

Border Security: A Culture in Crisis in South Western Nigeria?

Olanrewaju Abdulwasii OLADEJO

Department of Peace, Security and Humanitarian Studies, University of Ibadan, Ibadan, Nigeria

Abstract: A combination of public speculations and avalanche of media reportage are suggestive of fading culture of border security giving rise to evolving organized crimes along popular borders between Nigeria and Benin Republic. The study sought to establish veracity or otherwise of the claim with a view to signpost possible implications via security lens. Study adopted descriptive design and empirical evidence from analyzed data indicated faded culture of border security and affirmed six genres of organized crimes namely human trafficking, vehicle smuggling, smuggling of contraband goods, smuggling of small arms and light weapons, drug trafficking and migrant smuggling, perpetrated at varying degrees with contributory causes being border porosity, ignorance of the crimes, lucrativity of the crimes, poverty and unemployment. The nefarious practices were affirmed and noted to constitute a huge burden on the nation in different spheres, security sphere in particular. Thus, upgraded digitization of border security operations via incorporation of aerial surveillance, training on inter-agency collaboration, sensitization of border area dwellers, strategic recruitment of personnel and national rebirth advocacy to encourage legitimate dealings along the corridor to rebuild the culture of border security intelligence among border community dwellers and rekindle sense of patriotism in border security operatives were recommended

Keywords: border community dwellers, migrant smuggling, contributory causes, transborder crimes

I. INTRODUCTION

Culture of Communal Security

The African culture of communal living cannot be mistaken as it dots several activities the people of African descent are known over time whether at home or in diaspora. It is a practice which has endured several generations as though the survival of each clan, each community, each tribe or ethnic enclave depends on it. Kwazu (2018), posited that the communal lifestyle among indigenous black people gave rise to the philosophical mindset behind the Ubuntu ideology of the Zulu people of South Africa. According to Baken (2015), Ubuntu lies at the heart of the African way of life and impacts on every aspect of the people's well-being. He stated further that Ubuntu is actually regarded as the soul force that drives almost every facet of societal life in African societies which creates relationship beyond borders as long as the course of humanity is involved. The construct explicates a culture that places emphasis humanity expressed in the phrase "I am because You are" which underpins the Ubuntu philosophy. Of course, it is a philosophical statement, but the idea transcends mere philosophy of idealistic contextualization, as it could be seen, practically, in all spheres of life endeavour, at least, most prominent in the past. For instance, in the traditional African

societies, security, though a responsibility of the warriors often under the command of traditional rulers, but the people equally have undisputed roles to play as critical component of the intelligence community who regularly sent in observations, suspicions and reservations to help the rulers make informed decisions in his command of the warriors and local constabularies that then shaped the societies.

In contemporary times, the tradition aligns with the common dictum "security is everybody's business"; a cardinal call which beckons at all and sundry for their contributions to ensure safety of lives and property. The practice has assisted the security personnel in no small measure in their statutory obligations to the state and to the people at large as community men and women held a mutual crave replica of duty of care. As a matter of fact, this culture of communality has been recorded as one of the factors which had hitherto aided internal and border security efforts. Alhiogo (2013 & 2017), Chikwe (2018) noted that border community dwellers in Nigeria are critical stakeholders whose vigilance once had tremendous implications on the success of security agents' efforts in curtailing criminalities. Meanwhile, recent security breaches in Nigeria and along the border fringes, appear to have soared high giving a speculation that the culture of communal vigilance has plummeted, giving rise to fledging activities of unscrupulous actors to undermine national security.

The dimensions and momentum of trans-border crimes have increased with the emergence and expanding scope of globalization in Africa. Having realized the huge benefits inherent in inter-state relationship beyond the usual diplomatic ties, states and regional bodies have continually craved for cooperation in diverse areas. This has encouraged the opening of borders among states and countries with varying degrees of development in socio-economic, technological, political and cultural spheres merged together in one form of regional arrangement or another. Meanwhile, the attendant traffic flows across the borders tend to facilitate some illicit trade dealings culminating in trans-border criminal activities capable of subverting economic development and harmonious diplomatic ties. The history of political economy has shown that prohibition or restriction on certain forms of trade often creates economic incentives and opportunities for illicit trade activities with smuggling being prominent (Basu, 2013). Africa has increasingly become more vulnerable to organised criminal networks, highly connected across West Africa frontiers. Andrés (2008) Alemika, (2013) Mazzitel (2014) argued that the factors responsible for the growth of organised crimes in West

Africa are the wide spread of porous borders, corruption, economic mismanagement, political crisis, weak institutions, terrorism, violent extremism and high level unemployment among others.

However, the economic disparities between West Africa states have also been a driver of trans-border crimes. Golub (2012) noted that the economic strategies of Benin, Togo and Gambia have been largely based on their attractiveness as trading hubs for francophone landlocked countries while on the other hand, they facilitate illegal trade to her neighbouring state, Nigeria. In Afolayan (2000), Benin Republic is observed to have somewhat permitted economic infiltration policy towards Nigeria, as a way of surviving economically. The study further confirmed that Benin Republic offers an alternative entry route for importation of food items and second hand automobiles from Europe to Nigeria. The Central Bank of Nigeria Report (2016), acknowledged a high rate trans-border trade between Nigeria and its contiguous countries with evidence of smuggling in and out of goods, raw materials and other manufactured products from Niger, Chad, Cameroon and Benin Republic, into Nigeria border space where these products are then sold at cheaper prices. Noting the activities of these criminal organizations, the Federal Government of Nigeria has claimed to destabilize the structure of these organizations by launching out various interventions to end the activities of these criminal gangs such as war against human and drug trafficking and anti-smuggling operation across all national borders yet the crimes still persist. Several studies have been conducted, but painstaking scholarly scrutiny revealed that the notion of the border area dwellers was often less-examined or relegated. Considering the significant position community dwellers and resident traders occupy in their respective domains, relegating their contributions and disposition to issues surrounding criminal activities around the border areas would be unjustifiable. This study therefore intends to investigate the culture of obligation to border security in terms of dispositions of the border area dwellers, resident traders along with those of the security personnel leveraging on nature, contributory causes and implications of trans-border crimes in Seme and Idi-Iroko border areas of Nigeria. The issue of contributory causes is herein employed in context, noting that no single factor could suffice as sole determinants of crimes among people of diverse orientation anywhere.

II. LITERATURE REVIEWS

Crime is considered as an action or inaction which constitutes an offence punishable by law of the state. It is viewed as an offence against the state, even if not directly committed against it; as such, is encapsulated in the country's criminal code with variations in different jurisdictions; hence, no single description is applicable in all cases to offer a generally acknowledged application. Noting the description of the conduct and appropriation of penalty, crime is both a sociological and legal conception offering the public a lens to identify what the state accepts and detests. Williams (2004) argued that crime is a debatable social construct because of its fluid nature. Meanwhile the divergent viewpoints on the

meaning and purpose of the definition has somewhat expanded literature in the fields of sociology, security psychology and criminal justice administration. According to Somiya (2014), crime is a public wrong and strongly condemnable as an act disapproved by the society. Similarly, Eselebor (2019) opined that crimes remain products of risk-related events, occurring at a time and place targeted at potential victims. To establish its commission, there is a criminal intention and a criminal act. It is incontrovertible that no individual is born a criminal as the criminal intention and behaviour of the individual are creation of various social, economic, biological and psychological factors. Nonetheless, there is a convergence that crime is detested and it could be local, organized or unorganized suggesting some possible overlap between the civil and criminal departments of the legal system of a state. Tappan describes crime as an intentional act or omission in violation of criminal law of the land, committed without defense or justification and sanctioned by the state as a felony or misdemeanour.

The study by La Sage (2010) and Ngboawaji (2011), affirmed that smuggling of contraband goods have been a lucrative market in Africa for a long time. The study further revealed that illegal transportation of items such as foods, pharmaceutical products and textile materials have consistently been flowing along the Lagos-Seme-Cotonou corridor, with the aid of smugglers or criminal gangs. Le Sage (2010), Mazzitel (2014), Aluede (2017) Shaw (2017), UNODC (2018), argue that Nigeria has become a hotbed for human trafficking and stands as a source, transit route and destination country for trafficked victims. However, the commercialization of trafficking of persons in Nigeria has become a flourishing business in West Africa and beyond, with many young girls and women recruited daily for prostitution.

Besides the commodification of female for sex trade, another organized crime on the fringes of the Sahelian corridor is trade-in-arms. Nigeria Permanent Representative to the United Nations, Professor Tijjani Bande, recently affirmed this in his address where he emphasized the disproportionate effects of arms dealing on the region being caused by illegally traded arms produced outside the Continent. Further stated is a fact that an estimated 640 million small arms and light weapons are circulating illegally in Africa, with as much as 100 million in Africa and 30 million in Sub-Saharan Africa. According to the House of Common Foreign Affairs Committee Report (2016), the collapse of Gaddafi regime in Libya led to proliferation of small arms and light weapon and heavy artillery across North and West Africa. It was reported that Libya purchased ammunition worth 30 billion pounds between 1969 and 2010 and it was reported that the Libyan weapons were identified among insurgent groups in Algeria, Chad, Egypt, Gaza, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Tunisia and Syria. Aluede (2017) posits that the trafficking or smuggling of small arms and light weapons (SALW) is among the illicit enterprises of trans-border crimes in the Nigerian-Benin border corridor. Though, considered as illegal, it was also noted by Shaw (2017) that in some parts of Nigeria, arms are manufactured locally in Awka in Anambra

state, Calabar in Cross River, in Kaduna and Katsina states in northern Nigeria.

Further argued by Alphaeus, Daouda, Gueye and Udo (2013) and Aluede (2017), was that drug trafficking was predominant in Nigeria and across borders with her immediate neighbours by illicit dealers. Equally observed was that *cannabis sativa*, popularly known as marijuana is one of the illicit drugs produced in and smuggled into Nigeria and frequently peddled across the borders of the country to other parts of the world. Apart from *cannabis*, other hard drugs smuggled into Nigeria include narcotic substance, namely, cocaine and heroin and other psychotropic substances. Smugglers and traffickers of hard drugs take advantage of the strategic location of Nigeria and her porous land borders, which make hard drug peddling into and out of the country relatively easy.

Theoretical Perspectives

The Rational Choice Theory by Casare Baccaria which espouses salient concerns on deterrence, situational crime prevention and routine activity is deployed to offer expanded dissection of the concept of crime. The Rational Choice Theory perspective has been applied to explain a wide range of crimes, including robbery, drugs use, vandalism and white collar crimes. Rational choice theory is based on the fundamental tenets of classical criminology, which hold that people freely choose their behaviour and are motivated by the avoidance of pain and the pursuit of pleasure. It postulates that Individuals evaluate their choice of actions in accordance with each option's ability to produce advantage, pleasure and happiness. Rational choice provides a micro perspective on why individual offender decides to commit specific crimes (McCormick, 2006). At another instance, crime rise or reduction is considered a function of the anti-crime measures provided as state security preparedness approach, the pursuit of which always involves costs, (the sacrifice of other goals that could have been pursued with the resources devoted to security). Specification of this dimension of security policy is important because several studies tend to overlook this important aspect with a thought sometimes implying that costs do not matter. Any comprehensive study on crime and national security at large, should conceptualize security in terms of the protection of core values, which are pursued notwithstanding the costs incurred (Leffer, 1999). Therefore, from the standpoint of a rational policy-maker, cost of providing security is central to the effort at establishing a stable and effective governance system. According to Delwak (2020), retention of security provision at the heart of civil governance is not necessarily in terms of personnel strength but efficiency of operations through strong institutional structures capable of actualizing greater public tranquility and by extension, facilitate a sustainable development.

The central premise of this theory suffices to offer explanation on organized crimes in Sub-Saharan Africa. Since independence, Nigerian leaders tend to have neglected their social responsibilities, as they continue to siphon public funds from state coffers, subjecting the masses to avoidable pervasion

in hunger and poverty while educational, health and security sectors are left to deteriorate on a steady course. Furthermore, the gap between the ruling class and the ruled continues to widen exponentially as unequal distribution of wealth between the ruling class and the led becomes preeminent. As cited by Bella (2018), Popoola (2016) posited that economic instability situation in Nigeria, has continually pushed people into illegal activities, making them brazenly audacious to indulge in various crimes such as human trafficking, drug trafficking, smuggling of contraband goods, among others, in order to attain or sustain an attained social status.

However, since no sovereign state would willfully lower its border guard for whatever reasons, as this portends a great danger to its national life, the Nigerian state and her contiguous countries risk so much to allow illicit trans-border activities thrive unchecked. Perhaps, this was what informed the decision by the Nigeria Government to declare border closure with its neighbouring countries (Benin Republic, Cameroun, Chad and Niger) between August, 2019 and December, 2020. This important concerns facilitated the crave to undertake this investigation with the following objectives:

1. To identify nature of trans-border crimes in Seme and Idi-Iroko border areas (study areas)
2. To find out contributory causes of the identified trans-border crimes in the study areas
3. To examine implications of the identified trans-border crimes in the study areas on Nigeria

III. METHODS

The study employed the mixed research method and survey design. Data were obtained qualitatively and quantitatively through validated research instruments (interview guides and questionnaires) and analyzed accordingly using thematic and simple percentage analysis respectively. The study location traversed two most active border communities in south-western Nigeria; Seme border in Badagry Local Government Area of Lagos state and Idi-Iroko border in Owode Local Government Area of Ogun state. Target population for the study consists of border community dwellers, resident traders and border security personnel along the two selected border corridors. Being the principal border security agencies at the border posts along Badagry-Seme border in Lagos and along Owode-Idi-Iroko border in Ogun State, personnel of the Nigeria Customs Service and the Nigerian Immigration Service were the selected sample target among other agencies. The community dwellers comprised of indigenes and non-indigenes living in towns and villages along the Badagry-Seme and Owode-Idi-Iroko border axes. As part of the inclusion criteria for the study, only operatives who had held posts in the area for no less than two years and dwellers who had stayed up to two years prior to the study were selected as sample using systematic random sampling. To complement the qualitative data obtained through interview guides, a total of 118 respondents to whom questionnaires were administered constituted the sample for the quantitative data.

IV. RESULTS FINDINGS

Objective One: To Identify Nature of Trans-Border Crimes in Idi-Iroko and Seme Borders Areas

Table 1: Showing Responses on Nature of Trans-Border Crimes in Seme and Idi-Iroko Border Areas

Trans-Border Crimes	Respondents' Awareness Rating			
	Seme		Idi-Iroko	
	Most Observed	Least Observed	Most Observed	Least Observed
Human Trafficking	49(62.8%)	29(37.2%)	13(32.5%)	27(67.5%)
Vehicle Smuggling	43(55.1)	35(44.9)	22(55.0)	18(45.0)
Smuggling of Small Arms and Light Weapons	19(24.4)	59(75.6)	5(12.5)	35(87.5)
Smuggling of Contraband Goods	58(74.4)	20(25.6)	30(75.0)	10(25.0)
Drug Trafficking	14(17.9)	64(82.1)	10(25.0)	30(75.0)

Source: Field Survey, 2020. Percentages are in parenthesis

Observed from Table 1 above and complementary interviews on types of illicit trans-border activities, it was confirmed that there exist in actual fact, trans-border crimes both at Seme and Idi-Iroko borders. As evident from the table, a considerably high number (63 percent) of respondents at Seme area admitted that they were familiar with human trafficking around the border as against a few (33 percent) at Idi-Iroko. This finding was affirmed by the qualitative data which indicated that Nigerian women and children were trafficked across the borders to Benin Republic, Togo and Mali and sometimes, as far as Ivory Coast. The Seme respondents specifically reported that human trafficking occurred on a daily basis, especially the movement of women and children across the border. They also stated that besides Nigerians being trafficked to Benin Republic and beyond, women and children from neighbouring African countries were also trafficked into Nigeria for labour exploitation and prostitution. This clearly corroborates the UNODC Report (2006) which presents a fact-sheet indicating pervasive cross-border trafficking of female Nigerians and other African nations for prostitution purposes. It is therefore convenient to state that Nigeria serves as a source, transit and destination country for human trafficking. Though, on the above-shown table, there appears to be a discordant response pattern on the existence of human trafficking in Seme (affirming) and Idi-Iroko (rejecting) but the two-third affirmation of the former and qualitative data obtained from both locales are quite enough to substantiate the existence of human trafficking along both border corridors beyond mere speculations.

Also observed from the table was a fact that vehicle smuggling was another illicit activity in practice at the two borders under review. On the whole and componentially, obtained quantitative data reflected more than half (55 percent) of the sampled group confirming actuality of the existence of vehicle smuggling. Similarly, the obtained qualitative data align with the quantitative findings; responses of the dwellers, the trans-

border traders revealed that vehicle smuggling was a regular practice in the two border areas with chain of syndicate networks on both sides of the contiguous borders; though, the transition being usually east-ward. This means that the smuggling was more into Nigeria as destination rather than as transit. It was further revealed that several anti-crime measures deployed by border security operatives had proved inadequate and less effective as the smugglers appeared smarter ahead of deployed measures. Meanwhile, Agnes (2014) had argued that the ineffectiveness of the state machinery to arrest the trend of crime and illicit border activities along the Nigeria-Benin border corridor was not unrelated to what he referred to as internal conspiracy among border security operatives. A situation described by Melvin (2019) as granting border smugglers audacious confidence in carrying out their infamous activities. Quite interesting, though disturbing, was the overwhelming submission by the border community dwellers, the elderly in particular, that the complicity of border security operatives in vehicle smuggling in both Seme and Idi-Iroko areas could not be denied. They affirmed it was a highly concealed conspiracy indicating an apparent compromise the legally-minded critics consider a clear conflict of interest and a violation of Article 5 provision of Nigeria's Code of Conduct Act which stipulates that "a public officer shall not put himself in a position where his interest conflicts with his duties and responsibilities."

On the possibility of smuggling of small arms and light weapons at the two borders, obtained data indicated that the perception of many respondents in Seme on their awareness towards the crime was relatively low with 24.4 percent of the sampled population confirming the existence of the crime and only 12.5 percent in Idi-Iroko. This suggests that the sample population has indistinct knowledge of arms smuggling around and across the borders. Meanwhile, this is not to insinuate that the crime exists not in the areas but being a well-concealed crime, it may be barely known. According to a respondent, arms' trafficking was a silent crime which takes place under strict discrete cover around the border unlike other illicit activities that are more overtly perpetrated in and around the fringes of the border unhindered. He argued that only few people apart from those who belong to the cartel had the knowledge of such activities in the areas. This is in tandem with Ngboawaji (2011) who argued that even though Seme and Idi-Iroko border areas had low record of arms smuggling in comparison with many other entry and exit routes in Nigeria, it is heavily concealed, as such, not many people are aware.

On the issue of smuggling of contraband goods, it was revealed that it was a common phenomenon in Seme and Idi-Iroko border axes. As indicated on the table, about 75 percent apiece of the respondents indicated knowledge about smuggling of contraband goods across the Nigerian border in the study areas (Seme and Idi-Iroko borders). The respondents' level of awareness of the illicit activity of smuggling of contraband goods in the two border zones under review did not come as a surprise as these border points are known to be easily accessible routes between Benin Republic and Nigeria, especially in terms

of topography. More importantly, there are evidence indicating a comparatively easier business climate in Benin Republic than Nigeria which is known to have a more stringent culture on ease of doing business. As such, a contiguous country like Benin Republic which has its capital city (Porto-Novo) directly adjoining the Nigeria's economic capital city (Lagos state) is employed by importers as transit country through which some imported goods are commuted to their destination (Nigeria). Of course, such route offers both legitimate and contraband goods access into the country, however, curtailing the latter is largely a function of the efficiency and effectiveness of the security apparatus along the corridor. Besides being directly a threat to national security, the economic implications of cross-border smuggling are damn severe, either considered at the small scale, medium or large scale level. As cited by Oyenuga and Owugah (2021), Olapegba and Idemudia (2012) affirmed that cross-border smuggling was one of the most common crimes around the Nigerian borders culminating in increased rates of poverty, unemployment, direct loss of government revenue and death (capitulation) of local industries. Likewise, Mamazizi and Rostami (2016) were cited as confirming the fact that economic hardship on members of a society by rising joblessness and retarded industrial growth are by-products of smuggling, among other reasons.

According to traders and dwellers in the Seme border axis, smuggling of contraband goods was not perceived as illicit but a hustling spree to which peddlers are compelled to undertake due to society's unfavourable socio-economic climate. Meanwhile, Clatta (2009) reported that contraband goods such as basic daily needs like food stuff, clothes and poultry foods were the commonly smuggled items across Republic of Benin-Nigeria borders. The researcher was equally privy to sight some high-speeding fleet of cars and motorcycles loaded with goods in cartons and bags which a respondent firmly identified as 'smugglers in convoy'. Another respondent pointed out thus:

Majority of the goods sold in shops here (Idi-Iroko) are smuggled items because they get the products cheaper from Cotonou. (Field Report, 2020).

Affirmed by the researcher's observation, another discovery in the course of field engagement during the study was the apparent smuggling of petroleum products across the border through illegal routes. Most of the respondents responded in affirmative that the Idi-Iroko axis of the border between Nigeria and Benin Republic was popular for transporting petroleum products to Benin Republic and beyond. It was confirmed that rate of smuggling of this product surged lately due to the corollary directive to the border closure declaration of the Nigeria Federal Government that all fuel stations within 20 kilometer circumference to Nigeria borders should not be supplied fuel.

A number of respondents confirmed that the closure of petrol stations in Idi-Iroko had made smuggling of petroleum product more lucrative owing to the principle of demand and supply as buyers across border were compelled to pay higher prices due to shortage of product. This corroborated the statement by a

senior operative of the Nigeria Customs Service Ogun State Command that their Anti-Bunkering Team discovered a smuggling hideout along Idi-Iroko road, leading to the seizure of 160 jerry cans (25 litres each) of petrol. Furthermore, the same Command reported that since the closure of petrol stations in border towns, over 60,000 litres of petrol had been seized from smugglers by Custom Officers. The trend of petroleum seizure in Idi-Iroko clearly laid credence to a fact that petroleum smuggling was one of the high ranking criminal activities in Idi-Iroko. Similarly, the activity is not totally different at Seme border areas. The Nigeria Customs Service reported that between January 2017 to January 2018, a total of 174,015 litres were seized across the Customs Command within a year, with 81,270 litres of petroleum products seized in Seme border alone. The Nigerian National Petroleum Cooperation (NNPC) equally stated that the increasing number of fuel stations in Nigeria border towns are conduits for smuggling petroleum products. As captured in Awojulugbe, (2019), Maikanti Baru, the former Group Managing Director of the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC), raised an alarm about the increasing number of fuel stations in border towns saying they were channels for fuel smuggling to neighbouring countries. Having lamented that 16 states with a total of 61 local government areas with border communities accounting for 2,201 registered fuel stations and a combined capacity of 144,998,700 litres of petrol, he was quoted further to have said "There is a thriving market for Nigerian petrol in all the neighbouring countries of Niger Republic, Benin Republic, Cameroon, Chad and Togo and even Ghana which has no direct borders with Nigeria."

On the issue of drug trafficking, the study observed about 19 percent affirmation in Seme and 25 percent at Idi-Iroko border areas. The data presented an indication that drug trafficking was not a common practice in the two border areas, hence people's awareness of such illicit activity was minimal. On the contrary, more information obtained from the conducted interviews offers more insights into the phenomenon under investigation, though with slight contestation. According to the aggregated qualitative data obtained from designated interviews, it was revealed that smuggling of hard drugs such as cocaine and heroin was a practice in both Seme and Idi-Iroko borders but more pronounced and familiar was the smuggling of cannabis; a discovery which aligns symmetrically with a recent submission by Aluede (2017). Meanwhile, community dwellers reported a drastic reduction in smuggling operations in the two border areas, relating this, to impact of the recent land border closure enforcement of the Federal Government of Nigeria.

Quite interesting was one of the discoveries in the course of the study. Though, not captured by the quantitative instrument (questionnaire) of data collection for the study, illegal movement of people (in and out) was too apparent to be unnoticed. For the purpose of academic expression, it is herein referred to as 'migrant smuggling' but popularly referred to as 'gbigbero sòdà' literally meaning (in Yoruba language) taking persons across border. This act indeed, requires a sort of conceptualization to properly situate it as an illicit border

activity in clearer perspectives. As cited in Khalid (2005), the UN Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons (2000) as well as UN Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air (2000) attest to the possible mistake of interchangeable use of migrant smuggling and human trafficking but offers a distinction between both, stating the former (human trafficking) as ‘the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of threat, or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation’ and the latter (migrant smuggling) as ‘the procurement, in order to obtain, directly or indirectly a financial or other material benefit, of the illegal entry of a person into a state, part of which the person is not a national or a permanent resident’. As though it was not a crime, the act was brazenly perpetrated with several motorcycles by the road sides and designated motor parks taking ‘passengers’ across the border through several illegal routes. Though, not viewed as a crime, it was another unwholesome activity generally agreed by respondents at both borders as a regular border practice. It was indeed a semblance of free entry and free exit at the peripheral of the border areas, as the commercial motorcycle riders were often seen parting with some money obviously to gain access into or exit from a country. The routes (near and remote from the designated border points) were seen manned by different groups of non-

state actors stationed in clusters serving as ‘gate-keepers’ and granting access, at pleasure, to the commercial cyclists and their passengers for a fee hovering around N500 (CFA 709) from whatever charges the commuters had been charged. Quite interesting but disturbing is a fact that the cyclists pay the illegal fee on both sides of the borderline. This practice, no doubt, has necessitated illegal emigrants and immigrants alike, to take immigration system for granted on the understanding that an alternative channel of circumventing official protocols exists at a near-nothing cost. It is particularly interesting to note that this illegal practice of ‘migrant smuggling’ was confirmed by respondents in Seme and Idi-Iroko borders but blatantly denied by security personnel.

Objective Two: To discover the Contributory Causes of the Indicated Trans-Border Crimes in Seme and Idi-Iroko Border Areas

To address research question two bordering on investigation of contributory causes of the indicated trans-border crimes in the two foremost Nigerian borders, quantitative data obtained were analysed and findings indicated an express overlap of causes on each of the indicated crimes (Human Trafficking, Vehicle Smuggling, Smuggling of Small Arms and Light Weapons, Smuggling of Contraband Goods, Drug Trafficking and Migrant Smuggling). As captured in tables 2 and 3 below, specific outcomes of the study are indicative of the contributory causes of the different border crimes in the study locations.

Table 2: Showing Responses on Contributory Causes of Trans-Border Crimes in Seme Border Area.

Option	Human Trafficking	Vehicle Smuggling	Smuggling of Small Arms and Light Weapons	Smuggling of Contraband Goods	Drug Trafficking	Migrant Smuggling
Poverty	11 (14.10)	17(21.79)	13 (16.66)	33 (42.30)	6 (7.69)	30 (38.46)
Porous Border	34 (43.59)	29 (37.17)	29 (37.17)	20 (25.64)	34 (43.58)	21 (26.92)
Unemployment	14 (17.9)	12 (15.38)	3 (3.84)	6 (7.69)	12 (15.38)	21 (26.92)
Lucrativity	10 (12.82)	10 (12.82)	31 (39.74)	17 (21.79)	20 (25.64)	3 (3.84)
Ignorance	9 (11.53)	10 (12.82)	2 (2.56)	2 (2.56)	6 (7.69)	3 (3.84)
Total	78 (100)	78 (100)	78 (100)	78 (100)	78(100)	78(100)

Source: Field Survey, 2020. Percentages in Parenthesis

As evident in table 2, porous border condition was identified as the highest contributory cause of human trafficking (44 percent), vehicle smuggling (37 percent), smuggling of small arms and light weapons (37 percent) and drug trafficking (44 percent). Equally observed was that poverty was the most prominent of factors responsible for contraband goods smuggling (42 percent) and migrant smuggling (39 percent). It is to be noted that possible causes such as unemployment, lucrativity of the acts, as well as ignorance of the crime were other factors investigated in the study. These elements were individually examined across the listed crimes from where border porosity emerged as the most potent cause of four (human trafficking, vehicle smuggling, smuggling of small arms and light weapons and drug trafficking) out of six crimes considered for investigation. The former is indicative of an

accentuation of a well-supported argument that several border areas in Nigeria are porous; Isamotu (2021) and Ijaja (2021) are in clear consonance with a submission by Adeola and Oluyemi (2012) which had claimed that Nigeria borders were loose, giving rise to several illicit activities at the fringes of the borders. Similarly, Udeme (2012), affirms that Nigeria borders do have many loose entry and exit points. On the other hand, the two other crimes (smuggling of contrabands goods and migrant smuggling) were noted to have been largely caused by poverty. This revelation coincides with submission by Jacobs (2018) which avers that poverty is a predisposing element on which several other social factors are anchored: a situation Ogwueke (2019) considered as the vulnerability routes to vices among people of all ages, the youths in particular.

Table 3: Showing Responses on Contributory Causes of Trans-Border Crimes in Idi-Iroko Border Area

Option	Human Trafficking	Vehicle Smuggling	Smuggling of Small Arms and Light Weapons	Smuggling of Contraband Goods	Drug Trafficking	Migrant Smuggling
Poverty	10 (25.0)	7 (17.5)	2 (5.0)	4 (10.0)	0 (0)	9 (22.5)
Porous Border	19 (47.5)	22 (55.0)	5 (12.5)	23 (57.5)	28 (70)	23 (57.5)
Unemployment	7 (17.5)	9 (22.5)	3 (7.5)	8 (20.0)	2 (5.0)	5 (12.5)
Lucrativity	1 (2.5)	2 (5.0)	30 (75.0)	5 (12.5)	9 (22.5)	2 (5.0)
Ignorance	3(7.5)	0(0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	1 (2.5)	1 (2.5)
Total	40(100)	40 (100)	40 (100)	40 (100)	40 (100)	40 (100)

Source: Field Survey, 2020. Percentages are in parenthesis

As obtained on Table 3 above, border porosity was again noted here (Idi-Iroko) as a contributory factor necessitating human trafficking (48 percent); vehicle smuggling (55 percent), smuggling of contraband goods (58 percent); drug trafficking (70 percent) and migrant smuggling (58 percent) while lucrativity (75 percent) was noted as the highest causation of smuggling of small arms and light weapons in the area. Except for smuggling of arms and light weapons which the Idi-Iroko study claimed was occasioned by lucrativity, the data from both borders are similar on several other fronts.

Objective Three: To Examine Implications of Trans-Border Crimes in the Study Areas on the Nigerian state.

The third research objective of the study sought to explicate the implications of trans-border crimes in Seme and Idi-Iroko border areas on the country Nigeria. Qualitative approach was deployed to obtain and analyse the data for this objective and the imports of the obtained data set largely indicated that each of the examined crimes is multifaceted and does have ripple impact on several spheres of the socio-economic life of individuals, the immediate environment of the borders, the host-states and the nation at large. Respondents were categorical in condemning human trafficking as a callous crime of man against man capable of predisposing the victims to life-long physical and psychological injuries at the personal level. On a larger scale, such act also was claimed to portend a huge dent implication for the country of source, transit and / or destination as the nation's image (known for opprobrium) is overtly or covertly put to disrepute. While responses from the two study locales (Seme and Idi-Iroko) were not significantly at variance in terms of condemnation of the crime, many respondents expressed restraint on where lies the blame of negative implications of the crime, laying the blame of weak law enforcement in the 'courtyard' of government as a whole than on the perpetrators. The observation here tends to resonate fairly with a popular assertion that one of the myriad challenges bedeviling many African states is the menace of weak institutions. It would be recalled that the former US President, Barack Obama did not mince words on this, when he visited Africa before leaving Office. Reeling out several indices to underscore the claim of weak institutions on the African Continent, he was not ambivalent at all about this; he stated

pointedly that Africa did not need strong men, but strong institutions (White House, 2009).

On the issue of vehicle smuggling, obtained data pointed more prominently at public reluctance to admit it as a crime indeed. It was largely considered as hustling (Nigerian street parlance for daily struggle for economic survival), suggesting it was a form of business activity which should be seen as an economic exploit rather than a crime against the state as the extant laws have so designated it. As a respondent put it:

To consider bringing in vehicles from this area (Benin Republic) as a crime will not be fair. Is hustling to put food on the table through a means like this (referring to vehicle smuggling) not better than committing crimes like kidnapping and armed robbery? This kind of job is helping the economy by providing jobs for many people. (Field Report, 2021)

Like many people, contestation of the respondent was not in doubt. It was an indication suggesting aversion to categorization of vehicle smuggling through the borders as a genre of crime. Many of the vehicles herein referred are used vehicles, however, many who share this view do not claim being oblivious of the restriction protocol which stipulates importation prohibition of used-motor vehicles above fifteen (15) years from the year of manufacture enshrined as code 8703.10.0000-8703.90.0000 of the Nigeria Custom Service Restriction/Prohibition List.

Meanwhile, apparently observed from a few other respondents who admitted the practice of vehicle smuggling have some negative implications on the Nigerian state, was an articulated silence on whether the act was a crime or not. This was evident in almost all responses. A respondent in this category posited thus:

When we were young, these vehicles were assembled here; now poverty is everywhere. . . . if these smuggled vehicles are produced in Nigeria, more jobs will be created locally and more revenues to the government for infrastructural development. This is currently missing and we are at the receiving end. (Field Report, 2021)

The submission here replicates an attestation that vehicle smuggling at the Nigeria's busiest borders, though, creating

temporary jobs for few people, is denying the automobile industry in the country her once-significant contribution to the Nigeria economy. Besides researcher's close observation of daily smuggling activities at the borders, the rebuttal disposition of respondents to admit the act as a crime somewhat signposts that vehicle smuggling did not only exist but was also common in the two border areas. Notwithstanding, there was no mincing words that they affirmed it portends huge socio-economic implications on several facets of the nation's affairs; economy and security in particular.

As regard smuggling of small arms and light weapons, response pattern suggests respondents' *fait d'être* condemning the act and expressed knowledge of its implications on several fronts. The act was acknowledged to have a huge impact on the local, state and national security. Respondents were decisive in their claims that irrespective of the entry or exit point at the two borders, gun-running and illegal bearing of firearms are inimical to the internal security of Nigeria and was fingered as a cursory factor undermining the different efforts at curtailing the current security challenges the country is facing. The finding stood in consonance with Austin (2017) with a claim that the pervasive case of armed-robbery, militancy, insurgency and lately, banditry, found space to thrive in Nigeria because of proliferation of arms and weak arms control mechanism. Equally noted from the obtained data was respondents' dispositional affirmation that the pitiable economic state in Nigeria today was a fallout of the deteriorating security situation occasioned by the menace of proliferation of small arms and light weapons.

On the issues relating to smuggling of contraband goods in the locales under investigation, obtained facts portray respondents' awareness of the implications of smuggling of contraband goods. The contraband goods herein referred are items such as frozen chicken (code:0105.1100-0105.9900) refined vegetable oils and fats (code:1507.1000); cocoa-butter powder and cakes (code:1802.00.0000); spaghetti/noodles (code:1902.1100-1902.30.0000); fruit juice in retail packs (code:2009.11.1000-2009.11.9000-2009.90.9000); foot wares, bags and suitcases (code:6401.19.9000-6405.90.9000) except safety shoes; used motor vehicles, not more than 15 years from date of manufacture (code:8703.10.1000-8703.90.9000) and some other items as contained in Schedule 4 of the Import Prohibition List of the Nigeria Customs Service. It was acknowledged that illegal importation of such items primarily had implications on the local manufacturing companies which line of production have same or similar products. On the part of the manufacturing sector, it was admitted that local manufacturing companies would have such smuggled products competing the market space with their home-made products; as such, would lead to huge profit margin loss, reduced potential to hire workers, lessen payable tax to government as well as heighten the risk of company fold-up. It was equally, noted that this unpatriotic act had necessitated colossal depletion of the revenue base of the Nigerian government. By implication, government at different levels have been limited or in some places, incapacitated to provide public infrastructure as needed by the Nigerian state

and its people. The economic damage wrecked by such acts of sabotage to a struggling country like Nigeria with a huge population of over 200 million people is better imagined. Little wonder, the National Bureau of Statistics' Third Quarte Report of 2021 put general and youth unemployment in the country at 33.3 percent and 42.5 percent respectively with no less than 40 percent of the total population living in extreme poverty, despite its vast resources (NBS Report, 2021).

Another aspect of the study was cross-border drug trafficking. Obtained data indicated admittance that the crime had impact on the peddlers, the end-users and the government. On the part of the peddlers, drug trafficking was considered a lucrative business which might be difficult to halt in the immediate as the peddlers have a well-entrenched syndicate network on both sides of the borders. Equally, respondents were of strong opinion that the crime's attraction profile was enough reason the dealers would continue in the nefarious practice and be ready to deploy any possible resistance to out-match state counter-measures at combating the menace. This affirmation was in clear consonance with Njoku (2015) which averred that drug cartels were never dissuaded easily as the crime had turned a multimillion naira business with patronage and support of the powerful and wealthy people in the society. Noting the resources available at the cartel's disposal, checkmating their activities shall undoubtedly be a herculean task for the state actors, even when a multidimensional approach is employed. As regard implications on the dealers and end-users, respondents were unanimous in their opinion that the more the peddlers succeed to outplay border restrictions, so shall the drug-abusers surge in number, crave and willingness to continue the abuse; a discovery which directly relates to a finding by Brownstein, Shiledar Baxi, Goldstein and Ryan (1992) which confirms that victims of drug abuse were known by the police to have been involved with drugs and drug trafficking or involved perpetrators or victims with prior official criminal records for drug sales or possession. Quite reverberating in further responses was also a consensus that drug-peddling was an unmistakable albatross which resultant negative impact on mental wellbeing of abusers has been clinically and empirically proven. Lastly, the impact of cross-border drug trafficking, in the view of the respondents, was a huge impact on the government and by extension, the nation at large from diverse sources. Of course, youths who indulge in drug abuse or peddling are often less productive because of possible impairment to their physiological and psychological wellbeing. Clearly confirmed, the regular use of psychoactive substances among adolescents and youths is worrisome and has become a source of public concern worldwide. Whichstrom and Hegna, (2003) concurred with Daane, (2003) on this, because the illicit acts hold the potential for far-reaching injuries.

Another outcome of the study indicated that cross-border drug trafficking constitute a threat to border security measures and the nation's internal security as a whole, yet could barely be checked because of the huge profit the crime generates and the

height of conspiracy involved. A respondent offered an explanation thus:

Drug trafficking is a money-spinning business and this profit-laden trade is capable of emboldening the merchants to cultivate the culture of audacious affront against all state-owned measures at combating the crime.
(Field Report, 2020)

The explanation here, projects a semblance of incapacitation of state agencies in quashing the menace of trans-border drug smuggling due to the weird effrontery of drug traffickers; a situation many respondents considered responsible not only for the sustenance of the crime, but equally, its thrive in the areas. Implications in terms of migrant smuggling was the last data set collated during the investigation. According to the security personnel, what the researcher termed 'migrant smuggling', was to them, an illegal or undocumented migration which was admitted as a despicable crime with negative implications of inestimable dimension. Though, they admitted it as a crime but vehemently claimed ignorance of its existence in their respective duty bits and by extension, fervidly denied their complicity. Observed in their response also was a denial of the existence of illegal routes through which motorcycles navigate borderlines via footpaths conveying people (as physically witnessed by the researcher) without approving travel documents. On the part of the resident traders, movement of people across the border without documentation was not a difficult thing as there exist three popular options; one, an option of crossing country lines legally using the officially designated border routes with *Laissez-Passer* (a temporary travel permit in the African francophone countries) or ECOWAS passport; two, an option to be concealed in border-crossing vehicles without border agents knowing and three, commuting across borderlines on motorcycles through footpath manned by non-state actors. In their views, since the illegal migrants neither provoked direct breach of peace in the border areas, nor get caught with arms, their activities were not inimical to the overall security architecture of the area or the country at large. A resident trader at Idi-Iroko had this to say:

"Migrants without Laissez-Passer but who cross through other routes do not carry dangerous weapons, therefore their movement does no harm to the country or people whatsoever".

(Field Report, 2021)

Somewhat in an exasperation mood, a resident trader interviewed at Seme Border area also gave her take thus:

"Whoever says this class of migrants (illegal migrants) are trouble-makers or constitute security threats should say it. Though, without travel documents, they do cross regularly to or from Seme but I do not foresee their entry or exit causing danger to anyone"

(Field Report, 2021).

From the concluding part of the data relating to the implications of migrant smuggling, it was apparent that the resident traders do not subscribe to the claim that illegal migrants in a country are sources of potential threats to the community or country in anyway. The finding here could be better explained if considered on the hinges of Eamonn Butlers's Theory of Moral Sentiment. Noting the sociological make-up of man, the theory postulates that people are wired to raise contestation and or avoid aversive (unpleasant) stimuli and reckon with pleasant situations and phenomena. In this wise, claim of the resident traders that illegal border crossing by undocumented migrants has no injurious implications on the border communities and the country at large, may be based on sentiment of protectionism as encapsulated in the Theory of Moral Sentiment. The claim may not be acceptable to security and development experts, as influx of undocumented migrants into a country is often considered as threat to national economy and security. (Alege, 2016)

V. CONCLUSION

Obvious from the study is a conclusion that cross-border crimes in the Seme and Idi-Iroko borders were not a ruse but actual reality, though with prevalence at varying degrees. This affirms clearly that the culture of border security in the area has largely faded off as the presence of illicit cross-border activities in and around these two most prominent border areas in South-Western states of Nigeria appears less criminal to dwellers. Though, prevalence of the crimes varies in the two borders, the more prominent ones in both areas include human trafficking, vehicle smuggling, drug trafficking, smuggling of contraband goods and the least of all, smuggling of small arms and light weapons. In addition, another genre of crime discovered by the study, connected to illegal migration, was migrant smuggling. It was a crime orchestrated by accomplices at the borders but blatantly denied by security operatives. Though, the crime was denied by border security operatives, but the researcher's first-hand insight remains an evidence to claim and argue the veracity of the crime. The disavowal of the crime by security operatives could be explained using the Anna Freud's 'Denial' approach as one of the defence mechanism strategies. It is a bemoaning attitude which involves a refusal to accept reality, thus blocking awareness of external persons or third party. It is a way people put distance between themselves from feelings of guilt or connivance, however, several other indicators suggestive of presence of these organized crimes and complicity of different people, security operatives inclusive, are arguable. A cardinal issue unearthed by the study which, of course, had earlier been affirmed by many previous works on similar subject matter is the fact that the Seme and Idi-Iroko borders, like several other Nigeria borders, are indeed porous; a situation with huge implications. As cited by Ukpong (2017), Alemika (2013) postulated that organized crimes weaken government capacity by leeching away resources. From the foregoing, it is convenient to claim that the culture of border security which used to be a mutual task by border community dwellers as social obligation and Immigration Personnel as statutory responsibility has mellowed so steeply to a crisis point

giving filled days to perpetrators of crimes along the axis with little or no checks.

Poverty, border porosity, lucrativity of crimes, unemployment and ignorance being reasons for cross-border crimes as pointed out in the study reflect the public speculations and corroboration of some literatures. For instance, Okeke, Oji and Richard (2014) observed that porosity of Nigeria borders was a significant cause of organized crimes along the Nigeria border corridors. While these reasons for indulgence in the indicated cross-border crimes as observed from the study may not be totally untrue, they arguably, stand no ideal principle to be justifiable in any sane clime. It becomes more disheartening to note that the porous nature has not significantly changed despite increase in number of personnel and deployment of more border security and allied agencies. In extant corroboration, juxtaposing the International Crime Threat Assessment indices of state failure, Eselebor (2013) noted that border porosity was evident in many West African states, Nigeria inclusive, with numerous routes for smuggling of drugs, weapons, explosives and other contrabands. With the kind of crimes to which the two prominent borders in South-Western Nigeria are observed to be vulnerable, it signals an imminent multi-phased risk to the socio-economic stability of the region (south western Nigeria) and the country at large. More disturbing is a fact that such illicit activities are potential contributors to undermine national security.

VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

On account of the findings that emerged from the study, it is apparent that a more comprehensive security approach is necessary at the Nigeria's Seme and Idi-Iroko borders and their environs, if any of the border and cross-border crimes would be curtailed. Issues emanating from the study show that the Nigeria border security landscape has assumed a more intricate dimension and by extension, thrown up quite a number of challenges that require close monitoring and vigilance to include an efficient, flexible, responsive and well-fortified border security management.

A new social order to address conspiracy and complicity of border security operatives and the overall wobbling management of operations at the two borders and similar places is urgently required. Indeed, there are evidence that main border security agencies like the Nigerian Immigration Service and the Nigerian Customs Service, have begun to deploy digital mechanics in their respective operations, but since the border security management of the 21st Century cannot afford to be aback with technology, there must be constant upgrading to specifically attend to emerging operational and strategic challenges. In this regard, incorporation of aerial surveillance using the Nigeria-own satellite technological system - NigComSat-1R and similar covert technology in the security architecture of the border corridors has become an utmost necessity. Viewed from another dimension, for optimum efficiency of border security operations, the emphasis about recruitment of more personnel to man the border spaces should

change to emphasis on more skillful hands in modern telecommunication operations and cyber security.

Unlike sectors that are jointly taken care of by various tiers of government, border issues are symmetric to national defence; hence, its being on the exclusive legislative list - a reserved obligation for the Federal Government of Nigeria. For this reason, the Federal Government need accord it due priority in terms of funding for operational and logistics concerns with appropriate short-term, medium-term and long-term planning for enhanced efficiency. It is hoped that if smart approaches are deployed to revenue generation and capital expenditure, funding to prevent cross-border crimes would not be a challenge for the border management agencies. Besides being a national security treasure borders and border management are indisputable sources of revenues, if well-managed; hence the is no justifiable reasons not to have funds to procure needed gadgets to provide comprehensive border security. In same direction, a renewed effort to promote constructive inter-agency relationship among all border security agencies must be galvanized at the strategic, tactical and operational levels as a matter of immediate urgency.

Lastly, a long-term national plan must be activated by government in conjunction with relevant stakeholders to dissuade citizens from crimes and crime-related ventures and this is doable by abundant creation of gainful employment. The National Social Investments Programme (NSIP) to tackle poverty and hunger across the country by the Buhari administration should be intensified and made more accessible, consistent and persistent in all nooks and crannies of the country. More so, the National Orientation Agency (NOA) and relevant agencies should increase efforts at activating a social engineering for national rebirth through conscious measures at instilling moral values and sense of patriotism in all and sundry. It is only when these measures are done successfully that the advocacy for an overhauling of the administration of criminal justice system with stricter, enforceable and punitive penalties for crimes and cross-border crimes in particular would be justifiable.

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