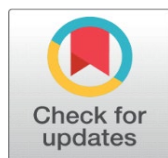


ISSUES AND CHALLENGES IN NIGERIA- NIGER REPUBLIC BORDER SECURITY

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ABSTRACT

This is an open border where contact is predominant and does not function as barrier between the two countries. It is a unique zone of cultural similarities, language, law as well as condition of trade, work, and life. This border is the location for the most intense interactions between the two populations. The border has the highest level of cross-border movement of border residents. Security challenge across this border is attributed to a constant movement of people and goods. This paper is on the issues and challenges of security and social stability along Nigeria-Niger Republic International border. It argues that amongst the various challenges to border security and social stability along the border, corruption, insecurity, porous nature of the border and uncontrollable movement of people are responsible. The persistence of these grim issues makes the border tumbled pathway to heightened state of insecurity and social instability across the border. This is in view of the numerous activities taking place across this border posing security threat. The paper employs reactive re-active model approach as a variant of linkage theory as a tool in understanding the study. Qualitative method was employed for this study. The paper concludes and recommends the study.

Keywords: Border, Security, Issues, Nigeria, Niger Republic

1. INTRODUCTION

A borderland is an area, where two or more political system is intertwined and each influence the socio-economic sphere of bi-lateral relations. The two countries share common border. It is easy to cross to either of the neighbouring states. Accessibility to either of the countries has not been a problem because of the nature of shared boundary.

Their proximity enforces less formal contacts among the different nationalities on both sides of the borderland and improving everyday life. This is because of the level of interaction resulting not only from the existing international frontiers, socio-cultural and economic linkages, but also because of the formal establishment of both

bilateral and multilateral relations between them. The two countries shared certain ethno-cultural and economic similarities which are far more remarkable than the differences manifested between the two countries. It is this shared ethno-cultural and economic variable coupled with the shared international boundaries that made security and other related issues very delicate and complex across these borders. These boundaries dissected various ethnic communities, made it difficult for both states to control their borders [Miles \(1993\)](#).

Major challenge to this border is international movement of people and goods where boundary dissected ethnic group with strong religion, economic, and social ties across this border. Therefore, the paper intends to discuss some security problems posed by these shared common variables and shared international boundary. It is also the intention of this paper to provide some policy measures to overcome or curtail the problem.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Linkage theory was employed as a tool in this study. The theory was propounded by [James \(1973\)](#). He emphasised that, linkage theory denotes any current sequence of behaviour that originates in any system and re-acted to in another. The theory offers more systematic tools of analysis for the investigation of perennial problems of the nexus between domestic politics and foreign policy regarding the domestic and international political spheres as two systems in interactions.

The theory is of great relevance especially for understanding international politics. It is worthy to note that, having decided to employ the theory as a theoretical framework in this study. It is important to know that the theory is of three models as stated by Rosenau- the first is the penetrative, the re-active and the emulative linkages. The paper employs the second model of the theory because it is caused by boundary crossing reactions without direct foreign participation in the decision made within the unit. The variant of linkage theory is useful in the analysis of the chain of events that took place between Nigeria and Niger Republic. For example, Nigeria on several occasions closed down its border with Niger Republic in relations to economic crimes and security problems taking place through the border. Therefore, reactive linkage as an element of linkage theory can be employed as a tool in the analysis of security and challenges along this border.

3. METHODOLOGY

This work is qualitative in nature; thus, the paper strategically reviewed related existing literature such as books, journals, seminar papers, reports etc. as an instrument of data collections. Qualitative methods of data analysis were employed.

4. THEORETICAL DISCUSSION

Security of life and property is the first assignment of any government as nothing could be done under insecurity.

[Igbuzor \(2011\)](#) argued that security challenges are a product of widening inequality, injustice, diseases, and public corruption. [Ogwu \(2011\)](#) argues that their national insecurity lies with the inability to promote social justice and integrate all ethnic nationalities through an enduring reconciliation process. [Ake \(1981\)](#) attributed it to the failed leadership structure in both nations.

[Baramova \(2010\)](#) argues that security appears to have gained importance with the emergence of territorial states in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries when borders became more visible and considered in the context of various aspects of state ideology. [Prescott \(1987\)](#) and [Flint \(2006\)](#) argued that border is region proximate to the boundary. [Kolossoff and Scott \(2013\)](#) argued that border studies have become a research field that encompasses a wide range of disciplines: political science, sociology, anthropology, history, and international law. [Zartman \(2011\)](#) argued that borders do not only concern with physical separation but also with social and psychological separation. Borders are zone that entices people to engage in activities that could be said to be legal or illicit [Zartman \(2011\)](#).

Borders serve different purposes to those who draw them. [Victor \(2015\)](#). [Okumu \(2013\)](#). [Courlet \(1988:58\)](#) argued that open border like that of Nigeria and Niger Republic is a border where contact is constantly made and does not function as barrier between the two socio-economic systems.

Borders between neighboring nation states require understanding that greatly exceeds nationalistic histories and ethnocentric considerations Str assoldo (1983:393) [Brunnet-Jaily \(2007\)](#) argued that borders are characterised by two features; human activities and broader social processes that frame individual action therefore government have to increase cooperation, collaboration and improve security policies [Brunnet-Jaily, \(2007\), p. 1](#).

[Stan \(2004\)](#) argues that security has taken centre stage in the contemporary international system. All are all battling directly and indirectly to improve their domestic and international security status. ([Igbuzor \(2011\)](#), [Oche \(2001\)](#), [Nwagbo and Odigbo \(2013\)](#)), argued that Security can be conceptualized as absence of threats to peace, stability, national cohesion of a country. [Star and Most \(1976\)](#) contends that even if 'a border cause either conflict or cooperation, international integration of border impinges on the range of possible policy options to the decision makers toward interactions with other nations.

5. CHALLENGES TO SECURITY ALONG THE BORDER

Records available to the Nigeria Immigration Service revealed that there are over 1,400 illegal routes between the two countries than approved number of border control posts. The porous natures of the borders of the two countries are factors that influence illegal transactions in, currency and other threatening circumstance. The economy of the two nations also does not provide a ground for better socio-political environment.

The implication is that the border is not safe due to numerous socio-economic activities taking place across the border. William M. Hartung argues that insecurity across this border was due to high influx of arms into different parts of Northwest and Central Africa that share international boundary with the two countries.

6. CHALLENGES FACING NIGERIA AND NIGER REPUBLIC

African countries have been betting with a number of challenges. The environment was replete with the consequences of lack of economic development. Nigeria and Niger Republic are faced with enormous challenges, which demote their ability to foster economic growth and political stability.

The borders between them are artificial which continues to pose a serious challenge to the two countries. Which the boundary delimitation dissected the culturally homogeneous communities from their brothers and sisters.

7. CHALLENGES

7.1. ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL INSTABILITY

Nigeria and Niger Republic suffer the absence of a stable, autonomous, and independent government, unstable national economy, weak political institutions, as a result of multiple policies. As a result, the local community were divided along ethnic, religious, and political norms and values. [AP \(2019\)](#)

Both governments have a high rate of corruption, and abuse of political power between the state actors and non-state actor who take advantage of the government resources and projects, to enrich themselves. There exists a high frequency of political risk in terms of coups, unstable political system, and civil conflicts [AP \(2019\)](#)

7.2. LACK OF TRANSPARENCY, ACCOUNTABILITY & ENFORCEMENT OF RULES

In both countries public institution such as hospitals and schools suffer from poor service quality. Public hospitals had become mere consultation clinics without antibiotics compared to private hospitals. [Collier & Gunning \(1999\)](#). Their political system is serving a limited number of people instead of general.

7.3. UNDIVERSIFIED ECONOMY

In light of the lack of openness to international trade has resulted in the rapid decline slow growth in their economic aspect. [Nurala \(2002\)](#).

7.4. POVERTY AND INEQUALITY

Nigeria and Niger Republic are faced with a higher rate of poverty. Inequality is hindering progress towards the eradication of poverty. Pervasive inequalities remained between rural and urban areas. [Collier & Gunning \(1999\)](#).

In both countries most of the hungry and poor people are from rural areas that relied from agriculture and fisheries. Their livelihood and higher share of their expenditure on food in their household budgets depend on the above. Agriculture and fisheries served as the key to poverty and hunger alleviation.

7.5. GOOD GOVERNANCE

In any government, peace and social stability are independent and indivisible. These factors are prerequisites for economic growth, the fight against poverty and sustainable human development.

7.6. RESULTANT PROBLEM OF ETHNICITY

[David \(2010\)](#). [Ryan \(1990\)](#), argued that Ethnicity has bred the feelings of suspicion, hatred, and distrust among members of various ethnic groups it retarded political integration hence Nigeria and Niger Republic are not an exception of these problems.

7.7. NEGATIVE ATTITUDES OF SECURITY AGENTS AT THE BORDER POST

The corrupt attitude of border official contributes negatively to the border security. The border officials at check points extort money from people this attitude give criminals an easy way to infiltrate the borders, similarly smugglers bribe the border official and find their ways in both the countries. As a consequence, thousands of innocent Nigerian and Nigeriens are being killed into the two countries.

7.8. TRANS-BORDER CRIME

Trans-border crime either for financial or economic benefits or due to political and religious interest such as human trafficking, arm, or drugs across this border area cause security issues especially the influx of arms. The security system is greatly undermined by expounded criminal activity across this border.

7.9. POROUS BORDERS

These are doors and windows to smuggling and other illegal activity which has evolved trans-national crimes and makes such areas transnational crime zones. [Kasaija \(2007\)](#) argues that these borders encourage inflow of weapons and its acquisition easy. And one of the fundamentals of regional instability in Africa, most especially is the recurrent incidence across Nigeria and Niger borders. Auto theft which is currently a daily phenomenon across the border.

Porous borders of the countries, where the movement of persons are untracked leads to a higher level of insecurity. This has caused influx and promotion of militancy and criminality. Adeola and Oluyemi lamented that porous borders have raised a number of questions that result into bitter experiences that the two nations are facing, Nigeria and Niger are among the countries that people get in and get out without proper documentation for crossing the border and proper tracking and checkmating. Furthermore, Niger Republic has a similar territory with Nigeria that is also difficult to control. The porous border of a country has promoted cross-border crime that proved to be a challenge to both countries.

7.10. CORRUPTION

Corruption in the two countries has no moral historical justification. There is widespread of corruption and has a corrosive effect on trust in government and contributes to crime and political disorder. For instance, it flouts and subverts formal process. In legislative bodies it reduces accountability and distorts representation in policy making; in the judiciary compromises the rule of law; and in public administration results in the unequal distribution of services. Generally, it erodes the institutional capacity of government as procedures are disregarded, resources are siphoned off, and public offices are bought and sold. ([Theobald \(1998\)](#), [Atuobi \(2007\)](#))

7.11. UNEMPLOYMENT

The degree with which unemployed youths are roaming on the street is alarming. This leads to a situation whereby they engage in illegal activities such as

kidnapping, robbery, child abduction, and other nefarious activities. The resultant effect of unemployment and poverty is violent crime. This is depicted by recent development in most of the parts in Nigeria and Niger Republic. The failure of administration in both countries to address these challenges among the youths is the causes of insecurity in this country (Adagba (2012)).

8. CONCLUSION

The concepts explained in this study no doubts constitute great obstacles to security and national development. The higher incidence of corruption, unemployment are the key issues in this border and are injurious to the security and social stability across this border. The incidence of these factors is responsible for the threat of peace and integration of the two communities.

Therefore, the government of the two countries should be proactive in securing their borders. Security challenges along the border which caused by trans-border activities are dangerous to both nations. The growing dissatisfaction, discomfort and distress along these borders coupled with the unabating official corruption, high rate of unemployment have heated up other violent crimes which has become leitmotif of Nigeria and Niger Republic social relation along the border.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

Border security is a large task. Therefore, this paper recommends the following strategies: There is need for an allied of bi-lateral arrangement of customs and immigration to enforce minimum standards at international travel. Government of the two countries should provide employment opportunities to the unemployed youths in the region in order to dissuade them from being indoctrinated in various crimes and terrorism.

Finally, the paper argues that preventive measures must involve active pursuit for security agents and other officers alike, in creating more options. There is also needed to revive and reinforce moral values and virtue ethics among the public officers and security agents in the two countries and take a step by codifying these values to guide their conducts, behaviour, and social relations.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

None.

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