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# Migration, Marriage and the Narrative of (Dis)location in African Short Stories

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## Abstract

This paper interrogates marriage and family reunion not only as a strategic site of negotiating and mediating legibility of migrants, but also where residency and citizenship in their destination countries are politicised and contested in Chimamanda Adichie's "Arrangers of Marriage", a story in *The Thing Around your Neck* and some selected stories in Chika Unigwe's *Better Never than Late*. As literary research, this paper relies on close reading and analysis of some extrapolations in some selected stories in the two collections, using Postcolonial concepts of 'othering' and unhomliness'. The study reveals that, order than its cardinal purposes of reunification and family formation, some migration marriages are fraught terrains for negotiating and formalising citizenship and permanent residency at migration destinations. It is against this backdrop that the paper concludes that migration processes could be regulated, if potential migrant couples are always made to prove the authenticity of their union, which could be detectable by examining their care-giving commitments and/ or procreation intentions.

**Key words:** Marriage; Migration; Permanent residency; Short stories

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## INTRODUCTION

With the world daily shrinking into a 'global village', there is high susceptibility on the part of many Africans to connect to the outside world. African writers, especially those in the contemporary generation, equally manifest intense inclination to be part of this wave of globalisation, as they structure their literary works to align with critical global imperatives. One of major means through which this crave for global integration has been made possible is migration, and since every generation of African writers recreates its defining experiences in the literary fervor of its time, migration and its consequences, thus, constitute a significant reality in the contemporary African writings. Following this, Ezechi Onyerionwu avers that the contemporary African writings have been termed "the localization of the international and the internationalization of the local" (*The Guardian*, Oct.2, 2016.).

In the explosive and globalised dispensation of the 21st century, migration has been made less cumbersome through advancement in transportation technology. According to Matthew Loimeier, "Seldom has history witnessed a greater large-scale international migration, especially North-ward, as it does in the present era" (58). This position is affirmed by Soren Frank when he avers that "The large-scale migration has then led to the globalisation of the local and the localisation of the global, so much so that the global permeates the local, while the local dissipates into the global; and the production of human identity is informed by new coordinates" (p.2). This may not only explain why many contemporary African writers make their homes outside Africa but, also why their literary enterprises have gained prominence in the literary canvass of world literature. Some of these new writers include Chimamanda Adichie, Sefi Ata, Chika Unigwe, Tanure Ojaide, Noviolet Buluwayo, Bernadine Evaristo, Unoma Azuah, Chinelo Okparanta among others.

As contemporary migrant writers, their writings explore the experiences of migration such as racism, cultural dislocation, politics of residency, regret and disillusionment and the general illusion around migration. The richness of their themes and the expertise with which they handle their narrative techniques prompt Onyerionwu's opinion on some Nigerian migrant writers:

> At no other period has Nigerian literature witnessed such a robust imaginative harvest; at no other time has the world literary arena been forced to stand in herald of yet another Nigerian prize winner at such heartening frequency. At no other time had creative talent flourished unhindered in Nigeria, leaving behind a productivity that tasks pundits' sense of statistics; at no other time have we had almost as many literary scholars at international bases, spreading the gospel of our intellectual resilience … At no other time has literary experimentation been the hallmark of an accomplished tradition. In fact, at no other time have wishes been horses! (p.1).

Onyerionwu's position above aligns with Pius Adesanmi and Chris Dunton's earlier position that "these writers have their sensibilities sharply molded by the contemporary notions of cosmopolitanism, globalisation, nomadism, and liminality, and that they have to grapple with these matters more than their literary forebears did" (p.8). Uwem Affiah, Offiong Amaku and Kufre Akpan also note that their writing is "Fuelled by the disillusion, despair and despondency of a fractured nation…" (p.64). It is the expert handling of these themes, and with the kind of narrative resilience and courage hardly seen in African literature of previous epochs that the new African transatlantic novel has been established as perhaps the fictional fulcrum of new Africa. (Onyerionwu, *The Guardian*, Oct.3, 2016). This also informs James Okpiliya and Kufre Akpan's assertion that "…Nigerian writers (novelists in particular), have remained ardent chroniclers of the socio-political realities of their country" (p.50).

Much as it could be posited that there has been a robust and thriving critical scholarship on African migration narratives, not much attention has been paid to migration marriage as a site of navigating precarious and tenuous pathways towards acquiring residency and citizenship rights in host countries. According to Jane Lopez "Extant studies, however, have tended to approach citizenship as an individual-centered concept vis-à-vis the nation state, thus fading the family into the background, resulting in a relative under-examination of the family in the scholarship of marriage migration and citizenship" (Quoted in Chiu and Yeoh, 2021). In this light, this paper intends to extend the scholarship by going beyond the state-individual framework in acquiring citizenship to conceptualising marriage and family as a strategic site where citizenship is mediated, negotiated and experienced. This position underscores the significance of contextualising contemporary writings about marriage, migration and citizenship within the framework of family and also calls for a rethinking of citizenship from an individual-centered position to a family-level concept.

This paper also highlights the tensions and apprehensions characterisng migration marriages, especially when it involves migrants originating from countries lower down the socio-economic developmental pedestal. Most often, it is noted that routes toward full assimilation are slippery and ambiguous. According to Brenda Yeoh et al:

> From the host nation's perspective, their lack of social, economic and (sometimes) linguistic capital is seen not only as an obstacle to integration but also as negative assets that would weigh down national safety nets for welfare provision. In this light, access to citizenship is contingent on demonstrating legitimacy in the face of widespread suspicion that marriage migration is a morally suspect, opportunistic channel exploited by those seeking citizenship, work or material gain (p.900).

The above position makes contestation for citizenship rights in host countries markedly uneven and unresolvedly entangled with the inequalities of class, gender and ethno-racial background. Irene Bloemraad and Alicia Sheares also point out that, "paying attention to race, class, and other status markers shifts our conceptual attention from citizenship as legal status to its social construction as privileged membership" (p.839). In other words, Bloemraad and Shares seem to insinuate that marriage migrant pathways to citizenship are precariously laced with negotiations around gender, ethnicity, nationality and class.

The methodology for this paper involves a close reading of "Arrangers of Marriage", a story in Chimamanda Adichie's *The Thing Around Your Neck* and some selected stories in Chika Unigwe's *Better Never Than Late*. The stories in these collections were purposively selected for this paper, and informed by their dept exploration of migrant marriage and the politics of residency and citizenship. As a literary research, the paper employs a qualitative approach, through close reading and analysis of these stories.

The paper, as hinted in the abstract, adopts the postcolonial concepts of "othering and unhomeliness" as its theoretical standpoint. The concept of *othering* was popularised by Gayatri Spivak and, within the context of everyday communication, *othering* is said to be a phenomenon of stereotyping and racialisation. However, within the context of postcolonialism as a discursive strategy, Oscar Thomas-Olalde and Astride Velho define *othering* as a process in which, through discursive practices, different subjects are formed, hegemonic subjects-that is, subjects in powerful social positions, as well as, those subjugated to these powerful conditions" (p.27). The term creates a socio-political and economic differentiation that infringe on the true meaning of "us" and "them". According to Massood Raja, "Whatever the markers of social differentiation that shape the meaning of "us" and "them," whether they are racial, geographic, ethnic, economic or ideological, there is always the danger

that they will become the basis for a self-affirmation that depends upon the denigration of the other group" (https://postcolonial.net>Glossary). In almost all contexts, the term presupposes social and/or psychological ways in which one group excludes or marginalises another group.

In the same vein, the concept of *unhomeliness* was popularisaed by Homi Bhaba. Chukwuma Okoye views *unhomeliness* as:

> the postcolonial condition of displacement, invasion, and estrangement of 'home' which typifies the experiences of displaced subjects as they engage with the project of identification against the drifting (dis)locations of home in two spaces: the natal homeland and the host nation. The sense of unhomeliness is 'this sense of being caught between two cultures and not entirely at home in either of them (p.79).

What Bhabha terms as "unhomeliness" is this feeling of homelessness, a concept some postcolonial scholars refer to as double consciousness. According to Che Guevera, "This feeling of abandonment by both cultures causes the colonial subjects (the colonized) to become a psychological refugee" (p.205). Thus, according to Ajibola Opeyemi, "Homelessness and the unhomeliness of home constitute a traumatising reality for migrant characters in the texts being examined" (p.67). As could be seen in the texts, the characters are compelled to renegotiate their identities in order to evade the toga of "the otherness" and achieve full assimilation. Thus, marriage and family have been seen as viable platforms through which they reconfigure their identities for full acceptability in their host countries.

## MIGRATION MARRIAGE AND THE POLITICS OF DIS(LOCATION) IN *THE THING AROUND YOUR NECK* AND *BETTER NEVER THAN LATE*

Despite the seeming flexibility of contemporary migration process, full assimilation of migrants in their host countries, in terms of social, economic and political rights, is still posing undaunted challenges that, most times, prompt some migrants to resort to some unofficial channels to mediate their legitimacy. The above condition is adequately explored in Gyatri Spivak's concept of postcolonial 'othering'. Jonny Gebara asserts that "'othering' focuses on representing any character or destination of any other descent besides European as inferior and dangerous or even less valuable to the world" (p.6). This, most often, creates feelings of subalternity and consequently pushes migrants into exploiting sham marriages and illegal family reunion to navigate their path to full assimilation in their host countries. April Schueths avers that:

> Certainly marriage to a citizen may provide advantages for an immigrant spouse. For instance, spouses of U.S. citizens have priority immigration status. In 2013, spouses of citizens included 25% of all new legal permanent residents. In addition, partners who receive legal permanent residence via a spouse may wait three years until they are eligible for citizenship, instead of the standard five. (p.811).

Judging from the above immigration-related advantages, it becomes obvious why irregular migrants see marriage as the golden pathway to improve their immigration status.

It could be noted that in a bid to achieve territorial legitimacy and social coherence, many European, American and Asian countries have wielded and exercised stringent powers of sovereignty that sharply separates citizens as insiders from those they deem as outsiders. Part of the reasons, according to Kufre Akpan and Monica Udoette, is that: "Of all those who involve in external migration, only a few purposefully and legally migrate through the instrumentation of visas and transmutation of citizenship and lotteries" (p.64). Apart from creating some privileged pathways for skilled migrants to gain residency and citizenship, many others, who have been barraged by the general assumption that migration actualises the search for a better lease of life and provides an escape from the sufferings that characterise developing nations, defy all migration protocols to improve to improve their status. According to David Udoinwang and Kufre Akpan, these set of migrants are usually those from nations "… where there is near anarchy, worrisome state of insecurity and vulnerability, especially when the fate of the younger generation, and the weak in society are put into the bargain" (p.189). To achieve this, they most often exploit the framework of marriage and family reunion, by stage-managing illegal and contractual marriages to negotiate their legitimacy in their countries of destinations.

The above scenario resonates audibly in "Arrangers of Marriage" in Adichie's *The Thing Around Your Neck*. The text is a collection of twelve short stories, laced with gripping suspense, that do not only explore some contradictions and apprehensions that characterise the world of migration, but also portray some socio-political inanities bedeviling the Nigerian nation state, which, of course, constitute some of the major factors that see many Nigerians leaving the country in droves. In some of those stories about migration, the reader quickly empathises with the characters struggling to grapple with the vicissitude of migration. But it is in the tenth story; "Arrangers of Marriage" that the author poignantly interrogates marriage and family as the most exploited avenue for contesting permanent residency in the migratory space.

The story is told in the first person and revolves around Ofedeli, a medical doctor on internship in the United State of America, who is newly married to Chinaza. The marriage is arranged by Chinaza's Aunty Ada and Uncle Ike, who are fixated with the idea that an arranged marriage is traditional and as such is positive for the woman. "A doctor in America! It is like we won a lottery

for you" (p.170). This is against Chinaza's wish to obtain Jamb form and go to the University. After being taken into their home, occasionally buying her a pair of sandals and finding her a doctor-husband residing in the USA, she has to consent to the arrangement to avoid being tagged ungrateful.

Ofodeli suffers alienation in America and so, becomes obsessed with the American ways of life in order to be assimilated into the mainstream American society. To achieve this, he has to follow standard stereotypical American customs, and once he does this, he will automatically be viewed as an American. In this story, Ofedeli drops his native name and goes by Dave and Bell as first and surname and insists Chinaza changes hers to Agatha. He rebukes his wife from responding 'you are welcome' to a visitor instead of 'Hi'. "You should say 'Hi' to people here and not 'you are welcome' (p.172). He changes 'biscuit' to 'cookies' and reprimands Chinaza for speaking Igbo language at the mall. "Speak English. There are people behind you" (p.177). The height of his cultural dislocation is when he forbids Chinaza from cooking with African recipe to avoid being noticed that he is an African. It is for this reason Gebara reveals that: "Othering" highlights characters in literature, which are often from non-European countries and therefore are the inhabitants of these countries often described as uncivilized and as something primitive and dangerous" (p.6). And so to enforce this order, "…the next day, he came back with a *Good Housekeeping All-American Cookbook*, thick as a Bible" (p.197). The major reason for all this is that "If you want to get anywhere, you have to be as mainstream as possible. If not, you will be left by the roadside" This affirms Anita Dimitrijovska-Jankulovska and Milicia Denkovska's position that: "The concept of Otherness within the framework of postcolonial criticism is used to describe the rest of the world, i.e., everything that does not fall within the scope of Europeans, as one homogeneous mass characterized by ugly features" (p.47). This implies marginalised people that are identified by their differences from the mainstream.

It is also out of the alienation and marginalisation suffered in America that Ofodile, now Dave, circumvents the residency rules by entering into a sham marriage by an American woman. In the context of migration, as noted earlier, marriage confers a permanent residency certificate, commonly referred to as a 'green card,' that allows aliens to hold legal jobs and entitles them to all benefits afforded any American, such as food stamps, welfare, student loans. Thus, the concept of sham marriage assumes that there is a binary divide between marriages entered for genuine reasons such as emotional intimacy, sexual fulfilment, raising children and 'bad' reasons such as financial gain, immigration, social status.

Ofodile's marriage to the American woman is tainted by immigration considerations and insufficiently genuine. This informs why he hides it from Chinaza his new wife. It is only when the American woman realises that she has been shortchanged, and moves to jeopardized the deal that he reveals this to his new wife. "The American woman I married to get a green card is making trouble" (p.182). When Chinaza insists that Ofodeli should have told her about the marriage, Nia, her new friend in America, simply confirms that "…it wasn't a real marriage" (p.185). This underscores the fact that marriage migration is a highly gendered phenomenon not only because a substantial proportion of marriage migrants are women, but also because of the way female marriage migrants gain admission into nation-states as wives and dependents of their citizen-husbands.

Also, Chinaza's disillusionment on account of her new husband's sham marriage to the American woman validates Shayla Conor's argument that "men have the ability to be unfaithful and not face severe consequences, rendering the decision to act on impulse all the easier. By being unfaithful he breaks the trust in his marriage which will either lead to two miserable people stuck together using each other for spousal duties only and no emotional fulfilment, or a divorce" (p.4). This consciousness trumps up her feeling of helplessness and dilemma when she preempts the reaction of her uncle and aunty should she consider divorce.

Her mimicry of aunty Ada's voice puts to rest Nia's suggestion to call her people. "Are you mad? Does one throw away a guinea fowl's egg? Do you know how many women would offer both eyes for a doctor in America? For any husband at all? (p.184). In the same vein, uncle Ike "would bellow about my ingratitude, my stupidity, his fist and face tightening, before dropping the phone" (p.185). This confirms one of the arguments of this paper that an arranged marriage may be adapted to reflect understandings of cultural difference so that, it is held to a different standard, but it is certainly problematic.

As Chinaza probes further, Ofodile's defence becomes revelatory of the fraudulent terrain through which citizenship and permanent residency are negotiated. Ofodile unabashedly reveals that "It was just on paper. A lot of our people do that here. It's business, you pay the woman and both of you do paperwork together but sometimes it goes wrong and either she refuses to divorce you or she decides to blackmail you" (p.183). It is for this reason that Chiu and Yeoh argue that "by giving rise to a fraught terrain for negotiating citizenship, marriage migration and the rise of cross-border families have the potential to challenge the substance, meanings and boundaries of citizenship" (p.881). This lacuna in the systematic consideration and scrutiny of familial relations before permanent residency is granted trivialises the process, and has been much exploited by undesirable elements to again citizenship in host countries. This also informs why some nations in Europe, America and Asia

have built some kind of rocky road, with U-turns and detours for migrants, as they attempt to access residency and legal citizenship in those countries, through marriage and family.

The above concerns resonate through Uniqwe's short stories in *Better Never Than Late.* The text is a collection of ten short, beautifully-honed and interconnected stories, chronicling the contradictions and other gender underpinnings that shape the experiences of female migrants in Belgium. But it is in "The Transfiguration of Rapu", "Cunny Man Die, Cunny Man Bury Am", 'Love of a Fat Woman' and 'Heart is Where the Home is' that Unigwe explores with clinical precision, sham marriages as an avenue where permanent residency and legal citizenship are contested, mediated and compromised. All the major characters in these stories are migrants and victims of alienation and marginalisation in Belgium and, must marry a Belgian in order to legitimise their residency in the country. All of them sufficiently exploit this loophole and formalise their stay, but with an eye on women from their home country as the 'real' wife.

In 'The Transformation of Rapu' Ungwe graphically negotiate through the world of Belgian migration space and beams her searchlight on illegal migrants who are bent on exploiting the framework of sham marriages to legalise their stay in the country. In this story, Uniqwe explores a migratory space that strips women of every self-worth, pitting them against themselves to the advantage of the male migrants. As if female migrants lead a one-dimensional existence, most of them are conditioned to accept the status of a "paper wife"; a kind of contractual marriage that guarantees the legibility of the purported husband to formalise permanent residency in the host land. It is noted that most of these marriages are entered in good faith, until one of the parties in the marriage suddenly realizes that the man or woman was not actually interested in the marriage, but was only seeking the status of a permanent resident alien that goes with such marriage.

In this story, Gwachi is an immigrant in Germany and is married to Rapu, who is in Nigeria with his child. To secure permanent residency, he has to formalise his marriage with a German woman, Hilde. Obviously in this kind of marriage, love is never a binding factor. The relationship is stage-managed with individual benefit in mind, and for Gwachi, it is for the possibility of improving his immigration status. And so, after the marriage and, on Hilde's suggestion, both of them relocate to Belgium.

However, Gwachi is hatching a plan to relocate Rapu from Nigeria to Belgium after, divorcing his German wife. To achieve this, he contracts Shylock; one of his kinsmen residing in Belgium, to arrange a fake court marriage with Rapu in Nigeria and bring her to Belgium as wife. The narrator reveals that Shylock "…was the sort of middle man you wanted if you were after an "arrange" marriage. He would know whom you could trust" (p.4). Back in Belgium, Rapu pretends to be married to Shylock and is to divorce him and move in with Gwachi immediately when he divorces Hilde. Rapu reveals thus: "Once he divorces Hee.. Hilde, and I divorce Shylock, we'll be too… too… together again. I am tired of sleeping on the-the-the sofa. My neck hurts. Everyday. (p.6).

However, a contradiction ensues, as Gwachi seems to be even more cordial with Hilde. He goes on vacation with Hilde and later gets her pregnant. This underscores the ugly condition of women in a landscape that primarily caters for the whims of men while perpetrating injustice on the side of women. To Rapu, Gwachi's continued flirtation with Hilde is seen as a sign that her expectation may not materialise. And so, to avert her utmost fears, Rapu begins a tortuous and unconventional process of self-assertion by shifting her emphasis from marriage to individualism and autonomy. Thus, instead of waiting endlessly for a marriage that will not come, she finds an unnamed love of her life and gets pregnant for him. "I met someone. I loh… love him. So now Gwachi can keep his oyibo wife…. I am not a bad person; you know? But I'm only human. I tried. Every time I asked Gwachi how-how much lon-lon-longer it w-would be, he-he would tell me, soon (p.13). Rapu stirs the social conscience and breaks the limitations migration places on some women. Prosperous says this of her: "How brave…. How freeing it must be not to care what anybody thought, not to mind losing the clos-knit community she had built up here…" (p.14). Monica Udoette argues that: "The idea of female consciousness is part of the process of redefining the woman's place within her society" (p.74). Through this, the author firmly moves away from the single female migrant story and creates assertive female migrants, who now make choices that negate the stereotypical narrative of a disappointing, disillusioned and subservient women in migratory spaces. This corroborates Monica Udoette and Kufre Akpan's argument that one of the goals of African female writers is "… to present female protagonists who are pitted against all odds, yet emerge liberated and determined to exist with or without the man" (p.58).

The above concern also runs through "Cunny Man Die, Cunny Man Bury Am". The title of this story is an African proverb rendered in Nigerian Pidgin English. It simply explains the fact that one who thinks he is smart does not know how smarter another person is. In this context, the statement metaphorises a scenario where one is poised to succeed through any means, despite some encumbrances.

The story revolves around Godwin, an illegal Nigerian migrant in Belgium. Like Gwachi, he also suffers marginalisation and other social restrictions on account of his illegal status in Belgium. And since marriages which involve immigration, are one of the few instances in which it is considered acceptable to impose added conditions and the particular interest that the state has in immigration

control and the substantial benefits which are presumed to flow from immigration status, he is avowed to marry a Belgian as a pathway to gaining permanent residency and enjoying those conditions. This is succinctly captured in this soliloquy: "A man's gotta do what a man's gotta do! And what a man had to do apparently was marry a Belgian woman" (p.75). This informs Homi Bhabha's suggestion that "the alienation which a person experiences in the 'unhomely' moment, may also present an opportunity to reevaluate one's identity" (p.139).

Thus, his marriage to Tine is nothing but a skewed arrangement to actualise his plans for a short cut to permanent residency. He graphically projects his plans thus: "…marry a Belgian, follow an integrating course for a few days a week. Get your papers in order. Ride it out a few years. Divorce. Then go back home and pick a proper spouse" (p.83). This informs his description of his Belgian wife as his 'passport' (p.79). When Prosperous feels pity for the Belgian Woman, knowing that she is being used as a means to an end, Agu unashamedly justifies that "Godwin wasn't the only one who married for papers. He is not the first and he won't be the last" (p.78). Agu further reveals that "in five years' time Godwin would have Belgian citizenship. He would carry that red passport, be able to get in and get out. Travel to America even, if he chose. That passport was the Holy Grail. The key to free and easy passage through the world" (p.83). For the time being, he is 'unhomed' and according to Lois Tyson: "To be unhomed is to feel not at home even in your own home because you are not at home in yourself: your cultural identity crisis has made you a psychological refugee" (p.14). However, immediately after the marriage, he stops going out with Tine and will not stay at home to do something together as a "*Koppel*" (p.81). He brings his girlfriend to his house and lies that she is his cousin, who speaks only Igbo language. Thus, within the context of migration, the powerful hold of the 'pure' marriage ideal is problematic for those who enter arranged marriages, where both the reasons for choosing a partner and the nature of the marital relationship are different.

The politicisation of migrant marriages is also deeply explored in "Love of a Fat Woman". The story explores the build up to Godwin's marriage to Tine; his Belgian wife. In order to establish that he is serious for the marriage, Tine insists Godwin shows him to his parents in Nigeria. And back in Nigeria with Tine, Godwin's mum and siblings are surprised and shocked because Tine contradicts their expectation of the kind of wife they had expected Godwin to marry, having told them on phone earlier that he was bringing a very beautiful wife home. Tine is corpulent and smokes like a man. This is why "his twin sisters hid their faces behind their hands and laughed" (p.97). His mother, in the same vein, throws a question that suggests total disapproval of Tine. "Could you not find anyone better?" (p.99). His response reveals his intention of marrying Tine, which is to beat the immigration process and obtain his papers and legalise his residency in Belgium. The narrator reminisces thus:

> If he played his cards right, she could help him become the sort of man he had dreamt of being; the sort of man who could finally repay his mother for the years of sacrifice she'd endured and grant her an early retirement from her petty trading, which no longer brought in as much as it used to" (p.99) .

Godwin's mother, who now approves of Tine, having been told of what necessitates the marriage keeps asking "when will you marry a proper wife? (p.98), and will only be assuaged when Godwin reveals that: "I'll marry a nice woman for you. A woman who will give you lots of grandchildren" (p.98). Godwin feels pity for his grandmother because "she had not been told that Tine was not a real wife, just a woman Godwin had married to get his papers, and now Godwin felt guilty at her enthusiasm" (p.104). This underscores the extent to which illegal migrants exploit the platform of marriage to obtain citizenship and permanent residency in their countries of migration. The situation further reflects deep-seated suspicion that marriage migration is an illicit pathway to gain entry into the nation-state, resulting in sham marriages with local men and women in order to take advantage of the resources, opportunities, and social rights available in host society.

## CONCLUSION

This paper has attempted to explore marriage and family reunion as a fraudulent terrain through which citizenship and permanent residency is mediated in the migratory space. The paper notes that some migrants explore this short cut to legitimise their residency because of the glaring marginalization and segregation that charaterise the relationship between migrants and the host countries. The paper has revealed that for those migrants, especially the unskilled ones, who originate from countries lower down the socio-economic developmental pedestal and, whose eyes are on Europe, America and Asia as destinations of opportunities, it becomes a to matter of necessity to defy all migration protocols and improve their migration status. And since marriage and family integration potentially provide privileged access to residence and citizenship status, these migrants engage sham marriages and fake family reunion to achieve this aim. This is the major thrust of this paper.

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