

## A Review of the Human Trafficking and the Opening up of Borders in Africa

By

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### Abstract

Africa Continental Free Trade Area is meant to enhance interdependence, connectivity, and integration on a global level and leads to increased economic prosperity and opportunities in emerging economies. However, its benefits are not without faults. The shortcomings include human trafficking and drug trafficking. Based on desktop research, this paper examines the relationship between the opening of borders in Africa and human trafficking. Meanwhile, Africa is heading for a continental free trade area; the world's most shameful crimes of trade in humans persist. The inhumane trade in human robs vulnerable and jobless Africans of their dignity while they strive to make ends meet. Opening of borders and the porousness of the frontiers complicates mechanism for combating crimes related to human trafficking. As well, lack of political will compounds the problem of regulating the crimes. This paper offers recommendations to combat the problems of human trafficking while maintaining the Africa Continental Free Trade Area.

**Keywords:** Human Trafficking, Opening up of Borders, Africa Continental Free Trade Area

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## BACKGROUND

Historically, Africa before becoming into contact with the western world was borderless, people were freely moving from one area to another with little or no cases of human trafficking. The majority of the African countries lived under the concept of 'Ubuntu', a belief that 'I am because you are' and vice versa. This general belief made Africa to some extent a safe place to live and do the butter system freely. With the concept of globalization where the world must live without borders, Africa at large is moving towards a united continent in trade in many capacities through the Africa Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA).

The world has been moving into a direction of borderless and to a point at which no one is restricted in carrying out any form of trade in any country. Nevertheless, this has come with a lot of inhuman trading systems which then affects the masses especially the vulnerable members of the community. The vulnerable members in many communities are prone to issues of trafficking and find themselves being sold. Human trafficking involves not only the national movement of persons from one region to another but also the transnational movement of persons, and such movement of people has brought about one important related area of debate in the migration policies globally, making the issue of human trafficking a major international discussion and concern. Using the desktop research, the author describes the complex interrelationship between the opening up of borders and trafficking in persons, smuggling of migrants, and migration flows. Due to border control in most countries, it has shown an increase in the number of people entering states without legal documents. An unintended consequence of efforts directed principally at illegal migration can be the non-identification and victimization of trafficked persons (UN, 2008).

Focusing on Sub-Saharan Africa, the issues of human trafficking have been deep-rooted primarily in the deteriorating economic situations of many countries. Largely, the continuous increasing rural poverty forces poor families to offer their children to traffickers, under the pretext of providing them the chance to secure good jobs and better lives (Dottridge, 2002). Furthermore, challenges of increasing unemployment, family breakups as a result of death or divorce, failed African households/societies/communities as they try to westernize and abandoned AIDS-orphaned children, make young people at risk of traffickers (ILO, 2003; Moore, 1994).

Also, the underlying causes of human trafficking in Africa are complex and often interrelated. These could include but not limited to poverty, weak governance, armed conflict or lack of effective protection against discrimination and exploitation are some examples (IOM, 2011). Generally, the causes highlight the "push factors" – on the so-called "supply-side" – and tend to neglect the demand dimension of the problem. However, "pull factors" on the demand side are of equal salience for effective counteractive measures against trafficking in women and children (UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre, 2005).

## Methodology

This write up was based entirely on secondary sources of information. These included published materials such as books, articles and seminar papers, and unpublished documents (reports). This paper aimed at reviewing human trafficking and its implications on the opening up of borders in Africa, with firstly, reviewing literature on conceptual

understanding of human trafficking, secondly, a review on Africa Continental Free Trade Area, Governance systems around Human trafficking, human trafficking on opening up of the borders, and finally, a review was done on implications of opening up of the borders on human trafficking.

### **Understanding Human Trafficking**

Martin and Miller (2000) opine that human trafficking is modern-day slavery because trafficked victims are subjected to fraud, force, or coercion to sexually exploit them or forced labor. In expressing their views on the definition of trafficking in persons, Martin and Miller argued that trafficking is smuggling plus coercion or exploitation, for example, when a woman agrees to be taken unlawfully across the border to be hostesses and end up being a prostitute, or migrant worker in slave or indentured conditions to repay smuggling fess. This is the most common process of human trafficking in the current era of globalization. Less developed countries are facing this problem differently and impacts are destructive because even when the victims are brought back to their societies, the copying up strategies are not conducive to some extent.

Human trafficking is profoundly defined as the recruitment, transportation, harboring, or receipt of persons either by use of abduction, force, fraud, deception or coercion, by the giving or receiving of unlawful payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person for the purpose of exploitation. Human trafficking largely is not only associated with acts of a threat and other forms of coercion but also issues of fraud, and abduction (UNODC, 2006) the abuse of power or position as well as the exploitation of prostitutes (Martin and Miller, 2000).

Furthermore, the US Department of Health and Human Services, in this regard defined human trafficking as the fastest-growing criminal industry in the world, and indicated that the practice of human trafficking is among the illegal enterprises known in the world today as it is the second only to drug dealing (USSD, 2004). Scholars have, however, argued that the openness of the world into a global village without strict measures that can help ensure effective implementation of human trafficking regulations is a big cause of this act. The writer sees nothing wrong with globalization and the world moving being regarded as one but lack of political will in most countries.

Furthermore, the concept of human trafficking inflows in a country refers to the extent of abuse and exploitation that a country tolerates against the citizens who have illegal standing in the country. Human trafficking is also considered and defined as an abysmal abuse and violence against the vulnerable members of societies, with whom majority are the foreign women (Dutch National Rapporteur 2010; German Federal Criminal Police Office 2008; UNODC, 2006). Human trafficking is defined as the extreme form of human exploitation for forced labor, slavery, prostitution, debt bondage, or want of human organs, the means used in trafficking are abduction, coercion, deception, and threats. Trafficking of people as a crime includes all phases of trafficking for example; recruitment, shipping, allocation, and harboring of persons (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2006). For instance, showing how profitable this crime is, the UNODC in 2006 argued that trafficking in humans generates billions of dollars as people are sent to work in prostitution, pornographic industry, sweatshops, construction, housekeeping, agriculture, and restaurants around the world. This

research attention to decision-makers seeking to make global migration more humane to know about the dynamics and processes of human trafficking and how to combat it.

Scholars have further argued that human traffickers generally prey on members of the society who may not only be poor but also isolated and weak. The following challenges are the most implicating issues especially that the members of the society are victims of these issues; disempowerment, social exclusion, and economic vulnerability and these are the results of policies and practices that marginalize entire groups of such people and make them particularly vulnerable to being trafficked. Natural disasters, conflict, and political turmoil weaken already tenuous social protection measures. Women, youths, children and disadvantaged people are vulnerable to trafficking not only due to conditions in their countries or societies of origin, however but also because of the pulling factors in the destination states and or societies. The fruits of globalization like the continental free trade area in Africa creates the allure of opportunity, the relentless demand for inexpensive goods and services and the expectation of reliable income drive people into potentially dangerous situations where they are at risk of being exploited (UN, 2008).

In essence, Victims of human trafficking represent a range of backgrounds in terms of age, nationality, socioeconomic status, and education, but one characteristic that they usually share is some form of vulnerability. They are often isolated from their families and social networks. In some cases, victims are separated from their country of origin, native language, and culture. Victims who are undocumented immigrants often do not report abuses to the authorities out of distrust of law enforcement, and/or fear of arrest, injury to family members, deportation, or other serious reprisals. Many domestic victims of sex trafficking are underage runaways and/or come from backgrounds of sexual and physical abuse, incest, poverty, or addiction (Bweembelo, 2016).

### **Discourse around Human Trafficking vis-a-vis Human Smuggling**

A comparable concept to human trafficking is human smuggling. The two concepts are similar and many scholars have tended to use them interchangeably because smuggling places people in situations of vulnerability that can trigger a trafficking process. The difference, however, lies in the fact that the latter violates the laws of the State that is illegally entered, while the former violates the human rights of a person for personal gain. Human smuggling is characterized by:

- The facilitation of illegal entry of a person to another country.
- The creation or supply of a false identity document or passport.
- The authorization, by illegal means, of the permanent stay of a non-national or non-resident (Apap et al 2002).

On the contrary, Weitzer (2014) indicates that there are three elements that must be met for an activity to be characterized as human trafficking:

- The action: That is, the crime carried out by organized networks, where it is evident that actions were taken with the intention of facilitating the exploitation of another person, such as capturing, sending or receiving them.
- The means: The means is how the criminals manage to carry out the trafficking, for example, through deceit and lies, force, violence, abuse of the other person's

vulnerability, etc.

- Exploitation: In itself, the abuse of another person for the benefit of a third party.

In the case of smuggling, the commodity at stake is the illegal entry into a country, and it is exchanged between a smuggler and a prospective smuggled individual. In the case of trafficking, the commodity at stake is control over a human being (Campana and Varese, 2015). In some instances this commodity is exchanged between a trafficker and a third party, e.g. the family of the victim; in other cases it is acquired by traffickers by means of abduction or near-abduction (i.e. gross deception). If a trafficking operation is transnational, it may then involve the crossing of one or more borders illegally. However, illegal entry into a country is not a constitutive element of trafficking but rather an ancillary one. It is the unlawful right to exert control over a person that is exchanged in the first place, not the illegal crossing of a border. A person can be trafficked and yet enter a country legally (campana, 2020).

The type of offence involved also differs between smuggling and trafficking. The former is primarily an offence against the state. When everything goes well between smuggler and smuggled person, the only victim is the state – its borders have been violated as well as its right to exercise control over a given territory. Trafficking, on the other hand, is primarily an offence against a person. A state may see its sovereignty as being violated but the primary victim remains the person who was deprived of his/her freedom and rights (Salt, 2002).

Finally, smuggling and trafficking differ in regard to the level of agency of the migrant. In the case of smuggling, the migrant has agency: he/she can collect information and make a choice, most crucially about which smuggling organisation is the best to pick in order to achieve the desired outcome, given the amount of money he/she is willing/able to pay. The choice may be between unattractive alternatives, but it is still a choice. In the case of trafficking, agency is non-existent by definition: either a third party sells the victim to the traffickers or the victim starts off making a choice and then his/her freedom is taken away (Campana and Varese, 2015).

Trafficking may sometimes involve an element of smuggling, particularly when it uses the same routes, forged documentation and organizational networks as the smugglers. Further, those who are being smuggled frequently have little idea of the degree and nature of exploitation that awaits them. Consequently, it may in certain circumstances be more appropriate to use the term “trafficking” generally to include the term “smuggling”, leaving “abusive exploitation” to describe those employment conditions that contravene human rights and are usually illegal. (Weitzer (2014).

Ronald Weitzer(2014), notes that smuggling requires the actor’s (victim) consent and participation in the migration process, whereas trafficking is characterized by the abuse of power or a position of vulnerability and at least some deception or coercion is involved in the recruitment and/or labor process. The distinction is, however, blurred as- for example, where smuggling involves vulnerability and exploitation but not deception (Skilbrei and Tveit 2008).

Some empirical studies, conducted in different parts of the world, have shown that the distinction between smuggling, trafficking and other forms of population movements has

become blurred. Skeldon (2001), with a perspective from Asia, shows that violence, coercion and exploitation are as much an integral part of smuggling as they are of trafficking.

Graycar (2002) is of the view that smuggling and trafficking are part of a continuum. He submits that smuggling focuses on the manner a person enters a country, and with the involvement of third parties who assist them to achieve entry. Trafficking is a more complicated concept, in that it requires consideration not only of the manner in which a migrant entered the country but also their working conditions and treatment after entry and whether the migrant consented to the irregular entry and/or these working conditions. It is frequently difficult to establish whether there were elements of deception and/or coercion, and whether these were sufficient to elevate the situation from one of voluntary undocumented migration to trafficking. (Adam Graycar 2002 in Apap et al, 2002).

Human trafficking in persons is an issue that is both domestic and global. For instance, human trafficking is the world's fastest-growing criminal enterprise, valued to be an estimated \$32 billion-a-year global industry. Largely, literature has indicated that human trafficking is the second most profitable criminal enterprise to drug trafficking, a status it shares with illegal arms trafficking (DOJ, 2016). Trafficking is known to be the primary source of labor supply for prostitution, domestic work, construction, sweatshop labor, and street begging. But coming out with an accurate number of people traffic is a daunting task, making the UN Office on drugs concluding that coming out with a statistical goal will forever remain a mirage (UNODC, 2006).

Nevertheless, there is a general agreement among many activities, government officials, and some scholars that human trafficking has reached epic levels worldwide. The United states government proclaimed in 2002 that as many as four million people worldwide were bought, sold, transported and held against their will in slave like conditions. In 2005, the ILO declared that 2.45 million persons were engaged in forced labor as a result of trafficking, which jumped to 9.1 million in 2012 (Weitzer, 2014). It estimated that around 94% of the women trafficked to Europe for the purposes of sexual exploitation, house workers, cleaners to mention but a few are from the Edo State of Nigeria while the remaining are from Delta, Kano, and the Borno States. It is also worth noting that majority of the women trafficked from Nigeria are sent to different destinations in Europe including but not limited to (Italy, Spain, France); West Africa (Benin, Côte-d'Ivoire); Central Africa (Gabon, Cameroon), and the Middle East (Saudi Arabia) (UNODC, 2006).

Smuggling is a risky activity and migrants often undergo very hazardous journeys which sometimes result in tragedies occurring (Salt, 2002). According to the Missing Migrant Project of the International Organization for Migration (IOM), at least 3,318 migrants lost their lives worldwide in 2019. Since the records began in 2014, a total of at least 34,477 migrant fatalities have been recorded by IOM, with 2016 being the deadliest (8,070 fatalities). The yearly average between 2014 and 2019 was 5,746. The Mediterranean route constantly ranks as the deadliest; it accounted for 64 percent of all fatalities in 2016. This is likely the result of both heightened risk due to the sea crossing, and improved data collection. The number of deaths recorded by IOM at the US-Mexico border was 2,336 from 2014 to 2019, with a yearly average of 389 (442 in 2018, the deadliest year on record) (Paolo campana, 2020).



### **Human Trafficking and Moral Dilemmas: Need for concerted efforts**

Policies to tackle smuggling pose moral dilemmas. They often imply difficult trade-offs between protecting the right of a state to control the movement of people across its borders and curbing illegal markets while at the same time protecting the lives and welfare of migrants and individual rights to seek asylum. Rescue operations at sea are likely to reduce mortality rates while increasing the number of individuals crossing and the size of the smuggling markets, ultimately increasing the profit for smugglers (Amenta, Di Betta, and Ferrara 2016). Heightened border controls are likely to increase apprehension rates but also to exacerbate dangers and risks faced by migrants (Slack and Martinez 2018, p. 171). More patrolling will increase prices paid by migrants but decrease the quality of the smuggling services rendered.

Slack and Martinez (2018) observed that smugglers in Mexico were less willing to walk with migrants for fear of arrest and harsh penalties and, as a consequence, that migrants were more likely to get lost and die while crossing treacherous areas. Similarly, smugglers operating across the Mediterranean responded to the increased likelihood of detection and conviction by not boarding the boats and training migrants how to make the voyage on their own (Optimity Advisors 2015). Stopping treacherous crossings across the desert or the Mediterranean may involve restricting the right of people to move on land, as in Niger, or people's rights to make asylum claims in a safe country (campana, 2020).

The international community has become conscious of the need to act multilaterally to combat trafficking. Thus, in December 2000, the United Nations Convention on Transnational Organized Crime and its supplementary protocols were drawn up for signing at Palermo, Italy (Luda, 2003).

The United Nations (2007) rather took a broader view and argued that human trafficking affects us all, whether one lives in countries of origin, transit, or destination. Preventing and combating it requires a comprehensive approach. The world must act together to stop a crime in our midst that deprives countless victims of their liberty, dignity, and human rights. Human trafficking is a crime against individuals and its consequences are most directly felt by those who are its victims. Generally, despite human trafficking being a global phenomenon with no international borders, the far reaching and pervasive consequences are felt within individual countries and societies. More than 130 countries are affected by human trafficking. Some of the most notable social, political, and economic impacts of human trafficking are identified, as also important policy considerations in each of those areas (UN, 2008). Nevertheless, the challenge still persists despite the sound and robust policies aimed at eliminating the act, and this leads us to a question of whether countries are rightfully implementing these policies or they simply lack political will.

### **Africa Continental Free Trade Area**

Generally, AfCTA aims at enhancing integration in Africa, a continent rich in natural resources. The Africa Development Bank (2019) argued that to generate growth and prosperity, African countries must fling open their markets beyond their national boundaries to stimulate and increase regional, continental, and global trade. The relationship between integration and growth encourages connectivity, trade, industrialization, and the free movement of people, among others, as key economic factors. For instance, cross-border

infrastructure connectivity enables economic growth and is a catalyst for integration. Furthermore, effective and efficient infrastructural connectivity has the potential of not only boosting trade and investments, permitting the free movement of people, goods, and services but also reduces cross-border costs by increasing access to internet services such as mobile phone technology. African countries in this regard, especially small or landlocked countries, have much to gain from effective and efficient infrastructure connectivity as it boosts economic growth. This paper, rather argues that despite the benefits of integration in the continent, Africa still lacks effective measures in combating challenges that come with the opening up of borders. The actors of human trafficking equally have been benefiting from integration as they gain access to countries that were once closed up and exploit the vulnerable people who are in dire need of opportunities for survival. In as much as integration is good, it is leading to an increase in the cases of human trafficking.

Furthermore, ADB (2019) argued that Africa is one of the fastest-growing consumer markets in the world. In the same line, Africa's consumer expenditure has been growing at a compound annual rate of 3.9% since 2010. This market is expected to reach \$2.1 trillion by 2025 and \$2.5 trillion by 2030. This, however, is a clear indication of the many opportunities that are opening up in Africa especially for foreign direct investors. This comes with the aspects of the bourgeoisie and proletariat, where the bourgeoisie find themselves funding activities of trafficking as they have the financial power. The proletariats as the earners in this context are mostly used as traffickers. The Africa Development Bank (ADB) is of the view that the implementation of the AfCFTA will help to create a single continental market for goods and services and an estimated potential market of 1.7 billion people. The vast majority of consumer spending on the African continent currently takes place in informal, roadside markets, even in those countries with well-developed retail and distribution markets. By 2030, the largest consumer markets will include Nigeria, Egypt, and South Africa while lucrative opportunities will prevail in Algeria, Angola, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Morocco, Sudan, Tunisia, and Tanzania, among other African countries. These countries currently have the highest numbers of human trafficking cases (Signe, 2018).

ADB (2016) argued and urged countries across the African continent to consider free visa policy to enhance integration in Africa. Visa openness in the views of the ADB and the African Union Commission is about facilitating free movement of people. It is about getting more people mobile, to carry out their business easily, spontaneously, quickly, with minimum cost. That applies whether you are a businessman or woman, a student or researcher, a cross-border trader or entrepreneur, reuniting with friends and family, or just travelling traveling to visit the sights (ADB, 2016). On the other hand, the African Union does not have a body or effective policies to combat the human trafficking cases, and even regional economic blocks and countries themselves, might have policies but lacking the political will ineffective in implementation. Some scholars have largely, argued that law enforcers like government officials are the trafficking actors and benefiting from the inhuman acts. It is, therefore, necessary that African countries and regional blocks in implementing the AU's development visions should also protect the rights of the most vulnerable individuals who fall prey to human trafficking. This requires having a political will in eliminating human trafficking by not only creating opportunities for employment, business, trade but also coming up with effective and efficient protective rights.



## **Governance Systems around Human Trafficking**

Human trafficking amidst the opening up of borders globally has been recognized as one of the criminal acts that are so inhuman and it involves a complex of actors. The complexity of actors, challenges of finances in some regions, and lack of political will are the major stumbling blocks to the successful elimination of human trafficking globally. The international community, in its effort to eradicate human trafficking the UN came out with the Palermo Protocol where about 117 countries supported the protocol (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), 2009). The Palermo Protocol became the game-changer in the incidences of trafficking across the globe as it clearly indicated that perpetrators of trafficking in persons be punished, and also called for states to offer the highest protection to victims (Hepburn and Simon, 2012). Rather, the challenge is not about lack of directive policies to this effect but on the implementation of these policies by all the involved key stakeholders especially the government who are the sole protector of the victims. The United States also followed the UN example, and in 2001, it came out with a law that established an office that was solely dedicated to fighting human trafficking.

Most importantly, in this era every country in the world today is contending with the issue of human trafficking due to the world shrinking or condensing and evolving towards a global village/community where the problems of one country directly or indirectly affects the other. The condensing of the world highly attributed to globalization has made human trafficking become a lucrative business and a fast-growing criminal activity as persons can now be trafficked from one country to other or worse off from one region to another. Literature has argued that countries like Ethiopia and Nigeria in Africa have to some extent been the primary suppliers of child labour across the continent. For example, Okojie (2003), argued that over 100 girls with ages ranging from 10 to 15 years are smuggled from Nigeria through Togo to Europe and other parts of the world every year. There are as many as 1,888 -2,500 minors working as street prostitutes in Italy.

The principal responses by Governments to trafficking in persons since the adoption in November 2000 of the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children have largely been focused on and ending on policies and less implementation. The main focus of states has been on detecting and prosecuting traffickers, identifying, protecting, and assisting people who have already been trafficked and initiating action to prevent people from being trafficked in the first place. However, this paper argues that Africa still lacks a lot in as far as eliminating human trafficking is concerned.

## **Human Trafficking on Opening of Borders**

Africa Continental Free Trade Area is meant to create and expand trade opportunities in Africa mainly by opening up borders to allow the free movement of persons, goods, services, and products across the continent. This, however, does not only bring positives to the continents as perpetuated. In this regard, it is important to understand who benefits in this AFCTA? Literature indicates that opening up of borders will strongly support the productive sectors in the continent and it will also bring challenges to the most vulnerable individuals as they strongly stand a chance of being victims of trafficking in search of opportunities.

The literature on human trafficking shows several factors leading to this act amongst which are: corruption and socio-economic deprivation as the most important factors that contribute

positively to increasing human trafficking. In this regard, economic globalization which argues for the world being a global village facilitates human traffickers to transfer the victim from one country to another (Jones et al., 2007). The traffickers bribe public officers who assist them in crossing borders and conducting illegal activities. The integration of countries has also the integrated networking of human traffickers and socio-economic problems of people. As a result, integration of countries globally has made poor countries more vulnerable to this evil act due to the enormous pulling factors like employment opportunities (Hoque, 2010).

Nevertheless, it is important to note that migration, whether regulated or illicit, voluntary, or involuntary, has become a global phenomenon and labor motivated migration from developing countries to developed countries is a growing trend. Whilst migration is often needed and desirable, both for those who seek workers and for those who seek work, opening up of borders without regulative frameworks has not only generated but also expand the business of human trafficking. Illicit and unsupervised migration nevertheless, have become a serious global challenge, and this has exposed workers (job seekers) or opportunity seekers more vulnerable and allowing criminal groups to exploit such peoples' vulnerabilities. Labour exploitation during the recruitment process and work placement are often made possible because businesses close their eyes to abuses that happen within their supply chains (ILO, 2018).

One of the avenues of combating human trafficking and forced labor is to compel companies to adhere to standards ensuring human rights in their activities. The supply chains of labor and products globally or continentally are essential to the production of products, but also may facilitate human trafficking and forced labor if transparency is lacking (ILO, 2018).

The process of globalization and economic reform in developing countries has created job losses through the disappearance of public sector employment, the decline of traditional industries, and the loss of agricultural competitiveness (Patrick et al., 2003). Besides, natural disasters, political turmoil, religious persecution, and war have led to increased pressure (Taran & Chammartin, 2004). Thus, harsh living conditions within the countries of origin compound traditional migration factors such as changing demographics and technological advances that allow for easier communication and travel (Lori & Nessel, 2001). As long as great economic disparities continue to exist between developed and developing countries, people from the developing world will continue to be "pushed" into migration for various known factors. Largely, these disparities in the two worlds play a key role in pulling the vulnerable members of societies in developing world in search of opportunities. The demand for cheap, low-skilled labor draws people to jobs within the agriculture, food processing, construction, semi-skilled or unskilled manufacturing jobs, and low-wage services like domestic work, home health care, and the sex sector (Taran & Chammartin, 2004).

Free trade area an-aspect of globalization has been argued to be one of the avenues for human trafficking as it provides the free movements of the perpetrators and abuse of the vulnerable individuals in developing communities. Globalization has largely, brought about access to technology and abuse of technology by the traffickers. As a result of the underground nature of traffickers trade across the globe, they often manage to stay one step ahead of law enforcement due to technology advancement and most scholars have argued that this is a

result of abuse of the ICTs (Strom, 2017). In this regard, the benefits of globalization as much as they have brought development across the globe, globalization has also facilitated human trafficking while accordingly serving to impede counter-trafficking efforts. State-centered approaches to combat trafficking are proving obsolete and futile since human trafficking knows no state boundaries.

The continuous worrying developments in human trafficking in Africa have fallen on the continent's regional organization, the AU. Though the AU by practice has dedicated more resources to economic prosperity and transnational issues like conflicts and terrorism than to issues of human security and human right, the organization has increasingly been involved in a discourse that includes human trafficking (Mensah et al., 2017).

The increase in human trafficking in Africa is blamed on several reasons amidst the adoption of the AFCTA by countries. AFCTA is an avenue for expanding intra-trade among African countries, however, the porous nature of African borders and the lack of proper security and identity systems, human traffickers are chancing on the existent lacuna, to pervade continuous actions of human trafficking (Mensah et al., 2017). For example, Nigeria a hot spot of human trafficking activities is a place where traffickers are taking advantage of a lack of effective documentation, security, and identity systems. In most African countries, visas are acquired through illegal means or falsification of documents often in collaboration with immigration officials (Carling, 2006; Salihu and Ajio 2009) and other countries within Africa, visas are acquired by road via the Sahara Desert for onward smuggling by ships to European destinations. In other words, these scholars place the blame on high corruption levels. One most worrying reasons around corruption are the fact that it is being perpetrated by government officials like the police officers. Some might argue that this is because most African countries rather deploy political carders into the police force, a group of hungry, dull, unreasoning people into the most sensitive wing of the government meant to protect the rights of the civilians.

The opening up of borders in Africa if not well protected and governed will lead to high trafficking cases not only within the continent but globally. For example, lapses in border security and ineffective identification systems in Ghana and Nigeria have availed to traffickers, many hidden recruitment points for trafficking activities. In rural areas where there are poverty and lack of education, children are often recruited from rural zones to urban areas. Adesina (2014) reports that most incidences of trafficking within a country are done from rural to urban. For instance, from Akwa Ibom and Osun to Lagos and Abeokuta. The central zones remain Kaduna Kano and Abuja. Also included are Edo from the Niger Delta region and Lagos in the South West of Nigeria.

Generally, for African countries to prevent and eliminate this inhuman business they must fully understand the involved actors and formulate policies that strictly address such avenues. This implies having a competent human resource that can help to deal with such cases. The most important thing that must be noted is the fact that the world is a global village which has brought about sophisticated technologies which the traffickers are using. Adesina (2014), argued that actors in the African trafficking industry are a group of people who in certain cases, are supported by prominent national figures within a government or outside of it. This to some extent makes the act difficult to deal with or even eradicate it because the law

enforcers are in some instances the perpetrators. Actors and players include; recruiters, those who sell, and individuals responsible for the transportation and receiving of individuals. Also included are immigration workers who aid this group of people making up the trafficking industry with paperwork, as well as pimps and brothel owners. Equally elemental in this trading mechanism are health practitioners who provide some protections and specialized services to victims (Makinde et al., (2015).

### **Implications of opening up of the borders on human trafficking**

The social implications of human trafficking, in particular, goes beyond just mental disorders to include; the physical abuse and torture of victims to the psychological and emotional trauma. Furthermore, the implications of trafficking in persons have the economic and political challenges of unabated crime, the impact on individuals and society is clearly destructive and unacceptable (Bales, 1999). Nevertheless, this section focuses on reviewing the impacts of opening up of borders on human trafficking and vice versa. Unlike most other violent crime, trafficking usually involves prolonged and repeated trauma. Human trafficking has an impact on the individuals it victimizes in all areas of their lives. Every stage of the trafficking process can involve physical, sexual and psychological abuse and violence, deprivation and torture, the forced use of substances, manipulation, economic exploitation and abusive working and living conditions (Zimmerman, 2006).

The implications of trafficking in persons goes beyond social aspects to include economic, and in this regards the crime of trafficking in persons economically incorporates many elements including but not limited to these; the value of all resources devoted to its prevention, the treatment and support of victims, but also the apprehension and prosecution of offenders. On the contrary, the above associated costs can be offset in part by the recovery of criminal proceeds and assets of the traffickers. Trafficking in persons also results in the loss of human resources and reductions in tax revenue. Furthermore, human trafficking redirects the financial benefits of migration to traffickers and their associates not only from migrants, their families, community and government, but also from other potential legitimate employers. Largely, such costs in individual countries greatly affect the productive capacities of these countries and in the long run, it negatively implicates the trading muscles. Generally, when the levels of human trafficking are increasing as they are in Africa, the public literally lives in fear and it is this fear that hinders successful import-export systems (UN, 2008).

According to CQ Global Research, 21 million people are suffering because of this inhuman trade (Maybee et al., 2016). In the fiscal year 2016, Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) initiated 1,029 investigations into human trafficking cases and recorded 1,952 arrests, 1,176 indictments, and 631 convictions. 435 victims were identified and assisted (ICE, 2017). While, barely a few years cases increased, in the fiscal year 2019, HSI initiated 1,024 investigations with a nexus to human trafficking and recorded 2,197 arrests, 1,113 indictments, and 691 convictions; 428 victims were identified and assisted. HSI continues to make human trafficking cases a top investigative priority by connecting victims to resources to help restore their lives and bringing traffickers to justice (ICE, 2019). Despite how alarming rate and dangerous trafficking in persons might be, the information on the scale of trafficking, how traffickers operate and the most effective means to stop it still remains very minimal. Globalization has further led to the realization of the need for the AFCTA which will allow the free movement of persons, goods, services, and products across Africa. But one

question that remains is to what extent the AfCTA is going to be an avenue of human trafficking and consequently affect trade in Africa. This paper, therefore, hypothesizes that there is a definite relationship between the AFCTA and human trafficking and that AFCTA to some extent shall be the catalyst for the increase in human trafficking making it the fastest growing criminal industry after the drug trade.

## **Conclusion**

Africa like many other parts of the world is not left behind in terms of regional integration, to live as one across the continent and support the movement of goods, services, products, and persons from one country to the other without any challenges. The opening up of borders in the world has not come without challenges; it has led to the generation of human trafficking. Nevertheless, the worldwide epidemic of trafficking in persons continues to be a global problem each year, despite the creation and ratification in 2000 of the United Nations Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, Supplementing the United Nations Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime (Protocol or U.N. Protocol). However, human trafficking problems go beyond legislation in Africa to mostly issues of implementation which has to do with lacking the political will. Africa has robust and sound policies yet the implementation is bad. Africa has acknowledged the persistence of the problem of human trafficking in their societies but they have not extensively formulated institutions directly dealing with the problem. In most cases, what is seen is the adoption of foreign policies that are not in collaboration with their norms and values. Africa like many others, parts of the world have their own unique cultures that can strongly be used in the formulation and implementation of foreign ideas as they comply with their ethics rather than pasting policies.

## **Recommendations**

Human trafficking is a global criminal and inhuman act that is terrorizing vulnerable households. However, countries and societies must remember that there is no one size fits all in dealing with human trafficking. Societies must firstly take into consideration the cultural norms and values that guide the societal behaviors and build their security around that as it could be one that people might be familiar with. For example, in Africa most countries have rural security men and women called the vigilantes who do not have any pieces of training at all but are fully aware of what their communities are going through. These are the people who in most cases walk around their communities voluntarily and ensuring the communities are at peace at all costs. This paper, therefore, recommends that following the norms and values that guide communities these people can be used in watching over human trafficking cases rather than entirely depending on the police officers who in most cases work for the benefits. When a police officer doesn't receive the expected benefits they then engage themselves into corrupt habits as actors of human trafficking. Another advantage of using traditional community vigilantes compared to modern security lies in the fact that they are known and part of the community and to some extent this can help eliminate human trafficking. These traditional community security vigilantes can still be used in sensitizing the communities on trafficking.

Secondly, societies must be able to ensure a minimal level of knowledge security for individuals, families, and communities to resist human trafficking without fear and anxiety about the consequences of their choices, be they socio-economic, cultural, or political. It is,



therefore, recommended that governments make informed decisions and carry out community sensitization of all the members of their societies. This could be done through village headmen and women, schools, churches, and or any other public gatherings. This will enhance the capacities of individuals in being watchful of the traffickers in all capacity.

Largely, less developed countries without good technological development could rather use these recommended traditional means in dealing with human trafficking together with the modern means at their disposal. Developing countries have not reached the point when all the members of the communities are literate, in other words, levels of ignorance are still quite high, and nevertheless, this doesn't mean they are not affected by the trafficking. The world is global and has come to one where one problem in one part of the world affects other parts. However, countries still have some level of security uniqueness which can freely be accepted by community members and easy to be implemented. Developing countries will not achieve their desired security levels if they continue copying and pasting policies of the developed countries. It is high time that less developed countries use the community-based approach in dealing with human trafficking.

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