



Irregular Migration and Insecurity; Implications for the Development of Rural Communities in Ikwerre L.G.A. of Rivers State

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ABSTRACT

Migration as a phenomenon is as old as man. It occurs in response to either the pull or push factors. This movement could be either internal or external. It could be "regular" in which case the migrants meet the requirements and terms/conditions laid down by both the source (origin) country and the destination point. It could also be "irregular" wherein the migrants adopt means, approaches, and routs which are unacceptable or termed illegal or unlawful by the destination country. When migration is irregular as it were, the migrants are put at risk. This is evident in the case of attacks on and deaths of irregular migrants along the Sahara Desert and the Atlantic Ocean. It also endangers and depletes the human resource base of source communities which in most cases are rural communities, therefore posing a threat to the survival and sustainability of the rural economies. This paper however examines irregular migration and insecurity, its implications for the development of rural communities. It however recommends amongst others that governments should strength their migration laws to provide for more stringent and tougher punishment for those who aid or take part in irregular migration. There should also be a proper security/surveillance measures put in place especially within the border territories to monitor and combat this menace of irregular migration and its attendant consequences.

Key words: Irregular Migration, Insecurity, Rural Economies, Human Resources.

INTRODUCTION

The prevalence of migration outside an official system is on the increase throughout the world. At the present, there is no available and reliable data that gives a precise and accurate information regarding the number and characteristics of these "irregular migrants". However, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) estimated that 10 to 15 per cent of the world's 214 million international migrants in 2010 could be categorised as irregular (IOM, 2010, p. 29 in Craig Loschmann, Katie Kuschminder and Melissa Siegel). The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) report suggest that the developing countries alone account for over one third (UNDP, 2009, p. 23). It is quite clear and imperative to note that those individuals embarking on such undocumented and irregular journey outside the authority of any formal institution, expose themselves to great risk and insecurity. However from the security point of view, the extent of irregular migration and its security challenges may create an unfavorable and difficult condition/ atmosphere necessary for the development of these migrants' source areas which in most cases are rural communities. According to Craig Loschmann, Katie Kuschminder and Melissa Siegel (2017), irregular migration is considered to be simply driven by a lack of ability to migrate through regular channels. This creates some level of insecurity for migrants and non-migrants both at the source and the destination areas. There is however a concern on its implication to the development of rural communities. According to Uehling (2004), critical to defining 'irregular migration' is the recognition of multiple routes into irregularity. The three main routes include individuals entering a country without proper authority, either through clandestine entry or with fraudulent documents; individuals entering with



authority, but overstaying their authority; and individuals deliberately utilising the asylum system. However, irregular migration is defined as the act of crossing borders without proper authority, or of violating conditions for entering another country (Jordan & Düvell, 2002, p. 15). An irregular migrant is therefore an individual who has migrated abroad without official documentation (e.g. tourist visa, work visa, student visa, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees [UNHCR] refugee status), (Craig, Katie and Melissa 2017). Beyond terminology, when reflecting on what may influence an individual to migrate irregularly, one must recognise that in most cases migration in general is not driven by a single motivating factor but rather an array of factors which traverse social, economic, environmental and political considerations (de Haas, 2011; Koser & McAulliffe, 2013). According to Lee [1966], there are four key areas influencing the decision to migrate namely, factors associated with areas of origin, factors associated with destination area, intervening obstacles and personal factors. Migration is perceived as a response by individual, family and community to surmount gap between their life aspirations and limited facilities in their areas of origin [Crivello, 2011; Gabriel, 2006]. Apart from the economic degradation wherein the active labour force can neither be employed publicly nor have the opportunity to own and run their businesses privately, Nigeria has been faced with a rise and increase of crisis on the economic, political, social and security spheres. The spread of violence –political uncertainties, common crimes/criminalities- kidnappings and terrorism throughout the national territory has contributed to create an atmosphere of insecurity and uncertainty to which emigration seemed the only viable and advisable way out for ever growing sectors of the population. At the individual and family level, migration is considered as an effort by young people to pursue better opportunities to improve their quality of life.

Meanwhile, at the regional level, the youth migration will result in high human capital stock in destination areas at the cost of loss in high-skilled young population in the areas of origin [Faggian et al., 2007; Franklin, 2003; winters, 2011]. This is because youth migration, especially the skilled and educated ones, can trigger the disparity of human resource development and inequality of regional development in a country. Previous studies on migration found that the decision to migrate is highly dependent on the migrants' life aspirations as well as existing opportunities to fulfill the aspirations both in origin and destination areas. This study analyzes irregular migration and insecurity, its implications for the development of rural communities. However, the study sets to identify the predominant factors that motivate and encourage irregular migration, establish the relationship between irregular migration and insecurity, and examine the effects of irregular migration and insecurity on the development of rural communities. The study hypothesized that there is no significant difference among the means of the prevailing factors that motivate and encourage irregular migration, and that rural development is not a function of irregular migration and insecurity.



STUDY AREA

Ikwerre Local Government Area of Rivers State is bounded in the North by Imo State, in the East by Echie LGA, in the west by Emohua LGA and in the South by Obio Akpo LGA. The area is made up of twelve(12) communities-Omerelu, Ubima, Apani, Elele, Isiokpo, Omagwa, Aluu, Iguruta, Omuanwa, Ozuaha, Omademe and Ipo out of which Elele, Isiokpo, Omagwa, Aluu, and Iguruta are relatively urban. The other seven communities are rural in nature. Ikwerre local Government Area has two seasons-rainy and dry seasons. The annual rainfall is over 2500mm with a mean temperature above 26' Celsius. Relative humidity is between 70 to 90 percent in the rainy season (April-October) and about 60 percent in the dry season (Nov.-March) The area lies within the rain forest zone of the country. The people are predominantly farmers.

METHODOLOGY

The ex-post factor design was adopted for this research. The choice of this design was informed by the nature of the problem under study and the fact that the design seeks to find out the prevailing factors that are associated with certain occurrences, outcomes, conditions or types of behavior by analysis of past events or of already existing conditions (Akuezuilo, 1993 in Umar, and Mbaba 2013). The population of the study includes every household in the study area. A total of 120 respondents drawn from the twelve communities were used as sample for the study. The cluster sampling method was used prior to a random sampling technique and each of the twelve communities in the study area formed a cluster. This was aimed at ensuring that each community is duly represented by specific percentage of the sample for the study. This study made use of primary data collected from 120 sample households selected from the twelve communities that make up the study area. A structured questionnaire was used to generate information from respondents. The questionnaire comprises of three sections, A, B, and C. Section A is on respondent's bio data, section B is on the factors which motivate irregular migration and section C deals with the effects of irregular migration and insecurity on the development of rural communities.

Table 1; Summary Table of prevailing factors that motivate and encourage irregular migration

	R	R-Square	Adjusted R-Square	Standard Error of the estimate
Model 1	.127	.016	.010	3.38

ANOVA

Sources of variation	Sum of squares	Degrees of freedom	Variance estimator
Between samples	0.2154	2	0.1077
With samples	1.1407	12	0.0951
Total	1.3561	14	

$$\text{Therefore, } f = \frac{0.1077}{0.0951} = 1.1325$$

$$\text{Table value} = 3.89$$

$H_0 = \text{accepted}$



This implies that there is no significant difference among the means of the three main prevailing factors that motivate and encourage irregular migration. This result indicates that lack of job opportunities, economic condition at home and perceived opportunities at the destination countries which in most cases many not be real are the most prevailing factors responsible for the need to migrate and to migrate unofficially (irregularly). Another major reason why people migrate irregularly is the high level of difficulty involved in obtaining a regular status – in terms of visa. This perceived availability of jobs and opportunities abroad makes it quite tempting for jobless and vulnerable labour force at home – hence migrating irregularly is seen as the only option. The result shows that there is no significant difference among the means of these factors which implies that there contributions are relevant in the overall factors prevailing on individuals to migrate even without proper documentation.

Table 2; Summary of Relative Contributions of irregular migration and insecurity on Rural Development

		Under standardized coefficients		Standardized Coefficient	t	Significance
		B	Std Error	Beta		
Model 1	Constant	8.437	0.804		10.498	.000
	Rural development	-579	356		-1.626	-106

Table 2 shows the relative contributions of two independent variables to the dependent variable. The results show that the joint contribution of the independent variable(volume of irregular migrants and rate of insecurity) to the dependent variable(rural development) was significant and that other variables not included in this study may have accounted for the remaining variance.

CONCLUSIONS

It is evident that there exist a widespread occurrence of irregular migration in both the developed and developing countries. Although the accurate and reliable data concerning this remains uncertain, there is a great difficulty in the attempt to figure out the specific determinants of irregular migration, the place of insecurity and the implications of these to the development of rural communities. This study has aimed to contribute to filling this research gap by pointing out the determinants of irregular migration in Ikwerre Local Government area of Rivers State. This study relied on primary and secondary data dataset. The result of this study points to the fact that irregular migration has flourished, survived and sustained as a response to both lack of livelihood opportunities, insecurity at home and the dare need to earn good living in a foreign land where “the pasture is perceived to be greenish”. However, in 2014 roughly 170,000 refugees and migrants landed in Italy, with the highest numbers from Eritrea, Somalia and Nigeria. between January and March 2015, 479 refugees and migrants died at sea or went missing and this number soared to 1,308 in April alone (UNHCR 2015: 8-9) with one capsized boat taking roughly 800 lives from various nationalities. The boat was found in June 2016 with about 400-600 bodies still inside (Kingsley 2016: “Italian navy recovers”). The plight of these people was occasionally highlighted in a special report or on the front page of daily newspapers, but many European



countries turned the other cheek, and in this way, these lives were disposable. Athanasiou argues, "As long as bodies are deemed disposable, found discarded, and remain uncounted, the notion of disposability will be associated with the concepts and practices of dehumanization" (Butler and Athanasiou 2013: 147) In what came to be known as "the Jungle," migrants attempt to enter Europe or other destinations through the desert with the aid and support from the traffickers. They also move through the port by hiding in trains, trucks, ferries, and cars. These migrant by so doing are confronted by a countless security challenges.

RECOMMENDATIONS

This paper however recommends amongst others that governments at all levels in Nigeria should strengthen the economy to encourage small and medium scale entrepreneurs, provide job opportunities for her citizens to discourage the urge to migrate without due process. Countries should strengthen their migration laws to provide for more stringent and tougher punishment for those who aid or take part in irregular migration. There should also be a proper security/ surveillance measures put in place especially within the border territories to monitor and combat this menace of irregular migration and its attendant consequences.

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