder kapitaal achter om een eigen bedrijf te beginnen. Als mechanisme, hebben Nigeriaanse wereldwijde cocaïnehandelaren baat bij de grote groep van wanhopige losgeslagen jeugd die als schoktroepen fungeren voor deviante activiteiten. Ik ontdekte dat de relatieve ontzegging van de Nigeriaanse jeugd nog bij de noties van Fajnzylber et al. (2002) komen, dat armoede en werkeloosheid de weg vrij kunnen maken voor crimineel gedrag zoals besproken in Hoofdstuk 2. Ik blijf erbij dat het gebrek aan alternatieven in Nigeria de kansloze en hopeloos wetteloze jeugd in contact brengt met criminele netwerken inclusief de internationale cocaïnehandel, en dat dit zo een bijdrage levert aan het succes van Nigerianen in de mondiale cocaïnehandel.

Verder beweer ik dat cultureel gezien, Nigeriaanse lekkernijen en de culturele eetgewoonte van het doorslikken van het basisvoedsel *fufu*, een zeer groot comparatief voordeel is, wat het voor koeriers gemakkelijk maakt om verpakte cocaïne door te slikken voor een vliegreis. In dit onderzoek wordt aangetoond dat- als gevolg van economische en sociale ongelijkheden, de terugtrekking van de overheid en het wegzetten van een segment van de bevolking als een verachtelijke onderklasse (Wacquant 2004, 2009) —, de krottenwijken in Nigeria, net als in diverse landen— een leger van wanhopige, werkeloze

potentiële handelaren bevatten. Deze zien drugshandel ook als een manier om de eindjes aan elkaar te knopen. Zijn ze eenmaal gerekruteerd, dan worden ze deel van de ‘shotgun approach,’ of het sturen van maar liefst 24 koeriers met een en dezelfde vlucht, toegeschreven aan de Nigeriaanse internationale cocaïnehandel. Bovendien, raadplegen Nigeriaanse cocaïnehandelaren vaak een zogenaamde pastoor voor hun gebed of hun zegen, en Juju/voodoo priesters of toekomstvoorspellers om de krachten van voorouders op te roepen, als beschermingsmechanismen om hun geluk op te krikken, een eed van trouw af te leggen, en om de mentale en emotionele gesteldheid te verbeteren ten einde het risico en de angst die samengaat met de daad van drugshandelen te overwinnen. Daarom stel ik dat als mechanisme deze kenmerken de aspecten die de prestaties van de Nigeriaanse cocaïnehandelaren onderstrepen, overtroeven.

Aangezien de vindingsrijkheid en de ondernemingszin van Nigeriaanse cocaïnehandelaren de aandacht trok van smokkelaars die van hun diensten gebruik wilden maken in Zuid-Amerika en Azië, hebben de Nigeriaanse illegale cocaïnehandelaren de kneepjes snel onder de knie gekregen. Voor een goede financiële opbrengst, versnijden ze pure cocaïne met andere chemicaliën die lokaal beschikbaar zijn voordat ze weer hergeëxporteerd worden naar overzeese markten. Versnijdingsmiddelen imiteren sommige biologische uitwerkingen van cocaïne om diens kwaliteitsbeleving te vergroten en verdunningsmiddelen fungeren eenvoudig als vulmiddel om de hoeveelheid te vergroten en dus ook de winst van de drugsdealer. Ik ontdekte dat dit een van de redenen is waarom er veel vraag is naar pure cocaïne in Nigeria. Bovendien zijn Nigeriaanse cocaïnehandelaren in staat om te plannen, te coördineren, en velerlei veelzijdige verantwoordelijkheden uit te voeren die samenhangen met zakentransacties en betalingsverkeer.

Hedendaagse wereldwijde verwevenheid en technologie heeft het succes van Nigeriaanse cocaïnehandelaren op verschillende manieren vergroot. Het is gemakkelijk om te reizen en mobiele telefoons zijn een belangrijke eigenschap van Nigeriaanse handelaren. Zaitch (2005) vond ook dat paradoxaal genoeg, de wil om het gebruik ervan vanwege veiligheidsredenen te beperken, botst met objectievere behoeften. Vanwege onverwachte veranderingen en improvisaties moeten ze telefoontjes plegen ter controle, bevestiging of om instructies te herhalen. Deals van duizenden of zelf miljoenen dollars worden puur door mondelinge communicatie gesloten, vaak in moeilijk te vertalen taal. Vrienden dragen bij met geld om omvangrijke bestellingen te plaatsen van gevraagde goederen die aan de doelstellingen voldoen. De controle van grote hoeveelheden reizigers of van bulkgoederen op illegale artikelen blijft moeilijk voor wethandhavers. Samengevat vond ik dat onder andere deze historische, sociaalgeopolitieke, economische, en culturele factoren samenspelen in combinatie van elkaar als mechanismen die de betrokkenheid van Nigerianen in de mondiale cocaïnehandel bevorderen.

Nigeriaanse cocaïne *strickers* in Brazilië en China

Dit onderzoek laat zien dat de betrokkenheid van Nigerianen in een cocaïne-exportland (Brazilië) en in een -bestemmingsland (China) hun deelname in de globalisering van de drugsmarkt onderstreept; het idee dat de cocaïnemarkt begon als een Amerikaanse onderneming, is daarna uitgebreid naar Europa en dan naar Afrika en Azië. Hoewel cocaïneconsumptie iets bleef voor de Amerika's, Europa, en Oceanië, zoals ook opgemerkt door de UNODC (2014), is er nu ook in Afrika en Azië een opkomst van cocaïnegebruik die verband houdt met de toename in handel door heel Afrika heen en toenemende welvaart op beide continenten. Zowel Nigeria, als Brazilië, kwamen de drugshandelvergelijking eerst binnen als een transitknooppunt en later als een consumptieland en China wordt ook relevant op dit gebied. Dit zal besproken worden in de conclusies verderop.

Terug komen op de gigant van zuid Amerika

Mijn onderzoek laat zien dat de recente trend van immigratie van Nigeriaanse drugshandelaren naar Brazilië achterin de jaren 70 begon, het beursprogramma van de Nigeriaanse overheid volgend dat studenten stuurde naar landen als de VS, Canada, Italië, Rusland, en Brazilië. Ik stel dat deze toestroom sindsdien toegenomen is om tal van redenen: Ten eerste daar waar sommigen succes hadden vielen anderen af voornamelijk vanwege het onvermogen van de overheid om de beurzen verder te financieren. Om te beginnen, was Nigeria bijna failliet vanwege de militaire dictatuur, economisch mismanagement, en falende structurele aanpassingsprogramma's in de jaren 80 die resulteerden in een serie van macro-economische politieke veranderingen zoals devaluering van de munt, liberalisering van de handel, inkrimpen van de publieke sector, en fiscale en bestuurshervormingen. Verder werkten deze factoren in samenhang met de negatieve gevolgen van de Nigeriaanse staatscrisis zoals endemische corruptie en verduistering zodoende het leven van de massa negatief beïnvloedend, zoals besproken in Hoofdstuk 2. Dit betekende dat de meeste ouders teleurgesteld waren in het beursstelsel omdat ze het onderwijs van hun kinderen niet konden financieren. Bovendien bleven de meeste studenten na het afronden van hun opleiding in Brazilië omdat ze niet wilden terugkeren naar de verslechterde levensomstandigheden in Nigeria. Ik stel dat waar de meeste beroepsmatig slaagden als doktoren, advocaten en ondernemers, voor sommige uitvallers die de Nigeriaanse droom najoegen, cocaïnehandel een attractief alternatief werd. Zij fungeerden als tussenpersonen tussen Braziliaanse en Latijns-Amerikaanse cocaïnehandelaren. Een van de verklaringen die dit ondersteunt is dat cocaïnehandel en -gebruik prominent in the regio werd, vooral in Brazilië — exporteur nummer één van cocaïne in the wereld (UNODC, 2013). Ook is Brazilië's geografische ligging dichtbij de drie belangrijkste cocaïneproducerende landen, Bolivia, Peru, en Colombia, en heeft Brazilië een grote stedelijke bevolking en een groeiende handel met Nigeria, zoals besproken in deel 2.

Ten tweede blijf ik erbij dat als Nigeriaanse cocaïnehandelaren een uitweg gevonden hebben, ze een beroep doen op beïnvloedbare familieleden en anderen waarmee ze nauw verbonden zijn om zich te voegen bij de inkomers door ketenmigratie waardoor er "getransplanteerde" sociale relaties komen (Naoto Higuchi, 2006) en een continuüm van sociale relaties die een concentratie van ongeveer 5,000 Nigerianen in São Paulo bevorderen, volgens het hoofd van de Nigeriaanse Gemeenschap, Kingsley Ikechukwu. De stroom blijft aanhouden omdat het een aanpassing is aan de druk om culturele en materiële oplossingen te vinden voor tegenstellingen in de maatschappij en dit komt tot de Nigerianen niet alleen in de vorm van een chaos, beloning en identiteit, maar ook in de vorm van een incoherent gevoel van oneerlijkheid en bestaansonzekerheid—een machteloosheid om te voldoen aan de hoge doelen en zelfverwezenlijking.

Dit onderzoek heeft uitgelegd dat Brazilië gelegenheid biedt om deel uit te maken van de reguliere economie, zoals leden van de Nigeriaanse drugshandelaren het zelf zeggen. In tegenstelling tot China, is Brazilië een multiculturele maatschappij met een historische band met Nigeria zoals aangegeven in Hoofdstuk 4. Hierdoor zijn Nigerianen in Brazilië ook op hun plaats. Ten tweede heb ik ontdekt dat in tegenstelling tot de wijdverspreide mening dat het moeilijk is om legaal te worden in Brazilië, er verschillende manieren zijn om een legale status te krijgen volgens artikel 75 van decreet 98.961 en evenals Natália Corazza Padovani (2013) ook vond, zou "uitzetting van buitenlanders die veroordeeld zijn voor narcoticahandel en aanverwante drugs" alleen niet plaatsvinden als "de vreemdeling een Braziliaanse echtgeno(o)t(e) zou hebben: een Braziliaanse echtgeno(o)t(e) van wie hij of zij niet gescheiden is, in feite of bij wet, en zolang als het huwelijk meer dan vijf jaar geleden

gesloten was.” Bovendien wordt er niet tot uitzetting overgegaan "als de vreemdeling: een Braziliaans kind heeft, dat aantoonbaar aangewezen is op zijn of haar zorg en van hem of haar economisch afhankelijk is.”

Ik stel dat hoewel deze kansen in Brazilië niet vergelijkbaar zijn met die in diverse andere landen over de wereld, het wishful thinking voor de meesten is om een succesvol leven te krijgen door legitieme kansen. Een reden hiervoor is dat, hoewel Brazilië geen etnisch gesloten maatschappij is, het een meritocratie blijft die beïnvloed wordt door de ontvlechting van de arbeidswereld, die resulteerde in een afname van de primaire arbeidsmarkt van veilige carrières en een toenemende secundaire arbeidsmarkt van flexibiliteit en onzekerheid. Ik beweer dat de meeste Nigeriaanse handelaren laag betaalde baantjes juist associëren met hetgeen waarvoor ze op de vlucht zijn—armoede en haar bijklank. In plaats hiervan zouden ze liever rijk zijn, terwijl Therborn (2011, 1985) de ongelijkheden aantoonde in Latijns-Amerika en de “Brazilianisering” van gevorderd kapitalisme met zijn drie-voudige afspiegeling in de maatschappij in een rijke, een onzekere midden- en een uitgesloten arme klasse. Ik ontdekte dat de Nigeriaanse handelaren een cruciale uitdaging aangaan namelijk de paradox dat de financiële druk van een legale baan het grote geld lokt van cocaïnehandel als men succesvol is. In het algemeen hebben ze geen geschikte beroepskwalificaties en werkervaring in een snel veranderende wereld, reden waarom sommige banen zo ontmoedigend zijn. Een andere verklaring is dat pogingen om de illegale cocaïnehandel tot rust te brengen in gevaar zijn als financiële druk om te voldoen aan de verplichtingen van de *extended family* sommige Nigerianen kwetsbaar maken voor deeltijd cocaïnehandel zelfs als ze legaal werken. Bijvoorbeeld, een bijdrage van \$500 USD voor een ad-hoc deal van 10 gram cocaïne zou \$5.000 USD kunnen opleveren, dat is een meervoud van inkomsten, vaak achter het opsporingsstelsel van de autoriteiten om, aangezien aangeleerde technieken en motieven, drijfveren, motivatie, en houdingen die indruisen tegen gezagsgetrouwe acties (Sutherland, 1947) hen in staat stellen om de daad goed te praten. Zodoende bood cocaïnehandel een riskante maar aanvaardbare oplossing voor velen.

Ik ontdekte dat professionele geïntegreerde Nigerianen de neiging hebben zich te distantiëren van de nieuwkomelingen die de illegale handel aantrok aangezien de betrokkenheid bij cocaïnehandel Nigeria's beeldvorming versterkt en allen stigmatiseert. *Os 'traficantes Nigerianos'* zijn nieuwe krantenkoppen. Anderzijds zegt men dat professionele Nigerianen zichzelf afschilderen als elites die met anderen niets van doen willen hebben. Doordat *othering* of het essentialising van de ander, het probleemgebied probeert te verplaatsen “om het van onreinheden te reinigen om de vreemdeling buiten te sluiten” (Gitlin, 1995, p. 233), dragen Nigeriaanse cocaïnehandelaren bij aan de dagelijkse misdaadverhalen in São Paulo. Zodoende roepen zij voortdurende angst op die op zijn beurt stereotypen creëren die de kloof verergeren. Deze verdeling vergroot de afstand tussen twee verschillende groepen Nigerianen met twee gevarieerde gevestigde belangen. Daar waar de gerespecteerde professionele Nigerianen een mechanisme hebben om hun reputatie en belangen in de maatschappij te verdedigen, vermindert deze kloof de kansen op een coherente Nigeriaanse gemeenschap en de mogelijkheid van de maatschappij om sommige soorten menselijk gedrag te beteugelen. Anderzijds zijn er individuen die geloven dat voor moeite, uitgestelde beloning, en opzettelijk vorderen richting een doel, onmiddellijke beloning en korte termijn hedonisme in de plaats is gekomen. Anderzijds, degenen die een quasirationele reactie op de schending van meritocratische beginselen hooghouden, trachten degene die een buitenproportionele beloning krijgen te straffen zoals uiteengezet in Hoofdstuk 5.

In tegenstelling tot het beeld van georganiseerde groepen die in harmonie samenwerken, ontdekte ik dat de Nigeriaanse internationale cocaïnehandelaren elkaar ook bedriegen. Sommige Nigeriaanse handelaren worden leden van traditioneel georganiseerde misdaadgroepen en bendes—zoals de satanische en op rijkdom beluste geheime

gemeenschappen of *Ogboni*, die leden rijkdom en welvaart garanderen en gemeenschappen van onaanraakbare *Osu* tovenarij die ook “hekserij” gebruiken — om resultaten te bereiken. Ik beweer dat zij binnen en tussen deze subculturen opereren op verschillende niveaus binnen de cocaïnehandelketen, door de inzet van hun sociaal kapitaal onder degenen die de wet op gegeven tijden willen misbruiken om de nieuwe trend van illegale cocaïnehandel te bevorderen. Zij beweren dat het nodig is omdat sommige Nigeriaanse cocaïnehandelaren teleurstellingen hebben meegemaakt.

Oppervlakkig gezien lijkt het dat de meeste ongedocumenteerde Nigerianen in São Paulo zich met drugs bezighouden als ze willen overleven. Dit onderzoek benadrukt dat sommige vindingrijk zijn omdat ze verandering willen, een uitzicht om deel te nemen aan de reguliere economie, wat aangemoedigd zou moeten worden. Ik beweer dat Brazilië goede kansen biedt voor ongedocumenteerde vreemdelingen, om legaal te worden, om een toekomst op te bouwen en een respectabel leven te leiden. Om te veranderen en een aanvaardbare mate van “integratie” in the gangbare economie te bereiken, is het op de eerste plaats belangrijk om de gasttaal te leren, om een goede opleiding te krijgen, en hard te werken. Ik stel dat Nigeriaanse handelaren in São Paulo succes moeten herdefiniëren.

Ik heb ontdekt dat aangezien aanpassen of integreren een persoonlijke keuze is, gegeven de mogelijkheden en de emotionele of culturele bagage die men bezit, de noodzaak om de gasttaal te leren fundamenteel blijft voor integratie, omdat het een zekere mate van opgenomen zijn in de maatschappij-inclusieve-gevangenis aantoont. Een gebied dat de communicatiekloof belicht, is wanneer iemand gearresteerd wordt en er een advocaat nodig is, terwijl de meesten geen goed Engels spreken. Want een advocaat die niet goed Engels spreekt heeft geen andere keuze dan zich dingen voor te gaan stellen.

Mijn bevindingen tonen aan dat Nigerianen behoren tot de grootste aantallen van buitenlandse gedetineerden in Brazilië. Aangezien de meeste gevangenen rechten ontzegd worden die bepaald worden door internationale normen, beperkt het feit dat Nigeriaanse gedetineerden geen advocaat kunnen huren en niet aan de eisen kunnen voldoen, het verschaffen van voorwaardelijke vrijlating. Nigerianen buiten de gevangenis zijn niet welwillend om garant te staan voor hen, omdat ze vermijden om in contact te komen met justitie, omdat ze het risico van schuld door associatie niet willen lopen. Voor de Nigeriaanse gedetineerden die ik interviewde, betekent dit afzondering op twee manieren—enerzijds gevangenen in de cel en anderzijds afgezonderd van hun landgenoten. Wat dit betreft beweer ik dat het minder komt doordat de autoriteiten het voor de Nigerianen moeilijk maken, maar meer omdat zij de benodigde documenten niet konden overleggen nodig voor voorwaardelijke vrijlating.

Ik beweer dat Nigerianen in São Paulo baat hebben bij orde in de maatschappij, in plaats van anderen de schuld geven van hun ongeluk in de illegale cocaïnehandel. Zodoende zullen ze er naar streven om de status-quo van de gestigmatiseerde cocaïnehandelaren te veranderen en van Nigerianen in het algemeen. Ten tweede zal dit het algemene gevoel verminderen dat degenen die weinig of niet werken, op kosten van de belastingbetalers leven. Ten derde zal het helpen om de toestroom van Nigerianen in de gevangenis, en de maatschappelijke kosten hiervan, te verminderen.

Als ze dat doen dan laten ze zien dat initiatief nemen proactief zijn betekent en de individuele aangeboren kracht gebruiken van zelfkeuze. Niet alleen individuen zijn in staat om te kiezen hoe zij reageren op een gegeven stimulus. Als een gemeenschap hebben Nigerianen ook dit vermogen, dat vitaal is om niet toe te geven aan het slachtofferschap. Voor de pionieren, impliceert het dat het opgeven van hun gemeenschappen in São Paulo aan drugshandel betekent dat men de capaciteit van aanpassing en verandering opgeeft. Daarom beweer ik dat een functionerende Nigeriaanse gemeenschap baat zou kunnen hebben bij de ervaring van Guangzhou, waar integratie wenselijk was maar de kansen beperkt waren.

Recap in de gigant van Azië

Dit onderzoek toont aan dat China's relevantie gelegen ligt in haar prominente positie in de internationale handel, die ook in Afrika en in Latijns- Amerika groeit. Aangezien de grootste partij cocaïne die in Nigeria aan het licht kwam in verband gebracht wordt met Chinese en Taiwanese handelaren en hun Nigeriaanse helpers, herinnert het feit dat China centraal staat in dit werk en waarom China, eraan dat China demografisch gezien miljoenen mensen heeft. Ik stel dat als de cocaïnehandel en het –gebruik in China toeneemt, dit tot prijsverhoging, drugshandel en repressie zou kunnen leiden. Daarom is China een goede casus, hoewel het nog geen groot consumptieland is maar dat zou het in de toekomst kunnen worden, aangezien Hongkong opkomt als een doorvoerpunt in termen van hoeveelheden cocaïnevangst zoals besproken in deel 3.

Mijn onderzoek laat een enclave van Nigeriaanse handelaren zien in een totaal andere omgeving ondanks een extreem hoog strafniveau in China. Daarom is het belangrijk om te analyseren waarom Nigeriaanse handelaren daar naartoe gaan. Ik betoog dat Nigeriaanse cocaïnehandelaren een goede koppeling vonden in hun nieuwe omgeving vanwege verschillende redenen: de deelname van mensen met Chinese nationaliteit in de internationale illegale cocaïnehandel, en het bestaan van een traditie van heroïnehandel van de Gouden Driehoek, zoals aangegeven in Hoofdstuk 7; de groeiende economie als de tweede economie in de wereld en China's middenklasse is tegenwoordig al groot in absolute zin— 157 miljoen mensen, alleen de Verenigde Staten heeft een grotere middenklassen, zoals ook opgemerkt door (Kharas, 2010, p. 30), daarom willen zo veel detailhandelaren en zakenlieden al graag doordringen in de Chinese markt. Bovendien is er in het nieuwe millennium een toename van cocaïnegebruikers in Hongkong, zoals Yueying, et al. (2008) zagen, volgens het Centrale Register van Drugsmisbruik (CRDA), nam het aantal van cocaïnegebruikers boven 21 jaar toe van 31 in 2000 tot 696 in 2007. De activiteiten van Nigeriaanse handelaren in China laten zien dat economische booms samengaan met een toename van of cocaïnegebruik, zoals dat eerder gebeurde in andere landen zoals in Spanje, Italië of de VS.

De verklaring van de betrokkenheid van cocaïnehoppers in Brazilië en China kunnen we vinden in de hedendaagse globaliseringsprocessen van de drugshandel zoals eerder genoemd. Nigeria en Brazilië zijn historisch verbonden met illegale handel. Terwijl Nigeriaanse handelaren gelokt werden, trok China ook de nieuwe trend van illegale cocaïnehandelaren aan, zoals Spring en Jiao (2008) beweerden, de politiek van 'inbrengen' en 'uitgaan' van China' om opener te worden bracht ook inherent onwenselijke ideeën en levensstijlen mee naar binnen. De notie dat misdaad evenveel een gevolg is van directe of van indirecte afhankelijkheid en uitbuiting van arme perifere landen door rijke kernlanden wordt hier bekrachtigd. Bovin's (2010) zienswijze dat het wereldsysteem met betrekking tot cocaïnehandel een georganiseerde handel onderstreept die onlosmakelijk de ontwikkelde en ontwikkelingslanden met elkaar verbindt.

Ik beweer dat Nigeriaanse cocaïnehandelaren gekenmerkt worden door transnationale mobiliteit, ze zijn afhankelijk van een veelheid van en van constante verbanden over internationale grenzen heen, terwijl ze inbedding construeren en reconstrueren in meer dan één maatschappij. Wezenlijk is hier de notie dat door het uitbreiden van bestaande netwerken of het overschakelen naar andere netwerken door het gebruik van sociale verbanden, criminele groepen toegang kunnen te krijgen tot nieuwe markten en nieuwe mogelijkheden kunnen ontdekken voor criminele activiteiten (Van de Bunt et al, 2014: 9; Oboh, 2011). Nigeriaanse cocaïnehandelaren smeden en onderhouden tegelijkertijd een veelheid van sociale relaties die niet alleen Nigeria en de gastlanden met elkaar verbinden maar ook vertegenwoordigers van grote bedrijven uit de ontwikkelde wereld en de transnationale

mensenstroom uit de ontwikkelingslanden en goederen waarmee relatief kleine sommen kapitaal gemoeid zijn en de vervagende grenzen van formele en informele economieën. Aangezien Nigeriaanse handelaren deze relatie tussen ‘globalisering van hoge kwaliteit’ en ‘globalisering van lage kwaliteit’ laten zien (Mathews & Yang, 2012), beweer ik dat de internationale drugshandel een ondernemende activiteit is die zowel erg lijkt op als erg verschilt van legale ondernemingen. De schets van zijn handel is te vergelijken met die van luxe goederen en vrije tijd, alleen een selecte kleine groep kan zich het permitteren tegen heel hoge prijzen in een wereld waar hun activiteiten van wereldwijde invloed zijn. Nigeriaanse mondiale cocaïnehandelaren volgen de ‘goederen.’ Waar men het fundamentele oneens is over wat juist is en er tevens een verbinding is met de wereldmarkt, zoals de notie van Gilman et al. (2011) van deviante globaliseringondernemers, komen Nigeriaanse cocaïnehandelaren ook op om te voldoen aan de onvervulde vraag. Zij benadrukken dat door het zich richten op onze collectieve verlangens, deviante ondernemers de verschillen zien in noties van publieke goederen, moraliteit en gezondheid, als betrouwbare marktgelegenheden. Zoals besproken in Hoofdstuk 7, kunnen de wijd open markt georiënteerde regels van het Neoliberalisme, globalisering wel regeren, maar voor de Nigeriaanse cocaïnehandelaren, wordt het spel op een moreel inconsistent veld gespeeld.

Ik blijf er bij dat terwijl de rol van de Nigeriaanse handelaren in Brazilië voornamelijk het doorsturen van cocaïne van São Paulo naar wereldwijde partners is, ze in China ook prominent zijn in het dealen op staat zoals besproken in Hoofdstuk 8. Doordat ze strategisch uitgebreide netwerken bouwen in cocaïne-export- en bestemmingslanden, hebben Nigeriaanse handelaren toegang tot kwaliteitscocaïne voor een goede prijs. Ze maken een balans tussen normen van groepssolidariteit en meer instrumentele banden over sociale verschillen heen en zijn zo een voorbeeld zoals ook door Woolcock en Narayan’s (2000) opgemerkt werd, van een effectief netwerkbeheer nodig om “de sociale relaties goed te krijgen” om hun prestaties te bevorderen. In tegenstelling tot NDLEA (2012), die hen zie als geformaliseerde kartels of georganiseerde groeperingen die zich met verschillende criminele activiteiten bezighouden, zag ik in mijn onderzoek dat de nieuwe trend van handelaren tot kleine, flexibele, netwerken behoren die zich ad hoc aanpassen. Ze breiden uit en krimpen in met als doel om te gaan met de onzekerheden van de business van cocaïnehandel in Nigeria, Brazilië en China. Aangezien ze als buitenlandse handelaren niet kunnen slagen zonder de deelname van locale partners, drijven Nigeriaanse handelaren op de concepten ondernemingsmodel, samenwerkingsverbanden van dappere risiconemers die kansen grijpen om winst te maken op investeringen.

Bovendien tonen mijn bevindingen dat veel Nigeriaanse handelaren winst willen maken en hun rijkdom willen beschermen door het aanwenden van strategieën om het risico te minimaliseren. Met in het achterhoofd de rol van geweld, vertrouwen en geheimhouding die Zaitch (2002) en Siegel en Van de Bunt (2012) lieten zien, nemen Nigeriaanse cocaïnehandelaren hun toevlucht tot ontvoering in zowel Nigeria als in Brazilië en tot geweld in China bij een geringe hoeveelheid externe regulerende instrumenten, ze rekenen vooral op vertrouwen bij de afwezigheid van geschreven overeenkomsten en ze houden hun activiteiten geheim om ontdekking ervan te voorkomen. Dit onderzoek verduidelijkt dat Nigeriaanse cocaïnehandelaren de kneepjes van de cocaïnehandel snel geleerd hebben. Op de eerste plaats gaan ze uit van de functiescheiding van alle niveaus; ze creëren onderverdeelde en ‘afgezonderde’ netwerken die gebruik maken van mobiele telefoons om in inheemse talen met elkaar te communiceren om hun anonimiteit, ondoordringbaarheid en zelfbescherming te waarborgen; ze specialiseren in het voornamelijk handelen in kleine hoeveelheden cocaïne en controle van de koeriers die rechtstreeks leveren aan de partners in de bestemmingslanden; ze rekenen op een wederzijdse relatie met gewetenloze rechthandhavingsinstanties en een vat vol potentiële handelaren; en het minder risicovol witwassen van de financiële voordelen, door ze meteen om te zetten in goederen die naar de Nigeriaanse en Afrikaanse markten uitgevoerd

worden. Ten tweede investeren Nigeriaanse cocaïnehandelaren in Brazilië en China in hun thuisland. Vanwege het ontvankelijke klimaat dat de Nigeriaanse staatscrisis geschapen heeft zijn dergelijke investeringen meestal gegarandeerd. Ze rechtvaardigen het als weggesluisde Nigeriaanse rijkdom ‘beschermd’ wordt in diverse banken wereldwijd. Ze beweren dat het in Nigeria geïnvesteerde geld een voorbeeld is voor wat de belanghebbenden verzuimen om te doen. Ze leveren een bijdrage aan de lokale economieën in Brazilië en China, gebruiken een systeem van ondergronds bankieren en onderhouden familie en verwanten in Nigeria. Ze scheppen banen door in allerlei soorten commerciële activiteiten te investeren. Ze staan in hoog aanzien omdat ze de kloof invullen die de overheid achtergelaten heeft. Ze roepen het beeld op dat ze niet alleen arme koeriers zijn, maar ook ‘zakenmannen en –vrouwen’ zijn die beweren dat ze een bijdrage leveren aan de ontwikkeling van Nigeria.

Amin’s (1974) notie maakt een relevante verduidelijking met betrekking tot Nigeria’s paradoxale situatie van een rijk maar arm land. Ten eerste benadrukt het doelmechanismen van onophoudelijke primitieve kapitaalsvermeerdering vanwege speculatie. Ten tweede onrechtmatige verzamelde activa in de handen van deze klasse die niet in staat is om uiteindelijk deze opgepote rijkdom om te zetten in werkelijke productiemiddelen en *value added economy*. Dit werk onderstreept dat regeren door omkoping en diefstal de ongelijkheden en de wijdverspreide irritaties verergerd heeft. Deze leidden tot militaire opstanden in de Niger delta of het Boko Haram terrorisme, beide groepen gerelateerd aan drugsmokkel om hun activiteiten te financieren, zoals aan de orde kwam in Hoofdstuk 2. Dit bevordert cocaïnehandel omdat de nationale rijkdom nodig om het land te ontwikkelen gestolen wordt en doorgesluisd naar landen waar het ontwikkeling brengt. Ironisch genoeg lenen de Nigeriaanse leiders weer van die landen als leningen. Hierdoor weerspiegelt het onvermogen om te investeren en het uitbreiden van het concept toegevoegde waarde naar natuurlijke hulpbronnen, in Nigeria de tekortkomingen van de belanghebbenden, zoals Amin’s (1974) ook zag, dat de relaties tussen de vorming van de ‘ontwikkelde’ wereld en die van de ‘onderontwikkelde’ wereld beïnvloed worden door waardeoverdracht; Omdat er zodra de kapitalistische productiewijze relaties aangaat met prekapitalistische productiewijzen, en deze hieraan onderwerpt, er waardeoverdracht plaatsvindt als een resultaat van mechanismen van primitieve accumulatie.

Dit proefschrift beweert eveneens dat de nieuwe trend van cocaïnehandel het resultaat is van een mentaliteit die het ziet als een ‘legitieme’ manier van financieel succes in Nigeria. In tegenstelling tot traditionele theorieën over sociaal kapitaal, moedigt ‘omgekeerd’ sociaal kapitaal illegaal en crimineel gedrag aan als een manier om in de maatschappij vooruit te komen. Dit resulteert in netwerken die zowel drugshandelaren, politie, douanebeambten, en politici in staat stellen om zowel met de Nigeriaanse internationale cocaïnehandel door te gaan als die zelfs aan te moedigen. Omdat Nigeriaanse handelaren, leiders van maatschappelijke organisaties, en overheidsbeambten connecties met elkaar maken, brengen ze, zoals Enrique Desmond Arias ook schreef, functioneel gedifferentieerde deelnemers samen die diverse vaardigheden en ervaring hebben die bij kunnen dragen aan voortdurende criminele activiteiten (2006, p. 318). Ik beweer dat Nigeriaanse handelaren lieten zien hoe goederen van een ongereguleerde of illegale derdewereldcontext in een formeel sectorproductie- en distributiesysteem geïntegreerd worden, wat de opkomst betekent van “een economie waarbij eerder onderlinge verbanden dan verschillende sectoren de norm zijn” (Klein, 1999).

Bovendien, is de betrokkenheid van Nigeria en de Nigerianen in de mondiale cocaïnehandel er een voorbeeld van, zoals Klitgaard’s (2010) ook beweerde, dat het de collectieve activiteiten of inactiviteiten zijn van de mensen in verhouding met elkaar in Nigeria die het economische resultaat bepaalt van een dergelijke maatschappij. In een context waarin corruptie verwacht gedrag is (zoals in Nigeria blijkt) dan zullen er in principe grotendeels, geen deelnemers zijn, die de rol op zich willen nemen om corruptie tegen te gaan.

De prestaties van cocaïnehoopders in Nigeria, Brazilië en China verhelderen hoe veroordeling en acceptatie naast elkaar bestaan in een maatschappij.

In de dominante criminogene omgeving in Nigeria, vond ik een verklaring die de Nigeriaanse maatschappij voortdurend in een kostbare staat van onbeweeglijkheid houdt. Betrokkenheid in de wereldwijde cocaïnehandel beperkt Nigeriaanse handelaren tot recidivisme, opsluiting en de dood. Zoals aangegeven in hoofdstuk 1, waren bijvoorbeeld, vier van de zeven mannen die door het Indonesische vuurpeloton gedood werden op 28 april 2015 Nigerianen. Het inzetten van frauduleuze paspoorten verergert het niet geregistreerde aantal van Nigeriaanse gedetineerden wereldwijd, zoals aangegeven in hoofdstuk 8. In de steek gelaten door de ambassade en door de afwezigheid van familieleden bevinden ze zich in een dubbele staat van onbeweeglijkheid zoals we in deel 2 en 3 zagen.

***Naijas'* (populaire term voor Nigeriaan) in Brazilië en China: Zelfde fenomeen, verschillende plek!**

Ondanks de dreiging van een lange gevangenisstraf in Brazilië, blijven Nigeriaanse handelaren in São Paulo. Ondanks extreem zware straffen, blijven Nigeriaanse dealers veel voorkomen in de uitgaanswijken van Guangzhou. Bovendien beweer ik dat hun succes in China, de doodstaf negerend, meer de volharding en de veerkracht belicht in hun poging om te komen bij en te onderhandelen over de fysieke rand van “durf”, doorzettingsvermogen en de hoop op het realiseren van zelfverwezenlijking. Zij laten zien dat het spelen met de uitnodigende rand (Ferrell, Hayward, & Young, 2008) van cocaïnehandel in Brazilië en China vaak een zin naar avontuur, spanning en betovering met zich meebrengt.

Kansen in Brazilië zijn niet vergelijkbaar met die in veel landen wereldwijd. Toch slaan Nigeriaanse internationale cocaïnehandelaren geen acht op deze ‘kansen’ voor ongedocumenteerde vreemdelingen om legaal te worden, een toekomst op te bouwen en een fatsoenlijk leven te leiden. Ik ontdekte dat de reden hiervoor de paradox is van het omgaan met de spanning tussen een laagbetaalde legale baan aan de ene kant en de enorme financiële beloning van de wijdverspreide informele economieën, en cocaïne handelen, als men succesvol is, aan de andere kant. De meeste Nigeriaanse handelaren in Brazilië doen aan wishful thinking dat ze een succesvol leven bereiken door de illegale handel. Terwijl dit doet denken aan Agnew's (1985) visie op laag in conventionele sociale hulp en opereren in situaties waar de kosten van misdaad laag zijn en de opbrengsten hoog; het roept ook in het algemeen op dat ze voldoende beroepskwalificaties en werkvaardigheden missen in een snel veranderende wereld.

In tegenstelling tot Brazilië, biedt China weinig mogelijkheden voor Nigeriaanse cocaïnehandelaren en ongedocumenteerde personen om zich bezig te houden met reguliere werkzaamheden. Guangzhou is een uitzondering omdat het bewustzijn over de negatieve gevolgen van de betrokkenheid van Nigerianen in de illegale cocaïnebusiness leidde tot een pragmatisch antwoord van de leiders van de Nigeriaanse gemeenschap op het fenomeen. De constructieve betrokkenheid van Nigerianen met de autoriteiten van Guangzhou vertaalde zich in het oriënteren van sommige handelaren om een respectabel leven te leiden door legale commerciële activiteiten, een alternatief voor het bestrijden van Nigeriaanse cocaïnehandel. Als een gemeenschap maakten ze een bewuste keuze die gericht was op preventie, waar het ieders taak is om er aan bij te dragen om mensen te weerhouden van betrokkenheid in drugshandel, zoals besproken in Hoofdstuk 9. Hun initiatief van een leiderschapsmodel met het goede voorbeeld in Guangzhou heeft de Nigeriaanse gemeenschap gelanceerd en een organisatorische omslag van hopeloosheid en wanhoop naar het verkennen van nieuwe horizonten.

De Nigeriaanse gemeenschap heeft het wijdverbreide Afrikaanse concept van *shame management*, herstelrecht interventies, en een terechtwijzing op re-integratie gericht die de overtreders minder kwetsten door hen niet te stigmatiseren. Hun aanpak die de deelname van hun medelandgenoten in cocaïnehandel vermindert, belicht de relevantie van het invoeren van programma's gericht op het bestrijden van de onderliggende problemen die bijdragen aan de betrokkenheid van Nigerianen in de internationale cocaïnehandel.

Dit proefschrift laat zien dat Nigerianen veranderen kunnen en dat de Nigeriaanse betrokkenheid in de mondiale cocaïnehandel verminderd kan worden door een adequaat bestuur en door interventie geleid door de gemeenschap, wat bereikt zou kunnen worden door het initiatief van een gemotiveerde Nigeriaanse leider met hart en ziel, en verstand die in staat is om de status-quo te veranderen. De Nigeriaanse gemeenschap in Guangzhou bracht verandering door een 'trap naar verandering' te creëren van micro naar macro niveau. Ik beweer dat dit een binnenstebuiten aanpak is die van beneden begint met 'rolmodelleiderschap' naar de top: 'een nieuw merk Nigeria;' niet gefundeerd op solipsisme, maar op inclusieve veranderende politiek, gebaseerd op het naleven van de wet, en het realiseren van voldoende sociaaleconomische publieke goederen om mensen in staat te stellen om een goede levensstandaard te bereiken. Als de 'trap naar hervorming' goed gevolgd wordt zou dit kunnen bijdragen aan het beperken van de aantrekkingskracht voor verscheidene kanslozen en hopeloze individuen van cocaïnehandel.

Ontwikkeling heeft een mentaliteit nodig, die de bevolking op een gestructureerde manier zou moeten leren. De aanpak van de Nigeriaanse gemeenschap om cocaïnehandel en misdaad onder haar medelandgenoten in China te verminderen kan als een voorbeeld gezien worden om nagevolgd te worden door andere landen en gemeenschappen die te maken hebben met de schadelijke gevolgen van illegale cocaïnehandel.

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Appendix 1

List of tables

Table I. Destination of drug couriers arrested by NDLEA at MMIA, Lagos, in 2011.

SN	DESTINATION	FREQUENCY	%
1	Nigeria	28	21.21
2	US	25	18.93
3	Malaysia	23	17.42
4	UK	14	10.60
5	Italy	6	4.54
6	Japan	5	3.78
7	India	5	3.78
8	Spain	4	3.03
9	Hong Kong	3	2.27
10	Greece	2	1.52
11	Thailand	2	1.52
12	China	2	1.52
13	Turkey	2	1.52
14	UAE	2	1.52
15	Germany	1	0.76
16	France	1	0.76
17	Mozambique	1	0.76
18	South Korea	1	0.76
19	Czech Republic	1	0.76
20	Australia	1	0.76
21	Gambia	1	0.76
22	DP Congo	1	0.76
23	Vietnam	1	0.76
	TOTAL	132	100

Source: NDLEA, Report 2011

Table II. Schiphol Airport Amsterdam: Data drugs couriers, Nigeria 2011

2011	POSITIVE ARREST	INNOCENT SUSPECTS COURIERS	METHOD OF SMUGGLING
Abuja	3	1	Swallow 1 Hand luggage 1 Body-packer 1
Lagos	6	9	Swallow 4 Luggage 2
Total	9	10	

COUNTRY OF DEPARTURE	COUNTRY OF BIRTH	COUNTRY OF RESIDENCE	NATIONALITY	
Abuja	Nigeria	2	Nigeria	2
	Brazil	1	Brazil	1
Lagos	Nigeria	1	Nigeria	1
	Suriname	2	Suriname	1
	Ghana	1	Spain	1
	Curaçao	1	Brazil	1
	Mexico	1	Mexico	1
			Unknown	1

Source: KMAR Schiphol Airport (2014)

Appendix II

Overview of informants

Table (III) summarizes an outline of formal and informal interviewees during this research. It comprises of all individuals addressed in Nigeria, Europe, Brazil and China in the course of participant observation and others whom I contacted. Though the scale of interaction and information acquired varies per person, these people are all considered important direct informants who assisted me by deliberately telling me their stories, offered me their proficiency, talked about others as well as linked me up with other informants. Whereas several remain anonymous, others are (nick)-named. This table omits people met in countless causal settings, whose additional oblivious contributions were also valuable.

Table III. Overview of informants

Number	Respondent	Category	Place interview	Date
1	Didi	Contact	Guangzhou	28-11-2009 29-11-2010 23-05-2011 28-04-2012
2	Suka	Contact	Guangzhou	29-11-2009
3	Chika	Courier	Lagos	12-03-2010
4	Owo	Cocaine striker	Lagos	12-03-2010 16-12-2012 10-08-2012
5	Maike	Cocaine trafficker	Lagos	14-03-2010
6	Emma Osy	Community leader	Guangzhou	20-05-2011
7	Kedu	Trader	Guangzhou	20-05-2011
8	Kani	Trader	Guangzhou	20-05-2011
9	Joe	Entrepreneur	Guangzhou	20-05-2011
10	Yadu	Trader	Guangzhou	21-05-2011
11	Aka	Trader	Guangzhou	21-05-2011
12 &13	Noko & Sibe	Cocaine traffickers	Guangzhou	22-05-2011
14	Lies	Female courier	Guangzhou	22-05-2011
15	Afse	Prostitute/courier	Guangzhou	22-05-2011
16	Ata	Trader	Guangzhou	25-05-2011
17	Tizu	Contact	Guangzhou	26-05-2011
18	Igwe	Community leader	Guangzhou	24-05-2011 27-05-2011
19	Atamu	Ex-trafficker	Guangzhou	25-05-2011
20	Antonio	Brazilian returnee's descendant	Lagos	30-08-2011
21	Tunde	Trader/trafficker	Lagos	02-09-2011
22	Mrs. A. Y. Oyediran	Granddaughter Candida Da Rocha	Lagos	
23	Ekete	Trader/trafficker	Lagos	05-10-2011 08-11-2012
24 &25	Boniface &Uche	Victim gang violence	Guangzhou	12-10-2011

26	Mana	Greek female courier	Sao Paulo (SP)	24-12-2011
27	Tapa	Thai female courier	SP	25-12-2011 28-12-2011
28	Lita	Thai female courier	SP	26-12-2011
29	Hafsat	Female courier	SP	Dec. 2011
30	Nin	Female courier	SP	Dec. 2011
31	Chi	Female courier	SP	Dec. 2011
32	Brazilian	Lecturer	SP	10-12-2011
33	Olili	Cocaine trafficker	SP	19-12-2011
34	Ropa	Teacher	SP	15-12-2011
35	MNF	Cocaine trafficker	SP	20-12-2011 28-12-2012 08-01-2013
36	A shop owner	Galleria mall	SP	22-12-2011
37	Big Papa	Nigerian inmate	SP	24-12-2011
38	Aga	Courier	Guangzhou	25-04-2012
39	Azu	Dealer	Guangzhou	26-04-2012
40	PN	Police Officer	Guangzhou	26-04-2012
41 & 42	Raka & Titi	Prostitute/courier	Guangzhou	27-04-2012
43	Ejike	Trader	Guangzhou	27-04-2012
44	Kele	Contact	Guangzhou	27-04-2012
45	Ache	Cocaine trafficker	Guangzhou	28-04-2012
46	TK	Nigerian inmate	Sungai Buloh Prison Malaysia	May 2012
47	Belo	Nigerian ex-convict	SP	22-09-2012
48	Otiyo	Ex- trafficker	SP	23-09-2012
49	Mrs. D.	Prostitute	SP	23-09-2012
50	Sima	Informant	SP	23-09-2012
51	Celense	Informant	SP	01-10-2012
52	Ada	Female courier	Lagos	26-10-2012
53	Patrick	Pastor	SP	24-12-2012 28-12-2012
54	Let Go	Courier	SP	27-12-2012
55	Ehi	Courier	SP	27-12-2012
56	CL	Criminal lawyer	SP	27-12-2012
57	OB	Courier	SP	28-12-2012
58	Rija	Malaysian courier	SP	28-12-2012
59	Gil	Nigerian activist	SP	28-12-2012
60	Kodo	Courier	SP	29-12-2012
61	Aja	Nigerian inmate	SP	29-12-2012
62	Aki	Ex-convict	SP	29-12-2012
63	Mipo	Ex-courier	SP	30-12-2012
64	Sharpi	Trader/trafficker	SP	29-09-2012 29-09-2012 12-01-2013
65	Miyi	Female convict	SP	03-01-2013
66	Feti	Female convict	SP	03-01-2013

67	Kata		SP	05-01-2013
68	Adaka		SP	09-01-2013
69	Saka	Shop owner	SP	12-01-2013
70	Tambu	Trader traffickers	Lagos	06-08-2013
71	Teku	Trader trafficker	Lagos	07-10-2013
72	Oga Dede	Entrepreneur	Lagos	15-10-2013
73	Adaki	Trader/trafficker	Lagos	27-11-2013
74	Chen	Trader	Lagos	14-12-2013
75	Wang	Entrepreneur	Hargeisa	27-12-2013
76	Aka	Courier	Amsterdam	12-07-2014
77	Stuart	Ex-inmate WCD Guangzhou. (Skype video interview)	South Caroline	29-11-2014 04-12-2014 06-12-2014
78	AA	Ex-inmate WCD Guangzhou. (Skpe telephone interview)	Lagos	17-09-2015



In recent decades, Nigerian criminal drug ‘barons’ and ‘gangs’ have come to dominate international cocaine trafficking via West Africa to destination countries globally, a trend that presents a serious security threat to Africa and the world.

This work provides empirical evidence to define and explain the role of Nigerians in a new style of illicit brokerage in supplying global demands for cocaine. Beginning with an

investigation into the criminogenic environment created by the Nigerian ‘state crisis,’ this work traces the geographic, demographic, economic, historical, political, and cultural factors that have contributed to the cocaine culture in Nigeria. These elements have led to a society that relies on ‘reverse social capital,’ wherein wealth and power are achieved through illegal means, and solely benefit the individual.

The author further argues that Nigerian cocaine traffickers take advantage of the country’s richness, better economy, modern infrastructure, and contemporary technological advancements; employ extended, flexible networks of relatives, friends, and acquaintances; incorporate specific cultural practices (e.g. consumption of foodstuffs that facilitate the swallowing of cocaine); and utilize excellent entrepreneurial skills in order to establish a global trafficking network, all of which are reasons why Nigerian cocaine traffickers are sought after by their South American and Asian counterparts. Exceptionally, however, they see their activity simply as a trade opportunity based on the market forces of covert demand and supply. Yet many Nigerians are serving time in prisons around the world for drug trafficking, much of which can be attributed to side effects of development in Nigeria.

This research addresses the root causes that have led to Nigerians’ enthusiasm for international cocaine trafficking, especially in relation with Brazil and China and the mechanisms that strengthen it by conducting extensive interviews with Nigerian drug traffickers, law enforcement agents (in Nigeria and abroad), politicians, and the Nigerian Diaspora. It concludes that further emphasis should be placed on addressing the use of Nigeria’s wealth in diversifying the economy by creating employment opportunities and a basic infrastructure that could provide jobs as a deterrent factor for the pool of potential drug traffickers in the international cocaine trade. This work has no readymade ‘solution’ to the problem, but it has opened an initial debate by providing insights into the role of Nigerians in international cocaine trafficking, thereby paving the way for further analytical and policy-centered research.