

## ECOWAS Protocol on Free Movement of Persons and Proliferation of Small/Light Weapons in West Africa: A Comparative Study of Nigeria and Niger Republic, 1999-2014

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### ABSTRACT

*One of the biggest challenges facing Economic Community of West Africa states (ECOWAS) members and Nigeria in particular is arms proliferation. One of the fundamental obstacles to peace and security in West Africa is the presence and continued proliferation of small arms and light weapons (SALW). The proliferation of small arms constitutes a major source of destruction to lives and properties and exacerbates inter-communal tensions leading to full-fledge conflicts. Most of the West African borders are porous, thus, making it easy for entry and exit of arms, drugs, as well as traffic of humans. More so, the high level of corruption in most of these countries compounds these security challenges faced by the states and the regional efforts at large. It is against this background that the ECOWAS Moratorium and subsequently the ECOWAS Convention on small arms and light weapons (SALW) was adopted by member states. The study has been designed to critically appraise ECOWAS protocol on free movement of persons and proliferation of small arms and light weapons (SALW) in West Africa: An Appraisal of Nigeria-Niger Republic, 1999-2014. It assesses the efforts by the regional body in combating the menace with a view to proffer suggestions on how to address the threat. To achieve this aim, the study was guided by two research questions and two hypotheses. The study used secondary source of Data collection. To analyze the issues generated, we predicated analyses on the Neo-Functionalist theory. The theory x-rays what has continuously fuelled armed struggle*

*Keywords: Ecowas, weapons, Africa, Corruption and Unrest.*

*in West African countries and high rate of small arms in the region. The study found that: (i) the implementation of the protocol has enhanced cross border movement within West African boarders and aid arms proliferation, and Recommends: (i) reconstitute the Nigerian state in such a way as to be proactive in dealing with the demand factors of SALW that heightens the proliferation of SALW, (ii) strengthen the law enforcement agencies in order to enable them check the supply factors of SALW that worsens security situations in the Northern part of Nigeria, (iii) all member states of ECOWAS must work assiduously to reduce the activities of trans-border criminal elements so as to encourage member states to open up their borders more freely to community citizens on legitimate grounds, (iv) the adoption of sustainability and lay-down plans for the youths to avoid taken up arms and creating civil unrest. The study further concludes that, the debilitating economy, failure of states to deliver the basic necessities of life, insecurity, and rising rates of unemployment, and above all corruption are some of the major internal factors that serve as obstacles to meaningful efforts at combating the problem in the region. It therefore posits that all hands must be on deck at all levels to address the problem, considering the important role of the region to the continent, and to the sustainable development of member nations and global peace and security.*

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### INTRODUCTION

The end of the cold war ushered in a spate of renewed global interrelation and interdependence that spurred the world into an era of unprecedented economic growth and prosperity. This regrettably was not the case for Sub-Sahara Africa

and the West African sub region in particular. The end of the Cold War had in contrast unleashed an outbreak of callous intrastate conflicts resulting in untold magnitude of human tragedy. The sub region has in the past two decades

ignominiously played host to some of the most callous and brutal conflicts in recent history. West Africa has undeservedly come to be epitomized by massive killings, internal displacements, wanton refugee flows and acute poverty.

The sub-region essentially portrays to the world a gloomy picture of human deprivation and indignity. This was the image captured by [1] in his *The Coming Anarchy: Shattering the Dreams of the Post Cold War* when he wrote, "West Africa is becoming the symbol of World Wide demography, and societal stress, in which criminal anarchy emerges as the real 'strategic' danger" [2]. Disease, over population, unprovoked crime, scarcity of resources, refugee migrations, the increasing erosion of nation-state international borders, and the empowerment of private armies, security firms and international drug cartels are now most tellingly demonstrated through a West African prism."

Long years of single party and authoritarian rule coupled with frequent regime change through military coups made it impossible to pursue development in West African Region [3]. Politics therefore undermined economic development because most leaders were more interested in maintaining the status quo through power struggle than pay serious attention to development that would benefit the citizens of the respective states constituting the region. Often, arbitrary regime change was aided and abetted by neighboring states and this made it impossible to pursue any regional project with success as government became suspicious of each other [4].

#### **Statement of the Problem**

The West African region is at the epicenter of the numerous violent conflicts that are destabilizing Africa today. From 1990s to the present, the manifestation of these conflicts, which have reached crisis proportions, is a culmination of long years of unstructured and unpredicted struggles that started in the 1960s and continued

to the 1980s. From the despair of peaceful protests, petitioning against conditions of poverty, blockading oil platforms, and occasional disruption of oil production [5] [6]. The violent character of the rebellion now includes the complete shut-down of oil installations and platforms, cross-killing and maiming of militants, state security forces and innocent citizens, and the unprecedented practice of hostage taking and illegal bunkering (a euphemism for oil theft), which has become big business in recent times in west Africa.

The proliferation of small arms and light weapons is adjudged as the most immediate security challenge to individuals, societies, and states worldwide, fuelling civil wars, organized criminal violence, insurgency and terrorist activities posing great obstacles to sustainable security and development [7]. Many a times small insurgencies tend to develop into larger civil wars and possibly destabilize an entire region. This trend especially in Africa is attributed to the weakness and fragile nature of the states and their attendant failure to deliver in governance. Small arms and light weapons are often used to forcibly displace civilians, impede humanitarian assistance, prevent or delay development projects, and hinder peace-keeping and peace-building efforts [8]. When conflicts end or subside, small arms often remain in circulation, which may lead to additional violence and suffering since fighting can resume or conflicts may erupt in neighboring regions. In non-conflict areas, small arms may be used in criminal violence or may be used in homicides, suicides, and accidents. And they are frequently the primary tools of terrorist bent on sowing chaos and discord [9] [10].

#### **Objectives of the Study**

In West Africa, the rate of proliferation of small arms is increasing exponentially. The balances of small arms traded are the remnants of arsenals of ethnic militias and political thugs, as well as licensed weapons being stolen or lost.

These small arms have played a major role in exacerbating crimes and armed conflicts; thus making west Africa a viable market for illegal arms dealers, as well as a growing producer of local arms [11]. This phenomenon poses a major threat to political stability, democratic consolidation and security in the region, which are necessary conditions for sustainable development.

The general objective of the study is to interrogate the rationale behind the proliferation of small arms and light weapons in the West Africa especially as it concerns threat to socio-economic and political development. The specific objectives of the study are to:

- 1 Ascertain the link between free movement of persons and proliferation of small arms and light weapons in Nigeria-Niger Republic boarder between 1999-2014?
- 2 Examine the impact of arms proliferation arising from the implementation of ECOWAS Protocol on Free Movement of Persons in Nigeria-Niger Republic boarder between 1999-2014?

#### **Significance of the Study**

This research work has both theoretical and practical significance. Scientific knowledge is cumulative. Hence, on a theoretical level, the study shall synchronize with the existing works already done on the subject [12]. Put differently, this study, by clarifying issues and facilitating understanding, will be a further contribution to knowledge and a source for further research and inquiries. It will not only enrich the pools of literature in the subject area but shall chart a new intellectual course in the strategic study of small arms proliferation in West Africa [13].

#### **Theoretical Framework**

This study is anchored on the theory of State First Approach. State First Approach is a theory of integration which claims that creation of centralized political institutions at the regional level

Practically, the study will be of interest and immense importance to the organs of the Africa Union, ECOWAS and other organizations and groups interested in the dynamics of arms proliferation and the inherent perils it portrays in this 21<sup>st</sup> century. The issues will also help to enhance understanding, provide valuable information/data that will assist global actors in articulating potent policies that will help to address the problems of SALW.

Finally, the study by addressing the research questions and stimulating enlightened intellectual discourse will definitely benefit students interested in conducting inquiries in sensitive areas of national security and hence reduce areas of conflict between the government and any dissident/aggrieved group.

#### **Scope and Limitation**

This study was restricted to ECOWAS protocol on free movement of persons, small/light weapons in West Africa, An appraisal of Nigeria-Niger Republic, 1999-2014.

The study used West African States as a central focus because of numerous conflicts that are destabilizing Africa today. From 1990s to the present, the manifestation of these conflicts, which have reached crisis proportions, is a culmination of long years of unstructured and unpredicted struggles that started in the 1960s and continued to the 1980s [14].

This study has been limited and constrained by some factors such as; finance, time frame for the research study, lack of some relevant data and other communication network.

The study specifically concentrates on ECOWAS protocol on free movement of persons, small/light weapons in West Africa, An appraisal in Nigeria-Niger Republic boarder between 1999-2014.

#### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

is the best way to build social and economic community. The most outspoken proponent of this theory is Kwame Nkuruma. In his book "Africa Must Unit" where he argues that African economic integration must proceed under

“sound political direction”, to permit the planning of complementary industrial development [15]. The amalgamationists position seems to be on how existing government can be persuaded to yield sovereignty to regional organizations. Nevertheless, amalgamationists emphasized that strong regional institutions offer a corrective to the purer forms of functionalism and interventionism which minimized their significance [16]. The issue of solidarity and unity has been viewed as essential, not only as far as the continental integration agenda is concerned, but also given the fact that for them, not a single African country can change the socio-political and economic relations with the global system and countries controlling it. Central to this view of solidarity and unity among African countries to achieve continental integration are several key issues [17].

- First, is the issue of the effective right of African countries to national self-determination and the free, independent exercise of their sovereignty and foreign policy.
- Second, is the structural and fundamental need to defeat neocolonialism and imperialism.

#### **Applicability of Theory**

Integration in one sector of activity results from a felt need, and then generates a felt need, for amalgamational collaborations would encroach upon or even absorb political sector. By the process of economic collaboration, and then unification, political cooperation and finally political unity could be achieved. The point to note is that the amalgamationists believe that national sovereignty can be gradually eroded by first internationalizing the performance of specific tasks, which do not present an immediate challenge to national sovereignty [18]. Although earlier forms of Amalgamationist proposed by [19], [20] intended to by-pass politicians entirely by working in a non-political area of cooperation. Onuoha however noted that because non industrial societies typically

lacks the organized economic groups, the freely competitive politics and the technocrats which Modibo Keita found to be too important in the integration process of European coal and steel community, therefore he expressed doubts that a functionalist strategy could work in developing areas .

Critics of State First Approach have since strongly illuminated the setbacks involved in integration programme based on the amalgationist prism. This includes especially the reluctance of member states in integration organization to transfer sovereignty to a higher level particularly in areas of strong national interests [21]. For them, this condition would only reproduce supra-national body with state-like functions and solely dominated by the most powerful states. They point also to the inadequacy of the logic of spill over, since there is no guarantee of stopping neither war through amalgational cooperation nor the seeming difficulty in entirely separating social, technical or economic problems from the political. The theory is also said to lay too much emphasis on technocratic logic to the detriment of the importance of politics, while some dismissed it for its “poor record of prediction [22], [23], and “lack of scientific rigor [24]. It is therefore the theoretical assumptions of amalgamationist that undergird the formation of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and informed the enactment and adoption of the protocol on free movement of goods and persons. In line with the amalgationalist postulation, it was reasoned that by facilitating the free movement of persons, goods and services, economic and social cooperation would be enhanced across the region and that this would result in increased political integration [25].

Applying the amalgationalist position to the explication of the lack-lustre implementation of the ECOWAS Protocol on Free Movement, the point needs to be made that it has been largely shaped by the character of politics in the ECOWAS member states [26]. This is reflective in

the reluctance of member states to transfer decision-making powers to the regional body which still lies squarely with the national governments of member states. In other words, there is a great tendency in the ECOWAS framework for the internal politics of the member states to intrude in the works of the community thereby stultifying the emergence of a truly supra-national entity which in itself is a desideratum for a proper regional integration. It is this that accounts for inability of the community to enact and enforce laws; its legislations and protocols are often left at the mercy of the national governments of member states to decide whether to enforce or not [27]. Having said that, this study submits that the attitude of member states is informed in large part by their legitimate national security occasioned by the notoriously high incidences of trans-border criminal activities and the proliferation of arms within the sub region.

#### **Hypotheses**

**H1** The implementation of the ECOWAS protocol on free movement of persons, did not contribute to proliferation of small and light weapons in Nigeria-Niger border between 1999-2014.

**H2** Arms proliferation has undermined Nigeria-Niger Republic relations within the West African Sub Region.

#### **Methods of Data Collection**

The method of data collection for this study is secondary data collection. Secondary source was extensively used for the purpose of drawing an empirical conclusion for proper analysis of the study so as to come up with objective findings.

#### **Secondary Data**

The main source of the data for this study was obtained through the review of relevant literature or use of materials from texts books, website pages, articles, publications, journals and also through other relevant official administrative documents.

#### **Method of Data Analysis**

Since secondary data gathering instruments was used in the course of

this research, it then implied that descriptive analysis would be used, so as to ensure accurate analysis of the data collected.

#### **Validity and Reliability of Instruments**

The success of any research depends on the validity and reliability of data gathering instruments. Validity means the appropriateness of an instrument in measuring what it intends to measure. This is why [28] stated that, 'a measuring instrument or a scale possesses validity when it actually measures what it claims to measure'. [29], stated that validity means the degree to which a research instrument serves the purpose for which it was constructed. In order to effectively ensure the validity of the instrument used for this study, the instruments were subjected to content validity measurement which involves face validity and predictive validity. The primary aim of adopting this method is to ensure that the instruments measured what they were designed to measure. More so, we ensured also the validity of the instruments by ensuring that the contents of the instruments provided the needed information for the research topic especially as contained in the journals and texts-books obtained [30]. The researcher also ensured the validity of the instruments by making sure that the contents of the instruments are consistent with both objectives and hypotheses of the study. Also, efforts were made to ensure that all aspects considered relevant to the study are adequately covered. Reliability on the other hand, implies the ability of an instrument to produce the same results credibly, dependably and consistently over some time when applied to the same sample [31]. Therefore, in order to ensure that the instruments are reliable and pave way for accurate testing of the study which will in turn enable a dependable and objective deduction, inference and conclusions, internal consistency method was effectively adopted. This was achieved by cross-checking our information alongside other sources of data collection and by ensuring that facts

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and figures collected from other sources mentioned earlier are accurate and would remain that same if the collection is repeated over time [32].

**ECOWAS protocol on free movement of persons did not contribute to proliferation of small and light weapons in Nigeria-Niger border between 1999-2014.**

The ECOWAS Protocol on the Free Movement of People and Goods ensures free mobility of the community citizens i.e. citizens of member states. The Protocol on free movement conferred on Community citizens the right to enter and reside in the territory of any member state, provided they possessed a valid travel document and international health certificate [33]. However, it also allowed member states the right to refuse admission to any Community citizens who were inadmissible under the member state's own domestic law. The four supplementary protocols adopted between 1985 and 1990 committed member states, among other things, to: provide valid travel document to their citizens, grant Community citizens the right of residence for the purpose of seeking and carrying out income-earning employment, ensure appropriate treatment for persons being expelled, not to expel Community citizens en masse, limit the grounds for individual expulsion to reasons of national security, public order or morality, public health or non-fulfillment of an essential condition of residence. Since the end of the cold war, West Africa has been characterized by series of conflicts in different dimensions [34]. There are hardly any of the countries in the sub-region which did not experience one form of crisis leading to conflict or another. Several authors have tried to analyze the root causes of these conflicts and there is a consensus on a number of causes such as the weak structure of states inherited from colonial rule, unstable and feeble political institutions, under developed economy, mismanagement of natural resources, self-enriching rulers who will protect their stay in power by all means etc. Most

of the states have experienced full scaled civil wars; examples are Liberia, Sierra Leone, Guinea Bissau, Ivory Coast, Nigeria, most have also experiences coup d'état, religious and ethnic clashes [35]. There is no single factor that can be said to be the cause of any of these conflicts, however, our interest is not on the conflict and their causes per say, but in its implication for regional peace and security especially with the ECOWAS Protocol on Free Movement as a point of analysis [36].

Looking at the nature of conflicts generally in Africa immediately after independence, conflicts were mostly over disputed territories e.g dispute over Ogaden between Ethiopia and Somalia, also between Nigeria and Cameroon over the Bakkassi-Pennisula, Libya and Chad over the Aouzou Strip, this went on for the most part of the Cold War period [37]. However, from the end of the cold war, states started experiencing internal crisis as a result of a number of factors. One of which is the international criteria of democratization to receive foreign assistance coupled with civil unrest in their demands for more participation and openness in government. Thus most West African states went through different measures of civil wars, some the full scaled civil wars e.g Nigeria.

West Africa's security atmosphere has changed since the outbreak of the Liberian war with the quick successions of the Sierra Leones' and Cote d'Ivoire [38]. Today, there is a change in the security calculations of the sub-region. The sub-region's internal conflicts have included groups who are fighting among themselves over such things as natural resources, political and chieftaincy matters, sometimes the groups fight against their governments, these conflicts have often been internationalized as a result of the spillover effects they have. States' concerns about the activities of cross-border criminal networks have increased. The sub-region is now notorious for trans-border criminality.

Even though the aim of the free movement protocol is to enhance economic activities, criminals have availed themselves of this initiative to perpetrate their nefarious activities. These have a lot of implication for the security of the sub-region [39]. There is no security of lives and properties,

weapons are readily available as a result of the proliferation of small arms and light weapons. Refugees generate a different set of problems for their host country. In fact, the expected future conflict in the sub-region is conflict over amenities and resources between refugees and host communities [40].

**Table 1: Travel facilitation and rights of entry (legal provisions)**

<b>Regional Arrangement</b>	<b>Period of stay(without a visa)</b>	<b>Categories of Persons</b>	<b>Identification Documents</b>	<b>Additional Requirements</b>	<b>Reasons to Refuse (if Specified)</b>
<b>Asean</b>	14 days	Asean citizens	Valid passport	Stay should not be intended for other purpose than visit	Person is considered undesirable by the destination country
<b>Can</b>	90 days	Can nationals and foreign residents	Valid national identification document	No	Immigration regulations, domestic order, national security, public health
<b>Caricom</b>	6 months	Caricom citizens	Travel permits, id with photographs, birth certificates, drivers licens.	No	Security concerns and if person is likely to be charge on public funds
<b>Cemac</b>	90 days	Certain categories	Valid national passport	No	Not specified
<b>Comesa</b>	90 days	Comesa citizens	Valid travel document	No	National security or public health, temporary suspension of entry rights possible
<b>Eac</b>	6 months	Eac citizens	National passport, passport, temporary travel documents	No	Competent authorities can ask person to register in accordance with national laws of the partner state
<b>Ecowas</b>	90 days	Ecowas citizens	Valid travel document	Inter-national health certificate	Person is inadmissible under national law
<b>Mercosur</b>	90 days	Mercosur citizens	Valid travel document	No	Not specified

<b>Sadc</b>	90 days	Sadc citizens	Valid travel document	Evidence for Visitor is sufficient means of person under support; entry national law through official port of entry
<b>Nafta</b>	Temporary not specified	Business visitors, traders and investors, intra company transfers	Non immigrant, nafta professional visa (or tn visa), different requirements for canadian or mexican citizens.	Only economic purposes for Public health, safety and national security, persons involved in labor disputes.
<b>Saarc</b>	30 days	34 specific categories of person	No information available	Only economic purposes for No information available

**SOURCE:**[http://repositorio.cepal.org/bitstream/handle/11362/26127/M20130015\\_es.pdf?sequence=1](http://repositorio.cepal.org/bitstream/handle/11362/26127/M20130015_es.pdf?sequence=1) p. 14

The challenges of the protocol have not helped the security landscape of the sub-region. The security forces have rather turned the job to their own business, encouraging the crossing of smugglers of all sorts of commodities from one country to another with just a tip of tokens [41]. There is high number of roadblocks, illegal barriers and the problem of insecurity on the roads. In 2005, about 44 Ghanaians were killed in The Gambia while trying to exercise their rights to freedom of movement within the sub-region.

Also, because ECOWAS does not have adequate instituted mechanism for checking the entry of illegal immigrants, people who carry out nefarious activities have exploited the opportunity to their advantage laundering money, trafficking in human, drugs, illegal arms etc. Thus, the privileges of the protocol have been abused. The Protocol rather than serve the purpose of integration is rather contributing to the insecurity prevalent in the sub-region. Unrestricted free movement of people in the sub-region can easily bring about a situation of tension among citizens of the receiving country and migrants especially in places where

migrants dominate trade and labour. This will lead to resentments towards migrants which can degenerate to 'populist political sentiments'. Regimes that are rather weak can become destabilized under such tensions. As earlier said, the nature of conflicts changed after the end of the Cold War. Conflicts now originate from within a state and gradually spread outside into the neighboring countries in its spill-over effects. This is the experience in West African sub-region today as in other parts of the continent [42]. The ECOWAS protocol on free movement because of the lack of instituted mechanism for proper monitoring of cross border movements is rather positively contributing to the spill-over effects of conflicts in the sub-region. The free movement protocol cannot be said to be solely responsible for the ease of passage of militants and their weapons but the subversion of security agents have also contributed to the insecurity of the sub-region. Based these, the regional arrangements were selected (and listed geographically) as shown in Table 1. It is considered an open list which may be changed according to current and future developments [43].

**Table 2: Selection of regional arrangements**

<b>Macro-Region</b>	<b>Regional Arrangements</b>
<b>Africa</b>	African Union (AU), Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), Economic and Monetary Community of Central Africa (CEMAC), East African Community (EAC), Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), Southern African Development Community (SADC), Community of Sahel-Saharan States (CEN-SAD), Arab-Maghreb Union (AMU)
<b>The Americas and Caribbean</b>	Andean Community (CAN), Caribbean Community (CARICOM), Central American Common Market (CACM), North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and Southern Common Market (MERCOSUR)
<b>Asia-Pacific</b>	Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), Pacific Island Forum (PIF), South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC)
<b>Europe</b>	Black Sea Cooperation (BSEC), Benelux, Community of Independent States (CIS), Council of Europe (COE), European Free Trade Agreement (EFTA), Nordic Common Labour Market (NORDIC), European Union (EU), Eurasian Economic Community (EURASEC), Organisation for Democracy and Economic Development (GUAM), Economic Cooperation Organisation (ECO)
<b>Middle-East and Northern Africa</b>	Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), League of Arab States (LAS)

Source: <https://www.ecb.europa.eu>

A majority of regional arrangements aim for a full or complete free movement of people in the framework of a common (or single) market, including the free movement of goods, services, capital, and persons. The free movement of people is usually conceived as a long-term goal to be established gradually. A second group of regional arrangements have limited their mandate explicitly to the facilitation of movement of certain categories of people. No free movement of all persons is envisaged, but rather those relevant in the framework of regional trade in goods and services [44]. This includes mostly high-skilled workers, business people, or

service providers on a temporary basis. A third group of regional organizations is mandated to become active in the field of migratory movements. However, these organizations do not aim at establishing free movement schemes but rather at strengthening the rights of migrants in the framework of existing (or future) sub regional, bilateral or national policies. The Council of Europe is representative of such an organization as it has adopted a great variety of different instruments targeting people on the move. A fourth group does not have a mandate at all, although migration-related issues may be included in regional cooperation efforts.

**Table 3: Mandates of the regional organizations in the field of movement of people**

Regional Arrangement	Scope of mandate
AMU	The AMU aims to 'work towards the progressive realisation for the free movement of persons, services, goods and capital' (AMU Treaty 1989, Art. 2)
ASEAN	No mention of movement of people in the Bangkok Declaration (founding document of ASEAN); ASEAN Economic Community Blueprint mentions ASEAN professionals and skilled labour who are engaged in cross-border trade and investment related activities.
AU	The gradual removal, among Member States, of obstacles to the free movement of persons, goods, services and capital and the right of residence and establishment' (Abuja Treaty of 1991, Art. 4 (2i)).
BENELUX	The Benelux Union seeks 'the maintenance and development of an economic union including the free movement of persons, goods, capital and services (...)' (Revised Benelux Treaty, Art. 2).
BSEC	Simplification of visa procedures (Agreements on simplification of visa procedures of businesspeople and professional lorry drivers 2008).
CACM	One main goal is to promote the establishment of a Central American Common Market (General Treaty on Central American Economic Integration, Art. 1).
CAN	Border and physical integration of the sub-region are pursued (Art. 3, Cartagena Agreement); Simón Rodríguez Agreement on Social-Labour Integration.
CARICOM	Free movement for the provision of a service on a temporary basis, Free movement to establish a business, Free movement of eligible categories of wage earners, Facilitation of travel (Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas, Art. 3 and 4).
CEN-SAD	The UAEC Convention states as one objective to create a common market based on the freedom of movement of goods, services, capital and persons (Title 1, Chap. 1, Art. 2 c). The Original Treaty states as a main objective 'the removal of all restrictions hampering the integration of the member countries through the adoption of necessary measures to ensure (a) free movement of persons, capitals and interests of nationals of Member States (...)
CIS	MS are called upon to cooperate in the 'formation and development of a common economic space' as well as in questions related to migration policies (Minsk Agreement, Art.7)
COE	Mandate is derived from the general terms of the Statute of the Council of Europe (5 May 1949).
COMESA	The founding treaty states as a specific undertaking the removal of 'obstacles to the free movement of persons, labour and services, right of establishment for investors and right of residence within the Common Market'(COMESA Treaty Art. 4(6e) and Art. 164).
EAC	MS agree to adopt 'measures to achieve the free movement of persons, labour and services and to ensure the enjoyment of the right of establishment and residence of their citizens within the Community' (Art. 104 EAC Treaty).
ECCAS	The founding Treaty states as an objective the 'progressive abolition between Member States of obstacles to the free movement of people, goods, services, capital and to the right of establishment' (ECCAS Treaty, art. 4(e)

<b>Economic Cooperation organization(ECO)</b>	ECO is a regional economic entity with primary focus on economic development. (mandate unclear).
<b>ECOWAS</b>	<b>Establishment of a common market through the removal of obstacles to the free movement of persons, goods, services and capital and the right of residence and establishment (Revised ECOWAS Treaty of 1993, Art. 3)</b>
<b>EFTA</b>	Free movement of persons having the nationality of one of the EFTA Member States (Agreement amending the Convention establishing the European Free Trade Association, 2001)
<b>EU</b>	According to Art. 18 EC every EU citizen shall have the right to move and reside freely within the Community. Art. 39 EC grants free movement of workers. Art. 43 EC grants the freedom of establishment. Art. 49 EC grants the right to provide services within the Community.
<b>EURASEC</b>	Creation of a customs union and a single economic space (Treaty establishing the EURASEC, 2000); 'Effective functioning of the common (internal) market in goods, services, capital and labour' (Agreement on Customs Union and Common Economic Space, 1999).
<b>GCC</b>	One main goal is the establishment of a Gulf Common Market, in which GCC natural and legal citizens shall be treated the same way as compared to citizens of that MS with regard to all economic activities (GCC Economic Agreement).
<b>GUAM</b>	n/a (no mandate according to information at disposal).
<b>IGAD</b>	Member States agree to 'promote free movement of goods, services, and people and the establishment of residence' (Agreement establishing IGAD, Art. 7(b))
<b>LAS</b>	n/a (no mandate according to information at disposal).
<b>MERC OSUR</b>	The Treaty of Asunción does not directly relate to the free movement of people but states that the free movement of factors of production is one of the main goals of the Common Market.
<b>NAFTA</b>	Temporary entry of high-skilled labour (Chapter 16 of NAFTA).
<b>NORDIC</b>	It is regarded a fundamental right for nationals of the Nordic countries to be able freely to take up employment and settle in another Nordic country (Preamble, Agreement concerning a Common Labour Market 1983).
<b>PIF</b>	Free movement of recognised professional/skilled workers, Movement of semi-skilled/tradespersons under quota mechanism (PICTA-TMNP).
<b>SAARC</b>	In order to facilitate trade, the SAFTA Agreements includes the goal of simplifying visa procedures for business people.
<b>SADC</b>	MS are required to 'develop policies aimed at the progressive elimination of obstacles to the free movement of capital and labour, goods and services, and of the people of the Region generally, among Member States' (SADC Founding Treaty of 1992, Art. 5 (2) (d))

Source:<https://www.osce.org>

There is hardly any region of the world that is spared of the phenomenon of trans-border crimes. However, the peculiarity of West African socio-economic problems such as poverty and inequality, hunger, unemployment and corruption presents more severe dimension of transnational criminal activities. Most of the conflict that at times appear internal also have trans-border undertone [45]. The sub-region vast ungoverned spaces especially those around the porous borders present a fertile ground for international terrorist organizations such as Al' Qaeda and Al' Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb to thrive in their activities. There are speculations that the Boko Haram insurgent group in Nigeria has connections with the Al' Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb, Al'Shabaab in Somalia and operational bases in Niger Republic, Republic of Chad etc. This signifies connections with other terrorist's organization and the aim is to create a coordinated jihadist movement across West Africa. The porosity of the West African borders can be identified as

We started by dwelling on the technicalities in the chapter one, where we posed two research questions, stated two specific objectives, and two research hypotheses. We, also, demonstrated the theoretical and empirical relevance or justifications of this study. The issues, time frame and subjects covered by the study were also highlighted. The main concepts or terms used in this study were defined as they are applied or used in this study.

#### SUMMARY

an aiding factor of the activities of these insurgencies groups and criminal networks across the region. Finally, though the Free Movement Protocol has laudable goals, people with clandestine activities have availed themselves of the provision of the protocol and are carrying out their activities across the sub-region [46]. This is possible because of problems inherent in the implementation of the protocol, for instance, most travelers do not possess travel documents even those who have, the credibility of their documents can hardly be ascertained. In fact, the Protocol is lacking full implementation by member states till today because of the perceived problems it poses to their national security. If these issues raised i.e instituted mechanism for proper implementation and adequate training of security agencies to curb subversions and machinery for proper checking and detection of fraudulent travel documents, can be addressed, then the Protocol on free movement will serve its purpose of integration in the West Africa sub-region [47].

In the chapter two, we reviewed the related extent and relevant literature concerning Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), borders and posts in West Africa. In Chapter Three, we discussed the research methodology. Whilst, in Chapter Four we examined the Hypotheses I and Chapter Five, we discussed the Hypotheses II. Lastly, in Chapter Six, we summarized the entire work and drew some conclusions on the basis of which we made some recommendations.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

In the course of this study, we suggest the following recommendations:

- Reconstitute the Nigerian state in such a way as to be proactive in dealing with the demand factors of SALW that heightens the proliferation of SALW.
- Strengthen the law enforcement agencies in order to enable them check the supply factors of SALW

that worsens security situations in the Northern part of Nigeria.

- All member states of ECOWAS must work assiduously to reduce the activities of trans-border criminal elements so as to encourage member states to open up their borders more freely to community citizens on legitimate grounds.

- Adoption of a national arms control strategy (NACS) to guide the clean-up and prevention of SALWs circulation. The proposed establishment of a National Commission on the control of Small Arms and Light Weapons (NATCOM) should be fast-tracked to lead this effort, involving collaboration with Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), National Taskforce (NATFORCE) and other stakeholders.
- The assigning of greater role to civil society in the conduct of the affairs of ECOWAS.
- Finally, the pursuit of vigorous and aggressive industrialization policy across the length and breadth of the ECOWAS sub-region so as to drastically reduce the dependence of individual member states on the industrialized countries with its obvious consequence for the development of the region.

#### CONCLUSION

There is hardly any region of the world that is spared of the phenomenon of trans-border crimes. However, the peculiarity of West African socio-economic problems such as poverty and inequality, hunger, unemployment and corruption presents more severe dimension of transnational criminal activities. Most of the conflict that at times appear internal also have trans-border undertone. The sub-region vast ungoverned spaces especially those around the porous borders present a fertile ground for international terrorist organizations such as Al' Qaeda. The porosity of West African borders can be identified as an aiding factor of the activities of these insurgencies groups and criminal networks across the region. Though, free movement protocol has laudable goals, people with clandestine activities have availed themselves of the provision of the protocol and are carrying out their activities across the sub-region. Thus, Provision of security along Nigeria-Niger borderlands is a collective

responsibility of the two countries. Security threat on any part of the country could undoubtedly pose challenge to the other. The level at which bandits were operating within the borderlands and posing serious threat to the downstream economy needs to be given its rightful attention by both countries. The bandits and rustlers seized the opportunity of long historical ties and cultural similarity in ever increasing border porosity to perpetual different crimes. There has for long been a high level of connection and interaction amongst the bandit groups both in Nigeria and the Niger Republic. This interconnection makes their entire criminal endeavors more sophisticated and deadly. Sadly enough however, some of the borderland villages and towns have been providing refuge for these misfits. Therefore, there is an urgent need for both countries to synergize and established cross-border security patrol team that could regularly reconnaissance the borderlands

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