Nigerian Press Coverage and Audience Perception of Inter-Border Migration Conflict and Development of West Africa

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Abstract

The Press plays a key role in national and international issues by bringing them up to the front burner of public opinion. As fourth estate of the realm,the press is expected to be a necessarypartner in the reportage of migration-conflict and developmentof West Africa in order to inform, educate,and persuade the people on the part they should play. It has been noted that one of the most salient features of todayglobalisation's drive is conscious encouragement of cross-border investments and development, especially by trans-national corporations and firms. However, some experts have argued that cross- border investments and development is a far cry due to cross-border migrationconflict among some West African States. The study examined Vanguard and The Nation newspapers of October, 2018 to examine the extent of reportageof inter-border migration conflict and its attendant implications on thedevelopment of West Africa. The researcheradopted mixed research methods using content analysis andinterview. The interview was conducted on selected experts in International Relations/Diplomacy, Development Economics,Mass Communication and Political Science who have interest in migration studies. The data from the interview was usedto support the data from content analysis. Four research questions were raised to guide the execution of the study.The finding from content analysis of the study showed that Nigerian press does not give adequate coverage and prominence to the migration issue, this finding was also collaborated with data from interview. The study findings also showed that inter-border migration conflicts has several negative implications on the development of West African States. Such negative development include; Inter-border migration conflict inhibit ECOWAS Protocol on free movement of people and goods.It spreads both socio-political and economic instability in the sub-region.It is the purveyor of insurgency and proliferation of small and medium size arms. The study concludes that Nigerian press has not been able to set agenda on issues bordering on inter-border migration conflict and its attendant implications on the development on West African nations. The researcher recommended that Nigerian press should pay adequate attention to inter-border migration conflict bearing in mind its grave consequences on development of West African nations. This study is anchored on Agenda-Setting theory and Conflict Resolution theory.

Keywords: 1 Nigerian Press Coverage, 2 Audience Perception, 3 Inter-Border Migration Conflict, 4 Development, 5 West Africa.

Introduction

Migration is a broad term that covers different spheres of human movement within a given phenomenon. Migration is one of the oldest human phenomenon that precedes civilization. It can be defined as a ''fluid socio-economic, political and cultural phenomenon involving millions of individual in motion at any given point in time'' (Kembe, 2018, p.253). Migration can also be seen as movement of people across national borders for socio-economic, religious, political and safetypurposes. The people involved in migration are called migrant. However, some of them are termed illegal migrants. Illegal migrants are those who do not follow the legal process of leaving their home country to another country. Legal process may include but not limited to presentation official international passport and visa that allow a migrant to officially move from his country to another. In the other hand, legal migrants are people whose purpose of moving from their country to another country is accepted by the authority of the country that they are about to move to. It is speculated thatAfricans consist a large portion of the global migrants. They move outside Africa to Europe in groveand within Africa and sub-region. Kirwin& Anderson (2018) citing (Charrière and Frésia, 2017) and Pew Research, 2018, state thatdespite the fact that West Africans are headed to Europe in growing numbers, there is ten times more migration within West Africa than migration to Europe. Meanwhile, in 2017, Africa had more than a billion inhabitants and by 2050 it will have nearly 2.5 billion and since 2010, eight of the top ten countries with the fastest growing international migration rates were in sub-Saharan Africa.This record is further collaborated by Croll(2018), who state that contrary to the still prevailing belief caused bysometimes one-sided media coverage that a large share of African migrants relocate to Europe or the developed states in the North, research has shown that this is not the case. Only 1.5 percent of all Sub-Saharan Africans, living outside their country, live within the European Union. More than two-thirds of all migrants from Sub-Saharan Africa, however, migrate to other countries within Sub-Saharan Africa (approximately 16.3 million).

The reasons for such movement include war, famine, natural disaster, such as earth quake, climate change which could affect certain economic activities such as cattle rearing. Other reasons include; to seek for asylum, health, sports, tourism, holiday, entertainment, education, business, academic,religious purposes.In the recent times these reasons have influenced movement of many across national borders. Adepoju (2005, p.1) states that ''West Africa has experienced a variety of migrations caused by population pressure, poverty, poor economic performances and endemic conflicts. Historically, migrants regarded the sub-region as an economic unit within which trade in goods and servicesflowed, and people moved freely''. Fujita(2009, p.21) puts it this way,''indeed in the past few decades, people began to migrate for variety of purposes besides business or labor, as the volume of international migration has grown, and more and more countries have been officially involved in these movements since 1980s. For a example, the US Citizenship and Immigration Services now have various classification immigrant, family-based immigration, employment- based immigration, diversity lottery, and refugee''.Naude(2009,p.23) states that ''between 1960 and 2005, the countries with the largest average annual emigration numbers in *absolute* terms were Mali, Burkina Faso, Somalia, Mozambique, Burundi, Ghana, Sudan, Guinea, Lesotho and Zimbabwe while South Africa and Côte d'Ivoire were the countries with the largest net inflow of migrants''.

This movement across national border has also promoted crisis among migrants and indigenous(natives) of the countries where migrants settled. This is partly because of the pressure on the available natural and economic resources for which the parties struggle to maximize and partly due to mistrust, and mis-understanding.Idowu (2014, p.1) posits that, ''conflict is one of the central features of political life, this is because societies compete for scarce resources. In the same vein, conflict affects all human endeavours; from political, economic and religious, to social aspects of life''.These conditions have further put development far from West African countriesof Benin Republic, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Gambia Ghana, Guinea, Guinea Bisssua, Ivory Coast, Liberia, Mali, Mauritana, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, and Togo.

In this context, we look at development from a broad spectrum; as social, economic, political and human development. The laterestablishes the basis on which the first three concepts are based. Economic and political development must translate into social development. As a broad concept, development has been extensively explored with a view to realize economic growth and social development.Migration patterns illustrates that African migration isstrongly related to processes of economic, social, and political change. Development and migration are intertwined in a set of complex, heterogeneous, and changing relationships in which causality is never one way. In short, migration can be seen as both a cause and consequence of

development and equally, development is both a cause and consequence of migration. While this assertion is subject to debate by migration scholars, it also expected of the press to constantly report issues of migration without bias. The press functions in reporting migration should go beyond routine reportage to agenda setting; a philosophy which believes that whatever the media constantly promote iswhat the society will think about. This philosophy remains the problem of this study, which provoked the question: do Nigerian press covers inter-border migration conflict? This is what the researcher intents to unveilthrough content analysis of select Nigerian newspapers and audience perceptionof inter-border migration conflict and its implications on development of West Africa. In order to effectively probe this problem, we raised these objectives:i. To find out if Nigerian Press covers issues bordering on West African countries inter-border migration- conflict and development? iiTo ascertain if Nigerian Press gives prominence to the issue of inter-border migration conflict and development? iii. To ascertain the angle of reportage by the Nigerian press on inter-border migration conflict and development? iv. To find out audience perception on Nigerian press coverage of inter-border migration conflict and also the implications of the conflict on the development of West African States?

Research Questions

The above stated objectives were translated into research questions thus:

    i.   Does Nigerian Press covers issues bordering on West African countries inter-border migration conflict and development?

    iiDoes Nigerian Press gives prominence to the issue of inter-border migration conflict and

    development?

    iii.   What is the angle of reportage by the Nigerian Press on inter-border migration conflict and development?

    iv.   What are the implications of inter-border migration conflict to the development of West African States?

Literature Review

Inter-border Migration Conflict in West Africa

Conflict is strive between two parties as a result of misunderstanding, disagreement and or mistrust. According to Coser (1956,p.8) conflict is defined as ''struggles over values or claims to scare status, power and resources in which the aim of conflicting parties are not only to gain the desired values but also to neutralize, injure or eliminate their rivals'' (Dougherty and Pfaltzgraff, 1996: 187). cited in Idowu(2014) see conflict as a condition in which one identifiable group of human being (whether tribal, ethnic, linguistic, cultural, religious, socio-economic, political, or others) is engaged in conscious opposition to one or more other identifiable human groups because these groups are pursuing what are or appear to be incompatible goals.Karl Marx cited in Akanji(2012) attributed human conflict to existence of classes with he referred to as class struggle. Marx opined that struggle is inherent in the relations between classes due to the fact that two classes are not equal as a result of the preponderance of economic resourcesin the hands of the bourgeoisies over and above the proletariats. Karl Marx also in his thesis identified two areas of the human conflict to include: (i) that human societies are wholes or interrelated parts- institutions, beliefs etc. and (ii) that human societies are always changing largely through internal conflicts and contradictions.

West African sub-region is not devoid of this struggle, particularly at the point of seeking greener pasture across national borders. Historically, Nigeria as the most powerful nation in West Africa due to its great potentials both in human and natural resources have always been a center of envy to neighboring West African countries as well as other African countries. For instance, before Nigeria loose BakassiPeninsula to Cameroon and even after, Nigeria and Cameroon have had serious border crisis at the instance ofCameroon migrants who make incursions into Nigerian villages (especially in the Peninsula area) as well as regular harassment of

Nigerians living in the border areas.Idowu (2014,p.3) review this situation thus:

To be sure, violations of Nigeria's border by Camerounians who make incursions into Nigerian villages (especially in the Peninsula area) as well as regular harassment of Nigerians living in the border area date back to the 1960s. However, tension at the border area escalated in 1981. To the extent that Nigerians living along the creeks were frequently subjected to humiliating treatment, such as being forced to pay tax to Cameroun, forced to discard trading in naira, confiscation of their goods and property including fish catches and at times, detention. The climax was the killing of five Nigeriansoldiers who were on routine patrol along the common border in May 1981. Although, the Nigerian soldiers did not retaliated, but since then conflict over Bakassi Peninsula has been a recurrent decimal.In addition, the Camerounian gendarmes allegedly occupied sixteen border villages in May 1987 in Borno state. It was however repulsed by Nigerian army units. In October 1989, Camerounian gendarmes allegedly abducted four Nigerian customs officials on routine border patrol duties.

The growing ties of border crisis in West African extents to Nigeria and Benin Republic.Several times Nigerian military and immigration officers have intercepted minor incursions of Beniniose which necessitated a joint action between the two countries to monitor and control smuggling, movement of illegal aliens, and harassment of people across the border. Similarly, Nigeria has had some kinds of border frictions with Chad, in April 1983, Nigerian troops fought the Chadians over lake Chad. In 1989, Niger and Nigeria faced off at the Borno border, Niger Fulanis invaded farm lands and destroyed crops belonging to Borno indigenes in Nigeria. Perhaps the current inter-security agencies conflict at Nigeria's borders has to do with maritime border disputes. Nigeria being a maritime state and a leading member of the Gulf of Guinea Commission (GOG) comprising Nigeria, Equatorial Guinea, Cameroun, Sao Tome and Principe, and Benin Republic, has a mandate to protect her sea border. This is because the Gulf of Guinea (GOG) is rich in natural resources and is currently facing a wide range of maritime threats and vulnerabilities. The Navy, Marine Police, Customs, and Immigration all share intelligence in curbing sea-based illegal activities such as pouching, smuggling, piracy, illegal bunkering, drug trafficking etc (Idowu, 2004). But the persistent border dispute has been attributed to arbitrary borders common in the sub-region with its widespread conflict, which has also affected Senegal and Mauritania, Togo and Ghana.

In West Africa, migration has been on the increase due to a number of internal and external factors. People move out from their countries to other countries from time to time and often times this movement leads to crises.Akanji (2012) states that in recent time, Africa has witnessed many protracted and gruesome conflicts that have sparkedoff a wave of demographic movement of people both within and outside of the continent.Communal clashes and civil wars are among the many factors that promote migration in Africa and West African sub-region which in-turn promote inter-border migration conflict. For example, the protracted civil war in southern Sudan, the Liberian civil war, the Rwanda genocide, and the crisis in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), the Sierra Leonean civil war, the Nigerian civil war, the Darfur crisis, Somalia crisis and a series of boundary clashes among many others contributed immensely to movement across the border with its attendant implication on inter-border migration crisis.Kirwin& Anderson(2018, p.6)opined that civil war is one of the reasons for West Africans migration, ''while migrants are categorised as people who voluntarily choose to migrate for the chance of a better life. However, refugees make up less than 10% of people outside their country of citizenship (UNHCR, 2017). Many others leave their homes because of indiscriminate violence,refugees are necessarily fleeing home because of "a well-founded fear of persecution" or civil war.Adepoju(2005, p.13) citing   United Nations document 2003, states thus:

> The absence of peace and stability discourages investment, the very foundation of development and leads to capital flight. Border disputes between Senegal and Mauritania, and Ghana and Togo have resulted in expulsion of Community citizens, in contravention of the Protocol on Free

Movement of Persons. Liberia's contagious civil war that started in 1989 soon engulfed Sierra Leone, Guinea Conakry, Guinea Bissau and Cote d'Ivoire, the later since September 2002. In its trail, the conflict has uprooted thousands of people internally and across national borders, as displaced persons and refugees. This almost turned to a regional conflict. Nearly 70 per cent of Liberia's population was displaced, and thousands who fled the war to seek refuge in Sierra Leone, were soon dislodged as conflict broke out there in March, 1991. Refugees were dispersed to Guinea and Cote d'Ivoire, only to be embroiled in another flight for safety in Mali, Ghana and Burkina Faso. About 750,000 people were displaced within the country and another 500,000 "foreign" residents, mostly nationals of Burkina Faso, were rendered homeless and in desperation fled to their countries of origin.

Statistics have shown that in the last decades African continent has been ravaged by war leading to displacement of persons and increase in the number of refugees. Witteler-Stiepelmann (2009,p.6) ''states that another reason for high migration and refugee numbers in Africa are wars. 40 percentof all wars of the last decade were fought in Africa. Multiple inter- and intra-state conflicts witnessed forced displacement, so-called ethnic cleansing, and severe violation of human rights''Naude(2009,p.23) also states the effect of war on African migration thus;''in many of the net out-migration countries conflict has been prominent. Burundi and Somalia, as well as Mozambique, Sudan and Zimbabwe have long histories of violent conflict. Over the period from 1960 to 1995 Burundi experienced seven years, Somalia 18 years, Mozambique 24 years, Sudan 19 years, and Zimbabwe 18 years of violent conflict''.

Economic conditions and commercial factor are other key reasonsthat motivate migration across the borders of West Africa. Poverty has been a major problem in West African countries. Many migrants hope to secure job in Europe and other West African countries. Kirwin& Anderson in their study of factors influencing West Africa migration assert that West Africans who would migrate if given the means and opportunity were far more likely to cite economic benefits as their primary motivation (better jobs and pay, and the opportunity to send money home) than to mention gaining personal freedoms, furthering their education, or escaping insecurity.Witteler-Stiepelmann(2009,p.2) in his paper states that the main reasons are poverty, lacking employment opportunities, war, environmental degradation, and climate change. "Let me illustrate this: Poverty and lacking employment opportunities:41 percent of all Africans still live on less than one dollar per day and 487 million laborers don't earn enough to feed their families. Yet another 1.3 millionearn less than two dollars a day—they need to work under humiliating conditions with no labor rights and social standards to protect them''.Abang (2005) in his research work on health sector crisis in Nigeria supported the reasons for migration of Nigerian's health professionals and states that,''there are 72,000 doctors registered with the Medical and Dental Council of Nigeria (MDCN); over half practice outside the country. Nine in every 10 doctors are considering work opportunities outside Nigeria and it is projected to keep rising as doctors continue to face systemic challenges''.Adepoju (2005) also states that the contemporary patterns of migration in West Africa are therefore rooted in socioeconomic, political and historical-cultural factors which have shaped the direction of development and types of economic activities and laid bold imprints on especially international migration. He also opined that migration from and within the sub-region includes temporary cross-border workers, female traders and farm labourers, professionals, clandestine workers and refugees and are essentially intra-regional, short term and male dominated. He further alleged that Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana are the main traditional countries for immigration while in the early 70s Nigeria was the major migration receiving country in West Africa due to oil boom-led economy. Ghana became the first and the leading supply of skilled manpower(doctors, paramedical personnel, nurses, teachers, lecturers, engineers, scientists and technologists) to Nigeria and later to other parts of Africa. In the other vein, Burkina Faso, Mali, Togo, Cape Verde, Guinea Conakry and Senegal are leading countries in migration but Senegal has been in the forefront of exporting and receiving labour. It is in this light that,Raliegh, Jodan, and Saleyhan, (2019) state that Labour migration to rural and urban areas is a common component of diversified local economies. In lesser developed countries, labour migration is typically internal, temporary and circular.

Alongside these, the problems of environmental degradation and climate change have combined to further accelerate the rate at which West Africans migrate in droves to different parts of the sub-region and to other parts of the world while at the same time increasing the frequency and potency of political, ethnic and religious conflicts in the continent, Witteler-Stiepelmann (2009). Raliegh, Jodan, and Saleyhan, (2019,p.9) assert that ''during periods of chronic environmental degradation, such as increased soil salinization or land degradation, the most common responses by individuals and communities is to intensify labour migration patterns. By doing so, families increase remittances and lessen immediate burdens to provide for themselves''Naude (2009,p.23) citingOhlsson,1999 also states that ''environmental conditions of some African countries greatly account for migration, he listed Burkina Faso, Lesotho, Mali, Somalia, and Sudan as countries that are particularly drought-prone and water scarce countries characterized by seasonal migration. Burundi,a country which experienced intense civil conflict for many years, also experiences high water stress''.Stückradt(2009) equally support the fact that deteriorating environmental conditions, especially in close proximity to desert areas, are likely to lead to renewed migration, and there is of course always the chance of major disasters triggering largescalerefugee movement. Migration and expulsions are therefore among the most pressing of global problems, in particular in Sub-Saharan Africa, home to 16.6 million migrants—most of them victims of forced emigration.

Citing the work of Wijkmanand Timberlake, 1984,Grote &Warner(2009) states that in the Sahelian zone of Western Africa, the drought from 1972–84 was one of the worst on record. During this period, more than 100,000 people died, and more than 750,000 people in Mali, Niger and Mauritania were totally dependent on food aid in 1974.In a summary statement, Grote &Warner(2009,p.1) opined that ''environmental degradation, desertification, and deforestation along with natural disasters like floods or droughts are all factors which result in migration as acoping strategy of households''.

Inter-border migration as well as the resultant conflict has posed some kinds of developmental challenges to West African nation. Some of the social cum developmental consequences of migration is the depopulation of the home community. Kembe (2018) noted that as part of the challenges of migration on Africa, is lack of relevant data, institutional framework, and manpower which in-avertedly affect development. He also said that smuggling and trafficking are major criminal enterprise that fuel and enable irregular movement of persons often with strong element of exploitation and abuse. Migration come with health concern which relates to the transmission of infectious diseases. Other developmental challenges with respect to the host community ranges from overpopulation, over stretching of social amenities and increasing pressure on urban infrastructure, increase in crime rates, cultural pollution, and increased social tension in the form of political, ethnic and sub-ethnic conflicts. It also leads to, for example, reduction in agricultural production in the areas of the origin of the migrants. Hence,migration has been seen as a symptom and cause of exploitation and underdevelopment; either way, it has been treated as a problem that needs to be addressed.

Another grave consequence of migration conflict which affect the development of West African nations is the expulsion of citizens(immigrants) unjustly. Literatures in migration conflict show that, in West Africa, many migrants have suffered expulsion.Senegal expelled Guineans in 1967; Ivory Coast expelled about 16,000 Beninoise in 1964; Sierra-Leone, and later Guinea and Ivory Coast, expelled Ghanaian fishermen in 1968. Earlier on, Ivory Coast had expelled over 1,000 Benin and Togo nationals in 1958; Chad expelled thousands of Benin nationals who were 'illegal migrants' and not 'law abiding'. In early 1979 Togolese farmers were expelled from Ghana and Ivory Coast. Ghana expelled all illegal aliens without valid residence permit as from 2 December 1969; this exercise involved an estimated half a-million people mostly from Nigeria, Upper Volta and Niger. Nigerian traders were once expelled from Cameroon, Zaire and Ivory Coast. These examples show that expulsion has been used extensively by most countries of the sub-region. The largest case of mass expulsion of undocumented aliens took place in Nigeria in 1983 and 1985. Again, in 2019, Nigeria close its borders. Benin Republic becomes the greatest victim of this immigration policy by Nigeria.

Aliens are usually scapegoats when governments are confronted with teething economic and political problems; migrants are targets of hostility from the native population and are blamed for whatever economic, social and political problems arise in the country(Adepoju, 2005). Records have also shown that Africa has the largest portion of the world Refugees, this is partly due tothe prolonged displacement ofpeople by conflict on development in sub-Saharan Africa. About 20 percent of themigrants in Africa are said to be refugees; who

have been internally displaced.Many in these groups have been in exile for long periods, and there is increasingconcern about the impact of such protracted displacement on their identities andlivelihoods, as well as on the security and stability of the source and host countries.Protracted refugee populations constitute over 70 percent of the world's refugees.On development and migration, Witteler-Stiepelmann(2009,p.2) asserts that"migration may threaten the sovereignty of a hostcountry with uncontrolled mass migration violatingborder control and sovereign territory. Migration threatens host countries' economies**.** Highimmigration is a burden to a country's infrastructureand increases competition for local resources(land, fuel, water)". It can even cause conflict andthus hamper development. Extremist immigrants may abuse receiving countriesas safe havens for planning assaults, with radicalimmigrants even recruiting support in their host countries.African migrants are increasingly being regarded as agents of development who maybe harnessed to pull the new development bandwagon. However, what is rarelyconsidered is the path on which this wagon is rolling. While migration and migrantsare being celebrated for their contribution to development of the receiving countries. For better understanding of the impact of migration on West Africa let us take views of some scholars on what is development?

Development

In this study development would be defined as a positive change (for the better) from conditions (social, economic, political, cultural and human) that are no longer considered good enough for the goals and aspirations of a society to those that are most likely to meet those goals and aspirations(Moemeka,2000)**.** The term development has several definitions based on individual discipline. Development can be defined by asking these questions according to Dudley Seers in (Todaro and Smith,2011):

> What has been happening to poverty?
> What has been happening to unemployment?
> What has been happening to inequality?

According to Dudley, if all the three of these have declined from high levels, then beyond doubt this has been a period of development for the country concerned. If one or two of these central problems have been growing worse especially if all three have, it would be strange to call the result "development" even if per capita income doubled. But Walter Rodney (1976) cited in Nwodu and Fab-Ukozor (2003) definesdevelopment as a widely participatory process of social change in a society intended to bring about both social and material advancement including greater equality, freedom, and other valued qualities for the majority of the people through gaining greater control over their environment with the state playing at active role. Rodney definition has been subjected into several empirical analysis which never deny the fact that development must be conceived of as a multidimensional process involving major changes in social structures, popular attitudes, and national institutions as well as the acceleration of economic growth, the reduction of inequality, and the eradication of poverty. Development, in its essence, must represent the whole gamut of change by which an entire social system, turned to the diverse basic needs and evolving aspirations of individuals and social groups within that system, moves away from a condition of life widely perceived as unsatisfactory toward a situation or condition of life regarded as materially and spiritually better. This assert also agrees with Campo and Singer's definition of development cited in Ogi&Keghku (2017) consider development in terms of better nutrition, low morality rate, broad choice of consumption, capital accumulation, skilled formation and technological progress.

Development is both physical reality and a state of the mind in which the society has, through some combination of social, economic and institutional processes, secure the means for obtaining a better life. At the very fundamental level, development must be channeled to specifically:

1. increase the availability and widen the distribution of basic life-sustaining goods such as food, shelter, health and protection

2. raise levels of living, including, in addition to higher incomes, the provision of more jobs, better education, and greater attention to cultural and human values, all of which will serve not only to enhance material well-being but also to generate greater individual and national self-esteem

3. expand the range of economic and social choices available to individuals and nations by freeing them from servitude and dependence not only in relation to other people and nation-states but also to the forces of ignorance and human misery (Todaroand Smith,2011).

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on Agenda-Setting theory and Conflict Resolution theory.

The Role of the Press and Agenda-Setting Function

The power of the press to bring issues to front burner of public opinion is undoubted.The ultimate goal is to monitor and reports issues of national importance to the public. Thus, it is right to say that the principal function of the press is to act as the watchdog of the society thereby monitoring all social, political and economic developments in the society. In addition to checkingthese developments in the society, it is also the fundamental function of the press to mobilise the people to shun all forms of activities that will affect their wellbeing and the development of the nation. The Nigerian press also holds a hallowed responsibility to inform Nigerians about illegal movement of persons and goods across border. This implies that the press should give adequate information that would enhance the people's knowledge, understanding of migration, illegal migration, and immigration laws of the nation and other neighbouring countries. Shaw Jamel and Flowe cited in Anyanwu&Uche (2015, p.226) assert that, ''the public rely on the print media to fill the gaps in their experiential knowledge''. The volume of coverage of issues and the angle to which the press expose the issues will actually determine the understanding of the issues. This therefore, implies that in reporting migration issues the press ought to constantly bring it to the attention of the public. Such attention given to issues is what defines media agenda hence, agenda-setting function of the press. Cohencited in Baran, 2002, states that, "the media may not tell us what to think, but certainly do tell us what to think about". This underscore the fact that media power cannot be undermined.It is also believed that, "the more the media attention given to a topic, the greater the importance attributed to it by the news audience. The media influence is not on the direction of opinion but only what people think about.

Another key function of the mass media is the educational function. This function allows the public to develop their knowledge, skill, capacities and formation of decent character through accidental learning during exposure to mass communication. Conflict can easily be resolved when the parties involved are ready to let go argument, disagreement, differences and all bitterness. This can only be possible when there is information that would correct and change the previous position of the aggrieved parties in the conflict. In the light of this, Ashong (2011) writes:

> The media are a necessary part of the environment in each of the conflict (current or future), therefore do have a role that cannot be ignored. First, the issues are usually of a nature transcending the interpersonal level and often the easiest links between the involved and the media. Second, the mass media have a duty to survey the environment and correlate events in different segment of the society if they are to function (p.125)

Against this backdrop, the fundamental role of mass communication is to change attitudes of the aggrieved parties and give them a new world view about the issue in contention. This assignment therefore paves the way for mass communication to provide a negotiation platform for all the parties in dispute.

Conflict resolution theory, this second theory which was developed in the early twentieth century Europe, when European society was theoretically identified as dominated by a small number of interconnected elites who control the conditions of life of many simply by controlling means of production. This theory in its modern state was espoused by C. Wright Mills who argued that social structures are created through conflict

between people with differing interests and resources. Individuals and resources in turn are influenced by these structures in the society ((Nwammuo,2012).

Research Questions

Research Method
Study design and Participants
The study used the mixed methods to gather both quantitative and qualitative data. The quantitative data were obtained through content analysis.These data are treated as quantitative because they have been converted from text and assigned numerical values and thereafter analyzed using SPSS. On the other hand,the qualitative data were obtained from ten scholars of Mass Communication, History and International Studies, Development Economic, Political Science and Conflict Management of the Faculty of Arts, Management and Social Sciences, Edo University Iyamho, Edo State, Nigeria who have interest in migration and conflict. Mixed research methods was used because of its flexibility in generating data for studying complex social problems. Using the two research methods allow for a better understanding of research problems and give comprehensive picture of social problems (Creswell, 2014). In total, 10(38.5%)lecturers participate in the interview from a population of 26. The interview supplemented data from content analysis and to ascertain if Nigerian press truly covers inter-border migration conflict and the extent of such coverage.
Selection of Participants
In order to select lecturers, the researcher obtained Faculty of Arts, Social and Management Science register for a random selection of lecturers to participate in the study. Because some of the lecturers are part time while some, their departments have little or nothing to do with the topic while some lecturers have no interest in the topic as all. Lecturers were picked mainly from Mass Communication, History and International Studies, Development Economic, Political Science and Conflict Management. These lecturers were also asked if they have interest in the topic before the interview was conducted. However, the researcher told the selected lecturers that participation in the study was voluntary. Whoever felt like not participating at all or wanted to withdraw from the study was free to do so at their own will. For lecturers who declined participation in the study, others were randomly selected to replace them.The following were the key questions that guided the interview process.
- ✓ *What is your opinion of Nigerian press coverage of inter-border migration conflict?*
- ✓ *Their responses prompted this second question; do you read Nigerian newspapers often and what is the angle of reportage?*
- ✓ *The follow up question was to ensure that they are newspaper readers' not just lecturers who have interest in migration issues.*
- ✓ *The last question was; what are the implications of inter-border migration conflict on the development of West African nations?*

The interview was more conversational in order to create room for brainstorming of ideas and getting in-depth responses from the lecturers. The responses were recorded and afterwards transcribed for purposes of qualitative analysis.

Sampling for Content Analysis

The researcher studied *Vanguard and The Nation newspapers* of October, 2018. These two newspapers were purposively selected because of their national and international outlook. The researcher also decided to study October 2018, because that was the period,44 African countries signed the African Continental Free Trade Area(AFCFTA) deal in its 10[th]extra-ordinary session of African Union Assembly and the same period, Economic Community of West African States(ECOWAS) signed the Economic Partnership Agreement (Igwe, 2018). These agreements are believed to promote migration. The study population of content analysis stood

at 62 editions. The sample size was 32 editions. The researcher used purposive sampling techniques to arrive at the sample size. The researcher purposively picked Mondays and Wednesdays for weekdays and Fridays and Saturdays for weekendsgiving 4 issues per week per newspaper. The number was multiplied by four weeks which gives 16 issues per newspaper and was multiplied by 2 which gives 32. The constructed content categories were: nature of story, prominence, direction and frequency. Under these categories were the following units of analysis: news feature, news stories, editorial, front page, inside page, back page, favourable, unfavourable, neutral. In this study favourable stories were regarded as stories that proffer solutions to inter-border migration conflict, unfavourable stories were stories that support illegal migration, shows the plight without suggesting remedy. Neutral stories were stories that could not take a stand. The data were converted from text to number and analyzed using SPSS.

Presentation of Data

Interview

Respondents views on Nigerian Press Coverage of Inter-border Migration Conflict

The opinion of the respondents differs. Five respondents (simple majority) believe that Nigerian press covers issue of inter-border migration conflict satisfactorily.

The Nigerian press to a very large extent has effectively covered inter-border migration conflict. However, the reportage has been one-sided in the sense that the reportage has always heap blame on the migrants without preferring solutions on how the situation can be curtailed by the government or her agencies saddled with the responsibility. In addition, Nigerian press always report these stories to favour Nigeria.

Four out of the ten opined that Nigerian press does not have what it takes to keep reporters at the borders or in other countries to give adequate reportage of infraction between Nigeria and other countries in relations to conflict arising from migration.

*Nigerian press does not adequately covered inter-border migration issue because is not sufficiently equipped to cover inter-border migration conflict. Nigerian press will rather prefer to cover trendy issues. As the issue breaks, they break in.**Two respondents** affirmed strongly that from their researches, Nigerian press does not accord prominence to inter-border migration conflict. They also alleged that, Nigerian press hardly promote the issue on front page and editorials.*

Respondents views on the implications of inter-border migration conflict on the development of West African countries.

Nine out of ten respondents opined that inter-border migration conflicts has only negative implications on the development of West African countries. The following are the implications as stated by the respondents:

i. *Inter-border migration conflict inhibit ECOWAS Protocol on free movement of people and goods.*

ii. *It spreads both socio-political and economic instability in the sub-region.*

iii. *It is the purveyor of insurgency and proliferation of small and medium size arms.*

iv. *It affects Direct Foreign Investment (DFI).*

v. *Create bad image to home country of migrants*

vi. *It has led to overpopulation and consequently led to expulsion of migrants*

vii. *It has also led to loss of skilled manpower. Some skilled manpower were killed in the process.*

viii. It has led to unnecessary competition of West African States over scare resource as well as depletion of the available resources and infrastructure.

ix. It has also led to loss of human and physical capitals.

x. Inter-border migration conflict has contributed to the stunted growth (underdevelopment) of West African sub-region because of its poor management. We can take a cue from North Korea and South Korea, Mexico and America (two of the respondents emphasized).

Content Analysis

Table 1: Frequency Distribution of Newspapers

Newspaper

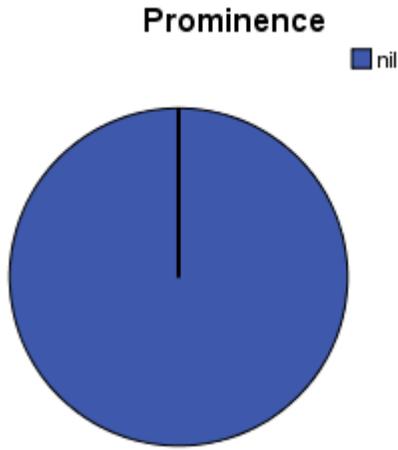|		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	Vanguard	6	27.3	27.3	27.3
Valid	The Nation	16	72.7	72.7	100.0
	Total	22	100.0	100.0	

Table 1 above presents the data on the numbers of newspapers editions studied. Only 6 editions of *Vanguard*newspaper were found in the library, meaning 62.5% of the editions that were supposed to be studied were not found while 16 proposed editions of *The Nation* newspapers were found and studied.

Table 2: Issues covered by the newspapers

Frequency

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	The Nation	1	4.5	4.5	4.5
Valid	Nil	21	95.5	95.5	100.0
	Total	22	100.0	100.0	

This table shows that from the 16(72.7%) editions of *The Nation newspapers found and content analyzed, only 1(4.5%) covered story bordering on migration crisis.*

Figure 1: Prominence given to the issue by Nigerian newspapers

Prominence

■ nil

The pie chart above illustrates that Nigerian press does not accord prominence to issues bordering on inter-border migration conflict.

Table 3: Direction of Story

Unfavorable

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	The Nation	1	4.5	4.5	4.5
Valid	Nil	21	95.5	95.5	100.0
	Total	22	100.0	100.0	

Table 3 shows that Nigerian press does not give favourable coverage to issues bordering on inter-border migration conflict.

Discussion of Findings

The findings were discussed in line with the four research questions presented below:

ii.   Does Nigerian press covers issues bordering on West African countries inter-border migration conflict and development?

The findings showed that Nigerian press does not give adequate coverage to issues bordering on inter-border migration conflict and its implications on the development of West African nations. From the findings, 22 editions of *Vanguard* and *The Nation* newspapers were studied only 1 edition of *The Nation* covered issue bordering on inter-border migration conflict. The data from content analysis also confirmed the result from interview as stated thus:

Nigerian press does not adequately covered inter-border migration issue because is not sufficiently equipped to cover inter-border migration conflict.

ii   Does Nigerian press gives prominence to the issue of inter-border migration conflict and development?

The findings from content analysis and interview also showed that Nigerian press does not accord prominence to inter-border migration conflict.

Two respondents affirmed strongly that from their researches, Nigerian press does not accord prominence to migration conflict. They also alleged that, Nigerian press hardly promote the issue on front page and editorials.

v.   What is the angle of reportage by the Nigerian Press on inter-border migration conflict and development?

The findings showed that, Nigerian press does not give positive support to the issues but rather exposed the negative implications of inter-border migration crisis, although result from interview showed that the report is always one sided.

vi.   What are the implications of inter-border migration conflict to the development of West African States?

The answers to this question came from interview. The responses showed that inter-border migration conflict has several negative implications on the development of West African countries.

Summary, Conclusion and Recommendations

The study adopts mixed research methods (interview and content analysis) to investigate inter-border migration conflicts and its implications on the development of West African nations. The findings of the study showed that Nigerian press does not give adequate coverage and prominence to inter-border migration conflict. This finding was also collaborated with data from interview. The study findings also showed that inter-border migration conflicts has several negative implications on the development of West African States. Such negative development include**;**inter-border migration conflict inhibit ECOWAS Protocol on free movement of people and goods.It spreads both socio-political and economic instability in the sub-region.It is the purveyor of insurgency and proliferation of small and medium size arms.It affects Direct Foreign Investment. The study concludes that Nigerian press has not been able to set agenda on issues bordering on inter-border migration conflict and its attendant implications on the development on West African nations.

The following recommendations were made based on the findings of the study:

i.   Nigerian press should pay adequate attention to inter-border migration conflict bearing in mind its grave consequences on development of West African nations.

ii.   The Federal Government of Nigeria should key into African Continental Free Trade Area (AFCFTA) deal by African Union Assembly and Economic Community of West African States(ECOWAS)Economic Partnership Agreement.

iii.   West African nations should be sincere in handling inter-border migration conflict.

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