PATTERNS AND PROCESSES OF IRREGULAR MIGRATION AMONG YOUTH IN NIGERIA

BY

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- I appreciate my supervisor (Dr. Bonny Ibhowoh), who is also present today.
- The presentation addresses only three of the objectives as the quantitative analysis is ongoing.
Background of the study

- Irregular migration is a topical issue globally.
- All countries fall into one or more of the categories of origin, transit and destination.
- Most research works have presented the issue from the policy makers’ perspectives.
- Previous studies concentrate on stock and flow.
- There is a need to have a socially embedded understanding of the issue of irregular migration.
Statement of the problem

• The youth are noted for being highly mobile
• There are enormous push factors to lead Nigerian youth to irregular migration
• Irregular migration has given the country a bad image
• It also undermines the security of the country
• Not much empirical studies done on migration intentions of youth and experiences of migrants
Objectives of the study

- Explore the experiences of returned irregular migrants in Nigeria
- Examine the treatment of irregular migration in the Nigerian criminal justice system
- Study the activities of state and non-state actors in the management of irregular migration in Nigeria
- Investigate the knowledge, attitude and practices (KAP) of selected youths in Nigeria as regards irregular migration
Securitization of borders

(Duvell, 2008)

Mayah, 2010
Europe by road:

Mayah, 2010

Duvell 2008
Theoretical frameworks

- Political economy theory
- Labeling theory
- Network theory
Conceptual framework

**SCHEMA FOR UNDERSTANDING CAUSAL/OUTCOME ANALYSIS OF IRREGULAR MIGRATION AMONGST THE NIGERIAN YOUTHS**

**CONDITIONS IN DESTINATION COUNTRIES:**
- Migration policies;
- Welfare policies;
- Political economy

**NEGATIVE OUTCOMES:**
- Deportation;
- Detention;
- Unemployment;
- Traumas

**POSITIVE OUTCOMES:**
- Employment;
- Social support system;
- Higher socio-economic status;

**IMPACT ON SENDING COUNTRY (NIGERIA):**
- Positive
- Negative

**PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS:**
- Age;
- Sex;
- Education level;
- Socio-economic status of parents

**THE NIGERIAN POLITICAL ECONOMY:**
- Macro economic policies;
- Political system and governance issues

**NIGERIAN PUBLIC POLICIES:**
- Education;
- Employment;
- Welfare of citizens etc

**PEER GROUP/SOCIAL NETWORK INFLUENCE (I.E. RETURNEES):**

**PREVAILING MIGRATION CONDITIONS AND INDIVIDUAL OPTIONS/ADAPTIVE MECHANISMS:**

**SOCIO-CULTURAL FACTORS:**
- Polygyny;
- Changing family values;
- Changing cultural values;
- ""
Study propositions

- Individual values and expectations are major motivating factors for irregular migration
- Income and unemployment opportunity differentials are motivating factors for irregular migration
- Access to information through the migrants’ network is a vital determinant of irregular migration
Study propositions (cont’d)

- Returnee irregular migrants will experience major socio-economic challenges after their return.
- Efforts at alleviating irregular migration by governmental and non-governmental organizations have been reactive rather than proactive.
Methodology

- Youths defined from age 18-35 years

Mixed methods involving:

- Interviews with governmental and non-governmental actors
- Life histories of returnee migrants
- Focus group discussions with “vulnerable youth”
- Questionnaire with selected youth
Methodology (cont’d)

- Data analysis
  - Qualitative data analyzed using Nvivo9
  - Thematic outlines according to research objectives
  - Quantitative data analyzed using Stata with bivariate (cross tabulations and chi-square) and multivariate analyses.
Preliminary Findings

A. Life histories:
   • Returnee migrants have similar socio-demographic background
   • Similar motivations to travel which was mainly economical
   • Decisions of all influenced by social network
   • The girl’s vulnerabilities and ignorance exploited by traffickers (Human Rights issues)
   • The men went on their own volition (Human smuggling)
Findings (Contd)

- Travel documents:
The girls were given fake documents by the traffickers while 2 of the men travelled without any form of document, 2 others traveled with real documents but under false guises.

- Destination
The girls were heading for various destinations in Europe but only 1 got to Italy, 2 others were “resold” in Libya where they were repatriated.
Satisfaction with return

- One of the girls, who got to Italy was not happy about return because she was almost through with her ‘ransom’ before deportation.
- Other girls expressed disappointment about their return but were glad to have been rescued.

Present activities
- Not all were engaged; two were based in Cotonou while others are still to find gainful employment.
Findings

- Criminal Justice System
  - Criminal and penal code used to address cases of irregular migration prior 2003
  - The law was inadequate
  - The Palermo Convention informed the basis for the Anti-trafficking Law
  - NAPTIP was established (1st in Africa)
Challenges of NAPTIP

- Funding
- Inadequacy of the act, last amended 2005
- Inadequate synergy with other agencies and NGOs
- Combination of prosecution and counseling, given antecedents of most law enforcement agencies in Nigeria.
- Political intervention
- More concentration on criminal justice aspect over human rights aspects
Nigeria Immigration Service

- Plans to initiate voluntary assisted return with some destination countries
- The SWITZ model
- Improvement in the process of deporting migrants
- Signed bilateral agreements with some countries like United Kingdom, Spain, Turkey, Switzerland
- Emphasis on AVR due to the processes many left home through
Challenges if NIS

- Staff welfare
- Teething problems with biometric passports
- Pending Immigration Law and National Migration Policy
- Training of personnel
Non-governmental organizations

- WOTCLEF
- Established by a former 1st Lady in 1999
- Caters for victims of trafficking and child labour

Challenges

Funding

Political patronage
IDIA Renaissance

- Caters for victims of trafficking
- Partnership with several organizations in Europe on voluntary return projects for irregular migrants
- Lobbied for the passage of AHTL and CRA in Edo State
- Assist in family tracing and reunion
- Gave their 1st shelter to NAPTIP
- Edo girls most unwilling to return due to stigma
Challenges

- Funding: No supports from the state government despite the status of the state in HT
- Political patronage
- Ineffective training of returnee on skills acquisition
Conclusion

- The management of irregular migration in Nigeria requires more concerted efforts
- NGOs should be more empowered
- NAPTIP should be well funded
- Relevant laws should address social reality
- Root causes of irregular migration be addressed
- Speedy conclusion of the Nigerian Migration Policy
- De-politicization of government efforts at tackling irregular migration
Thank you for the attention!