



**A Criminological Analysis of Trans-Border Crimes of Illela-Birnin Konni Corridor**

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**Abstract**

The paper explores the causes and effects of trans-border crime on two border communities: Illela and Birnin Konni border towns. The persistence and consistency of trans-border crime issue inspired the desire to carry out a study from which this paper emanates. The strain/ anomie theory and differential association theories were used as guides to the problem examined in the paper. Snowball and purposive or judgmental sampling procedures were adopted and a sample size of 271 respondents was chosen. This figure was arrived using Raosoft 2004 sample size of calculator by using 5% marginal error, 90% confidential level and 50% respondent distribution. Mixed methods of qualitative and quantitative were adopted. While questionnaire was designed and administered to designated respondents for the qualitative method, interview sessions were conducted with one each selected staff from the Customs, Immigration, Police Force, NDLEA and Civil Defense. There was 57.6 % response rate as 156 respondents out of 271 returned the questionnaire given to them and three (3) key informants were interviewed. The paper found smuggling of petroleum products as the major (89%) trans-border crime with poverty as the leading cause of trans-border crime as indicated by (38.3%) of the respondents. The paper then recommends that parent should instill discipline on their wards/children and proper socialization to avoid peer group influence on their children.

**Keywords:** Trans-border Crime, Illela-Birnin Konni Border, Drug Trafficking, Human Trafficking, Smuggling.

## **Introduction**

The rate of crime is increasing in many borders not only in Nigeria but also in various parts of Africa and the world at large (Umar, 2010). This is because a border is a point that brings two or more countries together through a common route of entrance and/or exit, as such brings people from different socio-cultural backgrounds and geographical locations in contact with one another for the purpose of trade and other form of interaction. These interactions according to Kankiya (2005) lead to the emergence of a culture that is totally different from the host community. For instance, in the use of common facilities such as the community market, community streams or source of water and place of worship by different people from different socio-cultural backgrounds, especially with regards to contacts at Illela-Birnin Konni borders that lead to the transmission of behaviours that are contrary to their norms and values of the host community which include crime

Crime according to Terry (2009) is the violation of criminal and civil law and that crime is more apparent in many border communities since the border serves as a point of entry and exit of people from different countries. Therefore, a lot of people that engage in criminal acts and illegal businesses are found along borders. According to Aluede (2017), between 1970 and 1985, a UN survey revealed that there was a considerable increase in reported crimes in all parts of the world; over 5 percent per year, which surpasses population growth. As a result, efforts have been made to reduce the gravity of crime on the citizens across the world by governments and organizations. For instance, the Spanish government in the year 2009 donated 30 new modern Toyota Hilux cars to the Customs and Immigration Departments that work along the Nigerian borders, in order to patrol and reduce the incidence of cross border crime (Umar, 2010).

Illela-Birnin Konni border (a border between Nigeria and Niger Republic) due to its location has evidence of various criminal activities involving people within and outside these two communities and countries. According to Umar (2010), some of the commonly committed crimes found at Illela-Birnin Konni border are smuggling of rice, petroleum motor spirit, oil, vehicles, electronics and drug trafficking which is indirectly triggering to other forms of crimes. Therefore, Illela-Birnin Konni as a border linking Nigeria and Niger Republic becomes a place for crimes of all sorts because of cross border movements, business transactions and social interactions.

## **Statement of the Problem**

A common parlance among scholars in the field of criminology that, it is the law that leads to the emergence of crime and that law enforcement agencies around the borders like the Customs, Immigration and Civil Defense and other uniform personnel are stationed and mandated to protect the country on its incidence as well as the consequences of trans-border crimes. Thus, crime is inevitable in these communities (Sejoro, 2018). This is because there is no total conformity to the norms (rule of conduct) and value of the community by its members.

However, there are various dimensions and momentums of trans-border crimes and form of trans-border crimes have increased with the emergence of globalization (Akinyemi, 2013). Presently, states have realized they cannot exist in isolation and are now increasingly interdependent. This current global trend of interdependence between and among states has encouraged the opening of borders among them. Countries with varying degrees of development in socio-economic, political and cultural spheres are merged together in one form of regional arrangement or the other and this has further helped in facilitating the activities of trans-border criminal activities (Opanike, 2015).

Criminals usually plan their attacks months or years prior to the planned time, and this makes it difficult to know the region and time of attacks. Crimes that are usually perpetuated in a particular region usually have linkages with other criminals in another country. In regards to the study area, crimes that occur in Nigeria usually have a linkage with individuals in Niger Republic to be effective. For example, vehicles, rice, oil, and electronics that are usually smuggled out from Niger Republic often have dealers ready to buy and sell them in Nigeria. This makes it difficult to trace and retrieve thereby leading to increase in the crime rate. The trans-border crime rate is rising daily especially with porous borders and unpatriotic activities of security agencies. This has been a major problem to the security condition of countries concerned. The seriousness of the problem lies in the complexity of these crime organizations and their activities (Kassaw, 2018). Trans-border crimes tend to destroy the political, economic and social relations among countries. In practice, Nigeria faces at least three challenges when tackling trans-border crime. The first is how to deal with crimes that emanate from outside their various jurisdictions. The second concerns investigating crimes with a transnational element and the third involving tracing and then

recovering the proceeds of crime that have been moved out of the country where the crime occurred (Saredau and Obutte, 2019).

The porosity of Illela-Birnin Konni borders has been one major issue affecting the development of Nigeria and Sokoto in particular (Umar, 2010). There is no effective policy to curtail the rate at which people migrate and transact trade by being duly checked at the borders. Various scholars have researched on the safety at the border and likewise; the rate at which crimes are perpetrated has not received adequate attention by security personnel across the border areas. The border is demarcated without any clear policy to back it up and the security personnel safe guarding the area are not efficient. The security personnel Customs, Immigration, FRSC, Army, and Navy are being designated to various outposts on both sides of the borders but their activities need to be questioned. Furthermore, the challenges of cross-border crime on the security of Nigeria are not adequately researched upon especially with the current trend in the international terrorism. Every country is prone to terrorist attacks and Nigeria has been affected highly with the Boko Haram sect in the Northern part of the country. The porosity of the borders around Niger and Cameroon gives way for the influx of external migrants to perpetrate attacks on Nigeria and her people.

Recently, there have been numerous crimes found in the Nigerian borders. These crimes include, narcotics trade and money laundering, and they are connected to illegal migration and people trafficking (Ojiakor, Nzewi, and Arize, 2021). Others are women and child trafficking, smuggling (small and light weapons, food items, vehicles, petroleum, among others).

The aforementioned criminal offences are increasing in Illela-Birnin Konni border compared to the last six years. The rate of crime has risen from 25% to 60%. This is according to a record of the Illela Police post. These increases are as a result of an increase in the number of people coming in and going out of this country (Police Crime Diary of Illela Post, 1999-2005) cited in (Umar, 2010). The rise in trans-border crime along Illela-Birnin Konni border put the life of the inhabitants in jeopardy especially in a case of a gun fight between the security agencies and the criminals can lead to fatalities and or affect the socio-economic and political development of the communities and Nigeria at large.

## **Literature Review and Theoretical Framework**

### **Types of Trans-Border Crime**

There are various types of trans-border crime committed along borders among which include the following: -

- 1. Human Trafficking:** In 1999 the United Nations General Assembly defined human trafficking as the illicit and clandestine movement of persons across national, international borders, largely from developing countries in transition with the end goal of forcing women, children into sexually or economically oppressive and exploitative situations for the profit of recruiters, traffickers, crime syndicates as well as all other illegal activities related to trafficking such as forced domestic labour (Ojiakor et al, 2021).

From the above definition, it implies that human trafficking involves carrying human beings particularly women, children and other able-bodied youths from one place to another, at times across national and international borders by the traffickers for the purpose of subjecting the trafficked persons to prostitution, drug peddling or child labour. Some youths are also lured into various crimes such as armed robbery, fraud and membership of violent gangs etc, as they found themselves in foreign countries.

In Nigeria specifically, human trafficking involving women and children has been going on in several locations and communities. Zoaka (2018) in a report on trafficking in persons described Nigeria as a source, transit and destination country for trafficked women and children. The report noted that Nigerians were trafficked to Europe, the Middle East and other countries for purpose of forced labour, domestic servitude and sexual exploitation. It also described Nigeria as a destination country for Togolese, Beninoise, Ghanaian and Cameroonian children trafficked for forced labour (Zoaka, 2018).

A recent report on human trafficking and migration to Europe shows that in 2014, 170, 100 migrants arrived Italy by sea, compared to 141, 484 migrants that were ferried through the Mediterranean Sea from Libya in 2013. According to the report, the migrants had come from Syria (42, 323), Eritrea (34, 329), Mali (9,908), Nigeria (9,000), Gambia (8, 691), Somalia (5, 756) and some other nations (4,095). Among the migrants, 64, 625 were said to have applied for asylum (Ojugbana, 2015:29). In the case of Nigeria, most of the migrants were victims of

human trafficking hoodwinked by syndicates as a result of their desperation to travel to Europe or Asia for a better life.

**2. Smuggling of People:** - Smuggling of people also called human smuggling is another type of trans-border crime. It is the facilitation, transportation, attempted transportation or illegal entry of a person or persons across an international border, in violation of one or more countries' laws, either clandestinely or through deception, such as the use of fraudulent documents (U.S., 2011). Smuggling of people generally takes place with the consent of the person/ people smuggled. In other words, it is characterized by the consent between customer and smuggler, a contractual agreement that typically terminates upon arrival in the destination location. Many individuals who consent to being smuggled are escaping poverty and hardship, seeking opportunities and better conditions abroad, or escaping natural disaster, conflict, or persecution. Others may be seeking asylum. However, according to (UNODC, 2015) people involved in smuggling operations happen to be victims of trafficking, for instance when they are tricked about the terms and conditions of their role for the purpose of exploiting their labour in the operation.

**3. Smuggling of Petroleum:** Smuggling of petroleum is another type of trans-border crime. It refers to bringing petroleum products in or out of a country without duly reporting the shipments to customs officials. In West-Africa apart from goods like rice, vehicles, poultry products and second-hand clothing, petroleum products remain a major attraction, talking about goods smugglers deal on in the full glare of customs officers. The lucrative business of smuggling of fuel tankers within the border community is highly organized by the smugglers and officers of the customs. Adekule (2018) reported that tankers laden with petroleum products always cross the border posts to neighbouring countries while customs officials who are supposed to monitor cross-border movement collect huge bribes from drivers. This implies that despite what customs authorities in Abuja are fed with, smuggling of petroleum products keep thriving because officers who make huge money from them (tanker owners and the drivers) encourage it. This trend has, over time, become a recurring decimal within the border towns owing to smugglers' determination to resist checks. Adekule (2018) adds that the products are not only smuggled by smaller containers and 50 litres jerrycans but through large

tankers bearing over 44,000 litres of fuel each. While tankers ply the roads, smugglers use 50 litres jerrycans to smuggle petroleum products through the creeks Nigeria shares with neighbouring countries (Adekule, 2018). That is because of the obvious differential in petrol price between Nigeria and other neighbouring countries. It had become lucrative for the smugglers to use the frontier stations as a veritable conduit for the smuggling of products across the border, because this had resulted in a thriving market for Nigerian petroleum motor spirit in all the neighbouring countries of Niger Republic, Benin Republic, Cameroon, Chad and Togo and even Ghana which has no direct borders with Nigeria. As of January, 2017 to January 2018, 81,270 litres of petroleum products were seized in Seme border, 69,150 litres in West Martine Command, 10,000 litres in Federal Operations Unit Zone D, that is the North-east. In Illela-Birnin Konni border, 1,775 litres were seized, 10,500 litres in Ogun, 1,320 liters in Adamawa/Taraba, making a total of 174,015 liters with a Duty Paid Value (DPV) of N27, 755,492 (Adekule, 2018). This shows the level at which fuel smuggling is apparent along the borders in Nigeria.

**4. Drug Trafficking:** - Drug trafficking is another type of trans-border crime that is often committed in Illela-Birnin Konni border and any other border in Nigeria. The United Nations office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) defines drug trafficking as the illicit global trade that deals with the cultivation, manufacture, distribution and sale of substances which are subject to drug prohibition laws. The most commonly trafficked drugs are cocaine, heroin, morphine, cannabis sativa (Indian hemp) and crystal methamphetamine (Chrisa and Maxi, 2013). The most widely abused and locally trafficked illicit drug in Nigeria and indeed West Africa is cannabis, in its herbal form because it is quite adorable and readily available due to the fact that it is cultivated and produced locally. Illicit drugs are usually smuggled across the nation's land, air and sea ports (Out, 2013). Those drugs smuggled by air are usually wrapped in protective film and swallowed, to be excreted at the destination of the trafficker or are tucked away in the smugglers luggage. However, drugs are smuggled into the country through the various porous borders. Nigeria is bedeviled with porous borders as it shares common borders with Benin, Cameroon, Chad, and Niger Republics that are known as countries of transit routes of illegal drugs to the country. For instance, a 2012 report by the International Narcotics Control Board (INCB), submits that Nigeria tops the list with the highest trafficking and drug

use in West Africa. The report further indicates that in the last 15 years, West Africa became the new transit hub for cocaine coming from Latin America destined for Europe with Nigeria's commercial capital Lagos, emerging as the most active centre for air trafficking of cocaine. The report indicates that close to 50% of Africa's drug couriers arrested in Europe in 2011 were citizens of Nigeria. Nigeria however, topped the list of major transit routes of heroin destined for Europe. Nigeria is reported to have featured prominently among West African States that produce and export cannabis to countries in Europe (Out, 2013).

### **Trans-border Crime and Socioeconomic Development**

According to Simon, (2011) trans-border criminal activities in west Africa straddle weak borders into specific geographical location in affected countries where state capacity to respond to the threat and challenges posed by these illegal activities is equally weak. Trans-border crime damages the financial sector institutions that are critical to economic growth, reduces productivity in the economy's real sector by diverting resources and encouraging crime and corruption which slows economic growth and can distort the economies external trade, internal trade, and capital flows or economic development. Nigeria's development is jeopardized because available evidence shows that the country is used as a transit for drug smuggling, particularly for the West African route. This paints a bad picture for Nigeria's image and could deter investors from investing in the economy. The dimension of heroin smuggling through Nigeria are best illustrated by seizures, which in 2007 amounted to more than five tons of heroin and have been on the increase in succeeding years (Ering, 2011).

Trans-border criminals are not only expanding into multiple criminal activities, which transcends trafficking in drugs, and humans, but are also pioneering new more sophisticated types of criminal operations. Among the hottest today includes cyber-crime; financial crimes are becoming more prevalent throughout the world as criminals have become more computer-savvy and continue to coordinate many sophisticated illicit operations including through modern and innovative channels such as e-currency or digital funds and through mobile payments technologies (Ering, 2011). In many instances, the police aid and abet drug traffickers, gangs and criminal insurgencies. In Nigeria, the dimension of these criminal activities has increased. The emergence of militancy in the Niger Delta, and the spate of kidnappings have created serious problems of insecurity in the



country. This is however, done in connivance with security agencies. This situation is scaring to foreign and local investors and impinges seriously on the socioeconomic development of the society (Ering, 2011).

Apart from drugs, the circumvention of the formal economy via trafficking of contraband goods has also haunted local industries. At a pre-yearly general meeting with the media in Lagos, in July, 2004, Nigerian Industrialists under the aegis of the Manufacturers Association of Nigeria (MAN) declared that the country lost \$6.3billion (about N800 billion) to unwholesome trade practices of smuggling and product counterfeiting in 2003 (Idris and Tutumlu,2021).

### **Theoretical Framework**

This this paper has reviewed two theories the Social Strain/Anomie Theory by Robert K. Merton, 1893 and the Differential Association Theory by Edwin H. Sutherland, 1939.

Using Merton Strain theory, one can say that trans-border crime like drug trafficking, terrorism and armed–banditry, illegal immigration syndicate, smuggling of arms and ammunition, and smuggling of petroleum and agricultural products across the border is resulted from inability of the offenders living the border communities and other parts of the world to advance success goals (financial) through legitimate means. Therefore, they follow the illegitimate alternative as the last option in order to earn money and survive circumstances of poverty, unemployment, etc the drug traffickers, human traffickers and border prostitutes, though are often regarded as innovators as pointed out by Merton they provide an alternative means of reaching their goals.

The Anomie theory is applicable in explaining and understanding criminal behaviours in the Illela-Birnin Konni border. This theory is used in this work in order to provide a clear understanding of criminal behaviours in Illela- Birnin Konni border and also to bridge the gap that the differential association theory fails to explain. For instance, the defereential association theory explained that criminal behaviour is learned in interaction with other persons in a process of communication while neglecting how socio-cultural system exerts pressure on individual which leads him to become a criminal without learning this criminal behaviour from others.

According to Sutherland’s Differential Association Theory in relation to trans-border crime at Illela-Birnin Konni border, one can say that, around the border, there are people from different

socio-cultural backgrounds, geographical, regional and racial grouping and having deferent kinds of behaviour and the interactions between these different groups lead to learning of many kinds of behaviour. This is typical of smuggling of arms and ammunition, armed –banditry and drug trafficking along border communities. Many people engage in to these acts through learning from other people who are experts in the process of interaction and communication. In the Nigerian situation, crime and delinquent behaviour is learned through interaction and interpersonal communication. For instance (karofi, 2005) explains that: there was an introduction of a harmful drug known as cocaine to Nigeria. This drug is the latest and contemporary drug being abused in Nigeria from a leaf of cocoa, some other plant which is grown in South America, especially in Colombia, Brazil, Bolivia, etc. It came to Nigeria especially in the late 1970s through Nigerian especially students who traveled to Asia, Central and South America. Many of such students were hired as carriers by international drug barrons to transport these drugs from their areas of origin through Nigeria to the attractive drug markets in Europe and North America. This happened mainly due to interaction, movement within the borders and neo-colonial capitalist nature of Nigeria that is the material culture of getting rich over the night, that is why the same issue is found in Illela-Birnin Konni border.

Another example of a trans-border crime in Nigeria that is leant through differential association is trafficking of drugs and abuse of drugs known as “Marihuana” Karofi (2005) stressed that “this is a commonly abused psychoactive substance in Nigeria. This drug was said to be introduced in Nigeria by soldiers returning from the 2<sup>nd</sup> world war. It is derived from the species of Cannabis in India, it is now widely available and even planted in Nigeria and heavily abused by different groups; like students, taxi drivers, members of secret society, teachers, etc.” (Karofi, 2005, p.10). The arrival of these harmful drugs came through interaction between the opportuned military men who experienced the 2<sup>nd</sup> world war. When they returned to Nigeria, many of them and the other people abused it heavily and finally produced a negative effect to themselves, families with effect on as well as national development.

## **Methods**

The paper used survey research design which allows the researcher to make use of a large sample of the population that would be representative enough. Also, an in-depth interview was employed to elicit data from the respondents; this made the research to be mixed method.

## **Location of the Study**

The location of this study is on two border towns that is Illela and Birnin Konni towns. Illela town on one hand is one of the twenty-nine Local Government Areas of Sokoto State created by the Federal Military Government under the leadership of Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida between the years 1985 to 1993. The earliest inhabitants of the area were mostly Fulani, Hausa, Gobirawa and Adarawa respectively. The settlement of the area was founded by the Adarawa people who first came in to area from Niger Republic (Bala, 2007). Illela has an area of 1,246 km and a population of 150,489 according to the Population and Housing Census (2006). The estimated population of the area as of 2018 is about 177,577 and this was derived from the assumption that population increases at a rate of approximately 1.5 percent per annum.

While on the other hand, Birni-N'Konni (also Birnin-Konni or shortened to Konni / Bkonni) is a town in Niger Republic lying on the border of Nigeria and the Kori River. It is an important market town and transport hub. The population of Birnin-Konni was 44,663 as of 2001 census. The estimated population of the area as of 2018 is about 52,702, this was also derived from the assumption that the population increases at a rate of approximately 1.5 percent per annum. The town is the historic centre of the small pre-colonial Hausa State of Konni. The name is Hausa language for "Walled Town of Konni ", and many Hausa towns (such as Zinder) designate the old citadel neighborhood the "Birni"(Stebbing, 2010).

Konni is known for its vernacular architecture including traditional granaries and is regarded as a centre for smuggling between Niger and Nigeria, in which some suburbs of the town are officially located. Birni-N'Konni's contemporary importance rests on the surrounding agricultural lands and its place on the Niger highway, the main east-west highway linking Niger's capital Niamey and the nation's main eastern cities of Maradi and Zinder.

Both Illela and Konni towns are therefore chosen as the study area because of their locations as a border point that brings Nigeriens and Nigerians together. The social interaction, social mixing, businesses, diverse people and backgrounds also come with its negative undertones like crime. Here, the thrust is trans-border crimes.

### **Population of the Study**

The population of the study is 230,279 people and this figure was arrived by adding the estimated population of Illela and Birnin Konni towns. Therefore, 230,279 people were the population of the study from which the sample size was drawn. The population of the study constitutes youth and the aged, both males and females that reside and do business along the Illela-Konni border towns. The population of the study also constitutes the people of Illela, Araba, Kalmalu and other villages within Illela local government area of Sokoto State. In addition, the law enforcement agents working along the border like the Police, Customs, Immigration, NDLEA and Civil Defense were also considered.

### **Sampling Technique and Size**

The sampling procedure for this research includes snowball and purposive or judgmental sampling. The two sampling procedures were adopted in order to compliment the possible deficiency that may arise from a single procedure. In snowball sampling technique, informants were sked to put the researchers in touch with their friends or associate. This approach was used to extract information from border securities and community leaders. In purposive sampling informants are selected according to prescribed criteria established by the researcher. This includes their status or precious experience that endowed them with the knowledge of the study area. This sampling method was used on the traditional leaders, traders etc.

The sample size for this research is 271 respondents. This figure was arrived at through the use of Raosoft 2004 sample size calculator. The sample size was obtained using 5% marginal error, 90% confidential level, and 50% respondents' distribution. Tus, the sample size is divided in to three (3) groups. The first group of 141 respondents is from the Illela town while the second group of 125 respondents wer Araba, Kalmalu which are villages around Illela-Birnin Konni border towns.

Each of the two groups was issued questionnaires in respect to their size. The third group of 5 respondents was the law enforcement agents, who are Customs, Immigration, Police Force, NDLEA and Civil Defense. One staff from each of the aforementioned law enforcement agents was interviewed.

Research assistants helped the researcher in administering the questionnaires. The statistical package for social sciences was used to analyze the data. e qualitative data was analyzed through verbatim quotations. The data was transcribed and analyze based on the study themes. Also, Pearson product moment was used to test the hypotheses from which the conclusion is drawn.

## **Result**

### **Socio-Economic and Demographic Characteristic of Respondents**

In this section, the results on the socio-economic and demographic characteristics of the respondents were presented. This data includes age, sex, religion, etc. Not all the items were completed by the respondents and this is why the totals are not equal. However, the percentage remains a total of 100.

**Table 1.1 Socio-Economic and Demographic Characteristic of Respondents I**

<b>Item</b>	<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage %</b>
<b>Age</b>	18 - 27 years	10	6.8
	28 - 37 years	73	50.0
	39 - 47 years	45	30.8
	48 - 57 year	14	9.6
	58 years and above	4	2.7
	<b>Total</b>	<b>146</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Sex</b>	Male	130	83.3
	Female	26	16.7
	<b>Total</b>	<b>156</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Religion</b>	Islam	103	66.9
	Christianity	43	27.9
	African Traditional Religion	8	5.2

	<b>Total</b>	<b>154</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Marital Status</b>	Single	28	17.9
	Married	106	67.9
	Separated	6	3.8
	Widow	2	1.3
	Divorced	14	9.0
	<b>Total</b>	<b>156</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Number of children</b>	None	39	25.0
	One	18	11.5
	Two	40	25.6
	Three	33	21.2
	Four and above	26	16.7
	<b>Total</b>	<b>156</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Level of Education</b>	Qur'anic	20	12.8
	Primary	4	2.6
	Junior Secondary	4	2.6
	Senior Secondary	22	14.1
	Diploma/NCE	50	32.1
	Degree/HND	37	23.7
	Postgraduate Qualification	19	12.2
	<b>Total</b>	<b>156</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Table 1.1 shows the socio-economic and demographic characteristics of respondents. Data in the above table shows that out of the total number of the 156 respondents, 73(50%) of the respondents are between the ages of 28-37 years, while 45 (30.8%) were within the ages of 39-47years, 14 respondents representing (9.6%) are within the ages of 48-57 years, and 10(6.8%) of the respondents are between the ages 18-27 years while 4 (2.7%) are above 58. The religious distribution of the respondents showed that 103 (66.9%) of the respondents practice Islam and 43(27.9%) of the respondents practice Christianity while only 8(5.2%) practice African Traditional Religion. This suggests that most dominant religion among the respondents and even in the vicinity where the research was carried out were people who practice Islamic religion. The Data also shows that out of the total number of 156 questionnaires returned, 130 respondents were males representing (83.3%) while 26 were females representing (16.7%). This shows that the male respondents were majority and participated in the study at the time of the administration of the questionnaire administration. This is because the study area is an Islamic settlement where women are not allowed to participate in public activities especially such sensitive issues like participating

in a research. Again, the religion preached the seclusion of women from the men especially when such men are not their husbands.

The marital status of the respondents showed that out of the 156 respondents, 106 (67.9%) of the respondents were married, 28 representing (17.9%) were singles, 14 respondents constituting (9.0%) were divorced and only 2 respondents representing (1.3%) are widows and the remaining 6(3.8%) of the respondents were separated.

Also, based on the numbers of children, the research shows that 40(25.6%) of the respondents had only two children as at the time of conducting this research and 26(16.7%) of the respondents have more than four (4) children while 18(11.5%) of the respondents had only one child. With regards to the educational level of the respondents, the table show that 50(32.1%) of the respondents had diploma/NCE while 4 (2.6%) had primary education and another 4(2.6%) had Quranic education and only 19(12.2%) of the respondents have Postgraduate Qualification. This suggests that the respondents are enlightened.

**Table 1.2 Socio-Economic and Demographic Characteristic of Respondents II**

<b>Item</b>	<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage %</b>
<b>Are you employed?</b>	Yes	140	94.6
	No	4	5.4
	<b>Total</b>	<b>148</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Nature of Job</b>	Driving	16	10.5
	Carpentry	10	6.6
	Okada Operator	4	2.6
	Barbing	2	1.3
	Petrol Hawking	4	2.6
	Mechanic	12	7.9
	Others Specify	104	68.4
	<b>Total</b>	<b>152</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Hours spend on the job/week</b>	Less than 20 hours	36	23.4
	20 hours	30	19.5
	30 hours	36	23.4
	40 hours	44	28.6
	Others	8	5.2
	<b>Total</b>	<b>154</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>How would you describe your earnings?</b>	High	10	6.8
	Moderate	73	49.7
	Low	30	20.4
	Very low	26	17.7
	Very high	8	5.4
	<b>Total</b>	<b>147</b>	<b>100.0</b>

<b>How much do you earn in a week from your job?</b>	Less than ₦ 2 000	45	29.7
	₦2000 – ₦3999	24	16.2
	₦4000 - ₦5999	34	23.0
	₦6000 and above	46	31.1
	<b>Total</b>	<b>148</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Furthermore, table 4.2 is the continuation of Socio-economic and demographic characteristics of the respondents. The table shows that 140(94.6%) of the respondents were employed while 4(5.4%) were unemployed. In addition to this, 104(68.4%) of the respondents do other types of jobs that were not captured by this instrument such as civil service while only 2(1.3%) were barbers.

The table further shows that 44(28.6%) of the respondents spend 40hours in a week on their job while 30(19.5%) of the respondents spend 40 hours in a week on their job. This shows that majority of the respondents spend 40hours on their jobs.

Based on the earning of the respondents, the result showed that 73(49.7%) of the respondents' earnings is moderate while 8(5.4%) of the respondents earn very high. Also, 46(31.1%) of the respondents earn from ₦6000 and above while 24(16.2%) of the respondents earn between ₦2000 – ₦3999 from their job in a week.

**Table 1.3 Types of Trans-Border Crime**

<b>Item</b>	<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage %</b>
<b>Do you notice people being transported for work in Niger or elsewhere?</b>	Yes	114	73.1
	No	42	26.9
	<b>Total</b>	<b>156</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>How frequent do you notice this in last one year?</b>	Once	51	36.2
	Twice	38	27.0
	Three times	6	4.3
	Four times	14	9.9
	Five times	6	4.3
	Six and above	26	18.4
	<b>Total</b>	<b>141</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Do you notice people moving across the border with drugs?</b>	Yes	90	57.7
	No	66	42.3
	<b>Total</b>	<b>156</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>For how long do you notice this?</b>	Three months	30	28.0
	Six months	20	18.7
	One year's	23	21.5
	Four years	20	18.7



	Five years and above	14	13.1
	<b>Total</b>	<b>107</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Do you ever witness any attack along this border?</b>	Yes	40	26.7
	No	110	73.3
	<b>Total</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>How frequent is the attack?</b>	Three months	12	25.0
	Six months	18	37.5
	One year's	10	20.8
	Four years	2	4.2
	Five years and above	6	12.5
	<b>Total</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Who do you think are the Perpetrators of these attacks?</b>	Nigeriens	26	47.3
	Nigerians	23	41.8
	Others	6	10.9
	<b>Total</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Table 1.3 presents the result of types of trans- border crime. From the table, 144 (73.1%) of the respondents indicated that they noticed that people are being transported for work in Niger or elsewhere while 42(26.9%) indicated that they did not notice people being transported for work in Niger or elsewhere. In addition, 51(36.2%) of the respondents indicated that they noticed that people are being transported for work once in the last one year while 6(4.3%) noticed it three times in the last one year and another 6(4.3%) noticed it five times in the last one year. This clearly shows that smuggling of people is one of the commonly committed crimes along Illela-Birnin Konni Towns.

*This was also corroborated by the in-depth interview. One of the law enforcement agents working along the border when interviewed on the type of crimes commonly committed along the border? He said, "Smuggling of people and their goods" and when asked about how frequent it is? He said, it is happening frequently to the extent that out of 80% of the crime recorded per day 30% will be smuggling of people".*

The table also shows that 90(57.7%) of the respondents noticed people moving across the border with drugs while 66(42.3%) of the respondents indicate they have not noticed people moving across the border with drugs. In addition, 30(28.0%) of the respondents indicated that they have noticed people moving across the border with drugs for the past three months while 14(13.1%) noticed for more than five years. This shows that drug trafficking is another type of crime committed along Illela -Birnin Konni border towns

*This was also corroborated by the in-depth interview. Three of the law enforcement agents working along the border shared the same view when interviewed what are the types of crime that are commonly committed along the border? They said, “Drug trafficking” one among the respondent revealed that “Tramol was the major drug being smuggled along the border” and when asked about how frequent is the Drug trafficking? One said, that “I witness this on every day basis” another respondent revealed that “it is very frequent that in a day we can arrest 20 to 30 people that engage in drug trafficking”.*

Also, the table shows that 40(26.7%) of the respondents indicated that they have witnessed an attack along the border while 110(73.3%) of the respondents indicated that they have not witnessed any attack along the borders. Hence, only few of the respondents have witnessed attack on this border. Out of this few, 18(37.5%) of the respondents said that it only occurs in the last six month while 6(12.5%) of the respondents indicated that it only happened in more than five years. Also, the result showed that 26(47.3%) of the respondents indicated that the perpetrators of these attacks are Nigeriens while 6(10.9%) of the respondents indicated other to which they explained that the both Nigeriens and Nigerians were the perpetrators of such attacks. This shows that border attack is not frequent in Ilella-Birnin Konni border.

**Table 1.4 Types of Trans-Border Crime**

Item	Response	Frequency	Percentage %
<b>Do you notice petroleum products being transported to Nigeria or else ware?</b>	Yes	140	89.7
	No	16	10.3
	<b>Total</b>	<b>156</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>How frequent is this in the last one year?</b>	Once	27	17.3
	Twice	16	10.3
	Three times	22	14.1
	Four times	20	12.8
	Five times	8	5.1
	Six and above	49	31.4
	<b>Total</b>	<b>142</b>	<b>91.0</b>

Table 1.4 further shows that 140(89.7%) of the respondents indicated that they noticed that petroleum products are being transported to Nigeria and elsewhere while 16(10.3%) of the

respondents indicated that they did not notice petroleum products being transported to Nigeria or elsewhere. However, based on how frequently they have seen this, 49(31.4%) of the respondents indicated that they have seen it for more than six times in the last one year while 8(5.1%) indicated that they have only seen it for five times. With this revelation, it can be suggested that smuggling petroleum products is one among the most commonly committed crimes in Illela-Birnin Konni border.

*This was also corroborated by the in-depth interview. Two (2) of the law enforcement agents working along the border shared the same view when interviewed on the types of crime that are commonly committed along the border? They said, “Smuggling of fuel” and when asked about how frequent is it, one revealed that “it is very frequent that in the last four (4) months of my service along this border I have recorded more than hundred (100) cases relating to fuel smuggling” another law enforcement said, “there is no day that will pass without us not arresting fuel smugglers”.*

**Table 1.5 Reasons for committing trans- broader crime**

<b>Item</b>	<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage %</b>
<b>It is often said that poverty lead people to engage in trans- border crime.</b>	Strongly agree	59	38.3
	Agree	42	27.3
	Undecided	27	17.5
	Disagreed	16	10.4
	strongly disagree	10	6.5
	<b>Total</b>	<b>154</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Association with bad friends can lead someone to engage in one or of the following</b>	Drug dealing	57	38.5
	Child/human trafficking	16	10.8
	Arms dealing	10	6.8
	Goods smuggling	30	20.3
	Petroleum products smuggling	35	23.6
	<b>Total</b>	<b>148</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Do you agree that porosity of the border facilitate trans- border crime?</b>	Strongly agree	56	37.3
	Agree	34	22.7
	Undecided	42	28.0
	Disagreed	12	8.0
	strongly disagree	6	4.0
	<b>Total</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Do you think that taking bribe</b>	Strongly agree	63	42.0
	Agree	49	32.7

<b>by the law enforcement agents facilitate crimes along the border?</b>	Undecided	18	12.0
	Disagreed	16	10.7
	strongly disagree	4	2.7
	<b>Total</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Table 1.5 on the reasons for committing trans-border crime shows that 59(38.3%) of the respondents strongly agreed that poverty is the reason why people engage in trans-border crime while 10(6.5%) of the respondents strongly disagreed that poverty is one of the causes of trans-border crime. Similarly, 57(38.5%) of the respondents indicated that association with bad friends can lead someone to engage in drug dealing while 10(6.8%) of the respondents indicated that it can lead to arms dealing.

*This was also corroborated by the in-depth interview. Three law enforcement agents in Illela-Birnin Konni border when interviewed on the major reason for the commission of trans-border crime one said, “Poverty, unemployment and bad friends influence” another one said, “Majority of the people that were arrested for smuggling of fuel, rice and oil do not have any other job than that” another respondent said, “majority of the people commit all sorts of trans-border crime because of interior motive that is gaining purpose, self interest by using the less vulnerable ones that suffer from poverty”*

The table also shows that 56(37.3%) of the respondents indicated that they strongly agreed that porosity of the border facilitate trans- border crime while 6(4.0%) strongly disagreed that porosity of the border facilitate trans- border crime. Also, 63(42.0%) of the respondents strongly agreed that taking of bribe by the law enforcement agents facilitate crimes along the border while only 4(2.7%) of the respondents strongly disagreed that the taking bribe by the law enforcement agents facilitate crimes along the border.

*This was also corroborated by the in-depth interview. A law enforcement that work along Illela-Birnin Konni border when interviewed said, “The border is so porous in the sense that the law enforcement agencies along this border axis cannot be able to*

*give 100% coverage because in Gwadabawa, any were you put your head it will link you to Niger that is why only 50% to 60% of crimes along the border are controlled”.*

## **Discussion of Findings**

The findings on the socio-demographic background of the respondents show that the male respondents were the majority and participated in the study at the time of the administration of the questionnaires or it might be because of the nature of the environment that regulates male-female interaction. As it is shown in table 4.1 the population of male respondents is 130 while the population of the female respondents is 26. This marked the differences of 104 respondents. Also, the findings show that most of the respondents in the study sample are Muslims and between the ages of 28-37. In addition, the findings also indicate that majority of the respondents are married having four and above children and on the level of education, the findings show that most of the respondents have obtained Senior Secondary School, Diploma/NCE, Degree/HND certificate and this show that many have acquired formal education in the study area. Nonetheless, the findings also indicate that majority of the respondents are employed mostly spending 40hr's at the work place with relatively moderate income usually ₦6000 and above per week as shown in table 4.1

The study showed that one of the most commonly committed types of trans-border crimes is smuggling that is moving (goods) illegally into and out of a country. The types of smuggled goods indicated by the respondents are rice, fuel, oil, rice, drugs, and humans. As table 1.3 show that 114(73.1%) of the respondents indicate to have witnessed human smuggling along the Illela-Birnin Konni border. Similarly, one of the law enforcement agents when interviewed on the types of crime that is commonly committed along the border? He said, “Smuggling of people and their goods”. This implies that human smuggling is one of the crimes that are frequently committed in Illela-Birnin Konni border. With this therefore, we can support the statement made by United Nations office on Drugs and Crime in 2015 that human smuggling is the most common type of crime committed along international borders.

The findings also show that drug trafficking is also happening in the border as indicated by 57.7% of the respondents and also by two law enforcement agents who share the same view when interviewed what are the types of crime that are commonly committed along the border? They said,

“Drug trafficking” That is to say drugs are being trafficked from Nigeria to Niger and vice versa and it is frequent. Majority of the drugs that are been trafficked along Illela-Birnin Konni border are pills (tablets) like tramol and amphetamine as indicated by one of the law enforcement agent interviewed. Therefore, with this finding we can support the idea of Out (2013), who argued that drug trafficking is a global phenomenon.

The findings of this research also show that smuggling of petroleum is also practiced along Illela-Birnin Konni, as identified by 140(89.7%) of the respondents and also two (2) of the law enforcement agents working along the border shared the same view when interviewed what are the types of crime that are commonly committed along the border? They said, “Smuggling of petroleum is among the recorded crime in the border”. Therefore, this indicate that despite the law enforcement agents that are stationed to checkmate the criminal activities in the border, smuggling of petroleum products is frequently occurring in the border. This shows how smuggling of petroleum products within the border communities is highly organized by the smugglers. Finally, the result of this research shows that Illela-Birnin Konni border is among the borders that have never experienced any border attack as indicated by 110(73.3%) respondent. This further indicates that the border is a conducive for people to engage in their economic importation and exportation without any tension of being attacked.

On the causes of trans-border crime, the study shows that poverty is one of the major cause of trans-border crime as indicated by 59(38.3%) respondents who strongly agreed and 45(27.3%) of the respondents who agreed that poverty is a triggering factor that leads individual to engage in trans-border crimes like drug trafficking, smuggling of petroleum products etc. Similarly, three of law enforcement agents in Illela-Birnin Konni border when interviewed what do you think are the major reason for the commission of trans-border crime? Share the same view that unemployment leads to trans-border crime. Based on these responses from the respondents, this implies that many local people that do not have jobs and any other sources of income to sustain their livelihood are the majority of the people that engage in all type of trans-border crimes. This also concurs with the findings of Fagge and Ibrahim (2021) who opines that, poverty, unemployment, misery and hunger forced some people to engage in trans-border crime because it is the only means of survival in order to get their daily meals.

Also, the findings show that association with bad friend leads individual to engage in one trans-border crime or the other. Table 1.5 shows that 57(38.5%) of the respondents are of the opinion

that association with bad friends can lead individuals to engage in drug dealing while 35(23.6%) of the respondents argued that it will lead individual to engage in goods smuggling like rice, oil and other agricultural products. Another 35(23.6%) respondents indicate that association with bad friends lead individuals to engage in smuggling petroleum products. From this finding therefore, it is clear that criminality is not inherited. Rather, it is learned through interpersonal communication and social interaction in intimate groups that is to say trans- border crime are learned through the process of interaction and association with people that come from diverse socio-cultural backgrounds. This also concurs with the assumption of Sutherland theory that Criminal behaviour is learned and it is learned in interaction with other persons in a process of communication.

Moreover, the findings of this study also show that porosity of border also facilitates trans-border crime meaning that it creates room for smugglers to smuggle their goods without any obstacle as 56(37.3%) respondents that strongly agreed and 34(28.0%) respondents agreed that porosity of the border facilitate trans-border crime. Similarly, a law enforcement agent that works along Illela-Birnin Konni border when interviewed said that Illela-Birnin Konni border is so porous that from Gwadabawa (a town in Nigeria) any where you put your head it will link you to Niger Republic". This shows that Illela-Birnin Konni border is so porous to the extent that it facilitates the smooth running of illegal goods in and out of Nigeria. With this findings we can conclude that border porosity leads to the increase in other types of crimes along borders.

In addition, the findings also show that taking bribe by the law enforcement agents also facilitates trans-border crime as indicated by 63(42.0) of the respondents that strongly agreed and 49(32.7) of the respondents that agreed that taking bribe facilitate trans-bolder crime. From the above findings it can be said that all sorts of crimes within the border communities are highly organised by the criminals and law enforcement agents that are stationed at the border. Similarly, this also concurs with findings of (Adekule, 2018) which report that custom officials who are supposed to monitor cross-border movements collect huge bribes from drivers. With this we can conclude that smuggling of petroleum products keeps thriving because law enforcement agent take bribe from the smugglers (tanker owners and the drivers) and thereby encourage them. This trend has, over time, become a recurring decimal within the border towns owing to smugglers' determination to resist checks.

## **Conclusion**

One of the qualities of a social research is that it is a purposeful venture and it must contribute to knowledge. The study found out that many crimes are committed along border areas. Among these are the conventional and non-conventional ones. As evident in this study, smuggling of goods and people was observed. Even more, trafficking of drugs and money laundering as global crimes are now taking root in border areas like Illela-Birnin Konni. This is exemplified by the coordinated networks as well as corrupt practices orchestrated by these law breakers. All these acts have far reaching implications on the country concerned as well the international community being in a globalized economy.

## **Recommendations**

This research has been able to highlight various causes and effects of trans-border crime. In the course of the research, numerous solutions have been pointed out which if adopted will help in checkmating trans-border crime in Illela-Birnin Konni towns.

1. The Federal Government should intensify efforts to create more vocational skills acquisition centres across the country to enable the youth to acquire employable skills and even become entrepreneurs. One of the respondents was of the opinion that employment should be provided by the government. Therefore, skills acquisition is a strong instrument for empowerment of youth in trades like tailoring, nail fixing, hair styling, manicure and pedicure, automobile mechanic, ICT and metal work.
2. Parents should give their children proper socialization and be mindful of the influence of peer group on their children and wards. Bad companies corrupt good manners thus the check on children's friends and social mixing.
3. The Federal government should promptly release budgetary allocation to the Customs Department and other law enforcement agencies in border areas. This would facilitate the provision of more equipment to counter border crimes and empower them. For example, the provision of transport facilities such as helicopters, boats, vehicles for patrols at the border post, seaports and international airports.
4. The welfare of the law enforcement agents should be improved upon. This is to dissuade them from the temptation of taking bribes.



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