Cross Boarder Crimes and the Need for Effective Policing: The Nigerian Perspective

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A b s t r a c t

The international community can never be comfortable with reports of the rising trend in cross – boarder crimes around the globe. This study examined the need for effective policing of Nigeria's borders with its neighbors following reported criminal activities across such boarders. Data was obtained through secondary sources such as books, journals, periodicals, magazines, newspapers, the internet, etc. It leveraged on the neo-institutional theory (Meyer and Rowen, 1977) for its theoretical framework while the methodology followed content analysis. Results showed that cross boarder crimes between Nigeria and its neighbors are quite on the increase and have adverse effects on the well-being of the country's citizens. Hence, the study recommended that government should muster every resource at its disposal to checkmate this cankerworm.

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Background to the Study

It is obvious that the West African sub-region lacks the appropriate mechanism to monitor cross border crimes within the region. Some of these criminal activities manifest in the form of illicit trafficking of small arms and light weapons/ammunitions, trafficking in human beings especially women and children, smuggling of drugs, cattle rustling, mercenarism and the recruitment and use of child soldiers in armed robbery, '419' activities, and attack by the Boko Haram insurgents. These existence of these criminal activities pose serious challenges for countries in the sub-region. Such challenges include lapses in national security apparatuses and the criminal justice system, uncoordinated state security agencies, weak collaborative efforts and legal regulatory frameworks. According to the head of the UN office on Drugs and crimes and leader of a five-day mission in West Africa, Antonio Mazzitelli, and the weak border security in the sub-region had attracted international criminal networks to Guinea-Bissua. Nigeria also shares in this experience. More startling is the revelation of some neither lucky survivors of kidnapping in recent times that they were adopted by members of kidnap gangs who hail from a neighboring country (Niger) who could neither speak Hausa nor English. They claim to have smuggled themselves during the 2015 electioneering campaigns by some influential Nigerians on what they called special assignment. Many of these criminals live in thick forests and high mountainous areas of Abuja and environments.

Nigeria has suffered a lot of set blacks from cross-border crimes. Both the state security and economy are affected. The country's border with its numerous pot-holes are used to smuggle people, guns, rice, tokunbo (used) cars, fake pharmaceuticals and other contra bands. The North-eastern part of the Nigerian Border which has the highest concentration of border communities can be listed as the most backward due to most difficult terrain, lowest literacy, highest poverty, and unemployment rate. There are several cross-border crimes in Nigeria. Styan (2007) observe that "these crimes include the trade on narcotics and money laundering, and their connections to illegal migration and people trafficking. In the northern eastern parts of this country, the movement of people and arms across borders has created severe security problems in recent years. "Large bands of gunmen, remnants of rebel wars in Niger and Chad in the last two decades, have slipped into Nigeria where they have become bandits, making major highways and isolated towns and villages unsafe" (Onuoha,2013). Police reports in recent times have shown that these criminals have been very active in their involvement as mercenaries in an ethno religious crisis which ravaged the central state of plateau.

A study on the "Borderless-border and internal security challenges in Nigeria" by Osimen, Anegbode, Akande and Oyewale (2017), revealed that the international border between Nigeria and her neighboring countries is roughly 4745 sq.km. The major border countries with Nigeria are Cameroon (1,690 kilometers) in the (1,497 kilometers) in the North, Benin (773 kilometers) in the West and Chad (87 kilometers) in the Northern-east. Osimen, went further to assert Nigeria also shares maritime boundaries with Equatorial Guinea and Sao Tome. According to Bayard et.al, (1999), Williams (1998), "Cross border

crimes in Nigeria have become more pronounced in the 1980s and by the 1990s; although without much empirical evidence, Nigerians are counted amongst the top ranking global syndicates. Thus, it may not be wrong to state that the security and economic implications of cross-border crimes for Nigeria are as numerous as the neighboring states surrounding the country. In an era when every country is making frantic efforts at sustainable development, the consequences of the phenomenon are likely to overwhelm the capabilities of many individual nations. This is quite worrisome and demands a concerted effort. It is against such a back drop that this study has taken the responsibility of examining the need for effective policing of the nation's borders. This is the broad objective of the study; it would specifically seek to.

  a) Ascertain the effect of cross border crimes on national security in Nigeria
  b) Examine the economic implications of cross border crimes on the Nigeria..

Research Questions
This study will provide answer to the following research questions-
  a) What effects do cross border crimes have on the Nigerian national security?
  b) Do cross border crimes have implications for the Nigerian economy?

Literature Review
Conceptual Literature
Cross Border Crime: This is a phenomenon that is common among countries with porous borders. It is common among most African countries such as Nigeria. According to Abia (2013), cross border crimes include a number of illegal and notorious activities carried out by individuals and groups across national and international borders either for financial or economic benefits and also socio-political or religious considerations. It is a set of criminal acts whose perpetrators and repercussions go beyond territorial borders. Examples of cross-border crimes are: money laundering, corruption, business fraud, Cross –border terrorism, etc.

National Security: In many countries, national security is defined to include protection of the constitutional order and / or constitutional structures. The Hungarian National Security Service for instance, defines national security interest as ensuring sovereignty and "safeguarding of the constitutional order". Sometimes, protecting senior government officials like he president or prime minister, is considered a national security activity. National security or national defense is the security and defense of a nation state which includes its citizens, economy, and institutions that is regarded as government's responsibility. The New Zealand Intelligence and Security Bill (2016), acknowledges that national security is difficult to define as a concept. However, it goes ahead to conceptualize 'national security as including among others, the protection against –*threats, or potential threats to New Zealand's status as a free and democratic society from unlawful acts or foreign interference.
  i. Imminent threats to the life and safety of New Zealanders overseas
  ii. Threats, or potential threat that may cause serious harm to the safety or quality of life of   the New Zealand population.

iii.   Unlawful acts, or acts of foreign interference that may cause serious damage to New Zealand's economic security or international relations.
iv.   Threats or potential threats to international security.

Nigeria Economy: Definition of economic structure should proceed the definition of an economy. This notwithstanding, Anyanwu (1997), views the 'Nigerian economies' as referring to, 'all such economic activities taking place in the geographical domain of Nigeria (Domestic Economy) or all such economic activities of Nigerian residents wherever in the world they perform such activities. Anyanwu was taking his bearing in his definition from Lipsey (1983), who defined an economy as, any specified collection of interrelated set of marketed and non-marketed productive activities. Literally, economic structure can be defined in terms of institutional arrangements aimed at the decision on what, how and for whom goods and services in an economy are to be provided and consumed.

"Police" and "policing": The police may be defined as a civil organization whose members are given special legal powers by the government to carry arms and ammunition for the task of maintaining public order, solving and preventing crimes and supporting other sister security agencies to achieve internal security in the country. In his own definition, Akuul (2013), perceives police as "a socio-political and quasi-legal institution charged with the responsibility of enforcing criminal law and the maintenance of law and order". Measures and actions taken by variety of institutions and group (both formal and non-formal) in the society (led by the Nigerian Police Force) to regulate social relations and practices in order to secure the safety of members of the society as well as compel them to conform to the norms and values the society expects of them, constitute 'policing'

Empirical Literature
Past and current works on effective policing are hereby presented in a tabular format below.

Table 1: Works on cross-border crimes and need for effective policing in Nigeria.

Name of researcher(s)/year and Title of study	Geographical and content scope	Data source and analytical tools used	Findings/Conclusion/ Recommendation
Folami and Naylor (2017) police and cross border crime in an era of globalization: The case of the Benin-Nigeria Border	West African sub region: police, cross border crime, globalization, Benin-Nigerian border	Primary data through semi-structured interviews. Interview covered a total of 260 police officers in Nigeria and Benin.	Study revealed that globalization is crimogenic and that the phenomenon and crime are mutually constituted but that outcomes are also subjected to localised factors. The study made recommendations to enhance police cooperation to improve security.
Lisakafu, J. (2018) Interregionalism and police cooperation against cross border crimes in East Africa: challenges and prospects	East Africa: Border between Tanzania and Kenya. Interregionalism and police cooperation challenges and prospects.	Primary (field) data. Also, data was obtained from documentaries eg literature review.	The study revealed several challenges faced in the effort to checkmate crimes in the area. The paper recommends security cooperation among states to safeguard the borders.
Mobolaji and Alabi (2017) Trans- border Crime and Nigeria Security: A Study of Seme Border.	West Africa-Nigeria: Seme Border. Trans-border crime and Nigeria security (1999-2017).	Primary and secondary source of data were employed. It engaged the rational choice theory to explain the behavior of individuals as regards crime.	Findings show that the problem with crimes include mainly- a) High level of corruption among the nations' security agents, and b) The porous nature of the borders. The study concludes that measures to enhance the welfare of security agents, improve technologies and reorientation of security agents are necessary to boost the security of the borders.
Adeola and Oluyemi (2012). The political and security implications of cross border migration between Nigeria and her francophone neighbors.	West Africa: cross-border migration, Nigeria and her francophone neighbors.	Secondary data were employed.	The paper recommends Nigeria to move closer to Benin Republic and fashion out measures of joint investment between both countries. According to the paper, this will reduce the tendency of making the country a dumping ground for certain goods.

Theoretical Framework

The Neo-Institutional Theory (Meyer, etal, 1983, Rowan (1977).

The neo-institutional literature perceives institutions as "socially constructed, routine reproduced (ceterisparibus) programs or role systems. They operate as relative fixtures pf constraining environments and are accompanied by taken-for granted accounts (Jepperson, 1999). Institutions are carried by formal organizations, systems which convey a central authority system, and by culture, which gives meaning to the customary and the conventional in daily life. Institutions are also carried by individuals, and provide accounts of the social and legal constructions of individual identity (Freedland and Alford, 1999). The neo-institutional theory outlines three elements of institutionalized organizations as follows:

I) The organization in its behavior and structure, reflects the values in its institutional environment. According to this element, institutionalized organizations are first and foremost in the service of their constituencies. Hence, complexity in the institutional environment is mirrored as organizational complexity. Police department, for example, are frequently under pressure, and may be under court order to hire more minorities or to develop demographic representativeness in their organization. On the other hand, departments can be sure if they fail to use rationalized hiring procedures, and many want to hire more educated officers. The organization responds to the complexity of the problem

through the development of elaborate hiring policy and formal contractual negotiations among the many groups on a regular basis.

ii) To preserve positive relations with their (typically conflicting) constituencies, institutionalized organizations loosely couple formal practices with actual behavior. Complexity of constituent relations are dealt with by loosely coupling the formal position or goals of the agency to the concrete day-to-day working world of its officers. Loose coupling is a derivation of institutionalized organizations. For instance, the official policy of police department –arrest all lawbreakers – is loosely coupled to actual line officer behavior, which is highly discretional and infrequently result in arrest, even with complainant and suspect present (Black 1980). Informal structure sometimes enables officers to continue to police in highly aggressive ways even when formal oversight protocols aim at preventing such behavior (Christopher Commission. Independent commission on the los Angeles Police Department, 1991).

iii) A logic of good faith pervades organizational practices, impeding critical evaluation and supervision. Organizational members believe in the essential rightness of what they do. In police organizations, this can be an obstacle to efforts to critically evaluate ongoing organizational practices. For example, police supervisors tend to uncritically accept the "rotten apple" theory of police deviance; corruption is the result of a few bad police officers who slipped through background screening –though outside inquiries often cite the presence of systemic problems (Knapp Commission, 1986).

The neo-institutionalism covers every aspect of police affairs, hence. its adoption as the theoretical framework of the current study.

Methodology
Data in this study were obtained via secondary sources. Such data were then analyzed in the following sequence:

Research Question one (1): What are the implications of cross-border crimes for the Nigerian national security?

A study of cross-border crimes and security challenges in Nigeria described cross-border crimes as a set of criminal acts whose perpetrators and repercussions go beyond territorial borders. Such crimes were listed in the study to include–human trafficking, money laundering, drug trafficking, arms smuggling or trafficking on weapons, international terrorism, illegal oil bunkering, and illicit trafficking in diamonds, business fraud, etc. The paper noted that these activities have adverse effects on the security or the nation. It goes on to assert that the consequences are so enormous that the activities have turned West Africa to notoriety for instability, armed conflict and transnational criminal networks. Nigeria for instance, has suffered several setbacks from cross-border crimes as both the

state security and economy have been adversely affected. Styan (2007), observed that, "these crimes include the trade in narcotics, money laundering, and their connections to illegal migration and people trafficking".

Some available data on cross-border crimes in West Africa such as human and drug trafficking as well as livestock poaching, show that transnational social networks can have serious negative effects on national security. In Nigeria, for instance, political leaders and government officials including law enforcement officials have accused migrants from other West African countries of various crimes. Adetula (2015), laments that in Lagos state, criminal activities at different times have been attributed to the influx of migrant labor from neighboring countries. Cases of criminal violence in the city and urban centres like, Jalingo, Jimeta, Yola, Gashua, Dikwa, Mubi, Gembu, Damaturu, and Maiduguri are increasingly linked with the presence of immigrants in these communities. Child trafficking in Benin and Nigeria is one dominant form of increasing sophisticated regional trend in cross-border crime.

In a related development, in his study on the 'Challenges of Nigeria Borders and Frontier Security' Babalola (2015), observed that the layers of frontier and cross-border activities in Nigeria have led to controversies and worrisome security challenges that sparked diplomatic rows and near war experience. The paper observed that the greatest challenges facing Nigeria today is international terrorism that is aided by religious extremism, porosity of border line and cross border-security challenges and crimes.

Finally, another study titled "the Borderless border and internal security challenges in Nigeria by Osimen, Anegbode, Akande, Oyewole and Oyindamola (2017), observed that "the problem of security as a result of the borderless borders in Nigeria has become one of the most intractable challenges facing the country today". It further observed that, "in recent time, the security challenges in Nigeria and its border crime are alarming, especially as regards the activities of the terrorist group known as "Boko Haram" in which lives and properties are no longer secure".

Research Question Two (2): Do cross-border crimes have implications for the Nigeria economy?

In his study titled, "Trans-border crime and its socio-economic impact on developing economies, Ering (2011), asserts that cross-border crimes "significantly affect the economies of developing societies and possess the capacity of undermining and fueling insecurity across the globe". The paper believed that organized criminal activities affect our joint security, stability of the region, economic and core democratic values. The study concluded that the extent and magnitude of the problem necessitates a definite strategy with the broad frame of Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) as a sub-regional body to deal with it. Public –private partnership may also be involved.

Available literature on trans-border crimes reveals that no region or country of the world is spared of the phenomenon. Hence, Meatens (2007), argued that the problem of crime and violence, the drug trade, trafficking in weapons, and others are factors which make the Caribbean countries and their economies most vulnerable. Ntuli (2007) in his study of Somopho region of South Africa found that the area is fraught with problems of high unemployment levels and lack of physical infrastructures. These have affected level of criminality and community development.

Jobe (2010) identified the youth as persons at the Centre of criminality in the West African sub-region. Furthermore, Jobe (2010) observed that "young people have the potential which should be channeled or harnessed more appropriately toward productive ventures instead of engaging in criminal activities". The argument in this case is that, a well-equipped, knowledgeable, disciplined, and sophisticated crop of young people in our countries and the sub-region at large, will not only guarantee sustained socioeconomic development but also ensure that the desire of the founding fathers of ECOWAS on the ideal of sub-regional integration can be achieved with time.

Findings
This study exposed the following:
1. The international border between Nigeria and her neighboring countries is roughly 4745sq.km.
2. The major border countries with Nigeria are: Cameroon (1,690 kilometer) in the east, Niger (1,497 kilometer) in the north and Chad (87 kilometer) in the north east, Benin (773 kilometer) in the west
3. Cross-border crimes across Nigeria's borders manifest in form of human trafficking, money laundering, drug trafficking, arms smuggling or trafficking of weapons, international terrorism, illegal oil bunkering, and illicit trafficking in diamonds, business fraud, etc.
4. The above criminal activities have adverse effects on the security of the nation.
5. The activities listed above have turned West Africa to be perceived as notorious for instability, armed conflict and transnational criminal networks.
6. Both the state security and the economy have suffered serious setbacks from cross-border crimes.
7. Cases of criminal violence in the cities like Jalingo, Jimeta, Yola, Gashua, Dikwa, Mubi, Gembu, Damaturu, and Maiduguri, are increasingly linked to the presence immigrants in the communities.
8. Child trafficking in Benin and Nigeria is one form of increasing sophisticated regional trade in cross-border crimes.
9. Cross-border crimes in the layer of international terrorism which is made manifest in the activities of Boko Haram, have led to a situation whereby lives and property in Nigeria are no longer secured.
10. It was found that organized criminal activities significantly affect the economies of developing economies such as Nigeria.
11. Many youths are engaged in the criminal activities which they found lucrative.

Conclusion

This paper examined cross-border crimes across Nigeria and the need for effecting policy of the country's frontiers. It employed the technique of content analysis and data obtained from secondary materials-books, journals, periodicals, newspapers, the internet. Results from the study revealed that cross-border crimes across Nigeria borders have continued to increase in the areas of incidence and sophistication to the extent that these activities now constitute serious challenges not only to the national security and stability of Nigerian polity, but also to the socioeconomic development of the country, it is for this reason that this paper believes that for the nation not to degenerate to the status of a failed state due to dwindling economic fortunes and intractable security challenges. It is this vein that the paper makes a number of suggestions.

Suggestions

1. The security architecture of the state (Nigeria) must be beefed up to ensure a significant improvement on the security situation in the country, particularly the border and some urban cities like Maiduguri, Jimeta, Mubi, Yola, etc to mention only a few. This is due to large expanse of the national borders which is put at 4745 sq.km.
2. Nigeria must also use its diplomatic channels to secure the cooperation of its neighbors on border security patrols from their own ends.
3. Like the Islamic state terrorists (ISIS), it is high time the government mustered all efforts to ensure Boko Haram is nibbed in the bud.
4. Child trafficking between Benin and Nigeria must be addressed and dealt the final blow.
5. Measures and policies should be emplaced to make the illegal cross-border criminal activities unattractive while government embarks on moves to ensure employment for the youths. This is the only way to return the youths to productive ventures.
6. Government must do all it takes to ensure the security of lives and property. This is its first constitutional obligation.

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