



MIGRATION, IDENTITY AND THE CHALLENGE OF BANDITRY IN NIGERIA: A NEED FOR SUSTAINABLE POLICIES

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ABSTRACT

Various studies in contemporary Nigeria and Africa have frequently highlighted the challenge of the emerging train and the raise of banditry in Nigeria, as well as the overall inadequacy of the policy makers to come up with formidable policies that will check the activities of migration into or outside the country. These structural and institutional shortcomings mostly stem from the porous border-policies of the country, which frequently allows people of criminal tendencies into the country. Migration as one can see forms part of the necessary strategies of allocating global human resources to their highest value. Though benefits and costs of national or cross-border human movement are best conceived differently for distinct affected relevant entities, the fact that some migrants may engage in acts generally classified as "banditry," where it is associated with migration, the consequences may not only be deleterious but also profoundly damaging to the very purpose of why migration is warranted and legitimately sealed as a global practice, unless the phenomenon is properly appraised and policies formulated and sustained to ameliorate and prevent it, and consequently rid it. The study examines the boundary marking policies and procedures of Nigeria, the historical context of migration in Nigeria, the linkages between migration and banditry, the challenges and limitations of the existing policies in Nigeria and recommendation for policy makers in Nigeria. This study has worldwide significance on the challenges faced by bandits living on the environs where they are seen as immigrant societies, who are completely posing security traits to the peace, cultural and economic heritage of the indigenes. The study also makes important contributions to discussions on immigrant integration, global dialogues on border demarcations and exclusions, socio-religious and peace building.

KEY WORDS: Migration, Identity. Banditry, Migratory Policies and Porous Borders

Introduction

Migratory conduct is a fundamental human trait that is crucial, yet it also presents social difficulties. Migration has historically resulted in issues and conflicts that scholars in the social sciences and other academic disciplines have examined. Sunday Bobai Agang, observed that in different cultures, the host communities frequently perceive their numerical superiority as granting them social, intellectual, political, and economic superiority over all other groups (Aging, 2020:20). Trends in recent migration movements justifiably show apprehensive tendencies among the peoples of almost

nation-states, far more as some immigrants in host countries and border crossers have been lending themselves to acts of banditry. Not only do the host countries experience eroding budgets, social services, health, education, personal and home security as well as shared values they also suffer the acts of banditry by some emigrant communities. Such common challenges demand imperative investigation and actions to address this phenomenon, since modern communities often experience conflicts over ethnic inclusion and exclusion within their cultural boundaries. These conflicts are often concealed within the national ethos and politics, as well as in studies of ethnic politics, especially in terms of ethnic geography (Michael, 2013: 1-10).

This study focused on the intricate relationship between cross-border migration and banditry in Nigeria, arguing that porous borders, institutional weaknesses, and reactive policy frameworks have created enabling environments for criminal enterprises. Through analysis of historical patterns and contemporary security challenges, this study demonstrates how Nigeria's approximately 4,080 border routes—with only 91 officially monitored—facilitate transnational criminal networks engaged in cattle rustling, kidnapping, and armed violence (Isaac et al. 2024: 4; Lenshie 2024: 3511). The economic consequences are devastating, with businesses shuttered across the northeast, over 61,865 conflict-related deaths in a decade, and widespread internal displacement exceeding 3 million people (Center for Democracy and Development qtd. in Lenshie et al. 2023: 3; Udosen and Uko 2021: 757). This study contributes to global debates on migration governance by advocating for evidence-based policies that balance security imperatives with human rights protections and economic integration within West Africa. This study employs a multi-method approach combining critical policy analysis, theoretical frameworks from security studies, migration governance, and empirical evidence to address core questions: How do structural weaknesses in border governance enable criminal exploitation of migration pathways? What political functions does the securitization of migration serve? How might sustainable policies reconcile security imperatives with regional integration commitments?

Theoretical Framework for Understanding the Migration-Banditry Connections

The understanding of the Opportunity Structure Theory provides a compelling framework for analyzing how migration pathways facilitate banditry in Nigeria. This theoretical perspective posits that "a group of people, regardless of their amount of discontent or grievances, will not resort to violence unless opportunity structures that enable and inspire violence are present" (Lenshie 2024: 3511). Nigeria's porous borders and ungoverned spaces create precisely such opportunity structures by enabling:

Transnational Arms Trafficking; as one can see that the unmonitored routes in Nigeria facilitate weapon flows from conflict zones like Libya and Mali (Onuoha qtd. in Isaac et al. 2024: 8). This has encouraged Cross-Border Criminal Networks; it is obvious that the fluid movement allows bandit groups to establish sanctuaries beyond jurisdictional reach (Udosen and Uko 2021: 762) and will give rise to Illicit Commodity Flows which has to do with smuggling of petrol, agricultural goods, and people generates financing for criminal enterprises (Garuba qtd. in Isaac et al. 2024: 7). Giving opportunity for Transit Migration where migrants from Central and West Africa using Nigeria as a corridor toward North Africa and Europe (IOM qtd. in Isaac et al. 2024: 6)

Bandit groups strategically exploit these migration streams for recruitment, logistics, and camouflage. For instance, cattle rustling networks leverage pastoralist migration routes to move

stolen livestock across borders, while kidnapping syndicates utilize forced displacement flows to obscure human trafficking operations (Udosen and Uko 2021: 765).

Another theory for understanding migration and the security challenge in Nigeria is the Securitization Theory, developed by the Copenhagen School, this theory illuminates how political actors frame migration as an existential threat to justify their extraordinary measures. In Nigeria, this dynamic manifests through elite discourses attributing banditry primarily to "foreign elements" and "mercenaries trained and armed by the late Muammar Gaddafi of Libya" (Lenshie et al. 2023: 4). Such narratives perform crucial political functions in Nigeria through:

Deflection of Responsibility; this has to do with shifting blame for insecurity from domestic governance failures to external actors (Lenshie et al. 2023: 8), Policy Justification; this is employed to legitimizing restrictive measures like border closures without addressing root causes (Sakiemi 2023: 30) and Resource Allocation; as one can see, this one is used in channeling security budgets toward border control rather than community security and social infrastructure (Faleye 2021:85)

The Historical context of Migration and its Connection to Identity and Security challenge in Nigeria

Nigeria presents a paradigmatic case study of the complex interplay between migration and security challenges in a regional context characterized by porous borders, historical mobility patterns, and contemporary conflict dynamics. As Africa's most populous nation and largest economy, Nigeria simultaneously functions as origin, transit, and destination for diverse migration flows within West Africa. The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Protocol on Free Movement (1979) established ambitious frameworks for regional integration, yet Nigeria's implementation has been hampered by institutional fragmentation, resource constraints, and increasingly, securitization imperatives (Obikaeze et al. 2023: 760-762). The consequences manifest dramatically in the escalation of banditry—understood as organized armed violence for economic gain through activities like kidnapping, cattle rustling, and extortion—which has become a primary security challenge in northwest and central Nigeria.

The statistics paint a grim picture of Nigeria's security landscape. According to the Global Terrorism Index (2022), Nigeria ranks as the sixth most terror-impacted country globally, with bandit groups responsible for thousands of fatalities annually (Lenshie et al. 2023: 5). Between January 2020 and June 2020 alone, approximately 1,600 deaths were attributed to bandit violence in six northern states, contributing to the displacement of over 247,000 people and creating nearly 41,000 refugees (Lenshie 2024: 3511). These security challenges occur against a backdrop of significant migration flows, both voluntary and forced, facilitated by Nigeria's vast and poorly monitored borders stretching over 4,000 km and featuring approximately 4,080 crossing points—only 91 of which are officially recognized and monitored (Isaac et al. 2024:3).

Nigeria's contemporary migration challenges stem significantly from colonial border demarcations that paid scant attention to ethno-cultural landscapes or traditional mobility patterns. The 1914 amalgamation of northern and southern protectorates established Nigeria's modern territorial boundaries, dividing ethnic groups like the Hausa, Fulani, and Kanuri across multiple countries while creating artificial administrative units (Lenshie 2024: 3511). Colonial authorities simultaneously facilitated labor migration to support extractive industries, bringing workers from neighboring French colonies to Nigerian mines, plantations, and the emerging petroleum industry in the Niger

Delta (Lenshie 2024: 3511). This established patterns of cross-border labor mobility that continued post-independence, albeit with increasing restrictions.

The post-colonial period witnessed a paradoxical approach to border governance. While Nigeria championed Pan-African solidarity through organizations like ECOWAS—ratifying the 1979 Protocol on Free Movement and subsequent Supplementary Protocols—domestic implementation remained weak. The Immigration Act of 1963 (amended 2015) established the legal foundation for migration management but lacked adequate provisions for regional integration commitments (Isaac et al. 2024: 4). Crucially, the Nigerian state failed to develop the institutional capacity or technological infrastructure necessary to manage its extensive borders effectively. As Isaac et al. note: "Only 84 of Nigeria's 1978 entry locations are authorized, while 1894 are illegal" (Isaac et al. 2024: 4), creating conditions where security apparatus effectiveness is systematically undermined.

Emergence and Evolution of Banditry in Nigeria

Banditry has become one of the most significant security challenges facing Nigeria in recent years. The phenomenon is characterized by organized criminal activities, including kidnapping, cattle rustling, and armed robbery, which have displaced thousands of people and disrupted economic activities. According to Abdullahi (2021), "banditry in Nigeria has assumed a dangerous dimension, with severe implications for human security, economic development, and social stability" (Abdullahi, 2021: 67).

Banditry in Nigeria is often linked to the broader context of insecurity in the country. As noted by Olaniyan (2022), "the proliferation of armed groups, including bandits, has created a culture of fear and insecurity in Nigeria" (Olaniyan, 2022: 89). This has led to a massive displacement of people, particularly in the northern regions of the country, where banditry is most prevalent. According to the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), over 1 million people have been displaced in Nigeria due to banditry and other forms of insecurity (OCHA, 2023). Originally, the Fulani were a nomadic ethnic group, claimed to be the largest population in the Sahel, with a population of more than 20 million. The Fulani domicile is spread over seven countries in West Africa. They are known to travel far distances to find grazing land and water for their herds. In Nigeria, the Fulani are primarily domicile in the North, but the drought, climate change and persistent insecurity instigated by the Boko Haram in the North have driven them toward the Middle-Belt and Southern Nigeria which has in turn instigated confrontation problems with the indigenous Christian farming communities. The migration of Fulani herdsmen toward the South has been considered to be responsible for the conflict between the herders and farmers whose plantations are being destroyed by the herds while grazing on the farmland of their host. Over the years, conflicts between farmers and herdsmen have increased exponentially. The Fulani militants have been known to possess deadly weapons such as AK47 assault rifles, machetes, knives and machine guns to attack villages and farming populations dominated by Christians. (Isaac, Ndubuisi, 2024: 2-4)

Banditry in Nigeria has evolved from localized criminal activity into a complex security threat with national and transnational dimensions. It is important to examine the historical emergence, sociopolitical drivers, and contemporary manifestations of armed banditry, drawing on empirical research and theoretical frameworks. Which has resulted in mass displacement, educational disruption, and food insecurity as seen above.

Banditry in Nigeria defies simplistic categorization, existing at the intersection of organized crime, terrorism, and communal conflict. Scholarly consensus on a precise definition remains elusive, reflecting the phenomenon's fluid nature and contextual variations. As documented in a Security Journal, banditry encompasses "extensive cattle rustling, sexual violence, kidnapping, armed robbery, pillage, and attacks on gold mineral and traders" (Osasona 2023:738). This conceptual ambiguity complicates both academic analysis and policy responses. Contemporary banditry manifests most severely in Nigeria's northwestern states—Zamfara, Kaduna, Katsina, Sokoto, and Niger—where it has evolved from opportunistic crime into sophisticated militancy controlling territories and populations. The crisis has created what Okoli et al. term "captive population syndrome," wherein communities endure "complex, mortal existential threats" under bandit domination (Okoli, 2025: 2).

In order to understand the historical evolution of banditry in Nigeria, there is the need to understand firstly, the early manifestations and catalysts to banditry (Pre-2010). Banditry has historical antecedents in Nigeria, but its contemporary form represents a qualitative shift. Colonial archives document bandit activities termed "bush ranging" during the early 20th century, primarily as isolated highway robbery (Bell 1911 qtd. in Security Journal). Post-independence, banditry remained localized until several converging factors triggered its escalation which include; Desertification and Climate Pressures in Northern Nigeria is a major contributing factor for migration, with "over half of the land turning into desert," intensified competition between farmers and herders over dwindling resources. In addition, the proliferation of small arms from the fallout of the Libyan crisis (2011), this crisis flooded the Sahel with weapons, with Nigeria serving as a key transit route and destination point. The weaponization of pastoral conflicts transformed traditional cattle rustling into militarized banditry. Furthermore, political neglect and poor governance in the country was another cause; Decades of underinvestment in human development created a marginalized youth population susceptible to criminal recruitment. By 2022, over 136 million Nigerians lived below the poverty line, concentrated disproportionately in the north.

Secondly, the escalation and syndication of banditry (2011-2020); The period beginning in 2011 which witnessed banditry's transformation into a structured criminal industry in Nigeria; as one can see, there was territorial expansion, this was a period when bandits exploited the "ungoverned spaces" in the vast forest reserves like Kamuku, Kainji, and Birnin Gwari forests, establishing permanent bases. These territories functioned as criminal sanctuaries beyond state control. Furthermore, this period was also known for economic diversification, at inception it initially focused on cattle rustling, after some time bandits diversified into kidnapping for ransom, especially targeting schools. Over ten school kidnappings occurred within ten months in 2021 alone, exemplifying this commercialization of abduction. In addition, this period witnessed what is known as organizational sophistication; The emergence of "warlordism" saw bandit leaders like Dogo Gide and Bello Turji commanding hundreds of fighters. Okoli and Abubakar documented the rise of "crime-lordism" with command structures mirroring formal military organizations. (Okoli, 2025: 3-5; Osasona 2023:738).

Thirdly, banditry has evolved to contemporary convergence from (2021-Present). Banditry has now evolved to exhibit quasi-insurgent characteristics with complex relationships to jihadist groups like: Tactical Alliances the jihadist, evidence suggests tactical coordination between bandit groups and jihadist factions like Boko Haram splinters in border regions. While ideological alignment remains

limited, operational pragmatism drives temporary alliances. Another element of contemporary convergence is, governance claims on the affected communities; It is no longer news that bandits increasingly impose taxes, administer justice, and provide protection services in their controlled territories, establishing alternative governance systems. This represents a shift from purely predatory to proto-political posturing. In addition, one can also see another element of contemporary convergence as, transnational dimensions of network among bandit groups, where the activities of Bandit's network now span Nigeria's borders with Niger, Chad, and Cameroon, facilitating cross-border raids and escape from military operations. The International Crisis Group documented bandit corridors linking northwestern Nigeria to southern Niger. (Okoli, 2025: 3-5; Osasona 2023:738).

The emergence and evolution of banditry in Nigeria reflect deeper structural issues. Banditry, as used here, encompasses a range of violent criminal activities, including armed robbery, kidnapping, cattle rustling, and raiding, often carried out by organized groups. It's not simply spontaneous acts of desperation but often involves networks, hierarchies, and sometimes even local political or economic support. Understanding banditry requires examining these root causes, which are seldom mono causal. Migration is one important thread. It is important to note that migration may not be the only or even most important factor in the emergence of banditry. Other factors may be more central. Factors such as government corruption, poverty, access to resources, religious extremism, and a lack of economic resources might be more central. The emergence and evolution of banditry in Nigeria is a complex phenomenon shaped by a multifaceted interplay of factors, in which migration plays a significant, albeit often indirect, role. While not a singular cause, population movements driven by environmental stress, political instability, and economic disparities place strain on existing resources, exacerbating competition and conflict. Banditry in Nigeria represents not merely a law enforcement challenge but a multidimensional governance crisis requiring integrated responses. Its evolution from localized crime to transnational syndicate reflects the interplay of environmental stress, institutional fragility, and regional instability.

Border Control as a Strategy against Illegal Immigration and Banditry

Banditry in Nigeria has become a critical security issue, with groups engaging in kidnapping, cattle rustling, armed robbery, and other violent crimes. The problem is particularly prevalent in the northern regions of the country, where bandits have established operational bases in forests and ungoverned spaces (Adeola, 2023: 40-47). The porous nature of Nigeria's borders has been identified as a significant factor in the proliferation of banditry, as criminals can easily cross into neighboring countries to escape security forces or smuggle arms and ammunition (ECOWAS, 2021: 15-30). One can be optimistic that effective border control is essential to reducing the incidence of banditry in Nigeria and proposes strategies for achieving this goal.

The role of border control in addressing banditry cannot be over emphasized, effective border control is critical to addressing the issue of banditry in Nigeria. Borders are the first line of defense against external threats, and their porous nature allows criminals to move undetected (Ajibo, 2020: 89-104). Strengthening border control would not only prevent the movement of bandits but also disrupt the supply of arms and ammunition that fuel their operations (Nwankwo, 2021: 78-95). Furthermore, effective border control can enhance regional security and cooperation, which are essential for addressing the transnational nature of banditry (ECOWAS, 2021: 15-30).

Despite its importance, Nigeria faces several challenges in implementing effective border control. These include inadequate personnel, outdated technology, and corruption (Bamidele, 2019: 123-140). Additionally, the vast and difficult terrain of Nigeria's borders makes it challenging to monitor and secure them (NIS, 2020: 5-20). Addressing these challenges requires a comprehensive approach that incorporates technology, capacity building, and regional cooperation (Ajibo, 2020: 89-104). Strategies for Effective Border Control include;

Strengthening institutional frameworks; One of the key strategies for effective border control is strengthening the institutional frameworks that govern border security. This includes the Nigeria Immigration Service (NIS), the Nigeria Customs Service (NCS), and the Nigeria Border Communities Development Agency (BCDA) (Nwankwo, 2021: 78-95). These agencies must be provided with the necessary resources, including modern technology and training, to effectively secure the borders. Additionally, there must be clear lines of communication and coordination between these agencies to ensure a unified approach to border security (Bamidele, 2019: 123-140). Furthermore, engaging border communities is another critical strategy for effective border control. Local communities often have valuable information about the movement of criminals and can play a crucial role in preventing banditry (Adeyemi, 2019:45-67). Building trust and cooperation with border communities can be achieved through community-based approaches, such as the establishment of vigilance groups and the provision of incentives for information sharing (Ibrahim, 2020: 45-60). Additionally, addressing the socio-economic needs of border communities can reduce their vulnerability to exploitation by bandits (UNODC, 2019: 30-45).

In addition, integrating technology into border control is very important in this matter, the integration of technology into border control is essential for addressing the challenges posed by banditry. Technologies such as biometric identification, surveillance drones, and electronic borders can enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of border security (Ajibo, 2020: 89-104). Additionally, the use of data analytics and intelligence can help identify patterns and trends in criminal activities, enabling proactive measures to prevent banditry (Nwankwo, 2021: 78-95). However, the deployment of technology must be accompanied by the necessary infrastructure and training to ensure its successful implementation.

Another strategy for border control is, enhancing regional and international cooperation; Banditry is a transnational issue that requires regional and international cooperation to address. Nigeria must work closely with neighboring countries, such as Niger, Chad, and Cameroon, to share intelligence and coordinate efforts to combat banditry (ECOWAS, 2021: 15-30). Regional organizations, such as the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), can play a key role in facilitating cooperation and providing support for border security initiatives (Ibrahim, 2020). Additionally, international partners, such as the European Union and the United States, can provide technical assistance and funding to enhance Nigeria's border control capabilities (UNODC, 2019: 3045).

Finally, addressing the root causes of banditry is essential for achieving sustainable security along Nigeria's borders. This includes addressing issues such as poverty, unemployment, and inequality, which drive individuals to engage in criminal activities (Adeyemi, 2019: 45-67). The government must also address the political and social grievances that contribute to the rise of banditry (Ibrahim, 2020). By addressing these root causes, Nigeria can reduce the appeal of banditry and create a more stable and secure environment.

Effective border control is a critical component of addressing the issue of banditry in Nigeria. The strategies outlined in this paper, including strengthening institutional frameworks, engaging border communities, integrating technology, enhancing regional and international cooperation, and addressing the root causes of banditry, provide a comprehensive approach to achieving this goal. Implementing these strategies will require the commitment of both the Nigerian government and its partners, as well as the active participation of border communities. By working together, Nigeria can enhance its border security and reduce the threat posed by banditry.

The Need for Sustainable Migratory Policies Identity Politics and the Challenge of Banditry in Nigeria

As we have seen above, Migration is a global phenomenon that has shaped human history, contributing to the development of societies and economies. However, migration, particularly in the context of developing countries like Nigeria, is often driven by insecurity, poverty, and inequality. Migration is a natural and inevitable aspect of human life. People migrate for various reasons, including economic opportunities, political stability, environmental factors, and security concerns. In Nigeria, migration has become a critical issue, particularly due to the increasing wave of banditry that has plagued the country in recent years. Banditry, which involves organized criminal activities such as kidnapping, cattle rustling, and armed robbery, has become a major driver of internal and cross-border migration in Nigeria. Addressing the root causes of banditry and developing sustainable migratory policies are essential for achieving long-term peace, security, and development in the country.

The ungoverned Spaces and porous borders in Nigeria are where Crime thrives, particularly in remote locations where the presence of government is not registered such that there's little deterrence and abounding opportunities for criminal activity. This renders them vulnerable to banditry. This situation is made worse by the absence of effective community policing mechanisms capable of addressing the hinterlands' peculiar security challenges. The state security machinery has so far failed to tackle the scourge of banditry due to lack of political will, lack of collaborative efforts and operational challenges.

The Concept of Sustainable Migratory Policies; Sustainable migratory policies refer to policies that are designed to manage migration in a way that is fair, equitable, and beneficial to both the migrants and the host communities. These policies aim to balance the needs of the economy, the rights of migrants, and the security concerns of the state. According to Castles and Miller (2019), sustainable migration policies should be based on the principles of human rights, social inclusion, and environmental sustainability. They argue that "migration policies should be designed to promote the well-being of migrants and their families, while also contributing to the development of both origin and destination countries" (Castles & Miller, 2019: 12).

In the context of Nigeria, sustainable migratory policies are crucial for managing the large-scale migration of people from rural to urban areas, as well as across international borders. As noted by de Haas (2020), "migration policies should be flexible and responsive to the changing needs of migrants and societies" (de Haas, 2020: 45). This is particularly important in Nigeria, where migration is often driven by insecurity, poverty, and inequality.

The interconnection between migration and banditry in Nigeria is complex and multifaceted. On the one hand, banditry has become a major driver of migration, as people seek to escape the violence

and insecurity associated with bandit activities. On the other hand, migration itself can contribute to the spread of banditry, as displaced people may be forced to engage in criminal activities to survive. As noted by Arowosegbe (2022), "the relationship between migration and banditry in Nigeria is one of mutual reinforcement, with migration exacerbating the conditions that give rise to banditry" (Arowosegbe, 2022: 102).

Furthermore, the displacement of people due to banditry has put additional pressure on urban centers, leading to social and economic challenges such as overcrowding, unemployment, and competition for resources. According to Adeola (2023), "the influx of internally displaced persons (IDPs) into urban areas has created new challenges for urban planning, service delivery, and social cohesion" (Adeola, 2023: 78). This highlights the need for sustainable migratory policies that can address the root causes of migration and provide adequate support to both migrants and host communities.

Addressing the challenges of banditry and migration in Nigeria requires a comprehensive and multi-faceted approach. First and foremost, there is a need to address the root causes of banditry, including poverty, inequality, and lack of access to education and employment opportunities. According to Betts (2021), "addressing the root causes of migration is essential for developing sustainable migration policies" (Betts, 2021: 56). This requires investing in education, healthcare, and economic development in rural areas, where banditry is most prevalent.

Secondly, there is a need to develop sustainable migratory policies that can manage migration in a way that is fair, equitable, and beneficial to all stakeholders. According to Newland (2022), "sustainable migration policies should be based on the principles of human rights, social inclusion, and environmental sustainability" (Newland, 2022: 34). This includes providing legal pathways for migration, protecting the rights of migrants, and promoting the integration of migrants into host communities.

Finally, there is a need to enhance regional and international cooperation to address the cross-border dimensions of migration and banditry. According to the Global Commission on International Migration (GCIM), "international cooperation is essential for managing migration in a way that is fair, equitable, and beneficial to all stakeholders" (GCIM, 2023: 12). This includes sharing intelligence, strengthening border security, and providing humanitarian assistance to displaced persons.

The need for sustainable migratory policies in Nigeria is imperative, particularly in the context of the challenge of banditry. Banditry has become a major driver of migration in Nigeria, with severe implications for human security, economic development, and social stability. Addressing the root causes of banditry and developing sustainable migratory policies are interlinked challenges that require a comprehensive and multi-faceted approach. By investing in education, healthcare, and economic development, developing sustainable migratory policies, and enhancing regional and international cooperation, Nigeria can mitigate the adverse effects of banditry and promote sustainable migration. Only through better understanding, commitment to solve, resolve in partnership, and through policies which are put into practice, can the real advantage of human movement and capital allocation be appreciated by all.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Even though the incidence of banditry in Nigeria is beginning to attract scholarship, the theoretical expositions remain embryonic. This article fills the gap by offering explanations for the occurrence of banditry in Nigeria. This study was done bearing in mind that an understanding of the motivating

factors of crime provides insights and potential solutions. The study presents an overview of banditry in Nigeria, as well as discussing the challenge of banditry through addressing the root causes of banditry and developing sustainable migratory policies that are essential for achieving long-term peace, security, and development in the country.

The study also discovered that the under-governed spaces coupled with the country's porous borders have increased the influx of small arms and light weapons from the Sahel region – thus increasing the opportunities for crime. This is facilitated by vast forests which allow the illegal arms trade to fester. It is further complicated by the socioeconomic conditions prevalent in the country, which leave the youth vulnerable to recruitment for criminal activities. The socioeconomic realities that exist include multidimensional poverty, widespread unemployment, deprivation, inequality, marginalization, exclusion and lack of access to basic amenities. Even though this is a national challenge,

The study thus proposes practical solutions through the strategies of Situational Crime Prevention. The government should adopt management techniques to reduce poverty and vulnerability, particularly in the North. The government should also reform the security apparatus with an emphasis on increasing the size, funding, training, intelligence, support, and communication equipment of security forces. It is also recommended that the government establish its presence and make use of effective leadership in poorly governed spaces in the country. This will reduce the situational factors that compel crime and encourage the adoption of a situation-based prevention strategy.

The study has revealed that it is apparently clear that Nigeria and the international community can no longer pay lip service to the adoption and deployment of a technologically driven surveillance in the North West especially the porous stretch of border neither can anything less than a genuine activation of good governance rescue the North West region from the iron grip of insurgency, armed banditry and kidnapping which has quickly becoming a fertile and preparatory ground for Jihadist elements from Sahel.

This study hereby recommends thus:

1. The enthronement of good governance and fortified institutional framework covering all the ungoverned space in the North West region will be a major breakthrough and not just raw militarization of the region. The institutional framework should be seen working especially the social justice system.
2. Deployment of technology and intelligence resource by law enforcement agencies and related agencies like National Space Research and Development Agency (NASRDA) will enhance winning the battle against terror in the nation. The effective deployment of the drones and technology based surveillance with motivated security agencies cannot but deliver the nation.
3. Community participation at the center of the country policing strategy will be a major game changer as the present reactive policing strategy should be replaced by community oriented policing strategy which should be technology driven has no significant effect on curbing insurgency, kidnapping and banditry in the nation.
4. Collaborative efforts of law enforcement agencies, telecoms operators. Information sharing should be done by establishment of a fusion center and a secure software application to enhance this as crime and criminalities has also gone digital

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