

Porous Borders and Small Arms and Light Weapons Proliferation in South Eastern Nigeria

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Abstract

The paper examined porous borders and small arms and light weapons proliferation in South Eastern Nigeria comprising Anambra, Enugu, Imo, Abia, and Ebonyi states and inhabited by the Igbo ethnic group in the country. Data were collected using In-depth Interviews, Focus Group Discussions, field observations and documentary sources. Twenty-nine (29) personnel of different security agencies responsible for combating SALW proliferation, in the South-East participated in the IDIs and FGD as well as 41 participants drawn from ten (10) different communities with history of communal conflicts and stakeholders across the South-East. The result of the study revealed among others that though the South East region does not have any international borders, arms are trafficked into the region from other regions that border it and thus pave way for arms proliferation into the region. The paper recommends the use of cutting-edge technology in security surveillance, adequate funding and training of security personnel as well as strengthening of the Multinational Joint Task Force.

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Background to the Study

The issue of Nigeria's porous borders is intricate and significantly impacts governance, the economy, and security. The trafficking of products, including arms, drugs, and contraband, is facilitated by permeable borders, jeopardising local enterprises and escalating crime rates. Ineffectual border security facilitates the infiltration of thieves, terrorists, and armed organisations, exacerbating carnage and instability in the region. Nigeria's porous borders facilitate the criminal trafficking of vulnerable individuals for exploitation. Illicit trade and smuggling adversely affect legitimate businesses, leading to financial losses and a reduction in tax revenue for the government. Due to the permeability of borders, unscrupulous border officials accept payments to overlook illegal operations. Heightened migration resulting from conflicts or improved employment opportunities may exert pressure on existing resources and incite social instability in the host communities.

Furthermore, the facilitation of border crossings allows rebel groups like Boko Haram and other militias to traverse effortlessly between Nigeria and its adjacent nations. The military's efforts to restrain these groups are hindered by their mobility. The infiltration of firearms and ammunition into Nigeria is facilitated by permeable borders, leading to an increase in violence and conflict. Human trafficking networks operate due to inadequate border controls, exacerbating exploitation and brutality against at-risk populations. Criminal organisations use porous boundaries for transnational crimes, including kidnappings for ransom, which have escalated into a significant security threat in Nigeria. In the nation, cross-border migration intensifies ethnic and tribal tensions, leading to battles for land and resources.

Nigeria confronts a significant security challenge stemming from the smuggling of small arms and light weapons (SALW) across its porous borders, compounded by the domestic production and distribution of illegal arms by local manufacturers. This situation has precipitated extensive armed conflicts involving terrorists, bandits, and ethnic militia groups within the nation. Armed groups frequently use ethnic tensions to exacerbate conflicts for resources, territory, and political power through the utilization of small arms and light weapons (SALW). The proliferation of small arms and light weapons has led to an increase in violent crimes, including kidnappings for ransom, cattle rustling, and armed robberies within the nation. The porous borders of Nigeria have exacerbated the country's challenges with insecurity. A recent analysis identified 1,400 clandestine, uncontrolled, and unregulated entrance routes into Nigeria, in contrast to 84 regulated ports of entry. This facilitates the smuggling of various products, including small guns and illicit drugs, into Nigeria undetected, akin to the clandestine entry of individuals, especially criminals, into the nation. Nigeria encompasses a land area of 910,768 square kilometres and a water area of 13,000 square kilometres, totaling 923,768 square kilometres. The nation's porous borders have grown increasingly permeable due to the inadequate supervision by Nigerian authorities.

Mezie-Okoye (2022) asserts that the significant instability along African borders mostly results from their management and regulation, rather than the manner in which colonialists delineated them, as suggested by certain researchers and that border settlements have been persistently overlooked by state and federal administrations, resulting in inadequate infrastructure including as roads, electricity, educational institutions, and water supply. This condition intensified young unemployment, thereby rendering them valuable assets for smugglers and other transnational criminals. Mezie-Okoye (2022) also noted that smugglers of diverse illegal commodities, including small arms, exploit Nigeria's land borders as unrestricted entrance and departure points. They function largely unregulated by the nation's security apparatus. He asserts that our frontiers in the Northeast and Northwest resemble thoroughfares devoid of Nigerian security personnel's control. The correlation among porous borders, arms proliferation, and insecurity facilitates the unimpeded transfer of small firearms into and out of Nigeria, predominantly resulting in these weapons being acquired by non-state actors who utilize them to incite unrest and create an environment that is hostile, ungoverned, and perilous. He further stated that weak borders have enabled the growth of illicit guns, especially via the northern borders, while criminals from over the globe into the country, significantly exacerbating the alarming degree of insecurity Nigeria now endures.

Enejo et al. (2021) attributed the proliferation of small arms and light weapons (SALW) in the sub-region to the ECOWAS Protocol on the free movement of persons, goods, and services, asserting that it facilitated criminal involvement in cross-border trafficking. These traffickers use the ECOWAS region's unimpeded movement of goods and individuals to illicitly transport guns and ammunition into the nation. Salihu and Ozden (2020) argued that Nigeria's vulnerable border has unfortunately positioned it as a receptacle for various items, including contraband from Asian and African nations. Abiodun et al. (2018) assert that most of Nigeria's borders are permeable, facilitating the ingress, transit, and egress of firearms, human trafficking, and drugs. Nte (2011) observed that efforts to curtail the proliferation of SALW are considerably obstructed by Nigeria's permeable borders. He also noted the inadequate management of Nigeria's borders, both terrestrial and maritime, as well as at airports. The researcher approximates that Nigeria's northern border extends approximately 1500 kilometers, its western border measures around 770 kilometres (adjacent to the Republic of Benin), its eastern border spans about 1700 kilometers (bordering Cameroon), its southern border is roughly 90 kilometers long (adjacent to Chad), and Nigeria possesses an Atlantic Ocean border with South Africa that is approximately 850 kilometres in length. According to Ehiane and Uwizeyimana (2018), the lack of competent management of porous borders in terms of manpower and infrastructure for efficient surveillance of the country's border checkpoints, not the size of the country, renders it susceptible to the growth of SALW. Additionally, despite security officials being stationed at these borders to confiscate and destroy these weapons, some of them reach the country via its marine ports. A significant number of firearms are undoubtedly smuggled into the country across land and sea borders, as observed by Ehiane and Uwizeyimana (2018), exposing the Nigerian Customs officials' failure to adequately safeguard the nation's border checkpoints.

Alimba (2017) observed that more than 7 million illegal guns, or more than 70% of West Africa's total 8 million, are found in Nigeria. Due to Nigeria's open borders, unchecked migration from nearby nations including the Republic of Niger, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and the Republic of Benin has entered the nation. These immigrants, the most of whom are young males, are among the nation's most prolific offenders, having perpetrated a broad range of crimes.

Ebeye and Okon (2021) noted that the question of porous borders has come up often in discussions of international relations, globalization, and security. A constant in valuing state sovereignty is the existence of borders. The concept of sovereignty emphasizes the need that borders be established as a strong foundation for territorial integrity. The scholars contend further that any state that fails to adequately safeguard the lives and property of its inhabitants would perish. Both internal and external measures are used to defend the territorial integrity of the state in order to prevent the entrance of transnational criminal networks and syndicates, such as by quelling and suppressing insurrections and revolt. Due in part to the many places of illicit entrance, many developing countries, like Nigeria, have seen their borders become porous, weak, and poorly policed as a result of globalization (Ebeye and Okon, 2021)

The South-Eastern region of Nigeria, which includes Anambra, Enugu, Imo, Abia, and Ebonyi States and is predominantly inhabited by the Igbo ethnic group, lacks international borders, in contrast to the South South, South West, North East, and North Western regions of Nigeria; nevertheless, Small Arms and Light Weapons are illicitly trafficked into the South East region, therefore the objective of this paper is to examine sources of Small Arms and Light Weapons into South East Nigeria through international and internal borders, the role of border security guards and security personnel in compromising border security in Nigeria and whether ECOWAS Treaty on free movement of people and goods encourages SALW proliferation through Nigeria's borders.

Literature Review

Porous Borders and Circulation of Illegal Arms and in Nigeria

A border is a delineation, either tangible or conceptual, that distinguishes two locations on a map. Borders delineate political boundaries. They divided the globe into cities, towns, counties, states, and provinces. Furthermore, it delineates an area or territory next to a boundary. In the bulk of Anglo-American literary works, there are frequent allusions to frontiers or demarcations between politically autonomous geographical regions. This article acknowledges the primary distinction between countries, while also recognising the intangible limits and lawful authority of political entities such as sovereign and federal states. Consequently, boundaries serve as a clear physical demarcation between sub-national governments and entities. Nonetheless, they are equally regarded as a reliable representation of individuals' cultural value systems and sense of national identity. National borders are defined as the physical boundaries of a State within which its government possesses complete legal control over the activities, structures, and inhabitants, as stated by Gerstein et al. (2018).

The inadequate administration and oversight of Nigeria's national border have been a significant source of worry. This condition has resulted in an increase in transnational crimes, including the smuggling of illegal products, unauthorized migration, human trafficking, money laundering, theft, abduction, and terrorism. Nosiri and Ohazurike (2016) contended that the porous border facilitates terrorists in procuring or trafficking weapons and seeking help from neighbouring nations, owing to the challenges in securing Nigeria's border. This has resulted in the fatalities of thousands and the relocation of millions (Menner, 2014). Akinyemi (2013) asserts that Nigeria's economy has been significantly jeopardized by inadequate border security. He asserts that the smuggling of individuals and products into the nation has resulted in significant tax revenue losses for the government, jeopardized local and foreign direct investment, and contributed to unemployment issues, among other consequences.

Ahmed and Chilaka (2013) assert that Nigeria's permeable borders have facilitated various criminal activities, including oil bunkering and the smuggling of contraband, resulting in financial losses for the government. Insecure border crossings in Nigeria have exacerbated the proliferation of specific criminal organisations that engage in armed robberies and other offences, posing a significant threat to national security. Nosiri and Ohazurike (2016) identified that cross-border criminal activities significantly hinder the expansion of domestic investment and manufacturing in Nigeria, particularly due to car theft perpetrated by gangs that frequently steal high-value vehicles from their owners and transport them to neighbouring countries such as Benin, Togo, and Chad. The experts said that Nigeria's national security was significantly compromised by the challenges of enforcing adequate border security, which facilitated terrorist infiltration, insurgency, and loss of tax revenue, smuggling, and trafficking of illicit products, among other issues. Moreover, Nigeria's ability to sustain efficient border security is significantly undermined by corruption, obsolete technology, and the porous character of its borders.

Odey et al. (2022) employed the porous Benin-Nigeria border as a case study to elucidate the smuggling of small arms and light weapons (SALW) and the challenges posed by Boko Haram to Nigerian security. The Federal Republic of Nigeria and the Republic of Benin share a border approximately 700 km in length, as indicated by Okoi and Offor (2020), cited in Odey et al. (2022). Odey et al. (2022) assert that the current boundary is delineated by the line established between British and French territories in 1889. Certain locations are ambiguous about the precise placement of these borders, as the two states possess few natural boundaries. Immigration and customs officers find it challenging to monitor the extensive lagoons and marshlands in the Ouémé valley, which have historically served as conduits for transit and illicit commerce. The numerous local marketplaces along the borders from North to South support the dynamic commercial network between the two countries. Furthermore, these marketplaces function as the principal venues for connection and commerce for individuals residing in both rural and urban areas. Historically, the trade between the two nations has been focused around the border region. The Southeast has served as a commercial hub since colonial times,

particularly noted for its numerous local marketplaces, notably in Lagos and Badagry. Small arms and light weapons (SALWs) are predominantly imported and exported across porous borders throughout Africa. To address the issue of cross-border proliferation of small arms and light weapons between Benin and Nigeria, the establishment of a West African regional security network structure is proposed to regulate borders and coordinate security efforts to prevent the dissemination of SALWs and other criminal activities. Due to Nigeria's proximity to West African war zones, the importation of firearms into the nation has historically been facilitated. Consequently, Nigeria's foreign policy prioritised security considerations.

Omotuyi (2012) urged the government to reevaluate its approach and collaborate with Benin, Cameroon, Niger, and Togo to effectively manage and maintain territorial security. Dadur and Aliyu (2021) identify the Seme border as a significant porous boundary between Nigeria and the Benin Republic, situated midway between Lagos and Ogun State. The Seme border (Badagry-Cotonou) and the Idi-Iroko-Porto Novo border (Idi-Iroko frontier) constitute the barrier between the two nations susceptible to illicit cross-border traffic. According to Olomu et al. (2019), "controlling access to territories and citizens is challenging in the globalized security context because technology has enabled an increased flow of goods, people, and ideas across national boundaries, while global interconnectedness has increased interactions between people around the world whether for work, sport, or other purposes. They pointed out that controlling border conflicts and managing migratory flows continue to be top priorities for border security organizations worldwide. The paradox, according to the scholars, is that despite the fact that their position is threatened by transnational security actors, vulnerabilities, and numerous inherent weaknesses from within the agency itself, the Customs Service Agency has failed in terms of securing the nation's borders. Olomu et al. (2019) also citing various newspaper sources, further noted that "over the course of eight months, specifically from January 22, 2017, May 23, 2017, September 11, 2017, and September 21, 2017, the Nigerian Customs Service seized illegal items totaling N12.7 billion in addition to 2, 671 pump action rifles that were illegally imported into the nation. Government authorities' acceptance that there are approximately 1,479 illegal pathways in Nigeria implies that all manner of illegalities, such as illegal immigration, drug trafficking, the transit of illicit goods, and its attendant implications, exist at our national borders. In order to operate more effectively, security organizations throughout the world depend on both formal and informal information networks that might produce intelligence reports. The research suggested that new forms of security engagement are required to combat threats coming from both within and outside a state boundary" However, when borders are permeable, it is essential to investigate them alongside informal information networks in addition to going beyond official information networks.

According to Nnadi and Okoye (2022), the effectiveness of a country's national security is significantly influenced by its capacity to enforce border security for the benefit of its own territorial welfare, sovereign integrity, and internal socioeconomic growth and development. Border towns must be included when talking about border security and

protection since they still have a significant impact on how successful the former is. Nigeria's national security is threatened by the fundamentally ungoverned border towns, which represent a threat to the nation. They further argued that assuming effective authority over border lands, places, and communities is a fantastic answer to the issue of lingering security problem in the country. The government's presence, according to him, "must be evident not only in terms of infrastructure but also in terms of establishing an enhanced and elaborate feedback model or system which comprises a tripartite synergy between community/religious leaders, as well as security and traditional leaders." The Federal Government, according to the scholars, should examine, update, and put into practice all significant components of the National Security Strategy 2019, particularly those parts that deal with the threat of transnational terrorism.

Chinonso and Iwebi (2019), who engaged in the discourse regarding Nigeria's vulnerable borders, emphasized that the daily influx of illegally obtained weapons and ammunition contributes to severe violent conflicts, including militancy, ethnic unrest, terrorism, and warfare, which significantly threaten national security. They asserted that it is imperative for citizens in border communities and border security officials to collaborate effectively to address the security challenges arising from this porous border scenario. Additionally, they noted that the complicity of border security personnel, inadequate infrastructure, and Nigeria's widespread issues of bribery and corruption further intensify the situation. Mezie-Okoye and Chukwurah (2022) further observed that Nigeria's open borders have exacerbated instability. The safeguarding of property and human life within a specific territory necessitates robust border security. Nigeria's land borders serve as conduits for smugglers, facilitating the illicit entry and exit of various illegal goods, including small firearms. They operate with minimal resistance due to the inadequacies of the national security apparatus. The authors indicated that "However, when borders are permeable, it is essential to investigate them alongside informal information networks in addition to going beyond official information networks. The northeast and northwest borders function as thoroughfares, largely unimpeded by Nigerian security personnel. They contended that the porous nature of these borders permits unrestricted movement of small arms into and out of Nigeria. A significant portion of these weapons ultimately falls into the hands of non-state actors, who utilise them to incite unrest and cultivate a hostile, ungoverned, and perilous environment". This situation arises from the ease with which criminals can infiltrate the country with light weapons and small firearms, often resulting in chaos.

In a similar vein, Adewoyin (2019), in a study on the relationship between small arms proliferation, porous borders, and instability in Nigeria's Oyo State's Oke-Ogun region, noted that border security is essential and necessary for the protection of people and property within a specific jurisdiction. He continued by saying that smugglers of all types of illicit goods, including small arms, now exploit Nigeria's land borders as unrestricted entry and exit points for their criminal enterprises. He maintained that regardless of where they are located physically inside the country, all borders in it have the quality of porosity. Open borders permit the free flow of all kinds of small arms into and out of

Nigeria, and the majority of these weapons are held by non-state actors who use them to sow unrest and turn society hostile, ungovernable, and insecure, according to the scholar's explanation of the connection between open borders, the proliferation of weapons, and insecurity. Nigeria's very permeable borders present a severe threat to national security and likely will for some time. This is because, despite their broadness, these land and sea borders are not rigorously policed.

According to Abdulmalum et al. (2021), the proliferation of weapons is one of the largest security problems the African continent is now facing, and Nigeria's situation with respect to the spread of weapons is comparable to that of other African nations. However, they assert that this situation has led to a rise in terrorist activity in Nigeria. According to reports, Nigeria's wide borders serve as the primary point of entry for illegal firearms. Other sources include guns captured during conflicts with the Nigerian military and police, armaments provided by political parties for use in intimidation or violence during elections, and weapons specifically given to Boko Haram militants by individuals with links to Al-Qaeda, among others. Though deemed simple and portable, small arms and light weapons are really regarded weapons of mass destruction due to the many, significant fatalities and injuries they result in. Nigeria has a long-standing problem with guns, but over the past few decades, the proliferation of such weapons has stoked a wave of insurgencies, ethno-religious conflicts, cross-border banditry, kidnapping, terrorism, human trafficking, drug use, armed robberies, and other violent crimes. In order to minimize the nation's present security threats, such as terrorism and kidnapping for ransom, they opined that the Nigerian government should strengthen its regulations against the proliferation of small arms and light weapons.

Ebeye and Bassey (2021) contended that any state failing to adequately safeguard the lives and property of its citizens is destined to decline. They asserted that both internal and external strategies are employed to protect the state's territorial integrity, thereby preventing the infiltration of transnational criminal networks and syndicates, including the suppression of insurrections and revolts. The proliferation of weapons and porous borders has significantly exacerbated Nigeria's insecurity. They advocate for stringent border enforcement, enhanced training for border security personnel in intelligence and tracking technologies, and prioritization of human security above all other concerns.

Tonwe and Okoro (2018) lamented that it is horrifying to see how many lives and properties have been lost as a result of the spread of small arms and light weapons (SALW) in Nigeria, which is caused by the inability of law enforcement organizations to stop their illegal flow via the country's borders. This continues to be a significant source of concern for the populace. They maintained that if a successful plan to defend her borders is not implemented, the nation will continue to encourage violence. This is due to the massive loss of properties and lives brought on by the smuggling of SALW into Nigeria, which has reached a scary level. In addition, they argue that while socioeconomic hardship, ethnic identity, religious convictions, and youth unemployment are all unquestionably important causes of violence and insecurity in Nigeria, the proliferation

of weapons and open borders are more important causes because they have an impact on how severe all other sources of insecurity are. The authors proposed a comprehensive cooperation strategy (CCS) to address the problem of border porosity and the ensuing insecurity effects of SALW smuggling in Nigeria and her neighboring countries.

The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (2013) indicated that the inadequate border security of neighbouring African nations such as Benin, Cameroon, Chad, and the Niger Republic exacerbates the situation by facilitating the smuggling of illicit goods both within and beyond the region. Additionally, Tonwe and Okoro (2018) emphasized that the porous nature of state borders connects to hotspots like the Central African Republic, Libya, Sudan, and South Sudan via Chad, significantly benefiting the Nigerian state. These governments are undeniably unstable, struggling to maintain control over their permeable borders and the existing "ungoverned spaces" within, primarily caused by armed militias. Consequently, they are effectively utilized as conduits for the smuggling of individuals, narcotics, firearms, and ammunition into and out of Nigeria. Tonwe and Okoro (2018) added that on the northern border from Niger to the Mediterranean Sea and on the eastern border from Chad to the Nile, there have been wars, skirmishes, revolutions, and conflicts. The movement of weapons inside and around these borders is unrestricted and unhindered. People from these two axes have had historical economic ties with the North-East since the time of Trans-Saharan trade, which led to the movement of goods, services, and ideas. Due to the pre-colonial socioeconomic and cultural affinities that the population had formed prior to colonial incursion and the subsequent balkanization of the region along European spheres of influence, Nigeria's cross-border activities with the Central African Subregion are the cause of this. The availability and cross-border movement of SALW from the surrounding countries through the porous borders is greatly influenced by their geographic closeness to North-Eastern Nigeria. Several rebel groups in Nigeria have benefited from this uncontrolled supply of SALW via direct purchases of arms and ammunition as well as training. The AK47, which is reliable, versatile, and easy to use, was the most common covert weapon brought by rebel groups from these countries into the North-East. As a result of the ethno-religious and socio-cultural ties between these dissident groups and residents of the border region communities, the emigrants were able to meet with members of the underworld and other dissident groups in Nigeria, forming a partnership for arms deals. This made the flow of weapons easier.

Small Arms and Light Weapons

Small Arms: Small arms are defined as weapons that are compact and may be operated by a single individual. These are armaments designed for individual use, including firearms and other destructive implements or devices such as explosive bombs, incendiary bombs, or gas bombs. Small arms encompass auto loading revolvers and pistols, rifles and carbines, machine guns, assault rifles, light machine guns and various destructive devices, including explosive bombs, incendiary bombs, gas bombs, grenades, rocket launchers, missiles, missile systems and landmines. Other firearms encompass revolvers, automatic-loading pistols, rifles, carbines, machine guns, assault rifles, and light machine guns (ECOWAS Convention, 2006).

Light Weapons

The ECOWAS Convention defined light weapons to encompass the following portable arms: heavy machine guns, portable grenade launchers, mobile or mounted anti-aircraft cannons, non-recoil guns, portable anti-tank missile launchers, rocket launchers, portable anti-aircraft missile launchers, mortars with a calibre under 100 millimetres, cartridges, munitions for small-caliber weapons, projectiles and missiles for small arms, and mobile containers containing missiles or projectiles for anti-aircraft or anti-tank simple action systems. According to the ECOWAS protocol (2006), small arms and light weapons encompass the following firearms: RPG-7V1, portable rocket-propelled grenades, G3 assault rifles (Heckler and Koch, Germany), FNC (Fabrique Nationale Carbine, Belgium), 7.62mm PKMSN-2 machine guns, AR-70 assault rifles (Beretta, Italy), Type 64 assault rifles (Japan), AKM-47 assault rifles (Kalashnikov), and AR-70 assault rifles (Beretta, Italy). Vines (2005) asserted that such weapons are illicitly transported worldwide for several reasons, including mass manufacture and covert sales and transfers, and that they are easily accessible globally.

Theoretical Framework

Broken Window Theory

Philip Zimbardo proposed the hypothesis in 1969. Thirteen years later, George L. Kelling and James Q. Wilson elaborated on the theory. The hypothesis posits that observable indicators of disorder and neglect within a society, such broken windows, graffiti, or rubbish, may contribute to a rise in criminal activity and anti-social behaviour. He abandoned two automobiles in two separate locations: one in a predominantly underprivileged and crime-ridden district of New York City, and the other in a relatively affluent neighbourhood in Palo Alto, California. Both vehicles lacked registration plates and were parked with their hoods up. Within ten minutes, passersby in New York City began vandalising the automobile (Ikezue, 2020). They first disassembled it to obtain separate components. Thereafter, the indiscriminate destruction commenced. The windows were shattered. The vehicle was entirely destroyed. In Palo Alto, the second car remained untouched for over one week.

Zimbardo executed a conventional action by using a sledgehammer to violently impact the California vehicle. Subsequently, pedestrians swiftly disassembled it, emulating their activities in New York. This field investigation illustrated how neglect can swiftly convert an issue into a substantial problem for a community. Nevertheless, it gradually evolved into something far more substantial than its initial state. The "broken windows" theory underpins a significant perspective on crime and law enforcement in the United States. Thirteen years subsequent to the Zimbardo study, criminologists George L. Kelling and James Q. Wilson composed an essay for "The Atlantic" magazine. They were enthralled by the incidents involving Zimbardo's abandoned autos and posited that the findings might be generalized to encompass entire villages. The theory suggests that insufficient social cohesiveness and fragile community bonds might result in heightened crime rates. Fragmented populations or resource deficiencies in border areas can lead to inefficient border management and enforcement.

It further suggests that crime transpires when three variables intersect: a motivated criminal, an appropriate target, and an absence of adequate supervision. Permeable borders provide a milieu in which driven perpetrators (smugglers, traffickers) identify appropriate targets (merchandise, individuals) and encounter negligible supervision or enforcement. The broken window theory elucidates the circumstances at Nigeria's borders, where inadequate border management, corruption, and collusion among border security personnel facilitate arms trafficking. The porous nature of these borders allows small arms and light weapons to infiltrate the country, particularly the South East Region, where subnational groups employ them to exacerbate armed conflicts. Nigerian borders are notorious for the scarcity of security officers who often neglect their responsibilities. The limited personnel safeguarding the extensive borders are inadequately equipped, utilise outdated technology, and occasionally receive insufficient compensation, thereby facilitating the operations of criminals, traffickers, smugglers, armed robbers, cultists, terrorists, assassins, kidnappers, bandits, and arms black marketers, granting them access to weapons across the borders. The application of the Broken Windows Theory as framework of analysis of this study, is to effectively illustrate the complex relationship between porous borders, community disorder, and the proliferation of small arms in South Eastern Nigeria.

The relevance of the theory to this study is that porous borders and inadequate law enforcement to checkmate it can create an environment where illegal arms trafficking flourishes. This neglect can signal to criminal elements that the area is a low-risk environment for conducting illegal activities, leading to increased arms proliferation. According to the Broken Windows Theory, communities that fail to address minor infractions or signs of disorder may eventually face more serious crimes. In South Eastern Nigeria, if local authorities do not effectively respond to small-scale violence or arms-related incidents, it may embolden criminals and lead to larger conflicts. Small arms proliferation as result of porous borders create visible signs of disorder, such as increased crime rates and armed conflicts. Porous borders contribute to a cycle of disorder, leading to the proliferation of SALW, which in turn perpetuates further disorder and insecurity in South Eastern Nigeria.

Methodology

The target population of the study consists of 71 participants drawn from the agencies responsible for combating of proliferation of small arms and light weapons in Nigeria and members of border communities and Civil Society Organisation in South East Nigeria. Participants for the research were selected through purposive sampling. The paper utilized mixed-methods involving survey (In-depth Interviews (IDI), Focus Group Discussions (FGD) and Field Observations) and documentary source (Journal, Books, Internet etc) in generating data. Survey data were collected through In-depth Interviews (IDI), Focus Group Discussions (FGD) and Field Observations from the following participants: Nigerian Customs Service Enforcement Unit 82 Division Nigerian Army Nigerian Army Enugu, the five Nigerian Police Force State Commands in South East and four State Command Headquarters of Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps in South

East. Also, IDIs and FGDs were conducted with 42 respondents drawn from eleven (11) different border communities across the South-East in the following order: Ebonyi (3), Enugu (3), Anambra (2), Imo (1) Abia (2) and Importers Association of Nigeria (1). The data generated from IDIs and FGDs were transcribed and thematically analyzed; pictorial analysis was utilized in presenting field observations while content analysis was adopted in analyzing data collected from secondary documents. Tables and figures also used to present the data generated.

Table 1: Nigeria's International Borders Vulnerable to SALW Proliferation

S/N	Country	Borders in Km	Border type
1	Niger	1497	Land borders
2	Chad	87	Land borders
3	Cameroon	1600	Land and sea borders
4	Benin	773	Land borders
5	Coastal Borders	774	Sea borders
	Total	4470	

The research indicated that Nigeria possesses international land boundaries measuring around 4,470 kilometres (2,513 miles) with Chad, Cameroon, Benin, and Niger, beside a coastline of 774 kilometres (480 miles), which remains predominantly unmonitored. The northern region of Nigeria has a border with Niger Republic measuring around 1,497 km; the North-East borders Chad by around 87 km; the eastern region borders Cameroon by roughly 1,600 km, and the western area borders the Republic of Benin by approximately 773 km. Respondents/Interviewees indicate a proliferation of small guns and light weapons originating from crisis-ridden Libya into Mali and subsequently Niger. The issue we encountered in the North-East was the influx of weaponry from crisis-stricken Chad into Nigeria. Of these borders, only 114 had sanctioned control points staffed by immigration agents and other security services. There are more than 1,400 unmanned unauthorized routes, posing significant security risks to the nation. The open borders are responsible for the influx of radicals. According to Sagir Musa, the Director of Army Information, as described in Akpan and Umelo (2021), the Damaturu/Maiduguri axis contains approximately 250 routes that link to or lead straight to Cameroon, Chad, or Niger. He asserts that these networks function as vulnerable conduits for the illicit importation of guns and ammunition into Nigeria, since they remain mostly unknown to security agencies, unmonitored, and unguarded.

The Director of Army Information further claimed that certain livestock and grain traffickers in the North-East sub-region employ covert tactics to hide guns and ammunition at border checks, including beneath truck engines, behind grain sacks, and within empty fuel tanks. Security officers exhibit minimal scrutiny towards the "grains" transported in substantial volumes via trucks, trailers, lorries, antiquated pickup vans, and jeeps. The permeability of the nation's borders and waterways has consistently

elicited grievances from security authorities at seaports and border crossings. The problem of porous borders is exacerbated by an insufficiency of trained security officers, patrol vehicles, helicopters for aerial surveillance, and other resources. Consequently, most borders are permeable, rendering efficient management of trespassers, smugglers, and "merchants of death" an illusion (Akpan and Umelo (2021)).

Adeola and Oluyemi (2012) assert that the porosity of Nigeria's borders has facilitated an unlawful inflow of migrants from neighbouring countries, including the Republic of Niger, Cameroon, Chad, and the Republic of Benin. Nosiri and Ohazurike (2016) concurred with Adeola and Oluyemi, indicating that this situation, exacerbated by Francophone neighbours, has facilitated an unregulated influx of illegal immigrants and cross-border crime, thereby posing substantial challenges for law enforcement agencies.

The Nations Newspaper, in its editorial on July 6, 2021, supported the aforementioned claim by the author, asserting that the proliferation of firearms in the nation has led to a rise in illegal herdsmen activities, abductions, and Boko Haram insurgency. According to the editorial, "herders, Boko Haram operations, banditry, cultism in the Niger Delta, and ESN in the Southeast have all profited from small arms and light weapons (SALW). Criminality, insurgency, terrorism, riots, militancy, electoral violence, political violence, social unrest, ethnic tensions, cross-border smuggling, porous borders, black marketeering, indigenous manufacturing, and the privatization of security and instability arise from these permeable borders" Supporting this claim, Omitola and Awotayo (2016) observed that "armed organisations, national traffickers, political and community leaders, as well as individuals acquire these weapons for their use. They observed that the desire for tiny weapons will persistently increase as long as insecurity prevails and the application of force may produce economic and political benefits.

Table 2: Sources/Entry Routes of Small Arms and light Weapons into South East through Northern Internal Borders

S/N	Border point	Point of entry into S/E	Border community	State of entry in South East	Entry points into South East	Entry Routes
	North Central	Benue/Kogi States	Amaka,	Enugu	Igboeze North/ Udenu. Isiuzo LGA	A
			Akpanya Odeke	Anambra	Anambra North LGA	Anam
			Ado LGA	Ebonyi	Ohaukwu Ishelu LGA	Ngbo and Ezza Effium Umuhuali and Nkalagu

The Table indicates that Small Arms and Light Weapons are imported into the region from adjacent areas. Small arms and light weapons (SALW) enter the region from the

North Central borders via Kogi and Benue states. This weaponry infiltrated Southeast villages adjacent to the two states, including those in Igboeze North and South Local Government those of Enugu State, such as Enugu Ezike and several communities in Nsukka Local Government Area. The study similarly revealed that Small Arms and Light Weapons traversed the two states into Anambra State via the Odeke/Echohon communities in the Ibaji Local Government Area of Kogi State, reaching the Aguleri communities in Anambra State, notwithstanding the existing border disputes between these communities. The Ikar community in Kogi State is implicated in the influx of small guns into the Anam Communities inside the Anambra West local government area.

Additionally, small guns and light weapons from Kogi and Benue states infiltrated Ebonyi State via Ado Local Government Area, reaching settlements in Ohaukwu and Izzi Local Government Areas of Ebonyi State. Respondents indicate that the Benue/Kogi Axis serves as the primary entrance point for small arms and light weapons entering the Southeast from the northern region of the country, constituting a significant land route for arms smuggling into the area. The analysis revealed that the guns are carried from Kogi and Benue States using trucks and small cars, including both private and commercial transit. Conversely, Fulani ranchers migrating to the Southeast via the Benue and Kogi corridors have introduced various types of small rifles and light weapons into the region alongside their livestock (Nigeria Customs Service Enforcement Unit, Personal Interview 2022). The Nigeria Police Ebonyi State Command (Personal Interview, 2022) and the 82 Division of the Nigerian Army Enugu (Personnel interviewed, 2022) concurred with the aforementioned statement. The researcher interviewed personnel from the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence in Ebonyi State, who confirmed that certain arms and ammunition originating from the Benue/Kogi Axis are transported into the State via Ehamufu in the Isiuzo Local Government Area of Enugu State, subsequently infiltrating Ebonyi communities such as Umuhuali to Nkalagu, from which they disperse to other regions of the State. The responses indicated that these weapons are smuggled into the state via large trucks transporting people and cargo, where they are effectively camouflaged.

Table 3: Sources/Entry Routes of Small arms and light weapons into South East through Southern Internal Borders

S/N	Internal borders	State Point of entry into S/E	Border community	South East State	LGA	Communities
	South South Region	Cross Rivers State	Ogoja, Boki waterways, calabar , Owu, Awegune, Ebijakara, Oziza and Ndubue	Ebonyi	Ikwo and Afikpo LGAs	Ada and Afikpo Communities
		Akwa Ibong	Ikot Ekpene	Abia	Aba, Ohafia and Bende	Azumiri River near Aba, Ngwa Communities, Aba Town, Abala , Ohafia
	South Western part of Nigeria and international water	Delta State	Asaba and Delta River line communities	Anambra	Onitsha	Onitsha Markets. River Niger line communities in Onitsha South LGA
	Niger Delta Axis	Bayelsa / Rivers State	Rivers and Bayelsa River line communities	Abia	Aba/ Ngwa Land , Etche	Ugwunabo, Etche and Ngwa Communities

Moreover, the investigation revealed that Small Arms and Light Weapons supplied via international waterways and the Benin Republic are smuggled into South East Nigeria through its borders with the South West. These weapons were smuggled into Anambra State, from where they are distributed to other locations in the South East. The South-South area serves as an additional conduit for the influx of weaponry into South Eastern Nigeria. The Nigeria Police Ebonyi State Command (2022) reported that small arms and light weapons infiltrated Ebonyi State from Cross River and Akwa Ibom States, particularly through areas like as Ogoja, Boki, and Calabar. Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) are transported from Akwa Ibom State into Ebonyi State via the Itu waterways and other locations, including Owu, Awegune, Ebijakara, Ozizza, and Ndube, subsequently reaching communities like as Afikpo in Ebonyi State. Additional sites of entry for the guns include Oferekpe and Ochoka into Ikwo in Ebonyi State. The 82 Division of the Nigerian Army in Enugu asserted during an interview with one of their commanders that the porous border in Nigeria is the primary cause of the influx of illicit guns into South Eastern Nigeria. The respondent said that this was both the distal and proximate cause of many violent conflicts in the region. Numerous marketplaces in South

Eastern Nigeria serve as venues for the illicit trade of small guns. Consistent with this, Ebaye and Okon (2021) discovered in their study that the trafficking in small guns is predominant in significant marketplaces such as Ariaria market in Aba State and Onitsha in Anambra State within the South-Eastern zone.

The role of border security guards in compromising border security in Nigeria

The study revealed, through an interview with a representative from the Importers Association of Nigeria Task Force against SALW proliferation in the South East Zone, that despite the deployment of security officers at the nation's borders, trans-border crime remains a persistent issue. In Nigeria, most border security officers are corrupt, since they often enable illicit cross-border activities for financial gain. The respondent asserts that corruption is the primary reason a security officer would sell his weapons to criminal entities. Malefactors inside Nigeria's security architecture are significantly engaged in the illicit spread of small arms and light weapons (Okorie, Personal Interview 2022). Airahuobhor (2014) indicates that the nation's seaports, airports, and land borders have remained accessible, exacerbating Nigeria's security challenges due to the extent of compromise within the security agencies. Security officers are said to extort money from cars attempting to transport products from the nation's ports, soliciting bribes and gifts from cargo proprietors and ship crews, so facilitating the distribution of prohibited items, including Small Arms and Light Weapons.

Additionally, in an interview / Focus Group Discussion with military personnel from the 103 Motorized Battalion in Awkunanaw, Enugu, the participants disclosed that the porous nature of Nigeria's borders facilitates the smuggling of weaponry into the nation due to inadequate border inspections. The mobility of these weapons renders them susceptible to proliferation; nevertheless, the implementation of technology like metal detectors by border security personnel would mitigate the transboundary spread of small arms and light weapons. The respondents said that the absence of adequate border inspections, along with the ECOWAS protocol facilitating the free movement of commodities and individuals throughout the subregion, enables the illicit entrance of small arms and light weapons (SALW). The respondents indicated that thorough border inspections by security officials would eradicate the illicit movement of SALW. The Imo State Command of the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps, during an interview with its personnel, disclosed that their findings indicate a failure among security agents to adequately monitor the borders, resulting in a significant influx of small arms into South Eastern Nigeria. The inadequacy of security agents in addressing this threat at the borders, coupled with the selective nature of border inspections – where certain borders are scrutinized but others remain vulnerable due to their classification as priority or low targets – constitutes a significant issue. The respondents contended that there is significant dereliction of responsibilities by the security personnel assigned to the borders, along with the presence of several undocumented routes that remain undetected by these agents.

Musa (2013), cited by Ebaye and Okon (2021), observed that, notwithstanding the assignment of security forces to protect Nigeria's borders, arms traffickers have devised methods to circumvent security inspections at border crossings, including the use of custom-built compartments in standard vehicles to hide weapons within grain bags, palm oil containers, or boxes of merchandise in excessively loaded heavy trucks. Security personnel at checkpoints do minimal to no inspections due to the enormous volume of cargo contained in these trucks. Trans-border nomadic pastoralists have facilitated the smuggling of illicit firearms into Nigeria by utilizing specially designed skin or thatched bags, affixed to camels, donkeys, and cows, to conceal guns. The Nigerian government's inadequate border policing adversely affects local and international economic activities and poses security concerns to the nation, as evidenced by the research conducted by Ebaye and Okon (2021).

The aforementioned findings were corroborated by Nosiri and Ohazurike (2016), who identified that the challenge of attaining effective border security constitutes a significant threat to Nigerian national security, as it facilitates terrorist infiltration and insurgency, diminishes tax revenue, and enables the smuggling or trafficking of illicit goods. Furthermore, it was shown that issues like as corruption, obsolete technology, and the porous nature of the borders significantly hinder Nigeria's capacity to uphold efficient border security. Ezeobi (2022) asserted that a principal factor contributing to Nigeria's security challenges is the spread of small arms and light weapons (SALWs), facilitated by porous national borders and a flourishing arm trafficking business. The cooperation of the security sector in the weaponry trade has exacerbated criminal activity throughout the nation. The prevalence of illicit guns in Nigeria has escalated to frightening levels, underscoring the nation's inadequate security apparatus, exacerbated by corruption, complacency, ineffective institutions, and the absence of stringent sanctions for traffickers. (Okorie, Personal Interview, 2022). Another element contributing to the perception of Nigeria's borders as porous is the ECOWAS Protocol on the free movement of persons and things, which certain arms traffickers use to smuggle Small Arms and Light Weapons into the country over the borders. As per a responder from the Importers Association of Nigeria Task Force addressing SALW proliferation in the South East Zone. The ECOWAS agreement was not designed to promote transnational crime, including the trafficking of Small Arms and Light Weapons; rather, certain criminal elements exploit the opportunities presented by the agreement to smuggle different illicit and contraband commodities, including SALWs, into the country.

The researcher conducted a non-participant observational study at many internal border checkpoints in South East Nigeria and discovered that four highways, specifically the Enugu-Onitsha Express, connected the South East with Niger Delta State, Northern states, and South West states. The Enugu-Port Harcourt motorway connects the South South states of Rivers, Bayelsa, and Akwa Ibom. The third highway is the Enugu-Abakaliki Road, a trunk A road connecting the South East to certain states in the South South. Additionally, the 9th Mile Nsukka Road links the South East to the Northern States. The researcher dedicated approximately six hours at each of the border posts

located in Ugwunabo, Abia State; Etche Road, Imo State; the Amechi Idodo/Nkalagu boundary along the Enugu-Abakaliki road; Inyi and other areas of Enugu Ezike along the Enugu-Kogi/Benue road; Ugwuoba and Anansea (Anambra and Enugu border); the Head Bridge area of Onitsha; Izzi along the Abakaliki/Ogoja road; Abomege along the Abakaliki-Calabar road; and Ishiagu, an Ebonyi border community with Imo State, observing events while feigning car malfunctions to avoid detection by security agencies. The researcher recorded the passage of 300 to 400 vehicles of various brands at the checkpoints, where both military and paramilitary security agencies were primarily engaged in collecting fees from motorists rather than inspecting their cargo. The study discovered through field observation that throughout the hours spent monitoring the border crossings, none conducted searches on more than 15 vehicles, resulting in 95% of vehicles passing through the security checkpoints unnoticed. The conduct of security agents and the corruption they facilitate at internal borders gives opportunities for those involved in arms trafficking to participate in Small Arms Proliferation in the South East.

Complicity of Nigeria security Personnel in Small Arms and Light weapons proliferation

The researcher from the report of a study by the Civil Society Legislative Advocacy Centre (CISLAC), in collaboration with Transparency International Defence and Security (TI-DS), in Ezeobi (2022), discovered that among the instances of complicity of Nigerian security personnel in the proliferation of small arms and light weapons, there is the case of one Nafiiu, a soldier who had pledged allegiance to the Nigerian state in defending its territorial integrity and paid kidnappers N300,000 to procure a firearm, and an additional N200,000 for another operation. The narrative indicates that a secondary arrangement for an AK-47 rifle for three million naira was established, and it was this transaction, together with 30 rounds of ammunition found in his vehicle, that led to his apprehension. The allegations further said that in a distinct occurrence, Corporal Mohammed, a member of the 198 Special Forces Battalion, was apprehended at the Express Motor Park in Borno State carrying 2,000 rounds of 7.62mm ammunition. The Zamfara State Government said that an armed bandit received ammunition and military attire from a Nigerian soldier and his girlfriend. The military detained him based on intelligence provided by the community. Emmanuel Iorliam, an active Nigerian Army soldier assigned to the 156 Task Force Battalion in Mainok, Borno State, was apprehended at a checkpoint for pilfering guns and ammunition from his station to sell to bandits.

The study also implicated officials of the Nigeria Police in the spread of weaponry within the country. On January 2, 2022, the Office of the Auditor General for the Federation (OAuGF) revealed that 178,459 distinct types of weapons and ammunition had disappeared from the Nigeria Police's arsenal in 2019, comprising 3,907 various rifles and pistols, as well as 88,078 AK-47 rifles from multiple formations nationwide (Ezeobi, 2022). The report indicates that the 21 Police Mobile Force (PMF) Squadron in Abuja reported no instances of lost firearms, as stated by the Force headquarters. The schedule of missing arms acquired from the same PMF indicated a total of forty-six (46) missing limbs from the year 2000 to February 2019.

ECOWAS Treaty on free movement of people and goods and SALW proliferation through Nigeria's borders

The researcher conducted interviews with military and civilian respondents about the impact of the ECOWAS Protocol on the free movement of people and products among member states on the growth of SALW in the country and, by extension, in South East Nigeria. Article 2, Paragraph 2, and Article 27 of the ECOWAS treaty urge member states to prioritise economic integration, encompassing the unrestricted movement of individuals, goods, and services. The majority of servicemen from the 82 Division of the Nigerian Army in Enugu indicated that the ECOWAS Treaty on the free movement of persons and products is not responsible for the proliferation of small arms in Nigeria, particularly in the South East, while a minority expressed an opposing opinion. The respondents indicated that other countries in the sub-region encompassed by the treaty do not suffer the proliferation of small arms and light weapons to the extent observed in Nigeria. The respondent contended that the absence of suitable processes at border checkpoints is accountable for the increase in the illicit movement of Small Arms and Light Weapons in Nigeria. Despite the adoption of the ECOWAS Convention on Small Arms and Light Weapons, their Ammunition, and Other Related Materials on June 14, 2006, which prohibits all international transfers of small arms within the subregion unless a Member State obtains a waiver from the ECOWAS Secretariat, the proliferation of such weapons remains alarming (Ugaigbe, Personal Interview, 2022). Moreover, the Importers Association of Nigeria Task Force against SALW proliferation in the South East Zone concurred with the stance of the troops from the 82 Division of the Nigerian Army in Enugu and said that:

“I do not believe in the ECOWAS Treaty as a factor fueling SALW proliferation in Nigeria and into South Eastern part of the country because security agencies check goods being brought into the country thorough the borders” (Okorie, Personal Interview 2022)

In an Interview/Focus Group Discussion with military personnel from the 103 Motorised Battalion in Awkunanaw, Enugu, the participants indicated that the ECOWAS treaty serves as an effective framework for the sub-region and is not directly accountable for the proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) in South East Nigeria. They asserted that the issue resides with the individuals tasked with monitoring the illicit entry of such arms. The responses indicated that the Treaty does not permit entrance into Nigeria with any restricted products.

The researcher also interviewed personnel from the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence in Ebonyi State, who indicated that despite the existence of an ECOWAS Convention on Small Arms and Light Weapons, the Protocol lacks the requisite enforcement for border inspections due to the issue of selective border checks in Nigeria. This situation facilitates the proliferation of SALW across certain borders, allowing such weapons to infiltrate regions such as South Eastern Nigeria.

Another respondent from the Nigeria Customs Service Enforcement Unit concurred that the ECOWAS Treaty does not promote arms proliferation, as each ECOWAS member state retains the authority to regulate its import and export systems through its customs management. However, they attributed the proliferation and other illicit entry of contraband goods to discrepancies in customs administration. The respondent contended that within the ECOWAS border framework, products prohibited in Nigeria may not be listed as forbidden in other nations. The respondent's assertion is corroborated by Aduloju and Opanike (2015) cited in Agwu and Ogali (2023) who argued that "despite the ongoing debate regarding the ECOWAS Protocol on the free movement of citizens, security implications, as indicated by experts, the public, and scholars, demonstrate that the Protocol cannot be held responsible for the current rampant and abhorrent activities such as contraband smuggling, human trafficking, and the movement of small arms and light weapons."

Agwu and Ogali (2023) contended that the increasing prevalence of illegal armament, people trafficking, and transnational crimes within the West African subregion has impeded the effective implementation of the ECOWAS treaty on free movement and compromised Nigeria's security. Crimes often perpetrated in a specific region are generally linked to another country outside. The increasing permeability of borders and the unprofessional conduct of security agencies have led to a growth in trans-border crime, which poses a significant danger to international security among states.

Esekumemu (2014) and Aminu (2022) contended, contrary to the respondents, that the ECOWAS Protocol on the free movement of commodities and persons facilitates the illicit influx of Small Arms and Light Weapons into Nigeria. Esekumemu (2014) identified that since the conclusion of the conflicts in Liberia and Sierra Leone, there has been a proliferation of small guns and light weapons across West Africa, which is ascribed to the Protocol. Ekezie-Joseph (2021) corroborated this assertion by stating that in West African countries, these weapons are utilized in civil conflicts, including ethnic and religious discord as well as political violence. Opanike and Aduloju (2015) concurred that the ECOWAS Treaty regarding the free movement of individuals and products is not a contributing factor to the spread of small arms and light weapons in the nation. The scholars opposing our respondents asserted that "although the objective of the free movement protocol is to promote economic activities, criminals have exploited it to conduct illicit transborder activities, including the illegal circulation of small arms and light weapons."

Ugwu et al. (2019) in their study agreed that the implementation of the ECOWAS protocol has enhanced cross-border mobility across West African territories and facilitated the spread of Small Arms and Light Weapons. Aminu (2022) explicitly indicated that the ECOWAS Protocol on Free Movement has transformed frontiers, such as the Nigeria-Niger Republic border, into a hub for the distribution of armament for banditry. He asserted that the ECOWAS inter-state migration policy establishes the legal framework, and that ethnic fragmentation, along with the shared cultural heritage of

Nigeria's border villages with certain neighbouring communities, is drawing residents from other West African countries. Aminu (2022) further revealed that a significant impediment to effective border security governance is the identification problem among residents of these border communities. The propensity of analogous ethnic groups in Nigeria to use the resemblance of border towns in Niger and Benin for political advantage, both within and beyond Nigeria's border communities, further complicates this problem. The ECOWAS Protocol concerning the Free Movement of Persons pertains to this issue.

Conclusion and Recommendation

The paper having x-rayed how porous nature of borders in Nigeria contributed to circulation of illegal arms in South Eastern Nigeria with data collected from relevant stakeholders on border security and border communities found that porous nature of borders in Nigeria, necessitated illegal arms proliferation in South Eastern Nigeria which thus fuel armed conflict in the region as actors in these armed conflicts execute them with weapons in the caliber of SALW. The study is able to identify that even though the South Eastern Nigeria does not have any international borders, Small Arms and Light Weapons are trafficked into the country through the international boundaries of Nigerian state into the country from where they found their way into the South East. Border security guards in both internal and international boundaries compromise border security in Nigeria, thus gave way for small arms and light weapons proliferation into Southern Eastern Nigeria. It was further discovered that while some respondents and scholars agreed that ECOWAS protocol on free movement of goods and persons within the sub-regional borders has no direct link to illegal weapons crossing into Nigeria from her neighbours, others blamed the treaty for arms proliferation. The paper can argue here that though the ECOWAS protocol provided for free movement of goods and persons, however, it did not debar or usurp border security guard from searching the vehicles bringing in goods into the country so as to detect any contraband good, therefore it was the laxity and corrupt practices of border security guards in both internal and international that creates window for arms trafficking into the country thorough the international Nigeria and internal borders.

The paper recommends that adequate funding, the use of cutting-edge technology, adequate training of security personnel, strengthening of the Multinational Joint Task Force, should be considered in order to achieve effective border security in Nigeria and to advance both national security and development. That government of Nigeria should have the political to secure all the borders of the country both land and seas as to checkmate the activities of those who use the porous borders to bring in all sorts contraband goods into the country such as SALWs.

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