



Emerging Cross-Border Security Threats and Rising Security Concerns Arising from Nigeria's Border Porosity

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ABSTRACT

The issue of emerging cross-border security threats arising from Nigeria's porous borders poses a significant challenge to the country's security and stability. The evolution of modern borders can be traced to the partitioning of Africa during the Berlin Conference negotiations from November 15, 1884 to February 26, 1885. The artificial borders so created are accompanied with extreme porosity leading to myriads of transnational and cross-border criminalities which threatens the peace, security and stability of the region as a whole and Nigeria in particular. Previous studies focused on border control activities with little attention paid to the emerging cross-border security threats associated with border porosity. This study therefore seeks to examine the causes of Nigeria's border porosity and the associated emerging cross-border security threats.

Failed State Theory served as the framework while the mixed method research design was adopted for the study. A total of sixty one (61) respondents were sampled for the study while purposive sampling technique was employed to select participants who could provide valuable insights into the topic. Data for the study were collected from primary sources through questionnaires, interviews and secondary sources through review of related books, journals, articles, publications, books, newspaper publications, reports, and other internet based applications.

This research has been able to highlight various emerging cross-border related security threats, resulting from border porosity such as terrorist activities, transnational crimes, banditry, human trafficking, arms smuggling, and drug trafficking, that have exploited Nigeria's porous borders to infiltrate the country. While the various efforts of government and other stakeholders are duly acknowledged, it must be stated that a lot more needs to be done to secure Nigeria's borders in order to curb the emerging cross-border threats bedeviling the Nigerian space.

In conclusion, addressing the problem of emerging cross-border security threats due to Nigeria's border porosity requires urgent attention, holistic and a coordinated approach. Strengthening border security measures, enhancing regional cooperation, promote information sharing, develop joint strategies to combat transnational crimes, terrorism, cross-border conflicts, addressing root causes of security threats, promoting development and governance in the region are crucial steps to safeguarding Nigeria's security and stability in the face of these evolving challenges.

KEY WORDS: Border, Security, Border Security.

Introduction

Cross-border security threats have become a significant concern in Nigeria due to the porous nature of its borders. This issue has become even more pressing with the emergence of various security challenges, such as terrorism, human trafficking, arms smuggling, and drug trafficking, that threaten the stability of the country and the region as a whole. The porous nature and extent of Nigeria borders made it somewhat easy for criminals and illegal activities to cross into the country, making it difficult for law enforcement agencies to effectively monitor, control and tackle the menace of emerging cross-border security.

The border problem is related to colonial history where at a conference in Berlin; Germany between November 1884 and February, 1885 the territory was partitioned and carved out for the Royal Niger Company. However, its porosity has been worsened by the failure of succeeding governments to properly administer these borders. Onuoha (2013) observed that the high level of insecurity on African borders is largely due to the way they are administered and managed, and less to do with how colonialists patterned them. The former Minister of Interior, Abba Moro, has cited that there are over 1,499 irregular (illegal) and 84 regular (legal) officially identified entry routes into Nigeria, confirms the very porous state of these borders which permits illicit transnational arms trafficking. Different types of weapons, ammunition and other resources were accessed through these porous borders without checks thus further worsening the security situation in the country.

Security Council Report (2011) asserts that the level of corruption that has permeated various government institutions and government officials in West Africa has made effective border security impossible and this is one of the reasons the phenomenon of illegal routes continues to thrive. Meanwhile, a

professor of African History, Peace and Conflict Studies and pioneer Director of the Institute for Peace and Strategic Studies, University of Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria's Isaac Albert, blamed poor governance for Nigeria's inability to secure its borders. He noted that the neglect of border communities, corruption by officials at the borders and failure of government to deploy modern technology for effective border management were issues that had fueled the problem.

Furthermore, human trafficking and smuggling of illegal goods, such as drugs and arms, have also flourished due to the porous borders in Nigeria. These criminal activities not only pose a threat to national security but also contribute to social and economic instability in the country. The large numbers of illegal immigrants and goods entering and exiting the country through these porous borders cause tremendous social and economic problems. They cause strain on the resources of law enforcement agencies and make it difficult for them to effectively manage security at the different borders. Out of the thirty-six states, fifteen share international land boundaries with African countries. Unfortunately, the borders of Nigeria are neither adequately manned nor effectively managed by the border security forces. Traffickers of all sorts live across the border and are familiar with the routes beyond the official route manned by security agents.

Bodunde (2015) has argued that some Nigeria borders are demarcated with drums and logs of woods which show the state of nature of our borders. In spite of joint patrol and task force at the borders, security personnel are not enough to manage both regular and irregular route of entrance into Nigeria state. Okunade (2017) pointed out that these illegal routes keep increasing on a daily basis as a result of the clandestine activities taking place there and as some are being foiled, new ones are opened up around the porous borders.

Using a documentary research design and content analysis, Eselebo and Okunade (2021) revealed that one of the foremost and immediate factor of insecurity in Nigeria is the porosity of its borderlines, where individual movements are largely untracked due to shortage of manpower, inadequate facilities, higher number of illegal routes, lack of technological deployment, etc. and this has cost the country millions of Nigerian lives. According to them, evidences pointed out that huge flow of illicit activities such as proliferation of small arms and light weapons (SALW) and other dangerous weapons, illegal migrants and herders, drug, etc. which has contributed to the heightened insecurity in Nigeria. Specifically, their study's content analysis between January and December 2020 indicates that there was an average of two violent attacks and nine deaths daily across the nation.

Although, government efforts to address these security threats are recognized, including increased border surveillance and cooperation with neighboring countries, more comprehensive measures are needed to effectively secure Nigeria's borders and mitigate the risks posed by these emerging cross-border security threats. The lack of effective border control measures not only hinders efforts to combat these security threats but also strains law enforcement resources, making it challenging to maintain stability and security in the country. The failure of the Nigerian government to manage its borders effectively affects domestic and international economic activities. It is also a threat to national sovereignty and security of the nation. Illegal external incursion and cross-border criminal activities occurring freely within the country as a result of porous borders portends serious danger for the country.

In conclusion, Nigeria's porous borders have become a breeding ground for various security threats, including terrorism, human trafficking, arms smuggling, drug trafficking and a lot of other socio-economic vices. Addressing these challenges requires a comprehensive approach that includes strengthening border security measures, enhancing regional cooperation, and addressing the root causes of these security threats. The introduction of contemporary technology in the management of borders would be a very productive step that would yield expected results.

Statement of The Problem

The problem of emerging cross-border security threats arising from Nigeria's border porosity poses significant challenges to the country's security and stability. The nature and extent of Nigeria's porous borders has facilitated the infiltration of criminal elements and numerous criminal activities in the border areas extending to every part of the country. These illicit activities not only threaten the security of Nigeria but have unimaginable implications for the region as a whole.

Nigeria has hundreds of borders that are artificially delimited, extremely porous and poorly manned. The border porosity problem cannot be divorced from the colonial history where at a conference in Berlin, Germany between November 1884 and February 1885, the territory was partitioned and carved out for the Royal Niger Company. However, its porosity has been worsened by the failure of succeeding governments to properly administer these borders.

Onuoha (2013) observed that the high level of insecurity on African borders in general and Nigeria in particular is largely due to the way they are administered and managed, and less to do with how colonialists patterned them. For instance, the demarcation of the border between Seme (Nigerian) and Krake (Benin Republic) is through the use of ropes. The ropes are tied to drums filled with sand and after interrogation by the security agents, the rope is been lifted and vehicles can pass. It is possible to plant maize in Diffa (Niger republic) and plant guinea corn in Kukawa (Nigeria) while claiming ownership of the same piece of land. Terrorists like the Boko Haram have taken advantage of this undifferentiated border to recruit and regroup against the Nigerian state, especially at the northern borderlines (Adeolu, & Fayomi, 2012).

Despite the efforts of border security agencies which includes the Nigerian Police Force (NPF), Nigerian Army (NA), Nigerian Customs service (NCS), Nigerian Immigration service (NIS), and Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC) to provide security at the borders, Nigerian borders have remained porous thereby generating various kinds of cross-border or trans-border criminal activities. This includes human trafficking, smuggling, drug trafficking, armed robbery, money laundering and illicit arms trafficking. The increase in the rise of cross border criminal activities, no doubt, undermines Nigeria's peace and security and has greatly affected Nigeria's external relations. It is in this light that this research seeks to study the emerging cross-border security threats with a view to proposing practicable solutions to arrest the situation and prevent further degeneration of insecurity and threats to peace in the country.

In conclusion, the problem of emerging cross-border security threats due to Nigeria's border porosity requires urgent attention and a coordinated approach. Strengthening border security measures, enhancing regional cooperation, and addressing the root causes of these security threats are crucial steps to safeguard Nigeria's security and stability in the face of these evolving challenges. Failure to address these issues effectively could have dire consequences for Nigeria and the broader region.

Significance of the Study

Exploring the relationship between border porosity and emerging cross-border security threats would help identify key areas for intervention and inform strategies for effective border management. Understanding the implications of border porosity on emerging cross-border security threats would aid the development and implementation of effective border control mechanisms and policies to safeguard the country from internal and external threats.

This research would be highly beneficial to the social environment and the academics. It would also enhance understanding of the various implications of the porosity of our borders on national and international security. This study would benefit the Nigerian society considering the fact that border security is very key to the development of most countries economically, socially, politically and in all other ramifications. A country that could not control what passes through her borders cannot equally control what goes on within the country. It also benefit government as regards knowing the strength and weakness inherent in the security operations of the security agencies in the border areas.

Operational Definition of Terms

Border - A border is a line that connotes a boundary. Borders symbolize boundaries between states. Border is defined as boundaries that demarcate Nigeria as a sovereign and territorially independent state from her neighbouring countries.

Border porosity - Refers to the ease with which individuals, goods, move and illicit activities takes place within and across national borders unchecked.

Security - Security is the state of being safe from any kind of danger. It is defined as the protection from both internal and external aggression.

Border security - This refers to established control which seeks to control or regulate the movements of people, animals, plants, goods and activities around, in and out of a country's borders.

CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATION

Border and Border porosity

Borders are geographic boundaries of political entities or legal jurisdictions such as governments, sovereign states, federated states, and other sub-national entities. Borders are established through agreements between political or social entities that control those areas; the creation of these agreements is called boundary delimitation (Crause, & Nye, 2016). Borders are partially or fully controlled, and may be crossed legally only at designated border checkpoints and border zones which are highly controlled by the security agents. A border is said to be porous when it is unmarked which gives individuals chance to pass without formal check by the security agencies at the boundary line. Borders require presentation of legal paperwork like passports and visas, or other identity documents, for persons to cross borders.

According to Weber (2012), a border is a line that connotes a boundary. Borders symbolize boundaries between states, while boundaries are markers in existing states. As borders demarcate and differentiate a state's territory, they also showcase identities, belonging, and political affiliation. For this study, therefore, border is defined as boundaries that demarcate Nigeria as a sovereign and territorially independent state from her neighbouring countries. The concept of border porosity refers to the permeability or openness of national borders. It highlights the ease with which people, goods, and services can cross between countries. Border porosity can vary across different countries and is influenced by various factors such as political, economic, and security considerations. It can be categorized into three main types:

1. **Open Borders:** Countries with open borders have high porosity. They typically have few restrictions on the movement of people, goods, and services across their borders. Open borders often result from agreements or alliances between neighboring countries, such as the Schengen Area in Europe, where internal border controls have been abolished.
2. **Controlled Borders:** Controlled borders have moderate porosity. These borders have certain regulations and restrictions in place to manage the flow of people and goods. They may require specific documents or visas, conduct inspections, or impose tariffs on imported goods. Controlled borders aim to balance security concerns with facilitating trade and travel.
3. **Closed Borders:** This is a border that prevents movement of people between different jurisdictions with limited or no exceptions associated with this movement. These borders normally have fences or walls in which any gates or border crossings are closed and if these border gates are opened they generally only allow movement of people in exceptional circumstances. The [Berlin Wall](#) could also have been called a closed border. Perhaps the most famous example of an extant closed border is the [Demilitarized zone](#) between [North Korea](#) and [South Korea](#).

Whereas borders are vital to separate the physical boundaries of state territories, they are in daily practice even more important to the people living along the borders. In similar vein, demarcated or not demarcated, a border can engender positive or negative effects, which have implications for national security. A greater portion of borderlands in the African continent are not distinctly demarcated and hence show no guidelines, creating security threats. According to Kristof(1959), a boundary does not exist in abstraction, it owes its existence to man. That is, all boundaries are man made. This assertion

finds explanation from the partition of African borderlands resultant from the African-Berlin Conference of 1884/1885, where borders were artificially drawn without the consent and participation of the beneficiaries. Kristof (1959) identifies two types of borders:

1. **Artificial Borders** - They are the limits between countries that have been constituted by human means, and, therefore, different from the natural ones. For example, the fences in the city of Melilla that separate Spain from Morocco is an artificial border. The means that delimit the artificial borders can be constructions, objects, cultural differences or imaginary lines established by means of calculations and expressed in the form of geographic coordinates on the maps.

The main feature of artificial borders is that they have been created by humans, and not by nature. For this reason, they differ from natural borders in that they support their limits on geographical accidents, such as mountains, rivers, valleys, etc.

Examples include Berlin Wall, Border wall between Mexico and the United States, The Treksroset: border between Sweden, Finland and Norway, Border between North Korea and South Korea, Finland-Russia border, Triple border between Venezuela, Brazil and Guyana, Border between the Netherlands and Belgium, Border between Uganda and the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

2. **Natural Borders** - A natural border is a [border](#) between [states](#) or their subdivisions which is concomitant with natural formations such as [rivers](#) or [mountain ranges](#), deserts and oceans. Examples of natural borders are:

Mount Roraima -Between Venezuela, Guyana, and Brazil.

Rio Grande -Between the United States and Mexico.

Detian Falls -Between China and Vietnam.

Mount Everest -Between China and Nepal.

Iguaçu Falls -Between Argentina and Brazil.

The Rhine -Between Germany and France.

The Great Wall of China -A natural boundary that was built to protect China from invaders.

The Himalayas -A natural boundary that separates China, India, and Nepal.

The Sahara Desert -A natural boundary that separates the countries of North Africa.

Oscar Martinez (1994) classified borders into four categories as follows:

(a) **Alienated Borders** - In this type of borderland, interaction does not exist or it is prohibited because of "severe tensions between the adjacent states and/or [border](#) populations. Border is functionally closed, and cross-border interaction is totally or almost totally absent

(b) **Co-existent Border** - This is a type of border that is functionally closed, and cross-border Stability is an on-and-off proposition. Border remains slightly open, interaction is totally or nearly totally absent Residents of each country allowing for the development of limited binational interaction. act as strangers to each other.

(c) **Interdependent Borders** - Stability prevails most of the time. Economic and social complementarity prompt increased cross-border interaction. Leading to expansion of borderlands. Borderlanders carry on friendly and cooperative relationships

(d) **Integrated Borders** - In integrated borderlands, there are no barriers, which can hinder the flow of goods or people. This kind of borderland is very stable where the economies of the two (or more) countries are functionally merged, and there is unrestricted movement of people and goods across the boundary

Richard Hartshorne (1933;1936)believes that borders can be viewed from the perspectives of the following:

1 **Antecedent Boundary** - An antecedent boundary is a political boundary that existed before the land was populated by the current inhabitants. For example, the boundary between the USA and Canada was drawn by the colonizers before they colonized North America.

2 **Subsequent Boundary** - [A subsequent boundary is a political boundary that was created after two groups have already settled there. It is often used to separate different groups of people based on their ethnicity or cultural background, and so it is often also called an ethnographic boundary. An example of a subsequent boundary is the border between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland, which was drawn long after people were settled and reflected the religious differences between the two places](#)

3 **Super imposed Boundary** - A superimposed boundary is a type of political barrier drawn without regard for existing cultural, religious, and ethnic divisions. These boundaries are a product of European imperialism in Africa, where European powers would divide up the continent into colonies disregarding established tribal and ethnic divisions. This has resulted in many African countries with artificial borders that do not accurately reflect the cultural or linguistic identities of the people living within them.

4. **Natural Boundaries** - [A natural boundary is a natural feature that creates a physical boundary between regions. Examples of natural boundaries include:](#)

The Pyrenees mountains, which separate France and Spain.

The Great Wall of China, which follows the natural topography of the landscape and protects China from invaders.

The Himalayas, which separate China, India, and Nepal.

The Rio Grande river, which separates the US and Mexico.

Oceans and deserts, which isolate continents and countries.

Border porosity is the ease with which individuals, goods, and illicit activities cross national borders, presents significant implications for national, and international security. The lack of effective border control measures and the high permeability of borders contribute to numerous challenges, including the facilitation of transnational criminal networks, irregular migration, and the unauthorized movement of weapons and contraband. This porousness undermines efforts to establish peace, stability, and socio-economic development within countries and across borders. Moreover, it poses a threat to national sovereignty and international security, as it enables the infiltration of terrorist organizations, compromises border integrity, and exacerbates tensions between neighboring states. Thus, understanding the causes and consequences of border porosity is crucial for designing comprehensive strategies and policies aimed at enhancing border security, promoting peacebuilding initiatives, and safeguarding national and international security.

Border Management

Border management can be defined as the government's oversight functions of policing, immigration, customs and excise, put in place with the aim of controlling and regulating the flow of people and goods across a country's border/boundary in the nation's security, economic, peace and developmental interest. Border management is defined as the government functions of immigration, customs, and excise, and police, with the aim of controlling and regulating the flow of people and goods across a country's border/boundary in the national interest (particularly economic development, security, and peace) (Adebayo, 2005). Border management also includes maintenance of boundary beacons that mark the physical limits of the country's territory. Border management is a collaborative process between a country and its neighbors. It cannot be done unilaterally, and it is most effective and efficient when done regionally. Key stakeholders in border management in Nigeria include:

- i. Customs, immigration, police, armed forces,
- ii. Ministry of agriculture; exist for quarantine purposes,
- iii. Airline operatives
- iv. Shipping companies
- v. Border local authorities
- vi. International business companies and
- vii. Individuals; Individuals residents of the borders or travelers across boundaries e.g. traders, relatives, tourists or terrorists).

Osiemen et al. (2017) pointed out that border management is an expression of a state's sovereignty and that a state's failure to manage its borders can undermine its domestic and international legitimacy. The legal status of a state or government depends on how it manages its borders. The Montevideo Convention on the Rights and Duties of States of 1933 identifies four criteria for state sovereignty namely;

- i. permanent population
- ii. a defined territory
- iii. a government and
- iv. the capacity to enter relations with other states.

In other words, territoriality is equal to sovereignty while citizenship is defined by territory and territory is defined by borders.

Literature Review

African in general and specifically Nigerian border problem is related to colonial history where at a conference in Berlin; Germany between November 1884 and February, 1885 the territory was partitioned and carved out for the Royal Niger Company. However, its porosity has been worsened by the failure of succeeding governments to properly administer these borders. Onuoha (2013) observed that the high level of insecurity on African borders is largely due to the way they are administered and managed, and less to do with how colonialists patterned them.

Arising from the partitioning of Africa at the Berlin conference of 1884-1885 by European powers, artificial borderlines which were drawn on paper to serve as a demarcation between African states were created without putting into consideration the identities of the affected people (Wesseling, 1996). Marein (2010) notes that borders, especially in Africa, which cut across communities, were created by the colonialists without considering ethnic issues. Before the creation of the borders and their imposition on communities, ethnic or economic ties already existed. Evidence of formal and informal cooperation in a variety of areas already existed despite the restrictions linked to the existence of a political border.

Onuoha (2013) noted that effective border management is imperative for the preservation of national security. According to Spencer (2007), the border is the first point of combat against terrorism and the last line of a state's territorial integrity. Bodunde (2015) has argued that some Nigeria borders are demarcated with drums and logs of woods which show the state of nature of our borders. In spite of joint patrol and task force at the borders, security personnel are not enough to manage both regular and irregular route of entrance into Nigeria state. The nature of illegal arms entrance in to Nigeria through unidentified official borders has led to raising increase of various categories of crime from Boko Haram Insurgency, Kidnapping, arms banditry, militancy /Oil bunkering and farmers/herders conflicts. The state of insecurity in Nigeria today is no news to anyone and although it can be blamed on some factors that have been left unchecked for a long time by both the government and people of Nigeria but the level of insecurity in the country today is threatening to tear her apart and requires quick, adequate and a new approach to deal with the security challenges affecting the nation (Alemika, 2004).

In Nigeria, the porosity of the borders has paved way for truncation of peace and security witnessed in the nation as a result of transnational organized crimes carried out along the borders of the country. The effect of this has also filtered into neighbouring states that share boundaries with Nigeria, including the Benin Republic in the West, and Chad, Niger and Cameroun in the North, almost straining the relationship between the countries on different occasions. Transnational Organised Crime (TOC) has been likened to cancer which is fast becoming a global phenomenon. As it is a current trend in underdeveloped nations, so is it in developed nations of the world.

The porosity of the Nigerian borders has, therefore, made it easy for criminal activities to be carried out along the borders with damaging effects on the nation's security and economy. In this regard, effective border management is an important requisite for ensuring national security and economic prosperity. Alluding to this, Onuoha (2013) noted that effective border management is imperative for the preservation of national security. Perhaps, this explains why Spencer (2007) asserts that the border is the first point of combat against terrorism and the last line of a state's territorial integrity. Okumu (2010) contends that while many African states recognize the need for a secure and peaceful border, only a few have existing strategies for a secure border.

The influx of non-Nigerians and illegal immigrants mixing up with the teeming unemployed youths engage in to various criminal activities which cannot be manage by our security personnel's has led to possessions of the sophisticated arms uses by militants, these actions has showing to us that our entry borders are not safe, these indicate the level of security threat to the country. Bodunde (2015) has argues that some Nigeria borders are demarcated with drums and logs of woods which show the state of nature of our borders. In spite of joint patrol and task force at the borders, security personnel are not enough to manage both regular and irregular route of entrance into Nigeria state. The nature of illegal arms entrance in to Nigeria through unidentified official borders has led to raising increase of various categories of crime from Boko Haram Insurgency, Kidnapping, arms banditry, militancy /Oil bunkering and farmers/herders conflicts.

Gros (2011) opined that the situation of Nigeria's porous borders, which serve as conduits for illicit transnational traffic of small arms and light weapons and drugs, is enhanced by the limited presence of security and law enforcement officials. According to him, if they are present, they are poorly equipped, poorly paid, poorly trained and sometimes compromised or recruited to do the bid of the insurgents. Akinyemi (2013) noted that inadequate manpower has a negative implication for border security in Nigeria. It makes the policing of borders a herculean task for border guards. The resultant effect of this also would be the proliferation of illegal routes for criminal activities in and out of the country.

To Monguno B. (2021), Africa's porous borders remain a major source of concern as this has aided smuggling of prohibited items and irregular migration as well as other transnational organized crimes. Nigeria is bordered to the North by Niger, to the East by Chad and Cameroon, to the South by the Gulf of Guinea of the Atlantic Ocean, and to the West by Benin. According to him, unless and until our borders are adequately manned and policed, Nigeria will never have peace. He posited that while the phenomena of ethnicity, religion, economic deprivation, and youth unemployment have been frequently implicated in the recent violence experienced in contemporary Nigerian society, the role of Nigeria's porous borders, both land, and sea, in exacerbating insecurity in the country is yet to be appreciated and adequately addressed.

Mark and Iwebi (2019) sees the lack of effective border control as facilitating arms smuggling and, as a result, the development of small arms and light weapons (SALW) in the country. Inevitably, these weapons fall into the hands of criminals, who employ them to conduct a range of offenses. Seniors and Poitevin (2013) averred that lack of clear delimitation and demarcation between independent states can lead to tension between them, which can as well spill over to neighbouring countries. Nigeria's national security is easily discernible from the fact that most of the troubled states of Nigeria are linked to international border routes of the Cameroun, Niger and Chad which scholars described as exceedingly porous and unmanageable (Eselebor and Okunade, 2021). Sagir (2013) argues that the vastness of the nation's borders in the face of challenges brings to fore the need for a rethink on the management and security of the Nigeria's borders and seaports without which an effective fight against insurgency, arms trafficking and proliferation will remain an optical illusion. He argues further that the need for innovative technology and sound intelligence platforms for border agencies remains a panacea to this problem.

Akinyemi's (2013) assertion that in West Africa, Nigeria is both the most populous and the richest country and this incontrovertibly makes her a point of destination for citizens of neighbouring countries. It is worrisome that the movements of the migrants into Nigeria are without proper documentation, as many of them explore illegal routes into the country, thus, escaping routine immigrants' checks at the border posts by officials of the NIS and other related security agencies. The influx of unchecked and undocumented migrants has continued to pose unpleasant effects on Nigeria's national security as many foreigners were fingered as mercenaries in the recent Fulani herders and farmers conflicts in Nigeria's northeast.

Durkin (2009) posits that porous features of the border region and the prevailing economic policies of the neighboring states are tantamount to influence illegal cross-border transactions in goods, currency and other threatening circumstances. To Ginifer and Ismail (2005), the porosity of Nigeria's borders provides an evidence of the of cross-border criminalities, obvious because of the proliferation of small arms and light weapons (SALWs) and facilitated

by massive cross-border trafficking and mercenary activities as evident from (Chad and Niger) and the country's long poorly constructed borders that are inadequately regulated due to insufficient funds and the lack of capability of the security personnel. To them, part of the consequences of such horrible situation consist of threat to the security and peace of Nigeria, danger to Nigerian territorial sovereignty especially from the sides of the eastern and northern boundaries, loss of properties and lives of the Nigerian citizens present in the border zones and the constant provocation of Nigerians in those border parts.

Meanwhile, a professor of African History, Peace and Conflict Studies and the pioneer Director of the Institute for Peace and Strategic Studies, University of Ibadan, Oyo State, Isaac Olawale Albert (2021), blamed poor governance for Nigeria's inability to secure its borders. He noted that the Nigeria's border porosity can be explained under three major causes namely; neglect of border communities, corruption by officials at the borders and failure of government to deploy modern technology for effective border management were issues that had fueled the problem.

The dilemmas facing Nigeria are numerous and complex. Both the approved and unapproved point of entry are major sources of security concerns in the context of border management. Presently, Nigeria has to contend with security failures resulting from open and insecure borders with the mostly Francophone nations of Benin, Niger, Cameroun and Chad (Eselebor and Okunade, 2021).

Threat to life and property are indicators of lack of national security. Once there is danger, threat to lives and properties, banditry, terrorism, civil disturbances, riots, demonstrations, communal and religious conflicts, illegal influx into the nation, smuggling of illegal goods, and the inability of the nation to tackle these anomalies effectively, then the peaceful co-existence of the differing members of the society would suffer thus indicating security challenges (Onuabuchi, N. E. 2022).

The problem with the nature and characteristics of the management of Nigerian borders with her neighbours is that, they are poorly demarcated and poorly manned thereby making them porous. Nigeria has been battling with transnational and cross-border crimes which pose serious threat to national security. This includes smuggling of all kinds (contraband, stolen cars, firearms), advance fee fraud known as 419, kidnapping, drug trafficking, money laundering, illegal arms trafficking, theft, among others (Adelugba & Ujomu, 2008). To them, these aforementioned factors which translate to emerging cross-border security threats poses a threat to national security in Nigeria and they ruin the image of the country in the international environment.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The theory adopted for this research work is the Failed State Theory. According to Robert I. Rotberg (2004), nation-state fails when they are consumed by internal violence and cease delivering positive political goods to their inhabitants. Their governments lose credibility, and the continuing nature of the particular nation-state itself becomes questionable and illegitimate in the hearts and minds of its citizens. Major identifiers of a failed state are high level of corruption, unchecked criminal activities, illegal migrants, serious economic challenges, excessive inflation, ineffective central government, weak control over its territory, inability to provide public utilities or essential services, and pronounced insecurity.

Failed state theory outlines a situation in which a government fails to fulfill its duties. The theory explains why a state has broken its promises (Abiodun et al, 2018). Anyanwu (2005) also shed light on this matter stating that a failed state lacks the capacity to meet the needs and desires of its people. According to Patrick (2007), the term failed state is often used to describe a state perceived as having failed at some of basic conditions and responsibilities of a sovereign government. A failed state is one that has shattered social and political structures. It is characterized by social, political and economic failure. Common characteristics of a failing state is when a central government is so weak or ineffective that it has little practical control over much of its territory, non-provision of public utilities or services, widespread corruption and criminality; refugees and involuntary movement of populations, and sharp economic decline.

Thurer (1999) noted that failing states are invariably the product of a collapse of the power structures providing political supports for law and order, a process generally triggered and accompanied by anarchic forms of internal violence. It is the collapse of state institutions, especially the police and judiciary with resulting paralysis of governance, a breakdown of law and order, and general banditry and chaos. Not only are the functions of government suspended, but its assets are destroyed or looted; and experienced officials are killed or flee the country. According to Thurer, the attributes or characteristics of a failed state include

- (a) loss of physical control of its territory, or of the monopoly on the legitimate use of physical force
- (b) erosion of authority to make collective decision
- (c) an inability to provide reasonable public services and
- (d) an inability to interact with other states as full member of the international community.

The failed state theory is employed in this study to explain the increase in various cross-border security challenges a result of the Nigerian government's inability to adequately secure state borders and close unlawful entry points. According to Mark and Iwebi (2019), a lack of effective border control enables arms smuggling and, as a result, the development of small arms and light weapons (SALWs) in the country. Inevitably, these weapons fall into the hands of criminals, who employ them to conduct a wide range of criminal activities around the border areas with trickling down effect to the country as a whole.

METHODS AND MATERIALS

The mixed method research design was adopted for the study. A total of sixty one (61) respondents were sampled for the study while purposive sampling technique was employed to select participants who could provide valuable insights into the topic. Data for the study were collected from primary sources through questionnaires, interviews and secondary sources through review of related books, journals, articles, publications, books, newspaper publications, reports, and other internet based applications. The collected data were analyzed using a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods. The qualitative data from interviews and were transcribed, coded, and thematically analyzed to identify recurring patterns, themes, and key findings. The quantitative data from questionnaire were analyzed using statistical techniques such as correlation analysis, descriptive analysis and inferential analysis to derive meaningful insights and draw conclusions. The research findings were then presented in a comprehensive report.

Data Analysis and Discussion of Findings

Demographic characteristics of respondents and the analysis of respondents responses to the questionnaire designed to address the four objectives of the research is presented below in simple explanations.

Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Variables	Measurement	Frequency	Total	Percent %
Gender	Male	35	61	57.37
	Female	27		44.26
Age	20-30years	12	61	19.67
	31-40years	15		24.59
	41-50years	16		26.23
	51-60years	15		24.59
	Above 61years	3		4.92
Department	Immigration	19	61	31.15
	Customs	24		39.34
	Police	18		29.51
Location	Seme Border	61	61	100
Length of Stay in the Location	1-3years	25	61	40.98
	4-6years	11		18.03
	7-10years	12		19.67
	Above 10years	13		

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Analysis of the Findings to the Study Objectives

The analysis of research findings contained in this part of the study is done in sections with each section addressing specific objective.

Objective One: Factors Responsible for Border Porosity in Nigeria

The factors responsible for Nigeria's border porosity can be attributed to several reasons as shown in the table 2 above. These factors are explained below supported by the percentage of respondents that are in agreement that they are the major ones responsible for Nigeria's border porosity.

Insufficient Manpower: Research confirms the existence of several unguarded borders in the country. This can be attributed to insufficient manpower to guard the myriads of porous borders existing in the country. As seen in Table 2 above, 90% of the respondents identified insufficient manpower as one of the major factors responsible for border porosity in Nigeria.

Arbitrary delimitation of African borders: The arbitrary division of African borders during the colonial era has created complex and extensive border lines that are challenging to monitor and control. This has made it easier for illegal activities, such as smuggling and human trafficking, to take place across these porous borders. 86% of respondents strongly agreed and agreed that the arbitrary delimitation of African Borders is another major cause of Nigeria's border porosity.

Several unguarded access routes: Nigeria has numerous unguarded access routes along its borders, making it easier for criminals to evade detection and transport illegal goods across the border. 96% of total respondents believed that those several unguarded access routes contributes to border porosity.

These routes include remote areas, forests, and waterways that are difficult to monitor effectively. This further confirmed the position of Osimen et al. (2017) that there are over hundreds of illicit routes in Nigeria that connect or lead to certain bordering African nations. **Poverty of border communities:** Many border communities in Nigeria suffer from poverty and lack of basic amenities and economic opportunities. This socioeconomic condition makes individuals more vulnerable to engaging in illegal activities as a means of survival, contributing to border porosity. Over 94% felt this factor is a major cause of the porosity of our borders. These border communities are largely impoverished with little or no developmental project or visible infrastructures.

Poor funding: Insufficient funding allocated to border security measures hampers the ability of security agencies to effectively monitor and control the borders. Lack of adequate financial resources limits the deployment of personnel, technology, and infrastructure necessary for robust border control. 94% argued that if adequate funding is devoted to border security, we would have lesser porous borders and security challenges in Nigeria.

Abuse of ECOWAS free movement protocol: The ECOWAS free movement protocol allows for the free movement of people and goods across member countries, including Nigeria. However, this protocol is sometimes exploited by individuals engaging in illegal activities, taking advantage of lax border controls and weak monitoring mechanisms. About 93% of respondents agreed that the abuse of ECOWAS free movement protocol is contributory to Nigeria's border porosity and its attendant security challenges.

Corruption: Corruption within security agencies and border officials undermines efforts to secure the borders effectively. Bribery and collusion with criminal networks erode the integrity of border control operations and contribute to porous borders. 85%

Lack of cooperation among security agencies: Insufficient collaboration and coordination among different security agencies responsible for border control create gaps and overlaps in their operations. 84% of respondents believes that lack of synergy among security agencies allow for loopholes that criminals can exploit.

Non-prioritization of border security by the government: Inadequate attention and priority given to border security policies and initiatives by the government can hinder the effectiveness of measures put in place to secure the borders. 96% believes this is a causal factor. Government's inadequate attention to the development of border security is a major factor responsible for border porosity.

Underdevelopment of border areas: Neglected development of border areas, including poor infrastructure, limited access to basic services, and lack of economic opportunities, makes these regions susceptible to criminal activities and smuggling. 88% agree that the underdevelopment of border areas contribute immensely to border porosity. Border areas are seriously marginalized and have remained underdeveloped due to lack of government's presence.

Lack of collaboration with neighboring countries: 92% of the respondents believe that limited cooperation and information sharing with neighboring countries' security agencies and border control authorities create challenges in addressing cross-border criminal activities and securing the borders effectively.

Non-deployment of appropriate technology: Insufficient utilization of modern technology, such as surveillance systems, biometric identification, and drones, hinders the monitoring and tracking of illicit movements across the borders. 96% of respondents agree that this is one of the factors responsible for border porosity in Nigeria

Inadequate training of security agents: Insufficient training and capacity building for border security personnel limit their ability to effectively respond to emerging security threats and perform their duties efficiently. 90% of respondents agree with this.

Inadequate facilities and logistics for border control: Insufficient provision of necessary infrastructure, equipment, and logistics for border control operations impairs the ability to monitor, detect, and intercept illegal activities at the borders. 96% agree that this factor is one of the major factors responsible for border porosity.

Lack of sophisticated weapons for security agencies: 98% agree that shortage of modern and sophisticated weaponry for security agencies hampers their ability to effectively counter armed criminal groups involved in cross-border criminal activities.

Addressing these factors requires a comprehensive and multi-faceted approach, including improving border infrastructure, enhancing cooperation among security agencies and neighboring countries, increasing funding for border security, investing in training and technology, and prioritizing the development of border communities.

Objective Two: Emerging cross-border related Security Threats

Insecurity and Conflict - Insecurity and conflict are cross-border related security threats that pose risks to the stability and safety of nations. Insecurity refers to the lack of safety and protection within a region, while conflict involves disagreements and hostility between different groups or nations. These factors often go hand in hand and can escalate into violent confrontations, leading to significant security challenges. All respondents (100%) saw insecurity and conflict as a major consequence of Nigeria's border porosity.

Rise in Terrorism and Insurgency - Terrorism and insurgency are two interconnected threats that have become increasingly prevalent across borders. 92% of the respondents agree that rise in terrorism and insurgency is a consequence of border porosity. Terrorism involves the use of violence and intimidation to create fear and achieve political, religious, or ideological goals. Insurgency, on the other hand, refers to an armed rebellion against the established government or authority. Both terrorism and insurgency can spill over borders, as extremist groups exploit weak security measures and establish networks in multiple countries, posing a threat to regional and global security.

Smuggling of firearms - The smuggling of firearms across borders contributes to the escalation of security threats. Illegal arms trafficking enables criminal organizations, terrorist groups, and insurgents to acquire weapons, which they can then use to perpetrate violence and destabilize regions. 96% agree that smuggling of firearms is a consequence of border porosity. The flow of firearms across borders makes it challenging for governments to maintain law and order, as criminals and armed groups can easily obtain weapons from neighboring countries.

Infiltration of armed groups - The infiltration of armed groups across borders refers to the movement of individuals or groups involved in violence or armed conflicts from one country to another. 92% agree that this infiltration can occur due to various factors, such as porous borders, weak border control, or collusion among corrupt officials. When armed groups infiltrate across borders, they can carry out attacks, support local insurgencies, or exploit existing conflicts, exacerbating security challenges for both the affected country and its neighbors.

Cybersecurity - Cybersecurity is a cross-border security threat that arises from the increasing reliance on digital technologies and interconnected networks. It encompasses the protection of computer systems, networks, and data from unauthorized access, theft, or damage. Cyber-attacks can originate from anywhere in the world and target individuals, governments, or organizations, posing a significant risk to national security, economic stability, and personal privacy. 85% of respondents agree that Cybersecurity is also an emerging cross-border threat, as criminals exploit the digital space to carry out fraud, hacking, and other cybercrimes. These activities transcend national boundaries, making it necessary for collaborative efforts to combat them.

Farmer-Herder Crisis - The farmer-herder crisis refers to conflicts between agricultural farmers and nomadic herders over access to land, water, and resources. This crisis often occurs in regions where there is competition for limited resources, such as grazing areas. 94% of respondents agree that porous borders aided the farmer-herder crisis across Nigeria. The clashes between farmers and herders can escalate into violence, leading to loss of lives, displacement of communities, and further exacerbating existing security challenges. In some cases, these conflicts can transcend national borders, as herders and farmers cross boundaries in search of resources.

Drug Trafficking - Drug trafficking involves the illegal production, transportation, and sale of illicit drugs across borders. 96% of respondents agree that porous borders encourage drug trafficking. This illicit trade poses significant security threats, as it fuels organized crime, corruption, violence, and addiction. Drug trafficking networks often span multiple countries, taking advantage of porous borders, corruption, and weak law enforcement. The profits generated from drug trafficking can fund criminal and terrorist activities, destabilizing regions and undermining the rule of law. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime has identified Nigeria as one of the eight nations with the worst incidence of human trafficking (Austral, 2014).

Human Trafficking - Human trafficking is a grave cross-border security concern involving the illegal trade and exploitation of individuals. It encompasses various forms, such as forced labor, sexual exploitation, and organ trafficking. Human trafficking networks operate across borders, luring vulnerable individuals into deceptive situations and exploiting their rights and dignity. This illicit trade not only violates human rights but also contributes to social instability and poses challenges for law enforcement agencies in multiple countries. 98% of respondents agree that human trafficking is a product of porous borders.

Addressing these emerging cross-border related security threats requires a multi-dimensional approach and effective strategies to mitigate their impact on global security. This would involve international cooperation, intelligence sharing, strengthened border control measures, and capacity building for security forces.

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

This research has been able to highlight various emerging security threats arising from Nigeria's porous borders and its implications on national security and international security. In the course of the research, a number of factors were discovered to be responsible for Nigeria's border porosity thereby resulting in border related emerging security threats with serious implications for national and international security.

The porosity of Nigeria's borders poses significant implications for security and peace across various domains. Several challenges arise as a result which including the infiltration of criminal elements, terrorism and insurgency, economic impact, infiltration of armed groups, human trafficking, irregular migration, spread of infectious diseases, infiltration of strange doctrines and religion, weak governance and corruption, border disputes and insecurity, smuggling and illicit trade, food insecurity, influx of terrorists/rebels, rise in criminal gang activities, banditry and kidnappings, and illegal immigration.

Addressing these emerging cross-border security threats is crucial for national security and international security. It requires a comprehensive approach that includes strengthening border control measures, improving surveillance and intelligence capabilities, enhancing cooperation with neighboring countries, and investing in border infrastructure and technology. Additionally, addressing the root causes of insecurity, such as poverty, unemployment, and governance challenges, is imperative for an enduring national security.

Conclusion

The role of borders in emerging cross-border security threats cannot be overemphasized. Effective border management is a necessary condition for ensuring national security. Efforts have therefore been made in this study to empirically analyse the relationship between border porosity and emerging cross-border security threats and the various implications for peace and security in Nigeria. This study reviewed existing related literatures to have an informed perspective and establish a link with related previous studies. The relationship between border porosity and emerging cross-border security

threats in Nigeria is that of cause and effect. The research study confirm among other things that porous borders contribute to the emerging cross-border security threats both locally and across the border, thus affecting security efforts.

Furthermore, these cross-border related security threats, including insecurity and conflict, terrorism and insurgency, firearms smuggling, armed group infiltration, cyber-security, farmer-herder crisis, drug trafficking, and human trafficking, are interconnected and require international cooperation, strengthened border control measures, and effective strategies to mitigate their impact on national and international security. Tackling these emerging cross-border related security threats requires a multi-dimensional approach involving international cooperation, intelligence sharing, border control measures, and capacity building for security forces.

Addressing these border porosity and security challenges in Nigeria requires a comprehensive approach that includes strengthening border control measures, improving surveillance and intelligence capabilities, enhancing cooperation with neighboring countries, and investing in border infrastructure and technology. Government efforts at tackling the menace of border porosity is recognized but grossly inadequate. A lot more needs to be done to curtail the emerging cross-border security threats that has bedeviled our porous borders.

Limitations of the Study

This research on emerging cross-border security threats due to Nigeria's porous borders and its implications for national and international security has a number of limitations which are enumerated below;

A major limitation is time and financial constraints. Given the time available and the cost involvement of traversing the whole country gathering data for this study, the sample size had to be reduced to achievable size. This account for why only one of the numerous borders is the only border chosen for this research work which is the Seme border - an international border.

Additionally, the accuracy and reliability of secondary data used is dependent on the validity of existing data in the literature. Conducting research in border areas of Nigeria may be hindered by issues related to access and security restrictions. Restrictions on free movement, information released by security agencies, access to evidences (seized items), among others are limiting factors to the research.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are proposed following the outcome of this study;

- i. Government should intensify efforts in identifying all unmanned borders and provide adequate security personnel to guard them. A state of emergency should be declared on Nigeria's border porosity. The implication of border porosity on Nigeria's security and peace requires government to prioritize border security project. Government should enact a bill prioritizing border security and sufficient allocations should be made towards its accomplishment in national budget yearly until all borders are fully secured.
- ii. Provision of up to date border monitoring gadget, training of personnel with relevant skills, intelligence gathering, improved welfare package for security agents to reduce corruption is highly recommended. Increased surveillance of the border areas, acquisition of more sophisticated weapons and state of the art technology for border monitoring and patrol would be a step in the right direction. Government should increase allocation to security. Security agencies should be better funded. There should be commendable improvement in the welfare of security personnel. Identify, monitor and secure all porous borders.
- iii. The identification, arrest and prompt prosecution of criminals such as smugglers, traffickers, drug pushers, cross-border criminals as well as shaming them publicly, will go a long way in reducing cross border crimes. The justice system in the country requires serious overhauling to accommodate prompt and speedy execution of justice on all border related crimes.
- iv. The high level of criminal activities in Nigeria's borders are creating negative image for the country. The country's reputation in the international community is at stake with the nefarious activities of border criminals which also constitute serious threat to peace and security. Government should therefore move strongly to checkmate all activities in border areas that portray the country in bad light such as bribery and corruption, indiscipline among security agencies, unwarranted delay of passengers, aiding and abetting crimes and other criminal activities.
- v. There is a very serious poverty level in the border environment due to lack of government presence. Infrastructural facilities are almost non-existent. For instance the Seme Border Divisional Police Station and the Joint Border Patrol Task Force Police posts are very sub-standard (see figures 1 & 2). The environment is largely underdeveloped. Access roads are very bad, there is a very high unemployment rate among the youths which makes them susceptible to crime. As expressed by the petty traders and Okada riders interviewed; "we need infrastructural amenities in the border area. We suffering neglect and underdevelopment. We want to see more government presence."
- vi. As pointed out by the Divisional Police Officer (DPO) of Seme Border Division, there are thousands of unknown borders which cannot be manned by all security agencies put together. According to him, until Nigeria acquires enough drones for surveillance, Nigeria borders will remain porous because it is so wide that cannot be manned by all the security agencies unless with the aid of technology.
- vii. Strengthening international security measures, such as intelligence sharing, joint border patrols, and capacity building, would help in creating a secure environment along the borders. The introduction of modern technology should be the priority of the government in combating crimes across the border area. Due to the vast area of borders, we need to engage the use of improved technology like cameras, robots, scanners among others.

Sniffing dogs are trained especially by drug related agencies to easily help detect illegal materials. New machine that can scan vehicles and humans should be introduced and it will make the job of the security agents easier thus reduce crime.

- viii. Engaging with international partners, such as regional organizations, neighboring countries, and international law enforcement agencies, can help in addressing transnational security threats and promoting stability in the region. Asiwaju (2015) advocated serious engagement with the neighbouring countries, in terms of the effectiveness of collaboration and that it would have the best chance of success if governments on both sides engaged in serious matter of policy harmonization.

By addressing these implications of border porosity holistically, Nigeria can enhance peace, national security, and contribute to international security.

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