

Migratory Trajectory of Transnational Street Beggars in South Western Nigeria

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Migration remains an important course of action often resort-to by human and some other classes of animal for survival in the face of life-threatening conditions. However, the activity of certain group of migrants, who are exploiting the socio-economic and environmental challenges in their home countries to conduct street begging across different countries in Africa, is fast becoming a major cause for concern. This article examined the migratory trajectory of transnational street beggars in South Western, Nigeria. Strain and Migration Network Theories were adopted for the study. The methods of data collection were survey questionnaire, in-depth interview, and key informant interview. Convenience and purposive sampling techniques were employed for the selection of 395 transnational street beggars and 4 key informants were purposively chosen. Findings revealed that transnational street beggars immigrated into Nigeria all year round and all of them came by road. Also, while some of them entered the country officially, others gained entry illegally. The majority (29.3%) arrived through Sokoto, a border State to some neighbouring countries. This study calls for more security measures at the Nigerian borders as a way of controlling the influx of this category of beggars into the country.

Key Words: Transnational street beggars, street begging, migration, nigeria

Introduction

From time immemorial, migration remains an important course of action which humans and some classes of animal adopt in response to any life-threatening situation in their natural environment. Globally, the unstable environmental/climatic conditions and dire economic and socio-political situations in different parts of the world are increasingly compelling a large number of people to emigrate, either temporarily or

permanently, from their home country to other places where they believe their living condition can be substantially improved (Castles and Miller, 2003; Akpokpari, 2000).

In Africa, like in some other parts of the world, nationals of certain countries, who have been exposed to unfavourable or precarious situations in their nations, are continuously taking refuge in their neighbouring



countries for survival (Adedokun, 2003; Afolayan, 1998). However, the activities of certain group of migrants, who are exploiting the environmental and socio-economic challenges in their home countries to perpetually embark on transnational street begging in the continent is fast becoming a major cause for concern (The Punch, 2012; Mohammed, 1999). The goal of this type of migrants is fraudulently driven; they prefer to move from one country to another all year round for the purpose of engaging in alms solicitation rather than securing a more respectable source of livelihood in their host countries (Adedibu and Jelili, 2012, Igbinovia, 1991). A large number of migrant beggars have taken residence in Nigeria for the purpose of engaging in street begging (Anon, 2011; Esan, 2009). Adedibu and Jelili (2012) contend that the situation in most of the Nigerian cities shows a large influx of street beggars from relatively dry neighbouring countries, such as Chad and Niger Republic. Igbinovia (1991) similarly submits that alien or immigrant beggars in Nigeria are mostly from some neighbouring African countries like Niger Republic, Sudan, Ghana, Chad, Togo and Cameroon. Also, Anon (2011) asserts that the majority of the migrant beggars in the country are generally able-bodied and prolific such that they procreate more than people who are economically better off. While discussing the relationship between street begging and migration in Ecuador, Swanson (2005) submits that since the 1990s, the rural indigenous women and children have started migrating to beg from the Andes to Ecuador's largest cities for survival needs. The majority of these beggars, according to Swanson (2005), are children, who migrate during their two-month summer holidays, two-week Christmas holidays or when there are teachers' strikes or national holidays.

Similarly, in a study conducted by the Friends-International and UN Inter-Agency Project in 2006 in Bangkok, Thailand, it was observed that Thai beggars were significantly overshadowed by a major influx of foreign beggars from Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar,

and Bangladesh (Friends-International, 2006). Focusing on the networks that enable Cambodian beggars move to Thailand and operate, the study discovered a heavy involvement of a group of persons generally known as *Me Kyhol* (a Cambodian term for facilitators and leaders) that have a wide variety of characteristics and roles in helping migrants as part of the network bringing beggars to Bangkok. It was also discovered that many of the women beggars involved in the study claimed that they came to Thailand alone, while some stated they learnt from friends or relatives how to get to Bangkok (Friends-International, 2006). In a similar vein, Hussain (2010) opines that illegal Afghans and Tajik immigrants are also part of the beggar market in Pakistan. These migrant beggars, according to him, often enter the country illegally without any form of identification documents or registration, and are contributing to social and health problems in major cities in the country.

Adedibu and Jelili (2011) have also linked street begging in Nigeria to human trafficking. They submit that the physically challenged or disabled persons such as the blind and crippled are lured into begging business and trafficked into major cities in the country and to some other countries in the Middle East, particularly, Saudi Arabia. Furthermore, the United States Department of State (2008) has also reported that children are being trafficked for begging from Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Tajikistan, India, Burma, Laos, Cambodia and Thailand. The International Office for Migration (2004) notes that children are being trafficked for begging from a number of poorer areas of South East Europe to richer nations. Similarly, Delap (2009) contends that children are reported to have been trafficked for begging from various countries including Yemen and Sudan to Saudi Arabia.

The influx of transnational street beggars into Nigeria becomes problematic because this group of beggars often gain entry into the country, unofficially, through some unrecognized routes; thereby, contributing to the problem of illegal immigration in

Nigeria. Also, transnational street begging has a very high tendency of aggravating the human trafficking problem in Africa, particularly, within the West African sub-region. Indeed, studies in some other parts of the world have established a connection between organized human trafficking network and immigrants' involvement in street begging (Cherneva 2011; Delap, 2009). Furthermore, transnational street beggars, like their Nigerian counterparts, constitute potential readily available human resources to mischief makers who may wish to use them as instruments to perpetrate violence and/or vandalize public property in the country. Indeed, foreign nationals, particularly, those from some neighbouring African countries, have been frequently linked to series of civil upheavals and ethno-religious crisis witnessed in some parts of Nigeria at different point in time (Onuoha 2010). The most recent case is the indictment of some immigrants from neighbouring African countries by the Nigerian security agencies as members of Boko Haram, the terrorist group that is currently threatening the corporate existence of Nigeria through series of bomb attacks on Nigerians and public property (Okoli, 2013; Sambo, 2012). The current paucity of data on the migratory patterns of transnational street beggars soliciting alms in Nigeria provided a strong impetus for this study. Hence, its main objective was to examine the migratory trajectory of transnational street beggars in South Western Nigeria.

Theoretical Framework

Strain and Migration Network theories provided the theoretical guide for explaining transnational street beggars' migration process and their involvement in street begging. Robert K. Merton proposed strain theory after reviewing Emile Durkheim's theory of anomie. The theory opines that culture of any society defines certain goals it deems "worth striving for", and also specifies the approved norms or institutionalized means all individuals are expected to follow in pursuing the cultural goals (Vold and Bernard, 1986). Merton

noted that certain goals are too strongly emphasized throughout society (he uses the example of financial success), and society also emphasizes certain means such as hard work, education, starting at the bottom and working one's way up to reach those goals. However, due to social inequality, the approved means to reach the success goals are not readily available to certain groups in society, even though the goals are said to apply equally to all. According to Merton, when this inequality exists because of the way society is structured, the social structure is anomic (Williams and McShane, 1999). The individuals caught in these anomic conditions (largely the lower classes) are then faced with the strain of being unable to reconcile their aspirations with their limited opportunities. He however, presents five ways by which an individual responds to this problem of anomie, depending on his attitude towards the cultural goals and the institutionalized means. These options are conformity, innovation, ritualism, retreatism, and rebellion (Vold and Bernard, 1986).

To the extent that a society is stable, most persons in it will choose 'conformity', which entails acceptance of both the cultural goals and institutionalized means. Most crimes that exist in society, however, will probably take the form of 'innovation'. Persons who innovate retain their allegiance to the cultural goal of acquiring wealth (since this is so heavily emphasized), but they find that they cannot succeed at this through the institutionalized means. Therefore, they figure out new methods by which wealth can be acquired (i.e. pursuing culture goals through unapproved means). A third possible adaptation is ritualism, it involves rejecting the possibility of ever achieving wealth, but retaining allegiance to the norms of hard work and honesty. The fourth adaptation, retreatism, involves a rejection of both goals and means set by the society. The final mode of adaptation, 'rebellion' is of a different type from the others; it focuses on the substitution of new goals and means for the original ones (Williams III and McShane, 1999). Transnational street beggars like their



local counterparts, the Nigerian beggars, fall within the category of persons that adopt innovation as their mode of adaptation to the strain conditions existing in their respective societies.

Migration network theory conceives migration as embedded in social networks. It fits individual decision makers within groups, and further interposes groups between macroscopic social/economic conditions and actual migration (Light, Bhachu, and Karageorgis, 1993). Proponents of this theory opine that individual migrants are members of numerous formal and informal networks that affect their migration outcomes. Migrant networks are viewed as sets of interpersonal ties that connect migrants, former migrants, and non-migrants in origin and destination areas through ties of kinship, friendship, and shared community origin. These networks increase the likelihood of international movement because they lower the costs and risks of movement and increase the expected net returns to migration (Massey, Arango, Hugo, Kouaouchi, Pellegrino, and Taylor, 1993).

According to the theory, governments of destination countries will have great difficulty at controlling migration flows once they have begun because the process of network formation lies largely outside their control and occurs no matter what policy regime is pursued. Migration networks enable migrants to cross borders, legally or illegally (Bo'cker 1994). Certain immigration policies, such as those intended to promote reunification between immigrants and their families abroad, work at cross-purposes with the control of immigration flows since they reinforce migrant networks by giving members of kin networks special rights of entry. While networks at origin can restrain or encourage an individual to migrate, networks at destination can facilitate or discourage adaptation and integration. The significant others of transnational street beggars helped them with their migration and/or adaptation in Nigeria.

Methodology

Study Area

South Western Nigeria was the selected location for the study. It is one of the six geo-political zones of the country, and it comprises six states which include: Oyo, Osun, Ondo, Ogun, Ekiti and Lagos. It is mainly inhabited by the Yoruba people, and is one of the most densely populated parts of the country. According to the National Population Census conducted in 2006, the total population size of the inhabitant of the six states of South Western Nigeria was 27, 581,993 (Federal Republic of Nigeria Official Gazette 2007). The selection of this location stemmed from the fact that it is among the most urbanized and cosmopolitan parts of Nigeria. Also, some other studies have established the prevalence of street begging in most of the major urban centres in this zone (Adedibu and Jelili 2011; Federal Office of Statistics 2001).

Study Population

The primary target population of the study included both male and female transnational street beggars conducting street begging in South Western Nigeria. Also, officials of the Nigeria Immigration Service and Nigeria Custom Service were involved. The inclusion of personnel of these agencies is predicated on the fact that they are individually charged with certain responsibilities that equip them with important and relevant information on the migration trajectory of transnational street beggars. While the Nigeria Immigration Service is the government agency charged with the responsibility of controlling and monitoring the movement of persons in and out of Nigeria, the Nigeria Custom Service is the agency charged with prevention and suppression of smuggling in the country.

Sampling Technique and Sample Size

Two major urban centres in South Western Nigeria, Lagos and Ibadan, were purposively chosen. This selection was predicated on the fact that the existence of transnational street beggars in these cities is

confirmed. Also, convenience sampling technique was employed for the selection of the 382 transnational street beggars, which means that no rigid procedure was adopted for their selection. Only the available members of the study population were involved in the study. This approach was basically employed because of the mobile nature of the study population. In addition, 13 in-depth interviews were conducted with purposively chosen transnational street beggars. Also, 3 personnel of the Nigeria Immigration Service, and 1 official of the Nigeria Custom Service were purposively selected.

Methods of Data Collection

This study was exploratory and cross-sectional in design. Data were essentially collected through the triangulation of quantitative and qualitative methods. A set of 382 questionnaires was administered on the transnational street beggars through face to face interview. Thirteen in-depth interviews were also conducted with respondents, who possess some unique information on the subject of study, as a way of complementing the survey. Furthermore, 4 key informant interviews were conducted with personnel of the government agencies involved in the study. All qualitative data were conducted with the aid of tape recorder and field note.

Data Collection

Data collection spanned five months covering the period between November, 2012 and March, 2013. At each of the purposively selected cities, the identified locations of transnational street beggars were visited several times, with Fridays essentially reserved for data collection at popular central mosques where they usually converge in large numbers to solicit alms. At each of the visited locations, they were strategically sourced. The researchers on several occasions had to give them a token amount of money, usually between 20 and 50 naira as a form of motivation. The assistance of available local people who were observed to have

established some form of relationship or familiarity with some of these beggars was also sought at different times to help allay their fears. Thereafter, the trust and confidence of some of them were gradually won after the initial ice was broken. The willing ones among them that agreed to participate in the study were engaged in informal interactions, and the desired data was subsequently generated. The service of a field assistant who is fluent in spoken and written Hausa language was employed for the study as a precautionary step for the easy conduct of the fieldwork. However, nearly all the interviews conducted were done in either English or Yoruba language as all those interviewed remarkably demonstrated a good understanding and speaking of either one or both of these languages. For the key informants, interviews were conducted with them individually in the premises of their respective agencies.

Data Analysis

Data generated through the administered questionnaires were processed and analysed using frequency distribution, cross-tabulation and chi-square statistics. The qualitative data were however processed through content analysis and ethnographic summaries which involved a careful transcription, detailed description and interpretation of the tape-recorded data and field.

Ethical Consideration

The international standard ethics for research was strictly adhered-to in this study. The consents of the respondents were sought and obtained before their participation in the research. The objectives of the study were clearly explained to them. They were also informed of their right to voluntary participation, as well as their right to withdraw from the study at any time they deemed necessary.

Results and Discussion

Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Table 1: Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Characteristics	Categories	N	%
Sex	Male	167	43.7
	Female	215	56.3
	Total	382	100.0
Age	15-19	101	26.4
	20-24	53	13.9
	25-29	44	11.5
	30-34	71	18.6
	35-39	76	19.9
	40 and above	37	9.7
	Total	382	100.0
Nationality	Nigerien	304	79.6
	Chadian	58	15.2
	Malian	20	5.2
	Total	382	100.0
Religion	Christianity	9	2.4
	Islam	349	91.3
	Traditional	24	6.3
	Total	382	100.0
Marital Status	Single	126	33.0
	Married	236	61.8
	Divorced	8	2.1
	Widowed	12	3.1
	Total	382	100.0
Number of Children	None	105	27.5
	1-3	140	36.6
	4-6	110	28.8
	7 and above	27	7.1
	Total	382	100.0
Years of Residence in Nigeria	<1	246	64.4
	2	36	9.4
	3	44	11.5
	4	24	6.3
	5	32	8.4
	Total	382	100.0
Level of Education	No Formal Education	180	47.1
	Arabic Education	138	36.1
	Primary	52	13.6
	Secondary	12	3.1
	Total	382	100.0

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Means of Livelihood in Home Country			
Farming \	108		28.2
Pastoralism	95		24.9
Artisanship	53		13.9
Farming & Pastoralism	73		19.1
Mining	31		8.1
Farming and Fishing	22		5.8
Total	382		100.0

The sex distribution of respondents indicates that female constituted 56.3% of the respondents, while male constituted 43.7%. The difference in their distribution may be viewed as resulting from the fact that female respondents were more opened to alms solicitation than their male counterparts. The extent of men and women involvement in street begging in different societies has been observed to be culturally influenced (Karacoskun, 2009; Bourgois, 1996). As regards age, respondents who were between the ages of 15-19 were the most represented (26.4%), while those who were between the ages 35-39 (19.9%), and those who fell between the ages 30-34 (18.6%) were also fairly represented. The preponderance of children among them can be explained as resulting from the fact that alms-givers are more easily moved to give charity to children than adults. Hence, the children were exploited by their adult counterparts to make more money. Furthermore, the table indicates that transnational street beggars from Niger Republic (79.6%) were in the majority, followed by those from Chad Republic (15.2%); the nationals of Mali had the lowest frequency (5.2%). This implies that these beggars were citizens of some neighbouring countries that are relatively poorer when compared to Nigeria in terms of physical, social and economic resources. Also, the dominance of Nigeriens in the study can be explained as resulting from the fact that the socio-economic situation and general environmental condition of Niger Republic is relatively more precarious than

those of Chad Republic and Mali. Over the last 50 years, the country has often experienced grain deficit and food crisis (International Monetary Fund, 2013). Similarly, while the religion of the majority of the respondents (91.3%) was Islam, 6.3% of them stated that they were adherents of Traditional religion; the remaining 2.4% were Christians. The dominance of adherents of Islam among the respondents is unsurprising as all the respondents were nationals of countries where Islam is the major religion practiced by most of the citizens. Their marital status distribution reveals that the large majority (61.8%) of the respondents were married, followed by those who were single (33.0%); few of them (3.1%) were widowed and very few of them (2.1%) were divorced. The table further indicates that respondents who had between 1-3 children were the largest (36.6%) in proportion, followed by those who had between 4-6 children (28.8%); about 28% of them had no child.

Additionally, most of the respondents (64.4%) claimed to have resided in Nigeria for less than a year, while about 12% reported that they had been living in the country for 3 years. The recorded small proportion of respondents who had taken residence in Nigeria for a period of 2 years and above was not unexpected because of the mobile nature of transnational street beggars. Also, the majority (47.1%) of the respondents had no formal education, but those who had acquired Arabic education were also substantially represented (36.1%), few of them (13.6%) had primary education and very few of them (1.0%) had secondary education.



The analysis of respondents' means of livelihood in their home-countries shows that the majority (28.2%) were farmers, while 24.9% were pastoralist. Also, those who combined farming with pastoralism were also fairly represented (19.1%); about 14% were artisans.

Reasons for Migration

Since the decision to migrate from one's country of origin to another country is not often a simple one, it was considered important to investigate transnational street beggars' experience in their home-countries as a way of understanding factors responsible for their migration. Findings revealed that 34.3% linked the reason for leaving their country of origin to famine, while 31.2% attributed their migration to drought, about 19.1% of them gave reasons of poverty and war. The results of the in-depth interviews further corroborated the survey. In one of the interviews conducted, a respondent stated:

We had to leave Niger Republic because there was severe drought and famine in our land. All our animals have died and our farmlands are bad. Only birds now occupy our villages. Everybody has left because we do not want to die of hunger and thirst. If you do not believe me, you can check this (he brought out a mobile phone from his pocket and showed this website: www.tnrewl.com) (Nigerien Male Transnational Street Beggar/IDI/Kara, Ibadan/11/12/2013).

In the words of another:

I had to leave my country with my children because things became very difficult after the death of my husband. The drought and famine problems that also ravaged Chad at that time did not help because we did not have food to eat and that is why we decided to come here for survival (Chadian

Female Transnational Street Beggars/
IDI/ Ajegunle, Lagos/19/3/2013).

It can be deduced from these findings that different factors were responsible for the emigration of the respondents. Afolayan, Ikwuyatum and Abejide (2008) have also asserted that the decision of people to move out of a location is often determined by different socio-economic inadequacies (push factors) that include lack of employment opportunities or lack of access to better life existing in the source region, but which are believed to be available (pull factors) in the choice destinations.

Person that Influenced Respondents to Migrate to Nigeria

Information on person that influenced respondents to migrate to Nigeria for the purpose of alms solicitation is presented in table 2. The table reveals that the majority of the respondents from Niger Republic (57.2%) mentioned family member as the person that influenced their coming to beg, close to 31% of them, however, identified friend as the person that influenced them. About 12% of them maintained that they decided to come to Nigeria for alms solicitation on their own. For the Chadians, while close to 45% opined that it was their family member that influenced their migration to Nigeria to solicit alms, 41.4% of them maintained that nobody influenced them; close to 14% of them mentioned friend as the person that influenced their coming to Nigeria for alms solicitation.

Table: 4.3.1: Person that Influenced Respondents to Migrate to Nigeria

Nationality	Person that Influenced Respondents to Migrate to Nigeria			Total
	Family Member	Friend	Nobody	
Nigerian	174 57.2%	94 30.9%	36 11.8%	304 100.0%
Chadian	26 44.8%	81 3.8%	24 41.4%	58 100.0%
Malian	0 .0%	1 5.0%	19 95.0%	20 100.0%
Total	200 52.4%	103 27.0%	79 20.7%	382 100.0%

Of all the respondents from Mali, 95.0% of them declared that nobody influenced their coming to Nigeria to beg, but 5% of them mentioned friend as the person that influenced them. In all, the majority of the respondents (52.4%) from the three countries claimed that their family members influenced their decision to come to Nigeria to conduct street begging; this was followed by 27.0%, who declared that they were influenced by their friends. However, only about 21% maintained that nobody influenced their coming. Meanwhile, their responses according to nationality differ a little. While the majority of Nigeriens (52.4%) and Chadians (44.8%) mentioned family member as the person that influenced their coming to Nigeria for street begging, the large proportion (95.0%) of Malians declared that they decided to come to Nigeria to solicit alms on their own. The result of the chi-square ($X^2=98.472$; $P<0.05$) further established the observed difference in their responses. Some outcomes of the in-depth interviews corroborated the result of the survey. A respondent has this to say:

It was when rain did not fall and we started experiencing severe drought in our community that my husband decided that we should come to Nigeria to solicit alms (Chadian Female Transnational Street Beggar/ IDI/Agege Pen-cinema, Lagos/20/3/ 2013).

Another respondent said

I came to Nigeria with my friends who had been coming to Lagos before. She was the person who encouraged me to come to solicit alms (Malian Female Transnational Street Beggar/IDI/Obalende Motor Park, Lagos/8/1/2013).

This analysis has clearly established that the significant others of the transnational street beggars, most especially their family members, played a very important role in their decision to emigrate from their respective countries to Nigeria for the purpose of engaging in alms solicitation. This finding is similar to the study conducted by Friends-International and UN Inter-Agency Project among migrant beggars in Bangkok, Thailand in 2006, where some of the beggars interviewed claimed that they decided to migrate after they had discussed with friends or relatives.

Smuggler(s)' Involvement in Migration Process by Nationality

The process of migration, especially illegal migration, from one country to another is often not easily accomplished, especially for first time immigrants. Hence, respondents were asked about how they facilitated their migration to Nigeria.

Table 3: Smuggler (s)'s involvement in Migration Process by Nationality

Nationality	Payment to facilitate migration		Total
	Yes	No	
Nigerien	54 17.8%	250 82.2%	304 100.0%
Chadian	9 15.5%	49 84.5%	58 100.0%
Malian	2 10.0%	18 90.0%	20 5.2%
Total	65 17.0%	317 83.0%	382 100.0%

Table 3 below presents the involvement of smuggler(s) in the migration process of respondents by nationality. The table indicates that the majority (83.0%) declared that smugglers were not involved in their migration process to Nigeria, as against 17.0% who confirmed that smugglers were involved. A further breakdown of the analysis reveals that while the large majority of the respondents (82.2%) from Niger Republic stated that they did not pay anyone to bring them to Nigeria, 17.8% confirmed that they paid certain amount of money to someone to bring them to the country. Similarly, a large proportion (84.5%) of Chadians opined that they did not pay anyone specially to facilitate their migration to Nigeria as against about 16% of them who agreed that they paid someone to bring them. Also, while 90.0% of Malian respondents stated that they came to Nigeria on their own, 10.0% of them contended that they paid someone specially to facilitate their migration to Nigeria. The observed similarity in the submission of the large proportion of respondents from the three countries that smugglers were not involved in their migration process to Nigeria was indicated in the non-significant value of the chi-square ($X^2=0.910$; $P>0.05$). The result of the survey was also reflected in the in-depth interviews conducted. One of the respondents stated thus:

Except for the money that I paid as my transportation fare, I did not give money to anybody to bring me to Nigeria. I did not need to pay anybody specially to bring me here. This is not my first time of coming to Nigeria (Nigerien Male Transnational Street Beggar/IDI/Ijora Under-Bridge, Lagos/9/1/2013).

In the words of another:

Coming to Nigeria was not difficult since I have my entry permit. I did not pay money to anybody to bring me here because I came to Nigeria through the border in Borno (Chadian Female Transnational Street Beggar/IDI/Ajgunle, Lagos/19/3/2013).

Another respondent however, submitted:

It was a man who took us to Cotonou from Niger Republic after we paid money to him. We did not give money to the driver;

it is the man that we know, and he was the one who made arrangement for our transportation, and we later came to Nigeria on our own (Nigerien Male Transnational Street Beggar/IDI/Iwo-Road, Ibadan/ 29/3/2013).

It can be inferred from these findings that transnational street beggars in Nigeria either facilitated their entry into Nigeria by taking the advantage of the Economic Community of West African States protocol on free movement of the citizens of the sub-region across the member countries or they illegally entered into the country on their own without involving smugglers in their migration process. However, those who were brought to the country by smuggler(s) were more likely to be coming to Nigeria for the first time. The migration process of this group of transnational street beggars essentially involved the payment of an agreed sum of money which served as the facilitation fee to smugglers who arranged for their transportation to Nigeria, and also helped them meet their contact(s) in the country. In addition, the low involvement of smugglers in their migration process contradicts the result of the study conducted by the Friends-International and UN Inter-Agency Project (2006) which discovered a heavy involvement of a group of persons that specialized in facilitating the inflow of migrant beggars into Bangkok from Cambodia.

Migration to Nigeria with Family Member(s) by Nationality

Information was generated about whether transnational street beggars came to Nigeria alone or with member(s) of their family. The analysis shows that the majority (65.7%) of the respondents opined that they migrated to Nigeria with member(s) of their family, as against the remaining 34.3% who maintained that they came alone. Also, the large majority (71.7%) of Nigerians confirmed that they migrated to Nigeria

with their family member(s), while the remaining 28.3% maintained that that they came to the country alone. However, for Chadians, about 52% constituting the majority declared that they migrated to Nigeria alone as against 48.3% who disclosed that they came with their relative(s). Furthermore, the large proportion (75.0%) of Malians submitted that they migrated to Nigeria alone as compared to the remaining 25.0% who declared that they travelled to Nigeria with member(s) of their family. Furthermore, the observed difference in the responses of the respondents according to their nationalities was established in the significant value of the chi-square ($X^2=27.391$; $P<0.05$).

Responses on the accompanying family member(s) to Nigeria indicate that the majority (33.1%) of the respondents reported that they migrated to Nigeria with their child/children; a substantial proportion (19.1%) also maintained that they came with their father. Furthermore, while 14.3% of the respondents confirmed that they travelled to Nigeria with their husbands and children, about 12% of them reported that they came with their wives and children. Other persons identified by the respondents as their family member(s) that came with them to Nigeria included: mother (9.2%), wife (8.8%), uncle (3.6%) and husband (0.4%). These findings have established that children are the most preferred accompanying family members among transnational street beggars, for the purpose of soliciting alms in other countries. Consequently, children are more susceptible to being constantly moved from one country to another; this may negatively impact on their physical development and mental well-being. Different international organizations like the International Labour Organization (2006), International Organization for Migration (2004), and US Department of States (2008) have also observed that children are being trafficked across countries in Africa, Asia, Europe, Africa and Latin America for the purpose of engaging in begging.

Mode of Transportation to Nigeria

All the 382 (100.0%) respondents covered in the survey maintained that they were transported to Nigeria by road. The fact that all the transnational street beggars in this study claimed to have been transported to Nigeria by road clearly indicates that the proximity of Nigeria to their countries played a significant role in facilitating their immigration. It further shows that some of them who may find it difficult to come into Nigeria through official border can illegally gain entry into the country through some other unrecognized routes.

To further determine if the transnational street beggars gained entry into Nigeria, legally or illegally, the analysis of their mode of entry into Nigeria by nationality was also done. Responses show that the large majority (82.2%) of the respondents claimed that they gained entry into the country through the official border post as against 17.8% who disclosed that they did not. Similarly, the large majority (81.2%) of Nigerians claimed that they gained entry into Nigeria through the officially recognized border-post as against 18.8% of them who confirmed that they did not. Also, only about 14% of the respondents from Chad Republic stated that they entered into Nigeria through some other routes apart from the official post as against the larger proportion (86.2%) who opined they entered into the country through the designated border-post. For Malians, the majority (85.0%) contended they gained entry into Nigeria through the nation's official border-post, as compared to only 15.0% who claimed that they did not. The similarity in the responses of the respondents as shown in the table was further established in the non-significant value of the chi-square ($X^2=0.931$; $P>0.628$).

Respondents' mode of entry into Nigeria by encounter with the law enforcement officers on their way into the country was also investigated. Close to 30% of the respondents, who claimed that they entered to Nigeria through the official border-posts declared that they did not come across law enforcement officers on their way. Also, 12% of the respondents who

confirmed that they did not come to Nigeria through official border-posts declared that they came across law enforcement on their way to the country. It can be observed from the analysis that there was no connection between respondents' modes of entry into Nigeria and their encounter with law enforcement officers on their way to the country. This was also indicated in the non-significant value of the chi-square ($X^2=0.381$; $P>0.05$). The results of the qualitative data further buttress these findings. A respondent has this to say:

You people always look at us as if we are...My family and I was forced to leave Niger Republic because of the problem there. We did not come to Nigeria through bush path. We entered through the border because we have our papers (Nigerien Female Transnational Street Beggar/IDI/Bodija, Ibadan/ 11/12/2012).

In the words of another respondent:

No, we did not encounter them. Our town is very close to *Baaki*, so we passed through there. It was from *Baaki* we boarded a vehicle to Maiduguri (Chadian Female Transnational Street Beggar/IDI/ Agege Pen-Cinema, Lagos/20/3/ 2013).

However, all the key informants interviewed submitted that transnational street beggars in Nigeria were illegal immigrants that gained entry into the country unofficially through different illegal routes as a result of porous nature of most of the Nigerian borders. One of the key informants stated:

According to our records, most of them came into the country through what is called illegal routes. The Nigeria border is not fenced, we have porous borders. There are 147

recognized border-posts in Nigeria but because of the nature of our environment like in the arid desert where everything is opened, it is difficult to control their influx. They do not pass through appropriate border post because they do not have valid documents, passport, traveling certificate or what is known as L'cest Visae in French language (Immigration Officer/KII/ Zone 'F' Headquarter, Ibadan/12/3/2013).

In the words of another:

In the Northern part of the country, anywhere goes in the dry season. Even Immigration and Custom officers cannot effectively control the illegal movement of people into Nigeria at the border stations. You only stay at your duty post to carry out your statutory duties (Custom Officer/KII/ Oyo/Osun Area Command, Ibadan/14/3/2013).

From the above findings, it can be inferred that transnational street beggars gained entry into Nigeria both legally and illegally. This submission is essentially predicated on the fact that migrants, who followed official border into Nigeria, would come across the immigration officials and/or some other law enforcement officers at the border stations. These findings agree with the submissions of Adedibu and Jelili (2012), and Igbinovia (1991) that street begging in Nigeria is a syndrome of uncontrolled inter-city and international migration.

When probed further, respondents who confirmed to have encountered law enforcement officers on their way to Nigeria explained how it happened. The large majority of Nigeriens (77.1%) stated that the law enforcement officers checked their entry permit into Nigeria, the remaining 22.9% of them

confirmed that they were stopped and searched at the border. Similarly, 88.2% of Chadians, constituting the majority claimed that law enforcement officials checked their entry permit into Nigeria, as against 11.8% who disclosed that they were stopped and searched by law enforcement personnel. For Malians, the majority (57.1%) also claimed that the law enforcement agents they encountered on their way to Nigeria checked their entry permit, but the remaining 42.9% stated that the law enforcement officers stopped and searched them.

State of Entry into Nigeria

The analysis of respondents' state of entry into Nigeria shows that 29.3% reported that they gained entry into Nigeria through Sokoto State; about 13% of them mentioned Lagos as their State of entry. Also, close to 16% of them identified Borno as their State of entry into Nigeria. Other States included Adamawa (9.4%), Yobe (9.2%), Osun (8.4%), Niger (5.5%), Kebbi (5.2%) and Katsina (2.6%). Kwara with 2.1% was the least identified State of entry. Furthermore, there was an observed disparity in respondents' state of entry according to nationality. While the large majority (34.5%) of Nigeriens mentioned Sokoto as their State of entry, a large proportion of those from Chad Republic indicated that they gained entry into Nigeria through Borno State. Also, Lagos was the State identified by the large majority (70.0%) of Malians as their state of entry into Nigeria. This identified difference was reflected in the chi-square value ($X^2 = 122.022$; $P < 0.05$).

It is evident from this analysis that the entry point of the transnational street beggars into Nigeria cannot be adduced to a particular state of the country. This finding was also demonstrated in the analysis of the qualitative data. A respondent stated thus:

It was through Sokoto that we entered into Nigeria, and it was from



there we came to Ibadan (Nigerien Male Transnational Street Beggar/IDI/Agbowo, Ibadan/11/12/2012).

A respondent in another in-depth interview conducted said:

We did not come to Nigeria through the North. We came directly from Cotonou (Benin Republic) where we solicited alms for some months before entering into Nigeria through Osogbo and we later settled in Ilorin. It was from Ilorin that we came to Ibadan (Nigerien Male Transnational Street Beggar/IDI/Iwo-Road, Ibadan/29/3/2013).

Another respondent said:

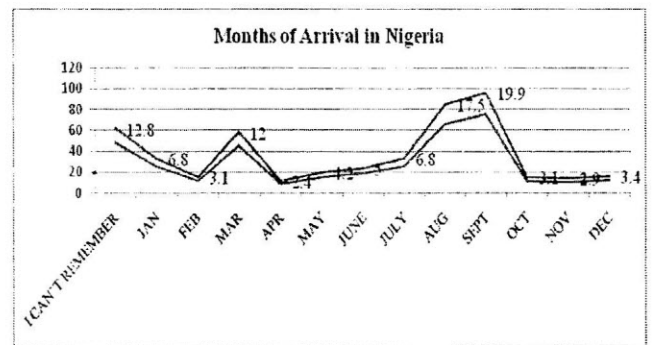
From Mali, we travelled to Cotonou in Benin Republic where we boarded a vehicle coming to Nigeria and we finally arrived in Nigeria through the Seme border here in Lagos (Malian Female Transnational Street Beggar/IDI/Obelende Motor Park, Lagos/8/1/2013).

The implication of the above finding is that the pattern of migration of transnational street beggars from their countries into Nigeria is complex and cannot be traced to any particular state of Nigeria. While some of them came to Nigeria directly from their country of origin, others also entered to Nigeria from some other neighbouring countries other than their own. However, it is important to interrogate their responses as regards States of entry into Nigeria further. For instance, transnational street beggars who declared that they gained entry through Osun State were either insincere

in their responses or they misinterpreted the question to be their first city of residence in Nigeria. This skepticism is logical because Osun is not among the border-states in Nigeria.

Month of Arrival in Nigeria

The distribution of respondents by their month of arrival in Nigeria is presented in figure 1 below.



With the exception of about 13% of the respondents, who claimed that they could not remember their actual month of arrival in Nigeria, the above distribution indicates that transnational street beggars came into Nigeria every month of the year. About 20% of the respondents, constituting the majority, mentioned September as their month of arrival in Nigeria, while close to 18% of the respondents identified their month of entry into Nigeria as August; 12% of the respondents also declared March to be their month of arrival in Nigeria. The month of April, with only 2.4%, was the least mentioned by the respondents as their month of arrival in Nigeria.

The findings above indicate that transnational street beggars migrated to Nigeria all months of the year, but with their influx likely to be particularly higher in the months of September and August. This observed variation in their months of arrival in Nigeria may be largely due to the dictates of the prevailing environmental and general climatic conditions in their countries. Although the general climatic conditions in Mali and Chad Republic vary widely across the

geographical areas in the countries (United States Agency for International Development 2012; International Fund for Agricultural Development 2009), however, the months of August and September are among the harshest months in terms of climatic condition and/weather pattern in Niger Republic (Department of Homeland Security 2006). Hence, the preponderance of respondents from Niger Republic may be responsible for the high percentages recorded for the two months. Also, the higher influx of transnational street beggars recorded in the two months may have been influenced by the fact that the last four months of the year are generally period of celebration and merry-making in different parts of Nigeria when more money is usually generated from alms solicitation.

Involvement in Street Begging in Some Other Countries by Nationality

Apart from immigrating to Nigeria to solicit alms, the involvement of transnational street beggars in street begging in some other countries was also considered. It was discovered that their activity is spread across different countries, particularly, within the West African sub-region. The distribution of the respondents shows that the majority (55.5%) declared that they had never migrated to any other country apart from Nigeria to conduct street begging, while 44.5% of them confirmed that they had solicited alms in some other countries apart from Nigeria.

A further breakdown of the distribution of their responses by nationality indicates that a large proportion of respondents from Niger Republic (55.9%) disclosed that they had never solicited alms in any other country apart from Nigeria, as against 44.1% of them who claimed that they had. Similarly, the majority (55.2%) of Chadian respondents submitted that they had never solicited alms in any other country apart from Nigeria, the remaining 44.8%, however, declared that they had conducted begging in some other countries. For Malian respondents however, there was

no difference in the percentage of those who claimed to have begged in some other countries apart from Nigeria and those who maintained that they have not, as the two constituted 50.0% each. This finding further established the internationalization of the practice of street begging as a way of maximizing opportunity for accruing more money from it. Azam (2011) and Mohammed (1999) have also asserted that street beggars now travel out of their country to solicit alms in some other perceived better countries.

Furthermore, the analysis of other countries where some of the respondents claimed to have conducted street begging apart from Nigeria shows that the large proportion (35.3%) mentioned Benin Republic as the other country where they had conducted street begging apart from Nigeria. Also, while 30.6% of the respondents claimed that they had engaged in street begging in Ghana and Benin Republic, 18.8% of the respondents mentioned Burkina Faso as the other country where they had solicited alms apart from Nigeria. Close to 8.2% of the respondents also confirmed that they had engaged in street begging in Mali and Niger Republic; 7.1% of them, however, mentioned Cameroon and Chad Republic as the other countries where they had engaged in street begging apart from Nigeria. These findings have clearly demonstrated that some transnational street beggars not only come to Nigeria to solicit alms but they also go to some other countries within the West African sub-region. Since all the respondents covered in this study were nationals of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) countries, it therefore means that some of them are maximizing the freedom of movement opportunity provided for the citizens of member nations as enshrined in the ECOWAS treaty to make more money through transnational street begging.

Conclusion

This study has examined the migratory trajectory of the transnational streets in South Western Nigeria. It

was established that the family members and friends of the transnational street beggars played pivotal role in influencing their decision to migrate to Nigeria for the purpose of engaging in street begging. There was a very low involvement of smugglers in their migration process. The fact that transnational street beggars are contributing to the problem of street begging in Nigeria and the recognition that their unrestrained activities is capable of adversely affecting the socio-political and economic well-being of the country makes it important to urgently formulate necessary measures to address the problem. The following recommendations are therefore put forward to Nigerian government and its concerned agencies to consider for adoption for an effective result:

Firstly, the porous nature of most of the Nigerian borders need to be addressed. The government should consider as a matter of urgent national importance, the need to identify most, if not all the illegal points of entry into Nigeria. This step, as daunting as it seems, is achievable through the active involvement of the local people at the border towns, who are familiar with the terrains and geographical landscapes of their environment. This will definitely go a long way in solving the influx of transnational street beggars and by extension, illegal immigration into Nigeria.

Secondly, officials of the Nigeria Immigration Service and National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons and Other Related Matters need to be more alive to their responsibility by controlling the influx of transnational street beggars into the country. While personnel of the Nigeria Immigration Service should review their approach of securing the nation's borders against illegal migrants, officials of National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons and Other Related Matters should gear up their surveillance to break the network of traffickers who specialize in bringing people to Nigeria for the purpose of engaging in street begging.

Lastly, the Federal Government of Nigeria is urged to put in place a mechanism through which refugees

who are genuinely in need can be identified from those whose migration goal is fraudulently-driven. The Nigerian Ministry of Foreign Affairs can be charged with this responsibility. Furthermore, this ministry should actively collaborate with their counterparts in the countries of origin of the identified transnational street beggars in Nigeria as a way of developing and/or putting in place far reaching measures on the ways to better control the untoward practice of some of their nationals who usually immigrate into Nigeria for the purpose of street begging.

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