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Small Arms Proliferation and Violent Conflicts in Nigeria: A Threat to Food Security.

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Abstract

The tendency of small arms proliferation to promote banditry and other illegal attacks in Nigeria is ascribed to the feeble and fragile nature of the federal government security management style and her attendant failure to deliver good governance. This academic enquiry attempts to scrutinize other security implication of the small arms and light weapon proliferation in Nigeria with empirically data generated from the secondary sources. Specifically, it attempts to ascertain if there is relationship between small arms proliferation related violence in Nigeria and the prevailing epileptic food security. The study employed the qualitative method of data collection and analysis with time series research design and the theory of failed state as its analytical framework in the analysis of the data collected for this study. It was reveals that there is a positive relationship between small arms proliferation related violence in Nigeria and the prevailing epileptic food security in Nigeria. Among other recommendations offered by this study it insist that while approaching the various stakeholders for a two-way small arms control pact the government should try as much as they can to assuage the existing tension while eliminating the small arms and light weapons from the society.

Key Words: Unemployment, Hunger Statistics, Poverty Head count, Poverty Gap, Killer Herdsmen and Boko-haram

Introduction

The proliferation of small and light weapons prolongs conflicts, facilitates violations of international humanitarian laws and human rights laws, and always put civilians at high risk of death or injury from weapons-related violence. In recent

time some African countries such as Nigeria have been under serious attack from different armed militant groups, although originally from the dreaded Boko-haram jihadist groups in the north, but in recent times are being supplemented with the killer herdsmen in



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the north and the unknown gunmen in the south, not to mention the migrant Fulani bandits that has continued to terrorize the whole country till date. Niger Republic and Mali has continue to battle with Tuareg security problems, while Cote d'Ivoire, have also come under attack through insurrections at some point, Liberia and Guinea persistently accuse each other of launching cross-border raids against their territories, in a conflict also involving Sierra Leone rebels. Illicit arms movement is not a particular country's problem nor does the spread of deadly weapons stop at national borders. Guns and small arms are no longer the preserves of militaries and police force but have fallen into the hands of ordinary criminals, terrorists, ethnic militias and death squads around the world, not only in third world or developing countries of the global south. The rate with which these small arms are available, leads to easy escalation of decaying and resolved security situations. These small arms have played a major role in exacerbating aimed and armed violence. Consequently, this phenomenon threatens the consolidation of democracy and security in Nigeria which is necessary for sustainable development. The ongoing Tigray crisis in Ethiopia is also another clear case of proliferation of small arms and light weapons considering its historical antecedence. As a result, in contrast to the conventional

believe inherited from the interwar period, emerging security problems confirm the role of small arms proliferation as stimulus to insecurity and a harbinger of massive human rights violation as well as humanitarian crises not just in Nigeria but in every society it is allowed to thrive. Though, in contemporary times, the greatest security challenge facing Nigeria and president Buhari's administration is the impunity of behavior of government officials and the national insecurity problems created by Islamic fundamentalist based in the Northern Nigeria. They are also known as the Boko Haram jihadist militias, and in recent times has been supplemented by the activities of migrant Fulani killer herdsman, bandits and the unknown gunmen in the south that has continued to attack government infrastructures. No doubt the proliferation of small weapons and illicit arms trafficking in Nigeria pose a major threat to peace, security and development in the African continent. However, they do not in themselves cause the insecurity and illegal activities in which they are involved. It is their wide availability, accumulation and illicit flows of their likes that tend to escalate insecurity and undermine peaceful coexistence. By intensifying aggression and encouraging crimes in the society which hamper the socio-economic as well as political development.



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In Africa, the proliferation of small arms is increasing in proportion. These proliferation has been argued to be a consequence of different civil and military conflict in the region such as the Syria conflict, the conflict in the Central African Republic, the Mozambique's, Angola's, Somalia's, Liberia's, Sudan's, Sierra Leone etc. as well as licensed stolen weapon in the region. There is no doubt that they have played a major role in exacerbating crimes and armed violence in Nigeria to the point that herders now carry AK47 instead of their nomadic herding sticks. As Pokoo (2014) has argued there are an estimated seven million such weapons circulating in sub-Saharan Africa with substantial numbers in the North East Nigeria. A tour of the Nigerian borders in September 1984 by Nigerian Immigration officials in Sokoto revealed that there were over 1,500 illegal entry points along Nigeria's border with Benin and Niger which provide opportunity for migrant Fulani killer herdsman to enter the country with their small arms unnoticed (Imobighe, 2003). Globally, it is about 35 percent of the small arms produced that are being used by the military or the constitutionally recommended personnel with the governments, the rest are in civilian hands, and the majority of these owners are unaccountable for, especially in the developing countries of Africa. In one of his studies Dokubo (2003) attempt

to highlight the general implication of the proliferation of small arms in any society but with a particular emphasis on the West African sub-region, he specifically contend that; out of the 600,000 people killed every year with small and light weapons across the globe, an estimated 350,000 of them are as a result of proliferation of arms in the society. He further contends that about fifty percent of illegitimate weapons that proliferate in Africa are used in internal conflicts, banditry, killer herdsman attack, armed robbery, kidnapping, and drug trafficking. He maintained that West Africa alone is reported to have an estimated eight million illicit weapons under circulation. Under the prevailing circumstances, he asserts that the availability of small arms outside the formal security structures has contributed to a great extent in creating continuous cycle of violence and instability in the sub-region that has no age or gender boundary as its brutality also include women and children in no small measure (2003). But this is not to imply that the international community is not trying to control or prevent its proliferation, a key step in this process was the 1997 report of the United Nations Panel of Governmental Experts on small and light weapon that led to the 2001 United Nations small arms and light weapon conference as well as the drafting of the United Nations Programme of Action to



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prevent, combat and eradicate the illegal trade in small arms and light weapons in all its speculative varieties. It also led to the drafting of the 2005 International Tracing Instrument and efforts to fully include small and light weapon in the coverage of the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms UNROCA (Onyishi & Oji, 2019).

The determined efforts to ensure that small and light arms proliferation were included in the coverage of the Arms Trade Treaty reflected the extent to which they remained central to the international security agenda. However, it was underlined with the adoption of UN Security Council Resolution 2117 in September 2013. The first UN Security Council Resolution to focus exclusively on the problems associated with the illicit proliferation of small arms and light weapon (Anthony, 2016). Prior to that, United Nations Security Council (UNSC) voted in favor of its presidential statement in 2005 encouraging the arms-exporting countries to exercise the highest degree of responsibility in small arms and light weapons transactions according to their existing responsibilities under relevant international laws (2016). However, numerous irregularities such as concealing arms as humanitarian aids and bribing of border officials including document forgery that are encounter on

transits undermine those provisions to a significant extent. It has also been argued that the accelerated pace of globalization has facilitated both legal and illegal cross-border transfers of these weapons, while a sudden upsurge in intra-state conflicts created an overwhelming demand for the small and light weapons, thereby making it a necessary weapons of choice in majority of the contemporary intra and interstate conflicts and even in non-war situations such as sectarian violence (Ibrahim, 2003).

So far we have explicated a range of views on the general security implication of small arms proliferation on the society from different scholars with various ideological orientation, and have also observed that most of the studies reviewed fervently contend that small arms proliferation encourages civil insurrection, sustain and encourages organized crime and has the tendency to transform minor and local insurgents into internationally recognized terror groups, such as the killer herdsmen in Nigeria. It must be as a result of this backdrop of varying degrees of human security challenges caused by proliferation of small arms and light weapon that the global community began to pay greater attention to it, and has designated them as the most destabilizing conventional weapons. However, none of the reviewed literatures highlighted its impact on other



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non-political or social indicators such as food security, economic as well as poverty trends in Nigeria. It is as a result of this noticeable gap in the existing literature that this study is embarked upon. To examine other security implication of all this violence occasioned by the proliferation of small arms in Nigeria, specifically to understand if there is a relationship between small arms proliferation related violence in Nigeria and the prevailing food crises in Nigeria as well as the growing poverty and unemployment trend. To do that we shall present a review of relevant literature and after which we shall discourse our methodology and theoretical approach.

Small Arms Proliferation in Nigeria

Nigerians *abinitio* were not familiar with small arms and light weapon, these types of weapon system were introduced by the Europeans prior to the advent of colonialism, precisely during the era of illegitimate slave trade between Europe and African sub region. Consequently, small weapons and other arms and ammunition were used by Europeans to realize their imperial ambitions in Africa because they used force to suppress Africans resistance to the European incursion. Though, gunboat diplomacy was also popularly used by the British to coerce African chiefs to enter into various exploitative agreements with

them (Edwards, 2005). These exploitative approaches to treaties by the European necessitated their use of small arms to keep their African counterparts in line. A tendency that encouraged the proliferation of the small arms and light weapons in the region as far as that period, There was also the West African Frontier Force (WAFF) that was used by the British Government to execute the British-Anglo War of 1901 to 1902, which also promoted the small arms proliferation in the region as they were employed to control other forms of resistance in Nigeria, West Africa, and Africa as a whole. The function of the United African Company (UAC) which was formally known as the role of Royal Niger Company (RNC) in using force to suppress dissenting communities is imperative in this review since they are backed by the British Government (Chuma-Okoro, 2011).

Evidently these small arms and light weapons found their ways into the hands of the colonized during the period of colonialism, and were initially used in the traditional hunting in the rural communities (2011). But as time progresses they become symbols of strength and power, and were later transformed into ceremonial weapons displayed during funerals, burials, ceremonies and customary festivals among the natives. Today, small arms are



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no longer just ornaments of prestige, or just for hunting and expedition. They have transformed in terms of functionality, lethality, sophistication, ubiquity and motive of ownership. They have become more weapons of criminality and instruments of the underworld (2011). Apparently, the 1959 Firearms Act was enacted to check the growing rate of small arms proliferation in Nigeria towards independence but it is evident that whatever measure that taken in that pact was not just enough to control the proliferation. The failure of the Nigerian government to execute a comprehensive disarmament and arms destruction programme after the civil war also exacerbated the proliferation of guns and illicit arms trafficking in the country. Nigeria later became a destination of small arms and light weapons used in banditry, crimes, political violence, social interest, ethnic tensions, revolts, sabotage, religious crisis, communal conflicts, social agitations, internal insurrection, terrorism, insurgency, riots, militancy, electoral violence, cross-border smuggling, black marketeering, among others (Abiodun, Ayo-Adeyekun, Onafowora, & Nwannenaya, 2018).

Nigeria is in the same vein, bedeviled with porous borders as it shares common borders with Benin, Cameroon, Chad, and Niger that are known as countries that transport illegal weapons into the

country. Small arms and light weapons are illegitimately procured through Cameroon, often as part of a shipment of machinery parts or smuggled inside petrol tankers. Other countries such as Gabon and Guinea-Bissau are also known to be countries through which illegal weapons re transported to Nigeria (Ojudu, 2007). Other countries from which illegitimate weapons and ammunition are sourced include Cote d'Ivoire, Liberia, South Africa, Turkey, and Ukraine, as well as Bulgaria, Kosovo, and Serbia (Davis et al, 2005). Other supply point of illegitimate arms into Nigeria include; weapons captured from confrontations with the Nigerian military and police, weapons sold to militias and illegal arm dealers by the bad eggs in Nigerian military, weapons provided by political parties for electoral violence/intimidation purposes, weapons provided in exchange for stolen oil offshore, weapons bought from ex-military men stationed in Bakassi and other places, and foreign/local arms dealers, weapons captured or bought from Cameroonian soldiers and finally those weapons that are directly supplied by Al-Qaeda cells links to Boko Haram jihadist in Nigeria (Abiodun, 2016).

The wind of globalization is also influencing the new international security agenda, it effects on the small arms proliferation cannot be ignored. On the



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one hand, globalization contributes to accelerated development of productive forces, scientific and technological progress and ever more intensive communication among states and people. On the other hand, it also facilitated the easy transportation of small arms from one country to the other and has transformed a domestic law and order problem to a national and international security threat (Best, 2006; Ninalowo, 2006). With its concomitant liberalization, states have in effect, lost control of its markets as is evident in the rise of black markets and the inability of the states to prevent the flow of illegitimate arms as a result of the the globalization appurtenances which advocate open borders and the adoption of policies such as free movements of people in a particular region (Ninalowo, 2006). Evidence indicates that illegal arms transfers in Nigeria are easier in periods of political transition that are normally preceded by social violence in the country. The politicians release arms to some political thugs who assist them to rig and win elections at all costs and after the politicians must have won and sworn into office; they forget to retrieve the arms already circulated. Thereafter, the political thugs and miscreants use the arms in their possession to unleash terror on the innocent citizens (Abiodun, 2016). Small Arms and Light Weapons Proliferation in Nigeria and indeed Africa

is reported to have caused about 5,994,000 fatalities in the last 50 years due to ineffective control (Renner, 2006).

In West Africa alone the figure changed a bit but it's still staggering, with about 30,000 people have been killed by small and light weapon in conflict each year since the end of the Cold War (2016). In Africa, the proliferation of small arms is increasing in proportion. These small arms being the remnants of conflicts in Mozambique, Angola, Somalia, Liberia, Sudan, Sierra Leone etc. as well as licensed weapons being stolen or lost, have played a major role in exacerbating crimes and armed violence in Nigeria. The continent of Africa is a major transshipment point for the international trade, as well as a major producer of local arms. In Africa, the sources of SALW proliferation are many and varied of international efforts to curb proliferation tend to concentrate on the manufacture and supply of new weapons, a major pipeline of SALW remains the stockpiles that were pumped into Africa in the 1970s, 1980s and early 90s by the ex-Soviet Union, the USA and their allies to fan proxy intrastate and interstate wars. These leftover weapons have found their way through clandestine networks involving rogue arms brokers, private military companies, shady airline companies and local smugglers to exacerbate on-going conflicts and



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facilitate the commencement of new ones in the continent (Abdel-Fatau, 2011). Two factors helped make it easier for these groups to act: the first one is that borders inherited by Africans are badly demarcated; hence, they are easily crossed. These boundaries inherited by African states, were arbitrarily drawn by European imperialists who colonized almost the entire continent (Imobighe, 1989).

A tour of the Nigerian borders in September 1984 by Nigerian Immigration officials in Sokoto revealed that there were over 1,500 illegal entry points along Nigeria's border with Benin and Niger (Imobighe, 2003). During the Meeting of States on Small Arms at the UN Headquarters in New York, between 14 and 18 June, 2010; it was observed that Liberia and its neighbours do not produce arms, but the major entry points of illicit arms and drugs, were more than 170 border points with Guinea, Sierra Leone and the Ivory Coast. Thus, small arms and light weapons are spread as a result of the influx of refugees from especially other neighbouring states. In other words, unregulated movement of people facilitates the circulation of such illegal weapons (Diarra, 2005). By the way, these arms are precisely small. They are circulated easily because they are small arms, easy to buy, easy to use, easy to transport and easy to conceal. Their

proliferation exacerbates conflicts, sparks refugee flows, undermines the rule of law and spawns a culture of violence and impunity. From the above point of view, one can confidently say that conflict prevention and resolution is not a question of regulating arms in general, but only a specific category of them (Chesterman, 2005). Equally, the break-up and deregulation of arms industries in eastern and central Europe have also led to the mushrooming of mini industries whose aggressive search for new markets in the developing world have made nonsense of existing export regimes. Africa itself boasts of countries that are arms manufacturers such as the South Africa, Zimbabwe, Egypt, Morocco and Nigeria among others, and countries that are dotted with growing small arms cottage industries (Abdel-Fatau, 2011).

Small Arms Proliferation and Its Economic implications in Nigeria

The review at this point will complement all the discussed papers, in that we also consider all the effects of conflict in Nigeria. However, we do not focus on a region of Nigeria or a particular type of violent conflict such as recent Fulani killer herdsmen or Boko Haram terrorism. Rather we focus on any type of violent conflict in Nigeria. Our rationale for doing this is the recognition that different regions in Nigeria have been plagued with momentous violent conflict at different times since Nigeria's



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independence in 1960. Hence, we attempt to identify the average recent and long term effect of exposure to any violent conflict on an individual's welfare over the period of 2000-2021. Our review may also differ from other reviews given our outcome variables of interest. In particular we focus on economic welfare related outcomes while other papers may focus on health and school related violent outcomes. Both health and education outcomes are important and our paper complements these papers by focusing on another important outcome household economic welfare. In this phase we focus on the impact of conflict on welfare outcomes such as poverty incidence and severity. Most study suggests the existence of a positive correlation between poverty and the likelihood of civil strife (Collier, 1999; White, 2005; Kondylis, 2007). Some authors have focused on linking poverty or food shocks to conflict. For example Pinstруп-Andersen & Shimokawa (2008) explain how poverty, hunger and food insecurity together with inequality of income, land and other material goods generate anger, hopelessness, a sense of unfairness and lack of social justice all of which provide a fertile ground for grievance and conflict. Other authors also examined the relationship between income shocks and conflict across states in Nigeria (Abidoye & Cali, 2014).

A situation of violence militates against domestic and foreign investors in the economy and prevents future economic growth and development (Basseyy et al, 2018). They maintained that attainment of independence, Nigeria is bedeviled with political violence which has undermined the performance of all sectors of national development. It has retarded the economic and social transformation of the country. Political violence militates against domestic and foreign investors in the economy and prevents future economic growth and development (2018). Another serious implication of political violence for national development is that it leads to electing those leaders that are not credible which is detrimental to economic and social progress of the country. Election of unqualified leaders into political offices in Nigeria is a launching pad to poor leadership that cannot drive home the vision of the country (Okoafor, 2015, p.8). In another study conducted in Cote d'Ivoire by Dabalen and Saumik (2014) using ACLED data and the HLSS and focus on the impact small arms related violence on households' food security using dietary diversity scores. Their findings suggest that households in conflict areas of highest intensity and individuals who are the direct victims of the conflict are more food insecure with lower dietary diversity. The development challenges



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that we are witnessing in the contemporary Nigeria, could be attributed to poor leadership. Political violence has disrupted educational activities and consequently school calendar is extended. This adversely influences the duration a student would spend in school, attracting more expenditure on parents, more worrisome is exposing students to social vices like drug addiction, alcohol, armed robbery, prostitution among other vices (Aver et al, 2013). Security is a major human need; it is paramount so much that absence of it will render people ineffective in different spheres of life.

Abraham Maslow, in his classical work on human needs ranked safety/security as second to physiological needs in the hierarchy of human needs. Traditionally, security of lives and property is the exclusive preserve of the state but the dynamics of the world today has clearly revealed that security is the responsibility of all (Abolurin, 2012). However, there seems to be synergy amongst scholars as to what internal security is all about; Hare (1973) views it as the confrontations of threats to peace in the society while Ray (1987) sees it as the desire and capacity for self-defense. Similarly, Brennan (1961) accepts that national security as the protection of national survival while in a more elaborate manner. As a result of recurrent violent conflicts, Nigeria is

faced with the herculean task of responding to a fluctuating but always sizeable number of internally displaced persons IDPs (1961). Between 2000 and 2002, for instance, an estimated 1,713,306 persons were displaced by ethno-religious conflicts and, by June 2013, some 1.6 million Nigerians are estimated to have been internally displaced. The January 2010 crisis in Jos, Plateau State displaced over 40,000 persons.

Wilson (2014) gave the various components of national security to buttress the meaning and they include; political security, economic security, energy and natural resources security, homeland security, cyber security, human security and environmental security. Arms build-up has fuelled violence in various parts of Nigeria especially, communal clashes and ethno-religious conflicts. Between 1999 and April 2019, Nigeria recorded at least 213 ethno-religious conflicts, leading to the death of several thousands of people (Osman, 2020). These weapons helped to prolong conflicts, induced huge internal population displacement, undermined social peace and devastated the economic livelihoods of individuals and communities as well as the country. Subrahmanyam (1973) perceive the term national security as protecting the national integrity of the state and defending the essential values that



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constitute national identity. However, Nigeria's problem with small and light weapon proliferation is not new, but its increasing availability in the last decade has helped stoke a wave of insurgencies, ethno-religious conflicts, killer herdsmen attacks, cross-border banditry, kidnapping, terrorism, human trafficking and drugs, armed robbery and other violent crimes which combined is threatening the economic development trajectory. The impact of Nigeria's small arms and light weapon proliferation problem on human security is also evident in financial losses induced by conflicts. About 10 major ethno-religious conflicts between 1999 and 2004 alone cost the Nigerian government over 400 million naira, about US\$2.02 million or thereabout. Just to take care those in IDPs, because situations of internal displacement undermine human security both at individual and community levels. According to Nte (2011) IDPs are usually vulnerable to violent crimes like robbery and rape, and are prone to contracting contagious diseases, due to poor sanitary conditions at the settlement centers.

Theoretical Framework

In this study the researcher employed 'the theory of failed state' as articulated by William Zartman (1995) as its framework of analysis; the theory contends that the state is first and foremost a service provider" and should do everything it can

to ensure the comfort and security of her citizens. According to Zartman a state is deemed collapsed when the basic functions of the state are no longer performed within its territory. In other words, a state has collapsed when it is no longer able to provide the services for which it exists. A similar alternative is to describe states that have not been able to establish the features associated with statehood as 'failed states'. from Anyanwu (2005) perspective as cited in Abiodun (2018), a failed state is one that has shattered social and political structures. It is characterized by social, political and economic failure as argued by Rotberg (2003). Another leading proponent of the theory of failed states defines state failure as the inability of states to provide positive political goods to their inhabitants. Both Zartman and Rotberg distinguish between a variety of services that states may provide, ranging from security to the rule of law, the protection of property, the right to political participation, provision of infrastructure and social services such as health and education. These services constitute a hierarchy, Rotberg (2003) argues. According to Abiodun (2018), common characteristics of a failed state is when a government is so weak or ineffective that it has little practical control over much of its territory, non-provision of public utilities or services, widespread corruption and criminality;



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refugees and involuntary movement of populations, and sharp economic decline (Abiodun 2018). The provision of security is the most fundamental service states provide, in the sense that security is a condition for the provision of all other services such as socio-political and economic development, including infrastructures.

The theory also argues that states failures serve as the breeding ground for violent as many extremist groups is indisputable, just as is evident in Nigeria. Clarke, (2015) notes that failing states are invariably the product of a collapse of the power structures providing political supports for law and order, a process generally triggered and accompanied by anarchic forms of internal violence. It is the collapse of state institutions, especially the police and judiciary with resulting paralysis of governance, a breakdown of law and order, and general banditry and chaos. The Nigeria state maybe prepared to wage war against the detractors but non-state actors differ fundamentally from state actors; the former are moving targets. They depend on highly decentralized structures that are semi-autonomous and can act and survive on their own. The list of internal challenges is extensive and growing and no region of the world is unaffected. In brief, the perceived pressure to anticipate and respond to state failure has increased

in the past several years but Not only are the functions of government suspended, but its assets are destroyed or looted; and experienced officials are killed or flee the country. It is as a result of these failed states that most people take laws into their hands, and start committing various crimes, which make it possible for the movement of small arms and light weapons across the Nigerian borders. The international community's track record in this regard is not good. First, it has failed to prevent the slow collapse of states in Central and West Africa, despite a clear understanding of when and where such events would occur and the availability of forecasts predicting and explaining their causes and manifestations as in Nigeria, Congo, Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone.

Method

This section will present a systematic and theoretical explanation of the research design or methods employed in this study. In this section therefore, the researcher will present the systematic steps taken in gathering of the relevant facts, analyzing them and drawing meaningful conclusions so that the objectives of this study could be achieved. The steps that follow consequently include research design, methods of data collection, as well as methods of data analysis, data presentation and analysis. The research



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design employed in this study is the **time-series** research design. In many ways the single-subject approach is similar to a time series analysis in that the stability and changes in behavior are studied across time (Box & Tiao, 1965). Time series analysis is characterized by repeated measurements of the dependent variable over time with an introduction of the independent variable at a particular point in time (Box and Jenkins, 1976). Trends or patterns of behavior are observed both before and after introduction of the independent variable. It is argued that all longitudinal designs must take the potential relationship between observations over time into account. But for time series analysis, the dependency precluded the use of traditional statistical tests. The sequence of analysis is comprehensively highlighted in this design. Our first step will be to identify the variables, which is that unit of research that change when situation changes. In this *time-series* design, “the quasi-independent variable is the **x** variable, which is the variable that is being manipulated to effect a dependent variable’ but the predicted outcome would be observed in the dependent variable, which is denoted as the **Y** variable’ (Pope, & Mays, 2000). Using a time series analysis the dependent variable is observed over a long period of time for any variation or changes that might occur as a result of the

manipulation of the **x** variable. The application of the design on the hypotheses of this study shall take the following order:

Hypothesis 1: There is a positive relationship between the small arms proliferation related violence in Nigeria and the prevailing food crises, poverty and unemployment. The **x** variable is the small arms proliferation related violence in Nigeria while the **Y** variable, would be the prevailing food crises, poverty and unemployment.

The qualitative method of data collection was employed in this study. The strength of this method is its ability to provide textual descriptions of how people experience a particular research issue. This method, provide facts about the human’ side of a particular issue. that is, the usual, conflicting beliefs, behaviors, emotions, opinions, and individual relationships (Devizin & Lincoln, 2000). Qualitative method of data collection are also very potent in identifying palpable factors, such as the norms, gender roles, socio-economic status, ethnicity and religion whose part in the research problems may not be readily obvious. When used together with quantitative methods, qualitative methods can assist to elucidate and comprehend better the complex reality of a given situation and the insinuations of a quantitative data



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(Behard, 1995). Also, the qualitative method of data analysis was employed in this analytical study, this methods of data collection and analysis can go in *pari pasu*, in an interactive manner because the result of the analysis will definitely assist and, or help guide the subsequent collection of data. Qualitative method of data collection and data analysis derive, inform or complement each other, with result that help the analysis to a higher level synthesis of the information being sought (Dunnin, 2009). Qualitative method of data analysis as perceived by Bogdan & Binlen (2003) is a process that advocates “working with data,

Data Presentation and Analysis

We shall now discuss the findings related to the study hypothesis which stated that ‘*There is a positive relationship between the small arms proliferation related violence in Nigeria and the prevailing food crises, poverty and unemployment*’. From the data gathered for this study it is revealed that there is a positive relationship between the dependent and independent variable in the study hypothesis. Preliminarily, the costs of killer herdsmen as well as boko-haram

organizing them into meaningful unit, coding them, synthesizing them and searching for patterns” (2003, p.33). The objective of analysis of qualitative data is to unveil patterns, concepts, meaning and themes as they exist without any manipulation. However, in order to reduce threats to validity, this study employed a multiple approach to data analysis. Consequently we employed the use of line graph, tables and percentages to analyze our hypotheses. This approach will assist in clarity of information and easier understanding of the data and facts presented.

attack which is powered by small arms proliferation on the rural farmers of the middle-belt region and the State Government Revenues is devastating, these states in the region records different degree of losses in IGR due various attack on their rural farmers (see table 2). However the current security failure due to small arms *related violence in Nigeria* has dislocated a numbers of farmers and has continuously discourage them from going back to their farms any time soon.



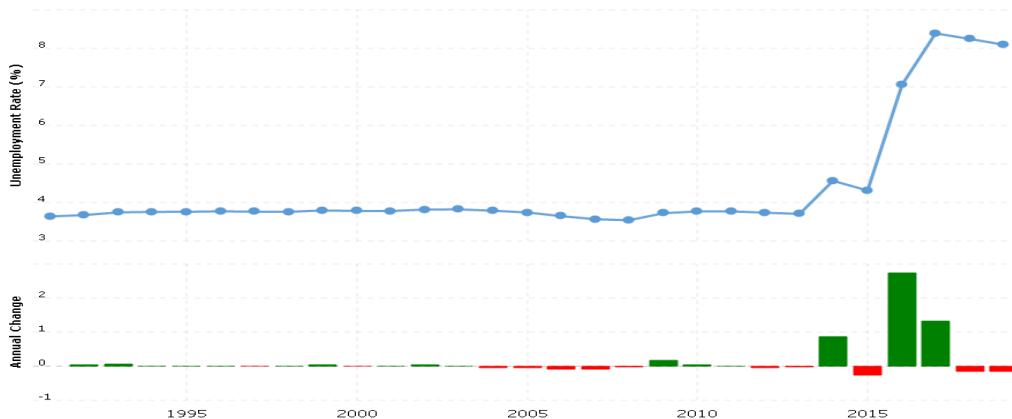
Table 1: Trends of Fulani Herdsmen Attack and Recorded Deaths 2010 – 2021 (tsnds)		
DEATHS BY ACTOR = FULANI MILITANTS	VICTIMS = CHRISTIAN POPULATION STATES (BENUE, KADUNA, PLATEAU, TARABA)	VICTIMS = NIGERIA TOTAL
2010-14	5,890	7,551
2015-17	3,452	4,722
2018	2,484	3,286
2019 – 21	4,253	6,725
TOTAL: 2000-21	16,079	22,284

Source: ICON 2021; Statistica 2021

On this very note, it may not be wrong to regard Nigeria as a country at war since the conventional threshold that is needed for a country to be referred to as such has been attained and surpassed in the present activities of the various armed group that have seized the control of the country and humbled the Nigeria security structure. It has been argued that the desideratum for an armed conflict to be classified as civil war is upon their record of one thousand deaths from the resulting attacks (Guseh

& Oritsejafor, 2019). It's no secret that Nigeria has recorded more than that required number only from the killer herdsmen independent of the dreaded Boko-haram and the recent bandit attacks on the Nigeria people (see table 1 and figure 2). In fact, Campbell & Harwood (2018) in their study revealed that the Boko Haram terrorist group alone has claimed about 3,426 to 3,753 between June 2017 and June 2018.

Figure 1 The Nigeria Unemployment Rate and their Annual Percentage Change 1991 – Q1 2021 (%)



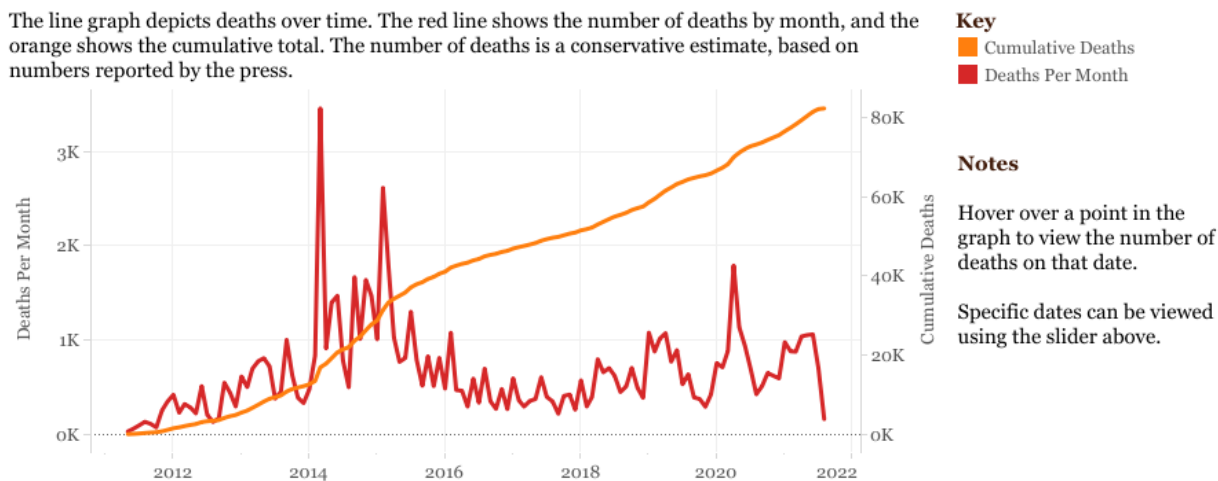
Source; World Bank 2021



the consequences of small arms proliferation in Nigeria has increased violent deaths which encompasses intra and inter community conflicts and other fatalities from different types of violence with the highest number resulting from the killer herdsmen attack on the rural farmers, the Boko-haram activities in the north as well as the migrant bandits that recorded 3,425 deaths in 1,191 incidents (Ukoji et al, 2019). All these insecurities combined has stretched the civil and social fabrics of the Nigeria nation and steered in obnoxious kind of

unemployment trend that has continued to climb as the rural farmers abandon their farms for fear of death while the various attack increases in magnitude. A review of the data presented revealed that both unemployment trends, hunger statistics and poverty incidence in Nigeria tend to increase as the coordinated attacks by various militant groups on innocent people necessitated by small arms proliferation increases (compare figure 1,3 & 4 with table 1 and figure 2). For instance the existing

Figure 2: *Number of Boko-haram victims in months and the cumulative total 2010 – 2021 (tsnds)*



Nigeria Security Tracker produced by the Africa Program at the Council on Foreign Relations (<https://www.cfr.org/programs/africa-program>)



Nigeria unemployment trend and their annual change have continued to climb since 2015 (see figure 1), just as the red line in the graph spiked within the same

three thousand deaths mark in the cumulative calculation. The percentage trend has also abandoned its negative route and assumed a positive position as

Table 1: *Economic Cost of Small Arms Proliferation violence in Nigeria (Selected States)*

State	Cut Point	Total IGR Lost	Predicted Effect (Avg. Estimate)	Predicated Effect (Conservative)
Benue	2015 –20	361,839,070.00	-47,704	0
			-44% 0%	0%
Kaduna	2000—21	527,448,060.00	-64,955	-29,570
			-22%	-12%
Nasarawa	2014—21	194,366,400.00	-27,746	-6,180
			-45%	-15%
Plateau	2013—20	270,109,090.00	-207,051	-73,543
			-75%	-51%
Total		1,353,762,620.00	-347,456	-109,294
			-47%	-22%
As Percentage of Synthetic Predictions			96%	90%
Source: <i>Mercy Corps 2014; NBS 2020</i>				

period under study (see figure 2). The figure as shown in the graph has risen from 4.3% in 2015 to 8.9% in the 1Q of 2021 just as the orange line in the graph is relentlessly approaching the eighty

a result of the rising insecurity in the country powered by small arms proliferation (see figure 3). Even when the

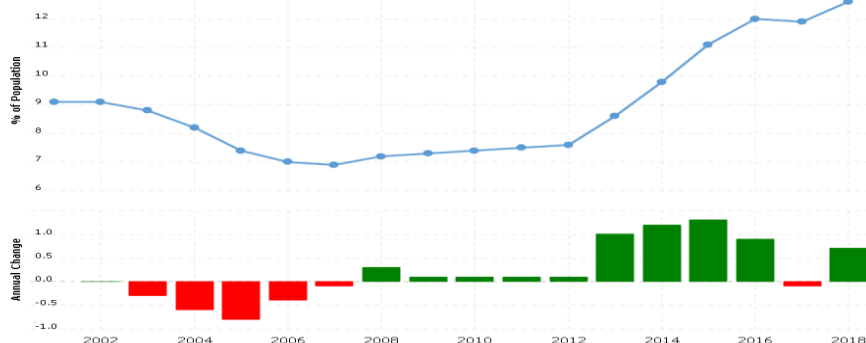
government has continued to pay less attention to the security reality of the country it is apparent that small arms proliferation present a situation that have crippled the Nigeria security structure, increase the hunger statistics, its annual percentage change as well as poverty head count percentage of the population, including the unemployment trend as is evident in figure 1, 2, 3 & 4 as well as table 1 of this study. Nigeria current unemployment rate remain one of the country’s most challenging socio-

economic encumbrance to autarchy and has continued to increase the hunger statistics. The figure 3 above present a historical review of Nigeria hunger statistic between 2000 and 2021 when the effect of the small arms proliferation in the Nigeria is presumed manageable to when they have become unimaginably catastrophic see figure 2 and table 1 above. This revealed that between 2001 and 2014 the hunger trajectory sloped to 6.9% in 2006, from 9.0% in 2000. These



situations no doubt threaten food security.

Figure 3; *Nigeria Hunger Statistics and the Annual percentage Change 2001- Q1 2021(%)*



Source; World Bank 2021

This trend remain reasonable till 2014 when it increase to 9.8% and has continued in that path as the killings and other insecurity crisis related to small arms proliferation continued to ravage the countryside, the 1Q of the 2021 already recorded 12.9% while the trend has continue on the upward position as a result of the recurrent attack on the farmers by the killer herdsmen as well as Boko-haram (see table 1 & figure 2). There is no doubt that no nation can ever achieve food security independent of agricultural development in that society. To do that requires first and foremost the provision of security to the concerned farmers, which starts with the control of small arms proliferation, protected source of farming materials, abundance crop and livestock as well as prolonged

opportunities for profitable employment of labour, including arable lands, food utilization and food quantity as well as quality to meet local consumption, national reserves and export (Ayinde, 2019). to achieve economic autarchy food security must be secure at five different levels which include the household, the individual, the national and international level, at national level which is our concern here its only achieved when all the citizen irrespective of social status continuously enjoy physical and economic access to adequate nutritious and safe food, to satisfy their dietary requirements as well as favorite foods for energetic and healthy life (International Crisis Group, 2017).



Table 3: *Poverty and inequality indicators in Nigeria in 2020*

	Poverty headcount rate, in percentage of population in strata	Poverty gap index, in percentage of poverty line	Gini Coefficient
NIGERIA	40.1	12.9	32.1
Urban	18	4.5	31.9
Rural	52.1	17.4	32.8

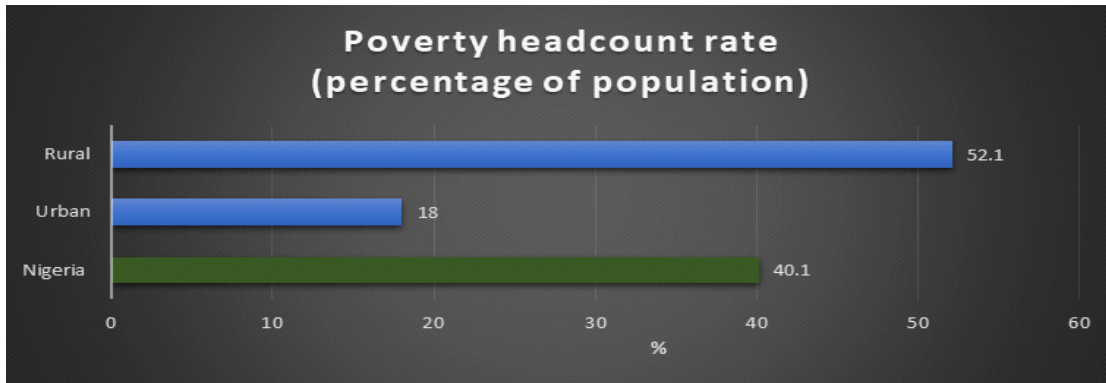
Source: NBS *Nigeria Living Standards Survey, 2020*. **Note:** The estimates did not include Borno state

But it is difficult to achieve that under violence situation created by the small arms proliferation in Nigeria. Achieving the above postulate means the achievement of poverty reduction in Nigeria which has continued to increase as the attacks on rural farmers continues in the farming communities. It's evident that the poverty situation in Nigeria is underpinned by the high unemployment rate, calculated at 8.9% in 2020 (World Bank, 2021). In Nigeria about 40.1% of the citizens were classified as poor. This means that an average of four people in

every ten in Nigeria can only access about N137, 430 per annum as their real per capita expenditures, it also means that over 82.9 million Nigerians are considered as poor by the national standards (see table 3). Though this number did not take Borno State into account as they are considered as non-random and non-representative since the sample was drawn from the household that are safe to visit in the state and does not represent the whole state due to security problems.



Figure 4: Poverty headcount rate in percentage of population in strata 2020



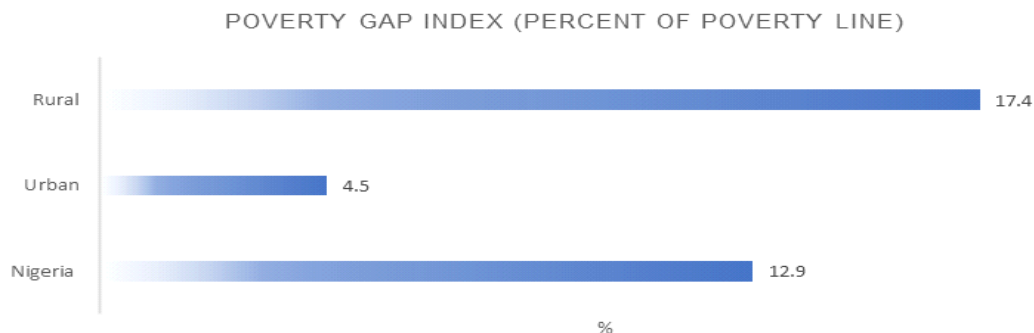
Source: NBS *Nigeria Living Standards Survey, 2020*. **Note:** The estimates exclude Borno state

Between 2018 and 2020 which was the period of this survey, concentrated insurrectionary attacks in the northeast have continued to increase poverty headcount with attendant food needs as well as displacement of persons in the region (FEWS NET, 2019; 2020). This is also true of many households who are victims of the killer herdsmen and boko-haram in the central and northern states of Plateau, Katsina, Adamawa, Zamfara, Benue, Taraba, Nasarawa and Kaduna.

Due to the security failure in these states engendered by small arms proliferation, the households no longer engage in their usual livelihood activities including farming as there is no safe access to farms and farm produce as well as market for them, including other related income opportunities in the region (FEWS NET, 2019) thereby increasing the poverty headcount as well as the poverty gap index (see figure 3 & table 2).



Figure 5: Poverty gap index in percentage of poverty line 2020



Source: NBS Nigeria Living Standards Survey, 2020. Note: The estimates exclude Borno state

The national poverty trend is rooted on welfare aggregate regionally adjusted per capita consumption expenditures across all households. Based on that, it is not impossible to use and, or apply the national poverty line to the consumption cumulative to estimate the inequality and poverty indicators across all states in Nigeria. Of particular interest and policy use are three indicators, they includes: poverty gap, poverty headcount ratio and Gini index (see table 3, figure 4 &5). The headcount ratio as here presented describes the proportion of population of the household's dwellers where the value of per capita total consumption expenditure is below or equal to the poverty line, poverty gap on the other hand estimate or measures the depth of poverty in the country, therefore, the dissimilarity could be below the line. Gini index is arithmetical computation of expenditure distribution in the country within a given time. It is generally used as a measure of economic inequality. It ranges from near 0, which would indicate perfect equality and 100 -perfect inequality (NBS 2020). A cursory look at table 3 will reveal the position of Nigeria between 2020 and 1Q of 2021. in

addition, the country also experienced very low SDGs Sustainable Development Goals Index ranking or score as a result of the security failure engendered by small arms proliferation, with 43rd position among the 42 African countries which is about $47.38/100$ % a position that left Nigeria behind countries such as Sudan with 47th and Comoros with 52nd positions respectively (Otekunrin *et al.* 2019b). The Annual percentage Nigeria GDP growth rate is not spared from the security implication of small arms proliferation in the Nigeria society but that will be a matter for another day.

Conclusion

In this study, using the time series research design and the theory of failed state we have seen that violence related to small arms proliferation in Nigeria has virtually affected food security, poverty rate as well as unemployment. This effect, of course, is not a positive one but negative. In the qualitative data collected for this study, it also revealed how the use of small arms have helped the Fulani killer herdsmen, Boko-haram and other illegitimate groups in the country



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wreck havoc in the lives of rural farmers in the northern Nigeria and other parts of the country which abruptly put a stop to their contribution to Nigeria GDP and arrest the rural per capita income. However, in as much as these small arms and light weapons can facilitate and exacerbate conflicts and promote banditry, they cannot do that by themselves except with the help of man. And since this type of arms also performs legitimate function, its control requires tactical approach. They perform legitimate functions in the administration of governance and are widely used by the rural community in hunting to supplement the usually starch-based diet in the sub region. Besides, discourses about small and light weapons always touch on state security and national sovereignty of the state. As a result, in the end, only governments can make and implement agreements on arms transfers and procurement. However, an inclusive and comprehensive response is required to meet the complex challenges of weapons proliferation in Nigeria. Unfortunately an institutionalized mechanism for such function is yet to exist or has remained fragmented and inadequately sourced for such function. Plans to build up effective controls on legal arms possession and transfers, among civilians and state security forces, remain inadequate. So, too, are procedures to disarm ex-servicemen, remove unlicensed arms from civilians, and destroy or safely dispose of surplus stocks of arms or confiscated illicit weapons.

Consequent upon the above stated fact, this study passionately recommend that the federal government should as matter of

urgency seek for an inclusive anti small arms proliferation campaign that are capable of producing results without alienating governments from the citizens. Whatever strategy is adopted the citizens must not feel threatened in the process of its execution. The study also recommends a two strand approach to the small arms and light weapon proliferation control. First, the operators of the small arms and light weapon conduit into the sub-region, exporting states mainly from Eastern and Central Europe, the brokers, and private military entrepreneurs must be approached for a two way control pact over the regulation of small arms and light weapons to and fro Nigeria. Secondly, the government should try as much as they can to assuage the existing tension while eliminating small arms and light weapons from the society. And finally, should any person or group is found wanting he/she must be treated accordingly irrespective of tribe or religion in order to brighten any hope of achieving food security, reduction of unemployment rate as well as the poverty trend in the country.

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