



Cross Border Trade and the Threat of Insurgency in Northeastern Nigerian Borderlands; 2000-2020: Challenges and Some Suggestions

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Abstract: Central to the development of any country, society or a people is the exchange of products and services either within or across their borders with neighbours or distant consumers of such goods and services. Nigeria has a border stretch of about 4,470 Km² with her five neighbours (Benin, Niger, Chad, Cameroon) and Maritime borders with Equatorial Guinea. For more than two decades now – since the advent of civil rule in Nigeria in 1999 - Five out of the six states of North Eastern Nigeria (Adamawa, Bauchi, Bornu, Taraba and Yobe) have been harangued by insurgency. This study investigates the activities of trade across Nigeria's security challenged North eastern borderlands in the last two decades, how trade has contributed to the mitigation or escalation of this security challenges in the study area. Extensive field work, using oral interview was carried out in addition to content analysis for the purpose of the study. Among others, the study found that in addition to the porous and difficult terrain of the borders which makes it difficult for effective security surveillance, other major challenges include the complicity of the security agencies, lack of a strong local administration at the border levels, connivance with locals by the illicit traders and the presence of a poorly motivated security personnel as the major challenges affecting the effective curtailing of illicit cross border trade. The study suggests strengthening of local administration with involvement of the locals in the border management, motivation and proper provision of needed modern gadgets for border security and management.

Key Words: Cross Border trade, Border Security, North East Borderlands, Nigeria Borders, Border Management.

I. Introduction

The long distance trade existing between Kano in Present day Nigeria, Birnin Ngazargamu, Timbuctu across the Sahara to North Africa into the ancient cities of Tripoli, Agadez and Cairo in Egypt with the Arab world and Europe goes back in history to the age of the Trans Saharan trade and beyond. This culture of commerce (both formally and informally) has survived till today after the creation of modern African states. In Post-Colonial Africa, this long distance trade continues both formally and informally across the modern African states of Nigeria (North Eastern Nigeria for the purpose of this study), through Chad, Cameroon, Sudan up to Egypt and Libya in the Western Mediterranean Coast. Articles of trade range from industrial products, household goods, grains, cattle, hides and skins as well as services. In the recent past, migrations across these borders include the infamous human trafficking for slave labour in some of the North African countries (Egypt, Morocco, Libya and illegal migrations across the Mediterranean into Europe. In the last two decades there have been monumental crises in the North African countries of Egypt and Libya (tagged the Arab spring) Sudan and Chad. For almost two decades now – since the advent of civil rule in Nigeria in 1999 - Five out of the six states of North Eastern Nigeria (Adamawa, Bauchi, Bornu, Taraba and Yobe) have been harangued by insurgency. A recent report by the UNDP put the casualty figures resulting from the activities of these insurgents at



over 350,000 with over 310,000 made refugees in neighbouring countries while another 3million are displaced internally.ⁱ Given the porous and highly permeable nature of Nigeria's Northeastern borderlands with significant cultural continuum, this study investigates the challenges posed by the ease of movement across the borderlands especially for commercial activities and its implications on the crises in the region. The study examines the role the historic trade routes might have played in this two decades old crises. The focus is on cross – border- trade in some border towns of Machina, Gashua, Gaidam Potiskum, Maidugri, Biu and others cutting across the affected states within the region. Most importantly, the study focuses on the trans border movement of persons, particularly the traders, the organisers and the role of non-Nigerians in the conduct of this trade in the face of the challenging times. It seeks to answer the question: how have the activities of these traders over time contributed to the security challenges in the region? Has the cultural continuum enhanced ease of movement and by extension made monitoring of goods across the borders difficult? What are the necessary measures to be suggested to curb this ugly trend in the region and Nigeria in general?

The Nature of African Borders

African Borders are a creation of Colonial (in the case of Nigeria, British) rascality. A glance at the map of Africa shows a glaring but questionable feature of straight lines which are delimitations of international borders. As confessed by Lord Salisbury, the Europeans sat in Europe (in Germany) and allocated to themselves slices of the balkanised Africa on the maps without ever setting their foot on the soil of the continentⁱⁱ. This rascality (the inaccurate borders) has survived more than six decades after independence, but not without its consequences. Before the partitioning and the large scale physical occupation especially of Africa from the last decade of the 19th Century, quite a number of ethnic groups which were incorporated into the colonial territories such as Yoruba in Dahomey, Hausa in Niger, the Shuwa, Kanuri and Serer in Chad, the Mandara, Gude, Fulani and Matakam in Cameroon, have been subjects of rulers of several kingdoms and states of Nigerian area, notably the Sokoto Saliphate, Borno, Oyo and Nikkiⁱⁱⁱ

In today's Africa, the cultural continuum that was negated by the colonial masters have created security and other nation building challenges including citizenship crises. Apart from

tax evasion through smuggling activities, especially in the spatial scope of this study, economic sabotage has become a celebrated practice across our borders. For example, Billions of dollars are lost annually by the government to the activities of cross border economic saboteurs who engage in illicit cross border commercial activities including smuggling, theft, banditry, cattle rustling, kidnapping, child and human trafficking among others. Because attention was focused on space and population for markets and resources to be exploited, with rude disregard to ethnic affiliations and political composition, large and amorphous expanses of land populated, sometimes, by culturally conflicting nations and nationalities were foisted together. Again because communities, villages and even families were rudely balkanized, our borders suffer the defect of non-respect and total non-recognition or total rejection on the part of the border communities. This explains the nature of our inherited colonial borders, the throne of thorns and the time bomb we have been sitting on for the last six decades after the paper independence. This study investigates the nature and patterns of trade along the border towns of North Eastern Nigeria in the last two decades; 2000-2020. The overriding aim is to figure out the nature, articles, participants and organizers of this cross border trade especially in the North Eastern part of the country. The study assesses the impact of this trade, particularly in the period under study, on the region and its implication on the security challenges in the country in general and the region in particular.

Justification Of Study

Central to the development of any country, society or a people is the exchange of products and services either within or across their borders with neighbours or distant consumers of such goods and services. International trade, in other words, trade across countries' borderlands, is quite essential to the survival of nations as it has both economic, diplomatic as well as security values. Since all manner of goods -some may be harmful to both the people and government of a nation- may pass through the borders of a country into its markets to be consumed by citizens, border management is very important to the health and mind of any nation. Nigeria has a border stretch of about 4,470 Km^{iv} with her five neighbours (Benin, Niger, Chad Cameroon) and Maritime borders with Equatorial Guinea.

The question then is; have our borders been properly managed, particularly in the last two



decades, under the threat of insurgency? Has trade across our borders still been going on? If it has, then who are the participants? What are the measures put to checkmate both human and article traffic across these borders? The study problem therefore is to investigate the activities of trade across Nigeria's security challenged North eastern borderlands in the last two decades and see how trade has contributed to the mitigation or escalation of this security challenges and proffer possible solutions.

This study has become necessary in view of the continuous threat to the peace and security of particularly the North Eastern region and the country in general in the last two decades, 2000 – 2020. Federal University Gashua where the study is domiciled is sited in Gashua, a frontier town, within less than 100 Kilometer radius to Nigeria - Niger border and as such could be classified as within the borderland area. More so, the Kano, Gumel, Nguru, Gashua, Gaidam road is an international trade route that links Nigeria and Niger Just as Kano, Potiskum, Damaturu Maiduguri. The Local markets at Potiskum, Gashua, Gaidam, Kanama, Machina etc. are border markets that are thronged by foreigners (Nigeriens Chadians etc.) even in the face of the security threat. The same situation obtains in the Bornu, Adamwa, Bauchi and Taraba axis of the international borders. Adamawa State alone has Nine Local Governments that situated in the borderland region of the Nigeria Cameroun borders.

A research of this nature is therefore invaluable in order to draw the attention of the nation to this very important human activity i.e. trade across our borders that has both diplomatic and security implications on the region and the nation generally. The central aim of this study is to present the two socioeconomic activities - trans-border movement and trading - as integrative processes that link people at the border. The three specific objectives are:

- To examine the volume, direction and nature of trade and trans border movement of people in northeastern borderlands in the last two decades.
- To assess the extent to which the trade and economic activities across the borders have impacted on the security challenges in the study area.
- To come up with suggestions to checkmate the activities of informal traders whose activities impact negatively on the security challenges in the region.

In carrying out the first objective, the two types of people moving out of or into the border area were categorized as residents and transients. It also involved recognizing two categories of movement: lifetime and periodic migrations.

II. A Brief Literature Review

Borderlands are defined as extending beyond the delimited border, covering an area that marks a nation's sphere of influence. Hanse (1981) describes it as 'the sub-national areas whose economic and social life is directly and significantly affected by proximity to an international boundary'.^v Contiguous countries have closely linked borderlands separated by an international boundary.

The three operational terms used in the study are border, movement and trade. The last two are essential to our understanding of the processes that make a border - not an imaginary, artificial line that divides, but a link or a bridge spanning border areas of adjoining countries.

Movement across borders is necessitated by two major socio economic activities; trade and t and other forms of social activities. Trade across Nigerian borders has a long history. According to Muktar, the economic significance and potentialities of Kano predated colonial conquest (1903).^{vi} As at 1900, colonial records show that Kano was one of the greatest commercial emporiums of Africa. There were collected Caravans from Tripoli, Morocco and the Sahara in the North Africa and from Lake Chad and Wadai in the East. This Commercial prowess attracted the Colonialists, motivating the urge to conquer Kano, but this trade persists to this day. In this study we focus on the changing nature of the trade particularly the articles of trade and participants in view of the challenges faced by the present cross border movement.

Trans-border movement and trading are usually considered as socio-economic activities across artificial boundaries. In contrast, they are perceived here as activities or processes that take place in the area, on either one or both sides of the border. Consequently in this study, borders are seen as encompassing the borderland. As submitted by *Adamawa State government*, the population around the borderlands is predominantly farmers whose economic income is quite low and therefore more gullible to undignified means to supplement their income. The analysis of the people who engage in criminal activities shows that they are mostly herdsmen in the age bracket of 18-30 years.^{vii}



Trans-border movement is not a single process or a once-and-for-all activity, but a 'form' of migration in its own right, with distinct features. Movements across a border may comprise normal everyday movement and conventional migration - which could be regarded as being both internal and international. Some aspects of the uniqueness of this form of migration are its spontaneity, the complexity of its pattern and the categories of the movers. Its spontaneity is evident from its almost impulsive and repetitious manner of occurrence. The complexity of its pattern stems from the fact that the same socio-cultural group is found on both sides of the border.

There are two categories of movers at the border, namely: transients and migrants. These categories include visitors, commuters, frontier workers and permanent migrants, all exhibiting variations in the duration of stay at their destination.

Trans-border trading has its own distinct features. It is an economic activity that can be regarded as being both internal (within one nationality) and international. What is more, the classification of trading activities becomes complex when describing buying and selling at the border, where each can be regarded as a distinct activity. Trading thus involves everyday buying and selling, semi-formalized marketing activities and formal trading transactions. The transactions are, of course, subject to the conditions of supply and demand.

The study area is the northeastern borderlands of Nigeria. North East is one of the geopolitical zones consisting of the states of Adamawa, Bauchi, Borno, Gombe, Taraba and Yobe. It occupies slightly less than one-third of Nigeria's total area and had a projected population of 23,558,674 or 13.5% of the country's population.^{viii} The inhabitants are mainly Fulani except Borno State which has Kanuri people as majority with more than 100 minority ethnic groups. The Border towns of interest are Damaturu, Gaidam, Gashua, Machina, Biu, Gombe, Yola, Mubi, Jalingo and their environs. The region has an uneven topography. It's made up of hilly areas and valleys in southern Borno and Adamawa and Taraba. The mode of transport is road. The main economic activities are farming, trade and livestock rearing. Western education is present among the elite class but overwhelming majority are only literate in the local languages such as Hausa and Kanuri.

III. Methodology

The study utilized qualitative data collected through ethnographic fieldwork and in-depth interview with key informants with knowledge on the subject matter. The in-depth interviews were conducted with both the Nigerian military, paramilitary and border security personnel in the Selected towns of Borno and Yobe states. Other categories of respondents are independent security consultants with expertise on Nigerian porous borders, renowned academics on security and migration studies from local universities, (Nigeria Army University Biu, Yobe State University, Damaturu and Federal University Gashua) religious and border community leaders in Biu, Damaturu, Macjina, Potiskum, Nguru, Gashua, Maimalari, Yusufari and Gaidam. The interviews were conducted from December 2022 and lasted through May, 2023. Equally, relevant information was collected through textbooks, academic journals, magazines, newspapers, seminar papers, and special reports on commercial activities across the borderland from relevant sources. The respondents were selected based on their role, expertise, knowledge of the study problem. Giving its sensitive nature, the identity and rights of the respondents are sealed, especially security agencies. The study relied on available records pieced together from official reports, published articles from the academia and related stakeholders and interested analysts and researchers interested in the subject matter. But most importantly, emphasis was laid on primary sources (official records, archival retrievals, published official reports etc.). We employed the use of extensive oral sources and interviews and interaction with stakeholders as the resources available at our disposal allowed us. To this end, an extensive tour of the study area and on the site visit of markets, trading posts, border communities and settlements as well as mini seminars were conducted. Oral interviews were widely conducted to cross check pieces of information gotten from the reviewed literature. We also garnered information from public agencies charged with the role of managing our borders.

Life at the Borders

We begin our discussion of the life at our borders generally with a conversation with a trader who simply introduced himself as Danladi. At the borders, Danladi encounters security agents including customs men, immigration and soldiers but he simply waves them and they in turn do same and he crosses the border unmolested. Danladi does



not see himself as a smuggler, he is just doing his business the way he knows best. He argues, albeit ignorantly that if the business were illegal “then we should be arrested by the security agents and have our goods seized but instead, they ask us for settlement.” Danladi explains further that “the security agents are our friends and we have no reason to be bothered or disturbed at their sight. Since we know what they want from us, we do it without hesitation and everybody is happy”^{ix} According to him; “we ‘settle’^x custom at their office before embarking on any journey and thereafter, part with 500, 1000 or 2000 to 5000 depending on the check point and what we are carrying. Asked what determines the “price” he replied that normally, “when we load fish or bushmeat which is considered as contraband, the price is higher. Also, for fish at the military check point, a full pickup load we pay between 3000 to 5000 at military check points and between 500 to three thousand at police, immigration and customs checkpoints.”^{xi}

The above scenario gives a vivid picture of what transpires between the state agencies and the traders at the borders. On close monitoring, we found out that no fewer than 15 to 20 trucks enter Nigeria through the Geidam- Yunusari -Yusufari - Gashua - Nguru - Hadejia to Kano Road between Monday to Sunday every week. These trucks sometimes move in convoys of three to five vehicles in through security posts including military checkpoints. In Bornu state, the Banki road leading to the border with Camroun used to have large number of trucks applying the route. Nigeria has over 4,470 Km stretch of borderland with her neighbours. Out of these over three thousand stretch of the borders are with Northern states of Niger, Kebbi, Katsina, Kano in the Northwest and Yobe, Bornu, Adamawa and Taraba in the Northeast where our study is focused. The countries borders with Taraba, for instance along Gembu is quite a busy route.

There are free movement of people across these borders since the borderlines, especially in our study area are ill defined. In Banki for instance, it is a fact that there are several houses having their entrance in Nigeria and their exit in Cameroon.^{xii} Thus, some people have businesses and even farms on the Nigeria side of the border but reside on the Niger or Cameroon side as the case may be or vice versa which often times is just a few meters away. Obviously, the existence of these borders has over the years, changed the dynamics of border communities. Cross border businesses has become a major preoccupation of the people. The items that

are traded across the borders include, rice, Vegetable oil, Fish, grains e.g millet, sorghum, sesame; cattle, fruits, other agricultural products, confectioneries, house hold goods, mats, plastic containers, etc. These items are traded along these borders including Nigeria fuel, which is the most common.^{xiii} Nigeria, by its location is strategic for international commerce between the North, East and Central African as well as the west Africa Sub regions. With abundant natural and human resources, Nigeria, could, with the right policies that could curb the nefarious activities of these criminals and saboteurs develop her industrial sector to feed the markets of the neighbouring countries and beyond. The flow of traffic however exhibits an unfavourable balance of trade with more goods entering the country than leaving the country. This is the same with human traffic.

Life at the borders definitely has some benefits to the border communities. A close observation show that though many wear the looks of rural areas, they have burgeoning rural economy with huge markets. In each of the border towns visited, there are huge periodic markets, e.g Geidam, Nguru, Macihina, Gashua, Gerin Alkali, Potiskum. Giving the peopling, the markets can conveniently be graded as international markets. In each of the markets one sees a cosmopolitan population and goods from across the borders of the country. Obviously the proximity of these border communities to the international borders gives them an edge over their interior counterparts in terms of access to competitive prices. On interaction with the people at the markets, one of the reasons for the patronage of these markets is simply because of their international nature. Local middle men benefit immensely from the traders especially the foreigners who must rely on them to make purchases. In the past, social life at these communities was above average as some people who were not actually interested in crossing the borders simply visit these markets and communities for social interactions.^{xiv}

Despite the seeming benefits, the borders are harangued with some Challenges. They complain of discrimination in the recruitment process of the security agencies, such as Customs, Immigration, Police, Army and other security outfits. People in the border communities feel they should be given preferences in the recruitment into these agencies not only to boost their economic power but also to give them legal backing to protect their territories especially from influx of unwanted elements.^{xv} Another obvious problem along our borders observed is the state of



infrastructure at our borders and border communities. These include the deplorable state of some of the roads (though in the recent past some of the roads have been upgraded) Many of the communities away from the urban centers have no graded access feeder roads to the communities. Lack of educational facilities such as schools, access to portable water. Lack of social infrastructure is a national problem but the border communities believe that as gateways to the outside world and revenue yielding communities, they deserve to be given a preference.^{xvi}

Officials of the security agencies also mooted some challenges. At the Yusufari Kanama axis, an official of the customs complained that fighting smuggling is sometimes made difficult because of the active participation of the locals. Because the locals know the terrain and all the illegal routes in the deserts. They are also aware that some of these smugglers are not only well connected to the powers that be but also are in possession of firearms, in some cases superior to theirs and ready to confront anybody. Some smugglers consider the illegal routes as their rights having avoided the legal routes.^{xvii} An officer blamed the inability of the agencies to curb smuggling on low morale. According to him “we are fully aware that if we die in active service, no body will remember us let alone do anything to attend to the plight of our families left behind. Our job is been hampered by bad patrol vehicles, inadequate vehicle and even lack of modern digital facilities to enable us do our jobs.”^{xviii} Pointing at a fully loaded truck, he lamented “how can less than five of us here offload this truck to check its content, it will take a whole day and not only one or two pass this route in a day” We need modern equipment to properly do our jobs at the borders. Complaining of poor remuneration he laments; “we are not even paid hazard allowances regularly. With all these anomalies, how do you expect us to go after the smugglers?”^{xix} He queried.

IV. Findings

In the course of the research and based on our objectives, we were able to make some findings and observations. Facts available reveals that Nigeria shares a total of approximately 4,500 km of land border with Benin, Chad, Cameroun and Niger republic. In the east, Nigeria shares 1,690 km land borders with Cameroun, 87 km with Chad in the northeast and 1,497 km with the republic of Niger in the North (Cross-Border Diaries 2008)^{xx}. Statistics available reveals that Nigeria has 86 formal border posts and uncountable illegal routes

across its land borders. As recorded by Asiwaju, in some parts the border terrain is characterized by mountains (in such area as Adamawa, Taraba and southern Bornu sections of the borderland), inaccessible roads and numerous footpaths which makes effective management of the border a big challenge (Asiwaju 2010).^{xxi} The share size of this border makes its effective manning a near impossible task.

Another serious challenge is the cultural continuum on the entire stretch of the borderland. Over the years, the physical separation of the various ethnic groups by artificial borders does not seem to bring to an end their social, cultural and most importantly, economic links. Migrations across the borders has continued, even on larger scale.^{xxii} Historically, Nigeria-Niger Republic border communities share similar languages, cultures, and ancestors who hitherto lived together. However, the creation of the borderlines by the colonialists, which unfortunately have been maintained by post colonial governments, divide them between the two sides of the post-colonial borders. One typical example is the Hausa ethnic groups in Nigeria which are divided between Nigeria and the Niger Republic, which is why functional disputes sometimes arise from stringent administrative controls at the borders. Sometimes the unhindered movement of persons and goods, which is a hallmark of good neighbourliness does result in cross-border insecurity. As Asiwaju has earlier maintained; because of tremendous cultural pulls drawn through ethnic homelands... restrictive measures need to be cut down and measures for positive development, aiming directly at frontier communities as distinct policy goals needs to be maximised.^{xxiii}

On a field work along Yusufari, Maimalari, Kanama axis; large caravans of camels were seen migrating across the border lands. On interview, the owners of these caravans did not hide their identity but proudly declared that they were from Niger migrating down south in search of green grasses and water for their animals. According to them it was an annual activity, and it happens at this time of the year when their lands get dried. What was curious about these migrants was the huge loads each of the camels carried, the content of which was difficult to fathom.^{xxiv}

Also members of the security are unarguably complicit in breaching security along the borders. The porosity of the borders is compounded by corruption and complicity among the border security agencies. One observes lack of synergy among border security agencies which



invariably affect intelligence gathering/sharing. Furthermore, lack of infrastructural development in the border communities, exclusion of the residents of the border communities in the management of illicit activities on the borders contributes immensely to the porosity of the borders. Furthermore, the Nigeria Customs Service, Immigration Service, Police Force, and host of others who are saddled with the statutory responsibility to manage the Nigerian borders have always complained of inadequate workforce and funding. Digital surveillance facilities to secure the existing 86 formal border post and over 1400 illegal routes are either obsolete or unavailable. This no doubt has compromised any possibility of effective management of goods and individuals crossing the borderlines^{xxv} Hence, none of Nigeria's land borders can be described as watertight.

The Kano, Gumel, Gashua, Yusufari, Yunusari, Geidam road is a very active trade route even in this period. On the average, between 40-50 overloaded and sealed trucks leave Kano and other southern parts via this road to neighbouring Niger and Chad.^{xxvi} What is curious about these long trucks is that load is so much that checking the content of these vehicles is simply not possible. On the reverse direction, a fleet Toyota pick up trucks overloaded with dried fish and other bush meats stacked in bags file their way through several checkpoints into such market towns of Gashua, Hadejia and Gumel in Nigeria. Just as is the case of the Caravans, these vehicles are hardly checked by these security operatives and other personnel that man the borders. This takes us to the next challenge I.e inadequate training of personnel who man the borders.

Lack of adequate training for border security personnel to detect how weapons are concealed and smuggled not only through the illegal but formal border post is another challenge contributing to insecurity. There has been cries by security agencies, including the police, immigration and Customs departments have had problems coping with armed banditry/smuggling. The Comptroller general of Immigrations in Taraba State Mr Alabi Toyé is reported to have once complained of lack of communication gadgets and other logistics by his department, as some of the factors responsible for the influx of bandits in the North East.^{xxvii} Similarly disturbed by the menace of this criminal acts, Governor Jolly Nyame of Taraba State during his tenure was reported to have argued that it was because of the ill-equipped nature of the Nigerian Police force that enabled the

armed bandits to besiege four out of the Sixteen Local Government areas of his State.

Social Cohesion: Fighting criminality which include smuggling and banditry across our borders is a collective responsibility. What we mean here is that communities need to be fully involved as a socially cohesive unit. Where a section of the community feels excluded, it tends to align with a third force to undermine the other. In this way, the collective resilience of the whole community is undermined. The experience of both Barma in Borno state where the settler felt excluded and in Mubi where Christians feel a sense of not belonging illustrates this as in both cases the smugglers and bandits were able to easily pass through the communities. In the same vein, communities that are inclusive in their social and economic activities tend to cohere better than those that manifest exclusions. Although both Gombi and Biu two of the most resilient communities in respect to the Boko Haram are multi ethnic and multi religious, they were able to sustain stakeholder consultative processes that allowed all to be part of the security management of the community. Which made it difficult for insurgents and similar criminal activities including banditry to operate in the communities.

Youth Unemployment: Unemployment creates a pool of disaffected people in the community. Without social security support, these disaffected people are left on their own, while the better section of the people carries on. The result is that, these disaffected community becomes a recruiting ground for discontent and handy tools to assist in these crimes. The rise and growth of Boko Haram demonstrate this very aptly. The Boko Haram capitalised on this and drew many unemployed youths to its ranks through economic programming that provided a means of livelihood for the unemployed. Similarly, these unemployed youths simply accepts offers as site guides to show the smugglers through footpaths and illegal passages in order to beat security surveillance.

Respected Leadership: A credible and respected leadership is a boost to community resilience. It is able to mobilise the energy and endowments of the community to confront the danger it faces. On the other hand members of the community are willing to be mobilised because they have trust in the leadership. This was the situation in Gombi and even Maiduguri where the community leaders gave tacit support to the CJTF. This was also most illustrative of the situation in Ningi, Bauchi state where the local leadership was at the head of community mobilisation.



Community Trust: Trust is critical to the Maintenance of community cohesion. But it is equally important in the way in which information is processed and used in the community. The history of insurgency shows that at the beginning when the insurgents targeted police and other security agencies, because there was no trust between the police and members of the community, some members of the community were jubilating and not willing to provide information to the security agencies. By the time the insurgents moved to include ordinary citizens in the target, it became impossible for even some of the members of the community to trust each other. The police then treated every member of the perceived hostile community as suspects and the result was that many innocent members of the community were killed. This lack of trust was most obvious in Potiskum and Damaturu, both in Yobe State where the security agencies used excessive force on civilians. Consequently, it was not possible to replicate either the CJTF or the Azare experience in these places.

Some Suggestions

Frontier Communities as major Security agents/Stakeholders

It is a common submission by scholars that special emphasis should be laid on human factor in the political partitioning and resultant boundary policies. We agree with this position and therefore suggest a significant redirection that would allow frontier communities to become a major policy goal. As Asiwaju Maintains, because of tremendous cultural pulls across the boundaries drawn through ethnic homelands and the unavoidable social intercourse across the borderlands, leadership at the levels of the communities need to be strengthened and given a legal right to be able to take responsibility and participate in securing the borderlands. In most cases they are the first recipients of the activities of these traders, whether positive or negative. As such restrictive need to be cut down and measures for positive development, aiming directly at frontier communities as distinct policy goals need to be maximised.* In this direction therefore, the local government administration should extend their administrative control by reabsorbing the traditional system at the local level. All the North East, there are district heads, village heads and ward heads. These enjoy a high level of respect and acceptance from the people. They should be equipped with offices and trained administrative staff, especially the local vigilante, who should

through the training be upgraded and licensed to carry out this very important task. Through their movement of goods and humans can be properly monitored especially in remote areas. These heads should be given enough powers to justify their responsibilities within the legal framework that would establish them.

Community Policing: The Geography of Boko Haram shows that early victims of the insurgency were security personnel. While this was happening the communities were either indifferent or in some cases even cheering. The police in particular had no support in getting information from members of the communities about these illegal trade deals, because most communities did not trust them. One way round this problem is to develop community policing initiatives that will help to build trust between communities and the police and bridge the gap between them.

Address Extreme Social Inequality: Many of our border communities are experiencing the evidence of social and economic inequalities. There is the urgent need to address through programming that will support for income transfer such as progressive and income based taxation.

Addressing Youth Unemployment: Government in conjunction with other stake holders should develop programmes that address the high rate of youth unemployment. The high level of youth unemployment in the absence of any social protection programmes in the country, especially in border communities make youths susceptible for recruitment into these illicit deals and even violent actions. It is extremely difficult to check illicit Cross border trade without providing for economic engagements of the youths.

Community Sensitisation: Border Communities should be sensitized through religious gatherings and schools in order to create awareness on the dangers of accommodating these illegal traders among them. They should be ready to volunteer information on the activities of these criminals who stay among them and carry out the illicit trade. This will also need the protection of the citizens by security agencies to whom such information is made available.

Encourage Youth Organisations. Encourage youth organisation by strengthening their sources of income. This can be done by providing funds for commercial activities. In addition, expand facilities and amenities to accommodate all the members of the community particularly the poor who are most vulnerable to be enticed into this illicit trade from the sense of economic disempowerment of community exclusion.



V. Conclusion

There should be a joint combat training for the lower cadre of the police, the military, the NSCDC, Immigration, Customs and other paramilitary agencies saddled with security maintenance for them to know themselves and be able to work together. This will reduce to a very large extent inter agency conflicts and role confusion among the security agencies especially at the borders. A joint counter terrorism center for all para-military personnel can be established in the country for this purpose. This is because, the officers of the military, police and other paramilitary has always had joint sessions at their level beginning from the Armed forces command and staff college and other senior institutions, so the officers can easily work together but it is not the same for lower ranked personnel. "Moreover" as admitted by a very senior officer of the military, "right now, the military is very weak because of too much involvement in internal crises and taking over police duties. Consequently, discipline is going down every day." Generally, the lack of political will to tackle insecurity, not only at our borders has created has sustained the menace o this period. On interaction with some of the security operatives in the high command, we discovered that one of the reasons insecurity is going away since the advent of democracy is that no commander in chief since 1999, has been bold enough to give a direct, definitive order for terrorists or bandits to be decisively dealt with. What the security agencies is open ended directives without any timeline and defined consequences for failures. For example if Mr President who is the Commander in Chief directs the service chiefs that banditry should be done with in six months, if after the timeline nothing is done and all the heads of security agencies (the minister, the Chief of Defence Staff, the Inspector General of Police,) and all the service chiefs are sacked, the menace will definitely be crushed as nobody wants his career prematurely terminated for nonperformance just as no political appointee would want to loose his job. It is really a national embarrassment that criminals lay siege and kill not only innocent citizens at our borders but also military and other security personnel on active duty.

Endnotes

ⁱ Centre for Information Technology and Development CITAD; Community Resilience: The Lesson Learnt From Boko Haram Experience; A

policy Brief; www.citadpeace.org.ng accessed 07/08/2023.

ⁱⁱ Lord salisbury on African Borders See NAK

ⁱⁱⁱ See Abdullahi Mahdi (2011) The Role of Neighbouring Countries in the Nigerian Civil War,History Department Seminar Series, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria-Nigeria, Volume 10, pp19 - 62.

^{iv} Life at Nigeria's Borders Tell Magazine; 15/10/2012 pp 48 - 53.

^v Hansen N. (1986) Border Region Development And

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^{vi} Muktar I M (2014) British Colonial Labou Policies and the Changing Roles of Labour in Kano Emirate, C.1903 -1960. Zaria, ABU Press.

^{vii} Kyari T. (2011) The Role of Cross Border Communities and SSecurity Forces in the Management of Security in the Border Areas of North East.

Bassey E.A and Bola A.A.(Eds) Cross Border Armed Banditory in the North east Issues in National security and Nigeria's Relations with its Immediate Neighbours; Nigeria Institite of International Affairs pp 119 - 131. Also, see Special Services Department,Government House, Adamawa "Cross Border Crimes and Armed banditory: Boundary Demarcation and Control Mechanisms" In Bassey E.A and bola A.A.(Eds) Cross Border Armed Banditory in the North east..ibid pp 23 - 29.

^{viii} Special Services Department,Government House, Adamawa "Cross Border Crimes and Armed banditory: Boundary Demarcation and Control Mechanisms" In Bassey E.A and bola A.A.(Eds) Cross Border Armed Banditory in the North east..ibid pp 23 - 29.

^{ix} Oral interview with Danladi Amshi (47) Trader/Truck Driver , Geidam Gashua Road 15/5/2023, Yusufari Town.

^x On further enquiry on what he meant by ' settle', the middle aged man simply laughed and asked us wether we are from heaven. This simply means a form ofvgratitification for the officers to call threir paeople to tell them npot to disturb us. You pay such monies at the office in to facilitate your movement.

^{xi} Oral interview with Danladi Amshi (47) Trader/Truck Driver , Geidam Gashua Road 15/5/2023, Yusufari Town.

^{xii} Tell Magazine opcit.



^{xiii} Ibid p.44

^{xiv} Oral Interview with One of the Market Officials
5/7/2022

^{xv} Oral Interview Alhaji Zangi Auwal (56);
community leader; 07/07/2023

^{xvi} Interview with sale Dauda; 46; Primary School
Teacher and Youth Leader, Mailamalri Town,
Yusufari local Government Area, yobe State
14/7/2023

^{xvii} Interview with Sup. Anas Adamu 38; Yusufari
Border point, 03/02/2023

^{xviii} Interview with Yusuf Umar (pseudonym for
anonymity) 35, Customs Checkpoint, Yusufari
town.

^{xix} This complaint was found among almost all the
security agencies at the border posts including the
Border Patrol Police, Customs and Immigrations.
See also Tell Magazine OpCit.

^{xx} Cross-Border Diaries. (2008). Kano-Katsina-
Maradi cross-border co-operation initiative.
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^{xxi} Asiwaju Anthony, I. 2011; "Borders, Crimes and
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^{xxiii} Asiwaju A.I Cited in Nuhu O. Yaqub (2011)
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^{xxiv} Personal Observation by the Authors on daily
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period of six months from March to September
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^{xxv} Onuoha, C. Francis, 2011. Small and light
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^{xxvi} Personal Observation by the Authors on daily
movement of vehicle on the said route over a
period of six months from March to September
2023.

^{xxvii} New Nigeria, July 20, 1999,p.24.