

A REFLECTION ON NIGERIA/GHANA TRADE RELATIONS AND LABOUR MIGRATION

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Abstract

The unfavorable national migration policies existing in Nigeria and Ghana have become extremely detrimental to transnational labour migration and trade relations between both countries. Historical analytical research design is used to analyze the migration policies of Nigeria and Ghana in conjunction with the provisions of ECOWAS free movement protocol. It was found however that Nigeria and Ghana encountered among other issues, two major challenges that transcribed national policies against transnational cooperation which has contributed to persistent economic integration and development crisis in West Africa; they include poor management of national resources for the benefit of their economies, which resulted to the second factor which is the use of labour migrants as patsy to conceal the poor managerial skills and corruptions of the governments.

Keywords: Trade, Labour, Migration, Policy, Nigeria, Ghana

Introduction

Trade relations in West Africa began a long time ago before the era of colonial rule. West African countries had traded through established trade routes at the Sahara desert where trading continued without any specified demarcation of state boundaries, trading policies or migration policies. With colonial boundary specifications, African countries at independence established national and foreign policies with the intention of protecting their sovereignty and their nationals from undue external influence and violations. At independence of West African states, economic integration process was basically focused on improving states cooperation through transnational trade. It was in lieu of this that the free movement protocol was enacted in 1978 by ECOWAS, to provide liberalized conditions for free movement of people, goods and capital to enhance trade relations among West African states.

Scholars have considered the issues around Africa's national, regional and continental development from the view of economic integration, which most times are considered as problem of nation building, neocolonialism among others. From the political perspective, A. I. Nwabughuogu in "*Problems of Nation Building in Africa*" posits that leadership is the act of coordinating and motivating both groups and individuals in the society to achieve desired goal¹. The book examines the obstacles surrounding nation building in Africa, where colonial legacies, and national leadership problems are major issues. Unlike some scholars, Nwabughuogu traced the problem of nation building in Africa to their leaders who did not possess the true nationalistic inspirations, but pursued the idea of taking power from the colonialists without a set down indigenous ideology

¹Nwabughuogu, *Problems of Nation Building*, 94.

or defined structure for the envisaged independent Africa. Alexander K.D. Frempong supports Nwabughuogu's position in his study, "The Executive and State Institutions as Primary Actors in Articulating Ghana's Integration Policies in West Africa: Challenges And The Way Forward"², with the view that the character and perception of the leader influences the social, economic and political situations of the country and even the sub region. His opinion was directed to state interest in regional integration which according to him is not made priority in relevant government ministries of member states. Though he used Ghana as case study, he was able to address collective issues pertaining to regional integration in West Africa, especially in regards to constitutionalism, which he explained to mean a relative transfer of state sovereignty to regional institutions; which he claims is basic to regional integration³.

Adepoju, in "Migration in West Africa", posits that the attainment of independence altered the free movement of persons across West Africa⁴. He appears to frown at independent leaders who were eager to sever national identity and demarcate national territories at the same time. New laws on migration were enacted to reduce and regulate the inflow of migrants to preserve available employment and business opportunities for nationals. The author further submits that post independent African leaders embarked on nationalist principles, severing the traditional connectivity and freedom of movement and making caricature of the idea of pan Africanism. The author however, discussed national identity and the issues of conflicting migration policies as key challenges to labour migration in West Africa, while projecting other factors such as ignorance of migrants and unwillingness of member states to implement the ECOWAS protocols, as part of the challenges. However, the present study aims to narrow down the challenges of economic integration and development to trade and migration which are considered in this study as basic socio-economic means of transnational relations in West African sub region which has been disregarded through unfavourable policies that undermine transnational relations, national and regional development and economic integration of West Africa.

Transnational Trade Relations between Nigeria and Ghana

Nigeria and Ghana have been in trading contact since the origin of long distant trade (international trade) in West Africa. Their trade relations was profound in the trans Saharan trade where goods like kola nut and gold from Ghana were exchanged with hides and skin, tobacco among others from Nigeria. During the colonial period, Nigeria and Ghana continued exchange of goods and services even up to the post-colonial era. Colonial demarcations and establishment of national boundaries created the need for the formation of collective and united institutions for the purpose of African unity and development. Under the provisions of ECOWAS treaty, Nigeria and Ghana, along with some other ECOWAS member states have tried to maintain cordial relations and

²Alexander K.D. Frempong, "The Executive and State Institutions as Primary Actors in Articulating Ghana's Integration Policies in West Africa: Challenges And the Way Forward", *Ghana In Search Of Regional Integration Agenda*, (Ghana: Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, 2009), 23-40.

³ K.D. Frempong, "The Executive and State Institutions as Primary Actors, 2

⁴Aderanti Adepoju, "Migration in West Africa," *A paper prepared for the Policy Analysis and Research Programme of the Global Commission on International Migration*, (September, 2005), 4-6.

cooperation especially in the area of trade, although with consistent challenges. Records have shown that trade relations within West African states involves mostly informal trade and a minimal amount of formal trade. They are rather seen to be more aligned to trading with developed economies of America, Europe and Asia, than with their neighbours. Even with the establishment of ECOWAS, member states have not been able to break the tide which holds them from pursuing progressive trade relations with neighbouring states more than they do with advanced nations of the world. There is therefore little or no market integration among West African neighbours.

More so, intra African trade are concentrated on single primary product such as petroleum, gold, and gas, which are usually incapacitated by factors such as poor economic policies, insecurity, corruption and human right violation. According to the report of Economic Development in Africa, 2009, trade attraction is dependent on fixed factors such as the size and population of a country, common language, and common history.⁵ This may apply in the general West African integration, giving credence to the multi ethnic and cultural differentials prevalent in Africa as well as the varied historic colonial demarcations which thwarted and divided Africa even more. However, the fix factors as mentioned in the report above do not seem to apply in majority of Regional Economic Communities (RECs), where countries with similar language and history were brought together. In Arab Maghreb Union (AMU) for instance, intra trade relations is very low, compared to the East African Community (EAC) which tend to cooperate more.⁶ ECOWAS on the other hand comprises the Anglophone and Francophone countries which perhaps may serve as a deterrence to trade. Albeit countries in these categories have common official languages and history, courtesy of the British and

French colonial escapades, they still do not record high intra trade relations. In West Africa however, intra trade attraction may depend on other factors like single and similar product structure; internal factors like insecurity and infrastructural decay among others. Africa is known to have similar product structure, which may limit intra African trade. Most African countries prefer to trade with countries outside Africa; although scholars argue that producing similar product should not pose a limit to intra African trade, since countries that produce similar products may decide to import the same product they produce if importation proves to be cheaper. Developed countries like America and European countries import similar goods produced in their countries from China because of cheap production and importation cost. The same scenario could be possible in Africa if not for high infrastructural decay, which does not allow for cheaper production, even when there is cheap labour.

Again, RECs policies sometimes limit the level of Intra trade relations in Africa. In ECOWAS for instance, the free movement of goods policy is limited to primary agricultural goods and handicraft, while industrial and processed goods are usually

⁵ "Strengthening Regional Economic Integration for Africa's Development", *Economic Development in Africa Report, United Nations Conference on Trade and Development*, (New York and Geneva, 2009), 31.

⁶ "Strengthening Regional Economic Integration for Africa's Development", 33.

subject to series of scrutiny and limitations. This has subjected trade within ECOWAS member states especially Nigeria and Ghana to be majorly focused on informal trade than formal trade. On this, Bonaventure Adjevor attested that informal trade covers about 80% of trade between Nigeria and Ghana, while formal trade is estimated at just 20%.⁷ Whereas, informal trade does not have any form of record, neither does it have any form of taxation structure attached to it; thus, may not contribute to the nation's GDP. In most cases also, high trade cost as a result of inflation, poor road infrastructure, and border inefficiencies can limit intra African trade. Inasmuch as tariff is lifted or reduced reasonably, these factors form constraints to trade between Nigeria and Ghana. It is estimated that transportation cost in Africa is 136% higher than in other regions, due to poor infrastructure. Transportation decay do not only limit trade, but affects the flow of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) into a nation.⁸ Trade between Nigeria and Ghana may also be affected by the fact that they do not share common boundary. They are demarcated by Benin and Togo, who serve as transit territories and may institute border control which can cause additional cost and delay to trade.

Labour Migration in Nigeria and Ghana

Nigeria and Ghana are the biggest economies in West Africa, but have done poorly in their pursuit of cordial relations and economic collaboration especially in the fields of trade and migration. Though the early indigenous propagators of pan Africanism and economic integration, yet have become the most notorious at implementing the protocols of economic integration structures. Labour migration has become a notable means of access to human resources around the world, and also a remarkable avenue for technology and culture transfer. This indicates its relevance to development of economies of nations. Labour migration is a phenomenon that has existed in Africa since the precolonial time, but became quite significant during colonial rule with the introduction of monetary means of exchange and the establishment of urban cities.

Nigeria and Ghana have *ab initio* experienced unrestricted labour migrations within their territories, notably from the Trans Saharan trade period; the momentum increased in the colonial era and more so after independence. People moved out of their rural villages on a temporal base to urban towns where wage labour was prominent. Labour migration in Africa is majorly intra-African migration which means the movement of people within Africa. It is hence estimated that up to 53% of the total number of people migrating from African countries stay within the African continent⁹, while Yeboah et al posits that an estimate of 71.8% of West African migrants live within West African countries¹⁰. In all these, labour migrants in Nigeria and Ghana experience mutual

⁷ Bonaventure Adjevor, Director of Economic, Trade and investment, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration Ghana; interviewed at his office on the, 31 March, 2022.

⁸ "Strengthening Regional Economic Integration for Africa's Development", 33.

⁹ Zipporah Musau, "Migration can be a catalyst for economic growth", *African Renewal*, (New York, Dec 2018- March 2019).

¹⁰ Thomas Yeboah, Leander Kandilige, Amanda Bisong, Faisal Garba, Joseph Kofi Teye, "The ECOWAS Free Movement Protocol and Diversity of Experience of Difference Categories of Migrants: A Qualitative Study", *International Migration*, (2020) <http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/imig.12766>

unfavourable national migration policies that discourage transnational migration which stands in disregard to the ECOWAS free movement protocols.

Labour migration in Nigeria and Ghana encountered new phase of development after independence. Although it was a period of decolonization and propagation of Pan Africanism/African unity, Ghana as well as Nigeria adopted opposing immigration policies, in the quest for nation building. Attainment of independence in Africa came with two main needs which soon created confusion for African states - the need to form a united Africa and the need for nation building. These salient ideas propelled establishment of weak continental institutions whose policies are inhomogeneous with national policies.

At independence, most colonial institutions were dissolved, while new ones were formed but mostly on national levels. It was on the premise of better cooperation and development of Africa that Kwame Nkrumah after independence of Ghana propagated the idea of both political and economic integration of Africa. Though his idea was regarded too radical, it led to the establishment of OAU in 1963 which was rather a subtle integration than what Nkrumah envisaged. Since this period, economic integration of Africa has occupied a prominent position in Africa's economic discuss, where it has been accepted as a sure means of achieving a sustainable economic development in Africa. More efforts were made towards economic integration which resulted in the signing of the African Economic Community Treaty, otherwise known as Abuja Treaty in 1991 which came into force in 1994. The essence of this treaty was to achieve a continental economic integration and cooperation by establishing regional economic groupings as well as strengthening the already existing ones¹¹.

It was believed that countries could easily integrate at regional level (Regional Economic Communities – RECs) then into continental level (African Economic Community – AEC). Owing to this, many Regional Economic Communities were established and are pursuing integration through the development of free trade, a common market and custom union¹². These regional economic communities are regarded by the African Union as the building blocks for the achievement of economic integration of Africa. Therefore, the ability of achieving the dream of economic integration of Africa lies in the commitment to the creation of a transnational community through regional economic communities under absolute monitoring and coordination by the African Union¹³. After independence of Ghana and then Nigeria, prevalent economic and political crisis and the pursuit of nation building truncated economic integration efforts in both countries. Ghana under the CPP leader Kwame Nkrumah maintained a liberal foreign policy in the bid to make Ghana the center for

¹¹Geda and Kibret, "Regional Economic"

¹²Steve Kayizzi-Mugerwa, John C. Anyanwu, Pedro Conceicao, "Regional Integration in Africa: A Introduction", *African Development Review*, (November, 2014), 2.

<http://www.researchgate.net/publication/267764762> Doi.10.1111/1467-8268./2/02,

¹³Babatunde Fagbayibo, "Policy Discourse", 4-5.

African unity¹⁴. His struggle for African unity was bedeviled by the global fall in the price of cocoa, the major export earning of Ghana. In Nigeria also, Africa became the center piece of her foreign policy, with the intention of fostering unity and development in Africa. Challenges of independence more or less limited this policy to mere extension of financial and military support and barely of economic cooperation.

Expectations of independence in Nigeria and Ghana were swayed by economic and political challenges ranging from illiteracy, ethnic disparity, political and economic instability and unemployment. These challenges emanated from the colonial legacies of foreign economic dependency and primary export production, which made both economies vulnerable. By 1965, Ghana's economy was quickly deteriorating, featuring mass unemployment, poverty and political instabilities, all of which culminated into the overthrow of Nkrumah led CPP party in 1966¹⁵. Coup d'état, ethnic/religious crisis and civil war were also prevalent in the first decade after Nigerian independence. Prevailing economic crisis and mass unemployment in Ghana instigated indigenes accusation of migrants of dominating available job opportunities and trade. Migrants were considered in competition with indigenous merchants and should be prevented from participation in major competitive sectors of the economy¹⁶. The continued pressure from Ghana nationals resulted in Busia's 1969 Alien Compliant Order, which gave an ultimatum to all migrants without valid immigration documents to leave Ghana by 18th November, 1969. The event of 1969 expulsion had massive record of casualties particularly from Nigeria who were expelled to return to their war ravaged homeland, as Nigeria was at war from 1967-1970.

It is germane to note that the 1969 expulsion of aliens from Ghana did little or nothing to improve the plight of Ghanaians. In fact, at the early years of the 1970s which also marked the Nigerian oil boom period, came massive emigration of Ghanaian professionals- teachers, doctors, nurses and even unskilled labourers to Nigeria for employment opportunities. In the 1980s, Nigeria had her turn of economic crisis. Acute mismanagement of the oil resource and neglect to agriculture and other sectors of the economy led to a massive blow on the economy when there was a global fall in oil price. Unbelievably, in 1983, the expulsion scenario repeated in Nigeria under the leadership of Shehu Shagari, but this time Ghanaian migrants were the major victims as they were the highest migrant population in Nigeria. A look at the two expulsion scenarios made visible two glaring points; that political leaders of Ghana and Nigeria were not able to manage national resources for the benefit of their economies. Secondly, that labour migrants were used in both occasions as patsy to conceal the poor managerial skills and corruptions of the governments. Major effect of the expulsion was increased antagonism among government and citizens of Nigeria and Ghana. A buildup of blame

¹⁴Awumbila, Mariama, Takyiwaa Manuh, Peter Quartey, Cynthia AddoquayeTagoe, and Thomas Antwi Bosiakoh. "Migration country paper (Ghana)." *Centre for Migration Studies, University of Ghana*, (Legon, 2008).

¹⁵Puplampu, Bill Buenar. "A Political and Economic History of Ghana, 1957–2003." *International Businesses and the Challenges of Poverty in the Developing World: Case Studies on Global Responsibilities and Practices* (2004), 64-74.

¹⁶Aremu, and Ajayi. "Expulsion of Nigerian immigrant community", 176-186.

and antagonism, mutual suspicion and competition erupted from the inhuman experiences of the expulsions. Loss of lives and properties, imprisonment, molestation and xenophobia characterized the expulsions. Needless to say, that the expulsion experiences has a continued effect on the socioeconomic co-operations of both countries, evidence of which is the unwillingness of the governments to engage in profitable cooperation and collaboration to allow free flow of people and businesses in line with the provisions of the Free Movement Protocols.

Since the expulsion experiences, Nigeria and Ghana have embraced opposing economic policies to the free movement protocols. Selective policies and restrictions to free movement of people and businesses became prevalent. Disregard for free movement protocol in Nigeria and Ghana occurs in two different patterns. Ghana in the area of free movement of persons, work, and residence while Nigeria in free movement of trade. This is perhaps because Nigerians immigrate to Ghana than the other way round; while Ghanaians come to Nigeria majorly for trade purposes. Yeboah et al observed a form of selective immigration processes in the Aflao border area where immigration officials decide entry on the bases of status, class, gender, nationality, education, and age¹⁷. Also, specific job opportunities are preserved for Ghanaian citizens, especially in the semi-skilled and unskilled sectors, like hair salon, petty trading, trading in the market places, taxi and car hire service of less than 25 fleets of vehicles¹⁸. In addition, Nigerians who seek resident permit complain that nationals are considered for job vacancies before them, which makes employment difficult and as such delays issuance of resident permit. Citizens and groups most times incite the government to enact restrictions and policies with the intention to protect nationals from competition¹⁹. While migrant professionals experience less discriminations from the nationals, records have shown more discrimination at the lower class for fear of competition in small local businesses, thereby making it relatively impossible for small and medium traders to participate in transnational trade and establishment in Ghana.

Additionally, Ghana merchants have witnessed restrictions on trade from the Nigerian government. From the 1970s, Nigeria have adopted the use of import prohibition as one of her main trade restriction policies. The restriction on some trade items were concentrated on agricultural products, textiles, and other items considered as non-trade products like weapons, obscene articles and second hand clothing. Some of the prohibited products were permanent on the prohibition list while some were in and out of the list. From the 1970s to mid-1980s, the prohibition list increased further but abated from 1989, when restricted agricultural products came down to 29%, while

¹⁷Yeboah, Thomas, et al, "The ECOWAS free movement protocol", 228-244.

¹⁸ "Act 865 Ghana Investment Promotion Centre Act, 2013", *Investment Policy*

Hub. www.ghanainvestmentpolicy.unctad.org.

¹⁹ Moses Duruji, "ECOWAS Protocol on Free Movement and Challenge of Labour Migration in West Africa", *emeric's Africa*,
<https://www.kiep.go.kr/aif/issueFileDownload.es?brdctsNo=319973&brdctsFileNo=81737>

manufactured goods was reduced to 20% against 40% as at 1986.²⁰ Another upsurge on the list took place from 2001 to 2004; this time, Nigeria placed a ban on importation of about 96 Ghanaian products, some of which included: textiles, starch, plastics, poultry and rice among many others.²¹ Ghana was grossly affected by series of these bans, but more grievous was the one of 2004, when most of her export goods to Nigeria was enlisted on the Nigerian import prohibition list. Before the 2004 import prohibition, there had been a closure of the Seme border in 2003, under the leadership of president Olusegun Obasanjo, for the purpose of curbing incessant border crimes and illicit smuggling of Nigerian petroleum products to other West African countries like Benin; even Togo, Burkina Faso and Ghana who do not have direct border with Nigeria. It was recorded that in 2004, 75 percent of petroleum found in Benin local markets are smuggled bunkered fuel from Nigeria which were selling at cheaper rates²². From the history of trade with the ECOWAS member states, Nigeria have been found to use border closure and import prohibition as strategy to protect the state from external pressures. Border closures, especially of the Seme border has occurred severally in the history of Nigerian external trade relations with ECOWAS member states; in 1984, 1996, 2003, and the most resent one of 2019 which was partially lifted in 2020. The reason for the consistent closure has been similarly the same for the Nigerian leadership at each period of border closure: illicit smuggling of petroleum out of Nigeria, human trafficking, illegal importation of drugs and agricultural products, proliferation of illegal arms and other criminal activities prevalent at the borders which affect the peace and progress of the nation. This strategies are considered to be in conflict with the ECOWAS protocol of free movement of goods and persons and the removal of all obstacles to trade.

Both countries have so far engaged in several trade agreements in the past and have continued to do so in this contemporary time although with some strains in their engagements. On this Michael Olawale-Cole, the President, Lagos Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LCCI) asserted that Nigeria and Ghana engaged in self-inflicted trade set back through the use of discriminatory trade policies, high tariffs, border closures and harsh business environment.²³ It is obvious that after the 1969 expulsion and what seems to be a retaliation from Nigeria in 1983, both countries have exhibited epileptic form of cooperation with cynical policy formation. The AU and ECOWAS have provided major trade cooperation platforms for both countries through the African Economic Commissions (AEC) and the ECOWAS Trade Liberalization Scheme (ETLS) established in 1979 and extended in 1990; and the African Continental Free Trade Area (AFCFTA) which allows and supports free movement of goods and peoples, right of residence and establishment among member states. Inasmuch as these organizations encourage economic integration in relations to trade, national policies of

²⁰Ademola Oyejide, A. Ogunkola and A. Bankole. *Import Prohibition as a Trade policy Instrument: The Nigerian Experience*, (2005), 29. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781139030526.033>.

²¹Oteng. "When Two Leviathans Clash"...

²²Oyejide, et al, 32.

²³ Benjamin Alade, "Nigeria, Ghana seek end to retaliatory Tariffs, Trade policies", *The Guardian Business News*, (February 17, 2022).

member states are allowed to supersede, for the reason of preventing dumping and preserving national interest.

For the protection of trade interest of nationals, some commissions such as: Ghana investment Promotion Council, Ghana Export Promotion Authority, the Nigerian immigration laws, and the Nigeria Export Promotion Council among other regulatory commissions, were put in place. The Ghana Investment Promotion Centre Act of 1994 (Act 478) reserved specified businesses for Ghana nationals alone. Such businesses as stipulated in section 18 of this Act was further explained by section 27 of the 2013 Act 865 of Ghana investment Promotion Centre Act. They include the following:

- the sale of goods and provision of services in a market, petty trading or hawking or selling of goods in a stall at any place;
- operation of taxi or car hire service in an enterprise that has a fleet of less than twenty five vehicles;
- operation of beauty salon or barber shop;
- printing of recharge scratch card for use of subscribers of telecommunication services;
- production of exercise books and other basic stationery;
- retail of finished pharmaceutical productions;
- Production, supply and retail of sachet water and all aspects of pool betting business and lotteries, except football pool.²⁴

These specifications were to preserve all small businesses for Ghana citizens and protect them from unnecessary competition. The provisions of the Promotion Act has however incited a lot of controversy, especially from Nigerians who have about seven million of their population living in Ghana. Nigerian traders in Ghana most of who are involved in small businesses believe that the provisions of ECOWAS on the free movement of goods, right to residence and establishment, overrides Ghana Investment Promotion Act²⁵. On the other hand, the Ghana Union of Traders Association (GUTA) with the believe that government has failed to implement the Promotion Act in favour of Ghanaian business owners, resorted to take laws into their hand to lock up foreigners shops by force. This forceful law enforcement by the union have occurred especially in Accra and Kumasi notably in 2012, 2019, 2020 and 2021. The chairman of the union, Joseph Obeng in a television interview explained that other ECOWAS member countries are not allowed to import or trade on imported goods on retail centers. He went further to assert that foreigners are allowed to trade on goods and services manufactured in their countries or engage on large scale importation investment of not less than one million dollars (\$1,000,000) and must employ up to twenty (20) Ghanaians; Although the GIPC Act stated Three Hundred Thousand Dollars (\$300,000) instead of the \$1,000,000 mentioned by Obeng. He emphatically maintained that other

²⁴ "Act 865 Ghana Investment Promotion Centre Act," *Investment Policy Hub*, (2013).

www.ghanainvestmentpolicy.unctad.org.

ECOWAS member citizens are not complaining but Nigerians in Ghana “are abusing the law and are bent on flaunting the local laws” which according to him “can never be accepted”.²⁶

On the other hand, Nigeria from the 1970s, have adopted the use of import prohibition as one of her main trade policies. Restrictions were concentrated on some trade items like agricultural products, textiles, and other items considered as non-trade products like weapons, obscene articles and second hand clothing. Some of the prohibited products were permanent on the list while some were in and out of the prohibition list. From the 1970s to mid-1980s, the prohibition list increased further but abated from 1989, when restricted agricultural products came down to 29%, while manufactured goods were reduced to 20% against 40% as at 1986.²⁷ Another upsurge on the list took place from 2001 to 2004, when Nigeria placed a ban on importation of about 96 Ghanaian products, some of which includes: textiles, starch, plastics, poultry and rice among many others.²⁸ Ghana was grossly affected by series of these bans, but more grievous was the one of 2004, when most of her export goods to Nigeria was enlisted on the Nigerian import prohibition list. Before the 2004 import prohibition, there had been a closure of the Seme border in 2003, under the leadership of president Olusegun Obasanjo, for the purpose of curbing incessant border crimes and illicit smuggling of Nigerian petroleum products to other West African countries like Benin, and even Togo, Burkina Faso and Ghana who do not have direct border with Nigeria. It was recorded that in 2004, 75 percent of petroleum found in Benin local markets are smuggled bunkered fuel from Nigeria which were selling at cheaper rates.

From the history of trade with the ECOWAS member states, Nigeria have been found to use border closure and import prohibition as strategy to protect the state from external pressures. Border closures, especially of the Seme border has occurred severally in the history of Nigerian external trade relations with ECOWAS member states; in 1984, 1996, 2003, and the most resent one of 2019 which was later reopened one month before January 1, 2021 when trading under the AFCFTA agreement was scheduled to begin. The reason for the consistent closure has been similarly the same for the Nigerian leadership at each period of border closure: illicit smuggling of petroleum out of Nigeria, human trafficking, proliferation of illegal arms and other criminal activities prevalent at the borders which affect the peace and progress of the nation. These

²⁶ Joseph Obeng. “Ghana refutes claim that it’s maltreating Nigerian Business owners”, *SABC News on YouTube*.

²⁷ Ademola Oyejide, A. Ogunkola and A. Bankole. *Import Prohibition as a Trade policy Instrument: The Nigerian Experience*. www.worldtradeorganisation.org

²⁸ Kofi Oteng. “When Two Leviathans Clash: Free Movement of Persons in ECOWAS and Ghana Investment Act of 1994” *African Journal of Legal Studies*, (01 January, 2013). <https://oa.mg/work/10.1163/17087384-12342015> accessed 25, May, 2022.

strategies are most times considered to be in conflict with the ECOWAS protocol of free movement of goods and persons and the removal of all obstacles to trade.

Nigerian border closure and import prohibition have affected many West African countries, who depend on imports from Nigeria as well as their massive population of above 200 million people for export market. Ghana has on several occasions sent delegates to Nigeria to consider relaxing some of her measures to no avail. Subsequently, this refusal, combined with the pressure it placed on Ghana economy may have affected the continued position of Ghana in maintaining the foreign retail involvement prohibition, which prevents foreigners from partaking in retail businesses in Ghana and has caused intermittent disturbance of Nigerian retail shop owners in Ghana. Ghanaian government with the pressure from the Ghana Union of Traders Association (GUTA) have worked towards implementing the Ghana investment promotion Act on retail trading.

Notwithstanding the constant bickering and topsy-turvy pattern of Nigeria Ghana relations, in 2010 however, Nigeria was Ghana's third most-important trade partner, which accounts for about 10% of Ghana total foreign trade; while Ghana was the 9th largest trade partner for Nigeria in that same year, amounting to 1.3% of Nigeria's entire foreign trade.²⁹ In 2012, Ghana High Commissioner to Nigeria, Baba Kamara while speaking at the event of Ghana day celebration at the Lagos International Trade Fair, called for a Bi-lateral Trade Investment Agreement (BTIA) between Nigeria and Ghana. He went further to say that the BTIA would provide a platform to discuss challenges to trade between Nigeria and Ghana.³⁰ Unfortunately, the BTIA has not been given possible consideration.

Meanwhile, in 2016, Ghana placed a ban on some Nigeria's export products, mainly crude oil, cement and pharmaceuticals. This action was insinuated to be a retaliation to Nigeria for placing Ghana on her import prohibition list for such a long time; although Ghana's discovery of deposits of crude oil in 2007 which is expected to produce up to 190,000 barrels of oil per day,³¹ may daunt the need of Nigerian crude oil. The tension between Nigeria and Ghana have continued over the years, with profound implications for the entire West African nations. The perceived competition between them has tilted to the negatives to impact on the progress which peaceful cooperation would have had on the entire ECOWAS community. It is most disheartening that this rivalry has affected the social coexistence of the citizens of both countries, who cease any given opportunity to engage in banter over which country is better or worse. This negative social

²⁹ Nigeria-Ghana Bilateral Trade Commission, www.businessday.ng, January 20, 2022.

³⁰ *Ghana Wants Bilateral Trade and Investment with Nigeria*, Nov 8, 2012, <https://www.premiumtimesng>

³¹ Damilare Opeyemi, "What Ghana Latest Importation Ban Could Mean for West Africa" <https://venturesafrican.com/here-is-what-ghanas-ban-on-nigerian-goods-means/>

behaviours have perhaps inflamed some of the xenophobic attitudes against Nigerians in Ghana.

The African Union in 2018 established the African Continental Free Trade Area (AFCFTA). The protocol establishing it was perhaps later signed reluctantly by Nigeria in 2020 since it was the last to sign the agreement to the protocol. The establishment of AFCFTA was received with deep skeptical views from spectators, giving cognizance to the fact that Regional communities are still struggling with full implementation of FTA within the various regions of Africa. It is however hoped that AFCFTA would receive maximum support to avoid replication of trade impasse that have existed between Nigeria and Ghana over the years; but rather enable peaceful cooperation and economic progress of African economies.

Conclusion

Labour migration in Nigeria and Ghana encountered new phase of development after independence. Although it was a period of decolonization and propagation of Pan Africanism/African unity, Ghana as well as Nigeria adopted opposing immigration policies, in the quest for nation building. Attainment of independence in Africa came with two main needs which soon created confusion for African states - the need to form a united Africa and the need for nation building. These salient ideas propelled establishment of weak continental institutions whose policies are inhomogeneous with national policies. Expectations of independence in Nigeria and Ghana were swayed by economic and political challenges such as illiteracy, ethnic disparity, political and economic instability and unemployment. These challenges emanated from the colonial legacies of foreign economic dependency and primary export production, which made both economies vulnerable.

Additionally, the persistent challenges in addition to government trade restrictions and unfavorable policies have resulted to government pursuit of national interest which are most times sabotaged by government leaders in pursuant of personal interest, thus the consistent environmental and economic decays that has birthed the current state of economic instability and underdevelopment of African states. However, the current economic situation of Nigeria and Ghana may persist even in a most deflating manner if both economies continue with policies that are not consistent with promoting both national and regional economic development and integration. There is therefore need to consider as a matter of importance new homogenous policies that will be binding on national and regional institutions to bring about sustainable development of West African states.

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