

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

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DOI:

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 uncontestable 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.