

FORCED MIGRATION AND SECURITY INTEGRATION: IMPLICATIONS ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN SOUTHERN NIGERIA**Chris-Obadigie Olayemi Omolola**Department of Sociology and Anthropology,
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Federal University Oye Ekiti, Nigeria.Olusola.moka@fuoye.edu.ng**Abstract**

This paper examines the security Integration and the sustainable development implications on the forced migrants of Northern Nigeria origin in Benin City, Nigeria. The study adopted a mixed method research design consisting of the quantitative and qualitative research methods. The cross-sectional survey was utilized to collect quantitative data while the phenomenology research design was employed for the collection of qualitative data. The study area was Benin City. The target populations were the forced migrants who migrated because of violent conflict in the Northern part of Nigeria to the relatively more peaceful southern part of the country who are not in the internally displaced camps or any other institutionally assisted holdings in Benin City, Nigeria. The sample size of 1,200 was drawn using mixed sampling methods because of the use of multiple instruments. The structured questionnaire was the instrument for the collection of quantitative data while the qualitative data was collected with the aid of focused group discussion guide and Key informant interview schedule. Descriptive statistics were used to analyze the quantitative data, while the thematic and interpretive phenomenological methods were used to analyze the qualitative data obtained from the field. Although there was convergence as well as divergence in the lived and share experiences of the respondents, the findings in the study established that the security integration experiences of the forced migrants in Benin City are predominantly poor. Challenges such as apprehension and mistrust, harassment, accessibility and affordability of formal justice system, jungle justice, lack of data base, lack of permanent address and language were reported as barriers to security integration. Recommendations were therefore made to improve the conditions of the force migrant group in the process of integration into the host communities. The recommendations include the need for the creation of data base, government assisted prosecution of jungle justice, and removal of structural barriers to social connections between the migrant group and their hosts were proposed.

Keywords

*Forced Migration,
Inner City Forced Migrants,
Security Integration,
Human Security,
Sustainable Development.*

1. Introduction

One of the most prominent aspects of globalization is the substantial increase in human mobility. It is estimated that 272million people are international migrants and 740million people are internal migrants within their own countries globally (IOM, 2020). Likewise, Africa has a longstanding history of migration (Findley, 2004). Currently about 21 million Africans are living in another African country (IOM, 2020) while the estimated African migrants in Europe are about 11million, almost 5million in the Middle East and more than 3million in North America (UN OCHA, 2022). Nigeria considered the most populous nation in Africa, with a growing population of over 200million people has a huge reservoir of people moving from place to place for various reasons (trade, agriculture, leisure, education/apprenticeship or tourism). Evidence in Nigeria suggests that different human groupings had move from one place to another inhabiting new territories and intermingling with people of different regions for several hundreds of years before colonization (Docquier, Lohest & Marfouk, 2007, Loschmann& Siegel, 2014, Byrne, 2016).

The right of citizens to internally migrate within the territory of Nigeria is not contested because it is a privilege guaranteed by the laws. Thus, the movement of members of one ethnic group from one native location to the other has raised no dust. The general perception is that this set of internal migrants moved mostly in response to socio-economic exigencies. Nigerians have exploited this privilege without let or hindrance until recently when incidences of security challenges became endemic across all parts of the country.

The recent influx of relatively young people, in large numbers particularly from the northern parts of the country to the south in what could be described as unprecedented magnitude, has generated a lot of discourse as to determining the real motives of such migration (Crisp and Dessalegne, 2002). While opinions split conspiratorially in the direction of the security concerns such “alien settlers” pose to the relative peace of their host communities. Others are of the notion that the influx is an existential exigency deployed by the migrants for survival.

The recurrent waves of violent conflicts in Nigeria have created the category of migrants who instead of seeking greener pastures, are forced to flee their natural places of origin and abode to relatively safer regions. This category of migrants referred to as “inner city forced migrants”, are the focus of the study. For instance, in their study, Kolbe and Henne (2014) reveals that more elevated levels of oppression on religion can impact on the number of people migrating from one country to another. In the case of Nigeria, the rise of violent agitations and insurgency over the last decades in the Northern Nigeria, has forced citizens to flee their habitual residence into more secured states and regions in the south. Benin City, a typical Southern metropolis seems to have her share of the influx.

Human security is the latest turn in the evolving security discourse (UN, 2001, Newman, 2001). The human security approach takes comprehensive methods to identify and respond to cross-section of risks faced by people on the move. Human security approach is people centered, comprehensive, contexts specific focusing on survival, livelihood, and dignity of all people including forced migrants and their host communities (UN, 2021). Viewing forced migration from the human security lens highlights the social, political and economic dimensions, which eventually helps in providing comprehensive data that may improve security architecture by strengthening institutional mechanisms that will protect migrant communities and their hosts.

Statement of the Problem

Security, including that of the inner city forced migrants, is critical to sustainable development and overall development of nations. Most literature on forced migrants, however, relates to encamped internally displaced people (IDP) population rather than those settled in the communities. This may be because the campers are more easily identifiable and easier to research in the camps. This represents a gap and potential bias as the vast majority of IDPs do not live in camps; they live in host communities (World Bank, 2017). Very little or no mention has been made of citizens who fall into the category of forced migrants fleeing their homelands into more secure states and regions who never made it into the internally displaced camps nor accessed any institutional assistance. This category of internal forced migrants referred to as the “Inner City Forced Migrants” for the sake of distinction from the Institutionally Assisted Internally Displaced People in the various IDP camps are the people of interest in this study. The study seeks to fill the gap by addressing the bias arising from lack of academic attention to this group.

It is important to look at the sustainable development implications of the security integration of the inner city forced migrants because violent conflict and the attendant internal displacement had been associated with development issues such as food shortage and hunger, demographic imbalance, family displacement, family disintegration, family livelihood, homelessness, poor access to health care, lower school enrollment rate, heightened insecurity and crime rate, unemployment, violation of certain human rights, drop in foreign direct investment and even deaths (Ibeanu,2001; Azam, 2009; Bamigbose, 2009; Oduwale and Fadeyi, 2013; Durosaro

and Ajiboye, 2011; Moore and Shelman, 2004; Olukolajo et al, 2014). These features have implications for sustainable development and some of them were thus evaluated.

Research Objectives

The main objective of this study is to describe the security integration of the inner city forced migrants in relations to sustainable development in Benin City, Nigeria. Specifically, the study:

Explore the psychosocial security integration of the inner city forced migrants in Benin City, Nigeria.

Examine the security challenges faced by the inner city forced migrants in the host community in Benin City, Nigeria.

Examine the security challenges posed by the inner city forced migrants to the host community in Benin City, Nigeria.

Investigate the role being played by the law enforcement agents in the security integration of the inner city forced migrants in Benin City, Nigeria.

Clarification of Key Concepts

The key concepts are Forced Migration/Displacement, Inner City Forced Migrants, Social Integration, Human Security and Sustainable.

Forced Migration/ Displacement: The process where people are forced or obliged to flee or to leave their homes or places of habitual residence.

Inner City Forced Migrants: Persons who are internally displaced but not in any institutional settlements such as IDP camps. The term "Inner City" was adopted to distinguish this category of forced migrants from the ones in the Internally Displaced Camp in Benin City.

Security Integration: A process which enables the inner city forced migrants to establish the relationships needed to maintain life, livelihood, dignity, personal safety, access to social services and inclusion in civic life in the host community.

Human Security:

Sustainable Development: refers to the various development provisions on security in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

2. Literature Review

Migration

Migration is a complex and multidimensional process which involves diverse motivations, with far-reaching impacts to the individual and the places of origin and destination. Perhaps that is why (Massey et al. (1993) conceive of migration as the temporary or permanent move of individuals or groups of people from one geographic location to another for various reasons ranging from better employment possibilities to persecution. Migration can either be in-migration and outmigration; Internal and international migration (Kings, 2012); legal immigrants, illegal immigrants, and refugees (Skeldon, 2002; Carling, 2006; Koser, 2010). The fourth classification is voluntary migration and forced migration (Cohen, 1996). The decision to migrate is considered forced when the migrants do not feel they have a choice in their migration decision while voluntary migration is based on the initiative and the freewill of the person and is influenced by a combination of factors: economic, political and social (Kuhnt, 2019, Neumann, & Hermans, 2017, Wong, & Celbis, 2015).

Forced Displacement

Forced displacement represents a major driver of global migration currently, as about 82.4million people were estimated to be displaced due to conflict, violence or natural disaster in 2020, most of which occur in Africa, Latin America and Asia (United Nations High Commission for Refugee [UNHCR], 2021). The definition of forced migrants includes both people crossing international borders in search of asylum and internally displaced persons (Turton, 2003: 6; Moldovan, 2008: 109). It has been shown that there is an increase in the number of internal migrations probably because of fewer structural barriers associated compared to international migration (Kuhnt, 2019, Neumann & Hermans, 2007, Wong & Celbis, 2015). Whether it is internal or international migration, it is known that migration has a profound effect on development, which could be negative or positive (De Haas, 2010).

Conflict and Displacement in Nigeria

In Nigeria, the insurgency in the north-eastern zone of Nigeria has resulted in huge displacement of people. Forced Migration in Nigeria is currently seen mainly as a response to the violence perpetrated by the insurgency of Boko Haram and counter insurgency by state military forces. Although internal forced migration is not a new phenomenon in Nigeria, increased numbers of internally displaced persons (IDPs) and their concentration in refugee camps and host communities were only observed after the emergence of the Boko Haram insurgent group (Mukhtar, Rose, Choy, & Ibrahim, 2018). The insurgency of Boko Haram has not only caused people to flee for safety, it has also created difficult conditions of livelihood and other human development issues

(Ogbonna and Jiménez, 2017) There is therefore need to look into the various developmental concerns that the situation may pose in parts of Nigeria especially in the process of security integration of the displaced group to their host communities.

Social Integration

Successful social integration closes the social distance between the native group and the settler group without causing the loss of identity by either of the parties. It gives access to all areas of community life by elimination segregation or social isolation (Peace Dialogue, 2015). Social integration is the degree to which individuals participate in a wide range of social roles and relationships (Brisette, Cohen and Seeman, 2000).

Security and Development

The discourse of the subject of security and development appears to be fundamentally mutually exclusive. It is however becoming clearer that security is inextricably linked to development in our increasingly interconnected and globalized world. For example, most of the threats to security have socio-economic roots while security challenges have socio-economic consequences. The UN millennium declaration emphasizes peace and security as one of the prerequisites for poverty reduction while the UN millennium development goals called attention to the fact that countries that are far behind in poverty reduction are the ones afflicted with conflict and displacement. Also, problems and solutions involved in the process of peace building often transcend and interact across humanitarian, development, security, justice, political, and even environmental domain (UN, 2014).

The analysis of security and development has shifted focus from state to individual (human security) as the primary point of reference in development scholarship just as more nuanced link amongst local, national and global security and development process is emerging (Hudson, 2005). Human security emerged prominently in the effort of United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to explain security within development framework. The UNDP defined human security as freedom from war and violence as well as the basic needs for and rights to economic security, food security, community security, health security, environmental security, and political security (Bariledum, 2013).

Human Security according to Frechette in Annan (2001, p.3) are “those things that men and women anywhere in the world cherish most: enough food for the family; adequate shelter; good health; schooling for children; protection from violence whether inflicted by man or by nature; and a state which does not oppress its citizens but rule by consent” (as cited in Annan, 2001, p. 3). Protection from human abuse, physical threat and violence and extreme economic, social and environmental risks including territorial and sovereignty threats are primary prerequisites and primary goal to make lasting improvement in the lives of people (UNIDIR Report, 2008). The concept of human security transcends the traditional conception of security in that the focus of the former is on the individuals as the unit of analysis rather than the state as unit of analysis. Human security also defies institutions that place emphasis on the superiority of the state over the individual experiences of their citizens. By this, greater importance of state security can be at the detriment of human security (Newman, 2010).

Sustainable Development

The Brundtland Commission’s 1987 groundbreaking report tagged “Our Common Future,” introduced the concept of sustainable development into the public discourse and articulated the various global concerns. It defined sustainable development in terms of both protecting resources and ensuring equality in distribution. “Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.” The conference affirmed commitment to Sustainable Development and keyed in to “The Future We Want” mantra. The outcome is the new 17 Sustainable Development Goals, which took effect from 2015 and now the current global development blueprint till 2030. The document sets the ground for the new SDGs and the global development agenda spanning from 2015-2030. The Sustainable development philosophy calls attention to the need for mindful and responsible human behavior and actions at the international, national, community and individual in the pursuit of development (Ukaga, Maser, & Reichenbach, 2011).

The Goal 11 of the SDG “Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable” This implies that security, especially human security, is critical for development. Consequently, security is a major preoccupation in development discourse as when people are not secure; they constitute a weight on society to carry.

Forced migration can have a long-term collective impact on sustainable development at local, national and international levels. To make progress towards achieving the SDGs and ensure that ‘no one is left behind’, States and other key humanitarian and development actors need to work more consistently to address the longer-term collective challenges that internal displacement poses.

Theoretical Framework

Theoretically, the term “Social Integration” first came into use in the work of the French sociologist Emile Durkheim, who believe that society exert a powerful force on individuals, he thus concluded that peoples beliefs, values and norms make up a collective consciousness- (group identity) a shared way of understanding each other and the world, which in turn constrain and obliges them to behave in some particular ways (see Durkheim, 1964). He went further by opining that as people relate with other groups, they tend to develop common ways of perceiving, evaluating, feeling or acting. These new patterns of value perception, evaluation and action give rise to expectations and constraints. For him, the social contract presupposes the existence of a priori. He assumed that if any group of people would live together cooperatively, they must have some basic agreement on what their priorities are and how they ought to relate with each other and arrange their relationship. Durkheim argues that a change in population leads to an increase in the density of social integration because of competition and conflict which first threaten social cohesion but later resolves by division of labor necessary to restore social order. The differentiation brings with it interdependence (organic solidarity). Durkheim submissions are reminiscence of the functionalist view of the society as a stable, orderly system which experience changes and which adjust or adapt to the changed situation (such as influx of a new migrant group) by creating a new order or a new state of equilibrium (see Clark, 2012).

Durkheim’s postulations that if any group of people would live together cooperatively, they must have some basic agreement on what their priorities are and how they ought to relate with each other and arrange their relationship is relevant to the paper because without the agreement, it will be impossible for the host community and the settler group to cohabit and integrate successfully. Security integration is important because where there is mistrust and hostility, other forms of social integration would be impossible.

Of relevant also is the process through which these ‘newcomers’ are incorporated (Integrated) into the mainstream social structure of the host society and the consequential sustainable development implications are of interest to the study. The process of integration may not always occur without attendant challenges that can be likened to the functionalist’s ‘social disturbances’, and the study attempted to understand the strategies being deployed to return to a state of ‘social equilibrium’.

3. Methods and Materials

Research Design

The study is descriptive in nature; therefore, the survey research design was adopted. To accomplish the objectives of the study, the quantitative and qualitative data were combined in the description of the lived and shared experience of the social group of interest. For quantitative data, the cross-sectional design was utilized to obtain necessary data while the phenomenology design was used for the qualitative aspect of the study.

Study Area

The study was conducted in Benin City. Edo State, Nigeria. The study area comprised three main local government areas (Oredo, Egor and Ikpoba-Okha), the three local government areas constitute the geographical boundary within which the research was carried out. Benin City is the capital of Edo State. The city was chosen in the study because it reflects all the complexities of a typical southern Nigeria city.

Population and Sampling

The projected 2024 population figure of Benin City is 1,972,558 (UN World Urbanization Prospects, 2024). The sample size of the study was 1,222. The sample size of 1,200 respondents was derived from the three local government areas for the quantitative study by way of multi-staged sampling procedure to ensure representativeness. The procedures include cluster, random and referral methods. There were 20 participants for the FGD sessions and 2key informants (a delegate of the police commissioner and the chairman of landlord’s association).

Instruments of Data Collection

The instruments of data collection include a structured Questionnaire, a Focused Group Discussion Guide (FGDG) and two Key Informant Interview Schedule (KIIS).

Data Collection

The Quantitative data were obtained by way of one-time administration of the structured questionnaire. On the other hand, the qualitative data was obtained through Focus Group Discussion Guide (FGD). Two FGD sessions were held consisting of 10 male and 10 female participants who were willing, available and volunteered to in each group. The focus group discussion was carried out in Urhopota hall (the city center). Also, one Senior Police Personnel and one Chairman of landlords’ association were interviewed to provide expert and outsider perspective.

Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics were used in the analysis and presentation of the quantitative data. While the data collected through the qualitative instrument were subjected to manual content analysis.

4. Results and Discussion

Demographic Data of the Respondents

Table 4.1.1: (see table below)

The variables examined among the respondents include Age, Sex, Marital Status, Highest Educational level, State of origin and Duration of Residency. The demographic data are presented in table 4.1.1. (See table below):

The age of the respondents in this study ranges between 18 and 65 years. The gender distribution of respondents indicates that the male respondents were more with 68.3% while the female constitute 31.7%. From the table, the largest proportion (45.7%) identify as married, closely followed by singles at 45.2%. Separated, divorced and widowed individuals represent smaller percentages of the respondents. The distribution of respondents by religious affiliations, reveal Christianity as more prevalent at 70.9%, followed by Islam at 27.3% while other religions represent smaller percentages. The larger proportion of the respondents (82.7%) attained at least primary education, while about 17.6% of the respondents have no formal education. The respondents' states of origin spread across about 10 Northern states as well as the Federal Capital City. Nasarawa state being the highest with about 41% while Gombe State yielded the least percentage of 0.36% of the respondents. Majority of the respondents (88.3%) have resided in Benin-City for less than 10years, indicating a substantial proportion of recent arrivals.

Table 4.1.2: (see table below)

The Demographic data of FGD participants depicts a well-balanced representation in terms of gender, the age range indicate a relatively youthful group. Occupationally, the participants held diverse roles. There was a mix of marital statuses within the discussion panels. The diversity in demographic characteristics of the participants highlights a rich blend of the experiences that birth the perspectives of the participants within and provided context for understanding the perspectives shared during discussions on security integration.

Table 4.1.3 (table below)

The interviewees- a 52-year-old male Police officer with a Master of Science degree in Criminology, brought insights from the of law enforcement perspective to the discussion on forced migration and security integration. Additionally, a 65-year-old male Landlords Association Chairman, with a 1st degree educational qualification, in his capacity as a prominent member of the host community, provided valuable perspective on the perception of the forced migrants in the inner-city community.

Table 4.1.4: (see table below)

Objective 1: Explore the psychosocial security integration experiences of the inner city forced migrants in relations to the sustainable development provisions in Benin City, Nigeria.

Most respondents (77.6%) reported feeling very safe, suggesting a prevailing sense of security within the community. Only few respondents reported instances of harassment to the police (16.9%) or being reported to the police themselves (22.7%), suggesting minimal interaction with law enforcement authorities. Regarding the awareness of security concerns from the host community about the settler group, participants acknowledged a level of apprehension and mistrust. They mentioned being perceived as potential sources of conflict due to their origin from regions known for unrest and might bring crises from the North here; therefore, they often experience distrust and passive aggression from the host community. Participant expressed,

"The truth is that Benin people are afraid of us. As they are seeing us, they are afraid that we might bring crises from the North here." 32years old male.

"Some of them think say we dey carry weapon to fight them" 27years old male – broken English

"Some people think say we be spies wey the boko haram send, them no know say we too dey run from the same boko haram" 38years old female – broken English

A notable proportion (51.0%) expressed occasional fears for their safety, indicating some level of feelings of insecurity among certain individuals

For instance, one male participant stated,

"We feel safer here compared to the North."

This sentiment was echoed by a female participant who said:

"We don't completely feel safe but it is better than the constant fear of attack and raid we used to have in the North."

Objective 2: Investigate the structural security integration experiences of the inner city forced migrants in relation to the sustainable development provisions in Benin City, Nigeria.

Difficulty in accessing the economic structure of the host community was demonstrated. Only 36% are gainfully employed while the others affirm in the FGD that they do any menial job to survive per day. The ability of the migrant group to meet physiological needs is critical to the security of the community. Also, a community of youthful groups with no stable source of employment may be perceived as security threat to the community.

Similarly, only about 33% of the inner city forced migrants have adequate housing. From the FGD, most of them live in makeshift structures, shanties, and uncompleted buildings without windows or doors for privacy. Lack of ventilation, overcrowding was also reported where up to 10 people share gateman houses- a space less than 3 square meters. Adequate housing is critical to health and safety. Most of the inner city forced migrants are vulnerable to natural elements such as the weather, mosquitoes, rodents and even snakes. They are also vulnerable to invasion because of lack of windows and doors.

The inability or reluctance of the inner city forced migrants to patronize the formal law enforcement agency also depicts poor structural integration. In terms of handling harassment, participants indicated a reluctance to involve law enforcement authorities. Instead, they reported incidents to community guards or vigilantes for resolution. This approach indicates a measure to keep a low profile and avoid trouble with the law. However, the approach may also result in taking self-help measures that may cause conflicts that will jeopardize the security of the communities.

Internal control mechanisms were also discussed, with participants noting the absence of a structured system for handling community issues. They mentioned the lack of a union or organized body to address and resolve conflicts within the settler community. This absence of internal control mechanisms was identified as a challenge in maintaining security and order. A male participant remarked, *"No, we don't have internal control mechanism. We are supposed to have but because we don't have a union yet, there is no community way of punishing or correcting offenders."* 42years old male.

Objective 3: Examine the security challenges the inner city forced migrants face in the host community in Benin City, Nigeria.

Instances of harassment by natives were reported by a minority (35.6%), while threats from natives were similarly less than averagely experienced (33.6%), suggesting isolated incidents rather than widespread issues. Some respondents faced discrimination or extortion due to their non-indigene status, such experiences were not pervasive among the majority (37.3% reported discrimination, 15.9% reported extortion). Moreover, the use of weapons for protection (27.4%) and instances of cheating by natives (33.5%) were reported by a minority, indicating isolated incidents rather than common occurrences within the community.

The Focused group discussion provided better understanding regarding harassment from the host community, participants shared instances of discrimination and extortion. They highlighted being labelled terms like "cow, aboki, mumu" and facing obstacles in conducting their businesses because of non-membership of trade unions. Additionally, participants mentioned instances of being extorted for money and cheating which affects their livelihoods. A male participant mentioned:

"Yes, there are some levels of harassment, especially the reference to us as Aboki melu (cows). We also have cases of forceful extortion of money for tickets or whatever excuses they can come up with." 30years old male participant.

"One madam cheat me ooo. She let me watch cloth finish, come say e no clean. She no pays me till today because she believes say I no get person wey go fight for me. If I be Benin person, she for no try am" 25years old female participant said – broken English.

In terms of handling harassment, participants indicated a reluctance to involve the law enforcement authorities. Instead, they reported incidents to community guards or vigilantes for resolution. This approach demonstrates a reluctance to relate with the law enforcement agents and a perceived inaccessibility of the formal justice system in addressing conflicts and maintaining peace within the community. A male participant stated:

"No, we don't go to the police, but we sometimes report to the vigilantes or community guards. They sometimes help calm issues down." 23years old male participant.

Another male participant declared:

"Who get time to dey go police station every day? We don't have money for police case abeg." 30years old male participant – broken English.

Finally, participants discussed their stance on possessing weapons, with the majority stating they do not carry weapons. This indicates a preference for non-violent conflict resolution and a desire to avoid escalating tensions within the community. A male participant responded:

"No, we don't carry weapons."

The key informant mention "Jungle justice," as a major challenge facing the inner city forced migrants in Benin City. Where community members handle suspected criminals independently without or before involving the police.

Objective 4: Examine the security challenges the inner city forced migrants pose to the host community in Benin City, Nigeria.

Physical fights with natives were infrequent, involving only a small minority (19.6%) as seen in the quantitative data, indicating a generally peaceful coexistence for the majority. For example, the landlord association chairman demonstrated awareness of the influx.

"Yes, we have them in our communities as tenants, gatemens or on the streets. They are a major source of cheap labour. People engage them for menial jobs. Some of them work for me."

Another inner city forced migrant corroborated the above and stated that:

"Most of them relate very well, some are however thieves. Especially those ones that pick up iron for recycling. They break into empty houses and steal under the guise of picking condemned iron."

Expert opinion from the police affirms that the Police are aware of the influx of the forced migrants

"Yes, we are aware of the influx".

On whether there is specific security challenges associated with the inner city forced migrant group. He identified significant security challenges linked to the influx of the study population, including various forms of crimes such as stealing and housebreaking.

Objective 5: Investigate the role being played by the law enforcement agents in the security integration of the inner city forced migrants in relation to sustainable development provisions in Benin City, Nigeria

In the interview with the police officer regarding forced migrants' security, several critical points emerged. Firstly, the police personnel demonstrated awareness of the influx of Northerners into Benin City due to conflicts in the Northern part of Nigeria.

"Yes, we are aware of the influx of people from Northern Nigeria to the South. Benin City in particular."

This awareness indicates the recognition of the changing demographics within the community, which is crucial for understanding and addressing associated security challenges.

Moreover, the officer identified significant security challenges linked to the influx of the study population, including various forms of crime such as stealing and housebreaking.

"Yes, there are certain vices associated with the migrants. They constitute a major security challenge in such crime as stealing and housebreaking.

Also, we have reported cases of violence in farmlands credited to them but there are no proves because the perpetrators are almost always long gone before the police is notified."

Of particular concern is the transient nature of many of the migrants who lack stable housing, significant social ties and are mostly anonymous.

"This people are difficult to arrest because they don't have permanent addresses. They simply run to another part of the town and assume a new name. Even on few instances of arrest, nobody comes for them."

These factors make law enforcement efforts more challenging as they simply move to another location within the city or other states as soon as they are indicted for a crime or offence. This insight underscores the multifaceted nature of security issues facing both migrants and the host community.

Regarding the arrest rate of accused individuals, the officer noted variations in apprehension outcomes.

"Yes, we arrest and charge to court, but arrest rates is low compared to the number of reports because of the factors I mentioned before."

While some are arrested and charged, others may be released due to factors like insufficient evidence. This variability suggests complexities in law enforcement responses to migrant-related crimes, which may require nuanced approaches.

Importantly, the absence of reported cases of harassment or maltreatment from the host community is notable. However, the officer highlighted challenges related to "jungle justice," where community members handle suspects independently without or before involving the police. This phenomenon underscores potential challenges relating to human rights issues which may result in tensions and more complexities within the community's justice systems.

Furthermore, the officer indicated a lack of frequent involvement in conflict resolution cases involving migrants or between migrants and the host community. While this may reflect a relatively peaceful coexistence, it also raises questions about accessibility of the forced migrant group to formal dispute resolution mechanisms for community cohesion.

When the question of database was raised, the police personnel indicated a lack of database on this social group

"I am not aware of any data base. Now that you mention it, I think it is very necessary for government to have such. It will help in security planning"

From awareness of influx to challenges in law enforcement and proposed interventions, his perspective underscores the complexities inherent in addressing the social integration and security needs of migrant populations.

5. Conclusion

The study made significant contributions to forced migration discourse at the state and non-state levels, to sustainable development literature, the various levels of governments, policy makers and executors and the existing body of knowledge. The study explored and described the condition of forced migrants in the process of integrating into the host community by presenting a balanced report drawn mainly from the migrants' perspective but also balanced from outsider view.

The study examined security based on the sustainable development perspective. Human security transcends the traditional concept of security; it expands from the notion that security is merely safety from violence and conflict and extends to include the protection from human abuse, physical threats, violence and extreme economic, social and environmental risks. Human security focuses on individuals as the unit of analysis instead of institutions or state. Findings reveal that majority of the respondents feel safe, as harassments, threats, physical fights, discrimination, extortion, and weapon possession were less than averagely experienced, suggesting a prevailing sense of security within the community. However, a notable proportion also expressed occasional fears for their safety and acknowledged a level of apprehension and mistrust; this suggests isolated rather than widespread psychosocial reactions relating to security. The absence of intra group internal control mechanisms to address and resolve internal conflicts within the settler communities is worrisome. While the reluctance to involve law enforcement authorities in conflict or security matters may be indicative of perceived inaccessibility of the formal justice system or a measure to keep a low profile and avoid trouble with the law.

Expert opinion from the police identified significant security challenges linked to the influx of the study population, including various forms of crime such as stealing and housebreaking and violations on farmland. Lack of stable address, lack of significant social ties and being incognito are some of the factors making law enforcement efforts more challenging as they simply move to another location within the city or other states as soon as they are indicted for a crime or offence. Impunity constitutes a big challenge to human security as people tend to resort to self-help when law enforcement is perceived to be failing. "Jungle justice," where community members handle suspects independently without or before involving the police, was also found to be a security and safety challenge for the forced migrants in their host community. The phenomenon of Jungle justice experiences by the forced migrants underscores potential challenges to sustainable development such as human rights issues which may result in tensions and more hostilities within the communities.

Important also is another double dimension of 'real' versus 'imagined' security threats. That is, the fear that comes from the influx of the "new" group can result in real or imagined increase in crime rate. The inability of the forced migrants to peacefully integrate into the host community in terms of livelihood as well as meeting other pressing socio-economic needs may result in their constituting both real and imagined security threats to their host community. Most of the forced migrants seem to be youthful and vibrant. They are therefore likely to be seen as perpetrators of insecurity instead of the victims. This may lead to aggression instead of hospitality on the part of the host group. This two dimension is critical to peaceful and successful social integration in the sense that a certain level of trust which Durkheim referred to as *priori* which he said is *sui-generis*, (taken for granted agreement) about the nature of relationship and the believe that both parties involved will keep to the agreement as the mechanic solidarity gives way to organic solidarity is important in the process of security integration.

6. Recommendations

There is urgent need to create a database of the forced migrants. This is crucial for a lot of reasons including security planning, need assessment, crime prevention and a means to address the impunity caused by anonymity in the host communities.

Adequate housing is critical to health and livelihood; therefore, government and real estate developers should be encouraged to invest in housing units that are affordable, accessible, private and sanitary to avoid health hazards that will be detrimental to both the migrant group and the host community.

Local Governments should adopt the structural approach by registering the inner-city migrants into communities by state of origin to easily liaise with their leadership in matters of security of both the migrant group and the host community as well as other representative matters.

Government should prosecute cases of "jungle justice" against this migrant group as their anonymous status because of lack of record in the host community; the anonymity may make them targets for different forms of vices such as violence, human right violation, fears and threats.

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Tables

Table 4.1.1: Demographic Data of the sampled Respondents

	Response	Frequency	Percentage
Age	18-29 Years	783	70.2%
	30-39 Years	232	20.8%
	40-49 Years	66	5.9%
	50-59 Years	21	1.9%
	60 Years and above	13	1.2%
	Total	1115	100.0%
Sex of respondents	Male	762	68.3%
	Female	353	31.7%
	Total	1115	100.0%
Marital Status	Single	504	45.2%
	Married	509	45.7%
	Separated	82	7.4%
	Divorced	12	1.1%
	Widowed	8	0.7%
	Total	1115	100.0%
Religion	Christianity	790	70.9%
	Islam	304	27.3%
	Traditional	8	0.7%
	Others	13	1.2%
	Total	1115	100.0%
Highest Educational level of respondents	None	196	17.6%
	Primary	303	27.2%
	Secondary	558	50.0%
	Graduate	58	5.2%
	Postgraduate	0	0.0%
	Total	1115	100.0%
State of Origin	Benue	13	1.2%
	Borno	8	0.72%
	Gombe	4	0.36%
	Kaduna	253	22.7%
	Kano	68	6.1%
	Katsina	160	14.4%
	Nasarawa	350	31.4%
	Plateau	235	21.1%
	Sokoto	8	0.7%
	Zamfara	4	0.4%
	Abuja	12	1.1%
	Total	1115	100.0%
Duration of Residence in Benin-City	0-4 years	719	64.5%
	5-9 Years	265	23.8%
	10-14 Years	80	7.2%
	15 years and above	51	4.6%
	Total	1115	100.0%

Field survey, June-August, 2024

4.1.2: Demographic Data of the Participants in the Focused Group Discussion

Demographic Characteristic	Participants
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Gender	Male (10), Female (10)
Age Range	19 - 45years old
Occupation	House help, Security Guard, Unemployed, self-employed. Others
Marital Status	Married (13), Single (7)
Duration of Stay in Benin City	Ranging from a few months to 15 years

Source: Field Survey, June-August, 2025

Table 4.1.3: Demographic Data of the Participants in the Interview

Interviewee	Age	Gender	Education	Expertise
Police	52	Male	M.Sc.	Law enforcement
Landlord	65	Male	B.Sc	Host

Source: Field Survey, June-August, 2024

Table 4.1.4: Respondent's responses to the questionnaire

	Statement	Response	Frequency	Percentage
1.	I feel very safe in Benin	Yes	865	77.6%
		No	250	22.4%
		Total	1115	100.0%
2.	I have experienced being threatened by indigenes in Benin City	Yes	740	66.4%
		No	375	33.6%
		Total	1115	100.0%
3.	I am gainfully employed in Benin City	Yes	397	35.6%
		No	718	64.4%
		Total	1115	100.0%
4.	I have access to adequate housing in Benin City	Yes	374	33.5%
		No	741	66.4%
		Total	1115	100.0%
5.	I once had a physical fight with natives of Benin	Yes	218	19.6%
		No	897	80.4%
		Total	1115	100.0%
6.	I have reported a case of harassment to the police	Yes	188	16.9%
		No	927	83.1%
		Total	1115	100.0%
7.	I have been reported to the police	Yes	253	22.7%
		No	862	77.3%
		Total	1115	100.0%
8.	Money or other properties has been forcefully collected from me because I am not an indigene	Yes	416	37.3%
		No	699	62.7%
		Total	1115	100.0%
9.	I sometimes have fears for my safety here	Yes	569	51.0%
		No	546	49.7%
		Total	1115	100.0%
10.	I wear a weapon to protect myself always	Yes	305	27.4%
		No	810	72.6%
		Total	1115	100.0%
11.	I have been cheated by natives in Benin	Yes	374	33.5%
		No	741	66.5%
		Total	1115	100.0%

Field survey, June- August, 2024