BORDER MIGRATION AND SECURITY BETWEEN NIGERIA AND NIGER

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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 is be sourced from secondary materials published in the forms of textbooks, newspapers, magazines and other documentary texts. 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 EU. 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, Slavery, Human Trafficking, Civilization, Mediterranean

Introduction

Migration is a highly diverse and complex phenomenon that transcends societies, cultures and races. It is a phenomenon that has continued to impact and contribute to the transformation of the entire facets of various countries changing the racial, ethnic, linguistic and socio-cultural composition of their population (Adeola and Ogirai: 2010 Marshall, 2000). It is a dynamic process which affects every dimension of social existence. Studies have indicated that 97 percent of the world population in 2000 is not international migrants (UNDESA 2005) yet, their communities and ways of life are changed by migration (Castles

et al 2009). In the sub-Saharan Africa, it is a process which predates colonisation and assumed greater impetus after the countries have traversed colonialism and became sovereign independent states. The countries were confronted with problems of integration, economic growth and underdevelopment, the people were also in haste of adjusting to the new realities brought about by self-government. This of course is in response to the contact established with outside cultures brought about by long years of colonization and so the new aspirations was spectacular and the urge for modernity was high. The motivation for employment and better life inspired migration within the countries and across borders and so cities were attracted by migration from the rural areas while economically developed regions became magnets of migratory destinations. In West African countries such as Cote d'Ivoire, Ghana, Senegal and Nigeria became destinations of international migration and Lagos and Dakar as preferred cities with teeming inflow of people from other parts of the sub-region. Nigeria which shares borders with francophone countries has to contend with influx of people from these countries and Lagos becomes the African metropolitan city for the citizens of these countries. The economic boom of the 1970s and 80s brought about by the fortunes derived from the oil sector attracted increased immigrants to Nigeria from the sub-region. The Nigerian border which is porous became easy access especially as members of a single ethnic group hold dual nationalities. As the movement was more of labour inspired, there was not much state reaction. However, Nigeria later started experiencing confrontations along the borders due to the activities of smugglers, traffickers and security challenges by the Muslim extremists who took the advantage of the porous borders to troop to the northern part of the country from Niger, Chad and northern Cameroon. At various times, some of these Muslim fundamentalists had declared holy war in the northern part of Nigeria. In the 90s the Maitasine Muslim fundamentalists and insurgency killed many innocent Nigerians before they were overwhelmed by the state security apparatuses. At other times, in the western part, the menace of traffickers and smugglers who have turned armed criminals posing serious threat to the security of the nation has forced the Federal Government to take draconian laws against the affront. It got to an unbearable height during the administration of President Olusegun Obasanjo between 1999 and 2003 that the president had to close the borders with the Republic of Benin at least two times. The persistent and deepened cases of smuggling and trafficking in the sub-region have induced other heinous crime causing serious security and political problems among the states (Adeola and Ogirai: 2010).

Conceptual Clarifications (Migration and Insecurity)

The Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences defines migration as "the movement of people over considerable distances and on a large scale with the intention of abandoning former homes." Everett (Everett: 1969) on the other hand, defines it as broadly as a permanent or semi-permanent change of residence. No restriction is placed upon the distance of the move or upon the voluntary or involuntary nature of the act, and no distinction is made between external and internal migration. The problem with the former definition is the abandonment of homes for a permanent one. The focus of this article is not so much abandonment or movement of people over considerable distance rather, the ability to move from one country to the other which may even be of short distance such as cross-border movement between Nigeria and Niger Republic or Nigeria and Benin Republic. Such migration is more often motivated by economic opportunity or criminal intentions (trafficking and smuggling) and so our definition for the purpose of this article is the movement of people on a long or short distance involving crossing from one country to the other and for a short or long period but usually on a short period but with high frequency for the purpose of seizing economic opportunity or perpetrating economic, political or social crime (Adeola and Ogirai: 2010). This definition will not be complete without making analogy to differentiation of migration (Castles and Miller:2009) which states that most countries do not simply have one type of immigration, such as labour migration, refugee or permanent settlement but a whole range of types at once. Typically, migrating chains which start with one type of movement often continue with other forms, despite government efforts to stop or control the movement. Cross border migration between Nigeria and her surrounding neighbours may start with one motive and end up with another. As remarked by Everett (1969) the difference between both in terms of economic and amenities become heightened especially between Nigeria and her neighbours. Again, as Castles et al (2009) observe, the growing politicization of migration resulting from domestic politics, bilateral and regional relationships and national security policies of states are increasingly affected by international migration. In effect, the security implications are these days dictating foreign policy directions of most countries all over the world. Globalization has complicated migration issues in security terms in such a way that state security has become a deciding factor in shaping the direction of diplomatic and foreign policy of countries in the sub-, region. In consideration of the stated issues, the theoretical exposition shall be articulated. One of the greatest migrations in human history was recorded in sub-Saharan Africa involving the Bantu people who left the area now encompassing Nigeria and Cameroun and formed settlements throughout the entire southern half of the

continent (Castles et al. 2009). Migration is increasingly driven by economic, political and social changes. In West African sub-region migration can better be explained theoretically from economic standpoint, other factors do play a role but economic remain outstanding. The neo-classical links migration to movement from low to high income area or more specifically, to fluctuation in business cycle. The approaches are known as push-pull theories (Castles et al. 2009). The "push factors" include lack of economic opportunities and political freedom among others and "pull factors" demand for labour, good economic opportunities and political freedom. The concept of insecurity would be best understood by first presenting the concept of security. In the view of Akin (2008) security refers to "the situation that exists as a result of the establishment of measures for the protection of persons, information and property against hostile persons, influences and actions". It is the existence of conditions within which people in a society can go about their normal daily activities without any threats to their lives or properties. It embraces all measures designed to protect and safeguard the citizenry and the resources of individuals, groups, businesses and the nation against sabotage or violent occurrence (Ogunleye,et al, 2011). According to Igbuzor (2011) it demands safety from chronic threats and protection from harmful disruption. Security however, can be described as stability and continuity of livelihood (stable and steady income), predictability of daily life (knowing what to expect), protection from crime (feeling safe), and freedom from psychological harm (safety or protection from emotional stress which results from the assurance or knowing that one is wanted, accepted, loved and protected in one's community or neighbourhood and by people around. It focuses on emotional and psychological sense of belonging to a social group which can offer one protection). This description structured the concept of security into four dimensions. However, these dimension can be weaved together to give a composite definition of security as the protection against all forms of harm whether physical, economic or psychological. It is generally argued however that security is not the absence of threats or security issues, but the ability to rise to the challenges posed by these threats with expediency and expertise. Insecurity on the other hand, is the antithesis of security. However, because of the very many ways in which insecurity affects human life and existence, the concept of insecurity has usually been ascribed different interpretations in association with the various ways which it affects individuals. Some of the common descriptors of insecurity include: want of safety; danger; hazard; uncertainty; want of confidence; doubtful; inadequately guarded or protected; lacking stability; troubled; lack of protection; and unsafe, to mention a few. All of these have been used by different people to define the concept of insecurity. These different descriptors, however, run into a common

reference to a state of vunerability to harm and loss of life, property or livelihood. Beland (2005) defined insecurity as "the state of fear or anxiety stemming from a concrete or alleged lack of protection." It refers to lack or inadequate freedom from danger. This definition reflects physical insecurity which is the most visible form of insecurity, and it feeds into many other forms of insecurity such as economic security and social security. Two views are of essence to this paper. These are (1) Insecurity as the state of being open or subject to danger or threat of danger, where danger is the condition of being susceptible to harm or injury, and (2) Insecurity as the state of being exposed to risk or anxiety, where anxiety is a vague unpleasant emotion that is experienced in anticipation of some misfortune. A major point about insecurity implied in these definitions is that those affected by insecurity are not only uncertain or unaware of what would happen but they are also not able to stop it or protect themselves when it happens. It is in this view that we would describe insecurity in this paper as: 'not knowing, a lack of control, and inability to take defensive action against forces that portend harm or danger to an individual or group, or what make them vunerable'. 'Vunerability' is the situation that we do not know and we cannot face or anticipate. It is also something we may know would happen but we are not able to face it.

Migration between Nigeria and Her Neighbours: Moving Forward and Backward

International migration has not been a matter of public policy nor of public debate in Nigeria until the 80s, even at that, have the authorities not taken it as a serious issue of public policy. That attitude changed as cross border crimes became notorious and touched virtually every aspect of human activities - economic, social and political. Despite this change of perception, migration is an integral part of labour market and a source of livelihood. Like all over Africa and other parts of the world one of the major reasons to migrate is to find work. It is this crave to find work and improve material well-being that have been the overriding motive of the nationals of the countries surrounding Nigeria to cross the border to Nigeria. Nigeria is bounded to the east by Cameroun; Benin Republic on the western side, to the south the Atlantic Ocean; to the north east, Chad and North West, Niger Republic. The people of these countries are virtually African descent with Nigeria commanding the largest population. The mainstay of the economies of the countries is agriculture even though Nigeria and Cameroun have discovered other sources of foreign exchange such as petroleum, gold, bauxite and other mineral products. Nigeria remains to a large extent the most industrialized. With the exception of Cameroun, the other Nigerian neighbours are members of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). Migration has been part of a dynamic feature of the area as with the entire West African sub-region and most of the ethnic groups

in each of the countries had settled in more than one country in the area. The artificial boundaries imposed by the colonialists were responsible for cross border population movement within the area. Compared to other parts of Black Africa including Cameroun, West Africa stands in an almost unique position. It is an area where European colonization in the form of permanent settlement never took firm roots which makes the areas in consideration as per excellence the land of Blacks (Mabogunje, A, 1972). International migration between Nigeria and her neighbours is made easy by a number of factors; the greatest being the short distance and the porosity of borders; the likelihood that no language barriers and a minimal set of intervening obstacles to use Stoffer's terminology (Stoffer: 1946). These apparent less stringent factors, make migrants troop to Nigeria. The harsh conditions of weather in the Sahara leading to drought in Niger, Chad and northern Cameroun made Nigeria the ideal destination of the migrants. Cross border migration between Nigeria and her neighbours which did not attract state intervention gradually became a matter for state policy as modern mobility continue to impact dangerously on the security of the nation and the need to defend the state from external aggression and criminality which has grown along the international borders.

Theoretical Framework

Neoclassical Theory of Migration Neoclassical theory of migration 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, xenocentricism 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.

Border Migration and Security Between Nigeria and Niger

Nigeria and Chad shares a 75 kilometre border, all of which is on Lake Chad. The border is porous and unreliable but because of her African policy of cooperation, invested about one million dollars in the development of a huge agricultural project called the Chad Basin Development Authority (CBDA) in the basin on the Nigeria side. The influx of migrants reached an unacceptable proportion when in 1983; forces from Chad overran many Nigerian islands on the lake. They were repelled by combined forces of the 3rd division of the Nigerian Army, the 23rd Armorial based in Maiduguri and detachment of the army in Baye and Doro on the shore of the Lake.

The Chadians were forced to withdraw before it could have resulted into war between the two countries. The issue was resolved after a temporary closure of the borders; it however exposed the economic fragility of Chad and its dependence on transit facilities in Nigeria. One lesson for Nigeria as remarked by a scholar is the propensity for international migration to interact with other factors to foment violent conflict in three ways: by providing resources that fuel internal conflicts; by facilitating networks of organized crime and by serving as conduits for international terrorism. Nigeria was quite concerned about events in Chad and in particular the rate of arms smuggled across the borders and the huge arsenal in the hands of the Chadian army most of which were either seized Libyan weapons or weapons supplied by France, the United States and Israel.

The situation led to a militarization of the border and construction of all weather road by the federal government from Baye to Doro facilitating rapid movement of troops. Migration across the borders continues as it has always been with Kanuri and Shuwa Arabs families divided between the two countries. Nigeria and Benin Republic share a lot in common linguistically and racially which explains the dynamism of cross-border migration. The Yoruba, gun (Egun) and other Ajo speaking people in the south, the Beriba (Borgwa) in the middle and Fulani and Hausa in the north straddled border between the two countries. Historically, southern and central Benin was part of old Oyo empire. The cultural affinity coupled with Nigeria's policy of good neighbourliness informed Nigeria's participation in joint economic, industrial and agricultural ventures with Benin counterparts. Such was the cement factory at Onigbolo (Queme province) and sugar factory at Save (Zou province): Both towns are located in the republic of Benin. The two companies have since been privatized. Despite this spirit of enterprising and promising neighbourliness, the borders linking the two countries are the most problematic because of the activities of internationally reputed criminals engaging in smuggling and trafficking of virtually everything from human trafficking, ammunition, arms, drugs manufactured goods, agricultural produce, prostitution, child labour to religious fanaticism, terrorist attacks and insurgency.

It got to a point in 1985 during the regime of Buhari/Idiagbon when the borders had to be closed severally. They were not re-opened until the emergence of Babangida on August 27, 1985. The decision to reopen the borders removed major source of conflict but the politics of border surveillance and monitoring became a major public policy. International migration and security has continued to blur the difference between illegal/irregular and legal migration. The deepened and devastating activities of smugglers to the economy, security and state sovereignty has made it impossible for policy makers to effectively differentiate between policies that infringe on human rights from those that actually address illegal migration. Many scholars and policy makers have commented on the effect of trans-border crime between the two countries which has been worsened by globalization. At the moment, Nigeria economy is fast becoming a dumping ground for Asian goods as Benin Republic is more of a transit country for these goods and virtually everything shipped there are smuggled into Nigeria. A tour of our borders will unveil the eyesore of how textile materials, rice, vegetable oil, tin tomatoes, cars, among others are smuggled daily through the country's borders into the country. Such comments aired by Oshuntokun (Oshuntokun: 2003) conveys the views of most Nigerians in respect of Nigerian/Benin borders. According to him, a greater part of the trade between Nigeria and Benin Republic and other francophone countries

bordering Nigeria is unrecorded because much of the trade is carried on through smuggling which is illegal business, seriously limiting the virility of Nigerian economy and a security threat to the nation.

Summary and Conclusion

Security just like other elements in the business environment enhances and optimizes business activities but insecurity hinders these activities and so it constitutes a threat to business organizations. There is a strong skepticism that if the level of insecurity in our country is not scaled down, our vision to be among the best 20 countries of the world may be aborted." The approach towards curbing this menace has been to respond when the crime has been committed and the harm has been done. This paper emphasizes a change in attitude and approach by being proactive. We must strive to get to a level were crimes will be nipped in the bud before they are perpetuated. Therefore, the government, civil society groups, business organization and individuals must fight insecurity so as to create an enabling environment where business organizations will feel free and secured to

achieve their full potentials and the country will itself be safe to achieve sustainable development. To this end, we recommend that prevention and emergency response focusing on the rising state of insecurity since 2009 should be the main focus on insecurity management.

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