

BORDER MIGRATION AND SECURITY SUSTAINABILITY BETWEEN NIGERIA AND NIGER REPUBLIC

Akpan Itoro Edet & Umelo Favour Chinazaekpere

Department of Political Science

University of Nigeria, Nsukka

[*itoro.akpan@unn.edu.ng*](mailto:itoro.akpan@unn.edu.ng)

[*princessnazihez@yahoo.com*](mailto:princessnazihez@yahoo.com)

DOI: 10.13140/RG.2.2.13367.34720

Abstract

Migration between Nigeria and her neighbor Niger Republic has been a source of concern in the formulation and articulation of diplomatic and foreign policy of the nation. The porosity of Nigerian borders has made it possible for unwarranted influx of migrants from neighboring States to enter the country illegally from such countries as Republic of Niger, Chad and Republic of Benin. Hence, this study will take a cursory look into the trend of trans-border migration and the pull and push factors in Nigeria. In order to achieve the main aim of this study, data was sourced through secondary method and the study relied on the Regional Security Complex Theory as its theoretical framework. Findings from the study show that the migration crisis presents a big challenge for Europe and is steering discussions among the member states on the issue of demographic pressure as the result of the ageing European society, concerns over national identity and migrant integration, and questions regarding the economic impact of migration on the member states, as well as the importance of finding a common asylum policy and sufficiently managing the external borders of the European Union. The paper recommends that Industrialization of Africa, skill Acquisition and Human Capital Development will help mitigate the desire to illicitly migrate out of Nigeria.

Keywords: Migration, Illicit Drugs, Human Trafficking, Niger Republic, Security.

Introduction

The challenges facing Nigeria to manage their borders are compounded by globalization that is tearing down traditional borders through advancement in technology and transformation of international relations. At the moment crimes are committed without crossing borders and huge amounts of goods are sold through cyberspace. The internet has not only made it more difficult to manage borders and to combat cross-border crimes, but has also effectively dismantled borders by allowing imports without going through customs. Trans-border crimes are said to have manifested themselves with the coming of colonialism which regrouped states and communities into new nation-state with defined borders manned by law enforcement agent to protect the polity and its economy. Nigeria is a colonial creation whose final stage was the merge of southern and northern protectorate in 1914. Nigeria came to share international land border with Benin, Niger, Chad and Cameroon, which amounts to about 4745sq.km. Nigeria also shares maritime boundaries with Equatorial Guinea and Sao Tome and Principe. Like other partitioned areas in Africa, the territories of Nigeria state poses some

challenges that have affected the structure of interregional trade as a result of colonial and post-colonial economic system. Borderlands are both melting pots and security hot spots. Often neglected in the development strategies of postcolonial states, they are an arena for cross-border crime and represent a dynamic place of historically fostered cultural and socio-economic exchange at the same time. However, 'trans-border crime' represent a number of illegal and notorious activities carried out by individuals and group across national and international borders, either for financial or economic benefits and also-political cum religious considerations. It is a set of criminal acts whose perpetrators and repercussions go beyond territorial borders. These would include human. The transfer of criminal activity from one country to another is a spill over effect of interrogation policies which loosen the borders for the purpose of development and enhancing great friendly balance crimes such as human trafficking, arm and drugs are seen to cut across one geographical area but the failure to check and properly control their various activities cause security issues especially the influx of arms around border. Out of the 1978 entry points in the country only 84 are approved and 1894 illegal route lies around the country. Of a true, the security system is greatly outnumbered by an expounded crime situation which in turn will lose it efficacy. Ortuno and Wiriyachai (2009) have maintained that, the past few years have been characterized by a significant increase in global criminal activities such as money laundering, trafficking in human and nuclear technology and material, the trade in human organs and migrant smuggling. At the same time , emerging crimes such as modern piracy , trafficking in toxic waste, counterfeit medicines, precious metals or natural resources have been added to the list of traditional illegal activities such as prostitution, drug trafficking and arms trafficking.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework for this study is the Neoclassical theory of migration which proposes wage differentials as the most important determinant of migration (Lucia, 2011). At present, the dominant theory in explaining causes of migration is the neoclassical theory with its underlying assumption that migration is stimulated primarily by rational economic considerations of relative benefits and costs, mostly financial but also psychological (Todaro and Smith, 2006). The theory has been subjected to criticism on conceptual (Arango, 2000) as well as on empirical grounds (Massey, 1998). However, owing to its analytical rigor and its ability to propose a set of testable hypotheses and useful tools for analyzing not only the causes but also the effects of migration, it occupies a prominent position in current academic and policy-related research. The propositions of the neoclassical theory of migration were also used (almost exclusively) in the research which preceded the 2004 Eastern enlargement of the EU (Lucia, 2011). The neoclassical theory understands migration to be driven by differences in returns to labor across markets. The most basic model originally developed to explain migration in the process of economic development in the works of Hicks (1932), Lewis (1954) and Harris and Todaro (1970) highlights that migration results from actual wage differentials across markets or countries that emerge from heterogeneous degrees of labor market tightness.

According to this theory, migration is driven by geographic differences in labor supply and demand and the resulting differentials in wages between labor-rich versus capital-rich countries. The central argument of the neoclassical approach thus concentrates on wages. Under the assumption of full employment, it predicts a linear relationship between wage differentials and migration flows (Bauer and Zimmermann 1999; Massey et al. 1993; Borjas

2008). Essentially, the impetus for migration and trafficking in persons, illicit drug peddling and smuggling of goods and services are fall-out from poor wages and the obvious need to drift from low income economic environment to high wage labour environments. Although, the drive for more income may not always present itself as the only impulsion for migration, political insecurity, ecological factors, cultural differentiation, geocentricism amongst others are unarguably causative factors for migration trend. In Nigeria, they no doubt constitute burgeoning justifications for constant exodus to Western Europe, Asia and Northern America. Given this, the theoretical justification for this paper is premised on the neoclassical theory of Migration.

Illegal Routes Between Nigeria and Niger Republic

The major border countries with Nigeria are Cameroon (1,690 kilometers) in the east, Niger (1,497 kilometers) in the north, Benin (773 kilometers) in the west, and Chad (87 kilometers) in the northeast. Most of these border areas are either mountainous or in the jungle which makes effective surveillance in the borders very difficult (Mustapha, 2004).

In these major borders, there are over hundreds of illegal routes in Nigeria that link or lead to some neighboring African countries. Nigeria's borders are massive with hundreds of footpaths crisscrossing to neighboring countries of Cameroon, Chad and Niger with links to Mali, Libya and Sudan. From conservative estimate by locals, there are well over 250 footpaths from Damaturu/Maiduguri axis that link or lead direct to Cameroon, Chad or Niger. These paths are mostly unknown by security agencies, are unmanned, unprotected and thus serve as leaky routes for arms and ammunitions trafficking in to Nigeria. It is disheartening and unfortunate that the “merchants of death” have since devised methods use to beat security agencies at the borders and through the footpaths. These methods include the use of camels, donkeys and cows to traffic arms, ammunition and drugs, like cocaine into Nigeria. The fact that the weapons are small, light and collapsible makes it easy to be concealed and moved on camels and donkeys' back in a specially crafted skin or thatched bags mainly meant for the illegal “expedition” unexpected, unsuspected and therefore undetected. Similarly, some cows and grains merchants in the North- East sub – region of the country, devices means of hiding cache of arms and ammunition in empty fuel tankers, under vehicles' engines and inside bags of grains mostly undetected by security agencies at the affected border posts. The “grains” are transported in large number via trucks, trailers, Lorries and old model pickup vans and jeeps with little attention given to them by security agents, (Sagir Musa,2010). Nigerian informal cross-border trade is estimated around 20% of its GDP and includes trade with all its neighbors, especially Niger and Cameroon. Many of these neighbour countries dependent on the openness of the Nigerian (illegal) market. Nigeria has already taken advantage of this in the past by using its border policies to manifest its power. In 2003, when the border between Nigeria and Benin Republic for instance was closed by Obasanjo, the Beninese economy found itself in high distress. A key commodity illegally imported to Benin is petrol. Cheaper in Nigeria, petrol is smuggled into Benin in large quantities. This contraband business is an important source of income for many of the border community members. In 2004, 73% of the Beninese market was satisfied by illegally imported petrol which is more readily available in remote regions and more affordable than the petrol offered by the state-owned stations. For some other commodities, such as agricultural goods, the volume of informal cross-border trade between Nigeria and its neighbors is estimated to be ten times higher than declared at customs. Informal cross-border trade can be seen as a positive or negative phenomenon,

depending on the viewpoint taken. On the one hand, it is a manifestation of an ancient solidarity between people that were separated by colonial borders. It can be seen as an expression of entrepreneurship and economic dynamism that is healthy for any economy and which secures the livelihood of many families. On the other hand, custom evasion deprives the state of important revenues which contributes to the weakening of public institutions and the state's legitimacy (Afrika, Jean-Guy K. & Ajumbo, Gerald, 2012). Informal trade, both legal and illegal is the most common form of trans-border activity in the region. Less common, but still important is transnational organized crime (TOC), which has been growing in the region over the past few years. Despite increasing sub-regional and international cooperation, criminal cross-border activities remain a key variable of instability in the sub-region. It is only in recent years, that the complexity of TOC has steeply increased. This development has occurred parallel to an increased commitment towards free movement of persons and goods in the ECOWAS region that is designed to stimulate growth and stability in the region.

Table 1: Routes Through Which Goods are Smuggled Into and Out of Nigeria

S/N	Routes	Items Smuggled In	Items Smuggled Out	Border
1	Idiroko Border	Rice, Second hand clothes (okirika), textile materials, arms and ammunition, used tyres	Petroleum Products	Nigeria – Niger (Lagos) Routes
2	Ilela Border	Foot wares, used vehicles, textiles	Milletts, maize, petroleum products	Nigeria- Niger (Sokoto) Border
3	Tibia Border	Used vehicles and used tyre	Petroleum Products, beans, yams woods	Nigeria-Niger (Katsina Route)
4	Mfun	Smuggling of illicit drugs, arms and vehicles	None	Nigeria-Niger(Calabar- Camaroun border)
5	Bela Sahoda	Used clothes (okirika)	Petroleum Products	Nigeria – Niger (Adamawa)
6	Gamboru- Ngala	Ams, ammunition, rice, textile, used vehicles	Drugs, grains, petroleum products,	Nigeria-Niger (Bomo Route)
7	Seme	Ams, Used vehicles, used clothes, frozen meat ranging from turkey, chicken etc	Petroleum Products	Nigeria-Niger (Lagos)
8	Coastal Area	Human Trafficking, textiles and arms	Smuggling of light arms and weapons	Nigeria-Niger (Lagos route).

Source; Human rights watch 20015.

Border Management and Security Sustainability between Nigeria and Niger Republic

Border security is a factor of border management. International borders are a security issue for all governments. Border security and the management of borders in ways that promotes national security has generally been given low priority in Africa and Nigeria in particular compared to security provided for political elites and their assets in the national capitals and other urban areas far-removed from the borders. While national security strategies of the country are left to be suffered. The negligence of border security and poor, border management in Nigeria has largely contributed to a prevalence of threats such as cross-border crimes; Nigeria border security issues are distinctive, when compared to the other countries of the world. Because of this fact, these borders are not monitored, patrolled or controlled. Consequently, these borders have become transit points for smuggling and other illegal cross-border activities Guy Martin, (2011). In other words, most, if not all the borders in Nigeria is transnational crime zones. The conundrum of national security in Nigeria has been compounded by the porous nature of Nigerian borders. When borders cease to function effectively, different forms of crimes prevail and the security of a state or region is put in serious jeopardy because borders constitute the most visible sign of the sovereignty of a State on its territory. Border management is therefore crucial to a State's involvement in the protection of its population against what it considers as threats ranging from migration, international terrorism, and multiform trafficking as in human beings, drug, raw materials or SALW (Jihan & Cédric, 2010). Interestingly, Nigeria's border points especially in the North-east and North-west no longer perform their strategic functions but serve as channels for smuggling of all sorts of illicit materials into the country. The current security challenges in Nigeria where the nation's Northern borders with Niger and Chad witness the unrestrained incursion of armed bandits to terrorize innocent citizens in towns and villages on the Nigerian side of the border calls for the need to put in place a rather effective border control system (Makka, 2011). The major border countries with Nigeria are Cameroon (1,690 kilometers) in the east, Niger (1,497 kilometers) in the north, Benin (773 kilometers) in the west, and Chad (87 kilometers) in the northeast. Most of these border areas are either mountainous or in the jungle which makes effective surveillance in the borders very difficult (Mustapha, 2004). In these major borders, there are over hundreds of illegal routes in Nigeria that link or lead to some neighboring African countries. Nigeria's borders are massive with hundreds of footpaths crisscrossing to neighboring countries of Cameroon, Chad and Niger with links to Mali, Libya and Sudan. From conservative estimate by locals, there are well over 250 footpaths from Damaturu/Maiduguri axis that link or lead direct to Cameroon, Chad or Niger. These paths are mostly unknown by security agencies, are unmanned, unprotected and thus serve as leaky routes for arms and ammunitions trafficking in to Nigeria. It is disheartening and unfortunate that the “merchants of death” have since devised methods use to beat security agencies at the borders and through the footpaths. These methods include the use of camels, donkeys and cows to traffic arms, ammunition and drugs, like cocaine into Nigeria. The fact that the weapons are small, light and collapsible makes it easy to be concealed and moved on camels and donkeys' back in a specially crafted skin or thatched bags mainly meant for the illegal “expedition” unexpected, unsuspected and therefore undetected. Similarly, some cows and grains merchants in the North- East sub – region of the country, devices means of hiding cache of arms and ammunition in empty fuel tankers, under vehicles' engines and inside bags of grains mostly undetected by security agencies at the affected border posts. The “grains” are transported in large number via trucks, trailers, Lorries and old model pickup vans and jeeps

with little attention given to them by security agents, (Sagir Musa,2010). The state has responsibility for maintaining its authority and preserving law and order within its own border. Thus, a country cannot be secured when its border is porous. However, the porous nature of Nigeria's borders presents evidence of the impact of cross-border Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW). This is facilitated by huge cross-border smuggling and mercenary activities (from Chad and Niger) and the country' long porous borders that are poorly policed due to inadequate resources and the lack of capacity of the security agencies (Ginifer and Ismail, 2005:6). Some of the consequences of this ugly situation include threat to the peace and security of Nigeria, threat to Nigeria's territorial integrity especially from the eastern and northern borders, loss of lives and properties of Nigerian citizens residing in the border areas and constant harassment of Nigerians in these border areas. The biggest challenge to Nigeria's national security within the context of inter-security agencies conflict at her borders is that Nigeria lacks the capabilities that are useful in conflict intervention. In fact, there is a challenge in terms of personnel and materials in this regard. Similarly, Nigeria's economy remains fragile, underdeveloped, heavily dependent on oil, mismanagement of resources, unsuitable development plans and lack of welfare programme. Indeed, the economy is very important in equipping and maintaining the security agents in the pursuit of their assignments outside Nigeria's borders. The ineffective demarcation of Nigeria's border has been a big challenge to her national security. While the Western and Northern borders are fairly well demarcated and perhaps need only minor adjustments and up-dating, some parts of the eastern and north-eastern borders with Cameroun and Chad respectively have not been effectively demarcated and have remained bones of contention between Nigeria and the two neighboring countries (Imobighe, 2003: 35). Even along the north-western and north-eastern sector where the borders have been relatively stable, the geographic condition, which is more or less a desert condition, makes the border porous and hence represent areas of potential conflict and security violations. Thus, the spill-over effect of this conflict is an overflow of refugees from the neighboring countries to Nigeria. Even more serious is the influx of illegal aliens who are normally engaged in criminal activities along the borderline areas of Nigeria.

Table 2: No of Illegal Routes and Legal Routes in Nigeria

Nature of routes	No of Routes	Activities
Legal Routes	84	Mainly importation of goods and services like petroleum products, cottons etc.
Illegal routes	1,978	Mainly illegal entries, smuggling of light arms and weapons, smuggling of illicit drugs, illegal migration, human trafficking, insurgency

Source: Nigeria Immigration Service Report 2017.

Summary

Cross-border crimes contribute significantly to the destabilization of political, economic and social activities in the ECOWAS sub-region. Transnational criminal activities in West Africa are rather one of the symptoms of larger underlying structural problems than the cause of insecurity. Over the years, Nigeria has initiated measures to check firearm proliferation. Realizing the dangers posed by such cross-border security issues, the United Nation Security

Council called on states in West African sub-region to take a number of measures to address issues of border-crimes and security. This was a report of 12 March, 2004 on West Africa and its recommendations to address cross-border issues with a regional context and in coordinating manner.

Conclusion

From what has been discussed so far, it is clear that Nigeria's ill-defined borders will always bring tensions between Nigeria and her neighboring countries. It is therefore, the responsibility of Nigeria to protect her territory. Such responsibility fell in the hands of Nigeria's security agencies. Apart from Cameroun, Nigeria has not had any invasion from outside or border war with any of her neighbors since independence, but inter-security agencies conflict is a common phenomenon. It has been established that Nigeria's responses to such conflict is very slow. Given the strategic location of Nigeria in the continent, especially at the GOG, Nigeria's ineffective management of border issues can have adverse effects on Nigeria's national security. In fact, a corrupt and ill-disciplined policy must not expect anything reasonable from the security agencies. In this context, the decision-making machinery in national security and foreign policy issues should have a political will, unity of purpose and clear sense of direction on border issues being violated by Nigeria's neighboring countries. More importantly, the security agents at Nigeria's borders should be briefed about their role in maintaining peace at the border or their area of operation. This will lessen suspicion and tension from other security agents from the neighboring countries.

Recommendations

The study recommends the following

- ✓ ECOWAS protocol on free movement of persons and goods should be strictly adhered to between Nigeria and Niger borders.
- ✓ Nigeria and Niger Republic should strengthen their borders, hence there should be proper mobilization of custom officers, immigration officers between the two borders.
- ✓ There should be a proper boundary demarcations between the two countries.

Bibliography

- Afolayan, A.A. (2000). "Trans-border Movement and Trading" in *Trans-border Studies*. No. 13 Ibadan Afrika, Jean-Guy K. and Ajumbo, Gerald (2012) "Informal Cross Border Trade in Africa: Babatunde, Olalekan A. (2009) "National Security and Migration: towards an Effective Borderless Region: Issues, Prospects and Options' *American Journal of Social Issues & Humanities* (ISSN: 2276 - 6928) Vol.2 (3) pp. 117-132 May 2012 *Criminal Justice processes: The Nigerian perspective*. Retrieved from ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR AFRICA (2013) "Report on the Magnitude of and *Human beings in Benin, Nigeria, and Togo*. Retrieved from http://www.undoc.org/pdf/human_trafficking/ht_research_report_nigeria.pdf
- Ibeanu, O. (2007) *Beyond Declarations: A report on the activities of Law Enforcement Officials that impede the full realization of ECOWAS Protocols on Free Movement of Persons and Goods in West Africa*. Lagos: CLEEN Foundation
- Implications and Policy Recommendations" *Africa Economic Brief AfDB*
- Kanu, A. I; Omojola, I. O.; Bazza, M. B. (2019). A Discourse on Migration and Unemployment within the Context of Africa. *Nnadiesube Journal of Education in Africa*. Vol. 4. No. 2. pp. 86-93.
- Kanu, A. I; Omojola, I. O.; Bazza, M. B. (2020). The Impact of Migration on Women and Children. *TOLLE*

- LEGE: An Augustinian Journal of Philosophy and Theology* Vol. 2. No. 2. pp. 1-15.
- Kanu, A. I; Omojola, I. O.; Bazza, M. B. (2020). Migration and Children. *Villanova Journal of Social Sciences, Arts and Humanities* Vol. 2. No. 1. pp. 91-95.
- Kanu, A. I; Omojola, I. O.; Bazza, M. B. (2020). Catholic Social Teaching on Immigration and the Movement of Peoples. *TOLLE LEGE: An Augustinian Journal of Philosophy and Theology* Vol. 2. No. 1. pp. 1-8.
- Kanu, A. I; Omojola, I. O.; Bazza, M. B. (2020). Climate Change and Migration: Drawing the Lines and Making the Connections. *Villanova Journal of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences* Vol. 2. No. 1. pp. 10-14.
- Muna, R. (2002). *Security of Transnational crime: Small arms and Light weapon and Drug Trafficking in Indonesia*. <http://www.rsis.ntsisa.org/.../transnationalcrime/>
- Ngor Ngor, A.D. (n.d.). *Effective Methods to Combat Transnational Organized Crime in Nte*, Ngboawaji Daniel (2011). "Trans-national threats and national security concerns: A Number 1 Issue 1.
- Omede, A.J. (2006). *Nigeria`s Relation with her Neighbour*. Lagos: Kamla-Raj
- United Nations Office on Drug and Crime. (2006). *Measures to Combat Trafficking in* USAID (2010) "NIGERIA: A GAP ANALYSIS OF ECOWAS MARKET INTEGRATION" West Africa Trade Hub Technical Report No. 37. December 2010 Volume 3 Issue 10 November 2012
- Vikki Chambers, Marta Foresti and Daniel Harris (2012) Final report: "Political Economy of Regionalism in West Africa-Scoping study and prioritization" Overseas Development Institute Pp.12-14