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Possession of Small Arms, Security Architecture and Crisis of Development in Obudu Local Government Area of Nigeria's Cross River State.

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[0202] Abstract
The study examines the impact of small arms possession on the security architecture and development of Obudu Local Government Area of Cross River State, Nigeria. Against the backdrop of the post-cold war proliferation of arms across Africa, the study explores how illegal arms circulation fuels insecurity, disrupts communal development and weakens regional stability. The study highlights how porous borders, poverty, unemployment, economic hardship, and governance deficits facilitate the influx and possession of arms by non-state actors, local militias, and civilians in Obudu LGA. Anchored on Johan Galtung's Structural Violence Theory and the Social Disorganization Theory of Shaw and McKay, the study employs the documentary research design and utilized secondary method of data collection. Data were analyzed using the content analytical technique. Finding reveal that small arms possession has significantly exacerbated communal clashes, boundary disputes, armed robbery, cultism, and a general climate of insecurity and underdevelopment. It concludes that addressing the menace of illicit arms requires a holistic overhaul of security institutions, implementation of robust disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) frameworks, and policies that enhance trust, governance, and socio-economic empowerment at the grassroots.
Key words: arms, development, disarmament, governance, poverty, security

Introduction

The illicit possession of small arms in sub-Saharan Africa has increasingly become a subject of grave concern, particularly due to its destabilizing impact on development and security. Scholars have long argued that the possession of small arms, especially in post-conflict and fragile states, undermines institutional authority and impedes socio-economic progress. According to Salihu and Özden (2020), the collapse of bipolar superpower order after the Cold War inadvertently unleashed a global surplus of small arms that were redirected into weak African states, where governance capacity was insufficient to regulate their circulation. This has contributed to what they term the "criminalization of insecurity," where non-state actors acquire the means to challenge both communal peace and state sovereignty for their survival. Within the Nigerian context, Ayissi and Ibrahima (2005) emphasize that the challenge is not merely the presence of weapons but the breakdown of mechanisms for civilian disarmament and border control. Obudu Local Government Area in Cross River State presents a microcosm of this national dilemma. Its strategic location, bordering Benue State and lying close to informal trade routes, has made it a convenient transit and destination for illicit arms. This porousness, coupled with under-resourced security agencies and socio-economic marginalization, has produced a situation where arms possession is not just criminal but functional: a perceived necessity for self-defense, community rivalry, and even political expression.

Building on Johan Galtung's (1969) concept of structural violence, it becomes evident that the unequal distribution of security infrastructure and social welfare compels marginalized communities to take security into their own hands. Galtung's argument that violence is embedded within social and political systems—when basic human needs are structurally denied—explains why arms possession becomes a rational, though dangerous, response in Obudu. Similarly, Imobighe (2001) insists that where human security is compromised by poverty, exclusion, and governmental neglect, peace is not only elusive but irrelevant to the affected populations. Thus, this study investigates the relationship between small arms possession and the degradation of development and security architecture in Obudu LGA. It seeks to examine not only how these weapons arrive in civilian hands but also how their presence exacerbates the breakdown of social cohesion, promotes fear, and deters investment, governance, and community development. In doing so, the research aims to contribute both theoretically and practically to peace building scholarship and policy in Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem The presence of small arms in the hands of civilians, local militias, and non-state actors in Obudu Local Government Area is no longer an incidental phenomenon—it is structural, persistent, and deeply entrenched. What makes this situation particularly disturbing is not only the volume of weapons in circulation but the manner in which their possession is normalized within communal life. Despite repeated interventions by state security agencies, Obudu continues to suffer violent outbreaks, boundary clashes, political thuggery, cult violence, and armed robbery, all of which point to a systemic failure in arms control and governance. Scholars like Florquin and Berman (2005) have argued that arms proliferation in West Africa is inseparable from weak institutional frameworks, emphasizing that where the state lacks monopoly over the instruments of violence, parallel security arrangements emerge. This is clearly visible in Obudu, where individuals and communities resort to self-help—arming themselves not only for protection but for asserting territorial and ethnic claims. These local security strategies, however, often escalate into confrontations, destabilizing the already fragile security architecture.

Furthermore, as Okereke (2020) observes, insecurity driven by arms possession does not merely result in physical violence—it erodes trust in formal governance institutions, discourages economic investments, and deepens community fragmentation. In Obudu, there are reported cases where residents fear engaging in commercial farming or cross-boundary trade due to threats of armed invasion from neighboring groups. The resulting stagnation in local enterprise, coupled with a climate of fear and mutual suspicion, reflects what Paul Collier (2007) describes as "development in reverse." There is also a glaring absence of effective arms reduction and disarmament programs in the area. Although the Nigerian state has implemented DDR (Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration) initiatives in volatile regions like the Niger Delta, such frameworks are virtually non-existent in Obudu. As noted by Tarila et al. (2020), DDR efforts fail when they are selective, underfunded, or imposed without grassroots ownership. In the case of Obudu, the state's limited reach, insufficient policing, and lack of community-based conflict resolution mechanisms have created an enabling environment for arms possession to thrive. Thus, the problem is not only the availability of small arms but the absence of sustainable institutional, political, and developmental responses to mitigate their impact. The study is therefore imperative to diagnose how the circulation and possession of these arms have affected both development and the functional capacity of Obudu's security architecture over the last two decades.

Literature Review

The present discussion on small arms and development is very different from earlier attempts to uncover the relationships between disarmament and development which has been discussed by most researchers. In the 1970s and 1980s, the rationale for pursuing disarmament for development according to Wulf 1991 as cited in small arms survey, 2003, consisted of three basic propositions. The first highlighted the expense of arms production, acquisition, management and their negative effect on the environment. The second was that military spending crowded out the asset-building investment and that the capital released from unproductive expenditures (on arms) could be reinvested in other social goods such as health and education. The third anticipated that a peace dividend could be harvested from savings associated with reduced arms - related expenditures and through the conversion armament facilities - particularly nuclear, biological chemical and conventional production and storage facilities - to civilian purposes (Wulf, 1991). According to Ayissi & Ibrahim, 2005, the fight against the possession, proliferation and the continuous circulation of arms is a key priority on West Africa's peace and security agenda. They further stated that; "stopping the illegal circulation and proliferation of small arms and light weapons is such an important objective that the economic community of West Africa states (ECOWAS) mechanism for conflict prevention, management, resolution, peacekeeping and security devotes an article (article 31) specifically to "preventive measures against the illegal circulation of small arms". This says that "ECOWAS shall take all the necessary measures to combat illicit trafficking and circulation of small arms.

There are many ways in which small arm can end up being misused in environments where the state is unable to fully control the accessibility to and illegal possession of arms. In general, political, economic and social transformations within countries tend to increase availability of arms. As stated in the previous chapter - the end of the cold war era brought about the circulation of deadly arms. At the end of the Cold War, the loss of bipolar control meant that, "Newly opened borders, massive post-Cold War arms surpluses and the rapid expansion of free trade contributed to arms availability and the ease of smuggling (Lora Lumpe, Sarah Meek and R.T. Naylor, 2000). The possession of arms by individuals or state militias poses significant threat to the society and it is also considered as a strong constraint to

societal growth and development. Abunimye et al. (2024) Stated that the proliferation of illicit small arms and light weapons is responsible for the high level of insecurity and economic underdevelopment in Nigeria today. They further maintained that the precarious security situation in the Niger Delta can be attributed to the proliferation and circulation of small arms and light weapons in the region. In their conclusion, they also argued that development cannot occur in an atmosphere congenial to arms proliferation and possession. This is because the possession of these tools provides an avenue for these individuals to become powerful and as a result undermine the modus operandi of the society and by extension, leading to chaos and anarchy - a state of lawlessness. It is believed that the possession of arms by individuals give such individuals extra ordinary strength even though they may not have physical strength on their own.

Olabanji and Ese (2014), noted that the chronological reflection of security challenges in Nigeria can be traced to the early years of military rule when large quantities of arms were imported into the country for the use of the military during and after the Nigerian civil war, some of which got into the hands of civilians. Soon after the civil war, these arms were used by civilians and ex - military men for mischievous purposes such as armed robbery (olabanji and Ese 2014). Adegoke (2014), Okonkwo, Okolo and Anagbogu (2015), maintained that armed robbery, kidnapping, Boko Haram, terrorism and hired assassins are major security challenges facing Nigeria_ and these challenges are been fuelled by the availability of arms and tools of war which are in constant increase as a result of the porous nature of the Nigerian borders. According to Akinyemi (2013), border security has come to assume heightened importance in the world today as the rate of criminal activities have also increased in scale especially since the end of the cold war and in the wake of globalization. He further maintained that Nigeria has been battling with transnational crimes which pose serious threat to national security ranging from drug trafficking to the almighty transfer of illegal arms.

According to Uchenna (2018), the porosity of Nigeria's borders has serious security implications for the country. He further maintained that the porous borders as well as the weak security system have contributed to the easy inflow/influx of weapons into Nigeria from other countries. According to him, Nigeria is estimated to host over seventy percent (70%) of about eight million (8m) illegal weapons in West Africa. This is why Alan Collins will say that, security is a matter of high politics; central to government debates and pivotal to the priorities they establish. According to Der Derian 1995, no other concept in international relations packs the metaphysical punch, nor commands the disciplinary power of "security". All this as a matter of fact have contributed in placing the concept at the peak of international discourse and the issue of small arms is rising on the international agenda. The possession of small arms - the leading threat to human security in today's world is also a major road block to human development (Walter 1999). Walter further maintained that these weapons which can be carried and used by a single person makes conflict more deadly and crime easier, feeding culture of retribution and downward spirals of violence around the world. When and where the possession of arms proliferate, sensitive project are been obstructed, infrastructure are been damaged, materials looted and even the lives of the workers are been endangered causing a bridge in the developmental status of the society. According to Punch Nigeria, 2024, Josephine Ogundeji reported and wrote that; "Nigeria has seen a surge in the company closures and relocations, driven by economic difficulties, currency fluctuations, and escalating operational expenses in recent years"

This attest to the fact that the Nigeria's business environment has been marred by a worrying trend in recent years, as both multinationals and local enterprises have been forced to either shutdown or relocate their operations. Report from the Nigerian investment promotion commission stated that between 2015 and 2022, over 50 multinational corporations and local enterprises shutdown or relocated their operations out of Nigeria. Also, it's has been reported that in 2020 to mid-2024, Nigeria saw a troubling trend of companies exiting the market due to ongoing economic instability, operational challenges, and other unfavorable policies by government. In 2020, notable companies like; standard biscuits Nigeria Ltd., NASCO Fiber products Ltd., Union Trading Company Nigeria PLC. and Deli foods Nigeria Ltd. etc shutdown their operation in Nigeria because of the high level of Insecurity and the increasing economic uncertainty. This trend escalated in 2021, witnessing the major exodus or more than 20 companies leaving Nigeria.

According to Vincent Nwani - an economist and former Director of research and advocacy at the Lagos chamber of commerce and industry, the top reasons for the exit of multinationals from Nigeria were the foreign exchange rate and scarcity, decline in naira, poor infrastructure, poor power supply, exorbitant energy costs, unstable government policies, increasing interest rate and the almighty insecurity crises which in this context ranges from kidnapping, stealing, and robbery etc. He further

stated that the exodus of these multinationals from the Nigerian economy has cost the country a 94tn (94 trillion) loss of output in five years and by extension how it has contributed in rendering most Nigerians unemployed. This has birth a cycle of recurrent intensification where the unemployed youths or individuals begin to take up arms again. In this case, underdevelopment has led to unemployment, the high rate of unemployment will lead to hunger which will in turn leads to aggression that might push individuals into taking up arms that might be used in distorting development. Using this similar circle of event, the UN under - secretary, Marrack Goulding Presented the conflict in Mali when he wrote;

> "The lack of security was fuelling the demand for weapons. The availability of weapons was fuelling the cycle of banditry and violence which in turn was virtually bringing structural development to a halt and preventing any progress on socio-economic problems." Cited by Dorn Walter in Small Arms, Human Security and Development (1999 - 2000).

This means that the possession of small arms can sabotage development. Besides such direct impact, Walter opined that; Arms hinders development by diverting limited national resources to weapons purchases, especially in developing countries. He further stated that military spending (partly for small arms) by the developing countries (poor countries) in the past decades has rose by 20% while dropping for the richer countries. According to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), developing countries spent 172bn (one hundred and seventy-two billion) on armed forces - almost five times the official aid they received, and 44% of their expenditure on education and health combined (compared to about 20% for industrialized countries) (Human development report 1998/1999). According to Joseph O. Charles et al (2019), internal security remains a cornerstone for investment friendly climate. They further stated that the role of internal security in the realization of Nigeria Vision 2020 (NV 2020) is necessary. The Nigeria Vision 2020 was aimed to launch the country into the league of top 20 economies in the world by year 2020.

According to Abah 2021, small arms and light weapons proliferation are threat to the security and corporate existence of any nation, hence, the need to establish a comprehensive and concrete national security architecture that can withstand the test of time in increasingly global security uncertainties that currently constitute enormous challenges to world peace and human development. However, to be able to establish comprehensive and concrete national security architecture, it will be therefore pertinent and sacrosanct to understand the entry points, transit route and the source of these illegal arms into the Nigerian state.

Points of Entry and Transit Routes for Arms into Nigerian Communities: Nigeria's vast and porous territorial borders, coupled with the presence of several international airports and coastal ports along its southern flank, pose significant challenges to the regulation of smuggling and transnational arms trafficking. The limited availability of trained personnel, surveillance equipment, and logistical support across border control agencies—particularly customs, police, and naval forces—further compounds the difficulty of intercepting illicit arms shipments. Although the influx of small arms and light weapons is widely acknowledged—often evidenced by the prevalence of foreign-manufactured weapons in local conflicts—the precise trafficking routes into Nigeria remain largely undocumented and ambiguous.

Nevertheless, scholarly and policy sources have identified a number of neighboring countries that serve as key transit corridors for arms inflow. These include Benin Republic, Cameroon, Chad, and Niger, with additional links traced to Gabon and Guinea-Bissau (Ikelegbe, 2005; Ojudu, 2007). Beyond the sub-region, source nations such as Côte d'Ivoire, Liberia, South Africa, Turkey, Ukraine, and even some Eastern European states like Bulgaria, Kosovo, and Serbia have been cited. According to Olori (2004), a substantial portion of intercepted weapons was smuggled through these routes, with arms originating from Ghana's Tudu market and moving across Togo and Benin before entering Nigerian territory. Among the country's key smuggling hotspots, three frontier zones are frequently highlighted: the southwest corridor—specifically Idi-Iroko in Ogun State and Seme in Lagos State; the southern entry via Warri in Delta State; and the northeast corridor connecting Nigeria with Niger and Cameroon through Adamawa, Borno, and Yobe States (Agboton Johnson, Ebo, & Mazal, 2004). Warri, in particular, has earned notoriety as a major distribution hub for illegal arms within the Niger Delta region (Peel, 2005; Ojudu, 2007), primarily due to its coastal access and persistent demand for weaponry by militant groups.

Furthermore, while detailed intelligence on arms flow remains limited, various Nigerian cities are consistently reported as centers for arms availability and redistribution. These include Asaba, Benin City, Warri, Aba, Onitsha, Enugu, Owerri, Awka, and Port Harcourt (Small Arms Survey, 2007). Arms entering through the southern ports typically circulate within southern markets or progress northward through layered distribution systems. In the northern belt, additional entry points such as Maigatari, Nguru, and Mallam Falori (Adejo, 2005) facilitate the movement of arms through Niger and Chad, highlighting the transnational dimension of Nigeria's arms proliferation challenge.

Sources of Illegal Small Arms: Sources of illegal small arms and light weapons include purchases from international and national arms dealers, sales and rentals by serving and retired security personnel, sales by returning peacekeepers, sales of recycled weapons from decommissioning exercises, oil-for-arms exchanges in the Delta region, and purchases of locally produced craft weapons. Illegal weapons are also obtained through thefts from dealers, armories, and residences; seizures from security officials during robberies; and in clashes with other armed groups (Small Arms Survey, 2007a, p. 16). National weapons dealers remain quiet on the sources of their weapons. While a few international dealers have been named during interviews in country, there is little information about these dealers or their operations. Both armed groups and dealers have been quiet on their operations. While this is not unusual for the illegal trade, some have specifically refused to share these details, show their weapons, or allow the recording of serial numbers of weapons, explaining that they do not want to threaten the future supply of arms by divulging their sources. Despite the difficulty in obtaining details of transfers, there do appear to be different sourcing methods. Weapons entering the south, especially in the Niger Delta area, appear to be acquired through more direct means, such as cash payments or bartering oil for arms between armed groups and offshore ships. Weapons entering through border areas and the south-east take a more indirect route to both dealers and buyers, often passing through primary and secondary distribution points.

While international arms dealers remain a primary source of weapons, the scale of imports and sales remains unclear. Some persons interviewed in Nigeria reported hearing of purchases of NGN 7 million (USD 56,000) or even NGN 20 million (USD 160,000), when translated into weapons, these amounts are roughly equivalent to 40 and 100 weapons, respectively, based on a price of USD 1,500 per weapon, which was the average price for an AK-47 in late 2006. Even at lower prices, the amounts imported would still number in the low hundreds. This does not limit the significance of their importation or the destructive effect of their use, but it does raise questions about the level of arms possession that exists in the country, and whether the often claimed high figures in circulation have been exaggerated. Illegal sales by serving and retired security personnel pose a major concern with regard to the proliferation of small arms. This problem was publicly acknowledged by President Obasanjo in December 2002 when he stated that 'the majority of small arms and light weapons circulating in Nigeria were either sold or rented out by, or stolen from, the country's security agencies' (Ginifer and Ismail, 2005, pp. 6–7). Security officials have lost a number of weapons through theft. While a common occurrence, the numbers lost in this way appear to be relatively small (Bah, 2004, p. 4). Security officials have provided weapons to ethnic militias in their home areas, with one customs official claiming the donation of 16 G3 rifles as his 'contribution to the Niger Delta cause' (Ebo, 2006, pp. 11, 25). A survey of armed group members conducted in Bayelsa state revealed that the majority of respondents received assistance from the police (30.4 per cent), the mobile police (14.7 per cent), and the military (24.5 per cent) in obtaining small arms (Isumonah, Tantua, and James, 2006, p. 74).

There is also some evidence of the diversion, or recycling, of weapons from decommissioning exercises into the illegal trade (SDN, 2006b, p. 8). In addition to providing access to small arms, serving and retired service personnel have also provided training to militants (AAPW, 2006). The armed groups in the Delta have displayed 'superior strategies and tactics using better training and organization' (Von Kemedi, 2006, p. 3). The use of military trainers would explain how militants in the Delta have developed more organized and sophisticated tactics over the past years. Nigerian peacekeepers have also been identified as a source of black market weapons. Nigerian soldiers have served in a number of peacekeeping missions in Africa, including Sierra Leone and Liberia, among others. This has provided Nigerian soldiers with access to small arms. Soldiers returning from peacekeeping missions have sold small arms on the Nigerian black market, providing 'a ready source of assault weapons' for the Nigerian population. Although perhaps not a significant source of weapons in terms of numbers, this has been recognized as a source of small arms, especially for inter-communal conflicts (Bah, 2004, pp. 4–5).

Increasingly, in the Delta region, oil bunkering by armed groups has provided an important source of funding and small arms to groups. Bunkering is the illegal tapping of oil pipelines and

wellheads to siphon off crude oil. The oil is then sold to foreign buyers or bartered for small arms. Oil bunkering is believed to be a lucrative endeavour, providing an estimated USD 1–4 billion per year (Lubeck, Watts, and Lipschutz, 2007, p. 9). There have also been credible reports of Nigeria military personnel selling arms to unauthorized individuals and groups. In 2016, Major General Lucky Irabor acknowledges that some officers were selling arms and ammunitions to Boko Haram, describing it as a betrayal against the Nigerian people. In 2024, National security adviser (NSA) Nuhu Ribadu as reported by Channel Television criticized security agents for stealing and selling arms to criminals, highlighting the severity of the issues while Hazen and Horner (2007), in their work X-rayed the local production of weapons as the major sources of arms in Nigeria. According to Sunday and Sa-lau (2017) sixty percent (60%) of illicit arms used in the South-East are locally fabricated in the region. From the foregoing, it is essential to know that the possession of small arms can hinder communal development. This, without doubt can affect the economic facet of the society.

Theoretical Framework

To contextualize the relationship between small arms possession, development, and security in Obudu Local Government Area, this paper adopts Johan Galtung's Structural Violence Theory as its primary theoretical lens. Structural violence provides a robust framework for explaining how systemic inequalities and institutional failures—rather than direct physical conflict alone—produce conditions that foster insecurity, arms proliferation, and underdevelopment. According to Galtung (1969), violence extends beyond visible conflict to encompass the societal arrangements that prevent individuals or groups from achieving their full potential. In this view, poverty, marginalization, poor governance, and unequal access to security or economic opportunity constitute forms of "invisible" violence. In Obudu, the proliferation of small arms is symptomatic of these deeper structural failures. When individuals are denied protection, justice, or socio-economic inclusion by the state, they are compelled to create informal systems of security—often through arms acquisition. This "weaponization of survival" is not irrational; it is structurally induced.

Scholars such as Farmer (2005) have extended Galtung's thesis by demonstrating how structural violence reproduces itself through institutional neglect and economic disenfranchisement. In Obudu, for example, decades of state inaction in resolving boundary disputes or delivering public goods have generated a climate where armed self-help becomes normalized. Youths, excluded from employment and civic participation, turn to arms not only for protection but for asserting agency within a system that has otherwise failed them.

Moreover, Galtung's framework reveals why conventional responses to arms proliferation—such as police raids or temporary amnesties—are insufficient. These interventions treat the symptoms, not the cause. Unless the underlying structures that create insecurity are dismantled—such as the weak presence of the state, corrupt security institutions, and unaddressed socio-economic inequality—arms possession will persist as a survival strategy. As Boulding (1977) rightly argued, peace is not merely the absence of war but the presence of justice and development. In the case of Obudu, where state institutions are distant, porous borders are unchecked, and economic alternatives are few, structural violence is not an abstraction—it is a lived reality. Thus, Galtung's theory is essential in understanding how and why arms possession persists and how its consequences are embedded within, and sustained by, the very design of the society.

Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative approach by relying on secondary data sources. The data where gathered from a wide range of materials including academic books, peer-reviewed journal, research reports, and credible internet sources. These materials provided valuable insights into the issue of arms possession and how they affect development particularly in Obudu LGA. Using this method, the study was able to explore existing knowledge, and analyze how the possession of arms impact negatively on development. This approach also allowed for a critical review of relevant literature, enabling a deeper understanding of the challenges and opportunities involved in addressing arms possession through addressing the issues of underdevelopment.

Discussion of Findings

The reviewed literature reveals a significant correlation between arms possession and development. Studies by Adegoke (2014) and Okonkwo et al. (2015) highlight that security challenges in Nigeria, such as armed robbery, kidnapping, Boko Haram, terrorism, and hired assassins, are exacerbated by the

availability of arms and tools of war. This assertion is further supported by Josephine Ogundeji's report in Punch Nigeria (2014), which notes that company closures and relocations in Nigeria are partly attributed to these security issues. The cyclical nature of this problem is evident. As noted by UN Under-Secretary Marrack Gouding's analysis of the conflict in Mali, the lack of development fuels arms possession, which in turn hinders development. This cycle is also observed in Obudu, where arms possession and underdevelopment are intertwined.

To break this cycle, Joseph O. Charles et al. (2019) emphasize the importance of internal security for creating an investment-friendly climate. They argue that development is crucial for ensuring internal security, which can be achieved by engaging individuals and providing them with opportunities for growth. By prioritizing development, we can reduce the surge in arms possession and its negative impact on development. In essence, the literature suggests that addressing security challenges and promoting development are intertwined. By fostering an environment conducive to growth and investment, we can mitigate the issues surrounding arms possession and ultimately promote sustainable development.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This study examined the relationship between small arms possession, development, and the security architecture of Obudu Local Government Area. Drawing from empirical evidence and theoretical insights, especially Galtung's Structural Violence Theory, it is evident that the circulation of small arms in Obudu is not an isolated problem of criminality but a deep-seated structural issue tied to weak state presence, socio-economic marginalization, and systemic insecurity.

The findings revealed that the widespread availability and use of small arms in Obudu LGA has significantly undermined local security institutions, escalated communal conflicts, disrupted agricultural and commercial activity, and fostered an environment of fear and underdevelopment. The normalization of arms possession as a self-protection strategy reflects a profound loss of faith in state institutions and a broader failure of governance.

Moreover, the study validates broader scholarly concerns about the nexus between arms proliferation and development collapse, as posited by Walter (1999), Imobighe (2001). It emphasizes that without addressing the root causes of insecurity, namely; poverty, exclusion, porous borders, and the erosion of law enforcement capacity, disarmament efforts alone will be inadequate development might become even impossible. Ultimately, Obudu's security crisis reflects a national pattern, but one that manifests uniquely at the local level through historical grievances, boundary disputes, and political neglect. Addressing it demands both national-level policy shifts and community-specific interventions. (a) Federal and state governments must improve surveillance of Obudu's border corridors, deploying trained security personnel and intelligence teams to monitor arms trafficking routes. This should include collaboration with international partners in Benin, Cameroon, and Chad. (b) Community policing initiatives should be introduced, with mechanisms for accountability and transparency. Security personnel should undergo human rights training, and local vigilante groups must be reformed, regulated, or integrated under lawful command structures. (c) Government and non-governmental actors should invest in youth employment schemes, skill acquisition programs, and educational infrastructure. Providing alternatives to violence is key to sustainable disarmament.

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