



E-ISSN: 2664-603X
P-ISSN: 2664-6021
IJPSG 2023; 5(2): 248-256
www.journalofpoliticalscience.com
Received: 08-08-2023
Accepted: 12-09-2023

M Kolawole Aliyu
Department of Political
Science, Obafemi Awolowo
University, Ile-Ife, Nigeria

Kayode Joshua Temitope
Department of Political
Science, Obafemi Awolowo
University, Ile-Ife, Nigeria

Corresponding Author:
M Kolawole Aliyu
Department of Political
Science, Obafemi Awolowo
University, Ile-Ife, Nigeria

Policy tracks and transnational migration on criminalities in Nigerian cities

M Kolawole Aliyu and Kayode Joshua Temitope

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.33545/26646021.2023.v5.i2d.288>

Abstract

This study examined the causes of irregular transnational inflow into Nigerian cities and its impact on criminalities. The study also discussed government measures to solve the problems, and hindrances against the moves. We collected primary data from twenty-two key informants, and secondary data from relevant books, journals, government documentaries, gazettes, and online publications. Data was content analyzed and interpreted thematically. Porous border, poor monitoring and corruption caused irregular entry into Nigerian cities. Irregular movement into Nigerian cities influences banditry, insurgency, clashes between, farmers and herders, and other criminalities. Government has increased its security budget, established operation safe corridor, presidential initiative on the North East, victims support funds, and so on to address the challenge but bad eggs, and tribalism subverted the efforts. The study concluded that land borders in the northern Nigeria are porous and expose northerners to more dangers.

Keywords: Transnational, migration, terrorists, criminality, mayhem

Introduction

Irregular transnational migration is a recurring menace across the globe but more prevalent in African states with devastating effect of criminalities in Nigerian cities. According to Ullah & Huque (2019) ^[15], poverty, unemployment, and the need to seek a greener pasture are few reasons why migrants struggle to enter another country at all cost and illegally. In other words, significant numbers of migrants seek better economic opportunities, improved living conditions, and greater security in cities. For instance, in an interview with a senior official of immigration service in Abuja, more than two million people illegally enter Nigerian cities through northern borders. There are unconfirmed apprehension that the upsurge in banditry, conflicts, insurgency, and farmers-herdsmen clashes, robbery, kidnapping, killings, raping and other organized crimes, especially in the northern cities in Nigeria are occasioned by irregular transactional movement. A top military officer affirmed the above in an interview, that severe criminal elements, who enter northern cities illegally, perpetuate serious crimes by taking people hostage.

There are studies that established the relationship between migration and security (Choucri, 2002 & Koser, 2011) ^[3]. There is, however, no definitive answer whether migration causes security threat or insecurity leads to migration (Ullah & Huque, 2019; Ullah & Kumpoh, 2018) ^[15, 14]. As migration becomes a soft issue (Choucri, 2002) ^[3] in the security agenda of many countries (Collyer, 2006) ^[6], current migration-security debates reflect on different approaches to understanding migration (Huysmans & Vicki, 2009) ^[5]. Some scholars argued that the debates about migration flows were at its peak during the collapse of the Soviet Union in the 1990s, which saw the end to the Cold War where countries lost enemies while simultaneously migration appeared to be their main security challenge (Ronald, 2008) ^[11]. During the period, migrants facilitated the irregular movement by illegal and dangerous means, leading to a range of negative outcomes for both migrants themselves, and host countries. The view expressed here is in tandem with the submission of a senior National Security and Civil Defence Corps that illegal migration is a risk to the victim and the host residents in cities. A member of Miyetti Allah Cattle Breeders Association captures the above position, that unregulated and uncoordinated movements are major causes of conflicts, crime, insurgency and reign of terror in Nigerian cities.

There are frequent Farmers-Herders clashes, which refer to violent conflicts between farmers and pastoralists over access to land and water resources. These clashes often occur in areas where farming and livestock rearing are major economic activities. Repeated conflicts in the conflicts areas of the northeastern part of Nigeria are due to climate change, competition for resources, and ethnic and religious tensions. Thus, according to another member of Miyetti Allah Cattle Breeders Association, there is the influx of illegal herders into Nigerian cities and steal cattle that belong to another person or group of people. Therefore, there is organized cattle rustling, as captured by a member of Farmers Association of Nigeria. There are clashes between farmers and herders and result in loss of lives and property, displacement of communities, and needless ethnic and religious tensions in the areas.

Robbery and kidnapping are also significant security challenges in Nigerian cities, particularly in the northeastern part of the country. There are more irregular movement from Chad and Niger than other countries from African countries. Most irregular migrants from the above countries do not have legal status but in search of work in the informal sector, and are therefore vulnerable to criminalities, in order to survive. The situation becomes worse with the activities of terrorist groups such as Boko Haram and the Islamic State in West Africa (ISWA), most of whom were originally emigrants. A top military officer captured the evils the above group of people perpetuate during an interview. According to him, these groups have been responsible for numerous terrorist attacks, including bombings, shootings, and kidnappings, and widespread fear in the region. More worrisome is the confession of a senior customs official that terrorist groups have taken advantage of the insecurity caused by Farmers-Herders clashes and irregular migration to recruit members and launch attacks on vulnerable communities.

The Nigerian government has put up a number of measures to address irregular migration into Nigerian cities, including the establishment of border controls, repatriation of undocumented migrants, military operations, as well as intelligence gathering and cooperation with neighboring countries. However, the effectiveness of these measures are limited with rise in criminalities in northeastern Nigeria. Criminalities such as robbery, killings, insurgency, and kidnapping caused by irregular migration in Nigeria are complex challenges that require a comprehensive and sustainable approach to address, and hence this study.

Objectives

The specific objectives of this study are to

1. Identify the factors that are responsible for transnational migration into Nigerian cities,
2. Examine the impact of irregular transnational migration on criminalities in Nigerian cities,
3. Discuss government measures to control irregular transnational migration into Nigerian cities.
4. Investigate why government policy tracks on irregular migration into Nigerian cities are not yielding results

Methodology

This study is a descriptive design and adopts a mixture of both primary and secondary sources. The primary data was sourced from twenty-two key informants who were army officers (04), paramilitary officers like immigration, 04,

National Security and Civil Defence Corps, 04, Customs, 04), Miyetti Allah Cattle Breeders Association, 02, Official of the Nigerian Correctional Centre, 02, and Farmers Association of Nigeria, 02. The secondary source was from relevant books, journals, government documentaries, gazettes, and online publications. The data were content analysed thematically.

Conceptualizations

The word transnational refers to the movement of the people, ideas, and goods across national borders, and the resulting connections and interactions that occur between individuals and institutions in different countries. Transnationalism is a complex social process that involves the crossing of political, economic, and cultural boundaries, and takes different forms. In the context of people, transnationalism refers to the phenomenon of individuals or communities maintaining strong ties and relationships across national borders, often through regular travel, communication, and cultural exchange. This includes immigrants who maintain close connections with their home country, or individuals who have multiple citizenships. Transnationalism can also refer to the activities of multinational corporations, which operate across multiple countries. It includes the movement of goods, capital, and labor across borders, and the creation of global supply chains and networks. In addition to its economic and social dimensions, transnationalism also has political implications. Migration refers to the movement of people and animals from one place to another, either permanently or temporarily. In the context of human beings, migration is a social process that involves the movement of people across political and geographical boundaries for a variety of reasons. There are many reasons why people migrate. The reasons include economic, social, political, and environmental factors. Thus, the need to seek better economic opportunities, join family members, escape political persecution or conflict, or for a better quality of life. People migrate as well to escape natural disasters or climate change. Given the above reasons, migration can be voluntary or forced. It may also take internal or international form. Internal migration is the movement of the people within a country, while international migration refers to the movement of the people across national borders. International organizations play key roles in managing migration, including the protection of migrants' rights and addressing the social and economic challenges that migration poses on criminalities in cities.

Terrorism refers to the use of violence, intimidation, or coercion in pursuit of political or ideological goals. It involves targeting civilians or combatants and creation of the feeling of fear, panic, and a sense of insecurity in the public. The term terrorist is an individual or group that engages in acts of terrorism (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2018) ^[16]. These individuals or groups seek to achieve their goals through violent means, such as bombings, shootings, or non-violent means, such as propaganda or cyber-attacks. According to United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (2020) ^[19], there is no single profile of a terrorist, and individuals who engage in terrorism may come from a wide range of backgrounds and have different motivations. Some are into terrorism by desire for political or social change, while others do so due to religious or ideological beliefs. The methods used by

terrorists can also vary widely, from suicide bombings to cyber-attacks. It is important to note that not all individuals or groups who engage in violence for political or ideological purposes are terrorists. Some people engage in armed conflict or insurgency for criminalities, just to make a living.

Criminality refers to the tendency or inclination to engage in criminal behavior. Criminal behavior is any behavior that the law prohibits and can attract punishment or sanction. Criminality can manifest in various forms, including theft, assault, fraud, drug trafficking, and so on. Criminal behavior can be due to a variety of factors such as socio-economic status, upbringing, education, peer pressure, and mental health, among others (Okeaghen, 2017) [8]. Some individuals are susceptible to criminal behavior due to a combination of the above-mentioned factors, and others due to specific factor. The study of criminality is an interdisciplinary field that draws on psychology, sociology, criminology, and other fields to grasp the causes and consequences of criminal behavior. Researchers in this field seek to identify risk factors that increase the likelihood of criminal behavior and develop strategies to prevent or reduce them. It is important to note that not all individuals who engage in criminal behaviours are inherently "criminal". Most individuals who engage in criminal behavior do so because they have experienced poverty, trauma, or other forms of social deprivation. Additionally, some criminal behavior may be due to systemic issue, such as discrimination or inequality.

Mayhem is a legal term that refers to a specific type of violent crime. The term mayhem has its origins in medieval English law. It describes a specific type of injury that involved the loss of a body part, such as an eye or a hand. In general, mayhem involves intentionally causing or attempting to cause serious bodily harm to another person, often resulting in disfigurement or permanent disability. Mayhem can also include the intentional destruction or mutilation of another person's body parts. Mayhem is a form of crime and can result in significant legal consequences, including imprisonment and fines (Ronald, 2008) [11]. The severity of the punishment often depends on the degree of harm caused and the intent of the perpetrator. Mayhem came to be associated with serious bodily harm and was later inbuilt into modern legal systems. Today, mayhem is a form of aggravated assault or battery in many jurisdictions and prosecuted as a felony. The severity of the punishment for mayhem may vary depending on the specific circumstances of the crime, including the use of weapons, the victim's age or vulnerability, and the intent of the perpetrator.

The Interregnum of Irregular Transnational Migration on Criminality

The interregnum of irregular transnational migration refers to the period during which the movement of people across national borders occurs outside the legal frameworks and regulations of governments. As explained during an interview with one of the senior military officer, transnational migration has implications for criminality in Nigerian cities, which include armed conflict, and the presence of terrorist groups like Boko Haram. These conditions have led to a significant influx of migrants, including refugees, asylum seekers, and economic migrants,

who cross the borders illegally or through irregular channels (Collyer, 2006) [4].

One of the primary consequences of this interregnum is the proliferation of criminal activities in the norther cities. The influx of irregular migrants into Nigerian cities provides a fertile ground for criminalities to thrive. The criminal activities range from human rituals, robbery, drug trafficking, and arms smuggling. As expressed by a member of the Farmers Association of Nigeria, irregular migration routes and porous borders make migrants vulnerable to exploitation by human traffickers who lure them with false promises of better lives or coerce them into forced labor, prostitution, or other forms of modern-day slavery. The lack of legal protection and oversight exacerbates the vulnerability of irregular migrants to criminal networks.

Similarly, illicit drug trade has thrived in the interregnum of irregular migration into Nigerian cities. North East Nigeria serves as a transit hub for drug trafficking networks, taking advantage of the porous borders and limited number of law enforcement agents. The presence of armed conflict and terrorism further complicates the situation. Terrorist groups, such as Boko Haram, exploit the chaotic environment created by irregular migration to infiltrate and expand their operations. According to a senior officer of the National Security and Civil Defence Corps in an interview, addicted criminals target vulnerable migrants, recruit them as fighters, or use them for logistics. These groups also engage in various criminal activities, including kidnapping for ransom, extortion, and arms trafficking. In all, the interregnum of irregular transnational migration has significantly contributed to criminality in North Eastern cities in Nigeria.

Theorizing Transnational Migration and Criminality

This study used two theories to explain transnational migration and criminality in Nigerian cities. They are rational choice theory, and the push-pull theory. Gary Becker, Anthony Downs, and James Coleman are the proponents of the rational choice theory. The theory provides valuable insights into decision-making processes, it is important to note that it does not account for all factors that influence human behavior. Socio-cultural factors, psychological motivations, and systemic inequalities can also play significant roles in shaping individual choices. Therefore, a comprehensive understanding of irregular transnational migration and criminality requires a multi-dimensional approach that considers various theories and perspectives. The theory of rational choice assumes that individuals make decisions based on a cost-benefit analysis of the potential outcomes of their actions.

The theory of rational choice also highlights the role of social context and opportunity structures in shaping individual decision-making. The theory of rational choice provides a framework for understanding the decision-making processes that underlie irregular transnational migration and criminality perpetuated by immigrants in Nigeria, and highlights the importance of addressing the underlying social and economic factors that shape these decisions. Additionally, the theory of rational choice suggests that influence that individuals come across are due to their perceptions of the likelihood of success and the potential rewards of their actions. In the case of irregular migration and criminality perpetrated by immigrants in Nigeria, individuals may perceive that the potential rewards

of their actions, such as financial gain or improved living conditions, outweigh the risks of harm such individual witnessed.

The theory of rational choice also emphasizes that individual decision-making are products of available opportunities and constraints within a given social context. In the case of Nigeria, the lack of viable economic opportunities and social safety nets may push individuals towards irregular migration or criminality as a means of survival. However, it is important to note that the theory of rational choice is not a deterministic theory and does not suggest that individuals always make rational decisions. Individual decision-making is complex and a product of wide range of factors, including cultural norms, personal beliefs, and emotional states. Therefore, it is crucial to consider the broader social, economic, and political context in which irregular migration and criminality occur in Nigeria, and to develop policies and interventions that address the underlying causes of these phenomena. This may include improving economic opportunities, strengthening social safety nets, and addressing political instability and corruption.

The key propositions of the rational choice theory are as follows:

1. **Rationality:** The theory assumes that individuals are rational actors who make decisions based on their self-interest. They weigh the costs and benefits of different options and choose the one that maximizes their utility.
2. **Cost-benefit analysis:** According to the theory, individuals engage in a cost-benefit analysis when making decisions. They consider the potential rewards or benefits of an action and compare them to the potential costs or risks involved. If the benefits outweigh the costs, the individual is more likely to engage in that behavior.
3. **Preferences and constraints:** Rational choice theory recognizes that individuals have different preferences and face various constraints in their decision-making process. Preferences are subjective and can vary from person to person. Constraints can be external factors such as limited resources, legal restrictions, or social norms that influence decision-making
4. **Rational behavior and equilibrium:** The theory posits that rational actors strive to maximize their outcomes and engage in behaviors that are in their best interest. Over time, individuals' rational choices can lead to a state of equilibrium, where the costs and benefits of different options are balanced.

On the other hand, the push-pull theory, developed by Everett Lee in the 1960s, is a framework used to explain the factors that motivate people to migrate from one location to another. According to Lee, migration is as a result by two sets of factors: push factors and pull factors. The push-pull theory, also known as the push and pull factors theory, is a framework used to explain the factors that drive individuals to migrate from one place to another. The key propositions of the push-pull theory are as follows:

1. **Push factors:** These are the factors that "push" individuals away from their place of origin. Push factors can include economic hardships, poverty, job opportunities, political instability, armed conflict, persecution, natural disasters, environmental degradation, and social unrest. These conditions create

unfavorable circumstances and compel individuals to seek better prospects elsewhere.

2. **Pull factors:** These are the factors that "pull" individuals toward a particular destination. Pull factors can include better economic opportunities, employment prospects, higher wages, access to education and healthcare, political stability, social networks and communities, favorable immigration policies, and better living conditions. These factors attract individuals to migrate to specific locations that offer perceived advantages or opportunities.
3. **Decision-making:** The push-pull theory acknowledges that migration is complex decisions influenced by a combination of push and pull factors. Individuals weigh the push factors in their place of origin against the pull factors in the potential destination to determine whether the benefits of migrating outweigh the costs and risks involved.
4. **Contextual factors:** The theory recognizes that the push and pull factors are influenced by broader contextual factors, such as historical, economic, political, and social conditions. These factors shape the opportunities and constraints that individuals face in both their place of origin and potential destination. Additionally, individual characteristics, such as age, gender, education, skills, and family ties, can also influence the migration decision.

The push-pull theory provides a framework to understand the drivers of irregular transnational migration and its relationship to criminality in North East Nigeria. By considering the push and pull factors, policymakers can develop strategies that address the root causes of migration, improve conditions in the region, and mitigate vulnerabilities to criminal exploitation. Push factor refer to the negative conditions that exist in a person's place of origin that make them want to leave. These may include poverty, unemployment, political instability, violence, natural disasters, and environmental degradation. These conditions create a sense of dissatisfaction or discomfort that motivates people to seek better opportunities elsewhere. Pull factors, on the other hand, refer to the positive conditions that exist in a destination location that attract migrants. These may include better economic opportunities, higher wages, better living conditions, political stability, and social amenities. These factors create a sense of hope and possibility that motivates people to move to the new location. Lee's push-pull theory suggests that migration is a complex process that involves both the factors that push people away from their place of origin and the factors that pull them towards a new location. While push factors are often the initial driving force behind migration, pull factors can become increasingly important as migrants become more aware of opportunities in their destination location.

The push-pull theory is also useful to explain various forms of migration, including rural-urban migration, international migration, and forced migration. It gives credence to the underlying causes of migration, such as poverty, inequality, political instability, and environmental degradation. It provides a useful framework for understanding the complex factors that motivate people to migrate and highlights the importance of addressing the root causes of migration through policies and interventions that improve economic opportunities, social welfare, and political stability. The

push-pull theory recognizes the interplay between various factors that influence migration. The push-pull theory emphasizes that migration is not a one-way process and that migrants may move back and forth between their place of origin and destination in response to changing conditions.

In the context of irregular migration, both theories help us to explain the decision-making process of migrants. Push factors such as political instability or economic hardship may push individuals to migrate, while pull factors such as economic opportunities or family ties in destination cities may attract them. Rational Choice Theory help us to explain the decision to migrate irregularly, as individuals may weigh the risks and benefits of legal and illegal migration and decide that irregular migration offers the best chance for success. While regarding political institutions, Push-Pull Theory explain how political instability or poor governance can be a push factor for migration. In contrast, Rational Choice Theory suggests that political institutions can influence the costs and benefits of migration, including the risk of apprehension and deportation. Thus, political institutions can play a role in shaping the decision-making process of migrants, either by increasing the push factors that lead to migration or by influencing the costs and benefits of different migration options.

While Push-Pull Theory and Rational Choice Theory offer different perspectives on the causes of irregular migration and the role of political institutions, they both provide useful frameworks for understanding the complex factors that influence illegal migration into another city. Push-Pull Theory proposes that migration decisions are influenced by a combination of factors that push individuals out of their home country (push factors) and factors that pull them towards a destination country (pull factors). Push factors can include factors such as political instability, economic hardship, armed conflict, natural disasters, or environmental degradation, which make it difficult for individuals to remain in their home country. Pull factors can include factors such as economic opportunities, family reunification, or social networks in a destination country, which attract individuals to migrate.

On the other hand, rational choice theory suggests that individuals make decisions based on a rational analysis of costs and benefits. In the context of migration, this means that individuals weigh the potential risks and benefits of different migration options, such as the costs of migration (e.g. financial costs, risk of apprehension or deportation, loss of social networks) and the potential benefits (e.g. economic opportunities, better living conditions, family reunification). When it comes to political institutions, Push-Pull Theory suggests that political instability, corruption, or poor governance can be push factors for migration, as individuals may feel compelled to leave their home country due to political or economic factors beyond their control. In contrast, Rational Choice Theory suggests that political institutions can influence the costs and benefits of migration, as policies such as border control or immigration laws can affect the risks and benefits of different migration options.

For example, a country with strict immigration laws and strong border control may make legal migration difficult or impossible for individuals, which could increase the likelihood of irregular migration. Similarly, a country with lenient immigration laws or a lack of border control may make irregular migration more attractive, as the risks of

apprehension or deportation may be lower just as we have in the case of Nigeria. In summary, while push-pull theory and rational choice theory offer different perspectives on the causes of irregular migration and the role of political institutions, they both provide useful frameworks for understanding the complex factors that influence migration decisions and outcomes.

Gap in Literature

Many studies have offered insights into irregular transnational migration in terms of emigrants that is, Nigeria citizen seeking greener pastures which at the end of the day results into taking illegal routes as well as getting them involved in illegal activities such as smuggling, drug trafficking, and so on. However, there is little or no attention given to the issue of irregular immigrants, of persons coming into Nigerian cities from foreign countries, which now results in criminalities, and becomes worrisome to constituted authority. This study seeks to fill the gap.

Implications of Irregular Transnational Migration on Criminalities in Nigerian Cities

There is a complex relationship between the inflows of irregular emigrants into Nigerian cities. The implications manifest on the rise of insurgency, terrorism and kidnappings in most northern Nigerian cities. Migration has both positive and negative impacts on individuals and cities. On the positive side, migration helps to alleviate poverty and provides access to better education, healthcare, and job opportunities. It also leads to cultural exchange and the development of new ideas. However, migration can also create social and economic stress for both the migrants and the host communities, especially on social services and infrastructure.

It is of note that the inflow of irregular migrants may lead to increased competition for resources, including jobs, land, and housing. A member of Nigeria farmers association noted during an interview that illegal migration, in the case of Nigeria creates tension and conflict between local communities and migrants, which escalates into violence and criminality.

More importantly, irregular migrants have links with extremist groups such as Boko Haram, which has been responsible for numerous terrorist attacks and kidnappings in northern Nigerian cities. These groups may use the movement of migrants across the border to perpetuate their activities, making it difficult for security forces to track and intercept them.

The porous nature of Nigeria's borders makes it easy for unscrupulous elements to smuggle weapons, drugs, and other contraband or fake goods into the cities in Nigeria. This can contribute to the rise of criminality, including kidnapping for ransom, which has become a major problem in some parts of the country.

Additionally, irregular migrants into Nigerian cities also have demographic consequences that compound existing social and economic challenges in the country. For example, the influx of migrants in certain regions have led to overcrowding, strain, and increased pressure on already limited public facilities. A senior official of the Nigerian Correctional Centre remarked in an interview that irregular migration leads to marginalization and exclusion in local communities, which in turn contribute to social unrest and conflict.

Moreover, the presence of irregular migrants in Nigerian cities also have implications for public health. As noted by senior official of customs, the movement of people across borders cause spread of infectious diseases, and migrants may be vulnerable to exploitation and abuse by criminal elements and human traffickers. In other words, migration is the cause of a number of diseases. While irregular migrants into Nigeria is not the sole cause of the rise of insurgency, kidnappings, and criminality in the country, it is certainly a contributory factor.

Discussion

Factors Responsible for Irregular Transnational Inflow and Criminality in Nigerian Cities

A number of factors contribute to irregular transnational inflow of immigrants and criminality in Nigerian cities. As explained by a senior customs officer during an interview, people seek to escape from instability when a country is going through political crisis. According to the above named senior customs official, such political crises could be coups, civil wars, and insurgency and other forms of violence. People seek refuge elsewhere when going through any of the identified crises above. In addition, the instability can also be in the form of displacement and forced migration, that force people to seek safety in other regions or countries.

The porous nature of Nigeria's borders makes it difficult to control the flow of people and goods. This makes it easier for criminal organizations to operate, and contribute to irregular migration. Nigeria shares borders with several neighboring countries, and the borders are poorly policed and monitored. This makes it easier for criminal organizations to smuggle drugs, weapons, and people across the border into Nigerian cities. The lack of border control also leads makes it easier for people to have access to Nigerian cities, especially from foreign countries into Nigerian cities without proper documentation. A senior customs official interviewed noted that Nigeria borders are indeed insecure because they are extremely porous. Another immigration official also reiterated the porosity of the Nigerian borders by reiterating the frequency of arresting illegal emigrants in Nigerian cities on daily basis.

Nigeria is a diverse country with over 250 ethnic groups and several major religions, and there have been conflicts between these groups in the past. The conflicts create an environment where criminal organizations thrive and contribute to irregular migration as people seek to escape violence and persecution. However, there have been instances of conflict between these groups, particularly in the northern cities and central regions of the country. This, in turn, creates an environment where secret organizations operate. It, thus, leads to forced migration, as people flee violence and persecution in their home regions and seek asylum in places considered safer. The factors that contribute to irregular transnational inflow of immigrants and criminality in Nigeria requires a sustained effort on the part of government officials, civil society organizations, and the international community to put them under check.

Impact of Irregular Immigration on Criminality in Nigeria

Immigration have both positive and negative impacts on Nigeria's socio-economic activities. On the positive side, immigration brings in skilled workers and entrepreneurs who can contribute to the growth of the economy and create

jobs. While reacting to the positive impact in an interview, a member of the Nigerian farmers association noted that immigrants bring in foreign investment and new ideas into Nigerian cities that leads to innovation and increased productivity. His words: if not for criminal implication of emigration, it spurs investment in Nigerian cities.

Large-scale immigration puts pressure on the country's resources and infrastructure, leading to increased competition for jobs and housing. It also leads to social tensions and conflicts, particularly if immigrants become a threat to the cultural or economic identity of the host country. According to a senior officer of the national security and civil defense corps, politicians use immigrants as machineries to carry out crimes. In a report by Okeoghene (2017)^[8], about 40 Nigeria's Permanent Voter's Card (PVC) were found in Benin, Chad, Cameroun immigrants during the 2015 general elections. According to Muhammad (2016)^[18], foreign nationals in Nigeria disrupt electoral activities.

Criminality has a significant negative impact on Nigeria's socio-economic activities. It has led to loss of life and property, as well as increased insecurity and fear among the population. Criminal activities in Nigeria such as fraud, corruption, and cybercrime are not entirely in isolation of immigration. Although, Nigerians are also not free from some of the above-mentioned crimes, foreigners without clear identities are behind organized crimes. A senior army officer, noted in an interview that criminality leads to a breakdown of law and order, with multiplier effect on various aspects of the economy, including tourism, trade, and investment. It can also increase the cost of doing business, as businesses may have to invest in security measures to protect their assets and employees. Many people flee their homes and seek refuge in other parts of the country, thus leading to a significant displacement of the country's population. This has put a strain on the resources of the host communities and has led to increased competition for jobs and resources in cities.

Criminality, particularly the activities of the Boko Haram insurgency, has had a devastating impact on cities socio-economic activities. The insurgency has caused widespread destruction of infrastructure, including schools, hospitals, rail-lines and markets, which has had a significant impact on cities economy. The insurgency has also disrupted agricultural activities, which are a major source of livelihood for many people in Nigeria. According to a senior military officer, insurgency that cause loss of lives and property has created a climate of fear. This has made it difficult for businesses to thrive. Essentially, investors are daily losing confidence to invest in Nigerian cities.

Policy Measures by Nigerian Government to Track Irregular Immigration

The Nigerian government has taken several proactive measures to curb irregular immigration into Nigerian cities with a view to tracking criminalities in the country. According to an interview with a senior army officer, the Nigerian government has taken several measures to secure the border and combat criminal activities occasioned by irregular migration. He noted that the federal government has invested a lot in strengthening border control. Corroborating the above statement, another senior officer of the National Security and Civil Defence Corps, the federal government through the Ministry of Defence has deployed

sophisticated technology and establishment of specialized security units. For instance, there has been Operation Safe Corridor by the Nigerian government to condone, rehabilitate and reintegrate former illegal emigrants and insurgent groups, particularly those in the prevailing North East cities in Nigeria. One of the senior immigration officers noted in an interview that government has intensified collaboration with the various border communities to help in addressing irregular entry to Nigerian cities.

The federal government of Nigeria has strengthened the control of its borders to prevent the entry of not only illegal immigrants but also weapons. There have also been increased surveillance and border patrols on Benin, Chad, and Cameroon to monitor and prevent illegal border crossings. The Nigerian military has been engaged in various operations aimed at curtailing criminal activities in the North East region. These operations include Operation Lafiya Dole in 2015 to combat the activities of insurgents and illegal emigrants in northern Nigeria. Government has also encouraged the establishment of community policing initiatives to enhance security and intelligence gathering at the grassroots level. This approach involves the collaboration of community members with law enforcement agencies to report and arrest criminal activities. However, fear on the part of community members are reducing the effectiveness of this policy track.

Government also explore diplomatic engagements. The Nigerian government has engaged in diplomatic efforts with neighboring countries such as Niger republic, Chad, Cameroon and the Gulf of Guinea to curtail cross-border criminal activities. These efforts include the signing of bilateral agreements with neighboring countries to enhance intelligence sharing and border control. As revealed by a senior officer of the Nigerian Correctional Centre, the government's border control efforts have led to the interception of illegal immigrants and weapons. The establishment of community policing initiatives by the federal government has helped to improve intelligence gathering and cooperation between law enforcement agencies and community members. There are also working understanding between Nigerian security units and its neighboring states.

The establishment of the North East Development Commission (NEDC) in Nigeria is of great relevance due to its focus on the post-conflict reconstruction, rehabilitation, and development of the North East region. The NEDC is specifically dedicated to addressing the developmental challenges in the North East region. By focusing on the region's needs, the NEDC can channel resources, expertise, and programs towards targeted development efforts, including infrastructure rebuilding, social services, and economic revitalization. The NEDC serves as a central body responsible for coordinating and harmonizing development activities in the North East. It provides a platform for strategic planning, resource mobilization, and effective implementation of programs and projects. The NEDC plays a crucial role in rebuilding critical infrastructure in the Northeast cities. Schools, healthcare facilities; roads, water supply, and power infrastructure that were damaged during conflict are being rebuilt as policy initiative. The NEDC places importance on socioeconomic empowerment in the Northeast. It supports various initiatives aimed at creating employment opportunities, promoting entrepreneurship, and revitalizing agricultural activities and other income-

generating sectors. This focus on economic empowerment can contribute to poverty reduction, enhance resilience, and improve the livelihoods of the affected population. The NEDC recognizes the need for peace building and reconciliation efforts in the aftermath of the conflict and is vigorously pursuing it as its mandate. It supports initiatives that foster social cohesion, dialogue, and community reconciliation to promote harmony. By addressing the underlying causes of the conflict and promoting peaceful coexistence, the NEDC contributes to long-term stability and prevention of future conflicts.

The Presidential Initiative on the North East (PINE) was a program established by the Nigerian government to address the humanitarian and developmental challenges in the North East cities in Nigeria. The relevance of PINE lies in its comprehensive approach to addressing the multidimensional challenges in the Northeast cities. PINE aimed to provide immediate relief and support to the affected population in the North East. This includes the provision of food, shelter, healthcare, and other essential services to internally displaced persons (IDPs) and vulnerable communities. By addressing the immediate humanitarian needs, PINE sought to alleviate the suffering caused by the conflict. PINE recognized the need for long-term reconstruction and development in the region. It focused on rebuilding critical infrastructure such as schools, hospitals, roads, and water supply systems damaged during the conflict. By investing in infrastructure, PINE aimed to improve the quality of life and create an enabling environment for economic recovery. PINE placed emphasis on economic empowerment and revitalization in the North East. It aimed at creating employment opportunities, promoting entrepreneurship, and supporting the revival of agricultural activities and other income-generating projects. By fostering economic growth, PINE sought to reduce poverty, enhance resilience, and contribute to long-term stability in the region. PINE recognized the importance of fostering social cohesion and reconciliation in the aftermath of the conflict. It supported community-level initiatives, dialogue processes, and traditional conflict resolution mechanisms to promote understanding, healing, and social harmony. By addressing the root causes of the conflict and promoting peaceful coexistence, PINE aimed to prevent the resurgence of violence.

Why Government Policy Tracks are not Yielding Results

Irregular transnational migration is a complex issue that requires the cooperation of various stakeholders, including the government, civil society, neighboring states and international organizations. However, as revealed by a senior officer of National Security and Civil Defence Corps, corruption, religion, and sabotage have all contributed to the challenges faced by the government in tracking irregular migration in Nigeria. Its takes very strong commitment of government to bring these stakeholders together. Most of the neighboring states have their hidden national interest that they guide jealously.

Corruption is one of the major challenges confronting Nigeria's efforts to combat irregular migration. Corrupt officials often look the other way when illegal migrants enter the country. As revealed by a member of the Miyetti Allah Cattle Breeders Association, some security officials take bribes to facilitate entry of illegal emigrants. Thus, corruption has hindered effective border control

mechanisms and the implementation of policies aimed at curbing irregular migration. Corruption among some law enforcement officials has undermined the effectiveness of some of these measures. For example, some officials are guilty of taking bribes to allow illegal immigrants into Nigeria. Such corrupt practices have hindered efforts to curb irregular immigration and criminalities in Nigerian cities. Corruption is a major problem in Nigeria that makes it difficult for people to access legal channels of migration. Bribery and corruption make it easier for illegal emigrants to pass having paid off officials to look the other way.

At the same time, corruption also makes it difficult for legitimate migrants to obtain the necessary documents for travelling because some officials take bribes. Nigeria has consistently performed poorly in corruption perception index and rankings. According to the Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) 2021, Nigeria ranks 149th position in corruption out of 180 countries, and with a score of 26 out of 100 on integrity test. This indicates a high level of perceived corruption in the country. The CPI measures the perceived levels of public sector corruption in a country by aggregating data from various sources, including expert assessments and surveys of business people and citizens. The scores range from 0 (highly corrupt) to 100 (very clean). Nigeria's poor performance in the CPI is attributable to various factors, including weak law enforcement, lack of accountability, political interference in law enforcement and the judiciary, and widespread bribery and embezzlement of public funds. However, government has taken some steps to address corruption, such as the establishment of anti-corruption agencies like Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) and Independent Corrupt Practices and other Offences Commission (ICPC), that arrest and prosecute corruption cases. However, there is still much work to do in order to improve Nigerian corrupt behavior. For instance, there are allegations that officials of EFCC, for instance, are also corrupt. The removal of immediate chair of EFCC, Abdul Rasheed Bawa was suspicious of corruption.

Religion and tribalism also play key role in weakling of government policies in curbing irregular migration. Nigeria is a multi-ethnic and multi-religious country, and sometimes unable to cooperate in addressing irregular migration. As revealed by a senior military officer, some officials are willing to help migrants from their ethnic or religious group to gain entry into Nigeria illegally. Nigeria is a religious diverse country, with Christianity and Islam being the dominant faiths. While religion itself is not the direct cause of irregular migration, religious differences and tensions create social divisions that affect the efficacy of government policies. If religious tensions arise, it can divert attention and resources away from addressing migration issues, making it more challenging to implement cohesive policies and initiatives. Tribalism on the other hand, characterized by loyalty to one's ethnic group over the nation hinder effective policies of government. In some cases, tribal affiliations influence the actions of government officials, leading to bias, favoritism, or discrimination in the enforcement of migration laws. It indirectly undermines the fairness and effectiveness of government interventions.

Sabotage refers to deliberate acts aimed at obstructing government efforts to address irregular migration. These acts can come from various sources, including criminal networks, extremist groups, or even individuals with

primordial interests. Sabotage can take the form of attacks on security forces, destruction of infrastructure, or dissemination of misinformation to disrupt government operations. Such activities make it harder for authorities to effectively monitor borders, apprehend illegal emigrants, and dismantle smuggling networks. As explained by a senior immigration officer, some individuals or groups intentionally cause problems at the borders to create opportunities for bribery that would enable illegal emigrants pass. Several border towns have fought law enforcement agents who were on duty because they are accomplice to illegal immigrants. Because of civil rule requirement, most immigration officials become helpless and succumb to the antics of the movers of such frustration.

Recommendations

Flowing from the above discussion, the study suggests the following recommendations:

Tracking the challenge of irregular migration requires a comprehensive approach that addresses both the immediate and underlying factors. Nigeria requires a holistic decision on socio-economic and political factors that make irregular migration to thrive. Government needs to work together with other neighboring states to share intelligence, coordinate efforts, and implement joint initiatives to combat irregular migration, and its associated criminal activities. Furthermore, international organizations, non-governmental organizations, and civil society groups need to play a crucial role in providing assistance and protection to irregular migrants, raising awareness about the dangers of irregular migration, and advocate policy reforms. Government needs more enlightenment programs on its advocacy.

Security of Nigerian borders is key. Therefore, government should make it a priority to secure the borders more by recruiting and posting adequate military personnel to Nigerian border posts. Security operatives should be more vigilant in discharging their duties diligently without compromising the integrity of the nation. There is need for regular training of the Nigerian immigration service for them to be more diligent and shun corruption. Government needs to give the welfare of security agencies the desired attention for them to do away with corruption. The EFCC and ICPC should lay good example by discharging its duties more professionally.

Government should also implement its policy on illegal emigration to the letter. There should be sanctions on anyone found flouting Nigerian emigration laws. Concerned agencies of government should apply enabling Acts of the National Assembly on illegal emigration into Nigeria. There is need for synergy among the government and the people in border towns on the issue. There is need for constant reassessment of the governmental policies. The national interest should override tribal, religious or political interest on government policy decisions.

Conclusion

There is influx of foreigners into Nigerian cities through irregular migration. Most irregular immigration into the country are due to porous borders, especially in the northeastern Nigeria. Illegal immigrants engage in criminalities such as banditry, kidnapping, killing, robbery, and so on. The Nigerian government has taken several measures, such as increased budget on security, establishment of North East Development Commission,

operation safe corridor, presidential initiative on the North East, military and multinational joint task forces to address the menace. Unfortunately, corruption, religion, sabotage, and tribalism have subverted the good policies of government in tracking the menace. The study concluded that land borders in the northern parts of Nigeria are too porous, and expose cities in the zone to more criminalities.

References

1. Adebawale A. Corruption in Nigeria: review, causes, effects and solutions. *Journal of Public Administration and Governance*. 2020;10(2):103-121. Retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/341277238_Corruption_in_Nigeria_Review_Causes_Effects_and_Solutions.
2. Castles S, de Haas H, Miller MJ. *The age of migration: International population movements in the modern world*. Palgrave Macmillan; c2013.
3. Choucri N. Migration and security: Some key linkages. *Journal of International Affairs*. 2002;56(1):97-122.
4. Collyer M. Migrants, migration and the security paradigm: Constraints and opportunities. *Mediterranean Politics*. 2006;11(2):255-270.
5. Huysmans J, Vicky S. Migration and security. In Dunn Cavelty *et al.* (Eds.), *Handbook of security studies*. London: Routledge; c2009.
6. International Organization for Migration (IOM). *World Migration Report*; c2020. Retrieved from https://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/wmr_2020.pdf
7. Massey DS, Arango J, Hugo G, Kouaouci A, Pellegrino A, Taylor JE. Theories of international migration: A review and appraisal. *Population and Development Review*. 1993;19(3):431-466.
8. Okeaghene EP. *International Migration and the Study of Socio-Economic Development in Nigeria: The Role of Nigeria Immigration Service*. Unpublished Dissertation, Department of Political Science and International Relations, Covenant University, Ota, Ogun State; c2017.
9. Okoli U. *Corruption in Nigeria: A diagnostic review*. African Development Bank Group; c2019. Retrieved from <https://www.afdb.org/en/documents/corruption-nigeria-diagnostic-review>
10. Portes A. Immigration theory for a new century: Some problems and opportunities. *International Migration Review*. 1997;31(4):799-825.
11. Ronald DA. Europe's Eastern promise. *Rethinking NATO and EU enlargement*, *Foreign Affairs*; c2008 Jan-Feb.
12. Transparency International. *Corruption Perceptions Index 2021: Nigeria*; c2021. Retrieved from <https://www.transparency.org/en/cpi/2021/index/nga>
13. Transparency International. *Corruption Perceptions Index*; c2020. Nigeria. Retrieved from <https://www.transparency.org/en/cpi/2020/index/nga>
14. Ullah AKMA, Kumpoh A. Are borders the reflection of international relations? Southeast Asian borders in perspective. *Journal of Asian Security and International Affairs*. 2018;5:295-318.
15. Ullah AKMA, Huque AS. Migration led by demoralization in Bangladesh: Sense of insecurity-based decision-making model. *Asian Journal of Comparative Politics*. 2019;5(2):1-20.
16. United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC). *Global Study on Smuggling of Migrants 2018*. Retrieved from https://www.unodc.org/documents/data-and-analysis/glosom/GLOSOM_2018_ExecutiveSummary_web_small.pdf
17. United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). *Global Trends: Forced Displacement in 2019-2020*. Retrieved from <https://www.unhcr.org/5ee200e37.pdf>
18. Hossain MS, Muhammad G. Cloud-assisted industrial internet of things (iiot)-enabled framework for health monitoring. *Computer Networks*. 2016 Jun 4;101:192-202.