Crisis-Induced displacement and its Implication on the socio-culture of indigenous populations

Esther Ojodunwene Joshua¹, Mobolaji Olamide Olagbemi¹, Ohigho Airekun Afeisume²

¹Department of Political Science and International Relations, Graduate Student, Covenant University, Nigeria
²Department of Business Management, Covenant University, Nigeria

Accepted 2017-07-24; Published 2017-08-26

Abstract: This paper investigates the implications of displacement on the socio-cultural lifestyle and practices of the displaced persons. This paper employs the use of interview, but shall also adopt the descriptive research design under the quantitative approach to administer questionnaires to 100 respondents living in Gwoza /Bama IDPs camp in Abuja, Nigeria. For decades now, Nigeria has experienced incessant conflict ranging from communal clashes, ethno-religious conflicts, insurgencies and political conflicts. The consequence has been increased migration (emigration), which has interfered with the social and cultural practices of the tribes displaced. Findings have revealed that displacement has both positive and negative implications on the cultural and social practices of the displaced populations. These indicators provide significant information for the displaced populations and the relevant authorities.

Keywords: Displacement, crisis, Nigeria, culture, migration, induced

Introduction

The threat of insecurity in any situation, whether man-made or natural, causes men to flee (Barrs 2009). Rapid population growth, combined with unstable politics, escalating ethnic conflicts and persistent economic decline and poverty have shaped the trends of modern migration in Nigeria (Adepoju, 2010). The increasing rate of conflict in Nigeria, characterized by violent acts has resulted in the loss of lives and properties, and also the displacement of persons on a large scale (Centre 2016). This displacement has led to the movement of persons across communities and states within a nation and across countries, resulting in the loss of identities and the adoption of new lifestyles and cultures. These violent conflicts are insurgencies, inter-communal clashes and religious and ethnic conflict. Inter-state/intra-state conflicts, persecution, earthquakes and flooding are the reasons people are forced to flee their places of residence (Council 2016). An attack, anticipated attack or a viable advice to flee necessitates conflict-induced flight (Ferris, 2010). The recent most contributing factor to the displacement issue in Nigeria is the Boko Haram insurgency. However, the insurgency is simply a trigger as certain underlying factors account for this (I. D. Centre 2016; Obe 2016). Researchers have identified these underlying factors as “drivers” and classified them into three categories – political, social and economic. These drivers include corruption and a weak business environment (Peace, 2015), livelihoods and education (Obe 2016), search for good grazing conditions and sustainable livelihoods (Okpara, 2014) transport, corruption with impunity, dilapidated power sector and lack of functional infrastructure and agriculture, anthropogenic factors and development (Gao, 2011; Amadi L. & Ogonor, 2012).
The aforementioned factors invariably motivated over seventy (70) ethnic groups to migrate to the Lake Chad Basin in search of resources. The clog of so many groups in an area with limited resources led to discord and violent conflict, which has been on an upward spiral since 1972 (Wyk&Mioturubani, 2010). Migration is instigated by factors like poverty, political instability, terrorism and the search for better livelihoods. As people move from such conflict zones to more peaceful areas, they adopt the culture and lifestyle of their new habitual residence at the neglect of their own values and traditions, in a bid to start a new life.

DTM Round VIII Report surveyed a total of thirteen (13) states and reports that the total number of IDPs in Nigeria is 2,241,484 IDPs; the increase in this number from that of the previous year has been attributed to continuous attacks, intra-migration and the influx of returning refugees from neighboring countries (Agency, 2016). Nigeria, with 2,152,000 (Centre I. D., 2016) currently has the highest number of Internally Displaced Persons in the world (Ezigbo, 2015).

**Theoretical framework**

There have been various theories that have been propounded to best explain the concept of migration. The earliest theory was the Ravenstein proposal of 1834-1913 and the Lee’s Law. In the 21st century, new theories have emerged and prominent among is the Neo-Classical theory of migration. Other theories are the Human Capital theory, New Economics Theory, World System theory, Dual Labor market theory, Network theory among others (Kurekova, 2011). For the purpose of this work, the neo classical theory on migration will be approached.

The neo classical economist argued that, people move permanently or temporarily to raise and maximize their wages in a receiving country (Cassarino, 2004). Labor migration can be viewed as an adjustment process whereby labor is reallocated according to regional variations in the demand and supply of labor: workers respond to regional differences in labor market conditions by migrating between regions until the system is back to equilibrium (Olligschlaeger, 1984) this theory basically discusses the loophole that is been visible in one location and people tend to fill up that position to create more benefit and increased standard of living for themselves.

The Lee model of migration enriched the neo classical approach to migration. Lee’s model of migration is been divided into two factors. These are the push and pull factor. Push factor are the things that are unfavorable about in the area that an individual ones lives while the pull factor are things that attract an individual to another area (Wikipedia). Instances of push factor are poverty, political instability, and religious intolerance among others. On the other hand, the pull factors are democratic government, thriving economy, job opportunity among others.

**Concepts and Definitions**

**Displacement**

Displacement is a multidimensional phenomenon as it involves outcomes beyond the physical. The affected persons are faced with the loss of their homes and as well the trauma they have to live with as a result of the horrifying experiences, particularly if they had lost a loved one in the process. Displacement refers to the physical relocation, loss of livelihoods, and the interruption or destruction of economic and social relationship of individuals (Bartolome, 1999) Displacement “involves the loss of people’s rights to land and resources” (Bartolome J. W., 2000)

Displacement is caused by both natural and unnatural factors. A non-exhaustive list of probable causes of internal displacement are given as development projects, natural disasters, armed conflict and any form of violence (Nations., 2009) Whenever people feel threatened by a situation, whether natural or man-made, they flee (Barris, 2009). Displacement can be caused by unnatural factors. These unnatural factors are often human-induced and force persons to leave their
homes. They include factors like conflict, persecution, bush-burning.

Culture
The origin of the term culture can be traced to the latin word cultura (Thompson, 1991). Several authors have put forward varying definitions of the concept of culture. Culture is the shared knowledge and schemes created by a set of people for perceiving, interpreting, expressing, and responding to the social realities around them (Linton, 1945). Edward Burnett Tylor in his Primitive Culture (1871) expresses that:

Culture ... is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society. (Jokilehto, 2005:4)

Moreover, culture is seen as a community or population sufficiently large enough to be self sustaining that is, large enough to produce new generations of members without relying on outside people (“Defining Culture and Identities”:7). Culture is therefore see or considered the full range of learned human behavior pattern (Matthes, 2010) and it includes all things in the environment which are not in the forms originally given them by nature (Fadeyi, 200).

There are as many cultures as there are languages in Nigeria. Each culture represents the people’s ways of life, norms, values, mores, ethos, ethics, and etiquettes and complete worldview. There are over 250 ethnic groups in Nigeria and the most populous and influential groups are the Fulani/Hausa, Yoruba, Igbo, Kanuri, Tiv, and Ijaw. Others are Edo, Uhrubo and Nupe.

Crisis induced displacement
The scope of displacement in Nigeria is uncertain as there is limited access to collection of data and also the lack of a detailed survey on the extent of displacement in the country (Agency, 2016) in addition to the lackadaisical attitude of the government towards the adoption and implementation of durable solutions. Considerable data exists on IDPs living in camps while there is vague information regarding IDPs living with relatives and on displaced persons living in other countries. Of the total number of IDPs in Nigeria, only 8% live in the camps, while the remaining live in host communities (Agency, 2016). This makes proper management and catering to the needs of the displaced persons difficult. The conceptualization of the problems of displacement and the inherent secrecy of migration issues are some of the challenges affecting a regional approach to the issue of displacement (Hedman, 2009).

A major source of internal population mobility in Nigeria has been caused by forced displacement associated with frequently recurring and violent religious (such as in Plateau and Kano states in 2004) and ethnic conflicts (such as in Benue state in 2001) as well as conflicts over crude oil mining and refining in the Delta area (Haas, 2006). Non-indigenous’ inhabitants of states are often heavily discriminated against, which might also be a reason for this internal migration. The Biafra civil war of 1966 that changed the government of the country led to the movement of people scattered all over the country. Initially, Nigeria had been a major international migration destination (Black. R., 2004). Families were broken up and there was the adulteration of various cultures. The Nigerian system is built in a way that, the life style of people is not stable.

Implications of Crisis-induced displacement on Gwoza socio-culture
The Gwoza/Bama camp comprises of individuals from Borno, Bauchi, Jos, Kaduna, Adamawa and Kano state in Nigeria and they got to this location because of the insurgency in their various communities. The displaced individuals are all farmers making them been categorized in the informal employment sector. Drawing from interviews that have been conducted on 50 interviewees living in Gwoza/Bama Camp on the
Esther Ojodunwene Joshua et al. Crisis-Induced displacement and its Implication on the socio-culture of indigenous populations

outskirts of the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja reveals that displacement has changed the standard of living, lifestyle and social practices of the displaced persons. Although they are free to practice their religions, they are often not afforded the opportunity to observe cultural practice like dances, festivals and rituals.

The constant patrol of a military van to monitor activities keeps them in constant fear, as the gunshots in the middle of the night also triggers the trauma of the horrific events they had encountered. Displacement has also exposed them to modern cooking methods and social practices, including the use of electronic devices and the internet. The vocabulary and spoken English of some persons has improved from what it used to be before the displacement, but on another note, the displacement have adverse implication on their language as they tend to struggle with communicating with one another. They tend to have problem of relating well thereby causing rift between the people. Furthermore, it tend to led to assimilation policy whereby they tend to assimilate there host community traditions and cultures neglecting their own.

Recommendations
Crisis induced displacement have had significant impact in the socio-cultural wellbeing of individuals in Nigeria. The necessary mechanism to help protect the citizenry is for the government to firstly put in place necessary policies that will help the displaced individual reconcile with their families that might have been separated by conflict. This will help improve and build their psychological state of mind. The government have a clear role to provide necessary amenities to have the displaced individuals have a self of belongings in the environment in which they are been situated.

Furthermore, cultural activities should be encouraged to improve cultural values in the various camps. Dancing, festivals, games, traditional rituals among others should be allowed in the camps to enable them continue to express their cultural values. The host communities should reduced their rate of hostility and a mixture of cultural practices should be encouraged to give room for friendly relationship.

The government should create a data base to register all displaced individuals to help relocate them back to their ancestral area. Will help to know the number of displaced individual in a community and ways of resettling them will be organized. More so, more research should be turned towards proving solution to displacement of people. Scholars should be encourage to provide better platform to help educate individuals about migration effect to help exhibit the developmental potentials of migration.

Conclusion
Despite the positive implications of displacement on the socio-culture of the displaced populations, it is pertinent to recognize that displacement is not healthy for the development of a nation and as such, should be destroyed. The rate of displacement in the country has risen drastically and the implication is not healthy for the development of the country at large. The various socio-cultural activities tend to be affected as well. An individual in a new area will definitely want to learn the cultures of that new community for survival. Adaptation and assimilation will set in and this usually led to internal crisis.

There should be an avenue for the reawakens of lost cultural values that might have been lost through migration. The presence of modern technology should be implored to help enable people re-unit with their kindred. Crisis induced migration tend to have negative impact to the destination community. Prominent among this is diseases that are usually spread while migrating (Sinha, 2005). There is a need to take certain measures to carter for the displaced individual to prevent any form of dispute with the host community.
Esther Ojodunwene Joshua et al. Crisis-Induced displacement and its Implication on the socio-culture of indigenous populations


Esther Ojodunwene Joshua et al. Crisis-Induced displacement and its Implication on the socio-culture of indigenous populations


Centre for Migration Research: Development Research Centre on Migration, Globalisation and Poverty.

