

GLOBALIZATION AND THE PROLIFERATION OF SMALL ARMS AND LIGHT WEAPONS (SALWS) IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA: IMPLICATIONS ON NIGERIA'S SECURITY

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ABSTRACT

Greater interconnectedness and interdependence of nation-states has emerged as one of the outcomes of the current phase of globalization. One consequence of this is the ease at which Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALWs) flow from one part of the world to another. SALWs proliferation, however, plays destabilizing role in the peace and security of sub-Saharan Africa, as it fuels many conflicts that afflict the region. This paper qualitatively interrogates the nexus between SALWs proliferation, as occasioned by globalization, and the state of security in the sub-Saharan Africa, with special reference to Nigeria. It argues that, though the root causes of insecurity in Africa can be attributed to the internal socio-politico-economic contradictions, it is an uncontested fact that SALWs proliferation has aggravated the precarious security challenges of the continent. As the experience of Nigeria reveals, easy access to SALWs by aggrieved groups has served as a trigger to the state of insecurity in the country. Its increasing proliferation and circulation, most especially in recent years, has helped fuelled a wave of militancy, insurgency, cultism, ethno-religious conflict, electoral violence, kidnapping, armed robbery and other violent crimes. In order to achieve a measurable degree of security of lives and property in the continent, a concerted effort must be made to control the proliferation of SALWs, through a robust intra and inter-state strategy that encapsulates effective governance, comprehensive national control, strengthening of border security and international collaboration.

Introduction

Among the recent developments in the global politics, none has been complex and manifest as globalization. Over the last three decades, the rate and scope of global interconnectedness has become increasingly evident in every spheres of life. Capital, commerce, advanced technology, and information are speedily spreading worldwide thereby producing the complexity and chaos connected with the concept of globalization

(Kegley and Eugene, 2006). Globalization is the “process of increasing inter-connectedness between and among societies such that the event in one part of the world more and more have effects on peoples and societies far away” (John, Steve and Patricia, 2008: 8). A globalized world, as notes by John *et al*, is one in which “political, economic, cultural and social events become more and more interconnected and also one in which they

have impact” (p. 8). In essence, with globalization, societies are transformed more and more deeply by events in other clans.

It must be noted however that global interconnectedness portends both possibilities and problems (Amuwo, 2013; Karen and Jack, 2008; Kegley and Eugene, 2006; Kegley and Blanton, 2011; Majekodunmi and Adejumo, 2012). As observed by Kegley and Eugene (2006: 262), for instance, globalization is “uniting the world and generating unprecedented new levels of wealth on one hand while making national boundaries and state governments less important and, by creating some winners and many losers, it is also producing greater inequalities”. In the context of African political economy, one major consequence of globalization is the aggravation of the precarious security challenges in the continent through the proliferation of small arms and light weapons (SALWs). Globalization has facilitated rapid market liberalization and the privatization of non-competitive public arms industries thereby contributing to the spread of weapons from one society to another.

Arms and weapons proliferation is one serious problem facing Africa as the liberalization of national boundaries intended to enhance global integration, has facilitated arms trafficking. Thus, globalization has impacted negatively on peace and security in sub-Saharan Africa. This is because, the liberalization of national boundaries has warranted the seemingly loss of state power to control transitional crimes including arms importation. The proliferation of SALWs constitutes a major source of insecurity in Africa. Most of the African countries’ borders are porous, thus, making them easy for entry and exit of arms and weapons. SALWs’ proliferation is neither a new phenomenon nor its prevalence wholly attributable to globalization. Nevertheless, globalization, with its inherent interconnectedness, has led to the

intensification of illicit trafficking of SALWs. More often than not, the proliferation of SALWs takes place among local officials, formal and informal retailers, and civilians; but the effects can be speedily spread and felt globally. Globalization facilitates the linkage among the multiplicity of actors that engage into SALWs trafficking whether via illicit or rightful channels.

In essence, globalization has created a turbulent era during which aggrieved groups in states are unleashing violence against them, warlords are growing in financial and territorial influence, and the distinction between various forms of violence –political, communal, religious, and criminal- are blurring. It is paradoxical that the deepening of interconnectedness among nation-states actors has brought about public insecurity in many parts of the world. In this regard, the place of Africa in the globalization agenda requires some in-depth study. This paper qualitatively interrogates the nexus between globalization, proliferation of SALWs and the security challenges in Africa. For instance, to what extent has SALWs proliferation occasioned by globalization affected sub-Saharan Africa, with special emphasis on the security situation in Nigeria? To provide general context, the next section conceptualizes the central concepts of globalization, SALWs and insecurity. Section three situates the discourse within a theory while the fourth section examines the proliferation of SALWs and the challenges of insecurity in the sub-Saharan Africa. The implications of SALWs proliferation on the Nigerian political economy is the thrust of the fifth section. The last section presents conclusion and recommendations.

Globalization, SALWs and Insecurity: Conceptual Perspectives

Globalization: The concept of globalization has inspired competing definitions and

interpretations. The concept is perhaps today the most recurrent term employed by scholars and analysts to explain the occurrences in various parts of the world. Consequently, it has assumed the status of a contested concept as it means different things to different people. Generally, globalization “captures the idea that everything on planet is now more closely connected than ever before, but on an institutional foundation that is shaky and unprepared for managing the massive adjustments brought on by accelerating worldwide changes” (Kegley and Blanton, 2011: 601). It thus encompasses the increasing interconnectedness and interdependence among the world’s regions, nations, governments, businesses, institutions, communities, families and individuals (Ali and Muhammad, 2002; Stiglitz, 2002). According to Omotola and Enejo (2009: 522), globalization fosters the advancement of a “global mentality” and conjures the picture of a borderless world through the use of information and communication technology (ICT) to create partnership for greater financial and economic integration.

As a process, globalization has developed as an extension of neo-liberal economic policies. It is thus a market-induced, not a policy-led process, which has produced much that is new in the world economy and politics, but has not changed the basic ways in which capitalism operates (Magdoff, 1992 cited in Ali and Muhammad, 2002). The contemporary economic globalization is partly the result of the use of state power to pursue the political project of a global free market leading to the globalization of the world economy and the emerging condition of globalized security. Globalization, in this sense, connotes the simultaneous transformation of the state and its security environment (Bilgin and Morton, 2007). In the pre-globalization era, nation-states guaranteed their citizens’ security and posed the main threat to the security of other

states. However, the process of globalization has brought about a situation in which states have to face insecurity stemming from within and without their boundaries. Not only is the global spread of ideas and technologies makes it easier for states and disgruntled groups to develop arms and weapons, it also facilitates their movement from one part of the world to another. One of the most affected regions is Africa which has earned the reputation of crisis-ridden continent. Africa has gory tale of violent civil wars that had threatened international peace and security. This is aided largely by the proliferation of SALWs.

SALWs: According to Economic Community of West African States’ (ECOWAS) Convention on Small Arms and Light Weapons (2006), small arms (SAs) refers to arms used by one person and which include firearms and other destructive arms or devices such as exploding bombs, incendiary bombs or gas bombs, grenades, rocket launchers, missiles, missile systems or landmines, revolvers and pistols with automatic loading, rifles and carbines, machine guns, assault rifles and light machine guns. Light weapons (LWs) are defined by the Convention as portable arms designed to be used by several persons working together in a team, and which include heavy machine guns, portable grenade launchers, mobile or mounted portable anti-aircraft cannons, portable anti-tank cannons, non-recoil guns, portable anti-tank missile launchers or rocket launchers, portable anti-craft missile launchers, and mortars with a caliber of less than 100 millimeters. In short, light weapons encompass all conventional ammunition that can be carried by an individual combatant or by light vehicles.

The proliferation of small arms and light weapons (SALWs) has been prevalent and widespread within sub-Saharan Africa. Though, factors such as perennial crisis in the region and the porous nature of borders,

account partly for the proliferation of SALWs, the liberalization of global economy and the attendant connectivity among states has not only facilitated the spread of SALWs from one part of the world to another but also brought about their easy manufacture. This does not, however, mean that globalization mainly accounts for the proliferation of SALWs in sub-Saharan Africa rather; the persistent crisis in the continent is being fuelled by the ease at which SALWs are trafficked from one crisis zone to another. From genocide in Rwanda, to civil wars in Liberia, Sierra Leone, Cote d'Ivoire, and Sudan; to insurgent crisis in Nigeria, Kenya and Angola, weapons have been in high demand in all parts of the continent. This is more so as SALWs are well suited for illicit trafficking as they are easily portable, easy to conceal, and their small shipments do not draw much attention. In addition, most of these weapons require minimal maintenance, are easy to operate, durable and require little logistical support (Nganga, 2008). This has contributed to the easy flow of SALWs from one conflict area to the next with the same weapons, and by the same fighters who move from one conflict area to another. This scenario has had a debilitating impact on the security situation in Africa.

Insecurity: To properly conceptualize the concept of insecurity, defining security would be helpful. Traditionally, security is conceptualized within the context of the capability of governments to ensure the protection of their countries from internal insurrection and external aggression. However, this traditional realist mindset of security is undergoing some transformation as a result of the complex nature of global politics. The conception of security has changed from state-centric perspective characterized by narrow, restrictive, militaristic and strategic views to a broader

view that places premium on individual (Saliu, 2010 cited in Hassan, 2014). Broadly defined, therefore, security entails “improvement in the socio-economic, health, environmental and physical conditions of the people; protecting the dominant values, ideology and way of life of the state from threats and forestalling any form of socio-economic, political or religious assault on the state” (Hassan, 2014: 10). This paper, however, adopts the traditional limited view of security as it views it as the protection of lives, wellbeing of the people and safeguarding their prosperity.

In this context, insecurity denotes absence of protection from danger or other bad situations. It is on this understanding that Beland (2005) opines that insecurity is a fear or anxiety due to absence or ineffectiveness of the mechanisms of protection. Achumba *et al* (2013) also perceive insecurity from the same perspective by defining it as the state of (i) being open or subject to danger (where the danger is the condition of being susceptible to harm or injury), and of (ii) being exposed to risk or anxiety (where anxiety is a vague unpleasant emotion that is experienced in anticipation of some misfortunes). Ewetan and Urhie (2014: 44) simply define insecurity as “a breach of peace and security...that contributes to recurring conflicts, and lead to wanton destruction of lives and property”. A deep reflection on these definitions shows one basic fact, that is, insecurity entails absence of security as defined above. In the context of this paper, it is the prevalence of threats to human lives and property as a result of the proliferation of SALWs, which leads to intensification of conflict, terrorism and insurgency, militancy, armed robbery, and kidnapping.

Theoretical Framework of Analysis

The role of globalization in the global political economy has been the subject of numerous

and often conflicting interpretations. Most theories have highlighted the declining importance of state by laying their arguments on the erosion of the dividing line between domestic and international politics and the failure of governments in many critical areas of policy. Based on this premise, this paper is anchored within the context of liberal-dependency-system theory as a framework for understanding the nexus between globalization and the proliferation of small arms and light weapons (SALWs) on one hand, and proliferation of SALWs and perpetration of insecurity in Africa on the other. Liberal-dependency-system theory is based on the notion that, world society now comprises a whole range of interconnected systems-economic, social, political, strategic, religious etc. It thus follows that the traditional notion of sovereign states appears to have lost much of its former relevance (Miller, 1989). The globalization of all human activities has encouraged proliferation of sort of transnational transactions. One of such transactions is the proliferation of SALWs with its threat to both national and international peace and security.

Inherent in liberal-dependency-system theory is the notion that inequality, dominance, exploitation and subjugation have been the global economic features of capitalism in its phases of growth and expansionism (George-genyi, 2013). The central thesis of the theory that makes it relevant to this discourse is the need to give greater consideration to how different logics of sovereignty and capitalism are intertwined in shaping the structural conditions of the post-colonial states. This is captured through the manner in which post-colonial states internalize capital accumulation processes and associated forms of rule (Bilgin and Morton, 2007). In relation to sub-Saharan Africa, the distinct process of state formation and the associated form of sovereignty emerged within

global division of labour shaped by the expansion of capitalism and uneven process of development (Mandami, 1996). A considerable understanding of the contemporary nature of globalization, proliferation of SALWs and African political economy would thus be gained through a historical understanding of the progressive integration of Africa into the global political economy.

This brings to the fore, the need to understand how different processes of primitive accumulation have unfolded within the framework of competing logics of sovereignty and territoriality, linked to the emergence of capitalism and the international system (Harvey, 2003 cited in Bilgin and Morton, 2007). The process of uneven relationship between the developed world (which is the main proponent of globalization) and the developing world has contributed greatly to shaping state sovereignty, and socio-politico-economic development in the latter. In specific, a focus on the liberal-dependency state behaviour that has emerged as part and parcel of globalized security is a much more fruitful, historically rich, and empirically nuanced way of understanding the conditions of neoliberal globalization, proliferation of SALWs and the problem of insecurity in sub-Saharan Africa. This is more so, due to the fact that globalization does not only encompass the growing internationalization of financial, industrial and commercial capital, but also highlighted the feeling of insecurity of nations of the world. Most especially, as it facilitates the activities of terrorist gangs across national boundaries. Unlike the pre-globalization era, when arms trade was the exclusive preserve of states operating under strict laws, contemporary transnational arms traffickers have successfully used the opportunity offers by globalization to infiltrate arms militias in sovereign states, to further help them export terrorist related activities.

As Bilgin and Morton (2007) has pointed out, the process of globalization has compounded the problem of global insecurity in several ways. The spheres of security, which were hitherto an exclusive responsibility of state actors is now increasingly being shaped by non-state actors. States now have to cope with a plethora of non-state actors who have become more active and influential due to the process of neoliberal globalization. In other words, with the prominence of neoliberal globalization, the area of decision making such as national security, which previously did not avail itself to national scrutiny, are now politicized by way of being exposed to public skepticism and debate. In essence, the transformative effects of neoliberal globalization have created extra strain for the already fragile state structures in sub-Saharan Africa by liberalizing arms and weapons trade, subordinating them to a globalized security system and eroding their distinctive identity (Grugel, 2005 cited in Bilgin and Morton, 2007). Many African states are therefore faced with the perennial crises and insecurity.

Proliferation of SALWs and the Challenge of Insecurity in Africa: The Nexus

The proliferation of SALWs in Africa during the recent decades has become pronounced and has put the security and stability of the continent on a state of disequilibrium (Batchelor, 2001; GIABA, 2013; Klijn, 2001;

SIPRI, 2011; Unuoha, 2011). This is in spite of the existence of regional and global instruments put in place to prevent the proliferation of SALWs. Some of these instruments include, the ECOWAS Convention on SALWs: Their Ammunition and Other Related Materials (2006); Bamako Declaration on the common African Position on the Proliferation, Circulation and Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons (2000); and the United Nations (UN) Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All its Aspects (UN PoA) (Onuoha, 2011). These regional and international instruments intended to prevent SALWs proliferation are regularly breached. During the 2000s, for instance, several cases were uncovered of large-scale arms smuggling to sub-Saharan Africa in violation of regional and international laws (SIPRI, 2011). Consequently, illegal arms flows are widely thought to be a significant factor fuelling conflict in sub-Saharan Africa. For instance, Onuoha (2011) recounts that out of approximately 500 million illicit weapons in circulation globally in 2004, it was estimated that about 100 million are in sub-Saharan Africa, with 8 to 10 million concentrated in the West African sub-region. GIABA (2013)'s Report also presents the types, sources routes and destinations of SALWs in West Africa (see Table 1).

Table 1: Types, Sources, Routes, and Destinations of SALWs in West Africa

Country of Destination or Use	Types of SALWs	Likely Countries of Origin/Suppliers	Means/Routes
Niger	AK-47 guns, pistols, short, long and double barrel guns, Berreta guns, and Kalachnikov rifles	Libya, Chad, Somali, Sudan, Nigeria, Algeria, Burkina Faso, and Local Manufacturers	Land borders and footpaths
Guinea Bissau	AK-47 guns, pistols, short, long and double barrel guns	Remnants from the independence struggle, Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Local Manufacturers	Land and sea borders

Cote d'Ivoire	AK-47 guns, pistols, revolvers, assault rifles, short, long and double barrel guns	Liberia, Guinea, USA, Britain, Russia, France, China, and Local Manufacturers	Land and sea borders
Nigeria (Niger Delta, North-East)	Pump action guns, AK-47 guns, Revolvers, self-loading guns, Assault rifles, pistols, short, long and double barrel guns	Chad, Cameroon, South Africa, Europe, Niger Military and Police officers Local manufacturers Great Lakes region, and Russia	Land and sea borders, creeks, and air strips
Togo	AK-47 guns, local pistols and long rifles, pistols, short, long and double barrel guns	Nigeria, Ghana and Local Manufacturers	Land borders, footpaths
Ghana	Pistols, AK-47 guns, revolvers, pump action guns, short, long and double barrel guns	Remnants of the military-era, and Local Manufacturers	-
Sierra Leone	AK-47 guns, revolvers, rockets, self loading pistols, rifles, assault rifles, locally made guns, mortars, and hand grenades	Guinea, Liberia, Cote d'Ivoire, Remnants of the Civil war, and Local Manufacturers	Land, sea borders, and footpaths through Guinean Forest
Liberia	AK-47 guns, revolvers, self loading pistols, rifles, assault rifles, locally made guns, mortars, and hand grenades	Guinea, Burkina Faso, East Europe, Libya, remnants of the civil war, Local Manufacturers	Land and sea borders
Senegal (Casamance Region)	AK-47 guns, pistols, rockets, short, long and double barrel guns	Guinea Bissau, Gambia , Iran and Local Manufacturers	Land borders, maritime borders and footpaths
Gambia	AK-47 guns, pistols, rockets, short, long and double barrel guns	Local Manufacturers, Iran and Senegal	Land and Sea Borders
Burkina Faso	A-47 guns, revolvers, self loading pistols, rifles, assault rifles, and locally made guns	Liberia, Cote d'Ivoire, and Local Manufacturers	Land borders and footpaths
Guinea	AK-47 guns, local pistols and long rifles, short, long and double barrel guns	Local Manufacturers Cote d'Ivoire, Sierra Leone and Liberia	Land and Sea Borders
Cape Verde	AK-47 guns, revolvers, assault rifles, long and double barrel guns	Europe and local Manufacturing	Sea Borders
Benin	AK-47 guns, revolvers, assault rifles, long and double barrel guns	Nigeria, Togo, South Africa	Land and Sea Borders
Mali	AK-47 guns, revolvers, assault rifles, long and double barrel guns	Local Manufacturers Niger, Libya, Algeria, and Mauritania	Land Borders

Source: Inter-governmental Action Group Against Money Laundering in West Africa Report (2013: 16-17)

The Table shows that SALWs such as pump action guns, assault rifles, AK-47, revolvers and sub-machine guns are illicitly trafficked in West Africa with AK-47 being the commonest weapon. It also shows that SALWs are trafficked into the region through various sources. These include domestic (arms produced or proliferated within a given country); regional (arms trafficked from one ECOWAS country to another); continental (arms trafficked into West Africa from other parts of Africa); and non-African sources (arms trafficked from other parts of the world into the region). These arms are trafficked through land, sea and air routes. The case of the West African sub-region, as presented by this table, is a testimony to the prevalence of illicit trafficking in SALWs in the sub-Saharan Africa. Coupled with the illicit trafficking in SALWs, the alarming rate at which most African countries import weapons also compounds the problem of SALWs proliferation in the continent. Because there are generally only small numbers of functioning major arms service in sub-Saharan Africa, SALWs play an important role in the arsenals of governments and in the general insecurity in the region. According to SIPRI (2011), transfers of SALWs to sub-Saharan Africa between 2006 -2010 were common with at least 34 of the 48 countries in the region importing weapons and arms for their armed forces. These, according to the report, included transfers of at least an estimated 220,000 assault rifles and submachine guns, with Nigeria procuring 72,000 rifles, Kenya 51,500, Uganda 38,000 and Chad 31,000. It must be noted that most of available detailed information on SALWs transfers came from suppliers that have chosen to report publicly on their exports. It is likely that more weapons and ammunitions have been imported into sub-Saharan Africa from countries that do not report their arms exports in sufficient details or at all. For instance, SIPRI (2011) opines that there are

strong indications that during 2006-2010, Sudan received substantial numbers of SALWs from China which did not reflect on her exports of SALWs.

Globally, the state of security in the Post Cold War era has become worrisome. Global crises has become increasingly fueled and sustained by the incidence of observable reality of the malignant scourge of the proliferation of SALWs. In Africa, the source of SALWs proliferation are many and varied (see Table 1). Most of these sources are however facilitated by the forces of globalization. It is an uncontested fact that a major pipeline of SALWs remains the stockpiles that were pumped into Africa in the 1970s, 1980s and early 1990s by the ex-Soviet Union, the USA and their allies to fan proxy intra-state and interstate wars. These leftover weapons have found their ways through clandestine networks involving rogues arms brokers, private military companies and local smugglers to exacerbate on-going conflicts and facilitate the commencement of new ones in the continent (*World Trends Watch*, 2013; Ayuba and Okafor, 2015). Most noticeably, the 2011 fall of Muammar al-Gaddafi and the subsequent breakdown of order in Libya has been a major contributor to the instability plaguing large part of Africa. The flow of weapons, such as multitude of small arms and light weapons (SALWs) and explosives, from liberated Libyan military stockpiles into the surrounding countries has galvanized existing political opposition currents, separatist movements, and transnational militant groups. Much of the concern regarding the impact of weapon proliferation out of Libya emphasizes the potential threat of man-portable air defense system (MANPAS) falling into the hands of radical Islamic militant groups such as *al-Shabaab*, *Boko Haram* and *al-Qaeda* (*World Trends Watch*, 2013). This has contributed in no small measure to the environment of insecurity pervading the

continent. In fact, it is the residual impact of the proliferation of SALWs on stability and security that has posed the most immediate threats to an already precarious political and security environment in Africa.

Proliferation of SALWs is therefore believed to have played a significant role in the perennial crises in the sub-Saharan Africa. This is not to say, as argued earlier, that proliferation of SALWs is the primary cause of crisis in Africa. More so, there is limited evidence to suggest a direct causal relationship between proliferation and availability of arms and weapons and the outbreak or increase in intensity of a conflict. Nonetheless, it is widely assumed that under certain circumstances there is a risk that arms proliferation may provoke, prolong or exacerbate violent conflict. This assumption is reflected in the use of arms embargoes and other restrictions on arms exports as a conflict management tool by the United Nations, other regional organizations and individual countries. The United Nations, for instance, is of the belief that:

...the destabilizing accumulation and uncontrolled spread of small arms and light weapons in many regions of the world increases the intensity and duration of armed conflict, undermines the sustainability of peace agreements, impedes the success of peace building, frustrates efforts aimed at the prevention of armed conflict, hinders considerable provision of humanitarian assistance and compromises the effectiveness of the Security Council in discharging its primary responsibility of the maintenance of international peace and security (United Nations, 2002).

It can thus be argued that the proliferation of SALWs is a major challenge to security in the sub-Saharan Africa. The persistence and the increased number of wars in the continent are partially due to small arms and light weapons

proliferation. As Klare and Boutwell (2000) observed: "Nowhere has the relation between the accessibility of light weapons and the outbreak and severity of conflict been more dramatically evident than in Africa". Once competing groups have been armed with automatic weapons, any minor misunderstanding can escalate to a major bloodbath. Though the root causes of ethnic, religious and sectarian conflict in Africa are more complex and varied, typically involving historical grievances, economic deprivation, sit-tight and autocratic leadership, electoral manipulation and abuse of democratic process, but the ready accessibility and low cost of small arms and light weapons prolong combat, encourage a violent rather than peaceful resolution of differences, and generate greater insecurity throughout society, which in turn leads to a spiraling demand for, and use of SALWs.

According to Nganga (2008), SALWs proliferation plays a significant role in intensification of conflicts in Africa. With the majority of the wars fought in small continuous battles and the relative lack of economic prosperity in comparison to the rest of the world, the use of heavy weapons such as tanks and aircrafts is limited to governments or significantly large rebel groups. SALWs are therefore used mainly and tend to have an impact on the intensity as well as the duration of conflicts. Armed conflicts mostly affects civilian – women, children and disabled – who are often the deliberate targets of the disgruntled party. These attacks on harmless and civilians force them to seek out SALWs for self-defence, thus further reinforcing and increasing the proliferation of SALWs in the area. With more weapons available, the conflict is further extended and intensified. The spread of SALWs to the neighbouring countries is also increased by those displaced due to the conflict. In most cases, the weapons fall into the hands of

criminals who in turn use them to commit crimes such as armed robbery, kidnapping, militancy and insurgence against the state. This leads to the deepening of insecurity in most parts of sub-Saharan Africa.

In sum, it could be argued that SALWs proliferation has contributed significantly to the insecurity and instability being experienced in most parts of Africa. SALWs proliferation has contributed to most governments' inability to legitimately maintain or restore stability in their countries. Regrettably, illegal arms trade continues to play a role in the procurement of arms and weapons by both government and the rebel groups in the region. There have been regular instances of weapon flows within Africa to rebel groups in violation of UN embargoes. For instance, it was severally reported that arms and other provisions were being dropped for the *Boko Haram* insurgents in Nigeria by unknown aircrafts. Also, the Nigerian government was also caught up in illegal arms deals with dealers in South Africa in 2014. It is not surprising therefore that the various peace efforts in many Africa's conflict zones remain tenuous and highly dependent on what happens to the tens of thousands of SALWs in these countries. The Norwegian Peacebuilding Resource Centre (NOREF)'s 2013 security report on Africa provides an insight into the security trends and situation on the continent. The report spotted Mali, Nigeria, Cote d'Ivoire and Liberia as the countries with the most precarious security situation in West Africa. In Nigeria, in particular, the *Boko Haram* insurgency continues to pose a serious security challenge to the Nigerian authority. The fact that the scheduled February 14 and

28, 2015 general elections had to be postponed to March 28 and April 11, 2015, due largely to the need to rescue some constituencies from the control of *Boko Haram*, shows that the country is a precarious security situation. A cursory look of the Nigerian political economy, most especially since return to civilian administration in May 1999 would buttress this.

Globalization and Proliferation of SALWs: Implications on Nigeria's Security

To say that Nigeria's internal security environment has deteriorated is saying the obvious. In the last few years, security situation in the country has taken the turn for the worse. Bombing, mass murder, abduction, kidnapping, and other crimes against humanity are on increase in the country (Hassan, 2014). This unprecedented level of insecurity in Nigeria is, unquestionably fuelled by the proliferation of SALWs. Easy access to SALWs by aggrieved groups has served as trigger to the precarious state of security in the country. Since independence in 1960, the country is characterized by tribal and religious crisis, electoral crisis, fractionalized political system and armed robbery. The proliferation of SALWs in recent years has however made these security threats assumed worrisome dimensions. As Onuoha (2011: 50) has noted, "Nigeria now features prominently in the three-spot continuum of transnational organized trafficking of SALWs in West Africa: origin, transit route and destination". As can be seen in Table 2, the country is awash with millions of SALWs most of which are in the possession of non-state actors.

Table 2: Estimates of West African SALWs in or out of Circulation (2000-2010)

Country	SALWs in Circulation	SALWs Seized	SALW Surrendered	SALWs Lost	Comments
Benin	135,505	1,800	-	-	-
Burkina Faso	83,913	-	-	-	-
Cape Verde	12,188	-	-	-	-
Cote d'Ivoire	468,677	-	1000	-	-
Gambia	136,850	-	28	-	-
Ghana	100,000	3,387	-	-	-
Guinea	130,884	61	-	-	-
Guinea Bissau	25,000	-	-	1,270	-
Liberia	166,117	-	61,945,000	-	-
Mali	174,752	-	-	-	-
Niger	117,305	28	30,000	-	-
Nigeria	2.5million	3,732	21,257	7140	6491 destroyed by the army
Senegal	263,714	-	8,000	-	-
Sierra Leone	49,785	-	45,402	-	-
Togo	80,339	400	-	-	-

Source: *Inter-governmental Action Group Against Money Laundering in West Africa Report (2013: 22-23)*

The contradiction inherent in the neoliberal globalization has therefore compounded the problem of security in Nigeria. The process of globalization, as explained earlier, has congealed both time and space, making it easier for ideas, goods, persons, services, information, products and money to move across borders with fewer restrictions. This process has facilitated the activities of criminal groups in Nigeria through the proliferation of SALWs. The relaxation of national boundaries intended to enhance inter-state integration and connectivity has inadvertently facilitated transnational trafficking in SALWs. With porous land and maritime borders coupled with ineffectual national security system, SALWs proliferation has grown by leap and bounds in Nigeria. Some of the SALWs are manufactured locally while others rippled in from the warring African countries such as Cote d'Ivoire, Liberia, Sudan, Angola, Sierra Leone, Niger, and Chad (see Table 1). Although it is difficult to determine the exact quantity of

SALWs penetrating into Nigeria, it is estimated that over 70% of about eight to ten million illegal weapons in West Africa sub-region are in Nigeria (Onuoha, 2011).

The quantity of arms surrendered by the militants during the disarmament and demobilization phase of the Amnesty programme for the Niger Delta militants in 2009 bears testimony to the high rate of SALWs proliferation in the country. The Amnesty initiative saw over 15,000 militants surrender arms at the expiration of the disarmament and demobilization phase of the programme. Weapons recovered during the process included 2,760 assorted guns; 287,445 ammunitions of different calibers; 18 gun-boats; 763 dynamite sticks; 1,090 dynamite caps; 3,155 magazines and several other military accessories, such as dynamite cables, bullet proof jackets and jackknives (Onuoha, 2011). This is even in addition to the fact that not all the militants embraced the Amnesty while those who did only surrendered a small

fraction of their arms, as most of them doubted the government's genuine commitment to the programme.

The intermittent interception of illegal SALWs across Nigerian borders by the security agencies also reveals the worrisome dimension that SALWs proliferation has recently assumed in Nigeria. The media is awash with frightening reports of sophisticated SALWs being seized by security operatives either at ports, borders, highways or crime and conflict scenes. In August 2010, *Daily Trust* reported the arrest of a commercial driver by the security agents carrying 25 AK-47 rifles and hundreds rounds of ammunition (*Daily Trust*, August 17, 2010). According to the daily, these arms were allegedly smuggled into Nigeria from Cameroon and were destined for Jos, Plateau State- where cascading ethno-religious crisis has caused serious devastation in human and material resources. In November of the same year, *ThisDay* reported the interception of a woman, Lucy Dangana, at Dabar Masara, Borno State by the security personnel trying to smuggle 10 AK-47 rifles from Chad Republic into Nigeria (*ThisDay*, November 10, 2010). Prior to this incident, the police in Ibadan, Oyo State, had intercepted a large cache of arms and ammunitions from a suspected armed robbery gang. The seized arms and ammunitions included 47 rifles, 103 AK-47 rifle magazines, one assault rifle magazine, 2,540 AK-47 rounds of ammunitions, 727 general purpose machine gun (GPMG) rounds of ammunition, three chain bullets, explosive materials, two GPMG and one chisel (*Daily Trust*, November 9, 2010).

In addition, on October 18 of the same year, the National Task Force to Combat Illegal Importation of Goods, Small Arms, Ammunition and Light Weapons (NATFORCE) impounded a lorry load of arms and ammunition in Onitsha, Anambra State. A week after, a combined team of security

agents impounded 13 containers loaded with various sizes of grenades, rocket launchers, explosives, assault rifles, heavy machine guns and ammunitions at Apapa Wharf in Lagos. The containers were aboard a vessel, MV-CMA-CGM Everest, from Iran due to the interception (*ThisDay*, November 23, 2010). Other impoundment include a cargo from the United States impounded by the Nigerian Customs which smuggled arms concealed in house-hold items (*ThisDay*, September 18, 2013). Coupled with the illegal proliferation is the illegal manufacture of SALWs in the country. There are several incidents in which security agencies have uncovered illegal arms factories in some states. All these buttress the assertion that the deterioration of security is largely informed by the large volume of SALWs circulating in the country.

The proliferation of SALWs in Nigeria has been attributed to several factors such as Civil War (1967-1970), internal socio-economic and political dynamics, porous borders and globalization. According to Onuoha (2011:53):

The crude nature of Nigerian politics is one key factor driving the process of SALWs proliferation. Politics in Nigeria- especially electoral politics- is defined and approached by politicians as a do-or-die affairs, or warfare. The stake in Nigerian politics is incredibly high, making politicians desperate in the struggle to win elective positions. As a result, many of them recruit 'specialist of violence'- cultists, gangs and thugs- to attain and retain power... This goes a long way to explaining the violent brand of Nigerian politics, usually painted with blood and money. The incredible logic becomes: more money in politics, more blood spilling in the name of politics.

This explains the reason why election and electoral outcomes becomes one of the sensitive issues that trigger violence in Nigerian politics. The regularity with which

electoral violence occurs suggests that underlying grievances or structural imperfection may be inflamed by the easy access to SALWs by the contending parties. In recent years, Nigeria witnessed some of the worst moments of tension in her history- post-election crisis, ethno-religious crises, Niger Delta militancy, *Boko Haram* insurgency etc. in most of these crises, SALWs remain the key instruments used to unleash violence on innocent people and their properties.

Also related to the issues of globalization and SALWs proliferation is the porous nature of Nigerian borders. With the peculiar difficult terrain in the country's border areas, ineffective security system and corruption, SALWs proliferation has grown by heap and bounds. Nigeria has a total of 3,770 kilometre of shared land borders between its neighbours- Benin Republic, Cameroon, Chad and Niger- 850 kilometre maritime borders on the Atlantic ocean and many airports. The borders are so porous that virtually many goods, legitimate or contraband, are being smuggled in on daily basis. The ineffective security system and corruption also creates a security lacuna that feeds into the cycle of SALWs proliferation in Nigeria (Onuoha, 2011). Corruption has become largely endemic and institutionalized in both the public and private sectors in Nigeria, and the security personnel are notorious of corrupt practices (Hassan and Lamidi, 2014). Severally, security agents have been found aiding arms trafficking in Nigeria. For example, a Major and five other soldiers of the Nigerian Army were convicted in November 2008 of selling over 7,000 arms (valued at over N100 million) – including AK-47 rifles, rocket launchers and machine guns – to Niger Delta militants between January 2000 and December 2006. These arms were reportedly stolen from the depots of the Nigerian Army at the Command and Staff College, Jaji, and the One Base Ordinance, Kaduna (Onuoha, 2009).

Collapse in the security system, mainly occasioned by corruption has brought about the inability of the Nigerian state to guarantee security of lives and property. In the last few years, the Nigerian authority has displayed visible inadequacies in combating the various crimes and acts of terrorism ravaging the country- the *Boko Haram* insurgency mostly in the North East, West and Central; unprovoked massacre by the Fulani herdsmen in the North Central; unabated settler and indigene feuds in Plateau State; kidnapping for ransom and for ritual in the South East, South West and South South; the ceaseless threat of Niger Delta militancy in the South South and other banditry in several parts of the country (Hassan, 2014). The failure of the public security in Nigeria has led to improvising 'self-help' security measures, ranging from vigilante groups to community-owned arms stockpiling. The implication of this scenario is the development of 'security dilemma' and 'armed race' in the Nigerian polity (Onuoha, 2011). The conflicting parties or regions have become entangled in security dilemma while the quest to procure more arms to guarantee personal and community protection from perceived and real enemies is fuelling the "domestic arms race" (Onuoha, 2011: 54). This has led to an increased demand for SALWs by both the state and non-state actors to maintain security. As such, breaking the chain of SALWs proliferation and circulation has remained a major challenge to the Nigerian government.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The socio-political happenings in the sub-Saharan Africa explain to a large extent how the continent has been affected by the forces of globalization. Globalization has created a wide-scope and magnitude to the problem of small arms and light weapons proliferation and challenges of security that have denied Africa her rightful place in the progress of humanity. From the analysis in this paper, it is

obvious that the phenomenon of globalization has led to the proliferation of SALWs and narrowed down the ability of African states to initiate policies that can ensure lasting peace and security in the continent. Nigeria is one of the African countries where the impact of globalization as reflected in the proliferation of SALWs is harshly felt. Although Nigeria's problem with SALWs is not new, its increasing proliferation and circulation in recent years has helped stoke a wave of militancy, insurgency, ethno-religious conflicts, cross-border banditry, kidnapping, armed robbery and other violent crimes. Increased proliferation of SALWs in Nigeria (as shown by Table 2) and the corresponding increase in their accessibility deepens the tendency of the average Nigerian to resort to violence as a means of dispute resolution. SALWs proliferation thus increases the potential for violence and violent conflicts in the country, and by extension, retards development, causes massive human and physical destruction, serious human rights infractions, and a chronic atmosphere of instability and insecurity. It can thus be concluded that the proliferation of SALWs aided by the process of neoliberal globalization is posing a serious threat to the security and stability not only in Nigeria but in the sub-Saharan Africa at large. To ensure a measurable degree of security of life and property in the continent in general, and Nigeria in specific, a concerted effort should be made to control the proliferation of SALWs. This requires multi-faceted approach of governance, security and diplomacy. Given their legitimate use by the armed forces, police and civilian, an outright ban is not suggestible. However, it is imperative that national controls be established to ensure that SALWs are sold within a country legally. Not only are well-established controls important,

but a system to consistently monitor the flow and ownership of legal weapons after the initial sale is also important. This is necessary to ensure that weapons purchased legally do not make their way into the hands of arms brokers and criminals. For the control instituted to be effective, the provision of the national controls must be incorporated into the law of a country. In addition, a strong security sector with an understanding of the law and its application is needed. The National Conventional Arms Control Law in South Africa is a typical example of a national legal instrument against SALWs proliferation in sub-Saharan Africa.

There is also a need for strengthening border security through the implementation of effective collaborative mechanisms between security agencies and border communities to enhance information-sharing on activities along the borders. This also requires enhanced intra and inter-state collaboration among security and intelligent agencies in maritime and land border areas to ensure effective tracking and interdiction of SALWs traffickers. Strengthening border security also demands robust funding and provision of equipment for security agencies, including security posts at the nation's entry points- land, sea and airports- and proper motivation of the security personnel to dissuade them from engaging in corrupt practices. In addition, there is the need for the intensification of the various regional and global instruments and actions against the proliferation of SALWs. African countries should deepen their partnership with other states at sub-regional, regional and global levels to reinvigorate their call for a legally binding international instrument that will regulate, control and monitor illicit trade in small arms and light weapons.

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