

René Ngek Monteh, 2019

Volume 4 Issue 3, pp. 1573-1589

Date of Publication: 2nd February, 2019

DOI-<https://dx.doi.org/10.20319/pijss.2019.43.15731589>

This paper can be cited as: Monteh, R. N., (2019). *Frontiers Transgressions and the Evolution of Illegal Practices in the Central African States Before the Advent of Boko Haram Insurgent: A Historical Study During Recent Times*. PEOPLE: International Journal of Social Sciences, 4(3), 1573-1589.

This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-Non Commercial 4.0 International License. To view a copy of this license, visit <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/> or send a letter to Creative Commons, PO Box 1866, Mountain View, CA 94042, USA.

FRONTIERS TRANSGRESSIONS AND THE EVOLUTION OF ILLEGAL PRACTICES IN THE CENTRAL AFRICAN STATES BEFORE THE ADVENT OF *BOKO HARAM* INSURGENT: A HISTORICAL STUDY DURING RECENT TIMES

René NGEK MONTEH

History Department, University of Yaoundé I, Cameroon

montehrene@gmail.com

Abstract

Frontiers in Africa are areas fostering mobility and cross-border trade despite state limits. These frontiers have come to be a natural feature in human lives. They designate not only the limits and jurisdictions of states, but also an essential reference of national identity since they regulate movements of people, goods and services. In an era of global inequality of mobility rights, freedoms of mobility for some nationals have coexisted with the systematic exclusion of others. Since independence, the Central African States are developing an interest in cross-frontier cooperation. Frontiers are nodes of contacts, of conflicts and of cooperation all depending on the policies put in place by member States. This explains why frontiers in the study area are subjected to openness or closure. However, despite the role played by member States, Sub regional and regional organizations such as CEMAC, ECCAS and AU amongst others, the phenomenon of frontiers transgression still remain a bitter truth experience. The underway cross-frontiers perspective seems to militate for the openness option. This trend has been growing for the past decades at times because of the slow process of institutionalization and incorporation of cross-frontier cooperation in Central African development policies at national level. Drawn from our various sources especially primary data, this paper attempts to illustrate the dramatic characteristics and evolution in frontier transgression within Central African States. In this sphere, the countries evoked here are Cameroon, CAR, Chad, Nigeria and Sudan. Issues such as

dual nationality, cross-border prostitution, arms trafficking, contraband, large-scale trafficking and theft, and attempted solutions are discussed in this paper.

Keywords

Frontiers, Borders, Transgressions, *Boko Haram*, Central African States

1. Introduction

The mobility of people and goods is always a living reality for the African continent. Groups of people could leave their place of origin for the conquest of new areas suitable for their activities such as grazing, soil fertility, refuge, and water supply just to name but these. But what preoccupies our daily worry is not the migration itself, but the illicit nature thereof. Besides the known legal migration controlled by the various States, this part of Africa for the past decades was noted for illegal movement of goods and services termed clandestine, underground or parallel, underpinned by false visas, falsified statements and traffics of illegal goods such as drugs and small arms.

The word frontier transgression in this context refers to several illegal acts within or across frontiers or borders. In actual sense, the word transgression is a noun deduced from the verb transgresses which means to go beyond the limit of what is normally or legally acceptable by the law/customs or by norms. Its manifestation can be violent or abusive. In this light, frontier transgression in Central Africa embodies violation, abusive and illegal use of the Central African frontiers. Frontier or border transgression is not a new phenomenon in the African context. This phenomenon has existed before the advent of colonialism in Africa but to a minimal scale since there were no defined boundaries. As such, the principle of “no man’s land” gave the impression of free movement of goods and people with little or no disturbances. Colonial imperialism attached with their artificial boundaries fixation in Africa gave birth to the practise of “xenophobia” thus, limiting movement and transactions in Africa.

It was at the genesis of the above artificial barriers established by the colonialists that movement of people and goods became very difficult. During post colonial era, people from neighbouring countries or states embarked on series of hazards across international boundaries. In this paper, we shall first of all clarify our understanding of frontier at the two different historical intervals. Secondly, we shall examine the evolution of frontier transgressions in relationship to insecurity. Thirdly, we shall study frontier transgressions in relations to economic activities, and fourthly in relation to socio-cultural activities. In those sections, elements such as the circulation of fake degrees, the question on dual nationality, cross-border prostitution, the phenomenon of high way robbery, arms trafficking and contraband shall be treated. At the end, we shall conclude with some attempted solutions to redress the situation before the advent of *Boko Haram* insurgency.

1.1 Conceptual Clarification of Frontiers in Africa

This section clarifies the understanding of frontiers with some associated words such as boundary and border in the various historical moments in African history as captured from various authors. It is from this background that we shall examine this operational concept in the spheres of pre-colonial and colonial periods.

1.1.1 Pre-colonial Africa

The notion of frontiers or boundaries in pre-colonial Africa according to varying authors was not all that demarcated as the case nowadays. The Africans had only imaginary boundaries marked by natural features such as trees, rivers, mountains, valleys among others, to show the sovereignty of each rulers. In this sense, the idea of no man's land held true for land during pre-colonial Africa belongs but to the one who put it in usage. Probably this was due to the fact that there were limited socioeconomic and political activities during this period despite the existence of empires (P. Nchoji Nkwi, 1987, pp.35-37). People were mostly concern with farmlands to an extent that the desire for territorial conquest subsequently became an eventual factor to various African rulers who raided smaller chiefdoms in order to extend their kingdoms. But in case of setbacks or counter attacks, these rulers were expected to establish their sphere or limit in areas where they were resisted (1987, p.37). In this scene, each ruler knew his area of jurisdiction characterised with natural features contrary to the case nowadays.

This setup is more clarified by Catherine Coquery-Vidrovitch in her works. She further explains that in ancient Africa, political societies were delimited as the case elsewhere. She remarked that the concept of frontiers wasn't the issue of modern states as the case in modern days. But whatever the case, chiefs were quite aware of their various areas of jurisdiction. In this setup, their authority was no longer on their subject, but to their surrounding (territory) (C. Coquery-Vidrovitch, 1999, pp.39-60).

According to O. Adejuyigbe, the definition of frontier by House is different from its widely accepted definition as zone into which expansion takes place from one or more core areas. Expansion of a core area into a frontier will continue until the people involved encounter either physical or human hindrances to their activities. Where the hindrances cannot be removed or overcome, the expansion will end and ultimately the limit or boundary of the political unit concerned will be fixed. The hindrances may be people from other core areas who also expanding into the said frontier from other sides (O. Adejuyigbe, 1989, pp.27-29). According to him, border areas may be identified in any of the two ways:

- By reference to the frontier which existed before boundary delimitation.
- By reference to administrative units close to the boundary.

The characteristics of borderlands may be examined in terms of location, interaction patterns, and transitional features. In fact Adejuyigbe concluded that there are no features unique to border areas in Africa being before or during colonial eras.

1.1.2 Colonial and Postcolonial Period

During colonial time, Pierre Boilley in his article titled "*Le decoupage de l'Afrique*" advances his logical acquisitions in reference to the Berlin West African conference held on the 15 November 1884 to the 26 February 1885 on boundary fixations in Africa. This conference was held in the German political capital of Berlin with the sole objective to peacefully partition Africa by the various colonial powers. This conference was equally to avoiding rivalries on various territorial claims during colonial rush to Africa. Some of this conflicting interest was that linked on the Congo basin and the freedom of navigation on the Niger River. On the other hand, Bismarck ambition was to protect the interest of the Germans firms and investors operating along the coastal region of Africa. It was then due to the above claims that the partition of the African continent became legitimate (P. Boilley, pp.3-4).

In the space of 25 years that is within the Berlin conference till 1910, 70% of African frontiers were established within the above mentioned period. 50% was established ten years after the Berlin conference, while the rest of the 50% was done 15 years after the conference (Boilley, p.4). He concluded by appealing on how these frontiers had become sources of problems and troubles this as a result of the sentiments of belonging to a particular state or nation.

M.A. Ajomo on his own part, high light the usage of some terminologies used to this administrative debate. For a start, the terminologies; boundary, frontier and border have at times been used interchangeably. Surprisingly, the ordinary meaning of each as given by the dictionary does not clearly bring out any distinctions. A boundary is an alignment or an imaginary line that marks the legal termination of the territory of one state or political unit that has an international status and role, and the commencement of the territory of another state, or political unit (M.A. Ajomo, 1989, pp.37-38). In the case of sea and airspace boundaries, the termination of a state's territory adjacent to international waters or the upper atmosphere delineates the boundaries. A boundary is a line and not a zone; it has no national or actual width. A boundary marks a separation between territories or states. What it separates are areas of administration or sovereignty.

Ajomo further explains that a frontier on the other hand is used in common parlance as a synonym for international boundary; hence we speak of "crossing the frontier", "frontier posts"

and so on. Modern technical usage distinguishes the two terms: boundary as a linear feature and frontier as a zone. A boundary is a legally prescribed or agreed separation of jurisdiction, frontier is a zone of actual contact or separation, in the political, geographical or economic sense. “Border” is also used as a synonym for “boundary”; in contradistinction to “boundary”, it has reference only to international boundaries, as it is the case nowadays in post colonial Africa (Ajomo, p.38).

Reading the works of J. Lévy and Carine Bennafla in which to them, the frontier is as a means of defence but at times very troublesome. They further said that this defensive system had brought in the creation of no man’s land. In response to their points of view, they said that there exist lines of complete separation as was the case of the Berlin wall on one way or the other described as “*mur de Berlin ou les fortifications antiterroristes Israéliennes*”(UNESCO, December 2006). A frontier as such is effective only when there is no menace. In line with judicial and political ideas on frontiers, it sound’s smuggled when taking into account the following three aspects; barrier, ordinate interface and territory (UNESCO).

It is quite remarkable that both French and English writers have contributed enormously to the understanding of frontiers, the process of frontiers establishment or demarcation especially as a result of European colonization of Africa in the late 19th century. In this paper, frontier is used in common parlance as a synonym for international boundary; hence we speak of crossing the frontier, frontier posts and so on. Modern technical usage distinguishes the terms boundary as linear features, frontier as zone. Thus boundary is a legally prescribed or agreed separation of jurisdiction, and frontier is a zone of actual contact or separation in the political, geographical or economic sense. Border is also used as a synonym for boundary, but refers only to international boundaries.

From the above background, the sections that follow are designed to respond to major key issues in line with the illegal activities within the Central African States. In this respect, we examine frontiers transgressions in response to insecurity, economic activities and lastly frontiers transgressions in response to socio-cultural view in the study area.

2. Frontiers Transgressions in respond to Insecurity

Insecurity at all levels has been a prime concern to both individuals and nationalists. Insecurity around the banks of Lake Chad and in the northern regions of Cameroon for the past decades has been a theatre for major hazards in respond to the activities from neighbouring states even before the advent of the *Boko Haram* insurgency (Saïbou Issa, 2004, pp.11-13). In this section, factors such as; arms traffic, the question of double nationalities, high way robbery, child rape, among others aspects shall constitute the scope of this sub section.

The humanitarian situation at the frontiers between Cameroon, Chad, Nigeria and the Centre African Republic had been constantly depredated for since independence and more especially during the decades after 1990. This was partly due to political instability experienced by these countries as such, creating an atmosphere of social unrest in the areas concerned.¹ Insecurity is a factor resulting from arms rebellions and high ways robbers. Data collected from some forces of law and order in these northern regions describe more especially the highway robbery as a veritable guerrilla warfare phenomenon which is as old as time. Basically, groups are composed of individuals who used traditional, as well as automatic weapons to attack and rob passersby on the high way.² Not only does it infringe on the movement of people and their property, but it has a heavy toll on the development of tourism sector in the whole Northern Provinces which deprives the country of the needed foreign currency. Originally considered as a bunch of outlaws, they have gradually involved into a force to be reckoned with especially with the introduction of machine gun fire (MAG, ROCKETS etc) and with the direct implementation of Chadian factional armies roaming the eastern frontiers of the area in quest for food and means to sustain their war of resistance in their country (D. B. Nintai, 1999, pp.10-12).

On the other hand, the permeability of the Nigerian and Central African frontiers also facilitate the influx of organized gangs escaping repression from their bases to seek refuge in neighbouring countries. Other groups are composed of Bororo herdsmen, hunters as well as local vigilante groups that stretch along the frontiers and marry easily with the population. All ingredients for crime are ipso facto in place. Attacks are just part of daily life and no one is invincible as victims are sometimes left with horrific injuries. Bandits had often formed a cradle in a renounced village known as Mbaiboum linking Cameroon, Chad and the Central African Republic. This village was recently discovered by the Cameroonian defence forces as a midpoint of child rape and kick napping with other associated crimes in the sub region.³

In this regard, areas of operations and prime targets are mostly rural areas. Here, they benefit from the collaboration of local accomplices who are coerced and intrigued into a sort of quid pro-quo arrangement as well as a difficult but well-prepared terrain. A larger part of the zone with its traditional northern hospitality has fallen hostage. The roads are rough and full of brigands. It is a terrible tragedy and scourge on the whole region for at times it is difficult to identify some of the high ways gangsters. This act of doubt nationality is at the debate of full-time citizen in those operating states. Residents from the northern tributary villages such as; Badage in Figul sub

¹ Interview with Mbaiga Joseph, Emi-Immigration Police Officer, Ngaoundere, 09 February 2007.

² Interview with Mbaiga Joseph.

³ Interview with Assogwed Pius Ndi, Judiciary Police Office, Ngaoundere, 09 February 2007.

division, Kousseri in the Logon and Chari, Mobe, Fotokol, Banki, the villages of Darak among other villages, are areas of same or approximate ethnic groups who at times are very difficult to separate.⁴

National boundaries erected after long years of occupation has led to membership in the African transnational spaces (or claiming as such since most constitutions do not recognize dual citizenship). In other words, state borders have not managed to put a definitive end to the social, linguistic and ethnic backgrounds among different communities. There exists the strong solidarity that was forged through history and which has continued despite the boundaries fixation by colonialism and adopted by the newly independent African States. This has ensured that most nations located on both sides of the border do not know their true identity and is sometimes found with two nationalities and two identity cards. These people, in most cases, more identify with their community and ethnicities and the boundaries far beyond the state framework that their national belonging. A. Lambert emphasizes the insight with which users handle the state border spatial grid by writing that: *«selon leurs besoins et selon la conjoncture, ils mobilisent l'un ou l'autre de ces modes d'appartenance»* (A. Lambert, 1998, p.37). In other words, people from the same ethnic or linguistic group but located on both sides of the border, enjoying their social connections to cross easily. What is important to note here is the mentality of these people to who across borders are not perceived as border transgressions but as a necessity to which they cannot escape since they have relatives on both sides. What is considered as frontier transgression by the authorities to them is quite normal given their culturally identical.

During our investigations, we met two people whose nationality seems blurred. The first, a motorcycle-taxi driver originally from Toubouro (Cameroon) says he moves freely between Cameroon and the Central African Republic because of its linguistic potential in Fulfuldé, Mboum and Sango languages. The second, from Amchide, identifies himself as a Cameroonian when he is in Cameroon and Nigerian when in Nigeria. Answering the question of how he manages to cross the Nigerian border without embarrassment, he replied: "I know the Kanuri and Pidgin; that is all we ask for Nigeria". Karine Bennafla equally reports the case of a trader in Garoua who master Hausa and Pidgin who declares feel at home in northern Nigeria. This author also mentions the case of certain Fang in Ambam (South Region of Cameroon) who has successively said he is a Cameroonian, Equatorial Guinean and Gabon national (K. Bennafla, 1999, p.36). This is as a result of the geographical location in which he found himself. These cases are few examples out of the many existing ones where people lived daily across borders in Central Africa. In addition, with the advent of popular consultations for the appointment of representatives to the National Assembly,

⁴ Interview with Assogwed Pius Ndi.

there is the so-called electoral migration. During the decades after 1990, we observed some Chadians coming in Cameroon to vote for a candidate from the same ethnic or linguistic group and vice versa. In the third general population and housing census launched by the Cameroon government in 2005, people from foreign land migrated to be enumerated in the constituency of their ethnicity (KOUBAROU, April 2006). The issue of cross-border identity shows that the various governments are still far from being masters of the border areas, which can only encourage the illegal trade practice.

Among other issues in line with frontier transgressions in Central Africa, the weapon trafficking issue has a very important and worrying instead since it is essentially the safety of people and property. Among the boundaries that are more invested illegal arms trade, the territorial rupture that separates Chad from Sudan stands out as the appropriate space due to the conflict atmosphere which is prevalent and seems to be an old practice in the African context if we stick to these remarks:

La prolifération des armes légères a débuté après la seconde guerre mondiale, sans épargner l'Afrique de l'est. Le phénomène s'est aggravé ensuite au moment de l'accession à l'indépendance, souvent violente, pour certains Etats africains à partir des années soixante.⁵

With this in mind, it is important to ask a number of questions. Which mobile networks and the tare of security? Similarly, what are the consequences of this illegal arms trade?

The lighting such questions amounts to successively introduce weapons of distribution networks and the consequences which undermine the security in Central Africa after elucidated aspects related to moving this traffic.

Weapon trafficking in the countries of Central Africa in general and border between Chad and Sudan in particular, can be explained in terms of political, economic as well as social backgrounds. From the political standpoint, Chad as well as Sudan during this research period had political instability which gradually developed into a series of warlike malaise that overwhelmed the political context. Since the outbreak of the civil war in Chad in 1979 for example, the issue of successive military talk over government has always been at the fore centre in their internal diplomacy (Djida Ndanga, 1999, p.41). Moreover, it should be mentioned that the various governments of Ndjama and Khartoum have also distinguished themselves as champions in the maintenance of rebel troops against the neighbors. Thus, the regime of Idriss Débi formerly in

⁵ « Afrique centrale et de l'est : Les armes légères, un fléau pour le développement pacifique des Etats », Source: United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs-Integrated Regional Information Networks (IRIN), in <http://www.irinnews.org>, consulted 05 March 2007.

rebellion against that of Hisseine Habré was supported by the current Sudanese President Omar El Bashir. Today, supports to Sudanese rebel groups such as the Sudan Liberation Movement (SLM) to destabilize the regime in Khartoum was evidence.

It is, however, clear that rebellion is at the center of this arms trade. Nevertheless, nomadic herders often transformed into highway armed robbers, remain an important link in the commercial chain of arms. As far as the nomads themselves are concerned, their permanent mobility has on one hand, contributed to their involvement in these networks. In short, we should bear in mind that many groups were involved in arms trafficking in the area.⁶ But the case from Chad and Sudan rebels and nomadic herders were the most common.

The insecurity does not only lies on highway robbers, it is often very well organized and by Cameroonians and their foreign accomplices. This is the case of cattle theft. These flights are commonly at frontier markets like in Ngaoui, Kontcha Cameroon, Tongo and won in Nigeria. Despite the presence of different levels checkpoints, Cameroonians have become experts in livestock theft. They manage to circumvent these positions to liquidate their loot to their accomplices found in Nigerian, CAR, Gabon, Congo and to Equatorial Guinea.⁷ However, these thieves are often helped by the heads of sanitary checkpoints that allow these herds go through with more heads. Cameroon Customs is also indexed when we know that in the Faro and Déo, thousands of animals leaves Cameroon towards Nigeria under the eye of the customs, which collects 500 CFA per head of beef. How can we explain the large-scale flight when we best know that the movement of animals is rigorous in the country?⁸ This means that the transgression is supported and by customs and by the heads of sanitary checkpoints. Everybody blames the system, in which we can never define the contours.

The drovers (*duroobe ou wainaabe*) are also accused of being accomplices of the robbery. Threats of letters were also sent to the merchants and owners of oxen. We also have another category of herdsmen who often load two or more herds of cattle. These herders negotiate with border village chiefs to whom they give a few heads to pass the rest of the herd, flock which is conducted in the countries of origin of these cattle guards. All these malpractices are commonly as a result of poor border policy in Cameroon contrary to Nigeria who had developed its border areas (Saibou Issa, p.12). This explains why the fight against insecurity remains difficult in these areas partly because of the ease with which it circulates from one territory to another.

2.1 Economic activities in response to frontiers transgressions

⁶Interview with Mohamadou Ndjjobdi & Mohamadou Laminou, Ngaoundere, 16 February 2007.

⁷Interview with Mohamadou Laminou, Ngaoundere, 16 February 2007.

⁸ Interview with Mohamadou Ndjjobdi & Mohamadou Laminou.

Smuggling can be defined as an activity (agriculture, trade), any movement that smuggled across the border in margins of the country's standards. The laws on international trade require that we have a registration in the commercial register, which regulates its purchase and sales invoices and any person carrying shopping activities clears its products. Therefore, smuggling represents a potential threat to the State insofar as it constitutes an obstacle to sound economic policy. When analyzing the economic dynamics along the borders in Central Africa, one of the reports that smuggling is now part of the daily border area (A. Asiwaju, and P.O. Adeniyi, 1985, p.206). This situation is perfectly readable at the border between Chad and Cameroon, precisely between Ndjamena and Kousseri, Nigeria and Cameroon, and Cameroon with the Central African Republic out of many.

Indeed it developed throughout these border economic activities, involving smuggling in the most. Women, in particular, have developed ways and means to get around as much as possible customs and police barriers. These women buy products like flour, cooking oil, plates, spices, pieces of cloths, dates, sugar and even gold coins, they are fraudulently passing through the border sell on border markets with the example of Kousseri and NDjamena east or Banki and Amchide west (Djanabou Bakary, 2004, p.13).

During our research especially in the Adamawa Region Delegations, we were able to lay hands on relevant documents handling the phenomenon of economic activities in response to frontiers transgressions within the area under study. In respond to the interview conducted with the then Provincial Delegation of the Ministry of Livestock, Fishery and Animals Industry in Ngaoundere, he made use to understand that this phenomenon on the illegal movement of cattle within the Adamawa and in other northern parts of Cameroon follows an ethnic pattern for purpose of security. Equally, the normalised mode of living amongst the Mambilas (in Cameroon and Nigeria) and the Bororos found at the plains of east Nigeria and the Bayo cross section of the Adamawa Province are noted for that.⁹ One of the main reasons behind such illegal movement of cattle from north Cameroon to Nigeria is also as a result of high sale rate in their area of destination. Notwithstanding, the lack of commercial agreements between Nigeria and Cameroon especially during the Bakassi episode and the desire for the Cameroon government to protect this cattle species "Goudali"¹⁰ found in the Vina Division of the Adamawa Province has been at the forefront of the above phenomenon. On the other hand, the complicity of the various chiefs of

⁹ Interview with Tchouassi Wansi, 52, Provincial Delegate of the Ministry of Animals, Livestock and Fisheries, 16 February 2007.

¹⁰ 'Goudali' is said to have been the unique specie of cattle mostly found in the Adamawa Region.

centres (*centre zoo technique*) found in those major sanitary check points in the Adamawa Province has also contributed enormously in livestock trafficking in the said areas.

Still, in this domain, there is a good deal in this domain and in as frontier transgressions along the stations between Yagoua (Cameroon) and Bongor (Chad). On the other hand, the areas of Gambaru (Fare east Nigeria), the cross disputing territories of Darak (Cameroon) and its neighbouring villages in the north west of Kousseri (Fare north of Cameroon) coupled with the disputing areas of Bakassi and its surroundings, have been majors points of improper controls in the domains of incoming and outgoing goods. The zone of Ebebiyin and Eboro (Equatorial Guinea and Gabon respectively) had also been possible areas of customs violations and illegal business transactions in Central Africa. Karine Bennafla after her logical explanations on cross frontiers affairs in Central Africa did well to provide the map of Cameroon with references on those poles of possible frontiers commercial transgressions (Bennafla, p.24).

Related information was also collected at the delegation of the environment and nature protection. The chief of provincial service of forestry of Adamawa (Makaki Moise) advocated that, patching and deforestation are illegal activities dominated by the Chadian and the Central African nationalists. Some of which reside to unknown and hidden zones predominantly in the Fare North Province of Cameroon. However, we could not gain any statistics on the whole show for he said they are still isolated.¹¹ He also made us to understand that the exploitation of woods and animals are mostly done in the localities of Tiguère, Koutcha, and Kousseri among others. Due to poor legislations, the Cameroon government had done little such as putting in place forest guards in the abovementioned areas so as to stop these illegal acts.

The consequence of this contraband is ephemeral radiation border markets. Indeed in many cases, these markets have experienced a temporary breakdown but later took off. Just to be convinced to see attractive commercial places yesterday and abandoned the next day. Cases such as the market of Ngaoui, overshadowed by Mbaiboum (in the Cameroon/Chad and CAR), Kerawa succeeded by Banki in the northern borders between Cameroon and Nigerian, and Abang Minko'o overthrow by Kye Ossi in the Cameroon/ Gabon and Guinea region (Benafla, 2001, p.41). In the same vein, the market of Badadji, located in the district of Figuil (North Cameroon), near the border with Nigeria, has declined precisely because of foreign influences (Oumarou Kaoudam, p.22). However, it is still important to stress that people in border areas often ignore borders barriers because they are made permeable by ethnic solidarity binding the peoples of both sides of the border.

2.2 Socio-Cultural Features of Frontiers Transgressions

¹¹ Interview with Makaki Moise, 47, Provincial Chief of Forestry in Adamawa, Ngaoundere, 19 February 2007.

Social factors such as cross border prostitution is a common phenomenon in this region which remain an informal industry. In Central Africa, men and women come and go at will from one country to another engaged in this lucrative business. One wonders if the cross-border prostitution is a simple fashion or it is as a result of the deteriorating living standards in the Central Africa countries. Today, the situation is common with the advent of homosexuality, paedophilia, bestiality or lesbianism. The young the old and children have become fond of sex and new sensations. This attraction for sex is so strong that one and the other do not hesitate to brave the border barriers and to initiate various strategies to get around the various police and customs posts (H. Minché, H. Yambété et Y. Zoa Zoa, 2005, p.14). Since prostitution is informal and directly addresses the privacy of the individual, personal observations and everyday realities were our main sources of information.

It should be noted that, women in Africa were most often free from search. This is because it was estimated that they were innocent and therefore cannot have “bad intentions”. Even when they are arrested by border control officers, they claimed to visit a relative on the other side of the border. This existence of people having relatives on both sides of the frontiers has facilitated cross-border prostitution. No satisfactory answers are given at times by these women when questioned by control agents since they are prostitutes, make it soft eyes. Their voices are so beguiling and dissuasive. Most screeners are caught in this trap and leave through the women actresses’ in the sex trade (Minché et al., p.15). By default, they have to enjoy their free of their charm and voila. All happy, the agent has no more strength. This leads them to lose control of vaccination cards or passports from the women.

Prostitution is clearly recognisable as a high-risk occupation not only in Africa but the world over. There are risks of violence, arrest, and conventional sexually transmitted diseases across the African borderlands. The spread of AIDS has added a new dimension to the situation as an incurable, fatal disease spread by the activity in which prostitutes from neighbouring countries such as; Nigerian Ibo girls with those of Central African Republic, Chadian and Cameroonians are all specialised on. The case study of Ngaoundere is pragmatic in public and busy areas such as Balagi I and II where business starts as earlier as 9 PM to end at about 5:30 PM in the morning. While on the field, we took the risk to question some prostitutes who claimed to be Cameroonians but with no legal prove. Some merely said, “I came to Ngaoundere in search of money and that they cannot stop going to bed with men because that is the only way they can earn a living” (bar girls in groups of two or three).¹²

¹² Personal field observations in the Ngaoundere commercial avenues, December 2006.

The observation of the illegal immigration flow shows the involvement of women despite the negative effects of these movements. Most of these women, says they are widows, unwed mothers and shopping. In addition to cross-border trade which they engage covertly, these women do other activities such as catering, sewing, or child care in the border area. While in Ngaoundere during our investigations, we were fortunate to meet Ndoula Josué a Cameroonian missionary working at Ndanga. In the course of our discussion, he told us about a communion life he had with a Central African migrant who says she was pushed by her parents because of her attractive forms to come to Garoua-Boulai and make the sex trade to the benefit of the whole family.¹³ And as the journey was at night, this girl was stopped from the car and taken to a hidden place where she was raped by the police. These words reveal not only the probabilities of rape on the part of public officials and other illegal acts, but also the involvement of migrants themselves in sexual exploitation networks. Some of our informants put also in close relationship with the migration of foreign amplification of prostitution in cities like Mbaimboum, Ngaoundere and Garoua-Boulai where intense sexual activity is practiced. The feminization of illegal migration, written by H. Minche, H. Yambéné, and Y. Zoa Zoa is a contribution in new form of sexual slavery through trafficking of women in prostitution and homosexuality (Minché et al., p.14). The entry of women into the illegal migration is not irrelevant because it increases the risk of infection and unwanted pregnancies due to rape and prostitution in which they are engaged.

Still in line with social crimes, during our research, we came across some statistics about foreign prisoners and their crimes in the Adamawa central prison. In the Adamawa Region, we have one centre prison in Ngaoundere and four secondary prisons in Banyo, Tigueré, Tibati and Meiganga. In the central prison, we had 19 prisoners already judged with sentences varying from 06 to 20 years imprisonment. A total number of 14 Chadians and Central Africans were still in detention. On the other hand, 20 prisoners out of the 611 were detained in the Ngaoundere central prison for clandestine movement and burglary. In Banyo, we had 14/122 for illegal immigration. In Tigueré, 02/63 prisoners, Tibati 01/107 prisoner for prostitution. Finally, Meiganga had 17/158 prisoners for similar cases. In total, we have 67/1061 prisoners in the Adamawa Region with a percentage of 06.31% with a situation of 61.19% resulting from illegal immigration.¹⁴

2.3 Consequences and attempted solutions on frontiers transgressions in Central Africa

In view of the above, we can say that this phenomenon raises enormous problems from the political, economic, social and humanitarian point of view. Besides that, some steps and proposed solutions were taken to cave out these illegal activities amongst the countries concerned.

¹³ Interview with, Ndoula Josué, Cameroonian Missionary in Central African Republic, 7 February 2007, Ngaoundéré.

¹⁴ Statistics obtained in the central prison of Ngaoundere 16 February 2007.

At the political level, the massive proliferation of weapons contributes significantly to the political instability of African states in general. It is becoming increasingly easy to acquire weapons to fight an existing regime. The case of Ndjamena and Khartoum is an illustration because we are witnessing endless conflicts on both sides. In the economic domain, indeed, the economy of these states is plagued by the rampant insecurity that blocks the various economic activities and movements of businessmen. Similarly, the so-called unstable countries escape the attraction of foreign investors, especially around the Lake Chad region. At the social and humanitarian level, people who find themselves trapped in different conflicts are sometimes transformed into target populations. This explains their movements to safety zones. From their own country's citizens, they are now refugees who live in extreme poverty with lack of amenities such as water mask, sometimes without shelter, risk of epidemics, famines to name but these.

In line with the above consequence, some measures especially by the government of Cameroon were put in place to combat such illegal business.

At the level of livestock traffic and smuggled goods, certain measures had been put in place by the Cameroon government in association with her various ministries and trading partner though still with some difficulties. Some sanitary barriers coupled with major check points were put in place so as to avoid the incorporation of cattle as well as to secure the animals health. In the Adamawa Region, some of these sanitary check points are in two categories that are, A and B. Category A had five stations which are; Mbé, Bankim and the Ngaoundere station. Category B comprises the following two stations; Sadeck and Boudjournkoura. Apart from the above measures, the marking of certain animal species such as those found in Ngaoundere "Goudali" had been a primordial concern before their departures to any area most probably for sale.¹⁵

Besides the above measures, the PACE (*Programme Panafricain de Lutte Contre les Epizoties*) was created in 2002 in Africa but came to be in Cameroon 3 years later. This project has as a common objective to eradicate animal diseases or its transmission to human beings. As a result of the PPTTE or HIPC forum, a small development daily project was created in 2005 under the initiative of some learned Bororos women of the then North West Province. However, this initiative eventually came into Adamawa in 2006. The aim of this association is to assist cattle rarer in milk production and transformation in brief fighting against the exploitation of milk.¹⁶

In fact, let the Central African States leaders had embarked on social investments so as to secure the wellbeing of the population frequently attacked. The involvement of patrol helicopters, gunships on a permanent standby basis on the cross section of the frontiers more frequently

¹⁵ Interview with Tchouassi Wansi.

¹⁶ Interview with Tchouassi Wansi.

violated by the immigrants (J. Boute, 1998, pp.39-40). It should be necessary to establish an efficient and reliable radio transmission net work system as well as the intensification of information gathering which could help our defence forces to act promptly. The harmonization of our legal systems with neighbouring countries on the issue should be vital. The sensitization of the Lamidos as well as Sultans on the risk of masterminding waves of banditry or supporting with perpetrators coupled with permanent escorts and dissuasive highway patrols by specialized units in notorious and dangerous areas are aspects to take into considerations. Last but not the least, the creation of frontier posts directly at the frontier rather than far into the hinterland so that members' countries should not constantly lose their frontiers is necessary. However, if few of the above suggestions are put in place, frontiers transgression will be reduced at a high-level scale in Central Africa in particular, and Africa in general.

3. Conclusion

All in all, the frontiers in Central Africa are constantly transgressed and violated due to several factors. These contribute to highlight their decay and gradually lead to what Karine Benafla calls "the end of the nation-state". The most striking aspect, in this case, is probably the road cutters. Their ability to travel, the resources available to them and the more or less supports they gained from traditional and administrative authorities particularly in Cameroon, makes them the masters of frontier transgression. It is hoped that trans-state and, above all, trans-traditional co-operation will reduce the scale of this phenomenon, which negatively affects people's consciences. Parallel to this phenomenon, the magnitude of commercial activities beyond state borders highlights the danger that this type of uncontrolled trade may have on the political fate of states in Central Africa. At this level, all the States considered in this work undergo little or uncontrolled entry of goods into their countries, even if Nigeria, because of its technological and demographic pre-eminence, seems to dictate the situation. In recent years there have been particular forms of "intellectual and identity trafficking" which have not yet reached the seriousness of the phenomena mentioned above, but the scale in the future could considerably influence the future of States. Policies would, therefore, be better off trying to curb or control these various attacks on border integrity, all the more so because very often border violations are sustained by the laxity or tacit complicity of the agents in charge of controlling these flows. Ultimately, the fight against the illegal acts would first of all pass through Central Africa States via the consciousness of the local population and forces responsible for managing the different traffics. This explains why the recent phenomenon of *Boko Haram* insurgent was inevitable partly due to the laxity by the States concerned in the control of our frontiers.

References

- Adejuyigbe O. (1989), *Identification and Characteristics of Borderlands in Africa*, University of Lagos Press, Nigeria.
- Ajomo M.A. (1989), *Legal perspective on Border issues, in Borderlands in Africa*, University of Lagos press.
- Asiwaju A, & Adeniyi P.O (eds) (1985), *Borderlands_in_Africa*, V.L.D., Lagos.
- Benaffla Karine (1999), «La fin des territoires Nationaux : Etat et Commerce frontalière en Afrique Central», *Politique Africaine* n°73.
- Boilley P., *Le découpage de l'Afrique' in Les frontières en Afrique.*
- Boute Joseph (1998), *La violence Ordinaire dans les villes Subsahariennes in Violences Urbaines au Sud du Sahara*, Cahier de L'UCAC, Yaoundé.
- Coquery-Vidrovitch Catherine (1999), *Histoire et perception des frontières en Afrique du XII au XX siècle.*
- Djanabou Bakary (2004), «La Contrebande Féminine des Marchandises entre Banki (Nigéria) et Maroua (Cameroun) », Licence, Université de Ngaoundéré.
- KOUBAROU n° 58 du 1^{er} au 25 avril 2006.
- Lambert A. (1998), «Espaces d'échanges d'Etat en Afrique de l'Ouest», *Autrepart*, n° 6, éd. De l'Aube.
- Minché H., Yambété H., & Zoa Zoa Y.(2005), «La Féminisation de la Migration Clandestine en Afrique noire», mobilité au féminin, Tanger.
- Nintai Daniel B. (1999), “The “Raison D'être” of a National Identity Card in Cameroon”, in *Cameroon Tribune*, Tuesday, 04 May.
- Nkwi Nchoji Paul (1987), *Traditional Diplomacy: A Study of Inter-Chiefdom Relations in the Western Grassfields*, Yaounde: SOPECAM.
- Oumarou Kaoudam (2004), «Les relations transfrontalières dans l'arrondissement de Figuil (Nord Cameroun): les cas du marché de Badadji », Licence, Université de Ngaoundéré.
- Saïbou Issa (2004), «L'embuscade sur les routes des abords sud du Lac Tchad», in *Politique africaine*, n° 94, juin.
- UNESCO, Org/images/ 0013/001391/139147 e. PDF, consulted 28 December 2006.
- United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs-Integrated Regional Information Networks (IRIN), «*Afrique centrale et de l'est: Les armes légères, un fléau pour le Développement pacifique des Etats*», in <http://www.irinnews.org>, consulted, 05 March 2007.