"You are a foreigner, you are a foreigner, as if you are an outcast"

Exploring the Dynamics between Discrimination and Identification amongst Nigerian Immigrants in Durban, South Africa

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Table of Content

List of Figures

Abstract

Nigerian migrants are the pinnacle of the undesirable “Other” in South Africa. Partly revealing what this prevailing stereotype consists of, this exploratory thesis focusses on how discrimination in a new environment alters the lives of Nigerian migrants, resulting in an interplay of pragmatic and discursive coping strategies. By researching internal and external factors, such as how Nigerian migrants in Durban see themselves, their backgrounds, their perceptions of how they are viewed, their experiences in South Africa and how they live their lives (their (inter)actions), it is possible to analyse how their identity formations (framed theoretically as a continuing and correlating process) alter to include coping strategies.

Utilising (social) identity theory, this thesis unveils various processes of identity (re)negotiations and the respective meanings attached to them. The incorporation of complex and oftentimes contested theoretical considerations of “identity” is visually expressed through the *Ouroboros* metaphor. While the *Ouroboros of Identity* proved to be of utmost assistance in conceptualising the interconnected stages of identification extant in the participants' in-depth, semi-structured interviews, this thesis additionally attempts to reconcile seemingly contesting domains of meaning-making – the personal/experiential and public/representational.

With widespread public and institutional discrimination as quotidian realities, the personal narratives of six Nigerian migrants in Durban, as well as two testimonies of both the editor of *The Nigerian Voice* and the chairman of the Nigerian Union of South Africa (NUSA) in KwaZulu-Natal, are used to explore personal and institutional coping strategies respectively which respond to living in an oftentimes hostile environment/society. This exploratory thesis finds that ethnicity appeared to be of lower importance than nationality amongst the participants, with the meanings of the former often transferred to and renegotiated with the latter. While personal and institutional coping strategies, e.g. discursively *attacking the stigma(tiser)* or positively *re-articulating* Nigerianness, are oftentimes congruent, certain discrepancies can be seen to hinder active cooperation and mobilisation and impede the unanimous evocation for the need to strive against misrepresentation and misrecognition of Nigerian migrants in South Africa.

1. Introduction

Under circumstances in which the highly familiar
grows more and more unfamiliar,
the resulting amalgam of insecurity and dis-ease,
of confusion and festering frustration,
the resulting desire for remooring,
is readily reworked by many into a reassertion
of national (regional, local) symbols/meanings/values/idea-logics,
by way of a reassertion of difference,
is readily reworked into discourses and practices
apt to focus on those who culturally and physically embody
the newly unfamiliar,
apt to victimize those "less advanced," "unmodern"
migrants, refugees, or minorities
who most readily serve as scapegoats
for all *that is newly unfamiliar,*
for every thing *and* every relation *that is newly different,*
newly ununderstood,
or newly unappreciated.
(Pred 2000, pp.30-31; original emphases)

In the increasingly interconnected and dynamic world of the 21st century, Allan Pred's notion of the *embodied newly unfamiliar* is applied to those who, for various reasons, are constructed according to difference and perceived to undermine or adulterate the likewise imagined homogeneous construct of familiar similarities. As poignantly expressed in Pred's academic poem, migrants serve as welcome scapegoats for *unfamiliar* transformations and ills within nation-states and societies, and as first victims in discourses about belonging and deservedness.

Notwithstanding, for example, the formal agreements on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, progressive constitutional mantras and, what Wendy Brown calls "the global renaissance in tolerance talk" extant in the late 20th century (Brown 2006, p.2),

lived realities of migrants across the globe are frequently characterised and shaped by prejudices, discrimination and rejection. These mostly negative attitudes towards migrants cannot but affect and reshape the internal/external processes of understanding, identification and representation of "the Self", e.g. their individual and collective identities, which constantly manifest themselves in complex negotiations of meanings, perceptions and (inter)actions in a new (and often hostile) environment (Jenkins 2008a).

In post-apartheid South Africa, the vision underlying its constitutional preamble "that South Africa belongs to all who live in it, united in our diversity" and the promotion of an inclusive and tolerant "rainbow nation" by archbishop Desmond Tutu and late Nelson Mandela suggest an environment for migrants which, when considering the diverse ethnic make-up of the country, is not unaccustomed to accommodating ethnic differences. However, lived realities of migrants do not necessarily reflect these advocated ideals, as witnessed in and epitomised by the countrywide xenophobic attacks in May 2008. In these attacks, particularly foreign black African migrants became victims of black locals' lethal resentment and frustrations facilitating the ideological entrenchment of the figure of *Makwerekwere*[1] – the construction of the black foreigner (Matsinhe 2011a).

Though not immediate targets of the 2008 xenophobic violence, Nigerian migrants in South Africa face "some sort of 'special prejudice' directed against this group concerning drugs and illegal activities" (Adeagbo 2013, p.278). Against the backdrop of social inequality, unemployment and high crime rates (cf. Seekings & Nattrass 2005) in the "rainbow nation", "some bad eggs among Nigerian immigrants who are involved in all kinds of crime" (Adeagbo 2013, p.279; cf. Morris 1998; Shaw 2002) allowed political and media discourse to spread generalising and criminalising anti-Nigerian sentiments which in turn vindicated and strengthened the widespread negative public perception of Nigerian migrants in South Africa (Adeagbo 2013, p.279).

Accepting that perceived and actual discrimination, stereotyping and hostility by the host population are part of migrants' everyday life experiences in a new environment, this case study focusses on Nigerian migrants in Durban, the country's second largest industrial centre after Johannesburg, and an emerging major destination for African work-seeking

1 Phaswane Mpe describes the vulgar connotation of *Makwerekwere* in his novel *Welcome to Our Hillbrow*: "*Makwerekwere* […] derived from *kwere kwere*, a sound that their unintelligible foreign languages were supposed to make, according to the locals." (Mpe 2001, p.20; original emphases)

migrants (Vawda 2009, p.67; Crush & McDonald 2000, p.11; Maharaj & Moodley 2000, p.152). The specific focus of this qualitative research (based on in-depth interviews) is placed on how these negative attitudes towards Nigerian migrants are absorbed and dealt with by Nigerian individuals and their possible social networks. Thus, coping strategies with discrimination and their consequent interrelatedness with various aspects of migrant identity (such as ethnicity and nationality) form the main nexus of inquiry. These preliminary deliberations led to the investigation of the following, more explicit research questions:

What kind of discrimination is experienced by Nigerian migrants in Durban, South Africa? What coping mechanisms are used? How and why are these certain coping mechanisms embraced? What impact does (dealing with) discrimination have on Nigerian migrants' identities? How does their migrancy alter internal/external processes of identification and the representation of their particularly national and ethnic identities?

In order to investigate these questions, section 1.1 presents a general discussion on the interconnectedness between phenomena of globalisation, migration and identity, while section 1.2 explores the legacy of colonialism regarding the developments of identities in (South) Africa. Section 1.3 furthers this discussion by including the nexus of immigration and xenophobia in South Africa before section 1.4 zooms into the particularities of Nigerian immigrants in the “rainbow nation”. Chapter 2 gives insights into the theoretical framework of this research – the *Ouroboros of Identification*. Methodological considerations and the fieldwork carried out in Durban, South Africa are subsequently presented in chapter 3, followed by the analysis of the empirical data within broader trends in chapter 4, and conclusionary remarks in chapter 5.

1.1 Globalisation, Migration and Identity

Population movements have always been part of human history; from the dispersion of the first human beings from East Africa some 200,000 years ago, voluntary and forced migration shaped and continues to shape the world we inhabit. Nomadic lifestyle and/or territorial expansion (e.g. Ghengis Khan of the Mongol Empire, the Vikings in northern Europe) characterised early migration movements. Since the 16th century, the

development of the European states coupled with the colonisation of the rest of the world forged international migration via the transatlantic slave trade and colonial settlement. From the second half of the 20th century, the scope of international migration, as a seminal dynamic of globalisation, has reached unprecedented dimensions, mainly facilitated by political, economic and cultural globalisation as well as the development of new and accessible communication and transportation technologies (see Castles & Miller 2009; Sassen 2007; Moses 2006; Koslowski 2005; Croucher 2004).

This postmodern "experience of time-space compression is challenging, exciting, stressful, and sometimes deeply troubling, capable of sparking, therefore, a diversity of social, cultural, and political responses" (Harvey 1990, p.240). While the global flow of information and monetary capital appears increasingly limitless, this excitement of rapid change and flexibility is increasingly clouded by "the simultaneous anxiety of societies seemingly out of control; and the constant destabilization of identities and continuous reinvention of "traditions"" (Rattansi 1995, p.251) as migration also continues to increase globally. With the influx of forced (refugees) or voluntary (e.g. students) migrants, whether regular ("legal") or irregular ("illegal"[2]), desired (skilled) or undesired (unskilled), and therefore "deserving" or "undeserving" of accommodation, the faces of societies has undoubtedly changed (Castles & Miller 2009). "As a result of immigration, many societies become *culturally plural*" (Berry 1997, p.8; original emphasis) and experience, apart from socio-cultural, also economic and political challenges. Particularly the sovereignty of nation-states is (perceived to be) undermined by the (imagined) threat of cultural pluralism and transnational attachments unsettling the (likewise imagined myths of) socio-cultural cohesion of nation-states and notions of "national identity", resulting in the regulation of immigration through such tools as increased border control and the notion of citizenship (Castles & Miller 2009, pp.3,15; Croucher 2004, p.32; Comaroff 1996, p.173).

However, developments in human mobility have not only immense structural consequences for sending (e.g. "brain drain") and receiving countries and societies (see above), but also more nuanced and personal implications for migrants themselves. The variety of complex causes and effects underlying international migration obliges the academic fields of inquiry to span various interrelated disciplines, e.g. political science,

2 See Thomsen (2010) for a discussion on the power of terminology labelling migrants and its (potential) discriminatory connotations.

economics, law, history, sociology, anthropology and psychology, and multi-scalar readings, i.e. macro, meso and micro (Brettell & Hollifield 2007, Castles & Miller 2009). While the causes of migration are manifold (personal, political, economical, ecological etc.) and transgress simplistic push and pull explanations (Sassen 2007, Castles & Miller 2009), all migrants find themselves in a new environment where, to gain a foothold, identities are (re)negotiated in relation to the new (receiving) as well as the previous (sending) socio-cultural context (Conradson & McKay 2007, p.168).

In recent years, research in migration has become more interested in personal experiences of migrants and its relationship to identity and place within the emerging framework of "transnationalism[3]" (Gilmartin 2008). John Berry's practical question from a psychological point of view elucidates the importance of a micro-approach in understanding lived realities of migrants: "What happens to individuals, who have developed in one cultural [and national] context, when they attempt to live in a new cultural [and national] context?" (Berry 1997, p.6). While identity (a person's individual and collective understanding of the "Self" through the "Other" – see 2.1) is a complex social construct encompassing various constantly (re)negotiated aspects, such as race, ethnicity, nationality, class, gender and sexuality, the meanings attached to these are inevitably subject to shifts and changes through migration (Spencer 2006; Jenkins 2008a; Gilmartin 2008). This meaning-making or understanding of one's "Self" does not happen in a vacuum, but occurs on personal/cognitive and social levels of (interpretations of) daily interactions between the migrant(s) and the environment(s).

As sketched out above and encapsulated by Allan Pred's opening poem, in particular immigrants embody the "newly unfamiliar Other" and are often perceived as a threat to social cohesion and the sovereignty of the nation-state. Homi Bhabha supports this by stressing the effect on identity: "We have entered an anxious age of identity, in which the attempt to memorialize lost time, and to reclaim lost territories, creates a culture of disparate 'interest groups' or social movements" (Bhabha 1996, p.59). While in the best case scenario "interest groups", such as the host state and society, are willing to recognise and accommodate cultural diversity through multicultural policies, discourses and behaviours (Modood 2007, p.1, Castles & Miller 2009, p.34), the realities or "lived experiences" of immigrants are increasingly characterised by prejudice, discrimination and

3 See 2.4

exclusion from (parts of) the host society. Particularly since the early 1970s, economic (e.g. the rise of neoliberal capitalism) and political (e.g. the end of the “Cold War”) transformations, coupled with increasing cultural[4] interconnectedness (see “time-space compression” above)

> “[...] have been experienced by many sections of the population [in “Western” societies] as a direct threat to their livelihood, social conditions and identity […] leading to a reactive reassertion of nationalism and its symbols. As such changes have coincided with the arrival of new ethnic minorities, the tendency has been to perceive the newcomers as the cause of the threatening changes: an interpretation eagerly encouraged by the extreme right, but also by many mainstream politicians.” (Castles & Miller 2009, p.38)

This scapegoating of ethnic minorities, of which immigrants are part of, is rooted in “social processes which produce and reproduce […] boundaries of identification and differentiation between ethnic collectivities” (Jenkins 2008b, p.12); fostering categorical “us” and “them” divisions. Whilst ethnicity, a complex and contested social and political construct (see 2.3), is generally described as a sense of group belonging based on shared socio-cultural characteristics (Castles & Miller 2009, p.35), it “is not a thing in (or for) itself, but an immanent capacity which takes on manifest form in response to external forces” (Comaroff 1996, p.165).

Therefore, not only the self-ascribed, internal ethnic identification of immigrants is of relevance, but also the external, multi-scalar ascription of ethnicity imposed on by dominant groups via political and media discourse, and personal interactions. The inherent power dynamics of social categorisation can allow dominant groups in the host society to impose undesirable characteristics on and assign inferior social positions to migrant groups (Jenkins 2008b, p.23; Castles & Miller 2009, p.35).

Albeit with varying relative strength as, for instance, resistance towards external categorisation and marginalisation is possible (*ibid.)*, recent examples of exclusionary

4 While “culture” is used by different authors in myriads of ways, this thesis generally understands the concept as learned ways of doing, thinking and feeling. Stuart Hall describes culture as a “knowable community” and a “structure of feeling” when commenting on Raymond Williams' encounter with English culture as a Welshman: “It was his 'placing' within another culture, his access to a different, 'knowable' community, indeed another national culture, a different 'structure of feeling'.” (Hall 1993, p.350)

processes (i.e. racism and xenophobia[5]) against ethnic minorities and immigrants can be found across the globe. Single events of exclusion and discrimination, such as racist monkey chants directed against black football players in Italy (Bandini 2013), xenophobic hate crimes against Caucasians in Russia (Ovshieva 2013), the 2009 referendum in Switzerland against the construction of minarets (Lentin & Titley 2011, p.123) or the 2010 publication of Thilo Sarrazin's book *Deutschland schafft sich ab (Germany Does Away with Itself),* in which the country's "downfall" is attributed mainly to Muslim immigrants (Macgilchrist & Böhmig 2012), can only be understood within the above outlined broader trends and paradigms of growing anxiety and their interplay with political and public discourse.

The recent electoral success of anti-immigrant right-wing parties in Western Europe, such as the *Front National* in France or the *Danish People's Party* in Denmark, illustrates the dimensions of how anti-immigration attitudes have entered the political and public mainstream and how they are capitalised upon through the mobilisation of a "national identity" via the construction of immigrants as a cultural or economic threat (Art 2011; Lentin & Titley 2011; van der Brug & Fennema 2003). A poster (Fig.1 below) of the UK Independence Party's (UKIP) relatively successful campaign for the 2014 elections to the European Parliament exemplifies the fanning of fear:

Fig.1: *Poster of the UKIP's 2014 election campaign.*

5 Whilst the theorisation of the (re)production of racism, xenophobia and "new" or xeno-racism (see e.g. Lentin & Titley 2011; Fekete 2009; Balibar & Wallerstein 1991) is beyond the scope of this study, sections 1.2, 1.3 and 1.4 (see below) will offer some suggestions and specifications relating to the South African context.

Although rejecting general “anti-immigrant” accusations, the UKIP's leader, Nigel Farage, states that “*we* [the UKIP] are anti-uncontrolled immigration […] from Eastern Europe to come to pick *our* fruit” (Farage 2014; own emphases). The rhetorical question and the answer offered by the hand on the poster (figure 1) suggest an Orwellian imposition of thoughts by “Big Brother's” admonishing finger through the creation of fear of the invading “Other” – namely 26 million (Eastern) European immigrants. The “number game” and the implication that “we” (the UKIP) know what the consequences of uncontrolled immigration are for “you”, the individual citizen and the UK citizenry at large, clearly show how the mobilisation of a “national identity” can operate. Through the exploitation of uncertainties and the creation of a “national” scapegoat via political discourse, readily propagated by the mainstream media as “recited truths” (Lentin & Titley 2011), anti-immigrant sentiments may flourish disguised as a necessary unfolding in the name of national well-being.

Apart from alleged economic reasons, the perceived “Western” need for national security and control of borders in order to protect “us” against “them” (undesired immigrants) has been decidedly epitomised by the events of 9/11 and the subsequent “war on terror” and “symbolic politics of fear” (Benhabib 2007, p.47; original emphasis removed) embodied by anti-Islam and anti-foreigner attitudes. Religion was therefore constructed not only as a literal security threat, but also as a force capable of undermining “Western” values and “national identities” (Fekete 2009). Although political and public discourses varied in the “West”, they were exacerbated by the media and “always linked back to immigrant communities and cultures and the threat that multicultural policies pose to core values, cultural homogeneity and social cohesion” (*ibid.*, p.63).

While the hegemonic developments and anti-immigrant sentiments in the “Western” world might exemplify the problems and discrimination encountered by migrants, it is not an exaggeration to claim that “[r]acism [and its accomplices] towards certain groups is to be found in virtually all immigration countries” (Castles & Miller 2009, p.37). While varying in context, extent and direction, experiences of exclusion or discrimination seem to be a defining aspect of migrants' “lived realities” across the globe. The effects, this research suggests, cannot but necessitate a development of certain “survival” coping strategies for the new, and oftentimes hostile environment which in return inevitably affect their identity formations and understandings of the “Self”.

1.2 Contextualising Identities in (South) Africa

> *Wherever they land up in South Africa, immigrants take their place on a fraught historical terrain.* (Comaroff & Comaroff 2002, p.790)

Before exploring the situation of (Nigerian) migrants in South Africa, it is of importance to describe the spatial and temporal context they find themselves in – a multi-ethnic, post-colonial African country which only 20 years ago gained political freedom from the yoke of apartheid and insisted to be offered the chance to identify itself as an inclusive "rainbow nation". However, as the introductory quote by John and Jean Comaroff suggests, the lives of immigrants in contemporary South Africa can only be understood through the power relations of the past and their impact on the present. Speaking generally about the hegemonic impact of century-long colonialism on the African continent and the subjugation of African peoples "out of the 'zone of being' into a 'zone of non-being'" (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2014, p.35), Abdi posits:

> With a "cluster" of socially disruptive and politicoeconomically devastating colonial experiences […] African identities, as they were embedded in precolonial African ways of life, were either destroyed or relegated to the status of uncivilized and backward beliefs, sometimes superstitious practices, or unacceptable challenges to colonial programs and preferences. (Abdi 1999, p.150)

While, geographically speaking, colonialism culminated in the "Scramble for Africa" at the Berlin Conference of 1884-5 with arbitrary border demarcations across ethnic lines (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2014), the newly formed colonial states were thoroughly organised by legally inscribed (biologically defined) "races" and (culturally defined) ethnicities/"tribes". In order to secure domination of non-native "citizens" (predominantly white settlers) over native "subjects", civic rights were granted only to the former, while the latter were bound to customary law (Mamdani 1996; 2001). Furthermore,

> [i]nstead of racializing the colonized into a majority identity called "natives", as did nineteenth-century direct rule, twentieth-century indirect rule[6] dismantled this racialized majority into so many ethnicized minorities. (Mamdani 2001, p.663)

6 "Native" chiefs were deployed as local authorities under indirect colonial rule (Mamdani 2001, p.655).

The fragmentation and imposition of categorical, highly politicised racial and ethnic identities on the colonised only exemplify the immense influence colonialism and its hegemonic power structures had on peoples' past understandings of the "Self" and its enduring impact on contemporary identity formations. Although decolonialisation of sub-Saharan Africa began in 1957, with Ghana being the first country to declare its independence, Grosfoguel argues that a decolonised world is "[o]ne of the most powerful myths of the twentieth century" (2007, p.219). He continues, claiming that "the coloniality of power" survived the end of colonial administration and, with "[...] the racial/ethnic hierarchy of the European/non-European divide [which still] transversally reconfigures all of the other global power structures" (Grosfoguel 2007, p.217). While this is not really disputable in the age of "Western"-based multinational corporations and "Structural Adjustment Programs" imposed on "developing" or "underdeveloped" countries, international counter-hegemonic movements, such as the ideology of pan-Africanism or postcolonialism in academia (cf. especially Said 1978), emerged during the course of the 20th century advocating self-determination and agency of the (previously) oppressed. In particular, pan-Africanism gained prominence as an anti-racist, anti-colonial vision for African unity (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2014). Kwame Appiah asserts that, although "African unity [and] African identity[7] […] need securer foundations than race" (Appiah 1995, p.107),

> [...] it remains clear that another Pan-Africanism – the project of a continental fraternity and sorority, *not* the project of a racialized Negro nationalism – however false or muddled its theoretical roots, can be progressive force. (*Ibid.*, p.112; original emphasis)

In a sense, defying or responding to the message of Frantz Fanon's *Black Skin, White Mask* that "[...] the colonized can only imitate, never identify" (Bhabha 2008[1986], pp.xxii-xxiii), the Black Consciousness Movement (BCM) arose in South Africa in the mid-60s after the 1960 banning of the African National Congress (ANC). Founded and led by Steve Biko, the BCM pursued an "ideology of liberation" (Adam & Moodley 1993, p.105) directed not only against the institutionalised structure of racial apartheid, but also aiming for the decolonisation of the mind (Ahluwalia & Zegeye 2001; Abdi 1999, pp.155-7). Regarding the redefinition of power structures and African identity, Biko insisted:

7 "And in thinking about how we are to reshape it, we would do well to remember that the African identity is, for its bearers, only one among many." (Appiah 1995, p.108)

> We must relate the past to the present and demonstrate a historical evolution of the modern African. We must reject the attempts by the powers that be to project an arrested image of our culture. This is not the sum total of our culture. They have deliberately arrested our culture at the tribal stage […]. It is through the evolution of our genuine culture that our identity can be fully rediscovered. (Biko 1987, p.70)

As a legally entrenched system created by the "architect of apartheid", H.W. Verwoerd, white supremacy rule in South Africa permeated since 1948 literally every aspect of human life by intensively expanding previous century-long colonial oppression. The South African population was divided into four "racial" groups, "black" ("Bantu"), "white", "coloured" and "Indian", of which each was assigned a different set of rights and different residential areas. In the case of "black" South Africans, ten ethnically distinct homelands or "Bantustans" (in the 1970s partly declared nominally independent) were created, as noted above by Mamdani (2001), to divide a racialised majority into ethnicised minorities ("tribes") in order to maintain control and prevent mass action. Furthermore, the "independence" of some Bantustans tied their inhabitants legally to this area and was generally intended to deny black people South African citizenship, thereby rendering every black South African a foreign migrant (Klaaren 2000; Neocosmos 2006, p.30). A former apartheid minister stated: "If our policy is taken to its full logical conclusion […] there will be not one black man with South African citizenship (Mulder 1978 quoted in Klaaren 2000, p.225). The systemic exclusion, segregation and control of everyday aspects of life by, e.g., various pass laws, "Bantu education"[8] or the prohibition of mixed marriage, under the pretext of "separate development", deeply affected the understanding of the colonised "Self". "Bantu education", for example, additionally aggravated the constructed ethnic boundaries by enforcing an exclusive affiliation with the "tribe" instead of the wider South African society (Valji 2003).

A "psychological inferiority complex" (Ahluwalia & Zegeye 2001, pp.459-60) was the result of a further imposition of racial stereotypes on black people as "innately inferior, accustomed to dehumanized living, sexually promiscuous, intellectually limited, and prone to violence; blackness symbolized evil, demise, chaos, corruption, and uncleanliness" (Adam & Moodley 1993, p.105). While resistance to colonial hegemony was voiced and practised in South Africa (*inter alia* by the BCM, the ANC and its armed wing, the MK –

8 Cf. Abdi 1999, p.155.

Umkhonto we Sizwe), it could not prevent the psychological damage – the (partial) internalisation of imposed inferiority, such as self-hatred, self-doubt, self-accusation and a prevalence of an intra-black hierarchy (Adam & Moodley 1993, p.105). Blitz The Ambassador, a Ghanaian-American hip-hop artist, gets to the heart of the inferiority complex caused *inter alia* by colonial religion in his recent song “Bisa”:

> *Remove all* religious obligations, especially if they house colonial modifications. Manipulation of soul, spirit and self-esteem; no self-respect, no wonder I don't like the self I'm seeing. (Blitz The Ambassador *et al.* 2013; original emphasis)

Under domestic and international pressure, the unbanning of the ANC and the 1990 release of Nelson Mandela after 27 years of imprisonment marked the beginning of the negotiated transition to democracy which resulted in the electoral victory of Mandela's ANC in 1994. The 1955 Freedom Charter became the template for one of the most progressive, inclusive and enlightened national constitutions worldwide (Comaroff & Comaroff 2003, p.446). Though South African “democracy [was] born in chains” (Klein 2007, p.194), restricting the ANC's political rule by neoliberal economic policies which ultimately benefit(ed) the previous powers that be (Bond 2004; Klein 2007), the task of unifying a deeply divided population through nation-building seemed crucial. Whilst Chipkin argues that “[...] the common factor, the X, on which to base a South African identity” (Chipkin 2007, p.178) is impossible to determine, nation-building was pursued through a range of efforts.

Symbolically, national unity was forged by the ANC through a new national flag, a multi-lingual national anthem and a new coat of arms. Matsinhe states, inferring from Billig (1995), that “these symbols [including national museums, monuments and other national shrines] create and flag the nation in the most banal ways” (Matsinhe 2011b, p.180). Furthermore, sports, “[...] an esprit de corps that Mandela view[ed] as one of the crucial mechanisms for nationbuilding“ (Adam & Moodley 1993, p.29), were utilised, famously embodied by “the father of the nation” during the 1995 Rugby World Cup in South Africa by wearing the jersey of the (predominantly white) national team, the *Springboks*.

Other, more concrete measures included socio-economic initiatives, such as the “Reconstruction and Development Programme” (RDP) and “Black Economic

Empowerment" (BEE), which pursued in a sense "identity politics" (cf. Young 2007), an attempt to assist previously economically excluded groups through state-driven "affirmative action" to overcome structural injustices created by apartheid, though still relying on racial categorisation. Whereas outcomes are controversial, thus debatable, both, the RDP and BEE, were discursively framed as necessary measures for nation-building serving the interest of all South Africans (Chipkin 2007, pp.152-5; Iheduru 2004, p.2 respectively).

On a socio-political level, the "Truth and Reconciliation Commission" (TRC) served as an important tool to unify former oppositions. Its underlying objective was, apart from granting amnesty to crimes committed during apartheid, that of nation-building through the creation of a shared memory between the "perpetrator" and the "victim" (Valji 2003). Having faced substantial criticism for its narrow interpretation of the "crime against humanity" by, e.g., individualising systemic crimes (cf. Mamdani 2002), the TRC pursued an implicit narrative of constructing *all* South Africans as "victims of the past" in order to lay the basis for a common national identity, albeit homogenised and internally-directed (Valji 2003). Additionally, archbishop Desmond Tutu, chairperson of the TRC, invoked Christianity as a unifying aspect and a main reconciling pillar for the "rainbow people of God" (Tutu 1999 quoted in Chipkin 2007, p.185). As a "foundational myth", the notion of the "rainbow nation" (suggesting, factually or ideologically, a peaceful unity in diversity) served, similarly to the TRC, "to discursively create a national identity that has been top-down in its constitution and implementation" (Valji 2003, n.p.).

While post-1994 studies on intergroup relations (cf. Bornman 2011) and survey data (see e.g. Adjai & Lazaridis 2013, p.194) carefully indicate a strengthening of national pride and a common identity among South Africans of all groups, they need to be seen within a broader context. By fostering and constructing national identification as described above – as an internal entity – the project implies and necessitates a contrast – an external "Other" (Valji 2003). The meanings of one's own South Africanness can only be known antithetically to the meaning attributed to non-South Africanness. This directly links to Lazarus' notion of South African exceptionalism which characterised discourses around the transition, implying, in a sense, superiority towards the rest of the "decolonised" world.

> The assumption has been that, with *our* particular and particularly irreducible history – which is to say, our history of struggle – *our* decolonization, when it came, would

not prove to be the neocolonization that it had been elsewhere […]. (Lazarus 2004, p.611; original emphases)

However, all these (top-down) attempts and tools to overcome the legacy of apartheid and create a sense of collective national identity are underpinned by the notion of citizenship and its unifying predication (Adjai & Lazaridis 2013). As outlined above, citizenship during colonialism and particularly apartheid was a legal tool for hegemonic segregation. In post-1994 democratic South Africa, these divisions were equalised with a national, constitutionally enshrined citizenship (Klotz 2012). Citizenship, though, as exemplified by the apartheid rhetoric regarding Bantustans (see above), can not only be a tool of inclusion, but also of exclusion, embodying some sort of "[...] ID-ology, the quest for a collective good, and sometimes goods, sanctioned by, and in the name of, a shared identity" (Comaroff & Comaroff 2003, p.447). While the context employed by Comaroff & Comaroff covers intra-citizenry legal conflicts (i.e. "tradition" versus state), the term "ID-ology" also poignantly speaks to debates and discourses surrounding the "citizen-foreigner" dichotomy in South Africa.

1.3 Migration to and Xenophobia in South Africa

As "[...] citizens necessarily partake of a common substance that distinguishes them from non-citizens" (Chipkin 2007, p.199), this "common substance" can, on the one hand, assume the shape of factual and more tangible notions of citizenship, such as guaranteed access to state resources or the eligibility of its bearers to vote. On the other hand, a "common substance" can also imply notions of an imagined citizenship (that of "being" South African), whereby bodies become signifiers of belonging or rejection, acceptance or intolerance (Matsinhe 2011a). Particularly since 1994 the bodies of African foreign nationals seem to have been denied this recognition, as they are perceived (mainly by many black South African citizens) to deviate by looks, movements, sounds or smells from bodily ideals of the imagined citizenship (*ibid.*). These "fantasies of the foreign body" (*ibid.*, p.302) allow, amongst various other circumstances, not only the ideological entrenchment of the figure of *Makwerekwere*, but also serve as precursors for large-scale discrimination against the "Other" – black "foreigners" (Matsinhe 2011a): "Most African migrants – from panhandlers to professors – are feeling the verbal, and sometimes physical, sting of

rampant anti-foreign sentiment" (Crush & McDonald 2000, p.7). While post-apartheid discourses on present-day (illegal) immigration tend to present African migrants as a new and overwhelming problem, this phenomenon has historical roots (Trimikliniotis *et al.* 2008, p.1324).

Even before the discovery of gold and diamonds around Johannesburg in the late 19th century, a system of (internal) labour migration was established by colonial rule utilising labour from all over the region (what later became South Africa) (*ibid.*, pp.1324-5). With the need for cheap and convenient labour power to work in the newly developed mining areas, recruitment was intensified and expanded to neighbouring protectorates (Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland) and what is today Mozambique, Malawi and Zambia offering strictly temporary working contracts without prospects for permanent residence (*ibid.*; Crush & Tshitereke 2001, p.50). In 1987, 477,000 registered migrant-workers were employed in South African mines (Crush 2011, p.14). By 1990 every country in the SADC ("Southern African Development Community") region has sent migrant labour to South African mines (Trimikliniotis *et al.* 2008, p.1325). While tens of thousands of "illegal" immigrants from neighbouring countries were repatriated in the late 1980s in accordance with the Aliens and Immigration Laws Amendment Act of 1984 (Morris 1998, p.1118), hundreds of thousands of refugees entered the country at the same time, mainly from war-torn Mozambique (Crush & McDonald 2000, p.6). With the initial Aliens Act of 1937, which was originally passed to curtail the immigration of (mainly German) Jews at the dawn of WWII, the term "alien" assumed its connotation with the "unwanted immigrant" (Neocosmos 2006, p.29).

The developments from 1990 onwards triggered a new immigration dynamic; the substantial numerical growth of "legal" and "illegal" immigrants entering the country from the SADC region, but also increasingly from further north, e.g. from the DRC and Nigeria (Trimikliniotis *et al.* 2008, p.1326; Klaaren 2002, p.229; Morris 1998, p.1119). In this period, immigration was regulated by the Aliens Control Act of 1991 which was passed by the ceasing apartheid government retaining the exclusionary nature of its immigration legislations (Klotz 2012, pp.196-7). Despite amendments made in 1995, the Aliens Control Act of 1991 effectively served as the main immigration policy until the passage of the Immigration Act of 2002, which was designed to facilitate skills import, however, "[...] still emphasised procedures for deterring, detecting, detaining, and deporting unwanted

foreigners" (*ibid.*, p.200; Crush 2011). While the most recent amendment of 2011 shifts the rhetoric to better "management", the protectionist agenda of "control" prevails (Klotz 2012, p.203) and fails to make up for the decade-long post-apartheid rhetoric portraying "aliens", in particular black Africans, as a threat to national socio-economic well-being.

In 1994, the first Minister of Home Affairs (1994-2002) of the democratic government and leader of the Zulu-based IFP (Inkatha Freedom Party), Chief Mangosuthu Buthelezi, had already set the agenda: "If we as South Africans are going to compete for scarce resources with millions of aliens who are pouring into South Africa, then we can bid goodbye to our Reconstruction and Development Program [RDP]" (Buthelezi 1994 quoted in Hicks 1999, p.401). Furthermore, regarding the highly contested topic of "illegal" immigrants, he encouraged "all members of the public to aid the Department [of Home Affairs] and the South African Police Services in the detection, prosecution and removal of illegal aliens from the country" (Buthelezi 1994 quoted in Matsinhe 2011b, p.85). A 1998 Human Rights Watch report sums it up:

> In general, South Africa's public culture has become increasingly xenophobic, and politicians often make unsubstantiated and inflammatory statements that the "deluge" of migrants is responsible for the current crime wave, rising unemployment, or even the spread of diseases. (Human Rights Watch 1998, p.4)

"The fear of being 'flooded'" (Trimikliniotis *et al.* 2008, p.1325) by "illegal aliens" was perpetuated over the years by "guesstimates" claiming that the population of "illegal" immigrants ranges between 2 and 12 million (the latter meaning that 1 in 4 South Africans is "illegal) (*ibid.*, p.1326). Another main narrative centres around the perceptions that "foreign migrants take away jobs from South African nationals" (Zuberi & Sibanda 2004, p.1464). The context of growing socio-economic inequalities (cf. Seekings & Nattrass 2005; Bond 2004) and the rise in unemployment since 1994 (cf. Kingdon & Knight 2007) facilitated the creation of a "frustration-scapegoat" who is made responsible for the struggle over scarce resources, such as housing, employment or education (Tshitereke 1999 in Harris 2002, p.171). Particularly in townships and informal settlements, where inequalities are felt most, the presence of "foreign-owned" small businesses (mainly "spaza" shops) is salient and able to trigger feelings of (perceived) business and employment competition (Vahed & Desai 2013). Chief Buthelezi proved, amongst other

politicians of the opposition, to be one of the origins of this narrative, announcing in August 1994 a causal link between unemployment of South Africans and “illegal” immigrants:

> I am thinking of proposing to Cabinet to consider legislation which will impose severe punishment on people who employ illegal aliens as it is unpatriotic to employ them at the expense of our own people. […] It is really good for us to consider the wisdom in the saying that charity begins at home. (Buthelezi 1994 in Croucher 1998, pp.650-1)

As official discourse does not differentiate between forms of immigration, such as forced refugees fleeing persecution or war, “[...] “illegal aliens” are all [depicted] the same and deserving of the same draconian policy response” (Crush & McDonald 2000, p.7). Media (re)production of the “number game” (which is not dissimilar to the UKIP; see 1.1) and of the perceived threat that “hordes of immigrants” are in South Africa to “steal jobs” has additionally contributed to the (re)production of a climate of fear and the increasingly hegemonic and xenophobic public discourse on African “illegal aliens” (Neocosmos 2008, pp.589-90; Harris 2002, p.178). In their analysis of post-1994 English-language press in South Africa, Danso & McDonald (2001) state:

> Highly sensationalized, Africanized and negative reporting of migration issues is generally in the form of superficial, statistics-happy articles that do little to inform the reader about the complexities of migration […]. Readers are all too often left with little more than incriminating innuendos and sensational accounts of what migrants are alleged to have done. (Danso & McDonald 2001, pp.132-3)

These negative media representations further “[...] the state's criminalisation of African foreign nationals as 'illegals', 'illegal aliens', 'illegal immigrants', 'criminals' and 'drug traffickers', most notably by the South African Police Service and the Department of Home Affairs” (Matsinhe 2011a, p.298). Although it is *per se* difficult to link, for example, an increase in crime to immigrants (Croucher 1998, p.646), the institutionalisation of anti-immigrant discourses in politics and media has expanded to law enforcement agencies, such as the police or migrant detention/repatriation centres (especially “Lindela” around Johannesburg), resulting in increasingly acute real-life consequences for the stigmatised immigrants (Neocsomos 2008, pp.588-9; Human Rights Watch 1998, pp.2-3; Human

Rights Watch 2007, p.60). In particular, the police often employ the above mentioned notion of bodily ideals of an imagined citizenship or, in other words, “[...] racial profiling in order to identify and detain suspected 'illegals'” (Valji 2003, n.p.). Criteria vary from skin colour (“being too dark”), physiognomy, height, haircut, dress style, language, accent or smell (Matsinhe 2011a). Some methods include the literal “sniffing out” of suspects (*ibid.*, p.306) or the pronouncement of characteristic vernacular words, such as the Zulu words for “elbow” or “buttonhole” (Adjai & Lazaridis 2013, p.199). The institutionalised denial of support for and abuse of African migrants mirror themselves in how the “politics of fear” have pervaded contemporary society (Neocosmos 2008).

Rooted in a “culture of violence” (Harris 2002, p.180), a legacy of late apartheid and the struggle against it, anti-foreign sentiments culminated in May 2008 in nation-wide lethal xenophobic violence, which occurred mainly in townships, leaving “[...] 62 people, including 21 South Africans, dead, 670 wounded, dozens of women raped, at least 100,000 people displaced, and property worth millions of rand looted” (Amisi *et al.* 2011, p.59). Governmental responses, such as then-president Mbeki's, denied however any xenophobic causality blaming instead purely criminal elements for the attacks (Crush 2008, p.38), although the same Thabo Mbeki reportedly warned in 2001 that

> [...] we must be vigilant against any evidence of xenophobia against the African immigrants. It is fundamentally wrong and unacceptable that we should treat people who come to us as friends as though they are our enemies. (Mbeki 2001 quoted in *ibid.*, p.40)

Particularly one image encapsulated the horrors committed against foreigners: the public burning of Ernesto Alfabeto Nhamuave[9], a 35-year old father of three from Mozambique, in a Johannesburg township. While outbreaks of physical violence against foreigners happened episodically before May 2008 (see for examples: Matsinhe 2011a, pp.307-8; Valji 2003) and continued since (see[10] Crush *et al.* 2013, pp.11-3), concatenations of historical, political and socio-economic aspects seem to be responsible for these developments.

9 See documentary *The Burning Man - Ernesto Alfabeto Nhamuave* (2008).
10 For Durban context see Desai 2010, p.100; Amisi *et al.* 2011.

Many of these aspects covered thus far describe the temporal and spatial circumstances (Nigerian) immigrants find themselves in. Several scholars have proposed different (though interconnected) theories and theses for the South African context to explain what xenophobia is and how it developed into its current form. Although key aspects of these theories outlined above are contextually relevant, it is not the focus of the paper to detail them[11]. With regard to the paper's emphasis on identity formations, Matsinhe's (2011a, 2011b) approach seems comprehensible as it historically locates current xenophobic attitudes (of mainly black South Africans against black Africans) by foregrounding the psychological impact colonial subjugation and control has had on group relations and the minds of the oppressed. The internalised inferiority complex imposed through asymmetric power relations expresses itself in reverse:

> In self-loathing, the self-loathers also loathe those who resemble them the most. […] Aversion to those who resemble the self externalises self-contempt, and projects negativity of self accrued through generations of vilification to the other. (Matsinhe 2011a, p.302)

Matsinhe's theory therefore accounts for the significance of internal and external aspects of identification to understand the perpetrators' motifs and backgrounds, but also implicitly poses the question of how the victims' identities are affected through stigmatisation and xenophobic discrimination imposed through the "ideology of *Makwerekwere*".

1.4 Nigerian Immigrants in South Africa

As shown in section 1.3, immigrants from African countries generally suffer discrimination and stigmatisation in South Africa. However, Nigerian immigrants are conspicuously subjected to a particular stigma – scheming criminals and drug dealers/traffickers (Adeagbo 2013; HSRC 2008, p.21; Hweshe 2013). While a stigma is generally "deeply discrediting" (Goffman 1990[1963], p.13), it also highlights "undesired differentness" (*ibid.*, p.15) and renders its bearers "not quite human" (*ibid.*). An extract from a popular South African newspaper, *The Star*, exemplifies the stigma further:

11 For a brief summary of theories by authors, such as Morris (1998), Harris (2002) and Neocosmos (2006, 2008), see Matsinhe 2011a, pp.297-8.

> Alien has become almost a swearword in this country, used by xenophobes to describe those who have come to take our jobs, our homes, our women; conmen from Nigeria who've come to steal our money and feed us drugs […]. (*The Star*, 14 August 1995 quoted in Harris 2002, p.178)

However, Nigerians only have a brief migration history in South Africa. Before the 1993 military coup in Nigeria, only a "handful of Nigerians" (Morris 1998, p.1121) were in South Africa, either to work or to study; most of them were young, unmarried and from middle-class backgrounds (*ibid.*, pp.1120-1). Due to politico-economical instability in post-1993 Nigeria and the improved circumstances for refugees and asylum seekers since September 1993 in South Africa, Nigerian immigration increased steadily in this time period, particularly to inner-city Johannesburg (*ibid.*; Adeagbo 2013). Morris (1998) estimates that by the beginning of 1997 there were around 5000 Nigerians only in this particular area.

According to Segatti *et al.* (2012), Nigerian arrivals became numerically significant since 2004 as the annual aggregate of *documented* entries levelled out at around 36,000 between 2004 and 2010 with highest concentrations in urban areas of Gauteng, KwaZulu-Natal and Western Cape provinces. The majority of these immigrants are young, male and well-educated and enter the country for business or educational purposes; a considerable proportion, however, only for leisure purposes. Furthermore, since 2004, 1,000 to 3,000 Nigerians have annually applied for asylum, constituting 1% of the total applications for refugee status in South Africa. However, "the South African government almost systematically rejects Nigerian applicants" (*ibid.*, p.3). In 2011, 99.9% of Nigerian asylum seekers were rejected compared to a 86% general rejection rate (*ibid.*). Most recent official data (Statistics SA 2013) of *documented* Nigerian immigrants to South Africa reveal the following: In 2012, 14,089 Nigerians were granted temporary residence permit (mainly visitors' or relatives' permit) constituting 10% of the overall recipients of this permit in this year – 2nd after Zimbabwe with 24,370 individuals (17,2%); only 60 Nigerian individuals were granted permanent residence (4,7% of all recipients of this permit); 0.0% were allowed asylum seeker status. Segatti *et al.* (2012) claim that in 2012 the total number of *documented* Nigerians in South Africa likely lied between 12,000 and 17,000 individuals, although admitting the probability of underestimating the figures due to the lack of available baseline data on this group, inevitably so when including *undocumented* Nigerian

immigrants.

While these numbers, even if incomplete, are comparably sizeable (Segatti *et al.* 2012), there is little doubt that there are Nigerian *individuals* in South Africa involved in organised crime, transnational syndicates or drug dealing (Shaw 2002; Snyman 2001; Leggett 2002). Although “[...] over the past twenty years, neither quantitative statistics from police and correctional services nor qualitative research among the police justifies claims that Nigerians are over-represented in criminal activities” (Segatti *et al.* 2012, p.5), the problem, as exemplified in the newspaper extract above, still remains that the terms “[...] 'Nigerian' and 'crook' are synonymous in the South African mind” (Leggett 2002, p.139). This generalising public perception is persistent and potentially harmful as stigmas and

> [s]tereotypes pay no attention to the distinctiveness of individuals because [they paint] all members of such a group as the same. The implication of this is that, the particular behaviour of a person in a group is unfairly generalised as the behaviour of a whole group. (Adeagbo 2013, p.277)

In particular, political leaders and the media have contributed to the spread of sensationalised and discriminating narratives about Nigerian immigrants (Adeagbo 2013, Morris 1998, Valji 2003). In 1994, Chief Buthelezi, for example, suggested in a newspaper “[...] that all Nigerian immigrants are criminals and drug traffickers” (Morris 1998, p.1126). A 1997 *Mail and Guardian* story, titled “Searching for a “guilty” Nigerian: South African police blame it all on the Nigerians...”, revealed how police officers of the South African Narcotics Bureau celebrated a colleague's birthday by attempting to arrest as many Nigerians in Hillbrow, Johannesburg, as possible (*ibid.*, p.1130). Additionally, the popular South African science-fiction movie *District 9* (2009) further perpetuated these negative stereotypes. The movie, situated in Johannesburg, presents Nigerians as criminals, cannibals, prostitutes and witch-doctors during an alien attack (Smith 2009). Nigeria's information minister, Dorah Akunyili, condemned the movie and demanded an apology from SONY as well as the removal of references to Nigeria (Bloom 2009).

More recently, two cases of alleged ill-treatment of Nigerian migrants have sparked major controversies. Firstly, in March 2014, a Nigerian immigrant was arrested in Cape Town, publicly molested, stripped naked and beaten by two police officers and private security

guards. Footage[12] of this incident, recorded by local residents, was published online and on television triggering a public and diplomatic outcry and resulting in the suspension of the two involved policemen. The chairperson of the Nigerian Union Cape Town, Azu Okparaugo, comments:

> What we saw on that video was a group of uniformed men abusing and humiliating an ordinary human being who happened to be a Nigerian. His right was violated and his dignity taken away. Treatment like this is unacceptable from the police […]. (Okparaugo 2014 quoted in Abodedele 2014, p.4)

This incident was a sharp reminder of another police brutality in Cape Town carried out against a Nigerian national one year before. Under similar circumstances the Nigerian victim was killed by the police in March 2013 (*ibid.*). Additionally, in March 2012, 125 Nigerians arriving from Lagos at OR Tambo International Airport in Johannesburg were denied entry and sent back due to their alleged forged yellow fever certificates. In response to what Abike Dabiri-Erewa, the chairperson of the House of Representatives Committee on Diaspora Affairs in Nigeria, called "[...] continuous unwarranted hostilities against Nigerians by the South Africa government'' (Dabiri-Erewa quoted in Patel 2012a), 131 South Africans were subsequently deported from Nigeria with similar allegations cited. Nigeria's Foreign Minister Olugbenga Ashiru stated with regard to the retaliation: "South African immigration officials do not have the monopoly of harassing travelers coming into their country" (Ashiru quoted in McGroarty & Hinshaw 2012). The diplomatic stir created by these incidents involved apologetic gestures by South Africa's president, Jacob Zuma, as he sent a "special envoy to reiterate his commitment to the bilateral relationship with Nigeria" (Patel 2012b). The extent and the tensions surrounding the issue of Nigerian immigrants can only be hinted at as these incidents reach the highest diplomatic channels of both countries.

However, according to Segatti *et al.* (2012), various networks on different levels are in place for the Nigerian diaspora in South Africa. While initiatives by Nigeria's High Commission in South Africa seem to be reserved for highly-skilled and diplomatic nationals, various other organisations attract either Nigerian migrants irrespective of their background, e.g. the Nigerian Union in South Africa (NUSA) or are based on an ethno-

12 See footage in eNCAnews (2014).

regional basis, e.g. the Johannesburg-based groups Egbe Omo Oodua (mainly Yoruba) and West Rand Nigerian Association (mainly Igbo). Furthermore, there is a number of village organisations which provide support to co-ethnics and their villages of origin.

Particularly, the organisations with an ethno-regional focus illustrate another issue which remains unconsidered as far as the generalisations and stigmatisations of Nigerian immigrants in South Africa are concerned. In the light of British colonialisation, the 1914 creation of a “culturally artificial and divided Nigerian state” (Attah 2013, p.618) is the main precursor for most of Nigeria's post-independence conflicts (see 2.5). By fostering hegemonic attitudes between ethnically and religiously diverse majority (Igbo, Yoruba, Hausa/Fulani) and minority groups, the colonial legacy has still a seminal impact on contemporary Nigerian society and people's identities (Attah 2013). Whilst generally being identified and lumped together in South Africa on the basis of their nationality (as “Nigerians”), national identity in Nigeria, due to various post-independence ethnic, religious and/or regional conflicts, does not appear to be the seminal reference for identification (Attah 2013). Agbiboa confirms this, asserting: “In 2012, ethnicity, religion, and language – not nationality – remain the touchstones of personal identity and the albatross around the neck of a true national identity in Nigeria” (Agbiboa 2013, p.3).

Considering the above outlined particularities of the Nigerian case in South Africa, little research has been done on this specific migrant group thus far (Segatti *et al.* 2012, p.2). Though Nigerian immigrants are frequently mentioned in the vast academic literature on xenophobia in South Africa, only very few articles have dealt with the topic specifically, such as Morris (1998) on Nigerians and Congolese living in Johannesburg. Others focussed on networks of and remittances by this group in Durban (Singh & Sausi 2010) or on intermarriages between male Nigerian immigrants and female South Africans (Adeagbo 2013). With regard to this gap in academic literature, this paper aims to provide additional insights (via the theoretical framework of the *Ouroboros of Identification*) into the complexities of Nigerian migrants' individual and collective identification, specifically looking at various coping strategies employed by (individuals of) this group to deal with omnipresent stigmatisation and discrimination in Durban, South Africa.

2. Theory

2.1 Conceptualising Identification

> *Though they seem to invoke an origin in a historical past with which they continue to correspond, actual identities are about questions of using the resources of history, language and culture in the process of becoming rather than being: not 'who we are' or 'where we came from', so much as what we might become, how we have been represented and how that bears on how we might represent ourselves.* (Hall 1996, p.4)

Conceptualising such a concept as "identity" has always been a complex and contested academic pursuit. Whilst it is not difficult to argue that identities are historically, socially, culturally and politically constructed, "[...] the real issue is how, from what, by whom and for what" (Castells 2010, p.7). Intimated by the Stuart Hall quote above, the term is rather more useful as a dynamic noun, *identification*, as opposed to it traditionally stative form, as this highlights its ever-evolving nature; an ongoing process of *identification*.

Like Anthias, this paper recognises that "[...] stories are not fixed but are continually being revised and changed" (Anthias 2002, p.492), and therefore that the anecdotes and perspectives featured in the analysis partially reveal but a "moment" of identification, although leitmotifs can affirm more reified aspects. Unlike Anthias, it is the contention of this paper that conceptualising identity can offer much analytical value and that the extant weaknesses (such as how to understand a person's individual and collective identities) are corrigible. By using a comprehensive and multi-diciplinary model of identification (through the metaphor of the *Ouroboros*), this paper seeks to avoid relying on the casual use of the term by "lay actors", as alleged by Brubaker & Cooper (2000) and contribute to the development of (social) identity theory.

Drawing on literature across disciplines, this paper refutes the idea that "[...] all forms of belonging, all experiences of commonality, connectedness, and cohesion, all self understandings and self-identifications in the idiom of 'identity'" (Brubaker & Cooper 2000, p.2) leaves us with a "[...] blunt, flat, undifferentiated vocabulary" (*ibid.*), arguing that only

by treating these obstreperous concepts as a concatenation, can the complex process be understood and analytically efficacious. A constructivist approach to identity formation involves looking at multiple dimensions of identity, presented diagrammatically in figure 2.

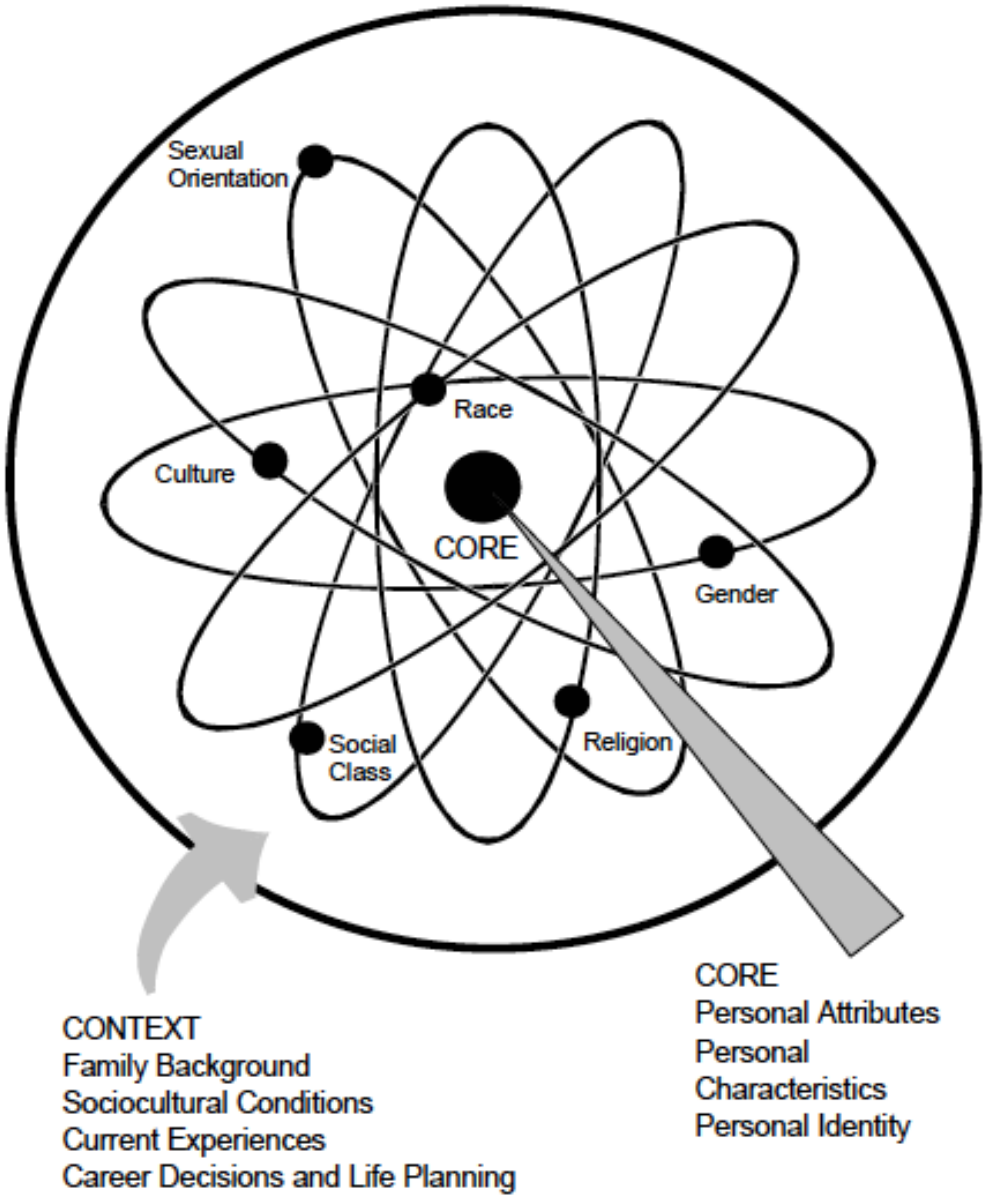

Fig.2: *Model of Multiple Dimensions of Identity (Jones & McEwan 2000, reproduced in Abes et al. 2007, p.4).*

Whilst noting that it is impossible to capture everything about the process (Abes *et al.* 2007), this model works within the theoretical position taken in this paper by presenting identity construction as dynamic; the values and meanings attached to the individual's ethnicity, nationality, social class, religion etc. are continually influenced by the internalisation of changing contexts (*ibid.*). The centre of the model consists of a “core”,

representing “valued personal attributes and characteristics” (*ibid.*, p.3) which, also fluid, are negotiated in relation to what is valued externally (by “Others”) and in relation to other identities (“Self”). The model therefore combines a person's individual (core) as well as collective forms of identity formation – understanding of group belongings manifesting as “us” (similar to the “Self”) and “them” (different to the “Self”) categorisations (Stets & Burke 2000, p.225); a recurring source of contention when conceptualising identity formation.

Putatively separate (see Hogg *et al.* 1995 and Stets & Burke 2000 on identity theory and social identity theory), the main difference between a person's individual and collective identity is merely a matter of emphasis (Stets & Burke 2000); “[...] that the former emphasises difference and the latter similarity” (Jenkins 2008a, p.38). Theorisation of identity formation “[...] must therefore accommodate the individual and the collective in equal measure” (*ibid.*).

Although the focus of this paper is on collective ethnic and national identities of Nigerian migrants, it is up to individuals to “[...] accept, resist, choose, specify, invent, redefine, reject, actively defend and so forth” (Cornell and Hartmann 1998, p.77) (elaborated on further in 2.23). Expressions of individuality and collectivity are therefore analysed within the same *Ouroboros* metaphor proposed below.

For example, external definitions of “heterosexual prejudice manufactured the faggot” (Adesanmi 2008, n.p.), became internalised and ultimately led to the production of LGBTQ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer) collective identities, the strengthening and organising of which has changed how the community is seen and sees itself. In this example, it is also possible to see how “hierarchies of collective identification may conflict with hierarchies of individual identification” (Jenkins 2008a, p.6), highlighted somewhat in a *Guardian* opinion piece which frames homophobia within the gay community as a conflict between the group definitions or perceptions in society and the individual understanding of the “Self” (particularly with regard to masculinity) concluding that “[...] we should see a wider spectrum of gay men – including, say, the beer-swilling, football obsessed lad alongside the body-pumping Kylie-loving scene queen” (Jones 2014, n.p.). It is therefore important to see identification within the context from which it arises. In writing about the immediate aftermath of 9/11, Sheila Croucher states that

> [...] sexual orientation, an otherwise controversial dimension of belonging, likely did not become divisive when gay rugby player Mark Bingham joined fellow passengers in thwarting the fourth terrorist attack of the morning. (Croucher 2004, p.7)

The implication here being that sudden changes in the environment necessitated changes in the boundaries of group identification; in her example straight/non-straight identities became irrelevant as new “us” and “them” distinctions of victims/perpetrators suddenly emerged, later defined through media and political discourse as “West”/rest and Christianity/Islam. Both individual and collective identification is therefore constructed through the negative: “When you know what everybody else is, then you are what they are not.” (Hall 1991b, p.21)

From the constructivist perspective, it is important to understand identification as one singular process (Anthias 2002; Jenkins 2008a); a continual (re)creation and (re)negotiation of multiple identities which accounts for the individual and the collective, the internal definitions and the external:

> For however many ‘multi’ or ‘layered’ prefixes we use, it remains the case that what is retained must have some singular meaning in and of itself, otherwise the term ‘identity’ would be a rhetorical flourish more than anything else. (Anthias 2002, p.495)

The *Ouroboros* metaphor advanced in this paper is used as a way to conceptualise the process in a way which answers these considerations. The following sections outline how this metaphor can be used to conceptualise identity formation and understand coping strategies. Specific coping strategies are named and explained in section 2.24. Sections 2.3 and 2.4 focus on ethnicity and nationality respectively. With collective ethnic identities so seminal in Nigeria, and as most participants of the study were Igbo, section 2.5 focusses specifically on the development of Igbo collective identity to gain insight into what belonging to that group might mean.

2.2 The Ouroboros of Identification

The *Ouroboros* (figure 3), often illustrated as a serpent eating its own tail, can be used to appositely depict identity formation not only as a construct, but an ongoing process of reconstruction and re-evaluation. This paper proposes the *Ouroboros* metaphor, broken down into three main steps, as a useful adumbration of the identification process. Whilst recognising that the three stages are intertwined and may operate simultaneously, broadly speaking, they can be described as follows:

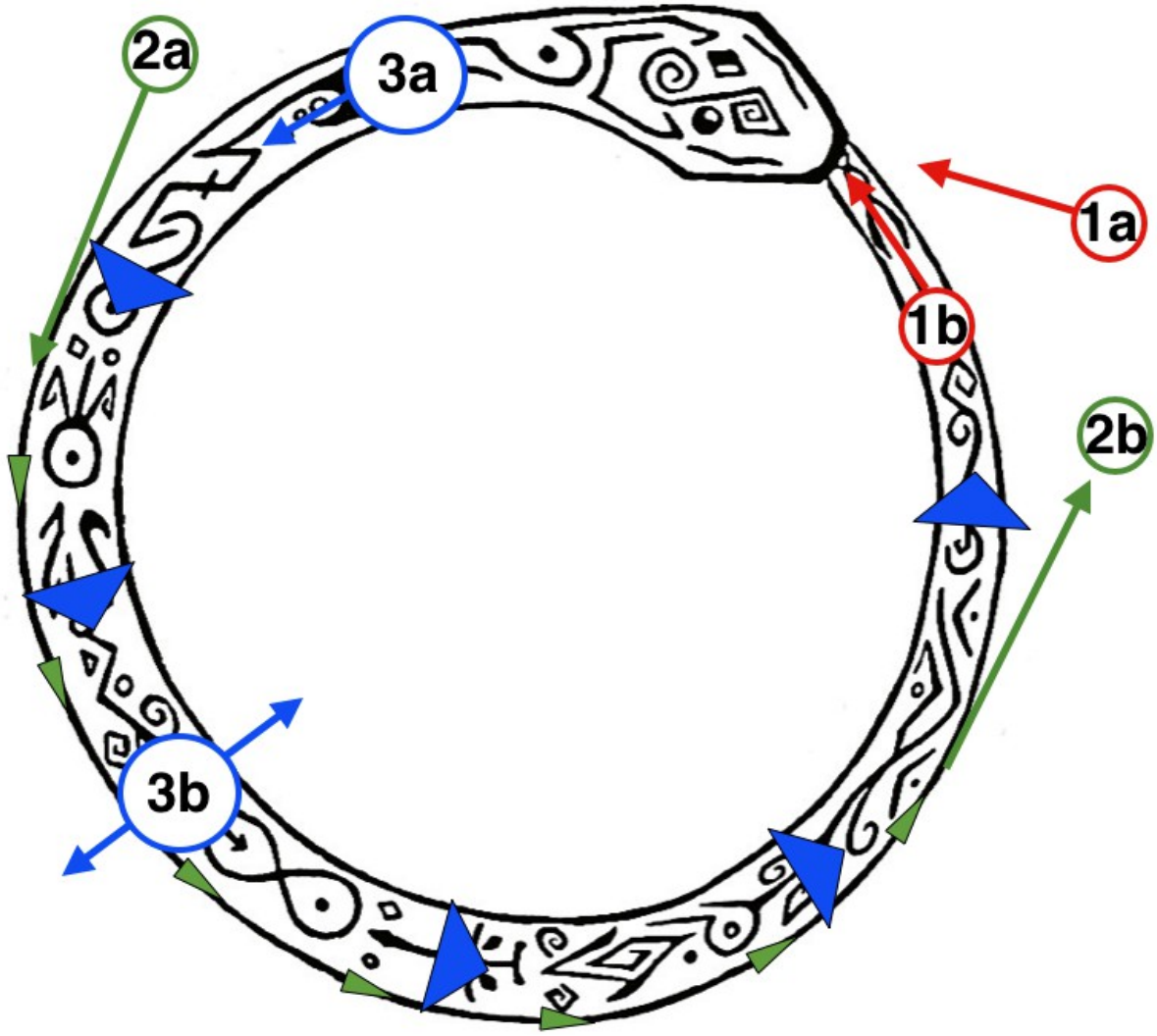

Fig.3: *The Ouroboros Metaphor; modified from original image. The Serpent rep(Eats) – 1; The Serpent Sheds Its Skin – 2; The Serpent Grows – 3.*

The Serpent Eats (1a & 1b in figure 3) emphasises the individual's internalisation (consumption) of the present environment/society (from what is outside the *Ouroboros* – 1a) along with the re-internalisation (consumption) of the previously internalised environment/society (the serpent's tail – 1b). This "consumption" is managed in *The Serpent Grows* (3a & 3b).

The Serpent Sheds its Skin (2a & 2b in figure 3) focusses on how interactional rules or norms in society deposit themselves in the *Ouroboros*, unconsciously *forming the skin* (2a) *which then sheds* (2b) into the environment, *viz.* how the "Self" is presented in/to the environment/society.

The Serpent Grows (3a & 3b in figure 3) elucidates how the previous two stages are negotiated into an understanding of the "Self" (and "Other") in relation to, especially the immediate, environment/society. This process involves, based on internalisations, (re)constructing the values and meanings of identities (the serpent digesting – 3a) which in turn relates to proficiency or "success" in the environment/society (i.e. the serpent grows into the environment – 3b).

Without migration, *the Serpent Sheds its Skin* and *the Serpent Grows* may merely work symbiotically, reinforcing or supporting each other. Migration to a new environment/society, especially if that environment/society includes widespread discrimination, can therefore be a challenge, resulting in a different, perhaps more conscious process, framed as coping strategies in this paper.

What makes the *Ouroboros* metaphor useful analytically is that it is at once intransigent and flexible. The "environment/society" for example will always be a factor but will include combination of various elements (depending on context and the position of the researched within that context) of which the researcher(s) need to remain mindful of in order to not produce essentialised results. Following through on this logic, whilst steps were taken to mitigate these effects, the micro-environment of the "research interview" used for data collection in this paper has to be considered as a limitation of the study, as will be explained in the methodology (see chapter 3). Different individuals (in this case Nigerian migrants) will place varying levels of importance on certain elements which have been internalised, informing the values and meanings of specific identities; from this, patterns of similarity and difference in identity formation can emerge.

2.21 The Serpent (rep)Eats

This first step in figure 3 encompasses two arrows, representing the external (1a) and internal (1b) factors involved in identity construction. This makes the *Ouroboros* metaphor especially suited to conceptualising identity in the context of migration as substantial changes in the environment (1a) will have direct bearing on the understandings of the "Self". Hence, as previously reified, unchallenged identities become viewed and treated as aberrant externally, their renegotiation is prompted, a result of what Jenkins (2008a, p.40) terms "the internal-external dialectic of identification". This dialectic appositely frames all identities as constructs, constantly negotiated between definitions of the "Self" by the "Self" (internal) and definitions of the "Self" by "Others" (external). Therefore, as *The Serpent Eats* illustrates, identity (re)formation can be seen as a "[...] dialectical synthesis of internal and external definitions" (*ibid.*, p.41):

> There is grasp of the idea that one's later states causally depend, in part, on one's earlier states: when one interacts with one's surroundings, what happens is the joint upshot of the character of the things around one and the way one is oneself. (Campbell 1994, pp.1-2)

2.211 The Internalisation of the External

As identification cannot be talked about without external definitions, the notion of power is seminal (Jenkins 2008a; Castells 2010). As highlighted in the introduction, colonial practices starkly exemplified how external definitions led to inferiority/superiority formations of identity: "For the black man there is only one destiny. And it is white" (Fanon 1952, p.10). In South Africa, colonialism also inspired the BCM, showing how the external environment/society can shift the emphasis of a person's identification from the individual to the collective for the political purpose of recognition and equality. This is shown by both the title and the content of Steve Biko's famous "We Blacks" article: "Today I propose to concern myself with the black world – the validity of the new approach" (Biko 1987, p.27).

Whilst the power of colonial regimes and discourses were able to produce such extreme dynamics of identification (cf. especially Said 1978; Bhabha 1984), identities established

over a long period of time, especially earlier in life, tend to become "[...] *primary identities*, more robust and resilient to change in later life than other identities" (Jenkins 2008a, p.41), *viz.* the previously internalised external can sometimes resist the current external. Primary identities are still constructions and subject to shifts and changes over time and can be seen as closer to the "core" (see figure 2), having greater impact than other identities in framing the structure of values and meanings.

2.212 The (re)Internalisation of the Internal

As with external definitions, internal definitions comprise of both individual and collective identities. Ethnicity, an apposite example, is "[...] both collective and individual, externalized and internalized" (Jenkins 2008b, p.43) and may, over time, become a primary identity, of which others are shaped around. In terms of this research, if being of Igbo ethnicity is a primary identity for someone, and is labelled and treated as Nigerian in South Africa, what impact does this have? How is the external and internal (re)negotiated?

The serpent eating its own tail (internal definitions, 1b) does not only represent the entrenchment or renewal of primary identities and the (re)negotiation of other identities in relation to the external, but also invokes the related idea of memory or continuing narrative which both informs and is informed by the "Self" (Neisser 1988)[13]. A study by Tolia-Kelly (2004) on the British Asian home, for instance, revealed the domestic sphere as an active site for the maintenance of cultural identification and shared memory.

How collective narratives are individually internalised from the environment/society is a complex and contextual process. In South Africa for example, changes in the built environment are used in remembering the struggle:

> The transition to democracy in South Africa has produced a new genre of buildings, heritage sites and memorials around the country which constitute an evolving cartography of sites devoted to apartheid memory and narrative. (Murray *et al.* 2007, pp.14-15)

13 For detailed discussion on memory as (in)dependent of/on personal identity, see Schechtman (2011).

Invoking a sense of collective narrative in the built environment can then be internalised, ultimately affirming and strengthening peoples sense of belonging and identity (in this case national).

Memory, however valuable in (analysing) identity formation, cannot represent a whole truth (or therefore be treated as such) (Campbell 1994) and can even be altered as it becomes internalised (or consumed). An example of this is the Endorois people in Kenya, who won a landmark victory for legal recognition and land reclamation against the Kenyan state by shifting aspects of their collective identity and re-remembering their history as a people (Ashby 2012). Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1950) provides an egregious, albeit fictional, account of this process as any evidence of ruling party ("The Party") critique is either destroyed (appositely through the "Memory Hole"), or altered to reflect favourably onto it, somewhat ostensibly, in the interest of "unity". Narratives are always selective and whilst it may not always have a direct bearing on identity formation (Bernecker 2010), "all profound changes in consciousness, by their very nature, bring with them characteristic amnesias" (Anderson 1983, p.204), with "certain forgettings sanctioned [and] certain rememberings disallowed" (Bremner 2007, p.94). This results in social or institutionalised narratives to be "[...] a site in which past, present and future forcibly intersect, enabling us, as individuals and societies, to construct and anchor our identities and envision our future" (*ibid.*). Whilst these can still be altered in content, meaning or selection, the serpent's tail would represent these more "anchored" identities. This presents individuals and groups as passive subjects of imposed or assigned identity and belonging, however (a qualified level of) agency is involved in their interpretation and internalisation (Cornell and Hartmann 1998), explained further in section 2.23.

2.22 The Serpent Sheds its Skin

These more "anchored" identities are not only a result of memory, but realised through Bourdieu's notion of *habitus* which "refers to something historical, […] linked to individual history" (Bourdieu 1993, p.86). *Habitus* is pithily described as

> [...] the way society becomes deposited in persons in the form of lasting dispositions, or trained capacities and structured propensities to think, feel and act in determinant ways, which then guide them. (Wacquant 2005, p.316)

As the forming and shedding of the skin is unconscious for the serpent, *habitus* highlights how improvisational, unconscious and learned the nature of interactions tend to be; the result of an interplay between agency and structure over time. As such, presentation of the "Self" is "[...] 'socialised,' moulded and modified to fit into the understanding and expectations of the society in which it is presented" (Goffman 1969[1959], pp.22-3).

The *habitus* therefore captures "the internalisation of externality and the externalisation of internality" (Waquant 2005, p.316) and "[...] tends to produce practices patterned after the social structures that spawned them" (*ibid.*, p.317). Therefore, migrating to an environment/society with differences in the social structure, can upset the *habitus* and disrupt "[...] the linear reproduction of cultural capital[14]" (Erel 2010, p.647), hence the development of areas where certain migrants "cluster", *exempli gratia*:

> Virtually from the moment they arrive, they *rely on their own networks and entrepreneurial experience* to fend for themselves. While most African migrants have opted to live and work in the [Durban] city centre [such as Point Road], the high cost of living in the city centre has meant that many Malawians exercised the option of moving their residence (and in some cases their enterprises) out of the city centre to the margins of the Durban Metro region such as Mirror Hill. (Vawda 2009, p.67; own emphasis)

Erel notes however, that the "cultural capital" stored in *habitus* can also be built upon and reproduce (as opposed to mirror), the "[...] power relations of either the country of origin or the country of migration [...] negotiating both ethnic majority and migrant institutions and networks" (Erel 2010, p.642). What is important to remain mindful of during the analysis therefore, is differentiations between the participants in terms of "cultural capital" as this can impact the process of identity formation and therefore the coping strategies utilised. In what is an oftentimes hostile environment,

> [i]t is, of course, never ruled out that the responses of the *habitus* may be accompanied by a strategic calculation rending to perform in a conscious mode the operation that the *habitus* performs quite differently, namely an estimation of chances

14 "Cultural Capital" being one of the four types of capital (others: social, financial and symbolic) which occupies a social space through which social relations occur. Cultural capital includes such aspects as language, accent and spelling and therefore accumulates over time (cf. Bourdieu 1990).

> presupposing transformation of the past effect into an expected objective. (Bourdieu 1990, p.53)

The presentation of the "Self" can be markedly conscious when individuals "[...] deliberately attempt to project a desired identity image to others" (Tyler 2012, p.619) as highlighted in emerging literature on online identification, especially regarding online dating. Additionally, awareness of inferiority "[...] means that one is unable to keep out of consciousness the formulation of some chronic feeling of the worst sort of insecurity" (Goffman 1969[1959], p.23). This insecurity can arise as "[...] the usual scheme of interpretation for everyday events has been undermined" (*ibid.*, p.25). Exacerbated by stigmatisation, it is this disruption which can produce such insecurity which, during interactions with non-stigmatised "Other(s)", can cause such an individual to "[...] feel like he is 'on,' having to be self-conscious and calculating about the impression he is making, to a degree and in areas of conduct which he assumes others are not" (*ibid.*, p.24). These *conscious interactions* cannot be located in the *habitus* but rather seen as a defensive mechanism, *a coping strategy*. Additionally, even without the existence of discrimination in the environment/society, as migrants are confronted with a world (environment) in central flux, the search for a sense of fixed identity becomes frustrated and the Shedding of the Skin,

> [...] becomes less what Pierre Bourdieu would have called a habitus (a tacit realm of reproducible practices and dispositions) and more an arena for conscious choice, justification, and representation, the latter often to multiple and spatially dislocated audiences. (Appadurai 1996, p.44)

As such, instead of the external being deposited and reproduced directly through *habitus* (*The Serpent Sheds its Skin*, 2a & 2b), (inter)actions, especially under migratory circumstances, can be a product of "conscious choice" and "justification", suggesting heightened communication between the presented "Self" (2b) and the meanings and understandings of the "Self" (3b). Because of the new external, "rules of the game" (in Bourdieu's language), both are now directly related to proficiency and "success" ("expected objectives") in the environment/society.

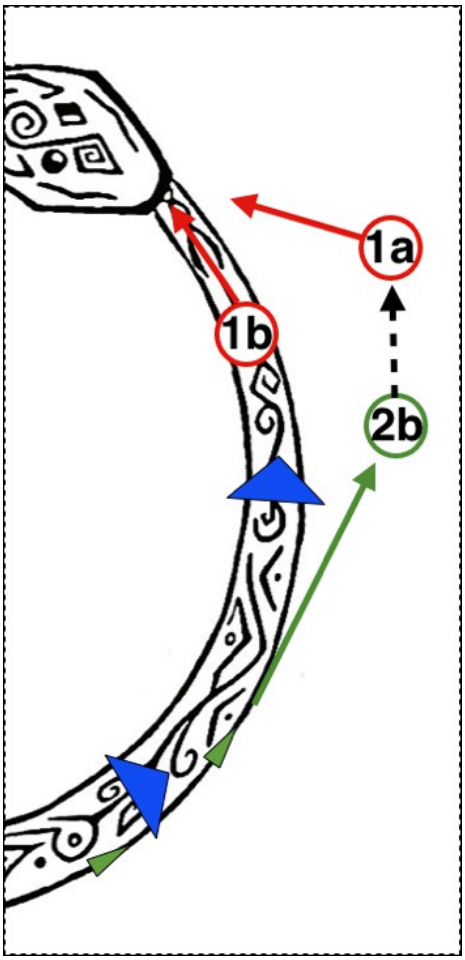

Fig.4: *Visualisation of reduced habitus.*

In figure 4, when *habitus* fails, the "rules" are actively sought, not passively deposited, therefore becoming part of what is internalised from the external and consequentially, "digestion" (3a), as represented in figure 3. It is from this digestion that *The Serpent Grows* and it is from this growth, that the serpent develops new skin to shed, in part at least, based on the new internalisations; the conscious seeking, accumulation and organising of these (once unconsciously accumulated) "deposits" in relation to shifting understandings of the "Self" in that environment/society.

The processes outlined in this section are not only fundamental in determining coping strategies and how these relate to a person's individual and collective identification, but have specific implications in the conducting and reading of interviews which contain narratives (see chapter 3). Whilst taking narratives at face value is problematic, the theorisation of identity formation sought in this paper, intends to facilitate a deeper and more meaningful analysis.

2.23 The Serpent Grows

> *Meaning, that elusive and ill-defined pseudo-entity we were once more than content to leave philosophers and literary critics to fumble with, has now come back into the heart of our discipline.* (Geertz 1973, p.29)

> *It's like everyone tells a story about themselves inside their own head. Always. All the time. That story makes you what you are. We build ourselves out of that story.* (Rothfuss 2007, p.551)

As *The Serpent Sheds its Skin* rubric denotes the end point of the serpent forms (2a) and sheds (2b) its skin, *The Serpent Grows* denotes the end point of the process the serpent digests (3a) and grows (3b). This section is concerned with how the internal (serpent's tail) and external (which could include actively sought deposits of interactions in the environment/society) are digested (negotiated) together resulting in growth: How values and meanings attached to specific identities change situationally and temporally resulting in an increased proficiency or "success" in the environment/society. These meanings are not merely a response to the environment and interactions but of personal reflection on them; a reflection which can be an especially conscious effort with respect to stigmatised individuals. This is exemplified in Jan Clausen's paper regarding her ambiguous sexuality:

> I was hardly in shape to make immediate, articulable sense of what I was going through. I knew I needed *privacy and time to let meanings emerge*, but these suddenly seemed to be terribly scarce commodities in a social universe in which "the personal is political" – and in which, I now understood, my own lesbian family had attained the status of a semi-public institution. (Clausen 1990, p.447; own emphasis)

Whilst the individual has the power to categorise themselves, this is not an absolute power but rather a choice within certain social parameters (Turner *et al.* 1987), as Clausen's difficulties indicate. In this way, it is a product of internal/external definitions and the power of each: "Some people, some collectivities, are in a stronger position to construct their identities and resist the imposition of identification by others; some are in a weaker position" (Jenkins 2008a, p.130). This can then create a site of struggle between those who

> [...] have an interest in subverting them [external categorisation] by modifying the classifications in which they are expressed and legitimated, and those who have an interest in perpetuating misrecognition, an alienated cognition that looks at the world through categories the world imposes, and apprehends the social world as the natural world. (Bourdieu 1990, pp.140-1)

It is this process (*"re-articulation"*) which, however (un)conscious, can be regarded as a coping strategy amongst stigmatised migrants; the greater the imbalance in power relations, the more exigent strategy becomes to the individual and "[...] all the more

pervasive [it is] in shaping his behaviour" (Barth 1981, p.89). It is therefore of interest to this paper how participants describe and reveal the values and meanings of their, particularly national and ethnic, identities.

"Identification is never just a matter of name or label: the meaning of an identity lies also in the difference that it makes in individual lives" (Jenkins 2008a, p.99). Incorporating meaning-making into identification can more thoroughly reveal how the internal and external interact and relate to specific coping strategies embraced. Figure 5 (below) shows how internal meanings are chosen, and perhaps adapted, from external meanings, hence "[...] the part is explained in terms of the whole, not the whole in terms of the part or parts" (Mead 1934, p.7).

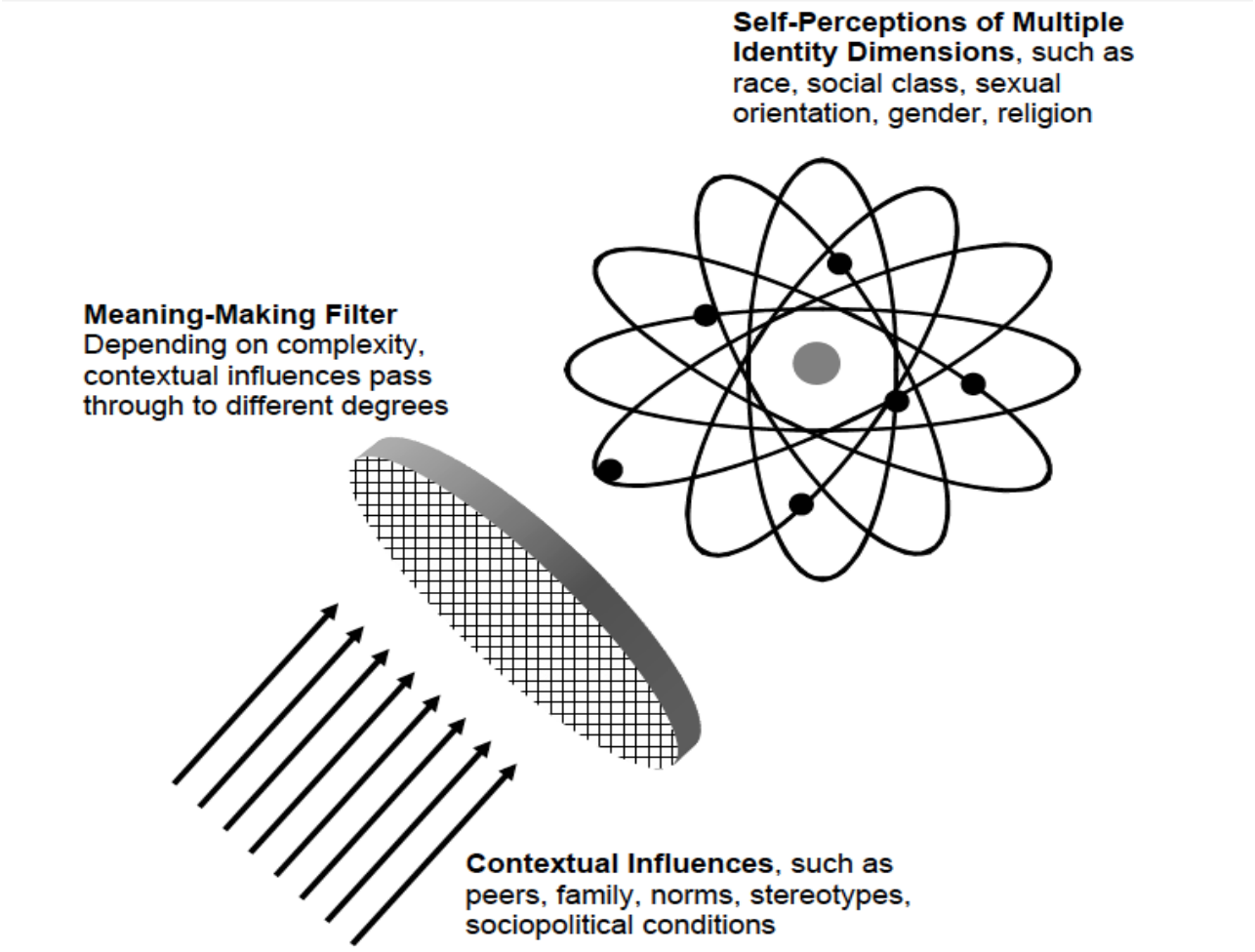

Fig.5: *"Reconceptualized Model of Multiple Dimensions of Identity" (Abes et al. 2007, p.7).*

Incorporating meaning-making in identification is therefore essential as without meaning, there is no identity. A recent opinion piece in *The Guardian* (Brown 2014) which claimed

that there are no atheist babies due to the fact that they had not yet accepted or constructed this identity (a *non sequitur* rebuttal to Richard Dawkins' claim that babies are born with "no religion"), brought this debate into the public arena. Work by Jesse Smith (2011) on the construction of an atheist identity in America demonstrates that not only is atheism constructed through social interaction, but it also provides a framework for self-understanding and had acquired certain meanings amongst his participants: Rational, logical, intelligent, moral, progressive and seditious *inter alia*. Meanings (and their importance) varied from person to person and were shown to be "not fixed or inherent, but change or take on new meanings through interactions with others" (Smith 2011, p.222).

Meanings therefore shift contextually and over time (Holland *et al.* 1998; Kokot *et al.* 2004; Jenkins 2008a) through interactions with and consumption of the environment/society. For example, in terms of national identity, meaning is generated through their contrast, interactions and history with other nations, which change over time as a framework for self-understanding (Triandafyllidou 2001).

Figure 5 (above) is also useful in understanding that meanings are not only attached to single identities but also negotiated in relation to other identities; a process whereby "[...] the self internalizes social meanings, reinterprets them, and in turn, responds back upon society" (Thumma 1991, p.334). As a person's collective identities can also clash with each other as contradicting expectations of group membership cannot be met (Ammerman 2003), a (re)negotiation of the meanings attached to those expectations becomes of seminal importance (see section 2.24).

Therefore, as external meanings (such as Nigerians as "clever" in South Africa) attached to certain identities become internalised, it can become necessary to shift or (re)negotiate the framework for understanding the "Self" in relation to the "core" (Abes *et al.* 2007), which is never completely reified. *A posteriori*, in South Africa, "Nigerian" carries strong external meanings of being womanising, insidious and criminal (especially drug-dealing), yet their ethnicity carries negligible social meaning. It is important to this research how prevalent external meanings attached to *nationality* have been internalised and negotiated; how this has affected other identities (focussing on *ethnicity*) and what coping strategies are employed to (re)construct/(re)negotiate these identities in response to the new environment/society and the specific challenges it presents.

The dynamic atom model then, can be thought of as the digestion process in terms of the *Ouroboros*. Negotiations which help in achieving proficiency and “success” in the environment/society are adopted (though still subject to shifts and fine-tuning) resulting in the serpent's growth. These specific coping strategies are elaborated on in the next section and will be analysed in terms of the identification model set forth in this paper.

An additional note to add to this would be that proficiency or “success” in the environment/society depends also on the “expected objectives” of the individual; the *moving of the goalposts* (negotiated with the external) can then be considered a coping strategy in itself. Given a substantial amount of time, the interviewees could be returned to and this coping strategy could be more accurately ascertained and analysed. From the data collected however, it is only possible to tentatively infer previous goals or rely on narratives.

2.24 Coping Strategies

Whilst Datta *et al.* (2007) differentiate “coping strategies” (to better one’s life) and “coping tactics” (to “get by”), this paper argues that the boundary between these is not distinct and both can ultimately include the goal of increasing proficiency/“success” in the environment/society. Therefore, “coping strategies” is used throughout this paper as a composite to refer to how Nigerian immigrants manage living in South Africa. De Certeau's (1984) distinction between coping strategies as a weapon of the strong (isolating oneself from the environment and forming power relations, such as competitors, adversaries and clientèle) and coping tactics as weapons of the weak (watching out for opportunities to be seized) is also considered too binary an approach when working with predominantly small scale Nigerian business owners in South Africa (see chapter 3).

Gay Christians provide a good case study of, not only how identities and their meanings can be negotiated, but also, as Yip’s (1997) study elucidates, the coping strategies which are employed to justify the “Self” against discrimination:

> [...] Strategies are used collectively and interchangeably to maximize the justificatory power of their identity and lifestyle. They can broadly be termed as: (i) Attacking the

> Stigma; (ii) Attacking the Stigmatizer; (iii) Using Positive Personal Experience […]. (Yip 1997, pp.116-7)

This paper suggests that these strategies have the potential to be generalised beyond sexual or religious prejudice and, of importance in this work, can be used to cope with an oftentimes xenophobic environment. Coping, as Yip (1997) puts forward, not only through the (re)negotiation or shifting of identities and their individual/collective meanings (*The Serpent Grows*), but by justifying identities themselves through defence and attack (Kaarsholm 2013), e.g. by attacking the idea and users of the term "Makwerekwere". Through this justification and "*flying the flag*" (*ibid.*), i.e. attaching positive meanings to one's nation and its people, identities become more reified.

Though "*flying the flag*" can be considered a coping strategy, it is often subsequent or simultaneous to other strategies. Firstly, discrimination may be countered through further scapegoating, or national/ethnic *detachment*. This involves framing the "problem" as "out there", within a different group to that of the migrant. For example, "instead of countering stigma with a positive reappraisal of 'Romanianness', some Romanians seek to transfer the stigma onto the ethnic Roma with whom they are frequently associated" (Moroşanu & Fox 2013, p.438). Ethnicity may be subject to outright *deflection* also, by the individual "embracing individual accomplishments" (*ibid.*, p.448) and not engaging with being part of a "spoiled" (to use Goffman's language) group.

Discrimination can also lead the migrant towards *self-exclusion* and isolation as individuals "[...] turn to their 'own', 'sympathetic others' who share their stigma" (Moroşanu & Fox 2013, p.439) in order to establish "[...] moral support and for the comfort of feeling at home" (Goffman 1990[1963], pp.31-2). This can also lead to identities which stress *victimisation* or suffering (cf. Adeagbo 2013). Conversely, discrimination can "[...] stimulate practices of internal social *differentiation* and distancing" (Wacquant 2008, p.183) amongst its victims; simulacrum of the *deflection* strategy.

The use of *re-articulation* of a certain identity can also be considered a coping mechanism. This has been noted within Mexican American and Native American communities and can be seen as a collective effort (Vasquez & Wetzel 2009) which involves "emphasizing an alternative set of values that they believe are absent from and indeed superior to white

society [which] enables group members to demonstrate their merit and validate their ways of being" (*ibid.*, pp.1557-8).

Whilst these strategies refer to discursively positioning identity to mitigate damaging external definitions, it is important not to overlook strategies dealing with the "real-life" or pragmatic consequences of discrimination such as finding employment, changing household dynamics and responding to exclusion (cf. Datta *et al.* 2007). Practical problems of discrimination lead to more conscious coping strategies such as learning the language, intermarriage, entrepreneurship, residency/citizenship *inter alia;* aspects also considered in the analysis.

Language is noted by Siziba (2013) who highlights the hierarchy of languages in South Africa: "[...] [S]ome languages become legitimate while others receive less value, and at worst are stigmatized" (Siziba 2013, p.2), concluding that "Zimbabwean migrants' [identity] negotiations are predicated on becoming (assimilating) South African" (*ibid.*, p.3). Siziba (2013) also reveals that some Zimbabwean migrants in Johannesburg have even gone so far as to adopt South African names and try to cut contact with Zimbabwean friends and relatives. This would then refer to *The Serpent Sheds its Skin* (see 2b) as a result of seeking the external, digesting and growing in accordance with their objectives (as opposed to *habitus*).

Vawda (2009), focussing on the importance of the religious identities of Muslim Malawians in Durban, cites marriages, whilst still being legitimate, as "[...] of some strategic importance" (Vawda 2009, p.73). These conscious choices, whilst not seeming directly related to identity, consequentially affect the everyday experiences of migrants, thus ultimately influencing interactions and the construction of identities. Whilst coping strategies can therefore encompass many aspects, this paper aims to highlight the seminal strategies utilised by Nigerian migrants in Durban and suggest possible trends which emerged from the data. The research also aims to elucidate how an individual might situationally choose certain strategies as well as how they relate to institutional efforts.

2.3 Ethnicity and the Ouroboros

The relevance and necessity of the (contentious) term “ethnicity” as an academic concept was revivified during the 1980s due to the proliferation of political mobilisation based on it (Hiebert 2009). Whilst “ethnicity” is impossible to define totally satisfactorily, Max Weber’s often cited delineation offers a reasonable starting point:

> We shall call “ethnic groups” those human groups that entertain a subjective belief in their common decent because of similarities of physical type or of customs or both, or because of memories of colonization and migration; this belief must be important for the propagation of group formation; conversely, *it does not matter whether or not an objective blood relationship exists.* (Weber 1968, p.389; own emphasis)

The central problem of this definition can be located in its first words. From this, it becomes difficult to distinguish between the terms “race” and “ethnicity”, the latter often used as a “polite” synonym of the former (Popeau 1998). The foremost distinction between these overlapping terms mainly lies in *who does the defining*; “while race categorises ‘them’ from outside, ethnicity is used for shared values and beliefs, the self-definition of a group ‘us’” (Spencer 2006, p.45), external from the individual but *internal* from within the group (Jenkins 2008b, p.55). Hence, it can also be thought of as an attempt to reify “culture” from inside the group, often correlating with physical similarities (Frederickson 2002). This is not to suggest that external factors (such as social, economic, and political processes and actors) do not have a role in the shaping and reshaping of ethnic self-identifications (Nagel 1994); as the introduction noted, the power of colonialism manipulated a shift in and deepening of distinct ethnic identities.

Ethnic groups are based on a variety of perceived similarities, organised in a variety of ways, include a variety of uses and ambitions, result from unique histories and are arbitrarily (mis)recognised by authorities. *Ipso facto*, ethnicity construction is not something that can be accurately defined or therefore analysed theoretically (Weber 1968; Comaroff & Comaroff 2009), and is

> [..] best understood as a loose, labile repertoire of signs by means of which relations are constructed and communicated; through which a collective consciousness of

> cultural likeness is rendered sensible; with reference to which shared sentiment is made substantial. (Comaroff & Comaroff 2009, p.40)

Whilst it is important to somewhat delineate what is meant by "ethnicity" and reveal its contextual (re)construction and specific internal-external dialectic, what is important in this paper is (providentially) not a comprehensive *etic* definition and theorisation, but rather placing value on *emic* understandings. Because ethnicity is subject to internalisation (and therefore construction) from an early age, and as such becomes a developed (even entrenched or primary) identity (*The Serpent Eats*, 1b), it can play a seminal role in framing the "rules of the game" (*The Serpent Sheds its Skin*, 2a & 2b) and in understanding the "Self" through the (situational) adoption and interpretations of (albeit labile) *meanings* which are attached to it (*The Serpent Grows*, 3a).

Feeling belonging to a particular ethnicity, places the individual within "[...] *historically created systems of meaning* in terms of which we give form, order, point, and direction to our lives" (Geertz 1973, p.52; own emphasis) so that "[...] we may not only feel but know what we feel and act accordingly" (*ibid.,* p.80). These systems of meaning construct community through "[...] mythology and history, and the creation of symbolic bases for ethnic mobilization" (Nagel 1994, p.152) (see section 2.5), manifesting as stories, rituals, music, territory and language (*ibid.*, p.164).

Exempli gratia, the marginalisation of Indigenous peoples in Canada involved the systematic erasure of their histories and geographies (Alfred and Corntassel 2005) which resulted in the strengthening of that identity to engage in a "[...] political struggle to defend themselves and their resources" (Bodley 1999, p.1). This involved (re)remembering histories and geographies and reclaiming traditional knowledge (Dyck 1997), *viz.* the meaning of Indigenous identity/identities.

Treating ethnicity as a potentially *primary identity*, it is also important in understanding how the more reified meanings attached to ethnicity, impact the whole *frame of meaning* which (situationally) position and assign values to concomitant identities (Jenkins 2008b) and how the act of migration might necessitate (re)negotiation.

2.4 Nationality and the Ouroboros

> *The next young player who says he does not want to play for England[’s national football team] should be ordered to ring the parents of a soldier who has died serving his country in Afghanistan and tell them his reasons.* (Wright for *The Sun*, cited in Media Mole 2014)

> *A Sgt. Pepper-style Sun collage of 117 definitive English people included James Corden, Simon Cowell, Boris Johnson, Michael McIntyre, David Cameron, Jeremy Clarkson, and Nigel Farage, but no Mark E Smith, William Blake, Mary Wollstonecraft, Ted Chippington, or Pauline Black from the Selecter, which my superior version would have boasted.* (Lee 2014)

As with ethnicity, nationality “[...] is one of the most discussed and least understood concepts of the late 20th century. It is subtle, elusive and contains many fragment qualities bundled under one heading” (Norris 1999, p.4). The purpose of this section is, as the previous section, not to *define* what it is exactly but to understand how nationality can become meaningful to individuals in the contemporary contexts in which they live.

Predominantly, it is important to view the nation as an *imagined* community “[...] because even the smallest nations will never know most of their fellow members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of the communion” (Anderson 1983, p.6). However communities are not to be distinguished “[...] by their falsity/genuineness, but by the style in which they are imagined” (*ibid.*).

The opening quotes to this section highlight the subjective nature of the concept “nationality” and what it *means* to the individual. Hence, notwithstanding political protestations to the contrary (see section 1.1), “[...] one need not ask ‘What is a national identity?’ but ‘What does it mean to claim to have a national identity?’” (Billig 1995, p.61). The construction of a national identity, also internalised from a young age, can become a common-sense way of ordering the world, a “natural” way of separating “us” and “them”, yet it “[...] includes mystic assumptions which have become habits of thought” (*ibid.*) which vary from person to person but can affect the externalisation of identification through anthems, sport team/player loyalties and cuisine *inter alia* (*The Serpent Sheds it Skin*, 2a

& 2b). This internalisation of nationality comes from a variety of sources in the environment/society (Billig 2005).

State institutions and practices (such as schools, citizenship, national holidays) aim to mandate membership, moderate behaviour, and construct a sense of national identity from the top-down by framing *what* is being belonged to (Bourdieu 1994). As Thatcherism brought "Englishness into a more firm definition" (Hall 1996, p.25), national identity is constructed by the state in a variety of ways.

> [...] [A]sking for the meaning of the photograph showing Chancellor Willy Brandt's famous *Kniefall* (kneeling) at the monument commemorating the victims of the Warsaw Ghetto […] is one of the 300 possible [German] federal citizenship test questions. (Joppke 2010, p.128)

External definitions of national identity also emanate from media. At the time of writing, *The Sun* (UK) appears to have embarked on a project of defining English nationality (inspiring this section's opening quotes), as they have been shown to do during previous football World Cups, by drawing on a favourable selection of English history (Vincent and Hill 2011). Different meanings of national identity are shifted, attenuated or reified over time (*The Serpent Grows,* 3a) and are different from individual to individual, as elucidated in the opening quotes; particularly the controversy caused by the Ian Wright article in *The Sun*.

Whilst the state and media can go some way in attempting to define "national identity", Billig's *Banal Nationalism* (1995) cites the everyday, often subliminal representations of the nation as building an imaginary community which becomes normalised and more anchored, subject over time to smaller re-negotiated shifts as new representations are internalised. In Nigeria however, strong ethnic identifications "[...] have proved far more resilient than national interests" (Agbiboa 2013, p.4). When treated as "Nigerian migrants" as opposed to, for example, "Igbo migrants" in South Africa, this can potentially strengthen national identity (see Morris 1998) as the external becomes internalised, *ergo* necessitating coping strategies such as *"flying the flag"*, *detachment* and *self-exclusion*: "[...] isolation, superiority and bitterness" (Harris 2002, p.181) and the excluding of oneself "[...] before being excluded" (Kristeva 1991, p.24).

In the current context of globalisation, Sheila Croucher (2004, p.84), notes “the contemporary perpetuation of nations and nationalism presents a seeming paradox – not unlike the paradox of a world that is simultaneously coming together and coming apart” (*ibid.*). *Viz.* the increase in cross-border movement has contributed to the proliferation of discourses trumpeting some particular form of national identity (see section 1.1).

It is these current trends in migration that have, within academia, led to the approach of “transnationalism” “[...] to effectively study the meanings that migrants attach to their mobility and settlement experiences” (Ralph & Staeheli 2011, p.517). Transnationalism is a concept which “[...] describes a movement or set of linkages that occur across national borders” (Mitchell 2009, p.772.) and is often invoked to “[...] express transcendence of the specific working of the nation-state” (*ibid.*); “What is often unclear, for example, is what exactly is being transcended in transnationalism” (Croucher 2004, p.91). Additionally, its emphasis on home ties is largely a moot point: “Connectivity between source and destination points is an inherent aspect of the migration phenomenon – no surprise given the social networks that channel that process.” (Waldinger & Fitzgerald 2004, p.1178)

A significant amount of transnational literature also points to “[...] the emergence of new identities” (Croucher 2004, p.101); enough to warrant a reference in this paper. Citing the “fluidity” of identity in identity theory as underemphasising stable interpretations and multiple belongings (Ralph & Staeheli 2011; Anthias 2002), this paper contends, utilising the *Ouroboros of Identification*, that “more anchored” identities have been sufficiently theorised. Conversely, by focussing on the “stable” belongings and identity, transnational literature can be said to overemphasise “home” and lasting connections. Whilst this is important, the conceptualisation of identity formation offered in this paper theorises the processes underlying this and additionally allows for possible disconnections to emerge; disconnections pertaining to “identity” and belonging as captured in the last four lines of T.S. Eliot’s *The Journey of the Magi*:

> We Returned to our places, these Kingdoms,
> But no longer at ease here, in the old dispensation,
> With an alien people clutching their gods.
> I should be glad of another death. (Eliot 2002[1927], p.100)

2.5 Igbo Identity in Context: A Literature Review

Ethno-religious conflicts have become a regular occurrence in Nigeria and have resulted in an estimated three million fatalities (Salawu 2010). Ethnicity therefore, can be viewed as an important, potentially primary identity in Nigeria not to be overlooked in analysing the self-understandings and thus *coping strategies* of Nigerian migrants in Durban. Whilst the history of ethnicity and ethnic conflicts has been touched upon in the introduction and are to be further elucidated here, the aim is not to give a comprehensive historical analysis but to adumbrate the context in which these identities have developed. This is used to broadly suggest, using literature, potential meanings (whilst regarding meaning-making as an individual process; see 2.23) related to ethnicity which can inform the *coping strategies* employed by migrants. The focus is on Igbo ethnicity as a majority of the participants identified themselves as belonging to this group.

At 17% of the population, *Igbos* represent one of the three dominant ethnic groups in Nigeria (amongst many other minority groups) and traditionally reside in the south-east; *Hausa-Fulani* (Hausa) (30%) in the north, and *Yoruba* (20%) in the south-west. These can be further subdivided into sub-groups or communities with small variances between them (Agbiboa 2013). Whilst the more urbanised Yoruba people had no common term to refer to themselves prior to colonialism, they *did* believe in a common ancestry which was "absent amongst Igbo-speaking peoples of what became Eastern Nigeria" (Chai 1996, p.293), until the arrival of the Christian missions (van den Bersselaar 1998):

> I am Nigerian because a white man created Nigeria and gave me that identity. I am black because the white man constructed *black* to be as different as possible from his *white*. But I was Igbo before the white man came."
> Professor Ezeka snorted and shook his head, thin legs crossed. "But you became aware that you were Igbo because of the white man. The pan-Igbo idea itself came only in the face of white domination. You must see that tribe as it is today is as colonial a product as nation and race. (Adichie 2006, p.28; original emphasis)

During colonialism, therefore, the British system of indirect rule resulted in the deepening of ethnic identity and the sharpening of ethnic boundaries (Chai 1996; Krymkowski & Hall 1990) through increased contact with the "Other" (migration was facilitated via the

centralisation of resources, power, status, and privilege) as well as creating the political need for collective union (Chai 1996; Meagher 2009).

Whilst the entrenchment of ethnic identity was a result of colonial context, "[o]f all Nigerian peoples, the Igbo had fought hardest and longest the establishment of British rule" (Uzoigwe 1999, p.9); the "Ekumeku Movement" of 1898-1911 highlights a seminal Igbo resistance to the centralisation of power:

> It is difficult to understand why it was only in the Asaba hinterland of the central province west of the Niger that a secret society characterized indigenous resistance to the imposition of British rule. An important consideration may be that the Ibo [archaic] people, who predominantly inhabit the Asaba district, are by tradition very individualistic in attitude. This attitude may be derived from their social structure, in which no one occupies a position of supreme authority to put the others in a position of subjection. This tends to inculcate in the people a feeling of independence and a less willing disposition to accept an imposed authority. (Igbafe 1971, p.458)

> Indirect rule in Igbo land proved far more challenging to implement. Colonial rule functioned through a newly created and incongruous establishment of "warrant chiefs[15]" – a deeply flawed arrangement that effectively confused and corrupted the Igbo democratic spirit. (Achebe 2012, p.11)

In 1914 however, came the forced amalgamation of Nigeria, "[...] the union created by Britain that brought the "North" and the "South" of the country together" (Akomolafe 2014, p.38). Igbo resistance soon ended (ca. 1920) due to "[f]ear and insecurity coupled with the realization that Christianity had suddenly become a badge of honour" (Ekechi 1971, p.105), i.e. external definitions became internalised. Additional to this was the metaphorical belief that white people had supernatural powers due to Western education: "Igbos, therefore, embraced Christianity and Western education with almost fanatical enthusiasm [...]" (Uzoigwe 1999, pp.9-10). Soon Igbos had become competitive in terms of education, with many wanting to emulate the British and pledging their loyalty (Harneit-Sievers 2006). This embracing of Christianity and Western education was reflected in their social identity

15 Cf. Mamdani 2001.

(van den Bersselaar 1998; Chukwuezi 2010). Suggesting what it meant to be Igbo during this time, Uzoigwe writes:

> He is fiercely competitive and is, therefore, contemptuous of authority or status that is not achieved. He believes that, given a fair chance, he will be as good as and indeed even better than anyone, be he white, black, or in-between.
> When the Igboman achieves his position, he likes to display his achievements and expects admiration from others. If, on the contrary, he is ignored or ridiculed, he becomes boastful and bumptious and sometimes aggressive [...] He dreads sinking back into the poor and unromantic existence from which he is desperately trying to escape. (Uzoigwe 1999, p.10)

This subsequent success of the Igbo people (especially with regards to education, but also artistic, cultural and political) in such a divided context, led to resentments, as they were "[...] seen as a threat to the Yoruba dominance of the colonial service" (Attah 2013, p.609):

> I will be the first to concede that the Igbo as a group is not without its flaws. Its success can and did carry deadly penalties: the dangers of hubris, overweening pride, and thoughtlessness, which invite envy and hatred or, even worse, that can obsess the mind with material success and dispose it to all kinds of crude showiness. (Achebe 2012, p.90).

The "material success" Achebe mentions is a seminal point: As modernisation created a *similarity* in the desire for the same (scarce) resources; that competition fuelled ethnic tensions (Attah 2013). British indirect rule ended in 1960, leaving a politically charged and ethnically divided Nigeria, ensuring "[...] only a question of time before things blew up. It did so spectacularly in 1967 when the aggrieved Igbos of Eastern Nigeria launched an abortive secession bid" (Akomolafe 2014, p.41). Perceived to be the responsibility of Igbos by the Northern Hausas (Attah 2013), the failed coup d'état in 1966 led to "[...] the massacre of thirty thousand Igbos and Easterners in pogroms [...]" (Achebe 2012, p.110) later that year; a problem the government did not attempt to resolve (*ibid.*). Though ultimately an Igbo defeat, the Biafran war of 1967-70 (for secession) was initiated and fought in the interests of Igbo representation and safety (*ibid.*). An Igbo migrant in Nigeria had then to choose "[...] between giving primary loyalty to his ethnic community, on the one

hand and, on the other, attempting to give expression to his Nigerian nationality" (Onwubu 1975, p.406), with the former generally taking precedence (*ibid.*). In terms of identity formation, the Igbos found themselves in an increasingly hostile and dangerous environment:

> Openness to others and the ability to adapt to virtually any circumstances of life in the [Nigerian] diaspora had been cornerstones to Igbo ethnic self-perception. The pogroms of 1966 appeared to prove that "the others" did not want the Igbo to live among them any longer. (Harniet-Sievers 2006, p.124)

The Biafran war highlighted "[...] the climax of Igbo identity, the ultimate celebration of Igbo-ness [...] which carries with it the bitterness of a lost war [...]; an identity that emphasizes the need to retain and strengthen the[ir] own language and culture as a way to defend oneself against other Nigerian groups" (van den Bersselaar 1998, p.12).

"When oppression and repression induce revolts, ethnicity often provides the material basis that constructs the commune of resistance" (Catells 2010, p.xxv). As "[...] devalued and/or stigmatized by the logic of domination" (*ibid.,* p.8), the Igbo identity can, in today's context, be thought of as a *resistance* identity due the strengthening of ethnic identity as a coping strategy and its reframing as, "for many people, primarily-a community of suffering" (Harniet-Sievers 2006, p.126) due to the Biafran defeat.

Coping strategies however, should not only be reduced to resistance and heightened sense of ethnic identity. Increasing Igbo involvement in the informal economy, a result of post-Biafran marginalisation, "[...] has strengthened Nigerian inter-ethnic cohesion from below, even as political struggles weaken it from above" (Meagher 2009, p.34)[16]. The against-all-odds gains in acceptance notwithstanding, "[...] the Igbo still conspicuously constitute "the enemy," being the butt of most violent ethnic, political, and religious grievances in the country" (Okoye 2007, p.5).

As collective identity is a product of history, this section has sought to pithily provide the context Igbos find themselves in today's Nigeria through a mixture of academia and

16 Focussing on cohesion from below as a coping strategy, Meagher (2009) offers an important contribution to Igbo history, identity formation and survival.

contemporary “fiction”, revealing Igbos as having strong sense of ethnic identity and yet (or perhaps consequentially) also as bridge-builders despite being “[...] fundamentally rejected as a group” (Harniet-Sievers 2006, p.124). Whilst acknowledging some fault, concluding this chapter, Chinua Achebe expresses the ostracisation of the Igbo people as lost potential:

> There is no doubt at all that there is a strand in contemporary Igbo behavior that can offend by its noisy exhibitionism and disregard for humility and quietness.
> Having acknowledged these facts, any observer can clearly see how the competitive individualism and the adventurous spirit of the Igbo could have been harnessed by committed leaders for the modernization and development of Nigeria. (Achebe 2012, p.90)

3. Methodology

This thesis' line of inquiry, (un)covering social constructs like identity, ethnicity and nationality is congruent with its methodological considerations. In particular, the fact that this study deals with persons as members of social groups (Nigerian immigrants), their subjective social realities and their subsequent subjective interpretations of these (affecting meaning making), reflects in the ontological and epistemological stances taken by this paper.

3.1 General Considerations

Social ontology deals with the “nature of social entities” (Bryman 2012, p.32). According to Searle (2006, p.52), these social entities consist of social objects (e.g. post-apartheid South Africa), social facts (e.g. immigrants are (not) South African citizens) and social processes and events (e.g. xenophobic attacks in 2008). Regarding the nature of these social entities, a constructivist position is embraced to emphasise that, as touched upon in the introduction, neither of these entities is objective nor has a reality external to social actors; as advocated by objectivist perspectives (Bryman 2012). Despite situational uncertainty that above mentioned social entities might generally be beyond people's reach (e.g. when facing their enormous extent), the exclusively qualitative empirical data, its

provision (field-work) and its contextualisation suggest the inevitability of interactions between subjective social actors (including the researchers). As extensively elaborated in chapter 2, the paper's theoretical approach in conceptualising the complexities of issues regarding “identity”, “ethnicity” or “nationality” follows a similar, *a priori* constructivist logic.

From an epistemological point of view, which is concerned with questions surrounding the acceptability of knowledge, an interpretivist position is taken as the objectives of this research centre around a rather inductive understanding of “subjective meaning of social action” (Bryman 2012, p.30) than a deductive explanation of it, as advocated by positivist viewpoints. With regard to the interpretivist approach, Howe (2004) adds that it “emphasizes understanding people in their own terms, in their own social settings” (Howe 2004, p.54). He continues stressing the connection to qualitative research methods: “[T]heir natural home is within an interpretivist framework with the *democratic* aim of seeking to understand and give voice to the insider’s perspective” (*ibid.*; original emphasis). The democratic aim to understand the insider's perspective (i.e. the academically hardly explored perceptions of Nigerian immigrants in South Africa) combined with the “[…] central tenet of interpretivism […] that people are constantly involved in interpreting their everchanging world” (Williamson 2006, p.84) frame the overall epistemological considerations embraced for the practical (field-work) and theoretical (*Ouroboros of Identification*) dimensions of this research. As the theoretical frame was built *a posteriori* to facilitate and understand the empirical materials and not vice versa, it was therefore not intended to prove any *a priori* hypotheses or to quantify findings. The emphasis was therefore mainly placed on a “democratic understanding” of personal narratives (through interviews) as they offer valuable insights into “lived realities” and processes of identity (re)construction of Nigerian immigrants and are seen as indispensable facets of broader trends regarding how discrimination generally affects their lives (such as the institutional efforts of the Nigerian community in South Africa).

According to Linger (2005, pp.147,8), there is a long-standing and controversial debate in (cultural) anthropology (the field in which this study, in its broadest sense, is anchored) between two seemingly opposite viewpoints regarding particularly the study of identities and their attached meanings – the *personal/experiential* and the *public/representational.* This paper, in an attempt to mitigate this perceived dualism, sees both domains as interrelated. While Linger frames both as ideal types, he admits that neither focus can

“resist equivocations” (*ibid.*, p.148), continuing that “[...] the most interesting new studies are likely to grapple with their inherent tension” (*ibid.*). This tension, generally speaking, is based on academic debates whether meaning (attached to identities) is at root a personal[17] or a public[18] phenomenon (*ibid.*, p.149). Accepting that both domains are inextricably intertwined, an accommodative approach was followed to portray the situation of Nigerian immigrants in Durban as comprehensively as possible. Both the personal (through focus on personal experiences through narratives; see section 4.1) and the public (through focus on institutional efforts and representations through testimonies; see section 4.2) domains were covered as each one can only be fully understood through the other. Additionally, (dis)similarities between both domains are considered insightful and are suggested (in section 4.3) to help in understanding the nature of this tension as well as broader trends and (possible) correlations in relation to the reception and negotiation (coping strategies) of discrimination amongst Nigerian migrants in Durban.

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However, greater analytical emphasis is placed on personal narratives, as the individual social actor experiences (potentially) discriminatory “lived realities” first hand and therefore finds him-/herself in a position where (re)negotiations of one's various identities (within their individual and collective dimensions; see 2.1) are triggered. In order to understand how participants mobilise and (re)construct the meanings attached to their identities against the backdrop of rampant stigmatisation, this study utilises narrative inquiry based on in-depth, semi-structured interviews (see section 3.3). As narrative inquiry and analysis shift the focus “from 'what actually happened?' to […] 'how do people make sense of what happened and to what effect?'” (Bryman 2012, p.582), this becomes relevant to the paper's overall thematic agenda.

> The purpose of narrative inquiry is to understand the wholeness of human experience through data collected in the form of stories. This methodological approach is well suited to identity studies because stories offer revealing glimpses into inner selves. (Abes *et al.* 2007, p.5)

Continuing, Abes *et al.* posit that “[s]tories not only reveal, but also shape identity because

17 Manifested through personal experiences and biography of e.g. a Nigerian immigrant in South Africa.

18 Produced through circulation of symbols and discourses, such as the examples of discrimination against Nigerians immigrants mentioned in section 1.4 or the institutional responses to these (see section 4.2) of the Nigerian community/support network.

identity stories" (*ibid.*) are "told, revised, and retold throughout life. We know or discover ourselves, and reveal ourselves to others, by the stories we tell" (Lieblich *et al.* 1998 p.7 in *ibid.*). While this paper embraces the position of Abes *et al.* (2007), caution must be exercised regarding the treatment of narratives in order to preserve their analytical as opposed to celebratory values (Atkinson & Delamont 2006, p.165). Being a contested academic topic, some critics claim, contrary to the above quote, that "[i]t is a common failing, for instance, to imply that informants' voices 'speak for themselves', or that personal, biographical materials provide privileged means of access to informants' personal experiences, or their sources of self-identity" (*ibid.*, p.166). Speaking towards their previous caution of over-essentialising narratives, Atkinson & Delamont (2006), however, offer a middle ground which stresses the necessity of the narratives' social context and the recognition that they, as with social (inter)actions themselves (therefore speaking in line with Abes *et al.* 2007), are constructed. In order to circumvent the pitfalls of letting narratives "float in a social vacuum" or "the voices to echo in an otherwise empty world" (Atkinson 1997 in Atkinson & Delamont 2006, p.166), strong analytical emphasis is placed on personal and societal context and the general awareness that "[...] stories are nearly always told with a purpose in mind" (Bryman 2012, p.582; see 3.2). The importance of context, in a sense the amalgam of Linger's *personal/experiential* and *public/representational* domains, is pithily put forward by Crush & McDonald:

> [P]ersonal narratives are essential to understanding the broader institutional, legislative, and politico-economic questions of migration. However, it is also true that these would be empty narratives without the skin and bone of the larger social, economic, and political systems within which they are articulated. (Crush & McDonald 2000, p.14)

3.2 Research Design – The Case of Nigerian Immigrants in Durban

This research is mainly designed as a qualitative case study; exploring identification processes of Nigerian immigrants in South Africa in light of widespread discrimination and stigmatisation. At the same time, its ubiquity can be seen as the main motivation driving this paper. Nigerian immigrants constitute a "special" group in South Africa's environment/society and this specific field has yet to achieve significant academic attention

(see section 1.4), and it is the resulting urgency of this combination which led to the investigation of this particular case study. Although the “case” is usually applied to single locations and settings, such as (geographical) communities or organisations, Bryman “would prefer to reserve the term 'case study' for those instances where the 'case' is the focus of interest in its own right” (2012, p.68). The “case” of Nigerian immigrants is the focus, the setting (Durban) only “provides a kind of backdrop to the findings” (Bryman 2012, p.68), although post-apartheid urban migrant spaces can generally be seen as seminal (cf. Tevera 2013) and proved, in the Durban context, to be of particular interest regarding xenophobia (cf. Vahed 2013). For example, certain recurring “topographies of safety” in the interviewees' accounts are of contextual significance for identification and coping strategies (see chapter 4.1). Figure 6 visually highlights these urban geographies (Point, Central/CBD, Musgrave and Berea), as well as the area of actual fieldwork (west of Central/CBD), which was carried out in a four-month period between February and May 2014.

Fig.6*: Map of Durban.*

While Nigerian immigrants are the case study, the exploratory nature of this thesis encompasses, besides the (modified) theoretical framework of identification, an attempt to include aspects of a comparative design. Two “cases” on putatively different levels, *viz.* personal/experiential and public/representational (see 3.1), within the overall case of Nigerian immigrants, are contrasted in an attempt to more fully grasp the subject matter.

However, due to the relatively small sample of interviewees (six narratives in section 4.1 and two testimonies in 4.2) and their demographic biases and limitations (see also appendix C), no attempts are made to insist on the research's external validity/generalisability or complete replicability. Nevertheless, the general methodological and theoretical outlooks (see chapters 2 & 3.1) allow for valuable insights and tentative suggestions to be made regarding the analysis.

The sample of eight participants reveals a particular bias towards gender (all male), education and occupation (all participants presumably have, at least, secondary education and are mostly self-employed). While the gender bias partially mirrors the general characteristics of migrant flows, whereby rather young, male Nigerians tend to migrate more (see section 1.4), the occupational bias speaks to some delimitations. As access to the “case” of Nigerian immigrants in Durban needed to be gained, Nigerian business-owners in Durban CBD were considered an appropriate point of departure, particularly with regard to the relatively short time-frame available and the researchers' own “topographies of safety”. While the area around Point Road seems to serve as an entry point for many African black immigrants and accommodate a considerable (Nigerian) migrant population (therefore promising valuable insights), the research's delimitations foreground general feasibility via a focus on more established immigrants (such as business-owners in CBD) and a somewhat valid concern about the area's notoriety (e.g. drug-dealing). However, despite its (de)limitations, the research's sample encompasses an underlying attempt for diversity regarding age (from 22-44 years old), ethnicity and place of origin (Yoruba and Igbo; west and east Nigeria), length of stay in South Africa (2-16 years) and citizenship status (two interviewees having a dual citizenship). As these diverse demographics prove to be of high analytical relevance, they can therefore be seen as somewhat mitigating the above (de)limitations.

Despite the research's delimitations regarding its feasibility, the sample of eight Nigerian interviewees proved somewhat to be a difficult task to obtain. Due to the researchers' relative unfamiliarity with the “case” of Nigerian immigrants in Durban, a mixture of opportunistic and snowball sampling was embraced (see Bryman 2012, p.424). Mainly relying on opportunistic attempts to identify Nigerian business-owners in Durban CBD, around 15 potential interviewees were overtly approached via the presentation of

identification/student cards and a research information sheet (see appendix A). While many showed reservation or reluctance to participate, five interviewees in Durban CBD (John, Festus, Bosco, Samuel and Jude) agreed to actively partake in the research. The contact to Geff was established via prior connections in Durban. Due to his existing network, references could be extended to Mike, the chairperson of the KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) branch of NUSA, and Olaniyi, the founder/editor/CEO of the Pretoria-based *The Nigerian Voice*.

3.3 Research Methods – Engaging with Interviews

> "*When I speak, I don't speak, I listen."* John
>
> *"When people talk, listen completely. Don't be thinking what you're going to say. Most people never listen."* (Hemingway 1935, p.219)

In line with the paper's main focus on the personal narratives of Nigerian immigrants in South Africa, qualitative, in-depth, semi-structured interviews are considered an appropriate method to investigate the research questions put forward in section 1.1. As with narratives, interviews (as tools to gain access to narratives) are scrutinised by sceptics who grant them negligible absolute admission to the "truth":

> [R]adical social constructionists suggest that no knowledge about a reality that is "out there" in the social world can be obtained from the interview, because the interview is obviously and exclusively an interaction between the interviewer and interview subject in which both participants create and construct narrative versions of the social world. The problem with looking at these narratives as representative of some "truth" in the world, according to these scholars, is that they are context specific, invented, if you will, to fit the demands of the interactive context of the interview, and representative of nothing more or less. (Miller & Glassner 2004, p.125)

While these "radical" constructionist positions seem somewhat to undermine the paper's approach, if not outright deny it (and any other interaction) its power to represent (at least

aspects of) somebody's perception/presentation of “truth”, the paper maintains the position that a (self-)reflexive, comprehensive contextualisation of the interviews (the awareness and exposure of their inevitable “invention”/construction, so to speak) can mitigate these inherent ontological questions and offer valuable insights into the subject matter. Nevertheless, the paper is mindful that “[...] as academics we are always complicit in the knowledge creation process (albeit to varying degrees)” (Madge & Eshun 2012, p.1395), in particular by actively forging and participating in an interview relationship (therefore complicit in the course it takes) and by inevitably evaluating the generated data, to a certain extent, according to *a priori* positions or suitability of arguments. Speaking towards inherent properties of interview relationships, Bourdieu identifies a “[...] kind of always slightly arbitrary *intrusion*” (1996, p.18; original emphasis) into participants' lives and probable *power asymmetries* regarding especially cultural capital (*ibid.*, p.19; see chapter 2). Understanding these aspects as forms of “symbolic violence”, Bourdieu continues to advocate a reflexive control of its possible distorting effects on the research via attempts “[...] to reduce as much as possible the symbolic violence which is exerted through them” (*ibid.;* original emphasis removed). While a complete eradication of symbolic violence in interpersonal encounters is a utopian illusion, efforts were made to reduce it. As with the aspiration to (at least partly) bridge the overarching social distance between the researchers and the researched, these efforts included *inter alia* understanding potential mistrust and considerations of the social settings in which the interviews took place (e.g. mostly during working hours in the respective spatial environments).

Regarding the presentation of the research to the respondents, a reassuring and inviting approach was applied in order to establish rapport “[...] so that the interview and the situation itself have a meaning for the respondent” (*ibid.*, p.23). After the identification of potential participants, the research and its objectives were presented (if necessary at length) as informal, but as precise as possible in order to inform but also to gain trust of the oftentimes sceptical interviewees. Apentiik & Parpart (2006, p.36) note that especially foreign researchers might encounter difficulties in certain research settings regarding conduct (e.g. clothes, language) and norms (e.g. age), although informal, personal exchanges (e.g. about the researchers' background) preceding the interviews can assist in establishing mutual curiosity and building rapport; as was the case in the eight interviews. Regarding ethical considerations such as confidentiality, transparency and treatment of data, a research information sheet along with a consent form were respectively provided to

and completed by each participant (see appendix A). In most cases, after mutual familiarisation, future appointments were made for the interviews as most willing respondents asked for time to consider their participation or needed to arrange time off work.

The interviews followed a semi-structured design to allow the flexibility to ask follow-up questions and therefore gain rich and detailed narratives (Bryman 2012, p.470). The in-depth, semi-structured interviews were based on an interview guide (see appendix B) which was formulated specifically with regard to the investigation of the explicit research questions. Starting with few relatively closed questions about background and personal facts, the interviews soon progressed to more open-ended questions as "[…] researchers in the field often know that they cannot find useful or interesting answers by asking direct questions about identity" (Anthias 2002, p.492). Although a critic of the "identity" concept, Anthias recognises that "[…] it is best to allow subjects to talk about themselves, their lives and their experiences, and their 'identity' will emerge through this narration" (*ibid.*). Therefore, depending on the situation, relevant thematic drifts were encouraged via follow-up questions as they were not only considered discursive expressions of the interviewee's identity and agency, but also manifested overall concessions regarding above mentioned social distance and symbolic violence.

As rapport between all the social actors involved in the interview (including sometimes bystanders/interviewee's friends etc.) was considered crucial, further attempts were made to get the "[...] interviewee feeling comfortable and competent enough in the interaction to 'talk back'" (Miller & Glassner 2004, p.134) by offering, for example, refreshments during the interview, avoiding non-judgemental responses and granting him a discursive position of exclusive insider knowledge. Lasting between 45 and 80 minutes each, all eight interviews, which were conducted in (Pidgin) English, allowed to be voice-recorded and were subsequently transcribed and then double-checked to ensure accuracy. Both researchers embarked on independent readings and re-readings of the transcripts, followed by discussions and negotiations regarding their interpretations with the ultimate aim for mutual agreement concerning the analysis of the collected data (Cassell & Symon 2011).

While interviews form the methodological backbone of this study, in a sense, a triangulation of methods was pursued in order to further mitigate their above outlined subjective and constructed nature. Whenever possible in the analysis, cross-references between interviewees are provided to draw comparisons, but also to verify their credibility and suggest potential trends. Additionally, academic literature and media reports are deployed intermittently for similar purposes.

It is in line with the above established premises "[...] that social scientists need to treat narratives as 'accounts' and as 'performances'" (Atkinson & Delamont 2006, p.166) and to be aware of their own co-creation of responses that the analysis of the eight interviews was conducted. Attempts were therefore made to include, wherever possible in the analysis, the verbal interactions between the interviewers and the interviewees as well as, for example, the interviewees' stressing of certain words or their emotional underpinning. However, greater analytical emphasis was placed on the content or plots of the narratives and testimonies with regard to the paper's overall research questions surrounding the exploration of processes of identity (re)construction against the backdrop of a rather hostile environment in South Africa for black African (and specifically Nigerian) immigrants.

Framed by the theoretical considerations, four (out of six) personal narratives (see section 4.1) were chosen according to their salience, comprehensiveness and relevance while the remaining two were included to complement them (see section 4.15). Each of the four personal accounts was then closely scrutinised in relation to salient plots, such as personal background in Nigeria (e.g. importance of ethnicity), migration to South Africa (e.g. reasons and expectations), experiences of discrimination (e.g. police harassment) and resulting coping strategies (e.g. *attacking the stigmatiser*). As these plots or stories reveal valuable insights into processes of identity (re)negotiations, the paper's theoretical framework of the *Ouroboros of Identification* was applied in order to analyse narratives "[...] in terms of their rhetorical, persuasive properties, and their functions in constructing particular versions of events, justifications of actions, evaluations of [the "Self" and] others, and so on" (Atkinson & Delamont 2006, p.167). In an attempt to bridge the *personal/experiential* and the *public/representational* domains, section 4.2 contrasts the results of section 4.1 with two testimonies of institutional representatives of the Nigerian community in South Africa (*The Nigerian Voice* and KZN NUSA). Albeit not to the same extent (as less plots are available), these testimonies present collective Nigerian efforts to

withstand discrimination and are analysed in line with the *Ouroboros of Identification*. Section 4.3 briefly outlines (dis)similarities between sections 4.1 and 4.2 regarding coping strategies and offers suggestions regarding how to possibly overcome these discrepancies.

Whilst briefly touched upon above and picked up by Atkinson & Delamont's previous quote, the rhetorical aspect of narratives is an important, though not overarching, focus of the following analysis. However, regarding the inevitability of pronominal representation of the "Self" and the "Other", Adriana Cavarero writes:

> Indeed, many 'revolutionary' movements (which range from traditional communism to the feminism of sisterhood) share a curious linguistic code based on the intrinsic morality of pronouns. The *we* is always positive, the *plural you* is a possible ally, the *they* has the face of an antagonist, the *I* is unseemly, and the *you* is, of course, superfluous. (Cavarero 2000, pp.90-1; original emphases)

Although Cavarero refers to a different, "revolutionary" context, her remarks are, to a certain degree, of importance as the respondents of this study inevitably deploy pronouns in their narratives to indicate individuality, collectivity (as e.g. Igbos and/or Nigerians) and antagonism (when e.g. *attacking the stigmatiser*). While the "I" is, in this study, not seen as "unseemly", the other "curious linguistic codes" of pronouns correspond with the paper's understanding. However, despite their meaningfulness regarding identification, the pronouns used by the interviewees are treated carefully as it is not always clear (also with regard to linguistic norms of Pidgin English) if their intended meaning corresponds with Cavarero's statement. Nonetheless, clear and comprehensive examples of pronominal representation are provided in the analysis to highlight, apart from contentual, also rhetorical elements of identification.

4. Analysis

4.1 Personal Narratives

As set up thus far, the following sections provide detailed and contextualised personal accounts of Nigerian individuals regarding their background in Nigeria, migrancy to South Africa, experiences of discrimination and respective coping strategies. Analysed according to the paper's theoretical backbone, the *Ouroboros of Identification*, the personal narratives below offer insights into processes of and reasons for (re)negotiations of identities of Nigerian immigrants confronted with (perceived) discrimination in a new and challenging spatial context.

4.11 John – “If I had known, I would have never come.”

More than two years ago, John arrived in his early thirties from the south-western part of Nigeria (Lagos state) in South Africa. Although describing himself as being of Yoruba ethnicity, he does not seem to ascribe much conscious meaning to it:

> I don’t know what it means, but sometimes you are just born into something. So I actually don’t know what it means to be Yoruba. On that matter I am not clear. But it is good to be Yoruba […] I am happy my own side is also recognised [in Nigeria]. It is just like that [laughing]. (interview 04/04/2014)

While claiming that ethnicity does not affect his life in South Africa, John generally asserts his national identity after being asked to prioritise nationality or ethnicity: “You must say Nigerian before Yoruba.” Having received tertiary education in his country of origin, which enabled him several jobs in the service sector (maritime and banking), John's curiosity mainly led him, after short-term stays in other West African countries, to South Africa: “[...] [I]n my country I am OK. I am graduated, I have a job, I am doing fine, but sometimes you just have this spirit 'Let me go and see other countries'”. A friend from Nigeria was John's gatekeeper to Durban, in his words, a “place where you can relax your head and reason properly”. He arrived with a positive attitude, and expected “[...] that we [people] are one, that all over the world we are one”, discarding even hypothetical warnings by Nigerian friends in South Africa:

> Even if they tell you [negative] things, you will never believe. There is a saying that "seeing is believing". If they say there is no money, you will think it is a lie. "Let me come and see for myself." And then when you get there you will realise "Oooh, they were right." [laughing]

John stays in close touch with his father (a retired military officer) and his friends in Nigeria: "It is good to communicate [via phone and social media], so that I don't get lost in the world. It is very important for me." For more than a year, he is married to a Zulu woman and stays with her in a city nearby, though, due to transportation to his work place in Durban CBD, he still continues sharing a flat with three other Nigerians in a nearby suburb (Musgrave). After being asked how it was adapting to life in South Africa, John ("J.") responds:

> J.: It is tough, man. I think it is really tough arriving in South Africa. In my country, what we do is, we don't care if you are foreigner. Wherever you come from, all we do...you are here. And you, you coming here, you have a purpose of coming here, so we make things easy for you. […] We make things easy for you so that you can enjoy your stay while South Africans, I don't know, there is this hatred against most Africans. They always have this stigma "You are a foreigner", "You are a foreigner" as if you are an outcast. And when I mean an outcast, you are a nobody, like you are not supposed to be here. So it makes things tough; you can't get a job, you can't do anything right. They make it hard for you. So it is not easy.
>
> Interviewers ("I."): Did you know about this tough life before you came here?
>
> J.: No, if I had known, I would have never come. For real. If I had known, I wouldn't have come.

This brief exchange discloses various issues surrounding discrimination and identification. Whilst John discursively exposes a hostile environment as an external factor (*The Serpent Eats*; 1a) in South Africa in which stigmatising labels ("foreigner") are attached to most Africans, rendering them socio-economic "outcasts" (*attacking the stigma and the stigmatiser*), he draws a noteworthy comparison to "*my* country". Nigeria, from his point of view, is much more accommodative of immigrants (1b); a country where "*we* don't care if you are a foreigner", where "*we* make things easy for you". Although John's perception

might be justified, indeed confirmed by survey data[19], it also gives insights into processes of identity formation, exemplifying how individual and collective identification cannot be analysed separately. His general perception of "them"/the "Other" (South Africans) as negative and hostile is simultaneously accompanied by the positive reassurance of the accommodative "us"/"Self" (Nigeria); hence he is "*flying the flag*". Facing (perceived) degrading stigmatisation, John mobilises some sort of collective resistance identity along national lines by *re-articulating* positive, "superior" values to his "spoilt" national identity. John's comparison manifests "[...] that it is only through the relation to the Other, the relation to what it is not, to precisely what it lacks […] that the 'positive' meaning of any term – and thus its 'identity' – can be constructed" (Hall 1996, pp.4-5). John's above statement additionally addresses his main frustration, i.e. not being able to find employment despite his three degrees; Economics, Logistics and Maritime Business. John continues:

> J.: The main challenge for me as a Nigerian in South Africa is not being able to live or to be what you tend to be and that is like getting a good job. […] It is a big challenge for me, because I am a Nigerian and a foreigner...they put it like that...'the foreigner'.

Despite his advanced *cultural capital*, his ability to "fit in anywhere" and his applications "all, all, all over" he could not find work in line with his qualifications. Explicitly connecting his lack of employment options to xenophobic discrimination (1a), John maintains that "even [to] have the chance to be interviewed, that's the problem. You can't get that. So it is a lot of stress." In the follow-up, John employs a similar comparison as above in favour of "*my* country", though somewhat qualifying his previous remarks on explicit discrimination surrounding employment in South Africa:

> I.: Do you think it is generally difficult to get a job here or could it have anything to do with your name or origin?
> J.: I don't know
> I.: They don't tell you?
> J.: They don't tell nothing. And the fact is – I am going to say this to the world and I

19 In 2000, 28% in Nigeria approved of "let anyone in who wants to enter". Only 2% of South Africans agreed with this proposition in 1999. Furthermore, 3% of Nigerians wanted to "prohibit people coming from other countries", while 25% shared this attitude in South Africa (Crush 2008, pp.24-5).

> am not going to lie about things – that South Africa, they said, is a country for everybody. It is not. It is not. They still have this big problem after apartheid. […] Fine, it has happened, it has happened. OK, in my country, we were actually colonised by the British, but we let it go. From the 60's we let it go, "OK, thank you, now we know our right hand, our left hand, thank you, you can go." But they still all don't do it. […] Why you don't let it go and just be one, one South Africa as you name it?

While repeatedly "*flying the flag*", he stresses his "more advanced" Nigerian national identity by comparing the colonial legacies (see chapter 1 and 2.21) of the respective countries, perceived or real discrimination in the labour market forced him to do "[...] what I am not supposed to do. I am doing something to make money. It is buying and selling [gold in Durban CBD]. You just make a little profit, you can live with that." The environment as an external force (*The Serpent Eats*) led John, albeit reluctantly, to comply and adjust (*The Serpent Grows*; 3a), although he still infers that his current freelance job is below his skills.

> I.: Why are Gold Exchanges [in Durban CBD] often staffed by Nigerians?
> J.: Because it is the only thing they can do. Nothing else, like I said, there is nothing; so basically every foreigner has a particular field that you can fit in when you are coming. Like, the Chinese, when they come to the country, they do more of a selling of appliances and clothing. So that is where they can fit in. You can't tell a Chinese man to go and do Gold Exchange or tell him to go and sell food [laughing]. He wouldn't do that. So basically why all Nigerians do this is because that is the only thing they can fit in for now...and nothing else.

Describing his employment as his personal last resort due to victimisation, John also expands his perception by framing this *individual* coping strategy (a result of a hostile environment) as a *collective* coping strategy of the Nigerian (or generally "foreign") community. Whilst not undermining some sense of agency in these processes (a Chinese man "wouldn't do that"), John implies that these active, internal (individual *and* collective) coping strategies regarding employment are intrinsically linked to external determinants which leave only a limited latitude for immigrants' economic self-realisation. As John

stresses freelancing as a vital coping strategy (as other interviewees), he relates this to external negative perceptions regarding his current business:

> If there are better things we can do, we must change and start doing that, because now they say Nigerians are the cause of most problems – hijacking, robbery – because they [Nigerians] go and take people's stuff and come to make some money with you [in Gold Exchanges]. It is not like that. We never started [the business]. We just came in. So why are we the problem being Nigerians now? But the problem I noticed is that Nigerians made it too popular.

Commenting on the frequent stereotype which depicts Nigerians as criminals and drug dealers (1a), John adds: “It is true that a lot of Nigerians [in South Africa] are involved in the drug cartel.” However, he qualifies it (3b) by calling them “the crawling ones”; meaning that, in comparison to well-known global drug cartels, Nigerians constitute “just a scratch”: “But if you are now having a scratch, you are not putting a *big* plaster on it and show the world “Ey, I have an injury”. [laughing] What would they think? That it is big, but no, it is just a scratch. That's the problem” (original emphasis). Whilst dissociating (*detachment*) himself from any criminal activities, stating “I don't do anything wrong, I respect the law of the country”, John further distinguishes himself, as his plaster-metaphor suggests, from easily-recognisable co-expatriates in South Africa who “talk too much” and “act weird” by “bragging”. Despite or because of his own victimisation, John frames the problem as “out there” and transfers it to a group of Nigerian immigrants he does not belong to. He further asserts that

> [m]ost people are recognised as Nigerians, but the way I am, people don’t recognise *me* (original emphasis). [...] I don't have this stigma, and when I mean the stigma, I mean that people know you for one particular thing...I am everywhere. People will not recognise where I am from. I may look like a Senegalese or a Ghanaian.

Whilst acknowledging the partial truth of the externally imposed, negative stereotype (1a), he discursively refrains from any internal association with it. In a sense, he *deflects* the stereotype via an emphasis of his personal qualities; his own positive “Self” (language, appearance, behaviour) over the stigmatised collective “Other” (“deviant” co-expatriates).

This coping strategy, however, does not prevent him from wearing Nigerian attire in order to express his identity as he was on the day of the interview: “I am not wearing it on purpose. It is just part of me. I can't just put on jeans, a shirt, trousers, that is not me. I originated in Africa, in Nigeria, so once in a while I need to be African, to represent Africa, personally, Nigeria.”

Invoking a mixture of personal, national and continental identity, John continues to offer more general and universal insights into his life as an immigrant:

> I.: Did you have to change your behaviour or anything to cope with this stigma?
> J.: No, you don’t need to change your behaviour, all you need to do is to try and adapt.
> I.: How did you do that?
> J.: By trying to be yourself and control yourself. Whatever anybody says to you, just be focussed. You have a purpose. It is tough with this killing, killing, killing easily, so you need to control yourself because you know where you are from [...].
> I.: You said that you are trying to adjust...does it mean that you give up being a Nigerian and trying to be more South African?
> J.: No. It is not about being a Nigerian or being a South African. It is all about being you as a human. Being you as a human is trying to respect other people, trying to take whatever insult that comes to you, […] then naturally you will accept in your own time that you are on foreign ground, that you need to adjust, explain yourself, don’t do things the wrong way and leave the rest to God.

The complex (re)creation of a meaningful “Self” via the interplay between individual and collective identities, specific and universal belongings, the fluctuating rejection and embrace of the importance of the individual, the Nigerian, the African and the human exemplify the concurrent (re)negotiation processes John faces regarding his situation as an immigrant. These (re)negotiations of the “Self” result in the entrenchment of his above outlined general strategies of acceptance, adaptation and self-control (see *The Serpent Grows*, 3a & 3b). Similarly to Stuart Hall's self-realisation “That's who I am! I am an immigrant” And I thought at last, I've come into my *real* self” (Hall 1991a, p.15), John, accepting that he is “on foreign ground”, (un)consciously developed over time strategies to cope with possibly very real consequences (“this killing, killing, killing easily”) of the

stigmatisation of Nigerians in South Africa. While not trying to "[...] judge or condemn people or condemn an area [Point]", John dissociates himself physically and discursively from it stating: "I don't go to places where it is tough...I don't like violence". By trying to avoid dangerous situations, he decided to settle in a middle-class suburb,

> […] a *very* expensive place to live in. But the major thing we talk about is your *safety* […] It is not like the locations [townships], where it is very dangerous. Basically South Africans have this problem – I don't know, maybe because of the one's that are not that much exposed – they have this violent act in them. It is better for you to just stay away and be on your own side where you can see people who will understand and accommodate you [rather] than going somewhere where they will start telling you: "Wena [You], you are taking our money. You are taking our women". (original emphases)

Adjusting his living environment according to aspects of personal safety is accompanied by adjusting behaviour in situations where immediate discrimination is experienced (see *Serpent Eats* and *The Serpent Grows*). Recounting a specific situation (amongst several examples) where he felt unjustly treated by a public taxi driver over direction issues, John claims that "South Africans, not South Africans, *black* South Africans still have a long way to go. […] If you board the same taxi with them, if there is an issue, it will be one-sided […]." Apart from his recurrent innuendo about apartheid's psychological impact on black South Africans (see 1.2 & 1.3), the (perceived) passengers' bias particularly earned John's disapproval: "Because you don't speak what they are speaking, they think you don't understand. They are going to be like a judge on you, so they gonna say in their own terms "He is a foolish person, don't mind him...kwerekwere". As no-one stepped in for John, he interprets this as general toleration of discrimination in South Africa (1a) and is forced to adjust (3b): "You keep quiet. "OK, you are going this route, sorry. Can you then drop me here?" You go your way. Act like a fool. It doesn't kill you. […] It feels bad, but […] [o]ne man cannot win the battle."

These lived experiences seem to further alienate John from his environment: "I don't see nothing [excluding his wife] that will tell me this is why I like South Africa." While John attempts to get along with locals, also by trying to learn and practice isiZulu (*The Serpent Grows*), he claims not to have South African friends, "because there is nothing that brings

us together." However, after being asked if he would like to have local friends, John responds: "Why am I here in the first place? I would love that, I would *love* to have *a lot* of South African friends, *but* there must be understanding" (original emphasis), which is not based on stereotypes, such as "'Godfather, bring out the gold stash!' No, I don't want that." By advocating a mutual accommodation, John again invokes the idea of more unifying meanings and identities, such as Africanness and humanity (3b), which would allow all actors to transcend entrenched local and national boundaries.

Being married to an "understanding" Zulu woman, John considers his aspiration for and eligibility of South African citizenship important as "it would change a lot" and reduce mainly institutional/bureaucratic discrimination (such as, he cites, in banks or at driving school). Once "I can be able to fit into the system […] I can go home [Nigeria], bring business here [South Africa], *do* like a citizen, go home, *do* like a citizen" (original emphases). His desire to act and to be treated like a citizen is exemplified in his attempts to engage with locals, thus able to rectify a *spoilt identity* (3a) and disperse popular clichés surrounding Nigerians by "*attacking the stigmatisers*": "If a Nigerian hurt you before, it doesn't mean all Nigerians are the same. So, I try also to impact my own [perspectives] on South African people to teach them 'This is wrong. This is right'." Notwithstanding these efforts, John misses Nigeria a lot: "I miss hanging out with those guys [friends], I miss the freedom. I miss not being stopped or harassed by people or cops. Ey, I miss my country, there is nothing like your old country. So I miss home a lot." Whilst not necessarily planning to go back, he actively considers leaving South Africa (if possible with his family and as soon as a "plan materialises") for any other country which might offer him better possibilities regarding his occupational perspectives; thus constituting, in a sense, a final coping strategy with (perceived) discrimination and stigmatisation. John would generally and vehemently advise potential Nigerian newcomers not to come to South Africa unless they are prepared to "[...] carry your cross yourself."

In general, after more than two years of staying in Durban, John expresses a rather negative and disappointed narration of his experiences in South Africa. His explicit disapproval of discrimination and his discursive attacks on the stigmatisers and on his "deviant" co-expatriates (both as the "Other") are framed alongside a (re)definition of a positive, mainly personal and national "Self" rejecting any association with the popular negative images of Nigerians in South Africa. At the same time, personal safety in

everyday contexts is prioritised, thus adaptation, *detachment* and, in a sense, *self-exclusion* are practised. Religion and ethnicity are rarely invoked as defining aspects of John's narrative; albeit situationally mentioned as meaning makers. Religion is regarded by John as of personal importance though with little implications on his migrancy, whilst ethnicity is used to explain the demographics of the Nigerian population in South Africa: “The majority of Nigerians you see here are Igbos, so I don't get to see my own people.” Although John does not attribute seminal significance to his Yoruba ethnicity, the meanings he attaches to it might still be partly connected to his *deflection, detachment* and *self-appraisal* coping strategies; talking about his plans to leave South Africa, he states: “Nigerians and Yoruba, we love education and we like exploring a lot. We love learning about all the cultures of the world. So, I still have a long way to go. I want to learn more, I want to know more.”

4.12 Geff – “Blacks in another black country; it is not easy.”

Geff is an unmarried Igbo man from Enugu state in south-east Nigeria. Experiencing both rural and urban environments due to the proximity of his home village with the city, Geff moved to study in the western part of Nigeria aged 20 and has also studied in the north. Before moving to South Africa, Geff spent some time as a journalist. Now in his mid-30s, Geff has been living in South Africa for seven years and came to Durban under the tutelage of his brother who was already residing there, though not any more. Geff is currently freelancing in the field of (music) video production. He has not applied for citizenship and ultimately intends to move on. He no longer has any close family or friends residing in Nigeria and does not intend to return.

Geff's perception of South Africa is mixed. On the positive side, he sees the infrastructure as decent (citing specifically the schools, roads and provision of water and electricity) and views the democracy as “working up to 80%” (interview 14/05/2014). However, Geff (like John) also thinks of South Africa as a place which limits his personal freedom: “Here, when you want to do so many things, they will ask you for your ID. [...] In Nigeria, I move about, I do anything I want to do [...] If I want to walk with my head upside down, I will walk with my head upside down”. The sense of freedom is, for Geff, connected to a pervading sense of fear which he carries with him: “There is no freedom here so you move about in fear”.

This fear began before even leaving Nigeria, from the leitmotifs and advice of his brother: “He was always telling me about the crime rate”. This in turn led Geff to stay “indoors for six months, I was afraid to walk on the street, but he was always telling me ‘these guys [South Africans], they kill for ten rand [...]’”. The xenophobic attacks in 2008, occurred as Geff was starting his life in South Africa and also contributed to this fear:

> The only thing was the fear of crime, but the fear increased more after 2008, after the xenophobic attacks on some foreigners. We got more worried. Both Nigerians and other foreigners because when they are attacking foreigners, it doesn’t matter where you come from as far as you are a foreigner, you might be involved.

The attacks therefore may have, discursively at least, led to some solidarity amongst (black) foreigners; the external discrimination towards (black) foreigners manufacturing that identity. Six years later, Geff is still careful but the *self-exclusion* coping strategy abated: “I am not afraid like before, I have stayed here for six years plus now so it is no more like that [but] I am still very careful about the way I walk and things like that”. Therefore, as the external environment/society becomes more familiar (1a), it becomes easier to “walk” in. Geff realises that, although the different Nigerian ethnicities “[...] don’t actually mix very well because they do different things” (suggesting continued importance of ethnicity on some level), discrimination in South Africa generally is not based on this: “They just see a green passport ‘Nigerian, he’s a Nigerian’ but the Igbo thing is pronounced in Nigeria, it is not pronounced in South Africa”. Geff’s (corroborated, although generalised) reading of the South African environment/society shows that he has sought the “deposits of society” usually performed unconsciously through *habitus* and as this is internalised (1a) *The Serpent Grows* (3a & 3b). A sense of pride can be detected in his voice as he declares “I wear normal, casual [clothes]. Even when I am working, people see me, they think I am Zulu, they speak Zulu to me so it gives me more confidence”. Being able to decrease outward markers of Nigerian identity is therefore a positive thing and has even resulted in him learning a small amount of Zulu. Additionally, Geff also remembers his brother’s advice, “telling me I should not mix with other Nigerians because of the things they do, most of them engage in illegal activities.” Whilst this represents a conflict between the internal and external definitions, this has been largely negotiated with Geff claiming “I socialise with people based on the way they think and the way they perceive things”. This way of ordering people was also highlighted in Geff’s (“G.”) analysis of South Africans:

I.: What do you like about South Africans?

G.: We have different people in South Africa. We have the good, we have the bad, we have the ugly. I categorise them in that way. There are good South Africans, there are South Africans that are very very xenophobic, [and] there are those ones that are more deadly. Some are xenophobic, they will tell you they don't like foreigners but they can't do anything about it. Those ones are the bad. The ugly are those ones who hate foreigners and they do something about it like killing them in different ways. They kill foreigners in different ways: secretly, by demonstration, by going to their shops to destroy them, by robbing them. Then we have the good ones, these are the ones that like foreigners, they are happy with them so they can do anything to help them.

Whilst this nuanced answer contains demonstrable truth and reflects the fact that Geff does have some South African friends, the positive question formulation may also have been an influence as unprompted, throughout the interview, Geff gives multiple examples which highlight individual or collective superiority over South Africans generally. The expostulation of the general South African mentality translated to *"flying the flag"* which worked alongside *differentiation* (concomitantly) facilitating the acknowledgement of the reality that some Nigerian migrants are involved in illegal activities. The following example demonstrates how *"flying the flag"* was used by Geff to discursively attack the stigmatiser, illustrating a clash between the two disparate national collective memories:

Why most of us feel bad is because when we were very small, we remember these guys were struggling [against] apartheid. [...] In our primary schools we donated money to fight apartheid here [South Africa]. We would collect money from our parents [...], Nigerian money. Some people collected it from different schools and they put it together and they send the money here to fight the apartheid regime. So they forget so soon. So that is why a lot of us feel sad when they are saying 'kwerekwere'.

This citation also uses "*flying the flag*" in order to highlight and delegitimise Nigerian victimisation in South Africa. Another example of Nigerian superiority as "*flying the flag*" can be noted when negotiating the external definition of Nigerians as taking South African women away from South African men, as mentioned by John (section 4.11).

> If you have a dog and you don't give it food, you don't take care of it the way you are supposed to do. If any person comes and starts giving it nice food, taking care of it, the dog will abandon you and go to the person who is giving more care. [...] [Most men] hit women; we don't hit women. We provide for women but here, I see that women provide for men. So when a woman sees a man who is caring, providing for her, she will be more comfortable with that person. The girl will tell this person "hey, I got a Nigerian boyfriend, he is doing all this, he is doing all that." The person will say "hey, can you hook me up with a Nigerian?"

Also legitimising and normalising a certain type of learnt gendered interaction (*habitus*)[20], this extract discursively *attacks the stigmatiser* and re-negotiates the external definition of "wife-snatchers" into something positive, perhaps "wife-savers". By doing this, "most" South African men are seen as "jealous", inferring more positive moral meanings onto Nigerian national identity (*"flying the flag"*) by attaching negative meanings to South Africans.

> South Africans have some problems. One of them is that they don't travel, because when you travel, you learn a lot of things. So when you come back to your country, then that knowledge you get from that travel will help you to deal with certain issues. But if you don't travel, you don't learn anything so you just believe that the world ends around your country or your area.

Perhaps because Geff has travelled and enjoyed higher education, he is able to draw a causal relationship between this (or lack thereof) and discriminatory beliefs and actions, discursively *attacking the stigmatiser* by remarking on a perceived limitation in terms of *cultural capital*. Whilst Geff does generalise this to all South Africans in the previous excerpt, he goes on to distinguish between South Africans who do travel and those who do not.

> Nigerians introduced some of their [South African] girlfriends to Nigeria. They went to Nigeria and they didn't want to come back. You go to Abuja, the capital of Nigeria [and] you see South African girls; they are doing prostitution there and they are making more money than Nigerian prostitutes. And they are spreading HIV/AIDS in

20 For a paper analysing the evolution of Igbo gender relations, see Okonkwo (2009).

> Nigeria. We don't complain and say "South African girls must go because they are spreading HIV/AIDS.

Whilst from this extract, Geff does seem to be attacking the stigmatiser as "diseased", the main insight is what it reveals about *nationality*. After talking about the stereotype of Nigerians and crime, Geff began answering the question "How do you challenge this perception?" by talking about how people should be treated as individuals (as opposed to racial profiling), quickly switching to framing Nigeria(ns) as better than South Africa(ns); the more offensive strategy of "*flying the flag*". Hence he starts the last extract off by "*flying the flag*", making Nigeria sound preferable to South Africa and continuing the "wife-savers" theme, and also ends by "*flying the flag*", attributing positive meanings to Nigerians (such as welcoming and tolerant), thus treating discrimination as a South African, nationally bounded phenomenon, or deficiency. As the meanings of Nigeria(ns) are emphasised sometimes as personal qualities and at other times national, individual and collective, identification is evidenced as a matter of mere emphasis (Jenkins 2008a) and infers a strong (constructed and (re)negotiated) correlation between what it means to be Nigerian (national identity) and what it means to be Geff (core identity).

Perhaps because of his successful company in which South Africans are employed, Geff applies meaning to national categories in terms of productivity also. Geff's advice to newcomers would be to stay in Nigeria and invest the travel cost in Nigeria, because "that money is going to be ten times double". Geff continues to "*fly the flag*":

> A Nigerian will come from Nigeria [to South Africa] today with two clothes, by [within] six months, you see him driving a car so they get surprised, "how did they make it?" When you are lazy, you think lazily. You see when we come from Nigeria to here, we do everything, work very hard to make sure we survive. If I go to my house now and start sleeping, how am I going to pay my house rent, my house is not here. Most of these South Africans who are complaining, they have RDP [Reconstruction and Development Programme] houses, they are not paying rent. They can decide to sleep there, they don't want to do anything so tomorrow they will go to the main road and put placards, they are protesting; they depend on the government too much.

The recurring representation of South Africans as “lazy” (*attacking the stigmatiser*) reveals a crucial binary created; the themes “hard work” and “success” are in relation to Nigerians, and specifically Igbos. This is revealed both explicitly, “[a]s an Igbo person, it makes you to work hard or to work harder because definitely there are some barriers”, and implicitly, “my other brother was here, he was a medical doctor”.

Notwithstanding the positive meanings he attaches to his national identity, Geff still recognises external definitions. Not only has he consciously shaped and refined his lived environment over time, he still consciously analyses and reacts to the safety of individual situations (2b becomes 1a; see fig.4):

> I.: Would you be recognised as Nigerian?
> G.: When I speak, they are not sure but they know I am not from South Africa but they are not sure which African country. So they ask me “are you from Ghana?”
> I.: Do you then disclose it?
> G.: Yeah. It is only once, I told somebody I was from Ghana [...] The situation was not good so I couldn’t tell them. There are places you go, you see that these guys don’t like people from Nigeria [...].
> I.: Was it a dangerous situation?
> G.: I can’t remember, but the situation was very bad so I said I was from Ghana. And they can’t come and ask me “where is your passport” or whatever; it is just a casual discussion.

Responding to how this felt, Geff said “[i]t doesn’t tell good about your country. We are doing that because of the sins some other people have committed.” Whilst distance is maintained from the [Nigerian] “greedy” “guys on the street” who are “some other people” (*differentiation* as a coping strategy), the stigma and stigmatiser were generally attacked throughout the interview via personal achievements (e.g. “I set up my own business and it is doing very well”), *“flying the flag”* and highlighting *victimisation* which at times *included* illegalised drug-traders: “So these guys here, they are just hawkers, I call them hawkers. They don’t see money. The main people who are dealing with drugs, they bring drugs with ships, they are not from Nigeria, Nigerians don’t have such power.” This speaks to the meanings Geff has attached to Nigeria(ns); whilst starting this answer with the common stereotype of “these Nigerians are greedy” (paraphrased), he goes on to unpack the

“exposed” and “depraved” situation “these guys” are in. In so doing, Geff subverts the stereotype of “Nigerians as avaricious”, framing the Nigerian involvement in the Durban drug trade as a strategy to get by as opposed to a strategy to get rich. This maintains the meanings of Nigerians both as victims (of jealousy) and as hard workers without condoning their activities. The main theoretical point highlighted by the previous quote however, is how signals in the environment which could translate to discrimination are sought and managed. Whilst in the previous example, Geff was able to hide his origins, it is not always possible to do this:

> I: Have you ever been accused of being a drug dealer?
> G: I am accused every day. Police stop you now and say “where are the drugs?”, that is the first thing. If they see me now, they see I am Nigerian, the police, they will say “where are the drugs?”

Geff’s response when this happens, is to allow them to search and watch them as they do so. Whether from experience, media or hearsay, Geff is mindful that the “corrupt police” might “plant drugs in your car to get money from you”. Therefore, Geff has learnt “the rules of the game” (1a), and responds with appropriate caution (*The Serpent Grows*). Discursively, Geff attacks the police as corrupt which reveals that he is not letting the external be “digested” with the internal, the disparity between them unable to be negotiated. However, Geff also discursively attacks the Nigerians he claims work with the police in order to target those with money. Geff's occasional framing of Nigerians as not trusting each other and working against each other was generally accompanied by *differentiation* through the use of terms such as “those guys” as opposed to “we” or “us”. Additionally, it can be inferred that as this is not a prevalent stereotype in the environment/society, there is less need to (re)construct a positive counter-meaning.

The numerous examples of the discursive coping strategy *“flying the flag”* utilised by Geff, reflects the (perceived) salience of the stereotype (external definitions) in the environment/society. Whilst still in contact with discrimination (such as his multiple interactions with the police), Geff has learnt to avoid this as much as possible by removing markers of Nigerian identity and somewhat managing his external; *self-exclusion* abated over time as Geff built relationships with people based on their mentality (social) and running his own business (work). At the same time, his modest involvement with NUSA

(covering some of their events) reflects his continuing attachment to Nigerians as well as "the journalistic instinct in me".

As Geff has not visited Nigeria and has no intention of doing so, being Igbo only seems to have some residual significance in the new environment/society. His ethnicity is discussed more historically, with the meanings still attached to it (mainly subjects of victimisation, hard-working, welcoming and tolerant) now attributed to his national identity which has consequentially gained in importance. The identity of Nigerians is also disconnected from the identity of Nigeria. Aside from (when asked) calling his state in Nigeria "home", Geff demonstrated little sense of belonging to his home country throughout the interview, framing Nigeria as the country without opportunity, South Africa as the country without freedom.

4.13 Festus – "If you don't reach to the river, there is no way you will drown."

Festus is a 43 year old Igbo man who has been living in South Africa for 14 years, all of which he has spent in Durban. Arriving as a refugee and now a South African citizen, out of all the participants, Festus has lived in South Africa the second longest. Born in a rural setting in the south-east Imo state, he grew up in an urban setting in "another state" which remained nameless throughout the interview.

Describing his reasons for leaving Nigeria as "a push", motivated by religiously inspired violence in Nigeria, Festus does little to discursively attack South Africa *per se*, saying "I don't have connections here but I knew South Africa was on the African continent and had a mixed race [population], just like America so I feel like here can be acceptable to me." Additionally, Festus praises the facilities offered by South Africa which do not exist in Nigeria, stating that this keeps him going and inspires him to overcome the difficulties faced. Noting that he has not achieved all his goals, Festus proudly states "I have overcome many of the hurdles that I faced in the early beginning" (*The Serpent Grows*).

Generally, these "hurdles" involved his struggles to be recognised as a refugee, run his own business and be openly received by people. He consciously does not allow these

setbacks to make him “think that it is not a good place.” Discrimination is therefore not applied to the whole of South Africa but explained predominantly through education:

> I.: Are you treated like a South African?
> F.: In fact, educated South Africans, they treat me like a South African but those ones who are not enlightened in the 21st century understanding, they still see me as a foreigner, they calling you, “hey you kwerekwere” meaning you are a foreigner. But for me, I know [this is] because of lack of understanding in their brains, so I just give up on them. It makes me not interact much with people I know are still being low in education or haven’t got higher studies to understand that my migration is not an offence and it is not a crime to humanity.

This thought process, as well as the language barrier, led him into becoming a businessman: “Mostly here, black guys, who are not educated, don’t even get themselves involved with business. [...] If you watch in this town here, if there are 100 shops, its Indians and foreigners that own 99.”

By explaining discrimination largely in terms of education, Festus is able to infer his higher status, or *cultural capital* (which could be considered a subtle *deflection* strategy), and simultaneously blames the stigmatiser and the stigma by invoking a hierarchy of knowledge or legitimate arguments, justifying and normalising his own position as a migrant. He also acknowledges that he consciously avoids interacting with the perceived “problem group”; *self-exclusion* being a strategy to shield against the threat and situates himself, physically and discursively, within an “in-group” of “educated people” and “business people” as well as “foreigners”.

Discrimination is concomitantly explained through the co-option of Nigerian identity by other “lesser” groups: “See here in Durban, in South Africa, anyone that commits crime, they say it is a Nigerian. Congolese use stolen Nigerian identity.” This can be seen as further scapegoating or *detachment* which speaks to a specific discrimination within the environment; shifting part of the blame to another sub-group within, what is labelled by some native South Africans as, “makwerekwere”.

Festus also distinguishes between rural and urban South Africa as a Nigerian migrant stating that in in the former “you are number one target [because] you are a foreigner. Mostly because you are Nigerian” and living in the city is consequentially “very very important.” The idea that the inveterate workings of and interactions in the urban environment he grew up in will be similar to those in the urban environment of Durban can partly be attributed to *habitus* (2a & 2b), however the animated description of the perceived topography of safety in South Africa denotes additional conscious reasoning triggered by discrimination in the environment.

Whilst not questioning the motives, consciously perceiving citizenship as also important in overcoming encountered hurdles, Festus’ marriage to a South African was of some strategic value:

> F: It [South African citizenship] took me about 5 years because I have to be married.
> I: Does the marriage help you here?
> F: Early in the beginning it was so helpful. As time goes on, I find that the life or background, the culture is not the same; so many things I can see as wrong are not by her. So that, many times, brings some problems. But at the same time, I don’t have any other choice than to stick and stay [with her] because I don’t have 50/50 equal rights with the wife.

In terms of the *Ouroboros*, it can be inferred from this that as time goes on (and *The Serpent Grows*), Festus becomes more comfortable as the “Self” gets negotiated further into the new environment, reducing on the one side the utility of having a South African wife in terms of fitting in and managing external definitions (1a), whilst still feeling connected to her. This has caused some tensions:

> I have a problem with my wife. She came to the shop and broke some things. When I went to the station to report, the police couldn’t assist me. They told me “go”. I say “I have a problem; I don’t want to commit a crime. Come and rescue me from my problem.” They couldn’t. At the time I said that because I couldn’t speak the [Zulu] language.

As his original grievances subside over time, the police are seen by Festus to be a the foremost hindrance currently to living a peaceful life in South Africa: “I find it so discriminating with the police here.”

> And in another case, somebody has come to my shop to fight me and I called the police. When the police took me to the station, Point police station, they didn’t give me a chance to write my statement. They started to ask the accused in Zulu and when they finished, they told me I am now to be charged. Instead of the accused to be charged! I said “I brought this guy here, now why must I be charged?” [...] I say “it’s wrong!” Within five minutes, I see that guy [had] vanish[ed]; he couldn’t make any statement.

This personal experience (as well as others mentioned, including a court case) has led to a distrust of the police for Festus which has resulted in a specific set of exigencies. Firstly, not knowing the language, as mentioned in the previous two citations, has led to an, albeit desultory, attempt to learn Zulu. He also goes through a process of “checking double” before acting to make sure his actions cannot be considered unlawful or questionable: “I don’t hide my identity because I know that my cupboard is clean.”

The perceived racial profiling and malfeasance by the South African police has also had more fundamental implications pertaining to how Festus lives his life; he has become tenacious in his dedication to avoid interactions with the police (a conscious and pre-emptive approach epitomised in the opening quote).

Point Road (at South Beach) has a reputation of having high levels of crime (especially regarding the retail and solicitation of illegal drugs) and African immigration; commonly the first place Nigerians find themselves when migrating to Durban. On the subject, Festus explains, “I don’t live there. I had a shop in Point but after three years, I said that place is not good for me because it is so rough. It’s so dangerous. [...] Illegal activities are committed there.” Whilst not explicitly mentioning Nigerian migrants, Festus is dissociating himself from common meanings attached to Nigerians in South Africa (*detachment*) both physically and discursively as well as highlighting his deep-rooted ongoing commitment to living in a safe environment.

By also repeatedly asseverating his role of “peacemaker” (*differentiation*), Festus is highlighting a *core* identity (see *The Serpent Grows*), important in disavowing external definitions and thus negotiating his place in South Africa. Festus views this as a trade off: “Instead of me going to the police, I stop problems with my accused, I make peace. I sell my own right and make peace. That has been leading me to survive for many years.” It can be suggested that finding *peace* was the original motivation for migration, resulting from the internalisation of the violence in Nigeria (environment) and strengthened by the internalisation of troubles encountered due to his subordinate position in South African society. The active strategies he adopts to achieve peace are therefore talked about at length as a point of pride. This can be seen as a general coping strategy in itself – a way to forge a positive and meaningful identity and reverse the hierarchy through demonstrating a superior morality.

It is through his “peacemaker” identity, that Festus’ main coping strategies developed. The following account of his problems renting an apartment highlight *self-exclusion* as a result of discrimination:

> In the beginning when I rented that flat 10 years ago, the people who I stay there with say “no, no we can’t put him there, he is a foreigner.” The owner of the flat watched me and saw my power and say “OK, I can give you, but don’t cause problems”.
>
> [...] I spent 10 years there but on so many occasion, I’ve had so much discrimination *that it makes me stay indoors*. This made me “OK, this is my right, take it!” With time [...] after 5 years, six years, they find out that I am better than him or her and they start to appreciate that this man is good. Because I didn’t want to prove, “let us go to court, let us do this” I just give up my own rights to find peace, because I know it can pay me nothing, it only cost me more.

The repeated sentiment which can be paraphrased to “with time, it got better” also hints at personal qualities such as honesty, integrity and patience, again suggesting a higher moral code as *they* learn and get used to *him*; not so much vice-versa. Hence when asked what he would like to change about South Africa, he responded “I would like to change the mentality of the people I interact with” and when asked generally how it was for him adapting to South Africa, Festus showed an appreciation that negotiating the new external

takes time, allowing for new meanings to be (re)created and reified and (*The Serpent Grows*, 3a & 3b) and ultimately for successful coping strategies to emerge:

> It's stage by stage. Don't rush it, it's not so fast, it doesn't happen like a miracle. It takes something that from time to time, I start to understand and learn that this is the way. Normally we are born not having the patience, we need to rush everything but I see that here you have to be patient. You need to be patient to get it.

His account of a disagreement between himself and his landlord, who wanted to evict him after Festus had spent 12,000 Rand repairing the apartment, underscores perhaps the most seminal peace-making strategy utilised by Festus, and relates to his commitment for safety and to avoid the police and courts: *talk legally, act peacefully*. Whilst he was ultimately evicted, ending up renting another flat in the same building, Festus managed to get 5,000 Rand returned as a compromise by warning the owner, "if I take you to court, I spend three months here, not paying you any cover, but lets find peace." By using the law ostensibly (as a deterrent) when he feels he is being discriminated against or wronged, Festus bypasses his *habitus* and engages in interactions on a highly conscious and deliberate level: "I use the law to defend myself when I see somebody is trying to attack me because they thought maybe I am weak. I use the law [...] just to protect myself, to push my neighbour aside."

Because he has been in South Africa for so long, Festus has had many experiences (1a) and the "*Serpent*" has had chance to grow significantly as he becomes more accustomed to and confident in the "new" environment (3b): "What I like to call 'my new home'". This is not to say that he has lost his ethnic or national identity; indeed it can be tentatively suggested that whilst the strength and meanings associated to the former have decreased, those pertaining to the latter have increased in South Africa due to the nature of the extant discrimination.

When originally asked about the meaning of his Igbo ethnicity, Festus replied, "I cannot choose where I should be born" suggesting it currently has little meaning. Festus does however, claim that "it is an advantage for me to be born there" and states that "I am glad that I was born as an Igbo because [...] your background means a lot to your social life." Whilst these statements could be considered nebulous, at one point, when discussing the

reproduction of Nigerian stereotypes in the South African media, Festus does use his ethnic identity to attack the stigma:

> It is a false report [in the media] [...] the tribe you see mostly here is Igbos [...] The civil war taught us [Igbos] a lot: that you need to work hard, you cannot earn your daily meal from the government and that we become more wild, we don't speak gently, we don't act gently. Not that we are rough; even you can notice as I am speaking to you, I'm not just relaxing speaking but it doesn't mean that I am violent. [...] Now we took the label, these are the rough ones.

Here, Festus articulates the meaning of his ethnic identity and reveals its ongoing importance in South Africa and therefore appears to confirm it as a *primary identity* (see section 2.3). Remembering lessons learnt during the civil war might be important to maintain generally but the *re-articulation* of values in this context can be seen to assume an additional importance (and have perhaps shifted over time) in challenging negative external definitions by emphasising alternative, even superior, values.

Conversely, elements of his identity which are prevalent in South African society are therefore not challenged; not interrupting the linear reproduction of *habitus*. Without mentioning his ethnicity, Festus repeatedly mentions God as a protector and guide. As a Christian in a largely Christian context, the external (1a) can be seen to reinforce the internal (1b) and therefore does not need to be negotiated. His religion is then used to justify and legitimise his behaviour and choices:

> No Nigerian in Durban is doing carpentry work. When I started it, I was an outcast "what are you doing here?", "you are belittling yourself". I say "No, this is where God called me." With time, concentration and working, I became so famous that they say "he can make a lot of money from this work", genuine [work].

Ethnicity was also shown to be important when discussing his current connection with Nigeria: "In our [Igbo] tradition, we are involved, we are connected to even my mother's parents and their sisters. They are still part of the family, part of you." However, his commitment to his "new home" was also stressed. These multiple belongings are negotiated by Festus stressing, through intonations and iterations, that his sojourns to

Nigeria are short and *visits*: “For the past three years, I never see Nigeria as my home, I see it as a visiting place.”

Whilst his felt belonging to Nigeria as “home” has decreased, the meaning of being a Nigerian has not. Especially because of police discrimination, Festus is happy to pass himself off as an average Nigerian (“*flying the flag*”) in order to *re-articulate* what being Nigerian means: “I’m proud [to be a Nigerian] because sometimes I do hear “eh, Nigerians are this and that.” I am proud to present myself as a Nigerian so that somebody can investigate me and see that it is not how he says.” It is therefore because Festus sees himself as a good and successful migrant that he feels legitimate in and able to challenge common “native” perceptions.

Whilst dissociating himself from the connotations of violence attached to Nigerians through utilising his religion and the related “peacemaker” identity, Festus largely refrains from discursively attacking the perpetrators. Instead, although he condemns illegal activities, he qualifies the situation saying for both Gold Exchange’s and the illegal drug street-trade, that the Nigerians involved “are a third party” and not making much money. In a sense then, he is framing them as victims also: “You are selling gold but you don’t have money to pay your rent.” By qualifying this, he is then able to still readily adopt the label of “Nigerian” and “*fly the flag*”:

> I am still proud to say “no, I am a South African” in Nigeria, tell them “I’m OK, not everybody is a gangster, or drug addict or this or that [in South Africa]”. I’m OK. And when I am here, I am proud to be a Nigerian.

Festus’ expression of national identity therefore, shows how belongings can be multiple with the values both sending and receiving country each shifting contextually and interactionally. Whilst he does not enthusiastically support everything Nigerian (for example in music taste), he is involved in its expression and *re-articulation*; on dressing in traditional attire, Festus proclaimed “on occasion, I do like to show off that I am Nigerian”. Additionally, Festus identifies and (to a degree) empathises with the struggles of other Nigerian nationals who are in rather disparate circumstances. At the same time, he openly states that he does not follow the news of Nigeria. Hence the place (Nigeria) has become less important whilst the people (Nigerians), and the external meanings attached to them,

has become a seminal individual and *collective* identity for Festus, from which his coping strategies emanate. Hence, whilst being a “peacemaker” can be seen as a *core* identity (it relating to personality), this affects the meanings of his other identities, especially, due to external definitions, national. As such, what follows can be seen as coping strategies: His “peaceful” and “law-abiding” “Self” becomes generalised, leading to a *(re)articulation* of what it means to be Nigerian which results in a specific “*flying of the flag*”; concomitantly *differentiation* is utilised with regards to those who do not fit into these meanings.

4.14 Bosco – “If a tree is sticking out of the sea, it can be seen very easily.”

Bosco is 44 years old and, since 1998, has spent 16 years living in South Africa. Born and raised in a rural context in the south-east of Nigeria (Imo state), he generally attributes much significance to his background and upbringing, i.e. ethnicity, religion and class. Particularly, ethnicity is regarded by Bosco as defining. Being personally proud to be an Igbo man, he states: “I can explain ourselves as people who are hard working, who are dedicated and who like to make sacrifices.” (interview 13/05/2014) However, his positive personal ascription of meaning to the collective “Self” is, according to him, challenged by “[...] people[, who] always see you [an Igbo] as out to take what belongs to them” or “[...] as trying to show them that you are better off or you are trying to do something what they cannot do.” While these internal/external discrepancies of perceptions along ethnic lines might be historically shaped (see 2.5), it seems that the mobilisation of the ethnic “Self” is a crucial determinant (a *primary identity*) of his identification (*The Serpent Eats*; 1b).

As a child from a “very poor family” with several siblings, Bosco could not afford tertiary education and managed to settle in the Nigerian police force. Though loving his job, he “couldn't make ends meet”, partly also because he refused, due to his upbringing (1b), to take bribes – according to him “the only way to make it”. Additionally, he accounts the fragile political situation in the mid-1990s (military regime under General Sani Abacha) as a reason for him to leave Nigeria in early 1996 with five other friends. His police training, which taught him “go for the best and expect the worst” and his journey to South Africa, in which he “walked with his legs”, seem to have had lasting impacts on his perceptions and expectations as a migrant. While leaving Nigeria with a positive picture of South Africa, a place he expected to be “politically much better [than Nigeria]; [where] you can express

yourself, you can be who you are", Bosco's journey prepared him somewhat for the permanent, albeit unplanned settlement in a new and different environment/society. Bosco ("B.") was hopeful, but he also anticipated challenges:

> I.: How did people treat you generally here as a migrant? Was this ever an issue?
> B.: It was not an issue for me, because I expected it. I didn't expect them [South Africans] to tell me: "Welcome, come and sit down, take a bottle of Coke." No, I expected them to be like "You are a foreigner, you are not from here". And I saw it, I accepted it, it is not a problem, because I have seen it happen before in other places, I've seen it in Congo, in Angola, in Cameroon. So I expected it when I came here and when it came to me it wasn't like a shock or a surprise, but something that I know is going to happen.

Recounting (perceived) anti-foreign sentiments at a police station in Gabon, Bosco exemplifies his "preparation" – the development of coping strategies and the (re)negotiation of one's understanding of the "Self":

> [If] you go to the police station [in Gabon], you know what they will tell you? "That case is against you." You gonna say "No, but this man stepped on my toe and slapped me", they will tell you that the case is against you, because if you were in Nigeria this man would not step on your toe and slap you. So you come to Gabon for the man to see you and slap you. [laughing]

His expectations of South Africa were only met "half and half", despite or because of his straining one and a half years peregrination. He was not disappointed about the situation he found in South Africa; comparing it even to a "five star hotel" in relation to other transit countries. Various other journey stories (about lack of food, petty jobs, crime) stress his above outlined perseverance: "[I]t [the hardship of the journey] is a price to pay if you are from a poor family, but you got your determination, that's also being an Igbo man." As his above elaborations indicate, Bosco developed over time (including the journey) a strong sense of his "Self", mobilised largely along ethnicity, class and religion: "Christianity is all about making sacrifices, the way I see it. For example, this is your car, I want it, being an ex-policeman I can steal it. But I have to sacrifice the idea of stealing it, because it is stealing. The bible says "Thou shall not steal". Interestingly, while these identifications

were externally imposed (during his life course), Bosco's internalisation and constant mobilisation of these primary identities as positive meaning-makers in his life exemplify his personal processes of identification. His journey and the subsequent life in South Africa (*The Serpent Eats*; 1a) seemed to have reinforced his understanding of the positive "Self", while the "Other(s)" contextually lose(s) attributed significance during his elaborations: "I don't blame nobody for it [discrimination]. I blame myself."

Bosco arrived first in Johannesburg, where he stayed almost two years, but due to "too much killing, too much shooting" at that time decided to settle in Durban. Having been "entirely on his own", Bosco worked first as a car washer and car guard at a hotel and eventually worked his way up as an informal taxi driver with his own car. After his move, he managed to establish a small leather shop in Durban, to start a family (marriage to an Indian South African with three children) and currently owns and manages two small businesses in Durban CBD. Whilst Bosco attributes his achievements to his above mentioned "sacrificial mind" (somewhat part of *core identity* and informing his *habitus*), (perceived) discrimination has been an additional challenge, e.g. being discredited by local business neighbours ("this man is using muthi[21]"; "he is a ritualist"). A particular story reveals profound insights touching also upon the disrupture of his *habitus*:

> B.: Where I come from, a rural area, everybody knows everybody; everybody trusts everybody. […] So when I came here new [to Durban], somebody, who has met me one day, said: "Ey, borrow me 10,000 Rand, I give you my car [as a safety]"...I was thinking that it is the same as in my village, so I gave him 10,000 Rand; that was my last money. This man gave me his car. Then I see him coming with the police [accusing me] that I stole his car. He took the car [laughing]. […] Wow, people can do something like that?! I don't understand.
>
> I.: How did you resolve this?
>
> B.: He took the car, I lost my money.
>
> I.: Where you charged?
>
> B.: No, he didn't charge me, he just took the car. […] I didn't even confess, because I have to be running away. I see police, I know that the police is gonna beat me up because I am a foreigner.
>
> I.: How did you feel?

21 Traditional medicine which also might be perceived as malicious.

B.: Not good, obviously, but afterwards you accept the defeat.

I.: You just accepted it?

B.: You have to, what can you do?

I.: What did you learn from this?

B.: I started learning that these people are not like my people. [...]

While generally praising South Africa for “one of the best governments [in Africa]” with a “beautiful” infrastructure and an advanced social system (in relation to a malfunctioning Nigeria; thus *not “flying the flag”*), Bosco, in a way referring to the above incident, states: “One thing that I don't like is...before I came here, I used to trust, I used the word “trust”, that word “trust” doesn't exist any more in my dictionary.” Lack of trust in the environment/society disrupted his *habitus* (2b becomes 1a; see fig.4) which was built up during his life in rural Nigeria. Whilst maintaining his dedication and self-confidence, Bosco's internationalisation of the (perceived/experienced) hostile environment (*The Serpent Eats*; 1a) facilitated *inter alia* the conscious development of a coping strategy (*The Serpent Grows*) – mainly in the form of *self-exclusion*:

I.: Who do you socialise with? South Africans or Nigerians?

B.: I socialise with my children, because I realised that most of the people, you can not trust them; like my mother used to tell me: “Don't go there, because if you don't go there, you won't have problems.” […] The best way is: finish your business, go back to your house, sit indoors, protect your own house. I hardly socialise, I only go to church. […] This is what my parents taught me from a young age. So I believe that, I just do it. Having too many friends, going out to drink, party... I try to avoid it. If I get into troubles I would blame myself.”

Albeit not being anti-social, Bosco, somewhat accordingly with his “sacrificial mindset”, seems to have internalised a similar rhetoric as the police of Gabon (see above), i.e. attaching responsibility and blame to himself. The “(lack of) trust” issue is also extended by him to his co-expatriates:

I.: How is the relationship between Nigerian migrants in Durban?

B.: Negative, nobody trusts nobody.

I.: Even amongst Nigerians?

> B.: Exactly, you must understand that the environment can change you, it changes a lot of us a lot. A good number of us change.

Explicitly framing external factors as contributing, if not seminal forces in the individual and collective interactional changes of and amongst Nigerian immigrants, Bosco generally refers to his national identity:

> I am proud to be a Nigerian. If I talk to you I will always tell you I am a Nigerian. The way I present my English, you can see that I am not even changing it. I am being a Nigerian. It wouldn't be hard for me to change my accent to speak like a white man or because […] I am married to an Indian, I can change my accent to be like an Indian, but I don't change it, because I am proud to be a Nigerian. Unfortunately people see Nigerians as bad people, but I believe this is who I am, I must be happy with who I am.

Whilst Bosco confidently stresses his proficient *cultural capital* regarding socio-linguistic aspects and his pride to be Nigerian, he retains a quite favourable opinion of South Africa, granting it “the majority of my vote” because “this country gives me a lot of things which I should be proud of [business, family, food]”. Being seemingly able to mobilise a balanced perception of his national identities (as he holds a dual citizenship), Bosco posits regarding the stereotypes surrounding Nigerians: “I used to tease people: once you ask me “Where are you from?”, I say “I am a Nigerian, but I am not a drug dealer”.” Although he sees his response rather as teasing or a joke, it exemplifies however a *detachment* from the “one bad apple [which] will spoil the whole basket” and a conscious leapfrogging the stigmatisers who he identifies mainly as “[...] the [South African] people in the grass roots, the uninformed, the uneducated one's, they are the one's who have a problem with you [as a foreigner].” Admitting that some Nigerians are involved in crime, particularly around Point Road, Bosco also mobilises his *cultural capital* (as he implies he has greater knowledge/experience) to simultaneously detach himself from the stigmatised group (Nigerians in general) by re-attributing positive meaning (i.e. law-abidance) to his personal “Self” and *deflecting/reattaching* the stigma to the internal “Other”, i.e. “some Nigerians, [who] stand in the streets selling drugs as if they have a license to sell drugs”. This “bad apple”, according to him, is like “a tree that is sticking out of the sea, it can be seen very easily”. While the visibility of a few criminal Nigerians is identified by him as the source of

the generalising stigma, Bosco condemns this criminal behaviour: “A lot of things they [criminal Nigerians] do in the streets here, you can't do that in Nigeria. The people will kill you.” Being asked for a statement about the 2008 attacks, he replies:

> Can I ask you one question? If I step on your toes and I tell you “I am sorry”, you will forgive me, right? But if I step on your toes and stand on your toes and tell you that I am sorry, you will defend yourself or push me away from the toes. […] Most of the things that happen to migrants are caused by migrants. […] Most of the time I would blame foreigners for what happens to them as foreigners in this country, but in few occasions South Africans have also to be blamed.

Bosco's caution generally and personally *not to attack the stigmatisers*, his *deflection* of the stigma onto the internal Nigerian/migrant “Other” and his discursive emphasis (*self appraisal*) of his positive personal “Self”, i.e. righteousness, law-abidance, marriage (three children) and his business (including the creation of five permanent jobs for locals), however, do not exempt him from “lived” experiences of stigmatisation and discrimination. Discrimination in everyday encounters does not seem to greatly affect him (i.e. the external is not internalised), as he was *inter alia* “prepared” for it (see above). Self-confidently, he claims:

> Whatever you think about me is your problem, whatever you say, whatever your attitude is, it is your problem. Even if you see me and say: “You are a drug dealer.” I will look at you and think “this person wants to spoil my day”. So I will try my best to make sure that you don't spoil my day by forgetting that you are existing. At the end of the day as a Christian I am not subjected to your judgement.

While his religious identity, as introduced above, seems to have been preserved and even partly used as some sort of coping strategy against discrimination, it is his determination (party informed by religion; see above) and the conscious loss of trust (disrupting his *habitus*) which seem to inform his coping with discrimination and the mobilisation of a *resistance identity* (“I will try my best to make sure that you don't spoil my day”).

> My father used to tell me: “Call me a fisherman, but give me my money.” So it is like whatever you say about me, whatever you do, as long as my shop is open in the

morning and customers are coming and I make money, it doesn't disturb me, because if I let it to disturb me, then I wouldn't be a winner.

In a sense, Bosco invokes his proficiency or “success” as a business owner in the new environment (see *The Serpent Grows;* 3b) as an explanation and justification for his overall rather passive and defensive attitude and response to discrimination; he seems to have observed and negotiated the “rules of the game” and digested them (3a) with strongly sacrificial *core identity*. Being asked for possible advice he would give to Nigerian newcomers, Bosco manifests his previous points in the following (almost) uncut dialogue:

B.: My advice to any Nigerian who is migrating to any part of the world, not just South Africa, you must expect that people must not like you totally. They like you or they don't like you, it doesn't matter, what matters is just work hard, be focused, don't let that disturb you, don't do illegal activities. A lot of things will come your way, but you will win as long as...like yesterday, the police stopped me, searched my car, tore my car upside down. I was at rest, because I know that I don't have drugs in the car, I don't have anything illegal in my car. I was not worried, at the end of the day they [the police] will tell you “Bye-bye”.

I.: So they searched you without a reason?

B.: They don't have a reason to search me, they just search you, because they see that you are a foreigner, you are driving a car. They assume you are going to the suburb, maybe somewhere you are going to sell drugs, they come searching for drugs in the car.

I.: How do they see that you are a foreigner?

B.: […] Sometimes you can pick it up. I am a Nigerian, my hairstyle is different from their hairstyle. If I am walking in the streets, my style of walking is different from their style of walking. […] If a Zimbabwean is walking and passing me, I can see that this is a Zimbabwean. I can see this is a South African.

Whilst this exchange gives insights into Bosco's “lived experiences” as an immigrant, including targeted police harassment and profiling, immediate coping strategies with institutional discrimination are somewhat in line with previous narratives; self-assurance, serenity and emotional detachment. Similar to Festus, Bosco uses his *cultural capital* as a coping mechanism (see also above) as he saw himself forced, in another example, to use

his knowledge of law against harassment by the police (law enforcement). Recounting a seemingly unfounded attempt of the police to search his shop, Bosco managed to ward off perceived discrimination by informing the policemen:

> I don't give you the right to search […] [but] if you want to search, search! But after you search I am phoning my lawyer and we are going to court. I have to claim for my customers who you are chasing away and for punishing the name of my business for nothing. I have to sue.

Speaking from a position of 16 years of experiences in South Africa, Bosco's (re)negotiation of identification seems generally to have levelled out at a point where the new, imposed "rules of the game" (*The Serpent Eats*; 1a) are processed along the previously internalised "sacrificial mindset" of an avowing Christian Igbo (*The Serpent Eats*; 1b) and ultimately have informed the (re)negotiation of the "Self" (*The Serpent Grows*; 3a & 3b) via the formation of various coping strategies against the backdrop of a partly hostile environment. Whilst his *habitus* (informed mainly by ethnic, religious and class identities in Nigeria) and therefore his determination (*The Serpent Sheds its Skin*; 2a*)* seem to have facilitated his arduous, but seemingly fruitful efforts to acclimatise in South Africa, Bosco's loss of trust forced him to develop conscious coping strategies (*The Serpent Grows* and *Sheds its Skin)*. Although he actively *detaches* himself from the stigma by *deflection* to the Nigerian criminal "Other", *self appraisal* (personal achievements) and *self-exclusion* (socially and spatially), Bosco refrains from putting the majority of the blame for discrimination and stigmatisation on South Africans. As he does *not attack the stigma* and *the stigmatiser*, possibly due to his achievements in and gratitude to South Africa, Bosco mainly blames immigrants (including himself) and their inappropriate behaviour (which is not according to the "rules of the game") for most of the discrimination directed against them. Nevertheless, Bosco proudly invokes his Nigerian national identity (as a way to *re-articulate* meanings) albeit in a somewhat neutral or even less favourable balance regarding his identification with South Africa.

However, as shown above, his strong emphasis on his upbringing, background and values are mirrored, to a certain extent, in his desire and obligation to return back to Nigeria:

> Being an Igbo man means you have to go back. You have to, you can't stay forever in somebody's land. […] By the time I get into a certain age, I have to go back to sit amongst the elders and deliberate in the meetings on how we can move the family forward.

Although Bosco, over time, managed to adjust to the new environment/society (*The Serpent Grows*; 3a & 3b), it is predominantly his sustained link to Nigeria (also via regular communication, visits, etc.) and mobilisation of previously internalised meaning-makers (mainly ethnicity and religion) which facilitated not only his arrival to and his stay in, but will seemingly also inform his departure from South Africa. His need to return seems therefore be informed by previously strong and further entrenched primary identities (ethnicity and concomitantly nationality).

4.15 Narrative Summary

Whilst there are differences to be found between each individual, this section aims to highlight some of the trends that can be found in the narratives above. This section also includes two other participants (Samuel and Jude) and concomitantly, the chairperson of the KwaZulu-Natal NUSA (Mike) and the founder/editor/CEO of the Nigerian newspaper in South Africa, *The Nigerian Voice* (Olaniyi).

Samuel, a 22 year old Igbo who moved to South Africa three years ago, was a special case and was therefore not included in the main narratives. A music producer, Samuel has found himself spending most of his time in a liberal artist crowd, an “in-group” whose focus and unity is inspired by a passion for music: “There is no kwerekwere or things like that, because they need me and I need them as well” (interview 13/05/2014) Samuel also lives in a middle-class suburb so is further shielded from potential sites of discrimination. From the stories of others and his limited experience with it, Samuel is aware of discrimination in the environment/society: “They [some South Africans] think people from Nigeria are eating flesh. I don’t know why they think that. Maybe they have seen a movie.” However, his external remains different from the other participants and he therefore comes into less contact with discrimination. Because of his unique experience of the environment/society, Samuel was the only participant with a favourable view of the South African police. His

outlook on South Africans was also the most positive out of all the participants whereas his view of Nigeria was relatively unfavourable. He intends, however, to return and insists on calling Nigeria "home" citing his family ties as especially important, similar to Bosco. Whilst Samuel's ethnicity may play a role in informing this feeling, he does not place any direct value or meaning to his ethnicity, rather preferring to be identified as an artist. This is similar to John and Festus in the sense that other sites/scales of belonging were framed, such as continental or global; a community of "Africans" or "humans". In her study on "Makwerekwere" youth in South Africa, Vandeyar (2013, p.457) reveals: "[M]any immigrant students identified themselves in terms of the continent of Africa as a means of finding common ground and seeking a sense of solidarity with the black indigenous students." This emphasis strikes at the heart of "Othering" processes which are framed as divisive. Whereas for John and Festus, being "Nigerian" meant inclusivity (even from outside Nigerian borders), Samuel framed art as inspiring unity.

Jude, a 28 year old Igbo, moved to South Africa three years ago and would like to live in Europe. Perhaps because he has not been living in South Africa very long, Jude has experienced less police harassment than others but he has had his store searched for drugs. During this experience, Jude asked to see a warrant and following up, managed to get the police warned to not turn up to search again without a warrant, showing that, like John, Festus and Bosco, Jude has engaged with the law and deploys this *cultural capital* as a coping strategy. Indeed Jude says this is a topic of discussion with his Nigerian friends in South Africa: "We only discuss... first of all, you must know your rights" (interview 13/05/2014), hinting at some degree of networking. Olaniyi had a similar story whereby the police randomly came to search his house, however he was saved by his more powerful status: "Eventually they found out that I was a media person [...] that kind of check-mated them a bit and then they left" (20/05/2014). Unlike Jude, Olaniyi did not pursue and use the law, his status granting him safety from repeat incidents. Coping strategies are therefore revealed as inherently situational.

Jude rejects all negative meanings associated with Nigeria and embraces it. Like Geff, Festus, John and Mike, Jude frames the Nigerians engaged in the drug-trade as "frustrated, there is nobody to take care of them, they don't have money, that is why they end up on the streets" (Jude), *attacking the stigma*. Perhaps because Geff, Jude, Festus and Mike were the most enthusiastically Nigerian (*"flying the flag"*), attaching strong and

mostly positive meanings to the identity, they are less willing to scapegoat (*differentiation*) within that group than some of the other participants (however, this strategy was also used concomitantly by these participants, notably Festus who was keen on fitting in with South Africans in his "new home"). It is by distancing oneself from the group that one can avoid the "digestion" process; if the identity is fully rejected and roundly condemned and this expression (2b) has no chance of being misinterpreted. Jude, Geff, Festus, John and Mike however expressed a more nuanced argument encompassing both condemnation of the crime and understanding their position or attacking the stereotype. This blend of defensive and offensive discursive coping strategies can be found throughout Mike's interview, who noted that there is crime everywhere in the world; only a few Nigerian migrants in Durban are criminals; South Africa has problems with its own such as the highest rate of rape in the world; Nigerian criminals are treated worse than other criminals and that some Nigerian migrants get into crime because discrimination means they can not get a job. Mike also describes foreigners living in the Point Road area as "trying to survive". Additionally, as with (most notably) Olaniyi and Geff, Mike stresses the achievements and contributions of Nigerian migrants in Durban, such as the architect for the World Cup stadium in Durban 2010 and Olaniyi and Mike stress the amount of medical doctors.

Partly because of discrimination and the threat of danger in the environment/society, all participants emphasised the importance of taking precautions to avoid violence. Festus and Bosco were the only participants who genuinely did not mind being investigated as their "cupboard is clean" (Festus) and the investigator will "see that it is not how he says" (Festus); their "clean cupboard" then disrupts the stereotype and allows them to discursively defend themselves in future. Less directly, the same sentiment was espoused by Samuel and all participants stressed how important it is to follow the law. This emphasis is a coping strategy in that it allows the individual to discursively *differentiate* between them and the criminal Nigerian ex-patriots, challenging the all-encompassing stereotype and defend themselves discursively. The police were seen by all participants (bar Samuel), especially Festus, Geff and Bosco, as a hindrance to living a peaceful life in South Africa and this coping strategy of "law proficiency" relates heavily to this reality:

F.: I find it so discriminating with the police here.
G.: I am accused every day. Police stop you now and say: 'Where are the drugs?'
B.: I see police, I know the police is gonna beat me up because I am a foreigner.

"Flying the flag" was a strategy all participants used in different ways and to different extents, with those who have been in South Africa longest, tending to use it more frequently (as the external becomes internalised). Though all participants said they were proud to be Nigerian, the paradox this paper finds is that generally (bar Jude), the longer a Nigerian is in South Africa and out of Nigeria, the more "Nigerian" (in their negotiated sense of the word) they can become (similar to the findings in Morris 1998), though other sites/scales of belonging can simultaneously become important in response to the external. This highlights the complex nature of discursive coping strategies which can *attack the stigma and stigmatiser* in various ways; an individual can assume both a national identity (facilitating *re-articulation* and thus discrediting the stigma) as well as continental or global identities (discrediting "Othering" processes entirely). Additionally, whilst ethnicity was still important in some ways, the meanings attached (especially of "hard-working and independent Igbos") were often transferred to all Nigerians. Mike (an Igbo himself) stated that "an Igbo man survives anywhere you send him" and that they "easily adapt" whilst also stating that "all of our nationals who come to this place, they always try to establish a business for them to survive" which, at least in part, attributes a meaning of "Igbo" to "Nigerian". However, Festus and (particularly) Bosco, who have been in South Africa the longest, whilst predominantly "Nigerian", also still attribute meaning directly to their ethnicity showing a diversification of scales of belonging to be a coping strategy located in *The Serpent Grows*. With Bosco, this informs not only who he is (hard-working, determined, sacrificial mentality) but also what he does, stating explicitly: "Being an Igbo man means you have to go back [home]."

Attributing negative meanings to South Africans is analysed in this paper as an indirect way to *"fly the flag"*. That John frames South Africans as violent and Geff frames them as violent and (more frequently) lazy, reflect their different experiences and positions *viz.* Geff, through his experience hiring South Africans, feels legitimated in this description. Both John and Mike also use apartheid as a way to attack the stigmatiser and *"fly the flag"*, the former expressing that it is time South Africa moves on as Nigeria did and the latter similarly to explain the South African "birthright" mentality which leads to xenophobia (foreigners as invading their fought for freedom). Mike, Geff and Olaniyi also used apartheid, focussing on the help Nigeria gave to black South Africans during apartheid, noting that the support is not being returned.

Conversely, Geff also *"flies the flag"* in talking generally about the success of Nigerians in spite of the discrimination. The discursive attack of Nigerians as wife-snatchers is subverted through the *re-articulation* of "Nigerian" meanings to do this. Though John (married to a South African) mentions this stereotype to evidence South Africans as unaccommodating, Geff (unmarried), who has been in South Africa longer, seems from the interview to have "digested" this more comprehensively along with the meanings of being Nigerian. Nigerian men are then constructed as "wife-savers" and South African men as "wife-beaters" and consequentially jealous of the success Nigerian men have with South African women. The benefits of a South African wife in adjusting to and being accepted in the new environment/society were also mentioned by John, Geff, Bosco and (though qualified) Festus. Mike, like Geff, also declares "some of them [South Africans] are lazy" and notes that foreigners are perceived to be taking away "native" jobs and opportunities which leads to jealousy. Both Geff and Mike said South Africans rely too heavily on the government. This could be the *habitus* (2a & 2b) being used as a coping strategy showing that whilst in dangerous situations, it can be blocked, it can in other times be used to discursively normalise their approach and *attack the stigmatiser/stigma*.

Whilst there were some differences regarding how South Africans are perceived, most participants used formal education as a defining factor, linking lack of education with xenophobic South Africans and sometimes, South Africans generally (Bosco, who used his experience as capital, a notable exception). This translates into a discursive coping strategy as it emphasises personal achievements and even *"flies the flag"*:

> J.: Nigerians and Yoruba, we love education and we like exploring a lot. We love learning about all the cultures of the world.
> G.: If you don't travel, you don't learn anything so you just believe that the world ends around your country or your area.
> F.: It makes me not interact much with people I know are still being low in education.

Out of all the participants, Bosco engaged with the negative external definitions the most which may reveal why *self-exclusion* is, after sixteen years in South Africa, still a predominant coping strategy. Participants such as Geff and Festus, who have also lived in South Africa a while (seven and fourteen years respectively), over time diversified their coping strategies after initial reliance on *self-exclusion*. Bosco cited his upbringing as a

reason for his use of this strategy: “I hardly socialise, I only go to church. [...] This is what my parents taught me from a young age.” His internal, reified core identity as a family man and primary identity as a Christian man (with the meanings of sacrifice that entails for him), attest to why he vacillates between blaming and praising himself. The *self-exclusion* then appears to be dictated by the internal (1b) and strengthened by the external (1a) as they are “digested” (3a) together allowing him to be “successful” and proficient (3b) within *his* lived reality and in fulfilling the goals he has set for himself. The other participants tended to focus the blame more consistently towards the perpetrators, or generalised the blame to (black) South Africans, easing the “digestion” process somewhat but, with different priorities, values and definitions of “success” than Bosco, interacting more with the environment/society and thus producing a different and more diverse set of coping strategies. The other participants tended to, over time, learn how to avoid or manage certain situations (as opposed to the more comprehensive *self-exclusion*), such as Geff removing markers of identification or Festus closing his shop on Point Road. It is also, perhaps through the necessity of developing coping strategies, that South Africa becomes framed as a country without freedom allowing Nigeria to be framed conversely (*“flying the flag”*):

> J.: I miss the freedom. I miss not being stopped or harassed by people or cops.
> G.: In Nigeria, I move about, I do anything I want to do.

Though from the data, it can not be ascertained exactly how and when these coping strategies are used in everyday interactions, the participants all emphasised pacifistic responses highlighting the goal of living peacefully. Violence was as such, a common concern and all participants resided in relatively affluent suburbs despite potentially modest incomes of some of the participants, a manifestation of the internal and external “digested” together (*The Serpent Eats; The Serpent Grows*): “I'm better sharing one room with somebody than living in a township because I’m risking my life” (Festus). As the local topography of safety (which is situational) is consciously read and responded to by managing the external environment, the growth into that environment is eased. This also related to avoiding police interactions and even Samuel (who gave the most favourable account of the South African police) said “you mustn’t try to fight in any situation”. Whilst the participants may be willing to spend a disproportionate amount of their income on housing, it is worth noting that many Nigerian migrants also live in less auspicious areas

such as Point Road, and so this strategy only works with a certain economic capital which is not always in reach, again revealing coping strategies as situational.

All participants noted how difficult it is to find employment in South Africa. Even the more shielded Samuel noted this saying “[w]e are not trying to get jobs now, we are trying to create our own so that we can employ, because Nigerians here [...] we are trying to make their people be employed”. Thus, whilst creating a job is often necessary with such widespread discrimination, it is sometimes framed as helping the native population thereby constructing Nigerians as generous, contributing and even saviours (*re-articulation)*. Whereas Geff frames the hiring of South Africans is an occupational necessity (though notes his contribution), Bosco forms working friendships with his staff and, perhaps because of his class or more generally his background, thinks of himself as more or less equal to them, engaged in reciprocal relationships with each side learning from each other.

The search for a peaceful and safe life is therefore the goal common to and prioritised by all the participants in this study; working out how to achieve that then, largely constitutes “success” and proficiency in the environment. Whether it is John keeping quiet in a taxi; Geff faking his nationality; Festus threatening to go to court or Bosco running from the police despite his innocence. As experiences accumulate, lessons are learnt and awareness of discrimination increases, the function of the *habitus* (2a and 2b) is reduced (though not eliminated) and the serpent consciously consumes more from the environment (*The Serpent Eats,* 1a):

> O.: On the on the negative side, the fear of the authority, the fear of stigmatisation, the fear that they might pounce on you, because I am a Nigerian at any point in time, so *you always have to be very careful*, watch your bag, know the places you go to. There are certain places I wouldn't go to. (own emphasis)

While participants are responding to this by managing their external environment/society (1a) to varying extents (most notably Bosco), identities and their meanings are also being negotiated (3a) (or rejected) to ensure stability, sustainability and confidence (“success”/proficiency) in the environment (3b). These narratives have therefore evidenced coping strategies as existing throughout the *Ouroboros*.

So far, this analysis has sought to analyse these narratives in relative detail in order to understand how discrimination affects lived realities and identity formation of Nigerian migrants. There are however, two predominant organisations in South Africa which are geared towards assisting Nigerians through media and politics, *The Nigerian Voice* and NUSA. The following sections (4.21, 4.22), explore how these institutions respond to the extant discrimination of Nigerian migrants and section 4.3 focusses on how these collective efforts are (dis)connected with the coping strategies of the participating individuals.

4.2 Institutional Efforts

While section 4.1 placed the analytical emphasis on Nigerian individuals and their personal perceptions, experiences and coping strategies in South Africa, section 4.2 attempts to explore more collective/institutional efforts and initiatives of the Nigerian community in Durban, and more generally in South Africa. Two major Nigerian institutions in South Africa were identified in order to explore possible similarities and discrepancies between individuals and institutions: The newspaper *The Nigerian Voice* (based in Pretoria) and the KwaZulu-Natal branch of the Nigerian Union of South Africa (NUSA).

4.21 *The Nigerian Voice* – "Telling Our Story the way It Is..."

The Nigerian Voice[22] is a free, monthly, Pretoria-based Nigerian community newspaper founded in late 2012 by Olaniyi Abodedele, a Nigerian expatriate in South Africa who also serves as its CEO and publisher. With the current circulation of 40,000 copies, *The Nigerian Voice* is distributed in six mayor South African cities (including Durban), and to a much lesser degree in Nigeria and the UK. The not exclusively Nigerian readership, of which it targets "not the grass roots, it is the middle/upper class" (interview 20/05/2014), is reached via diverse distributors, such as the Nigerian embassy or consulate in South Africa, NUSA structures (see section 4.22), sponsors (e.g. Arik Air, Western Union) or Nigerian restaurants. A high-toned layout and print visually facilitate the 12-pager's overall aspiration of delivering community/diaspora-relevant, "intellectual" news coverage by various contributors ranging from politics and economy to lifestyle and sports. As editor

22 See for online presence: http://www.thenigerianvoice.com/

and contributor, Olaniyi (re)creates and distributes information regarding what it means to be Nigerian in South Africa, thus playing a meaningful role in (re)producing collective Nigerian identities as well as efforts to withstand stigmatisation and widespread negative public discourse in the country.

With regard to the motivation behind this project, Olaniyi states: “I noticed that there is a lot of negativity when people are reporting about Nigeria; it is always the negative side and I felt it was right if we have a voice of our own and tell our own story the way it is.” Although admitting that there are “bad Nigerians”, “[...] the lousy one's, the one's doing illegal stuff, they are always on people's face and that is why the media always have something to pick”, he maintains his positions: “There are a lot of good Nigerians, more than bad Nigerians” and that “[...] *we* have been saying as a *community*, that it is time that *we* [the good Nigerians] also stand up and do something about it, because *we* wouldn't allow a small [“bad Nigerian”] minority to tarnish the image of the majority” (own emphases). Whilst mapping the situation of Nigerians in South Africa (including crime), Olaniyi, somewhat as a mouthpiece for the collective/institutional Nigerian efforts to defy generalising stigmatisation in South Africa, clearly distinguishes between “us” (the good Nigerians) and “them” (the “lousy” criminals); therefore *deferring* the stigma to the internal “Other” (*differentiation*).

Whilst accepting that a country of more than 170 million people will inevitably also produce undesirable behaviour, Olaniyi, from his position as *The Nigerian Voice*, in particular emphasises discriminatory actions against Nigerians in South Africa (e.g. “[...] the fact that Nigerians are unduly targeted by law enforcement agents”) as one cornerstone of the newspaper's coverage. Two cover stories (“'Stop Harassing and Killing Us!!' – Nigerians Cry” and “Angry mob unleash terror on Nigerians”) of the two latest issues (April & May 2014) elucidate the newspaper's approach to unveil and report discriminatory incidents (*The Serpent Eats*; 1b) by discursively stressing *victimisation* and *attacking the stigmatiser*. *The Nigerian Voice's* close ties to diplomatic bodies (Nigerian embassy and consulate in South Africa) offers it, apart from immediate political insights, also the possibility for direct action (*attacking the stigmatiser*), as Olaniyi highlights:

> So we went to the police stations [in Pretoria] with our embassy and with representatives of the South African police from their headquarters [...] [to

> investigate an issue of perceived police misconduct (i.e. denial of assistance) during "mob violence" against Nigerians in Pretoria in April 2014]. Although they denied it, a lot of our people say it was the case. I have people on tapes who we interviewed.

Although this institutionally backed protest might have not resulted in clarifications or immediate consequences, it nevertheless exemplifies how collective Nigerian can actively challenge discrimination. Taking the same line of *attacking the stigmatiser*, Olaniyi points out: "It is not just always about blaming Nigerians, there is a whole system which we have to point fingers at." The system includes, according to him, South African governmental authorities, their executive henchmen, such as police or custom services (as "drugs are not produced in Nigeria") and the media. Being asked what could be done to combat stigmatisation of Nigerians in South Africa, Olaniyi puts forward:

> I feel the media has a part to play and the South African government also has a big part to play, […] because it is not educating them about Nigeria and Nigerians. Nigeria has done a lot for South Africa in the past, especially during apartheid. […] I think, if the government which knows those things[23] begins to speak, then probably the way a lot of South Africans are looking at Nigerians will be different. […] In terms of investment, a lot of South Africans don't know how many South Africans companies are in Nigeria[24]. It is because the media is not *saying* it, it is because the government is not *saying* it. […] Their law enforcement agents start doing their work effectively and when one commits a crime, they arrest this person and the person faces the law. That would help. (original emphases)

Whilst Olaniyi also extends responsibilities to his co-expatriates (better self-organisation, "professionals and the good Nigerians have to come out" and a re-orientation from the celebration of financial over moral and educational success), above mentioned inadequacies of the South African system to publicly acknowledge positive aspects of Nigeria(ns) translate into another key feature of *The Nigerian Voice, viz.* the celebration of collective Nigerian "Self" through *inter alia* individual achievements (*self-appraisal*). The consequent positive *re-articulation* of what it means to be of Nigerian nationality or origin,

23 [that former presidents Nelson Mandela and Thabo Mbeki stayed in Nigeria during apartheid, and that the Nigerian population contributed a monthly solidarity fee towards the struggle against apartheid]

24 [currently around 150 and growing; extracting already billions of dollars from *inter alia* the Nigerian food retail (Shoprite) and telecommunication (MTN, MultiChoice Africa DStv) market]

somewhat already invoked by Olaniyi above, is furthered by the newspaper via exclusive interviews with (and therefore the spread of achievements of) diaspora-relevant political and professional personalities as well as the organisation of various events. Working against externally imposed definitions/generalisations by the South African environment/society, Olaniyi particularly foregrounds the seminal (though publicly little acknowledged) position of Nigerian expatriates in the health and educational system:

> I can tell you authoritatively that if Nigerian doctors pull out of the South African health system, it will be seriously affected […] [and] that in every university in South Africa there is a minimum of five Nigerian professors, not even talking about secondary schools […], the business side and media.

His striving for a *re-articulation* of Nigerian identity by re-attaching positive meanings to it is somehow mirrored in the organisation and hosting of events by *The Nigerian Voice*, e.g. the celebration of the Nigerian Independence Day, Nigerian Gala Dinners or annual "Nigerian Community Excellence Awards" (*The Serpent Grows*). The latter is awarded in 37 categories, such as "Most Outstanding Nigerian Student in South Africa", "Most Supportive Non Nigerian Personality in South Africa" or "Best Nigerian Restaurant in South Africa". While the awards honour the achievements and contributions of both Nigerians and "friends of Nigeria", they are undoubtedly framed counter to the perceived misrepresentation (seven awards are granted to "*Supportive* Non Nigerian..." social actors) in South Africa, thus also redefining the Nigerian collective "Self" ("*flying the flag*") through "success-stories" (*self-appraisal*).

However, talking generally about the unity of the Nigerian community in South Africa, Olaniyi recognises that ethnic and religious inter-group divisions (resulting in stubbornness and individualism) aggravate diplomatic (embassy, consulate), political (NUSA) and media (*The Nigerian Voice*) attempts to unify expatriates:

> They [ethnic divisions] exist, I won't lie about that. The funny thing is, it is there amongst Nigerians, but non-Nigerians won't see or notice it. As a non-Nigerian you see us as Nigerians and we are united; even when dealing with outsiders. But when dealing with ourselves, it is there. It exists. […] On a scale of 100%, probably 30-40%.

While the above mentioned bodies of Nigerian representation are “working hard to increase unity within us” (via projects like the forthcoming Consular Card for expatriates), Olaniyi states with regard to discrimination:

> Yes, it does unite us more, it makes us stronger and it keeps us in communication. It has helped us, the issue of stereotyping has helped us a lot to be united, to come up with associations that want to unite people, that want to fight with that [discrimination]. It gave us a very strong bond with the Nigerian consulate and Nigerian embassy, because now when there is an issue we can even call them after hours, we can go to the police station.

Interestingly, while referring to the existence, albeit “invisibility” of ethnic divisions amongst Nigerian expatriates for “outsiders”, Olaniyi describes discrimination in South Africa as a unifying factor, mobilised along Nigerian national identity. Being personally also reluctant to reveal his ethnicity, it seems that the external coercive imposition of a negative Nigerian national identity is somewhat picked up on an institutional level. This is then utilised, seemingly against all odds, to bridge inter-group divisions (through regular communication and the fight against stigmatisation) and present the Nigerian community of expatriates as a positive entity (mainly through “*flying the flag”* and *self-appraisal*). Olaniyi, in line with the newspaper's front-page slogans such as “Proudly Nigerian: Once, Always and for Life” (April 2014) or “We are Nigerians, the Good Global People, Passionate about Our Country” (February 2014), puts it in a nutshell:

> [N]ationality comes first and that is one thing I have been at the forefront [of]. I don't believe in where you are from, the fact is you are a Nigerian, you have to portray that image, you have to *fly the green-white-green flag first*. (own emphasis)

4.22 The Nigerian Union of South Africa (NUSA) – “The objective of NUSA is to protect our citizens in the diaspora.”

Previously represented by a few organisations such as the Durban Nigerian Association and the Peoples Club of Nigeria, NUSA, created in 2001 by the Nigerian consulate, serves as a union for Nigerian migrants in South Africa. As with *The Nigerian Voice*, NUSA aims to

help the Nigerian population in South Africa and as such, is concerned with the discrimination their nationals encounter. Interviewed in Durban, the quotes in this section are, unless otherwise stated, from the KZN NUSA Chairperson, Mike Enebechi.

As well as helping Nigerian migrants in KZN cope with discrimination, Mike is also keen on getting information on this reality to Nigeria, stating that “80% of the people in Nigeria do not even understand what is happening here. I have to be honest with you, some of their parents don’t even know what their kids are doing here” (interview 31/03/2014) This information is in line with most of the participants who said they emphasised the positive aspect of living in South Africa to their families. This was done to protect their families from worrying, but this reproduced image of South Africa can be seen to entrench the problem, as Mike says: “It is always believed, at the end of the day, that [there are] greener pastures [on the other side] and that is why we will continue having more nationals”. For Mike, this dissemination of this information to Nigeria depends on having a good relationship with the Nigerian government.

Mike is an Igbo but the next KZN NUSA chairperson will be Yoruba with Mike commenting “we try as much as we can to balance”. There are also meetings held between Nigerian states and the largest ethnic groups, evidencing ethnicity as enduring primary identity which migrants are given the chance to maintain in Durban through formal institutions. When asked if the different Nigerian ethnicities stay separate, Mike responds, “Well they don’t stay separate, but they have their associations that come and protect their interests and their ethnicity and the culture of their people”.

Mike proudly emphasises the fact that Igbos and Nigerians generally find it easier to adapt, noting that, whereas few Congolese migrants are marrying South Africans, with Nigerians it is fairly common. Whilst Geff used “marrying in” to highlight Nigerians as kinder to women than South Africans, Mike uses it to emphasise the Nigerian capacity for adaptability. Whilst these meanings attached to ethnicity and nationality hold true for Mike, the objectives of NUSA relate directly to the persisting problems Nigerian migrants encounter in this environment/society, with discrimination being focussed upon: “We found out that most of our nationals here are complaining that South Africans are very hostile in terms of, well 5% are not xenophobic in the country and we try as much as possible to protect our nationals”. Mike therefore reveals discrimination to be the main problem in

which NUSA are identifying and tackling in different ways. Changing the external to be less discriminatory was mentioned as, similarly to *The Nigerian Voice*, NUSA attempts to "explain to them [South Africans] that not all Nigerians are criminals" and that Nigerians are "also contributing to the economy of the country" through symposiums. But with such discrimination deeply affecting the lives of Nigerian migrants, NUSA is dedicated to tackling specific issues it produces.

Cases of police malfeasance were the first and foremost problem identified by Mike: "We have cases of police brutality". Personally, Mike discursively *attacks the stigmatiser* adding that "[m]ost of the police are not well trained [...] he [the officer] will not understand what a diplomatic immunity card means" attesting to the widespread nature of discrimination which has permeated government institutions. Though this citation accurately infers that NUSA is essentially a top-down organisation, Mike also interacts with migrants directly, advising them:

> You must not be unfriendly; they are your hosts. You [must] try as much as possible to conduct yourself in a very good manner. Be patriotic Nigerians. Don't engage yourself in businesses that are very risky or some illegal business.

Therefore, Mike is pointing (often newcomers) in the direction of certain coping mechanisms advising them to *"fly the flag"* ("[b]e patriotic Nigerians") and behave, not giving the hosts a reason or a justification for discrimination, or get themselves into legal trouble. This can be seen as an individual coping strategy in anticipating the South African police's racial targeting, echoing what many participants acknowledged, e.g. "don't go to the river" (Festus). For Mike, it is also a group effort, reducing overall the "truth" in the stereotype. From this quote, Mike assumes that Nigerian migrants are starting businesses as opposed to applying for work which corroborates with the findings of this paper. This highlights the potency of discrimination as well as perhaps *habitus* as many Igbos in Nigeria, since the Biafran war, have been involved in the informal economy and starting their own business (see 2.5). Some of the coping strategies here, therefore, can be seen as a result of *The Serpent Growing* in a previous environment/society where discrimination was experienced.

Recognising and accepting that “the statistic is very high” with regards to Nigerian crime in South Africa, Mike frames these people, similar to some of the participants, as “pedestrians, not big ones. Some of them get into crime because they don’t get a good job because there is no work to do here.” Mike therefore proposes “something like skill developments” to train the “pedestrians” and which “hook up to some companies”. This would be a way to protect nationals directly as well as weaken the discursive link between Nigerians and crime or drug-dealing. This solution is also framed politically and top-down as Mike believes this project can be realised “if we collaborate in terms of government relationship”. Additionally, the issue of repatriating Nigerian prisoners is also on the table: “It is still in process, the government is working on it.”

With the introduction of new Nigerian passports complete with microchips, the old passports were cancelled and it falls to NUSA to resolve this bureaucracy in South Africa. Therefore, one of the main tasks Mike is currently busy with, is arranging and organising “our documents in a proper way.” It is because of this new system that there are 4,000 known Nigerians living in Durban (i.e. using the new passports) and, Mike estimates, perhaps more than 4,000 unknown, adding that these numbers will increase. With regards to passports, Mike claims “we have had some of them where their passports have been torn.” This corroborates with Olaniyi who is also the NUSA chairperson of the Electoral Committee. Olaniyi cites the (soon to be realised) introduction of the “Consular Card” and the “Nigerian Union Card” which would stop passports being destroyed and enable Nigerians to not carry them around everywhere with them.

As well as sorting out immigration documents, NUSA has also identified the problem that “in recent times, South Africans are not giving them [Nigerians] drivers’ permit.” NUSA is responding to this: “We have some permits that they can use from Nigeria which the union sends to the consulate for them to be certified so the South African government can recognise most of these documents”. Whilst this reveals the political power of NUSA and their main strategy of helping their Nigerian nationals from the top-down, collective bottom-up strategies are also mobilised. For instance, after talking about the issue of driving permits, Mike highlighted another issue in that “we have a lot of our nationals who are dying here and we put ourselves together to see how we can repatriate the body home”. As the Nigerian “government are not doing anything” about this, NUSA has organised a members fee which is used as an insurance policy to “service this problem”.

Olaniyi partly uses the structure of NUSA to distribute his newspaper. He says the organisation “embodies every Nigerian irrespective of who you are or what you do as long as you are a Nigerian, even if you are a criminal” echoing Mike’s sentiments and ambitions. Olaniyi also references other NUSA projects such as the football competitions they organise, representing NUSA as inspiring unity amongst its diaspora, responding to the external environment/society. As a collective effort, NUSA is therefore responding to some of the practical and most egregious exigencies of their nationals. However, whilst a lot of what NUSA does relates directly to protecting Nigerian nationals and changing outsider perceptions of them through top-down solutions, meeting attendance remains relatively low.

4.3 The Gap

The institutional efforts of NUSA and *The Nigerian Voice* have been shown in the last two sections to be making some meaningful efforts in generating awareness of the external environment/society relevant to Nigerian migrants and in changing that external environment/society. As both efforts relate to the external, they have the potential to affect the identification and coping strategies of Nigerian migrants. However, both these institutions have limited purchase in terms of meeting attendance and readership respectively. This section aims to elucidate the nature of that gap, offering tentative suggestions as to how it could be closed.

Aside from Geff who “saw a copy maybe twice” (and not in Durban), none of the participants had heard of *The Nigerian Voice*. The limited readership and knowledge of the newspaper amongst the participants of this study however can be revealed partly by 22 year old Samuel, who prefers television as a source of news, and partly by 43 year old Festus who wants to concentrate “on what I call my new home”. With respect to NUSA, participant involvement varied. John (who said he was interested in finding out about *The Nigerian Voice*), knew about NUSA but remained critical: “How many do they know in the union? So it is [only] for some set of people”, highlighting the low attendance at meetings.

Festus had heard of NUSA but was not connected to it in any way. As well as stating “[i]t is not like it is a bad organisation, but I want to focus on what I call ‘my new home’”, he also

said he did not need them because he is not “getting into trouble”. This reveals a potential cause of NUSA's low meeting attendance in that the union’s strategy to protect all its nationals includes reaching out to drug-traders and other criminals. If this becomes what the union is “known for” amongst Nigerians or generally (which this narrative extract somewhat infers), a rejection of NUSA can be part of the *differentiation* coping strategy: “Nigerian Union protects *them*. *They* think *their* rights are being violated” (own emphasis). Festus continues, “[w]hen my rights are being violated, I know how to defend and come up from it. [...] I have practised it for years, I can see it’s working”. The *deflection* coping strategy Festus employs serves also to highlight his personal proficiency/“success” in his environment and suggests, similar to Bosco, a “make-it-on-my-own” mentality (or core identity).

Bosco, also not connected to NUSA in any way, said of NUSA that “it is useless for me being there [at the meetings]” because they do not have agendas which “change the way people see us [Nigerians]”. He sees NUSA’s role as rather limited to pragmatic but unimportant considerations, citing flying dead bodies back to Nigeria as an example, and not ultimately tackling the various ways in which discrimination affects the lives of Nigerian migrants. Bosco believes also that NUSA should be assisting, especially the most disadvantaged nationals, more directly:

> Maybe you can put money together and say “OK, let us establish a technical school where you can learn to be a mechanic. You can learn to be welder, construction worker”, things like that [...] You know, to change lives, not to come together to send dead bodies home.

This resonates with Mike’s yet-to-be-implemented “skill developments” programme idea, yet speaks to a current disconnection Nigerian migrants could have from the union, based on how NUSA’s priorities are perceived. Though Bosco is proud of making it on his own in this environment/society, his awareness of the difficulties (also negotiated with his primary identity as a Christian) leads him to believe that NUSA should more fully engage in changing the external and helping the most disadvantaged, i.e. emphasising *victimisation* This resonates somewhat with John’s view, who also stressed a more inclusive, bottom-up approach:

> [To] work for the well-being of Nigerians, you go around, just like you guys doing your research, you go around and see every Nigerian. Bring your name, take details and put it to record, that's how organisations or a society work. But as I told you it [NUSA] is made for some set of people.

Geff, who knows Chairperson Mike, said “I am not fully involved in it but I know [...] because of the journalistic instinct in me, I like reporting events. [...] I am not a member of the [NUSA] but I cover their events”. Like John, Geff noted that “[t]hey don’t offer legal support” but said “they help channel the person to the right direction” based on their specific circumstance and proclivities. With their ties to the South African police, NUSA also has the power to “call the police commissioner and tell the police commissioner ‘this is what is going on’ and the police commissioner will send independent police to go and check what the other policemen, those corrupt policemen, what they are doing” (Geff). Asked why he is not a member, Geff replies, expressing the same sentiment as Festus, “[n]o, because I don’t involve [myself] in all those [police related] problems”, revealing that NUSA does not operate in line with his general adopted coping strategies; Geff has already learned to avoid police interactions when possible and to watch the police carefully when not.

Neither Samuel nor Jude had heard of *The Nigerian Voice*, with 22 year old Samuel citing television as his preferred news media, stating “I am not used to newspapers”. NUSA however, was the most relevant in the lives of Samuel and Jude out of all the participants. Both are members with Jude, though only having attended one meeting, recognising the power of the organisation, stating “they can stand for you” and that “[a]ny time you call them, [for] anything, they will be there to make sure that things are all right, if you do the right thing or the wrong one”. Whilst with such a small sample size, caution is required before claiming causal relationships, it is worth noting that the two participants which experienced notably less discrimination (Samuel and Jude), were the only participants which were NUSA members (aside from Mike and Olaniyi who are part of the NUSA management).

Additionally, Samuel said “I know about the Nigerian Union because my uncle is the secretary there so I normally attend the meetings if I got the time” which could explain his higher knowledge of and involvement in the organisation. Samuel also attends his specific

state meeting. From the meetings he has attended, Samuel remembered pragmatic advice being offered regarding such things as migrant paperwork (permits and citizenship) and avoiding HIV/AIDS. With regards to discrimination, Samuel said “they will try to tell you that you mustn’t try to fight in any situation” and “when you are caught doing the wrong business, you are not going to be as well [...] And the most important thing that they are telling us is that we must protect ourselves”. This advice was in line with many of the participants who highlighted their commitment to a violence-free, peaceful and safe life in South Africa and viewed citizenship as a way to alleviate discrimination.

The limited purchase of NUSA then can be understood in part as a disconnection between the identification (including coping strategies) of the participants and their perception of NUSA as a brand (*its* identity) as well as its aims and actions. However, when explaining why “when you come for Nigerian Union meetings, you cannot see more than 30 people”, Geff said “Nigerians don’t trust Nigerians. They believe those people in charge of Nigerian Union are making money out of them. They believe the government is paying them so they don’t want to be part of it”. This could then link back to the internal: “Now the civil war taught us a lot [...] you cannot earn your daily meal from the government” (Festus). By being a top-down organisation which, created by the consulate, is openly trying to foster good relationships with both South African and Nigerian governments and their institutions (attacking discrimination issues from inside the system), NUSA could be isolating much of their target group, for whom NUSA is just part of the environment/society to be cautious of.

John also questioned the utility of the organisation, stating “if I die today, they [NUSA] don't know me...many Nigerians are being killed, many Nigerians are being attacked, when do you see the so-called “society” come to their rescue?” Despite insisting on saying “Nigerian before Yoruba”, John remains suspicious of NUSA which may stem from, or be exacerbated by, the image problem on the side of NUSA. Though presently involved in and supportive of NUSA, in 2012, Olaniyi Abodedele published an article online accusing and exposing the then chairperson of NUSA of mismanaging funds, violating the union’s constitution and remaining chairperson illegally throughout the controversial court case (Abodedele 2012). The legacy of this corruption, whilst not explicitly mentioned by any of the participants of this study, could also be a reason for the lack of trust endeared to NUSA by the participants and more generally.

Whilst a full discourse analysis of *The Nigerian Voice* was not undertaken, copies of recent additions of the newspaper were obtained revealing many similarities with the coping strategies of the participants (who were not readers of it). On the front page of issue 15 (February 2014), was the story "Mandela Stayed With Me In Nigeria" about how Mandela was hosted in the country for over six months during the struggle (in 1963). Included but not written by Olaniyi, this *"flying the flag"* article somewhat mirrors the arguments made by John, Geff and Mike regarding Nigeria's support of South Africa during the struggle.

In issue 16 (March 2014), the front page story, written by Olaniyi, covered statements by the Nigerian Consul-General reminding migrants, "South Africa is not Nigeria" and advising them to always remember that

> The moment you board the airline or ship to another person's country, you must comport yourself, learn the ways, the laws and the regulations of your host country. If you don't, the long arm of the law will catch up with you.

Again reflecting the coping strategies of the participants, this article is about knowing the law and acting within it, with "learn the ways" inferring the shift away from *habitus* as the environment/society is more consciously "consumed" (*The Serpent Eats*). Whilst this advice can facilitate more peaceful lives for migrants, it also can be seen concomitantly as an effort to change the behaviours of some Nigerian migrants, reducing the "truth" within the stereotype. The "Nigerian Community Excellence Awards" also attempts this by stressing the accomplishments of expatriates (see 4.21).

The front page story in issue 17 (April 2014) is another *"flying the flag"* article with a rubric "It is time to support each other and unite" as well as an article about a Nigerian demonstration in Pretoria which called for "the South African government to help stop unlawful harassment and killing" of Nigerian migrants (*attacking the stigmatiser*). The front page of issue 18 (May 2014) was about international health consultant Braimoh Bello who "can be deservedly called Proudly Nigerian" and a "brilliant citizen of the world" who is "yet to take SA [South African] passport because of his loyalty to Nigeria". This article shows an embracing of individual accomplishments, shapes what it means to be a good Nigerian migrant as well as invokes multiple scales of belonging through "citizen of the world", similar to John and Festus. The slogan for issue 15 (February 2014) also invokes this,

beginning “[w]e are Nigerians, The good global people”. Bello is also depicted as “successful” and proficient in the environment/society whilst (or perhaps *through*) maintaining a strong sense of national identity. The other article on the front page of this issue reads “Angry mob unleash terror on Nigerians” which also attacks the police explicitly for incompetence and suggests racial prejudice. The article mainly *attacks the stigmatiser* but also includes elements of *differentiation*; Hon. Abike Dabiri Erewa is quoted as saying “[...] any Nigerian who commits a crime should pay the penalty” in an argument similar to Geff’s, in favour of accused Nigerians being treated on a case by case basis as opposed to one homogenous group (of default criminals).

This brief overview of the front-page stories featured in *The Nigerian Voice* over four months (February through May 2014) reveals seminal discursive coping strategies as matching closely with the coping strategies of the participants, serving largely to encourage, support and entrench them amongst its readership. Whilst Samuel and Festus can partly reveal the paper’s low circulation, the fact that Olaniyi (and therefore *The Nigerian Voice*) is also connected to the consulate and NUSA, may also be a contributing factor by attaching itself to an organisation not widely trusted and accepted. Additional to this, when interviewed, Olaniyi stressed his target market as being middle class: “My readership is not grass roots, it is the middle upper class [...] [the grass roots] can’t associate with it very well. And if you see the quality, it is very expensive, because of the market I am targeting” (see 4.21). Therefore, whilst *The Nigerian Voice* promotes unity amongst Nigerian migrants in South Africa, it is only targeted towards a specific group of them (based on education and class). *The Nigerian Voice* and NUSA are however engaged in “identity politics”, or “politics of cultural difference”, based on nationality through voicing and acting on concerns for/of the group as a whole; Iris Young writes:

> The situation of political conflict, according to the politics of cultural difference, is one in which this dominant group can limit the ability of one or more of the cultural minorities to live out their forms of expression […]. Under these circumstances of in-equality of unfreedom, members of embattled cultural groups frequently demand special rights and protections to enable their culture to flourish, and/or claim rights to a political society of their own either within a federated relationship that of the dominant culture(s). (Young 2007, p.97)

In line with this, *The Nigerian Voice* can be seen to be involved in identity politics by responding to these externally created exigencies, reproducing and attempting to reify a positive "Nigerian identity"; challenging prevalent stigmatising discourses and actions in the environment/society through forging a politically-motivated platform of expression and mobilisation. The newspaper could then achieve this more fully with a larger and more diverse readership amongst Nigerian migrants in South Africa.

The newspaper can also be seen to be *preaching to the converted* in another sense by distributing its advice and coping strategies to those who are already more likely to have achieved greater proficiency/"success" in the environment. Based on the findings of this paper, a way forward for *The Nigerian Voice* to become more widely read and inclusive could be to have more online content and (if possible) more representation on television (based on Samuel's interview). To reach a wider range of Nigerian migrants and inspire greater unity, the newspaper could also distribute more creatively, using also smaller Nigerian run businesses, such as Bosco's. This would increase circulation and potentially allow it to become a more trusted source by reducing its reliance on the NUSA structures which many participants remain wary of. Whereas the stories and advice in the newspaper are generally those of higher status individuals such as ambassadors and diplomats, *The Nigerian Voice* could also include more "real life" experience articles, or "feature sections" written by other Nigerian migrants, relating to the different experiences and lessons learned (individual readings of and responses to the environment/society). Though striking at the heart of the *differentiation* coping strategy, if inspiring unity based on nationality (in response to discrimination) is the goal, the "target market" could be diversified in this way, including those running small businesses and those living lives on the street.

As asserted in the methodology, the suggestions put forth in this paper can be thought of as grappling with the inherent tensions between the personal/experiential and the public/representational domains (Linger 2005). With regards to NUSA, this tension has been framed in this section as arising in part from the clash between its "brand" (or legacy) and the personal coping strategies of the participants. Reportedly emerging from a period of corruption, the organisation needs to evidence itself as working for Nigerian migrants and not tied up in any "dirty" political game, as suggested by some of the participants of the study.

Additionally, though Mike had plans to reach out to Nigerian prisoners, Bosco and John felt NUSA were not doing enough on-the-ground work, especially with the more vulnerable Nigerian migrants. Bosco expressed that they should have more community development programmes whilst John feels they should be more pro-active in recruiting members and finding out more quotidian issues to respond to. Whilst NUSA does try and reach to the bottom, its commitment to fighting institutional discrimination only manifests in the public sphere, such as the focus on the South African police. Whilst these concerns were shared with the participants, discrimination was also considered a hindrance in the private sphere. To address this bias and include the private sphere, would involve revealing the topography of safety in different areas of possibility. This more pro-active, grassroots approach would respond directly to the experiences of migrants and could not only increase the level of trust which NUSA is allowed by many Nigerian migrants, but also give nationals more options to engage with and grow in the environment/society. Revealing the job market topography of safety for example, could involve NUSA finding “Nigerian friendly employers” (and perhaps “naming and shaming” those which are hostile) which, though many of the participants were businessmen previously in Nigeria, could ease job searching making it a more viable option than at present: “[Y]ou can't get a job, you can't do anything right. They make it hard for you” (John). Job vacancies from these “Nigerian friendly” companies or organisations could then also be featured in *The Nigerian Voice* and/or a NUSA mailing list.

Revealed through his plans to repatriate prisoners and begin a “skill developments” programme (see 4.22), Mike intends to deal with the most vulnerable of his nationals, but reiterates that these projects are to be forged through stronger relationships with both Nigerian and South African governments. Whilst this top-down approach can achieve things a grassroots organisation cannot (such as the repatriation of prisoners), the impression gained from the participants generally, was that they felt it was not representing *them*. In his interview, Mike said he could find many Nigerian “street kids” during a short amount of time around Point Road, a skill which could be utilised in many ways, potentially benefiting Nigerian nationals in a way which might clash with strategies of *differentiation*, but can ultimately inspire more confidence, unity, support and trust, allowing Nigerian migrants a chance to better or more easily understand, navigate and respond to the environment/society as well as “change the way people see us [Nigerians]” (Bosco).

5. Conclusions

As this paper understands identity formation as contextual and (inter)actions as tied up with dynamics of power, the methodology explains a limitation of this study as underscored by (social) identity theory critics. To mitigate against power asymmetries extant in the interview setting, the researchers attempted (to a large extent successfully) to put participants at ease before they went on the record. The style of the semi-structured interviews were relatively informal, allowing the participants to say as much or as little as they wished on particular subjects and interviewers engaged with the narratives following up answers with pertinent and personal questions, occasionally relating the experiences of the participants to their own when relevant. Caution was also taken when individuals expressed “cultural capital” which could be a way to stress individual accomplishments and perhaps part of a *deflection* coping strategy to stress the personal “I” over the collective “we” of nationality or ethnicity, but could also be a way for the participants to manage the power relation between the researchers and the researched in the interview setting. Particularly that education was expressed by many to be important could partly be attributed to this, however the emphasis and prevalence of this was, for the most part, deemed part of a discursive coping strategy in the analysis.

This paper also understands identity formation as constantly (re)constructed. As Anthias (2002) notes that an interview represents only a moment of the identification, given significantly more time, the study would have been able to reach more substantive conclusions through re-visiting the participants. However, this paper has been able to infer identity changes (focussing mainly on ethnicity and nationality) not only from the narratives but also the relatively voluminous literature on Nigerian, Igbo and Yoruba contemporary and historical “identity” (see section 2.5 for Igbo). Care has also been taken throughout not to asseverate categorical conclusions or causal relationships but to suggest possibilities based on the findings.

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The *Ouroboros of Identification* offers a useful way to analyse the process of identity (re)formation (not relying on “lay” interpretations of academic terms such as “identity”) and

allowed this paper to understand the main ways in which discrimination affects the lives and identities of Nigerian migrants in Durban, South Africa. Whilst not taking the narratives as direct truisms, “truths” were ascertained and inferred through deep empirical and analytical engagement with the data. From quotidian interactions to systemic or structural malfeasance, discrimination has been evidenced throughout this paper as widespread in Durban and South Africa, targeted especially towards Nigerians. Whilst contextual, responding to specific power relations in the environment/society, the coping strategies used by the participants were found to exist throughout the *Ouroboros* stages and relate closely with the individual’s (reconstructed) personal (core) and collective identities. As discrimination in the environment/society is consumed (1a) with internal definitions (1b), identities are (re)negotiated (3a), resulting in at times defensive and at times offensive discursive coping strategies as well as learnt responses to specific situations such as police searches (3b). It is suggested in this paper also that the heightened consciousness which results from such discrimination facilitates and encourages the management of identity formation.

Without the element of discrimination and potential danger in the environment, (inter)actions can largely be thought of in terms of Bourdieu’s notion of *habitus*. *The Serpent Sheds its Skin* (2b) is therefore largely unconscious resulting from a build up of societal norms deposited over time (2a). Just as when people vacation, certain customs in the destination are sought (such as appropriate tipping in restaurants), migration (especially when, though not limited to, migrating to a hostile environment) can be seen to accentuate this process. The function of *habitus*, represented in the *Ouroboros* as 2a and 2b, is then attenuated as society is less “deposited” (2a) and more “actively sought” (1a). This can be triggered by expecting certain challenges, especially regarding (inter)actional changes (2a is shifted to 1a), or by normal (inter)actional practices not working in the new environment/society (failure of 2b), of which responses and reactions are fed back into the serpent (1a). Both of these processes were evidenced most explicitly in the narrative of Bosco.

As the “rules of the game” are actively sought, over time as contexts and (inter)actions are learnt and negotiated with identities (3a), participants increased their proficiency and “success” in the environment (*The Serpent Grows* - 3b) and therefore can “shed their skin” more appropriately into a growing range of contexts. Though *habitus* was shown to

attenuate with the participants of this paper, it can not be said to be fully bypassed; at times utilised as a coping strategy, e.g. to *"fly the flag"* as evidenced with Geff renegotiating the "wife-takers" external definition into "wife-savers", promoting "Nigerian" learnt gender interactions. In accordance with previous literature, sceptical relationships to governments and their institutions can also be seen as a continuation of *habitus*.

By finding pragmatic as well as discursive coping strategies throughout the identification process, *The Serpent Grows* (3b). Thus new skin develops which can be shed whilst potentially, as was the case with most participants, retaining elements of the "old skin". Participants are therefore able to achieve greater proficiency or "success" in the new environment/society whilst largely maintaining their proficiency or "success" in their homeland (often in part, through frequent contact with family). This was expressed most explicitly through the narrative of Festus.

This paper also found that one result of discrimination (or anticipated discrimination) can be to try and manage the external (1a), often manifesting as defensive coping strategy of *self-exclusion*, preserving the *habitus.* Though Samuel had found an open and liberal artistic space where he felt free to express himself, this freedom was an anomaly and many other participants explicitly linked South Africa to feelings of *un-freedom*. This can especially be seen as a factor relating to why the participants of this study tended to adopt the strategy of *self-exclusion* when initially arriving in South Africa. Bosco, due to having set different goals in the environment, still relies on *self-exclusion* after 16 years in South Africa. *The Serpent Grows* then, is also revealed to be contextual, depending on the individuals motivations and ambitions; though all participants identified safety and non-violence as a priority, increased proficiency or "success" in the environment could also refer to finding a job, raising children *etc*. Through this example, coping strategies are evidenced as throughout the *Ouroboros*: *Self-exclusion* for Bosco is a coping strategy which can be located in 1a as he is managing the external which can then ease the "digestion" process (3a) as less external definitions need to be negotiated. He is therefore largely able to maintain (and even reify) his prior ethnic and national identities, achieve greater safety in his more managed environment and fulfil his personal ambitions (3b). That Bosco emphasised ethnicity may be related to his reliance on this coping strategy elucidating the symbiotic relationship between identity reconstruction and coping strategies.

Although there are examples told of repudiating nationality (most explicit example belonging to Geff), in terms of identification, national Nigerian identity amongst migrants can be seen to not only become further attributed with positive qualities, but becomes also a more entrenched identity. Often, certain positive meanings such as being adaptable or generous, were attributed to ethnicity and nationality interchangeably depending on the present argument, showing the flexibility of discursive coping strategies and linking back to de Certeau's (1984) distinction between "tactics" and "strategies". For de Certeau, this would be a coping "tactic" as discursively, opportunities are being seized when possible, however business relationships based on entrenching power relationships (so called "strategies") also remain seminal for many of the participants of this study.

Not only was a more reified national identity evidenced, further scales of spatial identity were also assumed: Regional, continental and global. This allows for further discursive flexibility. Whereas developing a stronger national identity involves the *re-articulation* of negative meanings, emphasising a continental/global identity or belonging discredits "Othering" processes entirely by suggesting an underlying unrealised unity.

Ethnicity still seemed of some importance to many of the participants though this was generally not revealed when asked directly about its importance or meaning. Through the use of local sayings, meanings later attributed to particular ethnicities and their occasional mention in particular stories (as well as the NUSA meetings), ethnicity remains an extant factor which is not so much emphasised. This lack of emphasis could have been because participants were "shedding their skin" to outsiders however it seemed that most participants genuinely felt more proudly "Nigerian" than "Igbo" or "Yoruba" and attributed greater meaning to nationality as suggested by Morris (1998). This could also be because external definitions in South Africa do not recognise Nigerian ethnicities and as this is internalised and negotiated, meanings attributed to a specific ethnicity often get transferred to Nigerian nationality in the South African environment/societies.

The findings in the narratives were also useful in understanding discrepancies between personal/experiential and public/representational domains specific to the Nigerian case in Durban, South Africa. From the testimonies of editor and CEO of *The Nigerian Voice* (Olaniyi) and KZN NUSA Chairperson (Mike), this paper was able to infer potential reasons for the relatively low readership and meeting attendance (respectively) and suggest

potential solutions. The variety of coping strategies in the narratives suggest it will be difficult, if not impossible, to get a great deal of Nigerian migrants on board – indeed the common strategy in the narratives of *differentiation* as well as *deflection* already suggests not everybody will be keen to actively engage with the agendas of these institutions. NUSA's alleged history of corruption also suggests an uphill battle.

The large and growing connection of NUSA to the governments of South Africa and concomitantly Nigeria, and the connection between *The Nigerian Voice* and NUSA seems not to inspire the confidence of the Nigerian migrant participants who were mainly Igbo and have experienced political marginalisation in Nigeria as well as South Africa. NUSA's focus on exposing, reducing and correcting institutional discrimination (especially within the South African police) is in line with the concerns of the participants, however the organisation overlooks everyday discrimination in the private sphere such as searching for a job or finding a place to rent. A more on the ground approach could assist NUSA in responding to prevalent issues of migrants as well as inspire greater trust.

Whilst a laconic analysis of *The Nigerian Voice* revealed similar coping strategies to the participants, its deep connection to NUSA (and therefore government structures) and its apparent insistence on only targeting a middle-upper class readership, runs contrary to its ambitions for unity amongst Nigerian migrants in South Africa. To distribute more outside middle-upper class structures (such as NUSA and sponsors) and include more "real life" experience articles from a wider spectrum of migrants themselves could help in increasing not only readership, but assist especially new Nigerian migrants who arrive in South Africa to cope with and actively tackle discrimination in the environment/society.

This conclusion has sought to pithily bring together some of the main methodological and theoretical approaches with the central findings of this exploratory paper. The theoretical approach used allowed for deep engagement with the data, leading to valuable insights into how migration affects the identification process of Nigerian migrants in Durban and concomitantly but importantly, how this relates to institutional efforts. Further research could explore other stigmatised groups to discern wider trends. Additionally, whilst not explored in this paper, the data also revealed humour as a potential discursive coping strategy ("weapon of the weak"), an exploration of which would make for an interesting study and valuable addition to the literature.

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Appendices

Appendix A

Research Information Sheet & Consent Form:

Research Information Sheet

This study has been subjected to ethical review assessment by Aalborg University, Denmark. All data will be collected and stored in accordance with the Act on Processing of Personal Data (Act No. 429 of May 2000).

You are invited to participate in this research project concerning stereotypes and coping mechanisms of Nigerians in Durban. Before deciding whether or not to take part, feel free to read the following information and direct any further questions to either David Ashby or Waldemar Diener (emails below).

Who will conduct the research?
Researchers: David Ashby dashby12@student.aau.dk 0616387843
Waldemar Diener wdiene12@student.aau.dk 0848121678

Supervisor: Prof. Peter Hervik

Title of the research
Exploring Identities and Networks of Nigerian Migrants in Durban

Aim of the Research
To understand everyday life experiences of a Nigerian migrant in South Africa such as (lack of) integration and to understand insider perspectives of individual migrants and groups which are often subjected to negative public perception.

Why you have been chosen?
As a Nigerian migrant who lives in the city of Durban, your knowledge and insight is considered a valuable aspect of this study.

What are you being asked to do?
You are being asked to take part in an interview. The interview will be voice recorded. If you do not want to answer any particular question, you have the right not to answer. You also maintain the right to withdraw your consent any time before, during or after the interview without giving a reason.

What happens to the data?
The data will be transcribed and used to write an academic report.

Will the outcomes of the research be published?
The research will be published in the form of a thesis and kept for the records of Aalborg University and the Centre for Civil Society (at UKZN). Your identity in this publication will remain confidential, unless otherwise agreed (see consent form). On request, you may be sent an electronic copy.

There will be no penalty or loss of benefits if you decide not to take part. If you do decide to take part you will be given this information sheet to keep and be asked to sign a consent form. You are free to withdraw at any point without giving a reason. To withdraw consent, request a copy of the final thesis or ask any questions, please contact either David Ashby or Waldemar Diener and we will get back you you.

Consent Form

	NO	YES
I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet for the study described in the participant information sheet, and that I have had the opportunity to ask questions.		
I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw from the study at any time, and do not have to give a reason for this.		
I agree to take part in the study described in the information sheet.		
I agree to the interview being audio recorded.		
I agree to the use of any of my direct quotes in written work.		
I agree for my real name to be used in this study.		

Please tick as appropriate

Name of Participant Date Signature

Name of Researchers Date Signature

Appendix B

Interview Guide:

"What Does it Mean to be You, Here, Now?"

Background
1) What is your name?
2) How old are you?
3) Where in Nigeria are you from?
4) How long ago did you leave Nigeria/arrive in South Africa?
5) What is your mother tongue?
6) What is your religion? How important is your religion?

General Nigeria
1) Why did you leave Nigeria?
2) How often do you visit Nigeria?
3) What do you miss about Nigeria?
4) (How) do you stay in contact with friends and family in Nigeria?

General South Africa
1) What advice would you give to newcomers from Nigeria?
2) What do you like about South Africa?
3) What do you dislike about South Africa?
4) How did your life change when you came to South Africa?
5) Can you imagine staying in South Africa permanently? Why/why not?
6) Did you come alone? Who with?
7) What is your living situation? (where and rent/buy flat/house)
8) Why South Africa? Why Durban?
9) How was it adapting to life in South Africa?
10) What is your opinion of Point Road?
11) What do you do in your free time? Who do you socialise with?
12) Have you voted in the recent elections? Why/why not? (entry point to talk about citizenship)
13) Have you heard of NUSA? How involved are you in it?
14) Have you heard of The Nigerian Voice?

Education and Work
1) What do/did your parents do for a living?
2) What was your occupation in Nigeria? Self employed?
3) What is your occupation now? How long have you been doing this?
4) Is this what you want to be doing?
5) Why do Nigerians tend to run Gold Exchanges here? What impression does this give?

Ethnicity
1) What does it mean to you to belong to that ethnic group?
2) How does being [ethnic group] affect your life in South Africa?

Nationality

1) How proud are you of your Nigerian origin?
2) (How) have your feelings on your nationality changed?

Discrimination

1) Does Durban/South Africa meet with your prior expectations?
2) Generally, how do you get along with locals?
3) Would you be recognised as a Nigerian/foreigner on the street?
4) Do you openly express your Nigerian identity through clothing, language...?
5) Have you faced any discrimination in South Africa?
6) In what ways does this affect your daily life?
7) How do you deal with discrimination/how did you deal with [that example]?
8) Is discrimination a topic of discussion amongst Nigerians here?
9) Do you think discrimination is generally accepted/tolerated here? How does this affect you?
10) Who/what is responsible for this negative picture of Nigerians?
11) What are your thoughts on the stereotype of Nigerians as drug dealers? To what extent would you say this is true?
12) What would you like to change about South Africa?

Concluding Questions

1) What makes a good migrant?
2) Is there anything you want to add?

Appendix C

Demographics of respondents:

Respondent	Age	Ethnicity; state of origin	Time in South Africa (years)	Marital Status	South African citizenship	Reason to leave Nigeria	Formal education; current occupation	Plans to stay in South Africa
Personal Narratives (see section 4.1)								
Jude	28	Igbo; Anambra (east)	3	No (?)	No	Visit	?; Gold exchange (self-employed)	No
John	33	Yoruba; Lagos (south-west)	2	Yes (South African wife)	Not yet, intended	Exploring	Multiple tertiary education; Gold exchange (self-employed)	No
Geff	36	Igbo; Enugu (south-east)	7	No	No	Mainly to further education; also to join brother	Tertiary; video production (self-employed)	No
Festus	43	Igbo; Imo (south-east)	14	Yes (South African wife)	Yes	Religious violence	?; carpenter (self-employed)	Yes
Samuel	22	Igbo; Enugu (south-east)	3	No	No	Music	?; artist, music producer	No
Bosco	44	Igbo; Imo (south-east)	16	Yes (South African wife)	Yes	Looking for greener pastures; military regime	Police training; business-owner	Yes, but not forever

Respondent	Age	Ethnicity; state of origin	Time in South Africa (years)	Marital Status	South African citizenship	Reason to leave Nigeria	Formal education; current occupation	Plans to stay in South Africa

Institutional Testimonies (see section 4.2)

Olaniyi	30-40?	Yoruba; ?	7	?	?	Saw opportunities in SA	?; editor/ CEO of *The Nigerian Voice* + Chairman of the Electoral Committee of NUSA	Yes, but not forever
Mike	40-50?	Igbo; ?	?	?	?	?	?; Chairman of KZN NUSA	?