

AFRICA AND BORDER SECURITY

Mgbonyebi V. C. (Ph.D) & Umerah Ezenwani Stephen
University of Delta, Agbor, Delta State, Nigeria

Email: voke.mgbonyebi@unidel.edu.ng & stephen.umerah@unidel.edu.ng

ABSTRACT

This study which is on Africa and Border Security aims to clarify a pivotal role in ensuring the stability, sovereignty, and socio-economic development of nations. This study focuses on the unique challenges faced by African countries in maintaining effective border security and explores the implications of inadequate border management. Africa's vast geographical expanse, diverse terrain, and extensive coastlines present significant challenges to achieving robust border security. To address these challenges, African countries need to prioritize comprehensive border security strategies. Strengthening institutional frameworks is crucial for enhancing border management capabilities, equipping border security personnel, and establishing specialized units dedicated to border security operations. The study further highlights potential strategies and recommendations for enhancing border security in Africa. Application of modern technology is another vital aspect of effective border security. Deploying modern surveillance systems, such as radar systems, drones, and advanced biometric identification tools, can enhance situational awareness, improve response times, and facilitate the detection of illicit activities. In conclusion, border security in Africa is a complex and multifaceted challenge with wide-ranging implications for national security, socio-economic development, and regional stability. , Africa should adopt policies that will transform border areas from deplorable conditions and put in place effective and efficient machinery that would speed up developmental process. This would deter youths from being exploited by subversive criminals. Also, adopting a comprehensive approach that encompasses institutional strengthening, technological advancements, regional collaboration, African nations can effectively address border security challenges and pave the way for a safer, prosperous, and interconnected future.

KEYWORDS: *Security, Porous borders and Border Crisis.*

INTRODUCTION

Africa and border security plays vital role in ensuring the stability, sovereignty, and social economic development of nations. Africa faces various challenges related to border security due to its vast geographical size, porous borders, and complex political and social-economic dynamics.

African countries are compounded by globalization that is tearing down traditional borders through the advancement of technology and transformation of international relations. Okumu, W. (2011).

Rising in volume of cross-border trading and movement of people from their countries of origin in search of greener pastures elsewhere have put enormous pressure on border security control. It is a wakeup call for African countries to put in place effective border security measure to minimize border tension, increase joint enforcement and surveillance efforts, decrease organized crime activities by syndicates.

This is done to generate common understanding amongst actors involved in the border region and device means to address security challenges in term of flow of goods and people in the spirit of regional and continental integration, promotion of sense of security and well-being among the border population. Nte et al (2011). Despite the efforts of the cross border security agencies like the Nigerian Police, Custom services, immigration services e.t.c. African borders have been described as porous allowing all sorts of trans-border criminal activities such as human trafficking, smuggling activities, like drugs, arm robbery, money laundry and illicit arms trafficking resulting to proliferation of small and light weapons. It's estimated that about 100 million are found in Africa,

about 30 million in Sub-Saharan Africa and 8 million in West Africa alone (Ibrahim 2003; Stohl and Tuttle 2009, Nte 2011). It is established that between 1999 and 2003 there were over 30 community clashes, sectarian violence and ethno-religious conflicts with each claiming hundreds of lives and properties as well as internal displacement of women and children.

This study tends to invoke the vicious and experiences of state actors and attempts to analyze the issue of border security problems in Africa. Therefore, permit me to point out here that the cross border activities of Africa and her neighbouring countries since independence has been bedeviled by controversies and worrisome security challenges that sparked diplomatic rows and near war experiences; Of course, involuntary migration which allows for women and child trafficking, abduction etc is the socio-economic cum political implications of migration on our border security; ascertain the porosity of Africa's border caused by the porosity of our borderline. Meanwhile, the objective of this study is to examine its effect on the corporate existence of our Nation-State and by extension proffer way forward and by so doing, we must have fulfilled our mandate of filling the vacuum generated in the course of this study.

Theoretical Framework

Rational Choice or Decision Making Theory pioneered by Sociologist George Hamas in 1961 provided basic framework for the explanation of Africa and Border Security. This theory was grounded in assumptions drawn from behavioural psychology and emphasizes the huge role economics play in human behaviour. According to this theory people are often motivated by money and the possibility of making a profit, calculating the likely costs and benefits of any action before deciding what to do. This theory becomes essential in the elucidation of this study because movement of people from one country to another is induced by socio-economic, cultural and demographic factor which in turn determines the state of Border Security. Besides, the study perceived uncontrolled and illegal Migration as a serious security threat to sustainable socio- economic development of Africa and that is why African leaders should articulate and formulate policies capable of manning its borders and by so doing the government has maximize the benefits of economic, internal and public safety and minimize the cost of threat associated with the irrational practices of migrants. Undoubtedly, Africa has the cognitive ability and resources to articulate and develop more sustainable socio-economic policies to curtail the illicit inflows of people to different countries considering the economic implications of their actions on Border Security. In fact, issues of Africa and Border Security have drawn much attention in the scientific research and practice and the objectivity of the theory we adopted in the course of our illumination cannot be over emphasized. Therefore, since the voluntary movement of the people are motivated by their personal wants and goals and are driven by personal desires, Africa should come up with alternative courses of actions that could deter the inducing factors to migration such as good road, good health centre and other social amenities. The study was based on the method of abstraction and comparism; data were collected through secondary sources and analyzed through expository mechanism. Coincidentally, this study will help African leaders generally to adopt policy that will curtail the inflows of unscrupulous elements into African countries and by so doing device means to boast Border security and social coherence thereby filling the vacuum created by our porous Border. It will also help in the reduction of proliferation of arms or dangerous weapons in circulation and strengthen the confidence of the general public on Africans leaders' ability to protect lives and properties of the citizenry. Furthermore, this study will bridge the existing gap between the past and present literature on Africa and Border security thereby adding to the pool of body knowledge already existing in the area under study.

Review of Related Literature

Socio-Economic and Political Implications of Africa and Border Security For more than three decades now Africa's security apparatus and agenda have been under attack by nefarious gangs who infiltrated into African countries from our neighbouring countries to unleash havoc on the innocent

citizenry thereby undermining the power of government and political office holders who by virtue of social contract theory are duty bound to protect the lives and properties of the common masses who voted them into position of trust. One of the fundamental responsibilities of any functioning government is to provide ample security for the people, private and public concerns by exercising its sovereign right to control who crosses its border so as to forestall the negative consequences of migrants incursion such as epidemiological situation or spread of infectious diseases, women and child trafficking, trafficking of illicit drugs, proliferation of arms, ethnic and religious conflict, fusty ecological conditions, youth restiveness, smuggling of contraband goods to name but a few. The factors outlined above which are facilitated by our porous border undoubtedly threaten the corporate existence of Africa as a continent. Involuntary migration in the work of Moyo I. et al (2021), has adverse repercussions for migrants themselves. This is obvious because the victims of trafficking are usually women or children who are often exploited in domestic work or sex industry and these are abuse of their human right. Meanwhile, according to Sanjari M. et al (2014)), labelling any issue security threat has significant implications on the socio-economic, religious, political, cultural, laws, norms and policies of the country in question. This is why Harold Brown: a one- time US Secretary of Defense defined national security as the ability to preserve the nation's physical integrity and territory; to maintain its economic relationship with the rest of the world on reasonable terms; to preserve its nature, institution and governance from disruption from outside; and to control its Border.

The advent of the African Union brought a sense of hope to the continent of Africa. The whole idea made everyone optimistic that the African Union structure and mandate would enable it to take responsibility for promoting development, peace and security in Africa. A plan to confront the prevalence of insecurity and its threats on the continent. Again, the Assembly of Head of State of the African Union adopted a protocol which established the Common African Defense and Security Policy. Africa and border security gave rise to measures which were part of the African Unions wilding desire to take ownership of managing peace and security in Africa following decades of Post-Colonial foreign interference and deepening human insecurity on the continent. These formal measures remain a growing socio-political challenge across many parts of contemporary Africa. Also, the incessant attacks by Boko Haram, Al – Shabab, AØim and Ansar Dine in Africa imply that the African Union and its counter terrorism strategies and policies are inefficient, ineffective and problematic. Africa and border security is often viewed through the lenses of state interest and this inform why terrorism is narrowly defined by African Union to involve only non-state actors. Ewi and Aning 2006, Vires 2013. Moreso, the peace and security council (P.S.C.) protocol refers to the Regional Economic committees (RECs) as part of the overall security architecture of the African Union and therefore the need to develop formal coordination, harmonization and cooperation between countries is very important; Makinda and Okumu 2007 Vine A. (2013), African Unions peace and security council protocol acknowledges the contribution of region mechanism in the maintenance of peace, security and stability and the need to develop formal coordination, harmonization and cooperation between them. However, there are also internal rivalries among the various states and lack of political will and commitment to the course Vine 2013. Moreso, there are often logistical, financial resources and state capacitive challenges in implementation of border security framework.

Meanwhile, according to Aliome (2019) labelling any issue security threat has significant implications on the socio-economic, religious, political, cultural, laws, norms and policies of Africa. This is why Harold Brown: a one- time US Secretary of Defense defined national security as the ability to preserve the nation's physical integrity and territory; to maintain its economic relationship with the rest of the world on reasonable terms; to preserve its nature, institution and governance from disruption from outside; and to control its border. Some scholars (see e.g. Ewi M. & Aning (2006) have argued that beyond posing Constraints, African borders also provide opportunities and can also act as conduits for local level economic and other activities For instance, focusing on the Ghana-

Togo border, Nugent (2019) shows that local cross border actors welcomed the existence of the border to the extent that it provided opportunities for local level cross border activities from which they benefitted. As a result, smuggling across the Ghana-Togo border was not necessarily a resistance to the state border by the informal local actors, but also amounted to a consolidation of the same Nugent (2019). This is because the border also created opportunities for local entrepreneurs who used it as a resource to grow and entrench their informal cross border economic activities, or what Moyo and Laine, (2021) refers to as arbitrage economies. In this sense, the border in question did not necessarily pose a constraint but was a conduit for cross border activities whose sustenance depended on the border in question. This essentially means that such economic activities existed because of the border, which provided a conducive environment for human agency in the context of cross border economic activities to thrive. Despite the artificiality and arbitrariness of African borders, which were imposed by European colonizers at the 1884-85 Berlin conference, they have been maintained. Another is that, globally, Africa is the most partitioned continent but this has not affected the stability of the Berlin borders-they have not been successfully contested. Therefore, the subjugation of African people and the imposition of a Westphalian state system resulted in manufactured nation-states. These invented borders and nation-states were maintained through terror and this has survived into the post-independence period, Moyo and Laine, (2021). Addoh, P. (2013) characterizes this as the colonial present or coloniality. This essentially means that the relationship between states varies along a continuum and includes alliances, friendship, and fear and this may be predicated on among others, ideological differences/similarities, historical and ethnic factors. The suggestion is that the security of a state is dependent on the security of other states at the micro and macro levels. This is the logic within which the notion of the security complex arises because "a group of states whose primary security concerns link together sufficiently closely that their national securities cannot realistically be considered apart from one another", suggests a security interface beyond a nation- state Buzan, (1991).

Cumulatively, the purpose of Africa and Border security is to uphold values and the most fundamental value of any nation is survival, self-preservation and collective progress. But the perception of migration into Africa should be viewed from the perspective of porous border which facilitate large scale of inflow of migrants into African Countries and their presence represents a serious security threat to the corporate existence of Africa as a continent.

Africa and border security have the following key features as highlighted below:

Boundary – The term has no clearly defined meaning. It is generally referred to as line that marks the confines or divides two continuous territories. It defines the physical limit of a state's territorial and physical jurisdiction. A boundary, on the other hand, is „a strip, surface, or line that separates, defines some other-wise homogeneous areas“. It is sign or mark on particular facet. Compared to a border, a boundary is a narrow phenomenon. As Anderson puts it, a boundary is "the line of delimitation or demarcation" but equally denotes a frontier of the political and administrative jurisdiction of a given political entity.

Border – This term is used interchangeably with boundary, is a region or area struggling a boundary or the area adjacent to a boundary. This area may or may not be located exactly on the boundary. Some borders such as airports are located hundreds of kilometers away from the boundaries. Customs officials usually define border as any place at, or within 12 nautical mile limit where state exercise statutory authority. Borders assign national identities. A nation's boundaries puts people under one entity, define their lifestyles, national culture including language, destiny, privileges (e.g right to vote, enjoy welfare, benefit and certain right denied non-citizens).

Borderland – This is a zone adjacent to a boundary in which the lives of the inhabitants are influenced by interactions with their neighbors on the other side of the boundary. The third concept is the borderland, representing the outlying regions of two countries. It specifically refers to a transition area between two distinctive areas, instead of clear cut-off mark or line. It exists on each

side of a border. In a microcosm, borderlands showcase the fuzzy social, cultural, religious and ethnic compositions, relations or affinities. People living in borderlands often continue to maintain their natural affinities regardless of obstructions imposed by arbitrarily-imposed borders.

Frontier – This not an historical term for boundary. It has the same meaning as border and borderland, that is a zone of an area on either side of a boundary, Lord Curzon of Kedleston in 1907 called Frontier “the razor’s edge on which hang suspended the modern issues of war or peace, of life or death to nation”.

Sources of African Border Insecurity

Africa faces various sources of border insecurity, which can be attributed to a combination of historical, political, social, and economic factors. Some key sources of border insecurity in Africa include:

1. **Colonial Legacy:** The borders in Africa were mostly drawn by European colonial powers without considering the ethnic, cultural, and tribal divisions. This has led to border disputes and tensions among different ethnic groups, as well as the marginalization of certain communities.
2. **Resource Conflicts:** Africa is rich in natural resources such as oil, diamonds, gold, and minerals. Competition for control over these resources often leads to conflicts and border disputes between neighboring countries, as they seek to exploit and profit from these resources.
3. **Political Instability:** Many African countries have experienced political instability, including coups, civil wars, and weak governance. These conditions create power vacuums and allow armed groups and militias to take control of border regions, leading to insecurity and violence.
4. **Ethnic and Tribal Tensions:** Africa is ethnically and culturally diverse, with numerous tribes and ethnic groups. Tensions and conflicts between different ethnic groups can spill over into border areas, exacerbating border insecurity.
5. **Transnational Crime:** Border regions often become hubs for transnational criminal activities such as human trafficking, drug smuggling, arms trafficking, and smuggling of contraband goods. Weak border control and corruption facilitate these illicit activities, undermining security and stability in the region.
6. **Terrorism and Extremism:** Several African countries face the threat of terrorism and extremism, with groups like Boko Haram in Nigeria, Al-Shabaab in Somalia, and various jihadist movements operating across borders. These groups exploit porous borders to launch attacks, recruit fighters, and move across territories.
7. **Refugees and Displacement:** Ongoing conflicts and political instability in various African countries have resulted in large numbers of refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs). The movement of people across borders can strain resources, create social tensions, and potentially lead to border disputes.
8. **Border Control and Governance Challenges:** Many African countries face challenges in effectively managing and controlling their borders. Limited resources, corruption, and weak institutions contribute to porous borders, making it difficult to enforce immigration laws, combat smuggling, and maintain security.

However, It is important to note that these factors are interconnected and often reinforce each other, creating complex security challenges for African countries. Addressing border insecurity requires comprehensive approaches that include diplomatic negotiations, conflict resolution, capacity building, and regional cooperation among African nations.

CONCLUSION

In spite of the Africa and border security challenges, the criminal activities at the border undermines the security formations Africa’s porous border is the underlying factor that precipitates infiltrations of terrorists, bandits and contraband goods across Africa borders. Security of international land borders which are largely unmanned by security officials. Migration processes are an important

factor of socio- economic, cultural and demographic development and largely determines the state of border security at all levels ranging from Citizen Security, Public Security and Security of the State as a whole. This is why uncontrolled Migration represents Security threat to sustainable socio-economic development of Africa. Coincidentally, the synergy between Africa and Border security is often viewed through economic, internal and public safety lens and this informs the reason, we adopted rational choice or decision making theory as our theoretical framework in the course of our elucidations. Notwithstanding, the basic elements of Africa and Border Security cannot be diverged or distanced from the prism of socio-economic paradigm Which encompasses job, water, good environment and food security otherwise security policy would be of no use to unemployed and hungry citizens that constitute majority of the continents populations. The significant impact of Africa and Border Security is such that Africa as a continent should take cognizance of the fact that globalization or openness without control encourages border crimes: smuggling, child and women trafficking, small and light weapons trafficking and trafficking of narcotics across the border. And at the same time the victims suffer physical assault and threat of violence of self and family, psychological issues, constant rape and harassment by security official Also, the regular trans-border crimes with Africa Sub-regions impeded the alternation relatives with her close neighbours, which they have observed that some of these security programmes and activities overlap even by deploying modern surveillance systems, such as radar systems, drones, and advanced biometric identification tools, can enhance situational awareness, improve response times, and facilitate the detection of illicit activities. However, more measures should be considered for socio-economic development and regional stability and enhanced transnational co-operation among African borders.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Historicizing and contextualizing border security in Africa has also been least investigated. Research on Africa and border security has not been deepened enough to consider the African socio-politico-economic and historical context, more work needs to be done as soon as possible to forestall certain mistakes made in the past.
- More so, the transnational nature of contemporary security issues calls for enhanced transnational co-operation. A state even a powerful one cannot mitigate security on its own. However, interstate co-operation alone is not sufficient. So more proactive measures should be drawn on the resources of international organization.
- Also, the study observed that some of these security programmes and activities overlap even by deploying modern surveillance systems, such as radar systems, drones, and advanced biometric identification tools, can enhance situational awareness, improve response times, and facilitate the detection of illicit activities.
- Again, Border security in Africa is a complex and multifaceted challenge with wide-ranging implications for national security, more measures should be considered for socio-economic development and regional stability. Since, the underlying causes of cross border crimes have links to economic disparity, absence of social amenities and poverty, Africa should adopt policies that will transform border areas from deplorable conditions and put in place effective and efficient machinery that would speed up developmental process. This would deter youths from being exploited by subversive criminals.
- However, adopting comprehensive approach that encompasses institutional strengthening, technological advancements, regional collaboration, and socio-economic development, African nations can effectively address border security challenges and pave the way for a safer, prosperous, and interconnected future.

- Finally, the border communities should ensure proper policing of the national boundaries. This is because communities and traditional rulers know those who belong to them and those who are infiltrators. So they are in a very good position to provide vital information to the security authorities that would help to control the infiltration of dangerous elements.

REFERENCES

- Addoh, P. (2013). Cross Border Criminal Activities in West Africa: Options for Effective Response. African Journal 2013.
- Aliome Collins (2019) Migration And National Security: A Study Of Nigeria's Porous Borders African Journal of Politics and Administrative Studies, Vol. 12(1); June 2019.
- Azar, E. (1994). "Protracted International Conflicts: Ten Propositions", Quoted in Robbie, M. Conflict Resolution and Ethnicity, London: Pager.
- Buzan B. (1991) People States and Fear: An Agenda for International Security Studies in Post-Cold war era. International Journal on security.
- Ewi M. & Aning (2006) Assessing the role of African Union in Preventing and Combating Terrorism in Africa. Journal of African Security Review 32-46.
- Garuba A. S. (2010) Trans-border Economic crimes, illegal oil bunkering and economic Reforms in Nigeria. Online Journal
- Moyo I. et al (2021) Precarity of border and migration regimes in the Southern African Region: Reimagining Border and Migration Management. Routledge, London.
- Nugent P. (2019) Boundaries, Communities and State-Making in West Africa: The Centrality of the Margins. Cambridge University Press 2019.
- Nte N. D. (2011) The Changing Patterns of Small and Light Weapons (S.A.L.W.) Proliferation And the Challenges of National Security in Nigeria. Global journal of Africa studies (1) 5-23.
- Okumu, W. and Botha A. (Eds) (2007) Understanding Terrorism in Africa Building Bridges and Overcoming the Gaps, Pretoria Institute for security studies. Online Journal
- Okumu W. 2011 Border Management and Security in Africa: online Journal.
- Sanjari M. et al (2014) Ethical Challenges of Researchers in Qualitative Studies: The Necessary To Develop a Specific Guideline. Journal of Medical Ethics and History of Medicine 7:14 PI
- Udensi C. E. (2011). Leveraging Indigenous Knowledge Development in the Social Sciences Through Ground Theory Methodology. The ABSU Journal of Sociology Vol. 9.
- Vine A. (2013). A decade of African Peace and Security Architecture. International Journal 2013.