Chapter 21

The Influence of Migration and Crime on Development in Lagos, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

Considering the implications of population movements for places of origin and destinations, migration has garnered significant interest in recent scholarship. To advance this objective, this chapter examines the influence of migration and crime on development in Lagos, Nigeria. The study used both quantitative and qualitative methods to collect data from 310 respondents. Data were analysed. Results show that 84.4% of Hausa, Yoruba (76%), others (73.3%) and Igbo (57.8%), planned their migration to Lagos. Overall, 95.8% of the respondents acknowledged that they had no assurances of jobs before migrating to Lagos. As frustration develops, some migrants embrace crime and endanger development. The study concluded that if development is inclusive, migration will be naturally controlled as individuals will remain in their places of origin rather than constituting nuisance to development in Lagos. It therefore suggests that government should control crime so that the people can see the possible constructive interactions between migration and development.

INTRODUCTION

As civilisation deepens, technology alters the direction of human occupation. In this connection, the branching out of some rural dwellers into non-crop income-generating activities has been identified as a critical livelihood strategy for rural households, particularly in Africa (Barret et al., 2001). Individuals pursue diversification as a livelihood strategy for two overarching considerations: necessity and choice (Ellis, 2000). Migration is one diversification strategy by which the mobility of rural dwellers is often explained as the outcome of push and/or pull factors (Bigsten, 1996). While push factors refer to factors that induce desperation and trigger involuntary migration (land scarcity), pull factors refer to those that trigger proactive, voluntary migration (high urban wages) (Bigsten, 1996). Since a developed urban centre
The Influence of Migration and Crime on Development in Lagos, Nigeria

may provide employment opportunities for supplementing farm income (Bilsborrow et al., 1987), rural dwellers may be pulled to the areas of prosperity and pushed from areas of decline (Braunvan, 2004).

In 1950, less than one third of the human race were living in cities (Kante, 2004), but the world’s population is projected to add 2.5 billion people to the urban population by 2050, with nearly 90 per cent of the increase concentrated in Asia and Africa (UN Population Division, 2014). Most indicators of welfare or human resource development, such as consumption levels, mortality rates and educational attainment, show that big city dwellers (for example, in Lagos) have a considerable advantage over their rural counterparts (Jones, 2002, p. 121). On the whole, urban life represents the dream of formal employment, less social restrictions and diversified opportunities, while the rural areas provide limited employment outside agriculture, insecure income and inadequate infrastructure (Bookaye-Yiadom, 2008). Although internal migration involves diverse forms; rural to urban migration is the most significant (Olajuyin, 2002). Thus, for many years, this type was viewed favourably in the development literature.

Given the significant disparities between Nigeria’s rural and urban sectors, the foregoing scenario might be one of the very basic attractions for prospective migrants to Lagos with its unclear implications for criminal acts. It is against this background that this chapter commits itself to a fourfold focus. First, it aims at exploring the reasons underlying migration, second, establishes the linkage between migration and criminality, third, studies how population movements affect crime rates and development, and finally, examines how migration can be disconnected from crime to promote the development of Lagos.

BACKGROUND

Migration is the movement from one place in the world to another for the purpose of taking up permanent or semi-permanent residence. This is usually across a political boundary due to certain reasons. These include natural disasters, physical conditions, worry of insecurity; differences in economic opportunities; differences in social amenities and change in standing such as high level of education and wealth (United Nations, 2013; National Geographic Xpeditions, 2013). By 1990, approximately half of the 54 countries in Africa concentrated more than 10 per cent of their urban populations in one single primate city (UNFPA, 2007:11). Migratory movement within Nigeria is not a recent phenomenon. It dates back to a period long before her colonial invasion. Individuals migrate for different reasons. For some, based on Governance and Social Development Resource Centre (GSDRC) (2013) thought, migration serves as a way of moving out of poverty and a cause of social exclusion. For others having a deep-seated sense of personal inadequacy to compete fairly for socio-economic survival may see in migration an opportunity to disrupt the development agenda of others, using criminal methods, typically for their selfish advantage.

With regard to crime, classical scholars conceived it as, ‘an act, which offends the strong, well-defined states of the collective consciousness’ (Durkheim, 1893, p. 39) and guilty beyond a reasonable doubt of a particular offence’ (Tappan, 1947, p. 100). But, ‘development’ remains a concept which is contested both theoretically and politically, and is inherently both complex and ambiguous … (Thomas, 2004, p. 1, 2). To the extent that development depends on values and alternative conceptions of good life, there is no uniform or unique answer (Kanbur, 2006, p. 5) to the question of a universal definition. Thus, development is a process of historical change, which is adjusted to a vision or measure of progressive change (Thomas, 2000, 2004) and relates to performance assessment (Gore, 2000, p. 794). Being a critical area of conceptual disagreement due to its commitment to implicit value assumptions, will what constitutes development, how to improve, who decides what to improve and the extent to improve