

National Security Policies of Nigeria and Benin Republic as Strategies for Curbing Cross-border Crimes

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Abstract

This study interrogates the constantly changing national security policies of Nigeria and Benin Republic in response to the cross-border security threats that are currently ravaging the two West African countries. The common focus in extant literature is on the diverse transnational organised crimes, with little or no attention paid to the manner in which the security threats have substantially shaped the national security policies of the two states. The study is guided by critical human security theory. Data was collected from primary sources; 13 interviews were conducted in Nigeria and Benin Republic, which were complimented by direct observations at the Nigeria-Benin borders. Some data were also derived from secondary sources, and the analysis of data generated was essentially qualitative, using descriptive and content analyses. Findings show that the security policies of both countries are encapsulated in an array of different documents and that they are, essentially, reactions to the constantly evolving security threats. The study calls for the harmonisation of border security policies of the two neighbouring countries in order to successfully rein in on cross-border criminal cartels.

Keywords: Security Policy; Cross-border; Security Threats and Non-state Transnational Actors.

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Introduction

A national security policy is a measure taken by a state to ensure its survival and those of its citizenry. It is an official report of how a state intends to provide state and human security (Jatau, 2017). A national security policy is, therefore, a guide, plan, concept, strategy and vision which can be encapsulated in a single document or in a collection of documents. It provides the basis for the development of a national security strategy, which organises and harmonises the security policies of a state (Federal Government of Nigeria, 2014).

National security policies are dynamic in nature as they keep evolving in response to emerging dynamics of new security challenges which states now contend with. Prominent among these new security threats are transnational organised crimes in the forms of cross-border armed robbery, smuggling of contrabands, money-laundering, trafficking of drugs, human beings and Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW), amongst others. Nigeria and Benin Republic are among the states in the West African sub-region where the deleterious effects of cross-border crimes are more pronounced. Expectedly, this development has impelled the governments of the two states to constantly come up with security policies and strategies in order to effectively deal with the security problems, with a view to enhancing their national security.

The major questions this study addressed are: In what manner have the security threats confronting Nigeria and Benin Republic shaped the national security policies of the two states? Are the security policies of both Nigeria and Republic of Benin codified in single documents or in different documents? What is the nature of cross-border crimes currently facing Nigeria and Republic of Benin? What are the security implications of these trans-border crimes? To do justice to these research questions, the author conducted interviews in Benin Republic with a criminal lawyer; representatives of Women in Law and Development; Human Rights, Peace and Development; the Republican Police; the Central Office for Repression of Illicit Trafficking of Drugs and Precursors (OCERTID) and a journalist with the Beninois Newspaper, *La Telegramme*. In Nigeria, interviews were also done with officials of the National Defence College; the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC); the National Drug Law

Enforcement Agency (NDLEA); Research and Programme Development Unit of the National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP) and officers of the Nigerian Police. To critically analyse these questions, secondary materials were utilised, using qualitative and descriptive analyses.

Theoretical Framework

The analysis of national security policies of Nigeria and Benin Republic as strategies for curbing cross-border crimes will be based on the assumptions of critical human security theory. Critical human security theory explains the short sightedness in looking at security in terms of military power and the survival of the state alone. This theory, which was first articulated by Marx Horkheimer in 1937 and was subsequently developed by Robert Cox in 1981 and Ken Booth in 1991, markedly departs from the traditional conception of security which sees the state as the primary referent of security, and which lays emphasis on military power and the protection of the state rather than the citizens (Devetak, 1995). In other words, critical security theory contends that the primary reference of security should instead encompass a wide range of non-state actors rather than the state. In essence, critical human security theory de-centres the military and state-focused threats that dominate traditional security agendas.

An important tenet associated with critical human security approach is the advancement of human emancipation which, according to Ashley (1981), is concerned with securing freedom from constraints and relations of domination. This conceptualisation of emancipation is similar to Booth's (1991) definition of emancipation as freeing people from those constraints that stop them from carrying out what they would have chosen freely to do.

In terms of the contextual relevance of the theory, its accordance of primacy to non-state intra-national and transnational actors rather than making the state the primary referent of security stands out. In relation to the central theme of the study, the national security policies of Nigeria and Benin Republic are strategies that are directed at curbing the activities of non-state criminal groups that specialise in cross border trafficking of people and illegal goods. The recognition by critical human security theory of non-state actors as the primary focus of security becomes useful in explaining

not only the increasing importance of transnational non-state actors in the contemporary world but it also throws light on the rationale behind the current global shift of security agenda to issues relating to destructive activities of transnational actors and the threats they pose to people of Nigeria and Benin Republic.

Critical human security theory's proposition of emancipation also provides a powerful tool for explaining the contemporary security challenges confronting the two states. To be sure, critical theory is interested in the advancement of human emancipation, defined in terms of freeing people from various constraints which curtail their freedom. Therefore, this assumption illuminates the security threats confronting Nigeria and Benin Republic, particularly in terms of their impact on people and the overall aim of the Economic Community of West African States to tame the phenomenon of trafficking and terrorism in the region.

Furthermore, critical theory's conception of the state as the primary source of insecurity provides a fresh perspective of viewing Nigeria and Republic of Benin as sources of insecurity for their people. This virtually becomes clear when the failure of both governments to prevent illegal crossing of their borders, to stop traffickers and smugglers of contrabands in their track, to prevent cross-border armed robbers from operating and to stop border officials from taking bribes at various border posts are taken into consideration, a dereliction of duties on the part of government which impinges negatively on the security of the people. In essence, the theory offers convincing explanations for the rapidly evolving security policies of both countries and the multidimensional threats which the security policies are meant to address.

Nature of Cross-Border Crimes between Nigeria and Benin Republic and the Security Implications for the two States

Cross-border criminal activities confronting Nigeria and Benin Republic are many, some of which are: cross-border armed robbery, trafficking of small arms and light weapons (SALW), trafficking of drugs, human trafficking, money-laundering, smuggling of contrabands, amongst others.

Cross-Border Armed Robbery

Cross-border armed robbery attacks in West Africa, particularly between Nigeria and Benin Republic increased dramatically beginning from the early 1980s. The resurgence of this criminal activity and the relatively easy manner with which the men of the underworld enter and exit the two countries to carry out their operations is due in part to the ECOWAS Protocol on free movement, which also confers on citizens the right to reside and establish businesses in any state of their choice within the West African sub-region (Okeke, Oji & Okechukwu, 2014). These rights enable Nigerian robbers to reside in Benin Republic and to rob people at gun point in Nigeria only to retreat to Benin after the execution of their heinous plans. The same thing goes for robbers resident in Nigeria who effortlessly enter Benin to operate and subsequently return to their places of residence in Nigeria afterwards.

Cases of armed robbery attacks on Nigerians by Beninese bandits became rampant from the early 1980s when car snatching became almost a daily occurrence, pointing out that cars sold to Nigerians in Cotonou would be snatched at gun point by Beninese robbery gangs operating in Nigeria and they would drive the snatched cars down to Benin to be resold to buyers from Togo and Ghana. Just as criminals come from Benin Republic to rob in Nigeria, they also move to Benin from Nigeria to rob. Robbers often move together in large number for an operation across the Nigerian-Benin borders without being apprehended. Well known among these robbers was Shina Rambo and his gangs from the Republic of Benin who specialised in snatching exotic cars from their owners in the 1990s? The robbery kingpin was a Nigerian but he lived among his co-robbers in Benin Republic. He and the members of his gang would snatch cars on Nigerian highways and they would drive them down to Cotonou to be resold to buyers from other neighbouring countries. At the height of his escapades, he snatched 40 cars in one day and in the company of his members, the cars were driven in a convoy all the way from Lagos to Cotonou unstopped. There was another international robbery network led by Hamani Tijani in the early part of the 2000s. He was a Niger Republic-born armed robber who resided in Benin Republic but carried out his robbery operations in Nigeria (Interview, Abuja, May 26, 2021). Though the names of these two notorious international robbers are often cited to corroborate the problem of cross-border robbery

between Nigeria and Benin, this is by no means to suggest that only these two kingpins terrorised the two contiguous states. So, car theft is the dominant phenomenon in cross-border armed robbery.

Cross-border armed banditry poses huge security risks to the people and governments of the two states. Armed robbers have killed many people in the two countries. The frequent border closures by Nigeria and the accusations against the Beninese authorities of shielding internationally reputed criminals have created diplomatic unease in the Nigerian-Beninese relations. Closure of borders impacts negatively on the economic security of Benin Republic whose economy is closely tied to Nigeria, its principal trading partner. As informal trade thrives between the two countries, people on both sides of the borders suffered deprivations each time the borders were closed. This has adversely affected economic cooperation between the two neighbouring states in particular, and the economic integration of the sub-region in general.

Small Arms and Light Weapons Trafficking

The relative ease with which small arms and light weapons (SALW) are smuggled into West Africa and moved across the states of the sub-region has been attributed to the freedom of movement in the zone, the porosity of borders between the states and the incapacity of security personnel to enforce laws that bother on controlling illegal intraregional movements.

Nigeria and the Republic of Benin, like some other ECOWAS states, are two countries where illicit trafficking and proliferation of weapons are prevalent, with the two neighbouring countries being sources, transits and destinations of firearms. The movement of arms across the borders of these two neighbouring countries follows well established trade and smuggling routes, which are mostly footpaths. Some of these arms are locally manufactured in both countries (Andres, 2008). In the case of Nigeria, large quantities of SALW are constantly smuggled into the country through the porous borders either overland or by sea (Andres, 2008; Nte, 2011). These entry points, through which arms and ammunitions are trafficked into Nigeria, are located at Idiroko and Seme towns in the South-West, Warri in Delta State and north-eastern states of Adamawa, Yobe and Borno border areas with Cameroon (GIABA Report, 2013). Arms are

similarly brought into the Niger Delta for the use of militant groups through the Atlantic waters, including the numerous creeks that dot the entire landscape. Besides weapons that are locally produced in the eastern part of Nigeria and those manufactured by Ghanaian blacksmiths, which are smuggled out through Togo and Benin to Nigeria, imported weapons from South Africa, Europe and Russia are also smuggled into Nigeria through its borders with Benin Republic (de Andres, 2008). This has resulted in the large quantity of illegally acquired SALW of about three million presently circulating in Nigeria (Moses and Ngomba, 2017).

Like in Nigeria, the rate of smuggling of arms into Benin Republic is equally high. These weapons are trafficked into Benin from South Africa, Nigeria, Kenya, Ghana, Egypt and Burkina Faso, with smugglers employing various tricks such as concealing weapons in specially constructed compartments under vehicle seats, coffins, cartons of iced fish, cement bags and inside other goods. Through these antics, a large number of arms have been moved to the francophone country through the various land and maritime borders of the country. Illegal firearms are mainly used for armed robbery in Benin's major cities and towns such as of Cotonou, Parakou and Seme. Unlike Nigeria, however, the use of guns for militancy and insurgency is virtually non-existent in the country (Andres, 2008).

One security implication of the ready availability of these weapons in Nigeria is the prevalence of high level of violence in the country because guns are the primary tools which armed robbers, kidnappers, militant groups and the insurgent *Boko Haram* members use in carrying out their dastardly act. Apart from this, the existence of thousands of SALW in Nigeria threatens both the corporate existence of the country and the lives of millions of Nigerians. There are firearms in the hands of Islamic fundamentalists in the northern part of the country as exemplified by the violent crises in the region over the past decades, an unfortunate situation that has led to the death of many people while many have been displaced from their homes given the high number of people at the various refugee camps in Nigeria. Boko Haram members confront the Nigerian troops with the use of SALW and many Nigerian soldiers have been killed while cultists in Nigerian tertiary institutions also use arms in killing themselves (Ayuba and Okafor, 2015).

From the numerous attacks launched by *Boko Haram* almost on daily basis, many people in the north-eastern states of Yobe, Adamawa and Borno have been killed while the attacks on national institutions and the recent killings of many Nigerians with firearms by herdsmen, especially in Benue State, have continued to weaken the unity of the country. In the same vein, SALW play an important role in making the conflict in the Niger Delta more devastating. The drastic reduction in daily oil production arising from the SALW-propelled activities of militant groups in the Niger Delta negatively affects the economic security and development of the country.

The availability of SALW in Benin Republic has equal debilitating implications for security in the country. A security official with the Beninese Republican Police divulged that firearms used for armed robbery in Benin are AK-47 and M16 guns. According to him, robbery, abductions and manslaughter are the security challenges that are propelled by guns, explaining further that the use of weapons by the criminals has led to the death of many innocent people. He asserts that the widespread robberies and killings in the country led to the creation of the Republican Police, a special force responsible for maintaining internal security of the country (Interview, Cotonou, May 26, 2021).

Though the magnitude of the consequences of firearm trafficking differs in the two countries, the narratives, nevertheless, attested to the damaging effects of the illicit trafficking and proliferation of SALW in terms of causing the deaths of a lot of people, threatening the national security of the two states as well as compounding the economic crisis plaguing the two neighbouring countries.

Human Trafficking

Trafficking in persons between Nigeria and Benin is one of the security challenges that emanate from the violation of the right of free movement in the sub-region. Most of the children and young women who are trafficked from Benin Republic to Nigeria for domestic slavery and prostitution respectively do not pass through official crossing points. Rather, once they get to Igolo, the border community in Benin Republic, motor bikes move them across to Idiroko, the border community on the Nigerian side through the numerous bush paths that link the two border communities (Direct

Observation, Idiroko-Igolo border, May 22, 2021). The operators of these bikes are many on both sides of the border and they solicit for passengers who want to cross the borders. Apart from these motorcycle riders, who take illegal routes, a sizeable number of them actually carry passengers through the official border posts without being stopped by security agents at the crossing points (Direct Observation, Idiroko-Igolo border, May 22, 2021).

The same scenario of using motorcycles by human traffickers to convey trafficking victims across Nigeria-Benin borders played out at the Seme border, except that those who patronised the motorcyclists paid more money as a result of the long distance to be covered before crossing the border. There, a trafficker pays an 'okada' operator as much as ₦1000 to take a victim across the Badagry-Seme border and the same pattern of complicity of border officials was observed there. Well-heeled transnational traffickers also successfully smuggle a large number of people in and out of Nigeria on daily basis in luxury buses as a result of the selfish benefits which border officials derive from the illicit activity (Direct Observation, Badagry-Seme border, June 2, 2021).

Human trafficking, especially of young women and children, for the purposes of labour exploitation, domestic slavery and sexual exploitation, is widespread in Nigeria and the Republic of Benin, and the two countries are among the countries where traffickers have operational bases (Ikoh, 2013). Both countries have also acquired the infamous reputation for being origin/ source, transit and destination countries for victims of human trafficking. The magnitude of trafficking in Nigeria and Benin Republic, as in other parts of the sub-region, appears to have assumed alarming proportions since the 1980s following the adoption of the ECOWAS Protocol on free movement.

Like the trafficking of girls for sex, the scope of trafficking and subjection of children to forced labour as domestic servants, agricultural workers and street hawkers in Nigeria and Benin Republic is equally enormous. A Report on trafficking in persons stated that children from Benin, Nigeria and other neighbouring countries are forced to work in the cotton agricultural sector, construction sites, or as street or market vendors in Benin, indicating that more than 7,800 children were subjected to labour exploitation in the markets

of Cotonou, Porto-Novo and Parakou, in Benin Republic. Koranic teachers in northern parts of Benin and Nigeria also use Beninese children to beg for alms, with many of these children transported to neighbouring countries where they are subjected to forced labour (Benin Trafficking in Persons Report, 2016).

The security threats of this modern-day slavery are huge. These trafficked persons suffer violations of their right to life as thousands of them in Nigeria and Benin Republic, as in other states of the sub-region, die every year. Many of the trafficked children often get knocked by vehicles while hawking on the roads, some die from industrial accidents in mines, while a good number of them become susceptible to various diseases as a result of harsh working conditions (Fitzgibbon, 2003). Further, trafficking of children denies them of education which is crucial for the economic development of their home countries, thus creating economic insecurity. Besides, the separation of the children from their parents through trafficking robs them of parental care, influence and control, thus making them socially vulnerable. This interrupts the passage of knowledge and cultural values from parent to child and from generation to generation, consequently, creating an atmosphere of social exclusion and frustration. By losing access to social relationships and learning opportunities that are vital for the development of children into a valuable human capital, repatriated trafficked victims tend to turn to anti-social behaviours that imperil the security of the societies in which they live.

Trafficking in persons is similarly damaging to the people and governments of the two countries, particularly to Nigeria in terms of its contribution to the continued flourishing of terrorism in the country. One of the reasons for the resilience of the *Boko Haram* insurgent group in the face of sustained onslaught from the Federal Government is the involvement of the sect in the trafficking of human beings, the proceeds of which are used to procure logistics, firearms and food for its bloody operations. Human trafficking yields huge profits and since these profits are often deployed to financing Boko Haram, that implies that the illicit commodification of human beings can endanger the security of people and destabilise the Nigerian government. This view is in harmony with a report on terrorist financing which stresses that the proceeds from illicit trade in human beings, which is

the third largest profit-yielding organised crime after drugs and arms trafficking, are major sources of financing terrorism in West Africa (Financial Action Task Force (FATF) Report, 2013).

Equally risky is the security threat which trafficking in women for the sex trade constitutes to public health in Nigeria and Benin Republic in terms of its propensity to cause a wide range of sexually transmitted diseases such as HIV/AIDs pandemic. Many sex workers in Benin as well as men who patronise them have died of HIV because they are not favourably disposed to having safe sex. The reluctance of men to have protected sex is not peculiar to Benin Republic, as Nigerian men also have aversion for condoms.

Trafficking of Drugs

Drug barons have a preference for West Africa as the transit zone for transatlantic drug trafficking. The existence of porous borders and weak laws, freedom of movement in the sub-region and corrupt practices by security officers are some of the reasons for the increasing use of the region for narcotics trafficking (Shehu, 2006). Significantly, Benin Republic and Nigeria are among the major outlets for drug trafficking business. Cotonou port is used by drug couriers for trans-shipment of large quantities of cocaine and heroin to Europe. Cannabis (Indian Hemp) and Amphetamine-Type Stimulant (ATS), which are produced in Nigeria are also widely trafficked and consumed in Benin (UN Security Council Report cited in Ikoh, 2013).

In Nigeria, well established cocaine trafficking networks exist. According to Andres (2008), these criminal groups buy cocaine directly from the shipments of their South American counterparts and then sell it through human couriers to Europe and South Africa (Andres, 2008). Nigeria is a major drug trafficking hub. Apart from being a major transit country for transportation of cocaine from Latin America to Europe, it is also renowned for the production of methamphetamine and cannabis, with large commercial-sized plantations clustered in the south-western parts of the country (NDLEA, 2015). A 2013 report by the International Narcotics Control Board (INCB) notes that Nigeria tops the list with the highest trafficking and drug use in West Africa (INCB Report cited in NDLEA,

2015). The 2017 Report of the International Narcotic Control Board (INCB) corroborates the use of these border posts for drug trafficking. It indicates that the total quantity of drugs seized at the Seme border in the same year stood at 17,015Kg, while Idiroko border recorded seizures of 361.7kg (INCB Report, 2017). It further notes that a total of 10,290 arrests were made in 2017.

The adverse impact of illicit cultivation, production, trafficking and abuse of drugs in Nigeria and Benin Republic is profound. Drug trade, particularly in Nigeria, has compounded the security problem facing the country with regard to the role drug money plays in funding the *Boko Haram* insurgent sect, whose activities have led to the death of thousands of people.

Indeed, drug trafficking is a catalyst for criminality, violence of different dimensions and poor democratic institutions, which militate against the socio-economic and political development of the West African countries in general and Nigeria and Benin Republic in particular. Though Benin has not been at the receiving end of terrorist attacks, drugs have propelled robbery and man slaughtering in the country in recent years, as disclosed by a Beninese police chief (Interview, Cotonou, May 26, 2021).

Apart from exacerbating crimes and violence, drugs promote youth deviance and anti-social behaviour, a scenario which impinges negatively on peaceful co-existence in both countries. The debilitating effect of drug abuse is more pronounced on youth, who constitute the productive sector. Individuals who are addicted to drugs could suffer from psychiatric complications, preventing them from undertaking productive economic activities. More than 25 per cent of those arrested for drug trafficking and drug abuse in Nigeria are adolescent and youths, both males and females, between the ages of 13 and 35 years, and some of them end up becoming mentally deranged (Interview, Abuja, August 24, 2021). According to a psychiatrist doctor at the Federal Neuro-Psychiatric Hospital, Yaba, Lagos, about 40 per cent of patients in that hospital are youths of both sexes who got involved in the consumption of cannabis and other drugs (Interview, Lagos, August 25, 2021).

The statistics of patients with mental illness in Benin Republic are similar to those of Nigeria. As revealed by a respondent at the Centre National Hospitalier de Psychiatrie de Jacquot (Jacquot National Psychiatric

Hospital), Cotonou, individuals, mostly youths, diagnosed with psychiatric disorders and depression are drug addicts and they account for 26 and 40 per cent of patients in that hospital. Though a large percentage of Beninese hold the superstitious belief that insanity is a manifestation of demonic or witchcraft attack rather than illness, the psychiatric doctor rejected this notion, stating that the cause of their health challenge is drug addiction based on the tests conducted on most of the patients. To him, depression is the top mental illness requiring treatment and hospitalisation in Benin (Interview, Cotonou, May 22, 2021). The increasing loss of sanity by youths who abuse drugs makes it impossible for them to live meaningful lives and to contribute to the economic development of their countries, with adverse impact on their well-being.

Money Laundering

Money laundering is a crime induced and driven by proceeds from all the organised smuggling and trafficking enterprises. Money laundering is the process of making illegally-obtained money (“dirty money”) from criminal activities (such as trafficking in firearms, drugs and persons) appear to have originated from a legitimate source (“clean money”) (Alemika, 2013). Though criminal cartels have been employing different strategies that will enable them to use their ill-gotten wealth and integrate this illegal money into the mainstream economy, the method of laundering money between Nigeria and Benin Republic is the use of cash smugglers or “mules” (GIABA Report, 2005). Large amounts of cash from corrupt practices and trafficking of illegal goods by Nigerians is smuggled on daily basis from Nigeria to the Republic of Benin. This illegal money is discreetly invested in the purchase of second hand vehicles in Benin Republic, which are then brought into Nigeria for sale.

While the right of free movement provides cash launderers the initial motivation to move, other factors underpinning successful currency smuggling include porous Nigeria-Benin borders, the existence of large swathes of ungoverned territory, weak and often non-existent-capacities of law enforcement institutions and the largely informal and cash-based economies of the two neighbouring states, which permits easy movement of money within and in between their borders without passing through the

formal financial system (GIABA Report, 2013). The increasing resort to bulk smuggling of money has similarly been attested to by Mobolaji and Alabi (2017). According to them, many people have been nabbed with stacks of money inside vehicles, with the money usually hidden inside clothes and other goods to prevent border guards from detecting them.

As a crime that is perpetrated by organised mafia, what then are the security implications of money laundering for Nigeria and Benin Republic? While Nigeria is at the receiving end of the negative impact of money laundering, smuggling of cash is beneficial to Benin Republic because it receives the laundered money as payment for its imported goods, thus contributing substantially to the economic well-being of the francophone country. The goods re-exported to Nigeria by money launderers are mostly smuggled into the country, thus denying the government the collection of import duties while the goods also stifle local industries because of their relatively cheaper prices. Money laundering, therefore, erodes good governance and exacerbates insecurity as the proceeds of money laundering are often re-invested into other criminal activities such as drug, arms and human trafficking. Importantly, the proceeds of money laundering is a major source of financing the *Boko Haram* insurgency, the activities of which have led to the death of thousands of Nigerians.

The above adverse impacts of money laundering on Nigeria's economic and political development contrasts sharply with the effects of money laundering on the Republic of Benin. It rejuvenates the economy of Benin Republic because the money smuggled into the country from Nigeria is used to buy the goods which Benin imports from Europe, America and Asian countries. This leads to economic security for Benin and makes the government of that country gain the support of its citizens, contributing to social harmony and political stability of the country.

Smuggling of Contraband Goods

Smuggling of prohibited commodities along the Nigeria-Benin corridor is another security problem. The informality which characterises the economies of both countries has added to the flourishing of illegal smuggling between them. Benin operates an entrepot trade policy and transit trade to Nigeria, which essentially revolves around the re-exportation of imported

goods. As Nigeria is Benin's source of economic activity, the informal trade with Nigeria is very high, "with 80% of Benin's imports being re-exported to Nigeria" (Blum, 2014). Blum asserts that Benin's informal cross-border trade with Nigeria constitutes about 75 per cent of Benin's GDP, with the francophone country known for its deliberate pursuit of an economic infiltrationist policy towards Nigeria (Nwokedi, 1992). Informal cross-border trade is also high on the Nigerian side and it is estimated at 20% of its GDP (Blum, 2014), and the extent of this informality is underscored by the role of Nigeria as Benin Republic's main trading partner.

Against this backdrop, it is not difficult to understand the rampant violation of ECOWAS Convention on inter-state transit of goods by individuals and smuggling networks that operate between the borders of Nigeria and the Republic of Benin. The Convention relating to inter-state road transit approves the transportation of goods across the West African sub-region (Convention on Inter-State Road Transit, Chapter 2, Article 4(a), 1982).

However, smugglers have devised various ingenious ways through which they successfully violate the Convention on transit of goods. For example, smugglers conceal prohibited items in legally-approved goods meant to be transported from Benin to Nigeria such as vegetable, pineapple, textile materials and other goods that originate within the sub-region. People often use this opportunity to bring contrabands such as drugs and firearms from Benin to Nigeria which they usually conceal inside these approved goods. It is worth noting that people take to smuggling of goods in order to evade the payment of customs duties and the corrupt practices of the Nigerian security agencies allow the successful smuggling of these contrabands.

These sharp practices are not limited to goods being brought into Nigeria from Benin Republic, they are also perpetrated by smugglers of goods from Nigeria to Benin. Goods being smuggled into Benin Republic include petroleum, sugar, beverages, and detergents. But the principal item that is smuggled into Benin in large quantities is petroleum product with about 300,000 barrels being smuggled illegally to Benin on daily basis (Nte, 2011), reaping enormous profits to the smugglers. This has made oil bunkering (oil theft) to continue to thrive in Nigeria. Smuggling of goods impacts negatively on the economic security of Nigeria. First, evasion of payment of customs

duties deprives the Nigerian government of the much-needed revenues, thus jeopardising the economic security of the country. Moreover, the smuggling of contrabands from Benin Republic to Nigeria is a further threat to Nigeria's economy. As a result of Benin's entrepot trade policy, the imported goods from Europe, America and Asian countries attract low tariff charges in comparison to Nigeria's higher tariff on imported goods. As a result, the goods smuggled from Benin into Nigeria are relatively cheaper than the ones imported or produced by Nigeria's manufacturing industries. This threatens both local industries and the job of Nigerians working in these industries, with serious consequences for Nigeria's economic development and welfare of its citizens.

The rights of cross-border traders, majority of who engage in smuggling, are often trampled upon. Cross-border traders, particularly women who deal mostly in prohibited items, suffer violation of their rights in terms of physical abuse, harassment by border officials, with some of them demanding sexual gratification from the women before releasing the goods seized from them. There is also the problem of stealing of their goods by gangs during the course of their travels.

National Security Policies of Nigeria and Benin Republic for Containing Cross-Border Crimes

The security policies of both Nigeria and Republic of Benin were codified in single documents during the first thirty years of their flag independence. However, the advent of new security threats, beginning from the end of the Cold War in 1990, has altered this state of affairs in tune with the changing realities. The security policies of both countries are encapsulated in an array of different documents, as they are reactions to the constantly evolving security threats. Interestingly, most of the interviewed respondents in Nigeria and Benin Republic were of the view that the security challenges of illegal border crossings, trafficking of people and smuggling of illicit goods have substantially shaped the security policies of both countries.

Nigeria

In Nigeria, a staff of the National Defence College, Abuja is one of the respondents who corroborated the view that the structure and nature of

Nigeria's security policy has changed since the early 1990s from focusing on the problem of external aggression and internal upheavals to issues relating to human security. He observed that the security policy had to change when Nigeria recognised the security problems posed by non-state transnational organisations and criminal groups, leading to the enactment of security policies on an *ad hoc* basis to tackle the security threats that emanate from cross-border criminality (Interview, Abuja, June 13, 2021).

These comments underline the adoption of multiple security measures over the years by the Nigerian government to checkmate diverse security challenges that arise from time to time. One of the measures resulting from this approach was the promulgation of the Robbery and Firearms (Special Provision) Act of 1984. With regard to curtailing the security challenge of robbery, the Act stipulated penalties that ranged from varying terms of imprisonment to death sentence for convicted robbers. According to a police officer with the Federal Special Anti-Robbery Squad (FSARS) section of the Criminal Investigation and Intelligence Department, Force Headquarters, Abuja, the Robbery and Firearms Act, which was drafted when the menace of armed robbery became a major threat to national security, is the policy guideline for the protection of life and property in Nigeria. This Act is one of the policies that empower the Nigeria Police to enforce laws that are related to crime, particularly prevention and detection of crimes. Apart from its provisions on armed robbery, the 1984 Act also had the objective of controlling the trafficking of small arms and light weapons. However, the sanctions it prescribed for offenders were too soft to serve as deterrent to firearm traffickers and to address this shortcoming the Firearms Act of 1990 was promulgated. According to a security official of the Joint Task Enforcement Team (JTET), Force Headquarters, Abuja, the 1990 Firearms Act became necessary because the 1984 Robbery and Firearms Act stipulated very mild punishment of a fine of ₦20,000 or imprisonment of not less than ten years, or both for a person convicted of illegal possession of firearms, noting further that the lenient nature of the Act tends to encourage many people to go into gun running.

The contents of the 1990 Firearms Act, however, contradict the opinion of this police officer as the Act prescribes the same penalties for illegal possession of firearms as those that were spelt out by the Act that preceded

it. Nevertheless, it was discovered that the 1990 Act is far more comprehensive than its predecessor, which underscores the fact that its approval was meant to address the tacit nature of the previous Act. Unlike the 1984 Act which had just two sentences on illegal possession of firearm, the 1990 Firearms Act contains several provisions that cover the issue of licence for possessing firearms, the regulatory powers of the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, the States Governors, the Inspector General of Police and police officers (Firearms Act, 1990, Chapter 146).

By the same token, the intensification of trafficking in human beings and its negative security implications for the Nigerian people led to the formulation and adoption of a security policy to provide measures against the trafficking of people. The policy found expression in the Trafficking in Persons Prohibition Law Enforcement and Administration (TIPPLEA) Act of 2003 which was amended in 2005. Both Acts were repealed and re-enacted in 2015 as the Trafficking in Persons (Prohibition) Enforcement and Administration (TIPPEA Act). An official of the Research and Programme Development, National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP), Abuja shed more light on the nature and scope of the anti-human trafficking policy. According to him:

Trafficking in persons was first criminalised by the TIPPLEA Act of 2003. It clearly stipulates the security policy of Nigeria on human trafficking. This policy revolves around the provision of measures for the prohibition, prevention, detection, prosecution and punishment of those who commit human trafficking and related offences. It was the first time the country would put in place a specific plan to deal with the crime which poses personal and societal risks. This policy was backed up by the creation of NAPTIP, the agency that has statutory responsibility of investigating, arresting, detaining and prosecuting any person, body or entity found to have committed the offence of human trafficking (Interview, Abuja, June 28, 2021).

For the effective discharge of the functions of NAPTIP, the security framework provides for the establishment of special units for the Agency.

They include: investigation and monitoring; legal and prosecution; public enlightenment; counselling and rehabilitation; research and programme development and training and manpower development (Trafficking in Persons (Prohibition) Act, 2015). Also, the Act provides that any person who is guilty of human trafficking offence is liable on conviction to various imprisonment sentences with the payment of fine. These terms of imprisonment and fine range from two years, five years to seven years and the sum of money between ₦250,000.00, ₦500,000.00, ₦1,000,000.00, ₦2,000,000.00 and ₦5,000,000.00

Arising from the foregoing, it is logical to ask whether the law against human trafficking has effectively deterred traffickers. A police officer attached to the Anti-Human Trafficking Unit, Force Headquarters, Abuja, described the policy of Nigeria on trafficking in persons as a model which other countries in the sub-region use for the drafting of their own law. He, however, observed that the widespread poverty in the country, lack of employment opportunity for school leavers and the readiness of traffickers to bribe officials in order to have their way, particularly at the point of crossing Nigeria's borders, have rendered the trafficking law rather ineffective.

Drug trafficking is another security challenge that has elicited the action of the Nigerian government. The first security measure taken to stop drug trafficking in Nigeria was the Decree 20 of 1984 promulgated by the Buhari/Idiagbon regime. Before then, there was no law in the country that criminalised drug pushing. The decree prescribed the death penalty by firing squad for convicted drug peddlers and some Nigerians were executed for committing offences under this decree. However, the application of capital punishment for drug offences did not last as General Ibrahim Babagida abolished the death penalty for drug trafficking when he took over power in a military coup in 1985 and drug smugglers returned to business with full force (Interview, Abuja, June 28, 2021).

The escalation of problems related to drug trafficking in Nigeria led to the promulgation of Decree 48 of 1989 and the establishment of an enforcement agency known as the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) in January 1990 (NDLEA, 2000). This decree, unlike the one that preceded it, abolished capital punishment for drug offences but it spelt

out some stringent penalties in order to control illegal cultivation, trafficking and abuse of hard drugs that had assumed an alarming increase. Section 11 (2a and b) of Decree 48 of 1989 specifies that any person who unlawfully engages in the production, distribution, sale, importation or exportation of any narcotic drug or in the acquisition of property derived from drug offences or incites or induces any person to commit any drug offence or engages in the conversion or transfer of property derived from any drug offence shall be liable to life imprisonment on conviction.

These sanctions have, however, not succeeded in deterring drug traffickers. One of the reasons for the flourishing of the illegal trade is the low risk that characterises drug pushing arising from the ability of drug pushers to operate underground, thus avoiding the suspicion of the law enforcement agencies such as NDLEA and police. Besides, the preparedness of drug traffickers to bribe security officials, who compromise once they are offered monetary gratification facilitates the smuggling of the commodity in and out of Nigeria. As shown by Odekunle (1979), very little of drug crimes committed in Nigeria are known to security operatives. The arrest statistics often made available to the public by government officials, therefore, is a likely indication of widespread drug offences in Nigeria and not an indicator of the effectiveness of the measures and strategies put in place to control illicit use and trafficking of hard drugs.

With respect to the security policy of Nigeria on money laundering, the Money Laundering (Prohibition) Act of 2004, which was amended in 2012, is the framework for combating money laundering and corruption in the country. Section 1 (a and b) of the Money Laundering (Prohibition) Act of 2012 attempts to make laundering difficult by setting a limit to the amount of money which an individual or a corporate organisation can deposit or withdraw at a time and provides for special surveillance and reporting of suspicious transactions. Section 1 of the money laundering Act, for example, prohibits an individual and a corporate organisation from making cash payment of a sum exceeding ₦5,000,000.00 and ₦10,000,000.00 respectively (Federal Government of Nigeria Money Laundering Prohibition Act, 2012). Furthermore, section 2(1) of the Act spells out the duty to report international transfer of funds. It states that a transfer to or from a foreign country of funds by a person or corporate body of a sum exceeding

US\$10,000.00 or its equivalent shall be reported to the Central Bank of Nigeria as well as Securities and Exchange Commission. In order to know the identity of those making or withdrawing cash through a financial institution and to ensure that the customer's transaction is consistent with the business he or she carries out, section 3 makes it mandatory for the financial institution to provide relevant information on the customer before entering into transaction with the customer.

The ultimate aim of the provisions of 2012 Money Laundering Act is to curtail the activities of organised criminal groups that have become entrenched in illegal trafficking businesses and terrorist financing, the sustainability of which relies heavily on the successful manner criminals launder the proceeds of these illicit enterprises. However, money launderers circumvent these provisions by devising varying ingenious ways of breaching them and escaping punishment for infractions, a development that has largely rendered it ineffective. One of these strategies, according to an official of EFCC in Abuja, is the breaking up of large amounts of cash into smaller units that are not up to the reportable limit of ₦5,000,000.00 for an individual and ₦10,000,000.00 for a corporate organisation, which are then deposited in different banks. The cash are either deposited directly into different bank accounts opened in the names of the launderer's fronts, or through the purchase of a series of monetary instruments such as cheques, bank draft, money orders and so forth, and then deposited into bank accounts domiciled at other locations (Interview, Abuja, June 20, 2021).

The interviewee further revealed that the law is also violated through the use of currency exchange bureau, which facilitates the conversion of bulky, low-denomination local currency to less-bulky, high-denomination foreign currency, which is thereafter transferred by wire to another country. Another method of breaking the money laundering Act is the manner money smugglers have taken advantage of the free movement Protocol to carry cash physically across the land borders, totally avoiding the use of banking institutions to escape being detected by security officials in the country (Interview, Abuja, June 20, 2021).

Counter terrorism strategy is yet another security policy adopted to stave off the threats posed by insurgency and groups linked with Islamic fundamentalism. The need for this security policy first came into the

consciousness of the nation's policy makers following the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks on the United States of America. The fallout of the coordinated attacks by the Islamic terrorist group, Al-Qaeda was the enactment of the Terrorism (Prevention) Act of 2003 by Nigeria. However, the first National Counter Terrorism Security Strategy came into force in 2011 during the administration of former President Goodluck Jonathan (Jatau, 2017). This counter-insurgency strategy focused exclusively on how to disrupt, dismantle and defeat the insurgency of Boko Haram sect and other terrorist groups. According to the National Security Strategy Report (2014), the Counter Terrorism Strategy revolves around five main streams: identify, prepare, forestall, secure and implement, which are to be co-ordinated by the National Security Adviser. The first component of this strategy, that is, identifying, involves ensuring that all terrorists and their sponsors are identified and brought to justice. Preparing deals with the physical and psychological preparation of the populace for any attack by the terrorist group. With regard to forestalling, the public is to be fully engaged through sustained enlightenment campaigns and de-radicalisation programme while securing relates to ensuring the security of lives and property, both private and key public national infrastructure. On its own part, the fifth component involves devising a framework for effective mobilisation of a coordinated cross-governmental effort in pursuit of the counter terrorism strategy.

But, is this strategy achieving its objective of defeating the Boko Haram fighters or not? This question is necessary given the incalculable damage the sect has inflicted on the people and government of this nation since 2009. The military preparedness to launch offensive against the insurgent group, which is a central plank of the counter-insurgency strategy, appears to be grossly inadequate. Apart from allegations against the Nigerian troops of retreating from the battlefronts and the obsolete military equipment available to them, the terrorist group has, in recent times, intensified deadly attacks on military targets, with very high casualty figures as exemplified by the recent Metele base incidence.

A United States Department of State Report (2017) did not only criticise Nigeria's counter-terrorism strategy, it equally cited flaws in the operations of the country's anti-terrorism agencies. The Department of State Security (DSS) is the primary investigating agency for terrorism cases but there

have been longstanding concerns about its capacity to investigate terrorist financing with respect to its failure to share case information with other agencies, such as the EFCC, that also have the statutory mandate to conduct investigations and prosecution on terrorist financing. It appears that neither EFCC nor the Ministry of Justice has made concrete efforts to prosecute terrorist financing cases as Boko Haram remains a potent threat in spite of the federal government's frequent claims that it has technically defeated the insurgent group. Thus, inter-agency cooperation among the various security organs in the country is a '*sine qua non*' for the effectiveness of Nigeria's counter-terrorism strategy.

Republic of Benin

Benin Republic, unlike Nigeria, does not have specific legal frameworks for controlling some of the trans-border security challenges facing it, and where they exist enforcement is very weak. Again, in contrast to Nigeria, there are no clear cut specialised agencies in Benin for controlling the trafficking of drugs and human beings. For example, the Central Branch of the Judicial Police, which is an integral part of the newly-created Republican Police, is responsible for combating both illegal drug and human trafficking, two security challenges that are handled by the NDLEA and NAPTIP respectively in Nigeria.

As confirmed by a criminal lawyer in Vedoko, near Cotonou, Benin lacks a specific anti-human trafficking legislation in contradistinction to Nigeria which has in place the Trafficking in Persons (Prohibition) Enforcement and Administration Act. In the absence of any law against trafficking in persons, the Republic of Benin utilises existing general laws dealing with offences that relate to prostitution, sexually exploitative activities, child abduction and forced labour to charge human traffickers to court. According to the lawyer, extant laws of Benin Republic on human trafficking are largely based on the colonial French West Africa Penal Code adopted on May 6, 1877. He, however, opined that this Code has undergone various modifications and amendments over the years in line with some changes in the society, noting that between 1961 and 1995, Benin took some measures to protect minors under the age of 18 from being trafficked. The measures include the promulgation of Law No 61-20 on 10

July 1961 that prohibited the illegal displacement of a minor below the age of 18 years outside of the territory of the Dahomey Republic, with punishment against the breach of this law being imprisonment ranging from two to five years and a fine of 25,000 CFA. Law No 73-37 of 17 April 1973 modified the provisions of the Penal Code on the smuggling and kidnapping of minors while Decree No 95-191 of 24 June 1995, which stipulated the procedure for the issuance of travel documents to minors, was introduced to discourage traffickers (Interview, Vedoko, May 13, 2021).

Benin is, however, taking further legislative measure against trafficking in persons as it is currently working toward adopting the Transportation of Minors and the Suppression of Child Trafficking law. Though this proposed law spells out prison sentences for violators and accomplices in child trafficking, there are many gaps in it. For example, the legislation focuses on prohibiting the illegal transportation of children within and outside the country and remains silent on the subjection of children to various forms of exploitation. As noted by an official of the Benin local chapter of Women in Law and Development, a regional non-governmental organisation, the Beninese authorities do not investigate any sexual exploitation or forced labour offences that do not involve the movement of victims within Benin or across borders. She disclosed further that Benin lacks legislation against the trafficking of adults, adding that the government of Benin has failed to investigate instances of trafficking of adults and provide protective services to adult victims (Interview, Cotonou, May 18, 2021).

These flaws pertaining to the poor level of implementation of existing laws on human trafficking are worsened by Benin's lack of an autonomous body for administering justice on matters relating to trafficking of people. This responsibility is entrusted to the Central Office for the Protection of Minors, the Family and for Combating Human Trafficking, which is under the control of the Central Branch of the Judicial Police, itself an integral part of the Republican Police of Benin Republic. Corruption is, however, widespread among police officers in the francophone country and this adversely affects the enforcement of laws on human trafficking. As divulged by a representative of Human Rights, Peace and Development, an NGO that promotes human rights in Benin Republic, the Benin Republic police force is marred by corruption as most of the police officers take bribes to

pervert justice, noting further that in the last few years police officers and magistrates have been dismissed from service for corruption (Interview, Cotonou, May 22, 2021). He went on to say that the country's judicial system is characterised by the dearth of law enforcement resources such as inadequate funding and qualified personnel.

Concerning drug trafficking, the approach of Benin Republic towards combating the criminal activity is closely tied to its anti-money laundering (AML) policy. Unlike Nigeria, Benin tackles the security challenge of drug trafficking by directly fighting against the laundering of money derived from drug trafficking. A Benin Republic's police chief revealed that the approach is informed by the establishment of illicit financial networks in Benin by transnational organised crime groups to launder millions of dollars of funds realised from narcotic trafficking (Interview, Cotonou, May 26, 2021). Thus, the security policy of Benin on drug trafficking is embedded in its anti-money laundering Act of 31 October, 2006. This presupposes that prior to this period, the country did not have a national drug control strategy, organised into programmes and action plans with clearly defined priorities. The only known effort it made before that period was the creation of the Central Office for Repression of Illicit Trafficking of Drugs and Precursors (OCERTID) in 1999, which was placed under the national police to investigate and prosecute drug couriers (Interview, Cotonou, May 28, 2021). Again, this contrasts sharply with the situation in Nigeria, which has firmly put in place a comprehensive National Drug Law Enforcement Act since 1989 and backed this up with the creation of the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA), the body that is responsible for the implementation of the drug policy, in 1990.

Since Benin's strategy of controlling drug trafficking is embodied in its anti-money laundering Act, it becomes relevant, therefore, to examine some major aspects of this 2006 Act. Article 2 of the Act, which essentially addresses the scope of offences relating to money laundering, stipulates that money laundering entails the conversion, transfer or manipulation of property knowing that such property derives from a crime or offence or from an act of participation in such crime or offence, for purposes of concealing or disguising the illicit source of the said property or assisting any person involved in the commission of such a crime or offence to escape

from the legal consequences of his actions (Article 2, 2006 Money Laundering Act, cited in GIABA, 2010).

As provided by this article, the scope of money laundering offences is very wide as the Act targets crimes and offences without limitation. As regards the illicit trafficking of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances, however, Article 95 and subsequent articles of the Act on drugs and precursors prescribes a prison term of 10 to 20 years. The responsibility for coordinating the control of drug trafficking is that of the National Financial Information Processing Unit (CENTIF), placed under the supervision of the Minister of Finance. According to Article 17 of the 2006 Act, CENTIF is an administrative service endowed with financial autonomy and autonomous decision-making powers on issues within its power. The Act also placed the duty of collecting and processing of financial information on money laundering circuits on CENTIF.

Benin's anti-money laundering law is fraught with a number of deficiencies, which impinge negatively on its ability to curtail drug trafficking. The effect of these lapses is exemplified by Benin's reliance on support from the United States and France for drug enforcement activities. Throwing more light on the weaknesses of this anti-money laundering Act, an official of OCERTID stated that Benin's anti-money laundering law is ambiguous on the person responsible for forfeiture of asset in money laundering cases, resulting in the failure of the law to play any deterrent role (Interview, Cotonou, May 28, 2021). Arising from these inadequacies, drug trafficking has continued to flourish in the francophone country, worsening the security of people and government of the state.

For many respondents, however, the most important and far-reaching security strategy adopted by Benin is the bill that created a special security force meant to tackle the multifaceted criminalities that have been threatening the peace and security of the country. According to a journalist with the Beninese newspaper, *La Telegramme*, the security measure, which was put in place in March 2018, revolves around the fusion of the country's internal security forces, namely the National Police and the Gendarmerie (the military). He elaborated further:

The merger of the two security services into a unified body known as the *Police Republicaine* (Republican Police) under the supervision of the *Ministere de L' Interieur Et De La Securite Publique* (Ministry of Interior and Public Security) is a response to the new threats of cybercrimes, trafficking of people, trafficking of drugs, armed robbery, abductions and even manslaughter. The newly created *Police Republicaine* is a special internal security force with paramilitary status. It will adopt community policing model and will reduce crime and curb internal crises in order to create an environment conducive for economic development of the country (Interview, Cotonou, May 30, 2021).

The integration of Benin's security services into a single force dedicated to achieving internal security of the country underscores the previous existence of two separate security arms (the police and the gendarmerie) that were performing the same duty of maintaining law and order. Expectedly, they worked at cross purposes in a manner that made them incapable of efficiently discharging their statutory responsibility of suppressing criminality in the country. The former arrangement before the fusion was characterised by lack of coordination between the national police and the gendarmerie. While the former, under the Ministry of Interior and Public Security, had the primary responsibility of enforcing law and order in urban areas, the latter, under the Ministry of Defence, performed the same function in rural areas. There was no cooperation among them and they often clashed with each other in their day to day activities as a result of their overlapping jurisdiction. The creation of the Republican Police has, however, put paid to the dichotomy between the two rival security arms.

Given the centrality of the Beninese police in the fight against traffickers and other criminal cartels, will the latest security measure result in curtailing the varied security threats confronting the country? The reorganisation is not likely to yield any positive development as corruption is still widespread among the police. At all the major centres visited by the researcher in Benin Republic, including Cotonou, Vedoko, Abomey-Calavi, Porto Novo, Pobe, Savalou, Save, Dassa and Zoume, police officers were seen collecting

bribes from motorists at checkpoints and they appeared less concerned with verifying the goods in the vehicles. The backlash of this widespread corrupt practice is the trafficking, on daily basis, of many Beninese to neighbouring countries of Nigeria, Togo, Ghana and Burkina Faso as slave workers, while drugs also transit through the country freely, with all their debilitating security implications for the people of the country.

Discussion of Findings

The major focus of the study is the manner in which crimes perpetrated across the borders of Nigeria and Benin Republic have shaped the existing national security policies of the two countries. Accordingly, the findings are discussed in relation to this objective and the relevant literature in order to establish the extent to which they confirm or reject existing works on the major theme of the study. The findings revealed that the thrust of the security policies of Nigeria and Benin, which, between 1960 and the late 1980s, focused on the securitisation of the states against external and internal dangers, had shifted mainly to human security. As indicated by the result, the change of the policy direction was informed by the emergence of new security threats posed by transnational and intra-national actors, whose activities impinged adversely on the security of people. To be able to combat the new security challenges, the study showed that both countries resorted to the formulation of security policies on an *ad hoc* basis, leading to the codification of these security policies in several documents rather than in single document.

This finding underscores the submissions of many scholars in the literature on the shift of focus from state-centric view of security that emphasises the protection of the state against external dangers to be achieved through the use of military power to securing both the state and its citizens from dangerous crimes and other non-military threats. According to Zabadi (2005) and Alli (2010), the concern of security has, since the end of the Cold War, extended beyond its political and military connotation to human security that encompasses issues relating to the basic needs of people and their protection from various threats.

With regard to Nigeria, therefore, the study found that the multiple security problems plaguing the country led to the adoption of the following

security policies. First, the Robbery and Firearms Acts were approved in 1984 and 1990 to curtail armed robbery and trafficking of firearms, which have both become major threats to life and property in particular and national security as a whole. Starting from the 1980s, cases of armed robberies had become rampant in Nigeria and lives and property were no longer safe. Cars were audaciously snatched from their owners in broad day light while houses were burgled at will by men of the underworld. Many innocent Nigerians were killed by armed robbers while many more were maimed. It is this widespread insecurity in the country that led to the approval of the Robbery and Firearms Acts in 1984 and 1990. To some extent, the Robbery Act of 1984 recorded some measure of success as the public execution of convicted robbers went a long way in deterring robbery activities. While the existence of militant and insurgent groups in the Niger Delta and the north-eastern parts of the country respectively were the major factors promoting gun running in the country, the study showed that the Firearms Act could not effectively curtail the proliferation of arms in the country as a result of the failure of the federal government in addressing the socio-economic conditions that made weapons to be in high demand in the country. As documented by Okeke and Oji (2014) as well as Moses and Ngomba (2017), the neglect of the Niger Delta and the North Eastern parts of Nigeria and the deprivations the people have suffered over the years are among the factors exacerbating the proliferation of firearms in the regions.

The rampant cases of human trafficking gave birth to the Trafficking in Persons Prohibition Law Enforcement and Administration (TIPPLEA) Act in 2003, an anti-human trafficking security policy that was amended and re-enacted in 2005 and 2015 respectively. At the time this Act was adopted, trafficking in persons had become so widespread in Nigeria, involving the exploitation of children, young boys and girls and adults. The study further found that unemployment and its attendant widespread poverty among the youth made trafficking victims available in large number while the corrupt attitude of border officials was a major factor that impacted negatively on the effectiveness of the trafficking law. This finding tallies with the work of Agbu (2002), where he documented that poverty, unemployment, lack of education/training, discrimination against women

and general economic hardship, all consequences of corruption, led to the emergence of human trafficking.

In the same measure, the study pointed out that the flourishing of drug trafficking in Nigeria had elicited different policy responses from successive governments in the country in order to tame its menace. These include: Decree 20 of 1984, Decree 48 of 1989 and the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency Act. The adoption of these Acts was informed by the increasing resort of Nigerians to the trafficking of hard drugs to overseas due to socio-economic hardship imposed on them by structural adjustment programmes beginning from the 1980s. Further, the number of youth addicted to drug began to increase, with all its negative implications for their health and the socio-economic development of the country. While the Decrees substantially reduced drug trafficking among Nigeria because of the capital punishment they imposed on drug traffickers, the NDLEA Act had recorded only marginal success in controlling illegal use and trafficking of drugs in Nigeria mainly because its strategies of arresting and detaining drug offenders were selective in nature, applicable mostly to petty drug dealers while the big time drug barons continued to operate unmolested. This situation, which resulted from the susceptibility of the NDLEA officials to corruption, rendered the drug law and the agency responsible for its implementation ineffective. The foregoing findings are compatible with the works of Odekunle (1979) and Alemika (1998), where they indicated that a negligible number of drug crimes committed in Nigeria are known to security operatives, contending further that the statistics of arrested drug offenders do not tally with the reality.

The study further showed that the harmful effects of money laundering, particularly in exacerbating embezzlement of money, corrupt practices as well as fuelling other organised criminal activities informed the approval of the Money Laundering (Prohibition) Act of 2004, an Act which was subsequently amended in 2012. However, the result revealed that the law has not succeeded in achieving its objectives due to the various antics of launderers such as depositing smaller amounts of money in different bank accounts in the names of their fronts or purchasing monetary instruments which are subsequently deposited into bank accounts elsewhere.

In the Republic of Benin, on the other hand, the study showed that the country, unlike Nigeria, lacked clear-cut legal frameworks and specialised agencies for tackling its security challenges, and in few cases where these exist, enforcement capacity is dismally weak. With respect to human trafficking in the Republic Benin, it was found that there's no specific agency saddled with the responsibility of curtailing human trafficking. However, there is an extant law that proscribes the trafficking of children, girls and women in Benin, the implementation of which is entrusted to the Central Office of the Judicial Police, itself a part of the Republican Police. The reasons for the adoption of this security policy is that the trafficking of girls and women for sex and the subjection of children to forced labour as domestic servants, agricultural workers and street hawkers had reached an all-time high in Benin Republic. Beninese children were forced to work in the cotton agricultural sector, construction sites or as street or market vendors in Benin and in other neighbouring countries. Koranic teachers in northern parts of Benin and Nigeria also use Beninese children to beg for alms and more than 7,800 children were subjected to labour exploitation in the markets of Cotonou, Porto-Novo and Parakou in Benin Republic before the adoption of the law against the trafficking of minors in 2006.

The study discovered that the absence of an independent body for administering justice on matters relating to human trafficking like the NAPTIP in Nigeria and sharp practices among police officers accounted for the poor enforcement of laws on trafficking of children in Benin Republic. The Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada Report (2016) has corroborated this result when it stated that the legislation suffers from the problem of implementation partly due to lack of access to justice mechanisms, corruption and impunity.

With regard to drug trafficking, the findings demonstrated that Benin neither had a drug law nor an autonomous agency for investigating and prosecuting drug offenders. Again, this is diametrically opposed to the situation in Nigeria where a comprehensive National Drug Law Enforcement Act and the NDLEA, the body saddled with the task of implementing the drug law, exist. As the study pointed out, Benin tackles drug trafficking indirectly by fighting against the laundering of money illegally realised from drug trafficking, a situation which led to the integration of Benin's security

policy on drug trafficking to its anti-money laundering Act of 2006. The reason for tackling money laundering in Benin Republic is because the money realised from drug trafficking is often invested in the importation of vehicles and other goods from overseas and that if this illegal money is prevented from being laundered into the mainstream economy, then drug trafficking will be stopped. However, the capacity of Benin Republic to curtail the laundering of illegal money acquired from drug trafficking is dismally low due to corruption on the part of police, customs and judicial officers who enforce the law.

These findings are consistent with existing literature on Benin's money laundering. In this regard, the International Narcotics Control Strategy (INCSR) Report (2016) affirmed the drug enforcement role assigned to the Central Office for Repression of Illicit Trafficking of Drugs and Precursors (OCERTID), which is an office in the Police Force of Benin. The Report emphasised that the judiciary, police officers with OCERTID and customs officials collect bribes and get involved in systems of patronage, noting that even the law which criminalises active and passive bribery in both public and private sectors is poorly implemented. All these lapses, the Report concluded, accounted for the flourishing of drug trafficking and the laundering of illegal money in the Republic of Benin.

Finally, the result further indicated that the recent adoption of the bill that merged the National Police and the Gendarmerie (the military) of the Republic of Benin into a single body known as the Republican Police was an important security measure for confronting the security threats confronting the former French colony. The merger was meant to make the newly created force more united and efficient in combating the multiple security challenges facing Benin. However, the fusion and reorganisation of Benin's security agencies would not bring about a positive turn around in the battle against the criminal cartels operating in the country due to widespread corruption of the country's police and judicial officers.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This study concentrated on the extent to which the constantly evolving security threats emanating from criminal cross-border activities have put Nigeria and Benin Republic on their toes to keep adopting different security

policies from time to time, which primarily aim at securing and promoting the welfare of their citizens. This, in itself, is in tune with the global shift of the traditional state-centric concern of security to that of securing the state and the people from any danger. In spite of the pragmatic nature of these national security policies, a combination of inadequate funding, administrative ineptitude and sharp practices among the law enforcement agents in the two West African states gives cross-border criminals the opportunity to operate with audacity.

A more dynamic approach should, therefore, pointedly address widespread poverty and socio-economic injustice that gave rise to cross-border crimes in Nigeria and Benin Republic. The governments of the two countries must deliberately create jobs and empower the youths financially to enable them engage in legitimate ventures. Such approach should also involve the creation of a more efficient and well equipped joint border security patrol teams made up of highly disciplined and well remunerated officers of the army, navy and air force. This has become imperative given that the major security problems confronting West Africa tend to have become intractable as a result of the inability of national governments to secure their land, air and maritime borders.

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Dates and Places where Interviews were Conducted

- Interview with a criminal lawyer in Vedoko, Benin Republic, May 13, 2021.
- Interview with an official of Women in Law and Development, Cotonou, Benin Republic, May 18, 2021.
- Interview with a representative of Human Rights, Peace and Development, Cotonou, Benin Republic, May 22, 2021.
- Interview with a psychiatrist doctor at the Centre National Hospitalier de Psychiatrie de Jacquot (Jacquot National Psychiatric Hospital), Cotonou, Benin Republic, May 22, 2021.
- Interview with a police officer at the Nigerian Police Headquarters, Abuja, May 26, 2021.
- Interview with a Republican Police chief, Cotonou, Benin Republic, May 26, 2021.
- Interview with an official of the Central Office for Repression of Illicit Trafficking of Drugs and Precursors (OCERTID), Cotonou, Benin Republic, May 28, 2021.
- Interview with a journalist of the Beninois Newspaper, *La Telegramme*, Cotonou, Benin Republic, May 30, 2021.
- Interview with a staff of the National Defence College, Abuja, Nigeria, June 13, 2021.
- Interview with an official of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), Abuja, Nigeria, June 20, 2021.
- Interview with an official the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA), Abuja, Nigeria, June 28, 2021.

- Interview with a staff of Research and Programme Development, National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP), Abuja, Nigeria, June 28, 2021.
- Interview with a psychiatrist doctor at the Federal Neuro-Psychiatric Hospital, Lagos, Nigeria, August 25, 2021.