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HANDMADE AND DEADLY

Craft Production of Small Arms in Nigeria

Matthias Nowak and André Gsell



Credits and contributors

Editor: Claire Mc Evoy

Copy-editor: Alex Potter
(alex.potter@mweb.co.za)

Proofreader: Stephanie Huitson
(readstephanie@gmail.com)

Design and layout: Rick Jones
(rick@studioexile.com)

Infographics: Daly Design
(studio@dalydesign.co.uk)

Cartographer: Jillian Luff, MAPgrafix
(www.mapgrafix.com)

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About the authors

Matthias Nowak is a researcher at the Small Arms Survey. His research focuses on documenting and researching the causes and mechanisms of illicit small arms proliferation in sub-Saharan Africa and Latin America. His work includes developing and implementing capacity-building projects on topics ranging from measuring the scale and scope of lethal violence and firearms-related conflict and crime to physical security and stockpile management (PSSM). He holds a bachelor's degree in Economic and Social History from the University of Geneva and a master's in Development Studies from the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies in Geneva.

André Gsell is a researcher at the Small Arms Survey, focusing on weapons and ammunition management issues. Before joining the Survey he was seconded as an expert on behalf of the Swiss Defence Department to various United Nations mine action programmes in Africa, working on PSSM issues in addition to information management in mine action. He also served with the Swiss Armed Forces in Bosnia and Herzegovina. He holds a master's in Public Management and Policy from the universities of Berne and Lausanne, and is a Swiss Armed Forces captain in active reserve service.

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Front cover photo

Hunters armed with craft weapons are seen in Adamawa state, before they move to the Nigeria/Cameroon border to support Nigerian army fighting against Boko Haram militants, December 2014.
Source: Mohammed Elshamy/Getty Images



Overview

Craft weapons production in Nigeria is under-researched, yet it is highly relevant for any future actions to counter small arms and light weapons proliferation.¹ This Briefing Paper provides new research findings based on extensive fieldwork in four Nigerian states (Adamawa, Anambra, Benue, and Plateau). It reviews demand and supply factors that shape the craft market in Nigeria, finding that demand is driven by insecurity and conflict, but also by cultural and societal factors. Supply is mostly demand driven. The quality of the products and production methods varies greatly across the surveyed states. Craft production poses a significant challenge for the Nigerian state and will require a mix of holistic measures to regulate or deter it, ranging from improving security (and security perceptions) and the relationship between security providers and communities, to licensing, measures aimed at providing alternative livelihoods for craft producers, and a more comprehensive application of the relevant legal framework.

Key findings

- About one-fifth (17 per cent) of civilian, rural weapons holders countrywide possess craft weapons and one-tenth in urban areas, according to preliminary findings from the National Small Arms and Light Weapons Survey (NSALWS).
- Craft producers employ a range of blacksmithing techniques, and the type and quality of their weapons vary greatly, ranging from muzzle-loading ‘Dane guns’ to 9 mm semi-automatic pistols based on Beretta models, and to assault rifles and sub-machine guns. Break-action shotguns and pistols are the most popular craft weapons produced in surveyed states.
- Craft weapons are mostly purchased to protect and defend individuals and communities. Many producers are convinced that craft production is a form of community service in times of heightened insecurity.
- Craft weapons are frequently purchased because of their ease of access and reduced price, which is up to four times cheaper than their industrially produced counterparts.
- Craft weapons are often produced in clandestine workshops that safeguard blacksmiths’ anonymity and safety.

Introduction

In early 2018 Nigerian and Cameroonian troops launched ‘Operation Deep Punch II’ in Nigeria’s Borno state, taking the fight against the Boko Haram insurgent group² deep into the Sambisa Forest. Along the Cameroonian and Nigerian border operations in late February led to the killing of 33 Boko Haram insurgents and the capture of an important weapons cache, including 15 craft-produced weapons (Omonobi, 2018). This is just one of an ongoing series of similar seizures.

Indigenous craft production is an important source of illicit weapons in Nigeria, with armed actors of diverse backgrounds increasingly using locally made weapons in the country’s many armed conflicts.³ Research on craft production indicates that the practice is widespread, with Nigeria being one of many centres of production in West and Central Africa.⁴

On the demand side, a history of conflict and rampant insecurity combined with ineffective security provision in many parts of Nigeria has driven individuals and communities to seek craft-produced weapons. Cultural factors such as a proud history of weapons production and the traditional status symbol of weapons ownership have driven demand in states such as Anambra.⁵ Equally, the supply of craft weapons is not limited to the lure of economic gain. Producers place great value on the importance of keeping the tradition and the acquired skills alive and within families. Producers also recognize weapons as being important for the protection of their communities from bandits and in cases of armed conflict, including the Boko Haram insurgency, farmer–herder conflicts, and inter-religious clashes.

Craft-production techniques, methods, and end products vary widely across Nigeria. Traditional blacksmithing based on crude techniques remains the most reported mode of production. Such producers supply mostly single-shot muzzle-loading weapons such as ‘Dane guns’.⁶ Yet other producers are focusing on enhancing firing power and developing more sophisticated loading actions. Revolving loading mechanisms and break-action—and in some cases pump-action—models are among the most prevalent observed in this study (see ‘Terms, definitions, and methods’). In one documented case a group of young and talented producers are applying modern welding techniques to produce self-loading pistols based on Beretta models. Automatic weapons are also being produced, similar in appearance to AK-type or G3-type assault rifles or Second World War-era sub-machine gun models.

Based on 82 in-depth interviews conducted between May and July 2017, this Briefing Paper provides an overview of small arms craft production in Nigeria with a focus on demand and supply, including the cultural, social, and economic factors underpinning the thriving industry and the types of weapons produced. It presents possible pathways to the regulation and control of craft production as a means of countering illicit small arms proliferation.

Categorizing craft weapons is challenging, because they often fall outside of established international definitions of small arms.⁷ Manufacturing characteristics that are normally used for classifying weapons—such as rifled barrels⁸—lie outside local Nigerian craft-production capabilities. The creativity of local producers has further led to non-traditional

combinations of designs and calibres. The following refers to established, rather vaguely defined small arms categories (Parker and Wilson, 2016, p. 14), but includes a description of technical design features, such as barrel length, ammunition calibre, and weapon actions, in order to highlight specific aspects of Nigerian craft production.⁹

Terms, definitions, and methods

Despite there being no universally agreed definition of craft weapons, this Briefing Paper uses the term to describe the production of weapons that are fabricated outside state control, by hand, in small quantities, and with a reduced capability, as opposed to their industrially manufactured counterparts (Berman, 2011, p. 1). The production of craft weapons 'requires access to specialized tools and equipment as well as some technical skill' (Hays and Jenzen-Jones, forthcoming) (see Box 1).

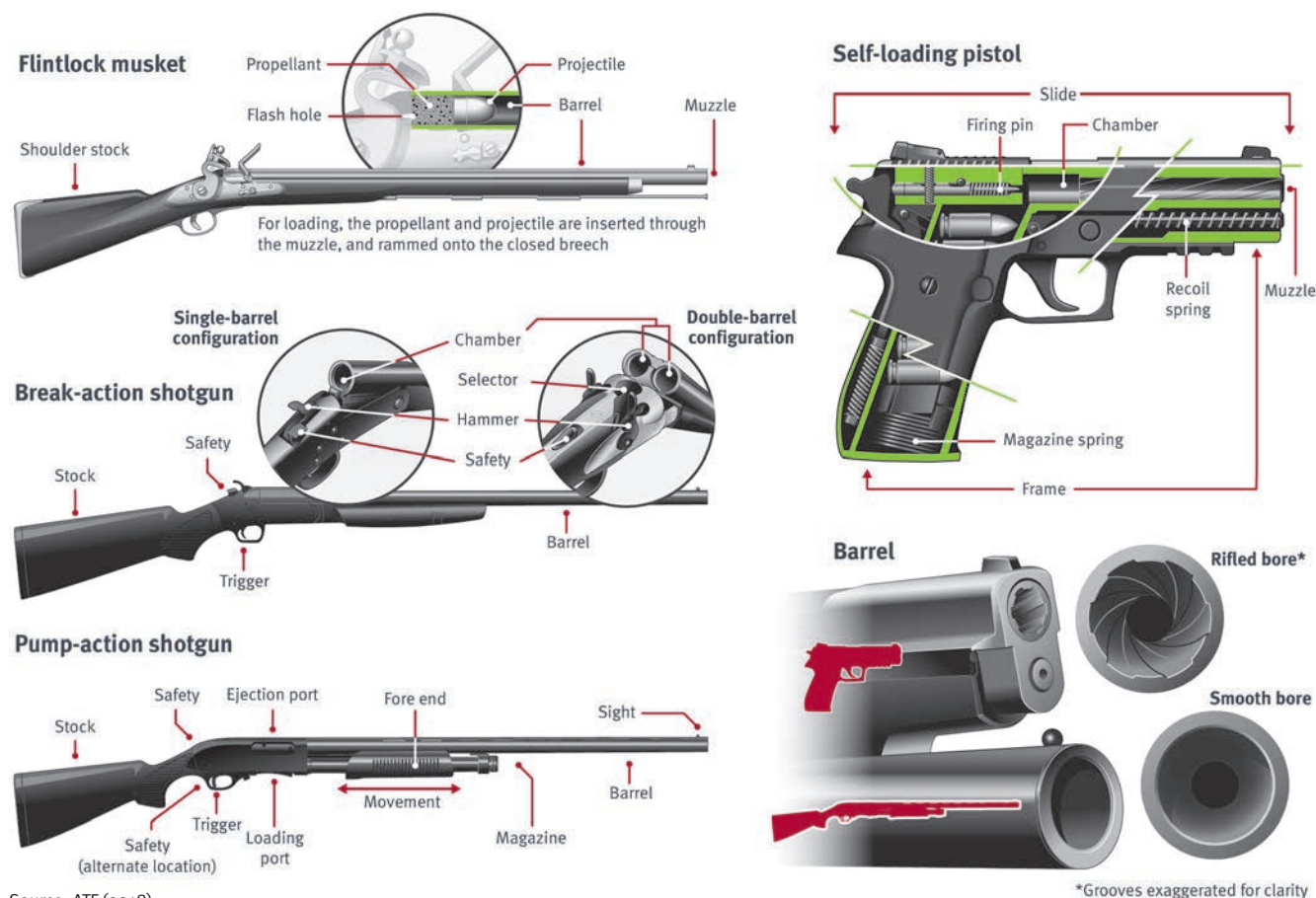
Box 1 Understanding the mechanics of firearms

Firearms work by expelling projectiles by a controlled explosion of a propellant charge. The simplest design to achieve this is a muzzle loader, where the user manually loads the weapon by inserting propellant and then a projectile¹⁰ through the open end of the barrel, before igniting the propellant and thus firing the weapon through a miniscule flash hole in the closed breech (Knight, 1997).

Breech-loading weapons, which have a simpler action, feature a barrel that has a locking action at one end that seals the barrel around a wholly inserted cartridge that combines a propellant charge and projectile (Bevan and Pézard, 2006, p. 20). The breech-loading action brings a round of ammunition into the chamber, locks the breech, allows the user to trigger the explosion of the propellant, and ejects the spent cartridge. Specific types of rounds with different projectiles exist depending on the effect sought, such as a single, solid projectile used for long-range shooting; a number of ball shots for hunting (enhancing the chance of hitting a moving target); or no projectile at all for training or ornamental uses (Knight, 1997).

Figure 1 below illustrates the different parts of a range of common firearms.

Figure 1 Parts of common firearms



Source: ATF (2018)

Handguns. Craft handguns use a single projectile round expelled out of industrially produced cartridges of less than 12.7 mm calibre fired through a barrel of less than 25 cm in length. They are intended for single hand firing and therefore typically lack a shoulder stock. Rifled barrels—a feature that is typical of industrially produced handguns—were not encountered during this study. Both self-loading pistols,¹¹ in which the chamber is an integral part of the barrel, and revolvers, featuring a cylinder containing multiple rounds that rotates after each firing, were encountered during fieldwork.

Photos 1 and 2 A craft-produced self-loading pistol (top) and revolver showing its cylinder (bottom) as examples of the kinds of craft-produced handguns that were observed, undisclosed locations, Nigeria



Source: Small Arms Survey (2017)

Shotguns. These weapons typically fire ball shot cartridges through a smooth-bore barrel and were encountered with three distinctive features. The first is barrel length. Weapons featuring a barrel of less than 25 cm are considered short-barrelled and weapons above that threshold long-barrelled. A second feature is the action of the weapon. Three types of actions were encountered during fieldwork: break action, based around a hinge and lock mechanism; revolving action, using a cylinder in which cartridges are stored and fired; and pump-action shotguns, which use a lateral sliding movement.¹² A third feature was the number of barrels present on break-action shotguns. The most prevalent category of craft-produced firearms encountered during fieldwork was break-action shotguns, both single-barrel and double-barrel models.

Photo 3 A craft-produced shotgun with revolving loading mechanism seized by the Nigerian Police Force (NPF) in Plateau state, photographed in Jos



Source: Small Arms Survey (2017)

Sub-machine guns. Craft-produced sub-machine guns use industrially produced, solid-projectile ammunition of less than 12.7 mm calibre and are capable of semi-automatic or automatic fire. Typically, a pistol round is employed: all items encountered in this category used a 9 × 19 mm round.

Photo 4 A craft-produced sub-machine gun seized by the NPF in Plateau state, photographed in Jos



Source: Small Arms Survey (2017)

Assault rifles. The craft-produced assault rifles encountered also use industrially produced cartridges with solid projectiles, feature automatic or semi-automatic actions, and typically have a shoulder stock. The cartridge calibre employed in these weapons is typically below 8 mm in diameter. Prominent calibres encountered during the field research were 7.62 × 39 mm and 7.62 × 51 mm.

Photo 5 An assault rifle in AK look-alike style seized by the NPF in Plateau state, photographed in Jos



Source: Small Arms Survey (2017)

Photo 6 A muzzle-loading 'Dane gun' ready for sale, undisclosed location, Nigeria



Source: Small Arms Survey (2017)

Muzzle loaders. Craft-produced muzzle loaders, often called 'Dane guns', have a simple design and are not loaded with cartridges. Rather, loose powder and a projectile (a ball bearing or small scrap parts are often used) are loaded through the barrel mouth and the powder is ignited through a flash hole. The source of ignition varies and may include matches or flint locks. Both long muzzle loaders (a barrel length of more than 25 cm) and short ones were observed during fieldwork.

Craft production in Nigeria: background

The craft production of firearms in West Africa dates back to the introduction of iron work several centuries ago (Ross, 2002; Duquet, 2009, p. 176). In the periods during and shortly after colonialism, craft-weapons production gained momentum across the region, including in Nigeria. Anti-colonial struggles and civil wars were drivers of demand and provided the stimuli for technological innovation. In Nigeria, the local craft production of firearms increased significantly during the Biafran war (1967–70), concentrating mostly in Awka, Anambra state. Weapons such as 'hand grenades, cartridges, mines and guns' used by anti-government armed groups were all locally sourced (Umoh, 2011, p. 347). The ensuing demand for weapons resulted in the Biafran government organizing blacksmiths into cooperatives for the production of arms and ammunition, explosives,

Box 2 Methodology for the study

The findings in this Briefing Paper are largely based on 82 in-depth interviews conducted with key informant interviewees in Adamawa, Anambra, Benue, and Plateau states, in addition to the Federal Capital Territory of Abuja, between May and July 2017. These interviews were based on a semi-structured, exploratory, and open-ended questionnaire. Key informants comprised 23 craft producers; 35 personnel from law enforcement agencies (LEAs); and 24 other knowledgeable informants such as traditional leaders, members of the Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF),¹³ and field staff of non-governmental organizations (referred to in Map 1 as ‘specialists’).¹⁴

Purposeful sampling techniques were used to select interviewees: expert sampling was used to identify knowledgeable people and snowballing (or chain-referral sampling) to identify and access producers of craft weapons. The selection of states reflects well-known sources and traditional places of craft production (particularly Adamawa), as well as states affected by the Boko Haram insurgency and farmer–herder conflicts.

The analysis also draws on preliminary findings from a nationwide household survey on small arms and security perceptions conducted by PRESCOM in 2016 with the Small Arms Survey (Small Arms Survey and PRESCOM, 2018). Photographic evidence of craft-weapons production methods, materials, and weapons was collected during field visits.

To supplement the above, the Survey conducted a literature review and a media review of six national and state-level newspapers over the period 2014–17, with an emphasis on seizures of craft weapons and associated events (such as crimes, or confrontations between armed elements and security personnel).¹⁵

Photo 7 ‘Dane guns’ in the final stage of production, undisclosed location, Nigeria



Source: Small Arms Survey (2017)

and improvised explosive devices nicknamed *ogbunigwe* (meaning ‘mass killer’), with the aim of increasing production quantity and speed, and ensuring steady access to weapons.¹⁶ After the war, blacksmiths were considered a threat to security and peace in Nigeria because of their capacity to produce weapons, and the Federal Government disbanded them and

drove them underground, while banning craft production (Ikelegbe, 2017, p. 28; Umoh, 2011).

Research indicates that there is still a strong cultural attachment to blacksmiths’ skills and the traditional weapons they produce. ‘Dane guns’, which are used for both ceremonial and ornamental purposes, continue to be used in

traditional rites and occupations such as hunting, for example. These types of firearms—which are symbols of power and prestige in traditional communities—are available throughout the country (Ikelegbe, 2017, p. 16).

Preliminary data from the NSALWS indicates that 18 per cent of respondents countrywide consider craft weapons to be

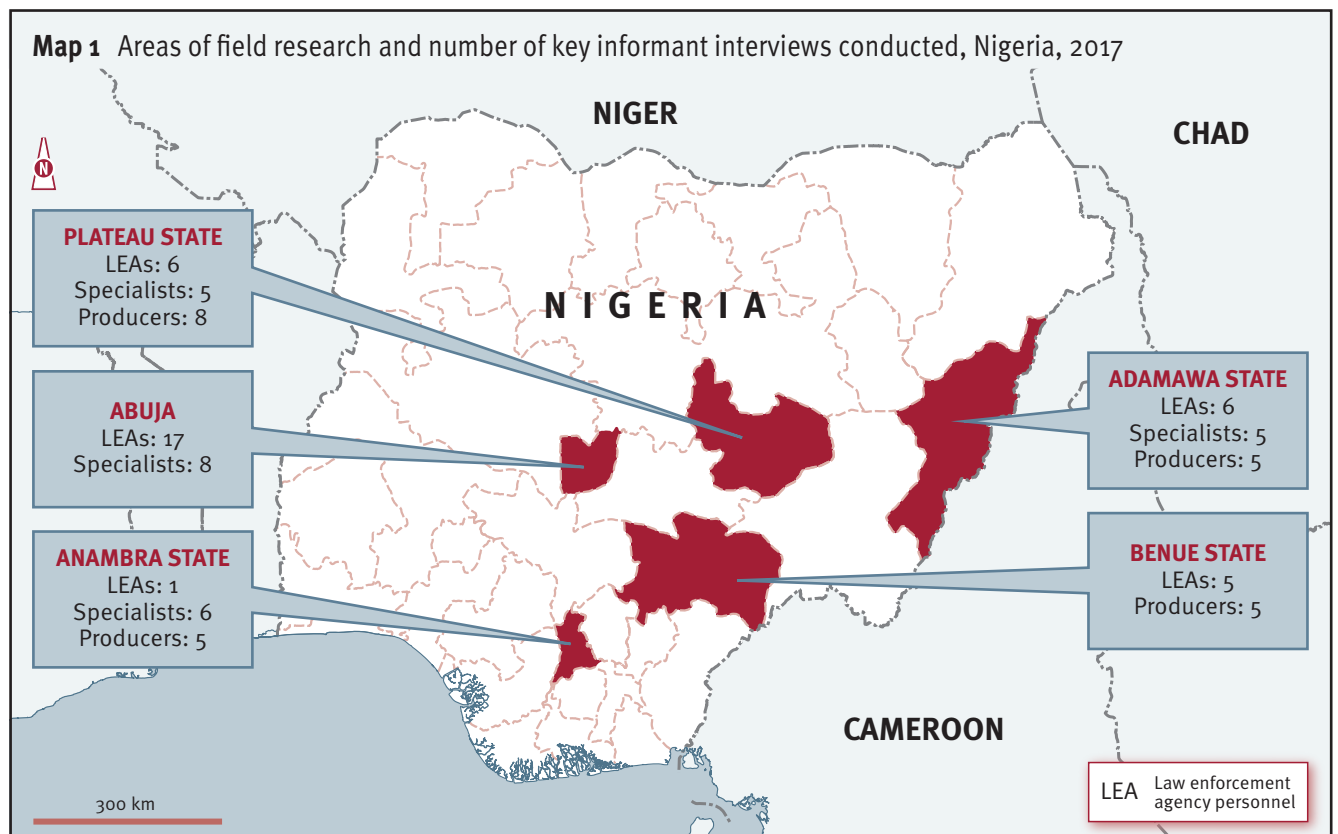
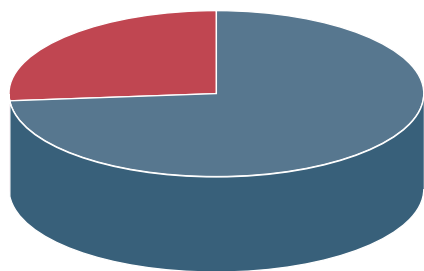


Figure 2 Number of weapons seized in Nigeria, by type, based on media review, 2014–17 (n = 283)

- Craft weapons seized (1,150)
- Commercial weapons seized (409)



Source: Small Arms Survey (2017)

a source of civilian firearms.¹⁷ Among rural weapons holders countrywide, about one-fifth (17 per cent) possess craft weapons (10 per cent in urban areas) (Small Arms Survey and PRESCOM, 2018).¹⁸ Data from the NPF confirms that a large proportion of seized weapons are craft produced. The NPF seized a total of 584 weapons between January and May 2017, and of these, 287 were reportedly locally made pistols and ‘Dane guns’, for example (Ikelegbe, 2017, p. 14).¹⁹ Other sources also indicate that a high number of craft-produced weapons are circulating in Nigeria. A review of 283 newspaper articles

mentioning seizures of firearms during police and military operations found almost a three-to-one ratio of craft weapons seizures mentioned, compared to industrially made firearms (see Figure 2) (Small Arms Survey, 2017).²⁰

Interviews inquired about the share of crimes committed using craft weapons in Nigeria. In Benue and Plateau states craft weapons are believed to be used to commit more than 50 per cent of crimes (see Figure 3), although this finding should be treated with caution due to the small number of respondents (n = 59). Based on the media review, the most common crimes associated with the carrying, ownership, and use of craft weapons in Nigeria are armed robberies, kidnapping, and terrorism-related activities (Small Arms Survey, 2017).²¹

Mapping the craft-production market in Nigeria

The mapping conducted for this Briefing Paper is based on an analysis of the key drivers of demand for craft weapons, followed by further analysis of supply factors. Understanding these is crucial to the overall arms control agenda in Nigeria.

Demand for craft weapons

The clandestine production of craft weapons in Nigeria appears to be largely demand driven. Research indicates that there are two main lenses through which to view the factors influencing demand. These are:

- insecurity and the need for protection; and
- cultural, social, and economic needs.

Insecurity and the need for protection

Demand for craft weapons is rooted in repeated cycles of conflict and rampant crime affecting many areas of the country. With the exception of Anambra state, cycles of violence and criminality have contributed to an increase in demand for craft weapons in—at least parts of—the surveyed states due to people’s perceived need to acquire arms for their personal safety and collective security (see Table 1). In Anambra an improvement in security due to the increased presence of LEAs and a related fear among producers of getting caught has led to a reported decrease in demand.

Craft producers and LEAs discussed the following factors as being key drivers of demand in surveyed states and in Nigeria more generally:

- **Boko Haram insurgency**

Violence linked to the fight between Boko Haram and the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF)²² and civilians caught in the middle reached a peak in 2014 and 2015 (see Figure 4). At the height of the insurgency between 2013 and 2015 more than an estimated 20,000 people lost their lives (ICG, 2017a, p. 26).

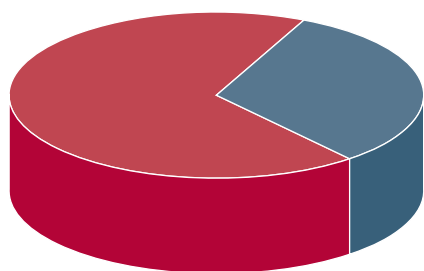
Boko Haram’s stated goal is to ‘create a strict Islamic state in the north that it believes would address the ills of society, including corruption and bad governance’ (ICG, 2014, p. 9). In areas under its control the movement implements an ‘opportunistic protection economy reinforced by violence, where all goods . . . are taxed’ (Jespersion, 2017, p. 5). In response, Nigeria has one of the largest deployments of military operations in ‘peace time’ on the continent (Abdu, 2013, p. 170). The deployed task force is complemented with the vigilante CJTF (see the section on ‘Crime and protection from criminals: vigilantes and self-defence groups’).

There has been significant progress in tackling Boko Haram since 2015,

Figure 3 Reported share (%) of craft weapons used to commit crimes involving firearms, according to LEA and specialist interviews, Nigeria, 2017 (n = 59)

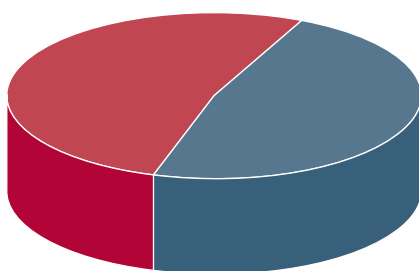
Crime in Adamawa

- Craft weapons (32)
- Industrially made weapons (68)



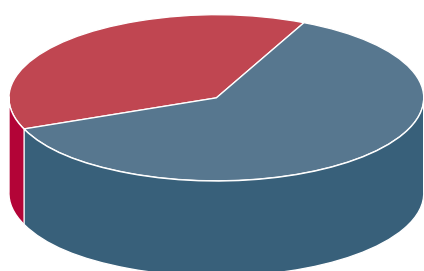
Crime in Anambra

- Craft weapons (48)
- Industrially made weapons (52)



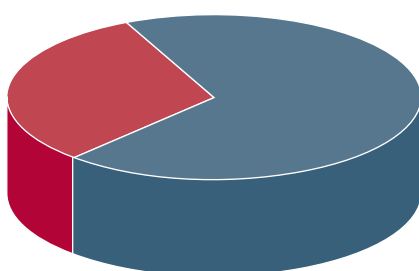
Crime in Benue

- Craft weapons (62)
- Industrially made weapons (38)



Crime in Plateau

- Craft weapons (69)
- Industrially made weapons (31)



Source: Analysis of responses from producers, LEAs, and other specialists

Table 1 Reported drivers of changes in demand for craft weapons, Nigeria, October 2016–October 2017

State	Reported change in demand	Reasons for changes in demand	Main source of violence reported
Adamawa	Strong increase	Boko Haram conflict: the need to increase firepower for self-defence of communities from Boko Haram attacks	Boko Haram conflict
Anambra	Strong decrease	Increase in security; increased law enforcement; fear of LEAs	Armed robberies, kidnapping
Benue	Mixed changes (increase and decrease)	Amnesty; more law enforcement presence; some areas remain affected by attacks from herders	Armed robberies, kidnapping
Plateau	Some increase	Intensified farmer–herder conflicts over the past years	Farmer–herder conflicts

Source: Analysis of responses provided by producers in KIIs

leading to what is considered to be a successful ‘containment’ of the group (ACLED, 2018). The years of insurgency led to a significant increase in demand for firearms, however, which are still in circulation. Furthermore, the threat from the group in the north-east—and from splinter groups—remains, with ongoing suicide bombings against civilian and military targets, often in rural villages and displacement camps, particularly in Borno state (ACLED, 2017).

● **Crime and protection from criminals: vigilantes and self-defence groups**

Crime rates are notoriously high in Nigeria. Home invasions, violent robberies, kidnapping for ransom, carjackings, muggings, and homicides are all frequently reported. Close to 4,000 people were reportedly killed in crime-related events in Nigeria during 2015 (NSRP, 2016, p. 11).

The Boko Haram insurgency, together with farmer–herder (see below) and other conflicts²³ tend to obscure the criminal violence that occurs in Nigeria—yet this type of violence is key to understanding the proliferation of community defence, neighbourhood watch, and vigilante groups (Jespersion, 2017). The formation of these groups is viewed as a key driver of demand for small arms, and especially for craft-produced firearms. The CJTF vigilante movement, reportedly involving close to 30,000 people, was pivotal to flushing out

Boko Haram fighters from key areas such as Maiduguri, the capital city of the northern Borno state, in 2013, for example. The Nigerian army and the MNJTF quickly realized the potential of the CJTF in the fight against the insurgent group and supported members’ arming and training (ICG, 2017a; Cropley, 2017).

Security providers in Nigeria more or less accept vigilante groups, because they assist in the maintenance of safety and order, and in some cases are reportedly allowed to equip themselves with firearms—mostly locally produced craft weapons that are considered to be affordable.²⁴ In Anambra state each of the 181 communities accounted for has a vigilante group of approximately 20 members to ensure protection against criminals and in case of attacks, for example.²⁵ Members of these groups are reportedly registered for the legal use of firearms in the performance of their activities.

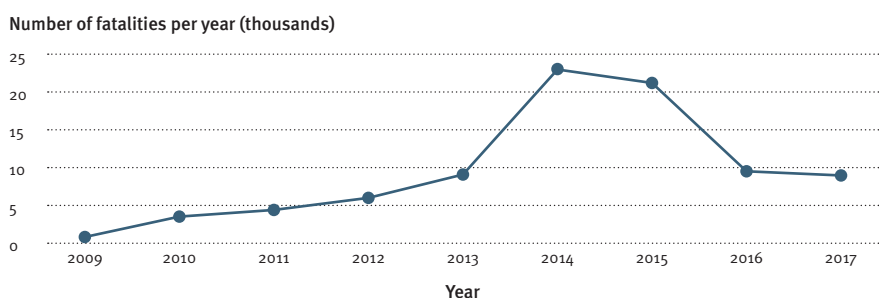
Demand among such self-defence groups was widely acknowledged in interviews with producers and LEAs (see Figure 5). Some producers said they were making craft weapons as a way of supporting their communities, as one blacksmith explained: ‘The production and repair of firearms is [sic] not about income for me, but for protection from incessant attacks for [sic] Fulani militia, and defence from armed robbers’.²⁶

About 10 per cent of respondents acknowledged that the main purpose of craft weapons was to commit crimes (Figure 5). This awareness among producers of their weapons’ use for criminal purposes contrasts starkly with the ‘community-service’ argument made by those producing weapons for protection purposes.

● **Conflicts between farmers and herders**

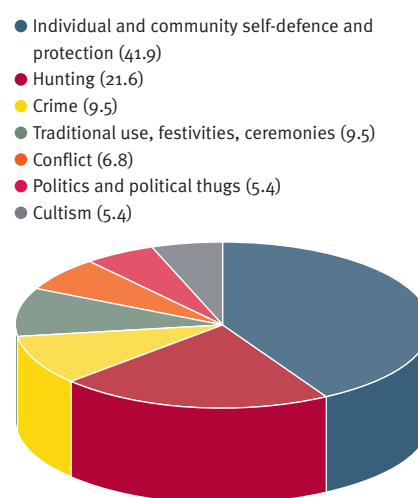
Desertification and droughts, structural changes in agriculture and pastoralism, insecurity and conflict in the north, and the loss of traditional mediation mechanisms among herders and farmers lie at the heart of the increasingly violent conflicts between these communities (ICG, 2017b, p. i). Traditionally, predominantly Fulani and Muslim herders sought grasslands in the central areas of Nigeria for pasture during the dry season (October–May) in designated areas. Desertification and expanding population and farmlands have reduced the size of these

Figure 4 Fatalities due to ‘organized and collective violence’, Nigeria, 2009–17



Source: ACLED (n.d.)

Figure 5 Main intended purpose of craft weapons (%), as reported by key informant interviewees, Nigeria, 2017 (n = 74)



Source: Analysis of responses from producers, LEAs, and other specialists

grasslands, while conflicts and insecurity (including cattle theft and the Boko Haram insurgency) are driving herders further south and for longer periods (ICG, 2017b, pp. 4–6).

Predominantly Christian farmer communities in the central belt and south see incursions and attacks from these Muslim herder groups as a ‘hidden form of jihad’ and clashes occur frequently along ethno-religious lines, particularly in Benue, Plateau, and Kaduna states (Ikelegbe, 2017; ICG, 2017b; Krause, 2011, p. 27). In 2016 alone these conflicts may have caused as many as 2,500 deaths in Nigeria (ICG, 2017b, p. 7).

As a response to the escalating violence and its geographical spread from the middle belt (to a dozen states as of 2018), farming and herding communities are gathering funds to buy weapons (Ikelegbe, 2017).²⁷ One producer explained that ‘the increase in the attacks on communities around [locations withheld] made people seek for means of self-protection and [self-]preservation’.²⁸

Cultural, societal, and economic needs

Craft weapons are also symbols of status, wealth, and power in Nigeria. Their production is a highly respected skill, and is often passed on from one generation to the next within the same family. Understanding the cultural and social factors that underpin craft production is crucial to understanding the deep roots these weapons have in Nigerian communities, particularly among hunters and as part of cultural festivities.

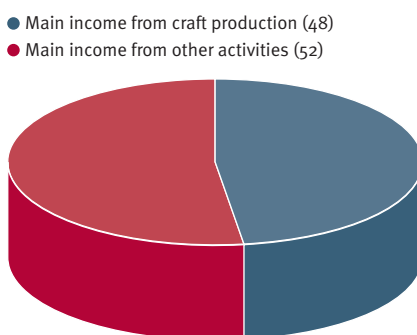
● Hunters

Hunters are found in many rural areas of Nigeria. Hunting can be an important source of protein and revenue in rural and remote villages, in particular; in arid areas the hunting season typically coincides with the dry season. Research indicates that hunters are the second most important group of ‘clients’ for (or buyers of) craft weapons (at 22 per cent) (see Figure 5).²⁹ For those who cannot afford an industrially produced hunting weapon, the alternative is a locally made smoothbore shotgun or muzzle-loading ‘Dane gun’.

● Ceremonial use and status symbols

Traditional and cultural festivities are heavily associated with the production of craft weapons, particularly ‘Dane guns’. In traditional societies

Figure 6 Main sources of income (%) based on interviews with craft producers (n = 23)



Source: Analysis of responses provided by producers in KIs

across the country chiefs and warriors fire shots in the air (mostly just a powder load: no projectile is fired) as part of celebrations such as weddings, burials, or the ascensions of chiefs (Ikelegbe, 2017, p. 26). It is also not uncommon for blacksmiths to be paid to produce weapons for traditional chiefs or to provide their emirs and chiefs with craft guns as gifts for these purposes (Ikelegbe, 2017, p. 26).³⁰

● Economic needs and reasons for craft production

Income generation and the related lack of job opportunities constitute an additional important factor shaping demand for craft-produced small arms. Of the 23 producers interviewed, 11 confirmed that their main income-generating activity was the production of firearms (see Figure 6).³¹

Figure 7 Main reasons cited for the purchase of craft-produced weapons by number of mentions, Nigeria, 2017 (n = 53; up to three responses allowed)



Source: Analysis of responses provided by producers and LEAs in KIs

A comparatively high percentage of respondents said that the lower price of craft-produced weapons vis-à-vis their industrially produced counterparts was a key factor in inducing people to buy them (see Figure 7). The availability of craft weapons was also widely cited, indicating that they may be easier to obtain than industrially produced weapons.

Supply of craft weapons in Nigeria

The following analysis focuses on the supply of craft weapons, including pricing and the production techniques that producers use. The acquisition of related knowledge and skills, and their dissemination are also discussed.

Weapons and ammunition

Photographic evidence and interviews show that producers make craft weapons of varying levels of sophistication and quality, catering to the needs of different clients. ‘Dane guns’ and long-barrelled shotguns are generally produced for cultural displays and hunting (Ikelegbe, 2017, p. 16). Shorter-barrelled weapons such as handguns and short-barrelled shotguns are more popular with customers seeking personal security and those who are involved in small-scale criminal activity (see Box 3). Automatic weapons, in contrast, are produced for larger informal security providers as well as organized criminals and various perpetrators of armed violence, specifically actors involved in militancy, insurgencies, and terrorism (Ikelegbe, 2017, p. 32).

None of the interviewed producers indicated that he currently produces ammunition. Several reported that conflict zones were sources of ammunition, due to members of security institutions selling their stocks, or seizures by non-

Photo 8 A selection of craft-produced handguns, undisclosed location, Nigeria, 2017



Source: Small Arms Survey (2017)

Box 3 Spotlight on craft-produced self-loading pistols

'In December 2016 I travelled to Lagos to produce for customers, and I produced up to 30 Berettas.'

A cluster of producers were interviewed in one surveyed state³² who focus on producing self-loading pistols. The pistols, which draw heavily on Beretta models, feature a magazine with a capacity of between eight and 12 rounds and are sold on the local market for between NGN 25,000 (USD 74) and NGN 60,000 (USD 177).

One interviewee³³—whose main source of income was producing craft weapons—said that in December 2016 he had temporarily relocated from the state where he lived to Lagos due to surging demand for self-loading pistols. Acquiring the knowledge and skills to produce these weapons took him more than a year of training. Working within a hierarchical network of producers, he was trained by an experienced and reputed producer. Three individuals have since completed their training under the guidance of the interviewee, while two are currently undertaking apprenticeships. All trainees are carefully vetted to ensure secrecy and protection from LEAs.

Describing the production techniques employed, another respondent³⁴ explained that the process began by cutting a number of 'frame forms' (see Photo 9) out of sheet metal and welding them together. He said the slide is crafted out of iron (such as that found in old beds). A nail is filed into shape to serve as a firing pin. Wire mesh from truck tires produces recoil and magazine springs. The barrel is a piece of pipe that is widened by drilling to accommodate the chamber. Production takes less than one working day.

A third respondent³⁵ stated that he sources original Beretta magazines—because these are difficult to reproduce—and builds the rest of the weapon around them. He described the process of hardening a piece of pipe with gas to make it strong enough to serve as a barrel.

Interviewed producers in this state revealed a number of trends—including mobility in response to demand, the incorporation of industrially produced parts into craft production, and the passing on of skills and knowledge within an organized group—which could be relevant to other regions and should be monitored closely.

Photo 9 A 'frame form' cut out of flat steel before welding



Photo 10 Various parts of a craft-produced self-loading pistol during production



Photo 11 After the metal work is completed, minor wood crafting still needs to be done on this self-loading pistol



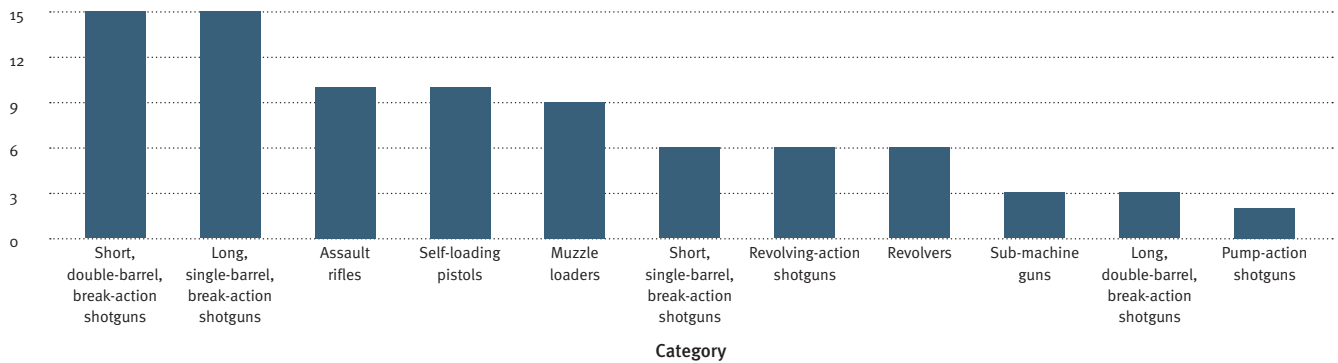
Photo 12 Two finished craft-produced self-loading pistols



Sources (Photos 9–12): Small Arms Survey (2017)

Figure 8 Categories of craft weapons made by producers (n = 23; multiple responses allowed)

Mention by producers making each category of weapon



Source: Analysis of responses provided by producers in KIIIs

state armed groups, such as Boko Haram, from state-owned stocks (Ikelegbe, 2017, p. 36). Licensed dealers and smuggled ammunition from Ghana and Togo are other prominent sources for shotgun ammunition (Ikelegbe, 2017, p. 33).

Repairs and other services

In addition to making new firearms, producers also apply their skills to servicing and repairing existing craft- and industri-

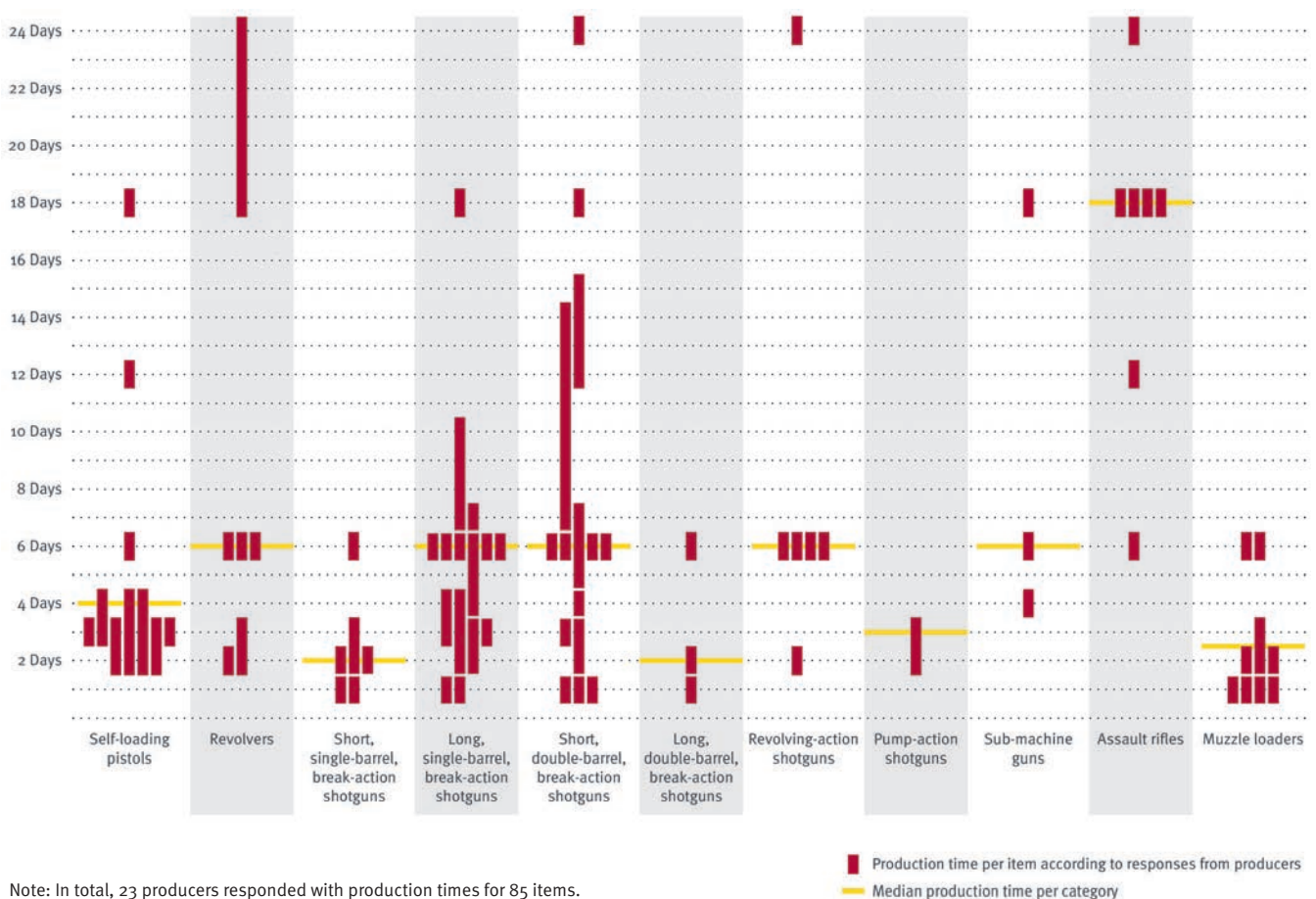
ally produced weapons. Multiple producers said that repairs were of less interest to them, however, due to lower profit margins and the risk of prosecution.

Craft producers appear to be sought out for repairs because of the limited availability of licensed service providers. One producer indicated that law enforcement officials entrusted their weapons to him for servicing. At the same time, multiple producers indicated that they were often wary when approached by new

clients seeking repairs of craft weapons that the producers themselves had not produced, because they feared entrapment by LEAs. One said that approval by a traditional leader for repairs of specific types of weapons was necessary, due to the government ban on repairing weapons.

Producers reported frequent defects with craft-produced firearms due to a lack of servicing (particularly the cleaning and lubrication of weapons) and the absence of high-quality parts, particularly springs.

Figure 9 Maximum and average production time per craft-weapon category, Nigeria, 2017 (n = 23; multiple responses allowed)



Note: In total, 23 producers responded with production times for 85 items.

Source: Analysis of responses provided by producers in KIIIs

Prices for repairs appear to be flexible and based on the relationship with the client: multiple producers said that bartering and customer loyalty were important factors in the determination of price.

None of the respondents mentioned the conversion of blank-firing weapons or other replicas, which appear to be difficult to source (see Florquin and King, 2018). The reactivation of non-functional weapons (such as burned weapons) does occur, however, often by copying damaged wooden parts or by recasting appropriate metals into the required shape.

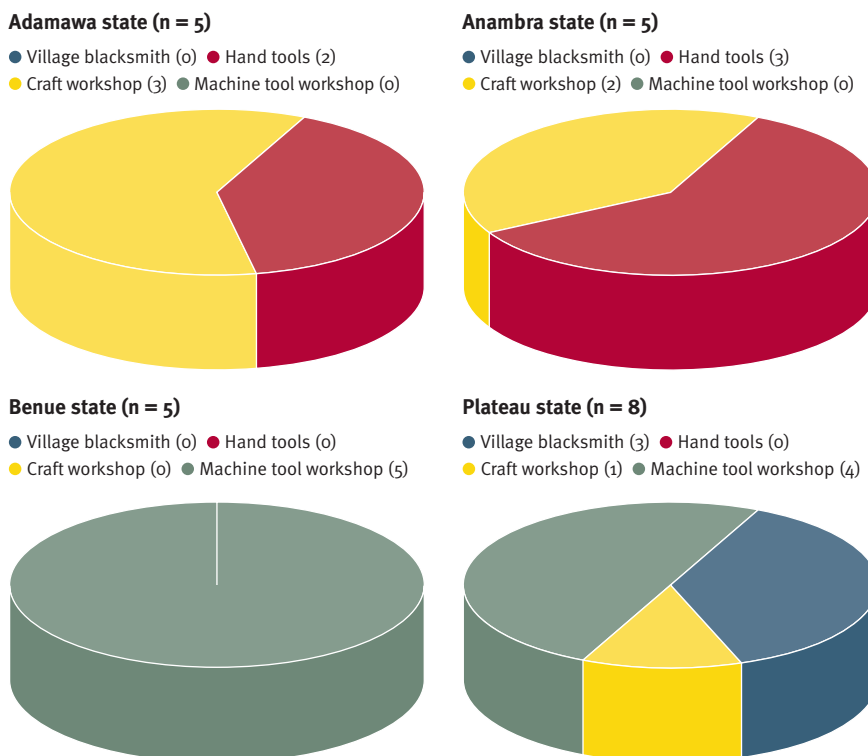
Production processes, techniques, and tools

Break-action shotguns and pistols are the most popular craft weapons produced (see Figure 8). These weapons are of medium sophistication and can therefore be manufactured by rural producers who lack more advanced equipment, while still being attractive for manufacturers who are able to fabricate more sophisticated designs. On average, producers make an average of four categories of weapons (see the categories in Figure 8), indicating their versatility.

The reported production times for craft-produced small arms vary widely, depending on the producer's experience and equipment, the technical complexity of the weapon, and the expectations of the client. Figure 9 indicates the manufacturing time distribution per weapon category, in addition to the median production time. This illustrates that simple designs such as muzzle loaders or single-barrelled shotguns are generally produced very quickly, whereas more complex designs such as revolving shotguns or automatic weapons require a production time of weeks rather than days. Production times vary greatly among producers, depending on their level of training, experience, and equipment.

The manufacturing techniques used to produce craft weapons also differ across surveyed states and are influenced by the skills and equipment of producers, and the quality aimed for and profitability of a given item. By examining the descriptions of their products and production techniques, producers have been rated on a qualitative manufacturing technology scale. This scale begins with the village blacksmith, who produces parts that are unique in shape and size. On the next level, a producer employing hand tools is able to produce similar parts, which may serve as spare parts for items from the same batch. A craft workshop makes parts that are interchangeable within a

Figure 10 Manufacturing technology rating of surveyed craft-weapons producers in Nigeria, 2017 (N = 23)



Source: Analysis of responses provided by producers in KILs

single batch, and a machine tool workshop is able to produce fully interchangeable parts between batches. As shown in Figure 10, makers of craft-produced firearms in Benue state are better equipped and trained, whereas producers in Anambra state have a more limited set of skills.

Producers use materials that are generally available in local markets; none indicated that there was a shadow market for industrially produced weapons materials or parts. Wooden parts are carved from local wood. General construction supplies (such as water pipes for barrels, and home-supply bolts or nails for firing pins) are converted and parts of automotive chassis or packaging material may also be used as source materials. Heat treatment may be applied to metal in order to convert water piping into gun barrels.

Locally available tools and machines are used. Major items include furnaces and drilling machines. More sophisticated items may require the use of gas or electric welding. One producer indicated that for demanding metal work he used the facilities of an educational institution. As discussed above, different producers also cater to different customer groups. Figure 11 shows that farmers, hunters, and vigilante group members tend to equip themselves from producers making simple craft weapons according to

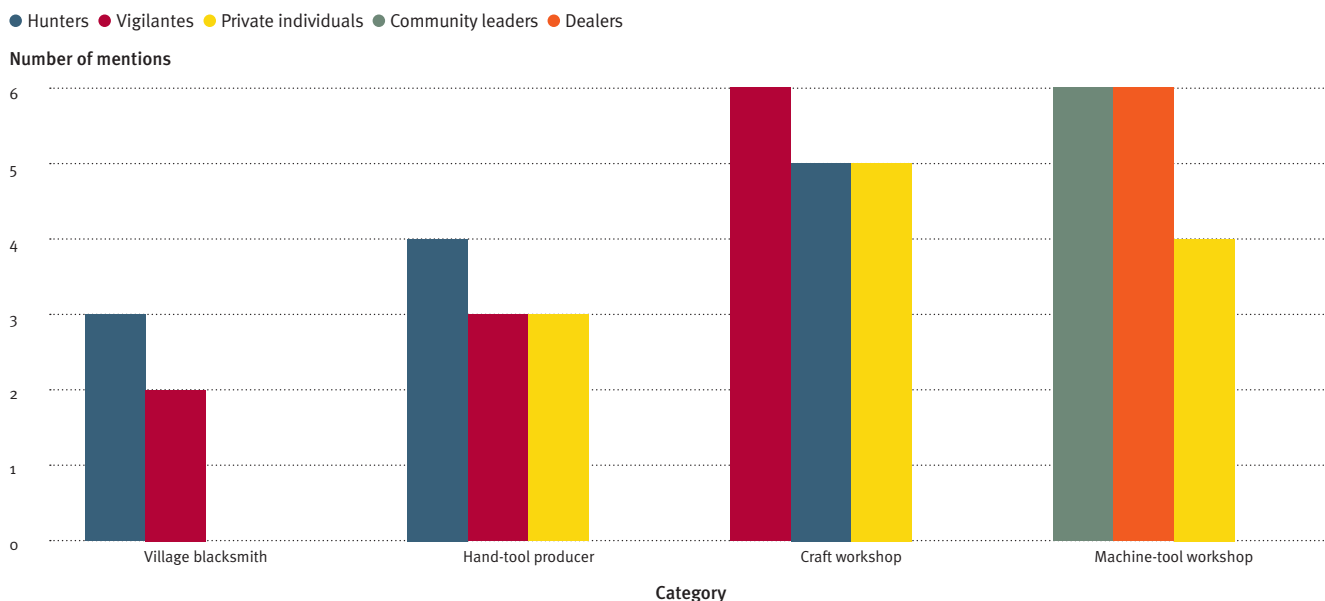
the manufacturing technology scale. Religious and other community leaders, and most notably firearms dealers, tend to buy from producers who make more sophisticated designs.

Photo 13 A muzzle-loading handgun and a simple manual furnace blower, typical of a low score on the manufacturing technology scale, location withheld, Nigeria



Source: Small Arms Survey (2017)

Figure 11 Top three customer groups per producers' manufacturing technology rating, Nigeria, 2017 (n = 23)



Source: Analysis of responses provided by producers in KILs

Training and spread of knowledge

The skills needed for craft production are acquired and transmitted in a number of different ways. In Adamawa state (the home of 'Awka-made' firearms) craftsmanship is often transmitted via traditional, generational, and family-based methods, with little mobility to acquire new skills.³⁶ Adamawa producers spoke of their pride in their craft-production skills and the role of family heritage in passing these skills on.

In Anambra and Benue states skills and technical knowledge are also passed on through local and family-based traditions and transmission of skills, aided by the mobility of some producers who acquire and transmit new skills and techniques by travelling outside their communities to visit producers in other states. In both states (in Anambra in particular) there is a strong cultural attachment to craft production and blacksmiths' ancestral skills. Some blacksmiths said it was 'an obligation' to ensure the continuity of their family and community craftsmanship.³⁷

Plateau state producers are reportedly more mobile than those in other states. Producers reported that they travel to other parts of the state to acquire knowledge and train with experienced producers, and similarly travel to areas where clients require their skills and knowledge.³⁸

In contrast, in one location where self-loading pistols are made—these pistols are called 'Beretta' locally and are based on 9 × 19 mm Beretta handguns—craft producers acquire welding and metalwork skills in official training facilities.³⁹

This is part of a more mobile and 'modern' transmission of knowledge. Surprisingly, only a few producers in one state mentioned the internet as a source of knowledge. These were young and had been trained in general metalworking skills in technical training facilities. They use the internet to fine-tune their craftsmanship and said they were eager to exchange techniques and lessons learned with others.⁴⁰

Distribution methods and sales prices of craft weapons

Price and the means of getting a product to a client is an additional consideration

when analysing supply methods. Craft producers distribute their products to clients either through direct producer-client contact; community-based distribution via friends, family, and trusted connections; or arms dealers who move the weapons to other communities.⁴¹ Overall, it appears that distribution tends to be mostly community based and for limited local consumption, involving hunting rifles or 'Dane guns'. Many producers viewed this as a response to local demand. Some producers using this type of distribution model reported that they would return to their 'usual' blacksmithing activities, such as making agricultural tools, if security improved.⁴²

Photo 14 A producer's workshop with selected hand tools, undisclosed location, Nigeria



Source: Small Arms Survey (2017)

Photo 15 A craft-weapons workshop hidden in the bush in an undisclosed location. The workshop is as far as possible from the producer’s home for safety reasons. He hides weapons under construction by burying them



Source: Small Arms Survey (2017)

Some producers set up their craft workshops in secluded, difficult-to-access areas to avoid detection, and in case the workshop is raided, to avoid any links to family and community members. This kind of production is more often aimed at ‘outsider’ clients, who range from hunters and vigilantes to criminals. These producers rely more heavily on dealers, or a network comprising family members and trusted acquaintances, who assist in the distribution of weapons to potential buyers.

The prices of craft weapons are comparatively lower than for industrially produced weapons in Nigeria. High-end industrially made weapons prices on the black market are reportedly in the range NGN 350,000–450,000 (USD 1,034–1,330) for an AK-47-type assault rifle and NGN 180,000–250,000 (USD 532–739)

for a self-loading pistol. Lower-end craft weapons, in contrast, cost an estimated NGN 25,000 (USD 74) for a single-barrel shotgun and NGN 10,000 (USD 30) for a ‘Dane gun’. Table 2 illustrates that industrially produced firearms and shotguns (single or double barrelled) can cost up to four times as much as a craft-produced weapon with similar characteristics.⁴³

While ammunition is generally thought to be readily available in Nigeria, prices per round fluctuate from NGN 150 to 500 (USD 0.44–1.48) for a shotgun shell and from NGN 250 to 500 (USD 0.74–1.48) for a 9 mm or 7.62 mm round. Analysis of producer responses shows that the average price for a shotgun shell is approximately NGN 300 (USD 0.89), while 9 × 19 mm and different types of 7.62 mm rounds average around NGN 425 (USD 1.26).⁴⁴

Table 2 Differences in minimum and maximum black-market prices reported for craft-produced and industrially made firearms in Nigeria, 2017 (n = 86; multiple responses allowed)

Type of weapon	Craft production		Industrial production	
	Minimum (NGN)	Maximum (NGN)	Minimum (NGN)	Maximum (NGN)
Assault rifle (AK-47-type semi-automatic)	45,000 (USD 133)	60,000 (USD 177)	350,000 (USD 1,034)	450,000 (USD 1,330)
Pistol (Beretta-type, self-loading)	90,000 (USD 266)	120,000 (USD 355)	180,000 (USD 532)	250,000 (USD 739)
Single-barrel shotgun	14,000 (USD 41)	25,000 (USD 74)	40,000 (USD 118)	50,000 (USD 148)
Double-barrel shotgun	30,000 (USD 89)	120,000 (USD 355)	60,000 (USD 177)	120,000 (USD 355)

Source: Analysis of KII responses containing pricing information

Responding to craft production in Nigeria

This section of the Briefing Paper examines the current legal and institutional framework governing small arms craft production in Nigeria, as well as possible control measures.

Legal and institutional framework regulating small arms in Nigeria

Legal framework

A number of legally binding instruments regulate small arms production, transfers, and ownership in Nigeria and are therefore relevant to craft production (see Parker and Wilson, 2016, pp. 27–59).⁴⁵

- **International legal framework**

UN Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Their Parts and Components and Ammunition (UNGA, 2001a). The legally binding ‘Firearms Protocol’ requires states to criminalize the illicit manufacture of firearms, their components, and ammunition, and provides a broad definition of the illicit manufacture of firearms as the production ‘without a licence or authorization from a competent authority of the State party’ and ‘without marking the firearms at the time of manufacture’ (UNGA, 2001a, art. 3(d)(ii)–(iii)). Nigeria ratified the Firearms Protocol in 2006.

ECOWAS Convention on Small Arms and Light Weapons, Their Ammunition and Other Related Materials (ECOWAS, 2006). At the regional level the ECOWAS Convention is the key instrument regulating (and prohibiting) transfers of small arms, ammunition, and other related materials to or from the territories of ECOWAS member states.⁴⁶ It defines control standards for the manufacture of small arms and provides a framework for action to reduce civilian possession of small arms in the West Africa region.⁴⁷ The convention is a legally binding instrument (FES, 2010, p. 3).

- **National legal framework**

The main national instrument governing the manufacture, possession, use, and transfer of small arms in Nigeria is the Firearms Act of 1959 (Nigeria, 1959). Subsidiary laws contributed to the Firearms Act in 1984, 1990, and

2000.⁴⁸ The 1984 Robbery and Firearms (Special Provisions) Decree No. 5 substantially increased the penalties for the use of a firearm in the context of crimes such as robberies and introduced the death penalty for such offences, for example (Nigeria, 1984; Chigozie, 2010, p. 56). But the main body of law regulating small arms still resides in the 1959 legal text, which is considered to be ‘obsolete’ (PRESCOM, 2014).

The Firearms Act states that individuals may possess ‘personal firearms’ if they secure a licence from the inspector-general of police (Nigeria, 1959, para. 4). Personal firearms include shotguns (excluding automatic and semi-automatic models and shotguns with any kind of mechanical action⁴⁹); sporting rifles (that is, ‘rifles of calibres other than those prohibited in item 6 of Part I’) (Nigeria, 1959, Schedule I, Part II.1–II.2); and ‘Air-guns, air-rifles or air-pistols’ (Part II.3). Prohibited weapons include ‘Military rifles, namely those of calibres 7.62 mm, 9 mm, .300 inches and .303 inches’ (Part I.6). A licence is also required to own muzzle-loading firearms such as ‘Dane-guns’ (Part III.1).

The guiding rules for the manufacture and repair of firearms are also provided in the Firearms Act. Section 28 (iv) states that anyone who manufactures, assembles, or repairs small arms unlawfully shall be liable to a minimum sentence of ten years’ imprisonment (Nigeria, 1959).⁵⁰ The act gives the inspector-general of police the power to—with the consent of the governor of a state—grant a permit to any person to carry out the business of manufacturing and repairing firearms. The inspector-general is mandated to maintain a register of such permits in force (Nigeria, 1959, sec. 6, paras. 22–25). This means that craft producers may—at least in theory—register their businesses legally and receive an official authorization to conduct their businesses.

Information on such registries and licences is difficult to come by, however. Currently, craft producers do not appear to receive the required authorization, and licences are no longer provided to blacksmiths for the repair and manufacture of craft weapons, to the authors’ knowledge. None of the producers in the states surveyed for this Briefing Paper was registered by his state’s authorities and licensed, for example.⁵¹ Indeed,

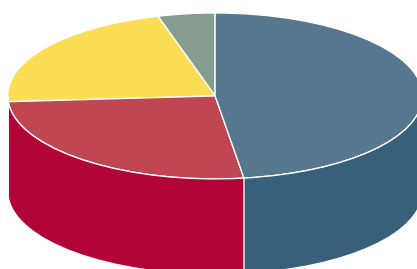
half of the producers who responded to a question about regulation were unaware of the legal provisions governing their trade, or ways of registering for a licence (see Figure 12), although some were aware of the legal framework regulating small arms more generally.

Complicating matters, there is some evidence of licences to own craft weapons being granted to vigilante groups acting in support of the Nigerian state. It has become common to see groups such as the CJTF openly displaying their muzzle-loading ‘Dane guns’ as proof of their willingness to engage in the fight against Boko Haram, for instance (Hays and Jenzen-Jones, forthcoming, p. 49). At least some members of the CJTF in Borno and Adamawa have reportedly been licensed to purchase mostly craft-produced weapons from local blacksmiths (ICG, 2017a, p. 11). In February 2018, however, the inspector-general of the NPF ordered all security forces to recover illegally held weapons in Nigeria, including those held by vigilante groups and neighbourhood watch members (Sahara Reporters, 2018). It remains to be seen how this will be implemented in practice.

To conclude, craft-weapons production poses serious challenges to the implementation of and compliance with relevant legal instruments. As part of an undercover, hidden economy, countries often struggle to gain control over this illicit activity. In Nigeria’s case, this difficulty is exacerbated by strong demand for these weapons and the de facto endorsement by the Federal Government of some forms of armed vigilantism.

Figure 12 Craft producers’ awareness of Nigerian laws and regulations on craft production, 2017 (n = 23)

- No: no knowledge (11)
- Yes: some awareness of legislation and regulation (6)
- Yes: aware of licensing possibility and obligations (5)
- No response (1)



Source: Analysis of producers’ responses in KILs

Institutional framework

The key state institutions⁵² involved in enforcing control of small arms are the NPF, which is the principal law enforcement agency in Nigeria (Stolpe, 2017, p. 23); the State Security Service, which is charged with the prevention and detection of any crime threatening the internal security of the country (Nigeria, 1986, sec. 2(3)); and traditional institutions.⁵³ Traditional rulers play a key role in regulating firearms, especially craft weapons, including by providing government security agencies with information regarding the manufacture and trafficking of weapons to and from their communities.⁵⁴

Fieldwork indicates that in the past there were associations of craft producers in Anambra state, but LEAs pursuing craft producers have disbanded them, especially in Awka.⁵⁵ Interviewees indicated that informal community-based associations of craft producers still exist, but that their purpose now is to share information on law enforcement activities and to warn their members about such activities.⁵⁶

A final institution that is key in Nigeria’s struggle to prevent and reduce the illicit proliferation of firearms is the Presidential Committee on Small Arms and Light Weapons (PRESCOM).⁵⁷ The committee was inaugurated by former president Goodluck Jonathan in April 2013 with a mission to reduce the proliferation of small arms, to create awareness on the impact of small arms abuse, to stop the illegal importation of small arms, and to arrange for the safe disposal of excess stockpiles of such weapons.⁵⁸

Addressing demand for craft weapons: security, sensitization, trust

Research indicates that there are a number of possible ways in which demand for craft weapons might be reduced.

- **Improve security.** A paramount concern for interviewees is the current context of conflict and insecurity in Nigeria and the need for protection and self-defence. Preliminary data from the NSALWS indicates that 49 per cent of respondents nationwide who own a firearm do so for personal protection (53 per cent in urban areas; 46 per cent in rural) and 28 per cent for the protection of property (including livestock) (Small Arms Survey and PRESCOM, 2018).⁵⁹

There is strong evidence to suggest that both actual and perceived insecurity

need to be addressed in order to foster an environment that is conducive to a reduction in firearms, including craft weapons. In a more favourable security environment, weapons collection and destruction programmes under the auspices of state authorities and PRESCOM could provide an avenue for action. Improving the relationship between communities and security providers would need to be a key ingredient of any such programmes (see below).

- **Engage in sensitization and risk-awareness education.** At the global level, risk awareness projects have yielded interesting results in the wider arena of arms control and disarmament. In 2006 a presidential decree in Burundi established the Technical Commission on Civilian Disarmament and the Fight against the Proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons (CTDC), for example, with which DanChurchAid implemented a campaign on raising awareness on small arms proliferation and its impacts on human security in support of a civilian disarmament programme implemented by the CTDC and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) (GICHD, 2012, p. 6). The prior sensitization of the population paved the way for the successful implementation of a ‘weapons-for-development’ programme led by UNDP (GICHD, 2012, p. 6).

Interviews with producers and LEAs in Nigeria indicate that while there is a common understanding that craft weapons are often purchased for self-defence purposes, there is also awareness that the weapons in circulation are used to harm communities and that an institution controlling these weapons should exist.⁶⁰ It may be possible for Nigerian institutions to take advantage of this awareness, as part of a phased approach that includes trust building, enhancing security, control measures, and disarmament campaigns within a well-established framework of communication and exchanges among concerned actors.

- **Improve relations between communities and security providers.** An integral part of enhancing security is improving the relationship between communities and formal security providers, such as the police. When asked to whom respondents reported violence, only 52 per cent of respondents who had experienced violence in their households in the past year

reported it to the police, whereas 32 per cent reported it to traditional leaders, 17 per cent to vigilantes, and 27 per cent to friends or family (multiple answers were permitted) (Small Arms Survey and PRESCOM, 2018). This and other surveys consistently show that households rely heavily on the provision of justice and protection by traditional and informal justice and security providers (CLEEN Foundation, 2014, p. 152).

While the reasons underpinning the lack of trust between communities and formal security providers are beyond the scope of this research, it is important to underscore the role that trust plays as part of a wider agenda of firearms control.

Addressing the supply of craft weapons: criminalization, licensing, and livelihood alternatives

Despite Nigeria’s national legal framework criminalizing the production of unlicensed craft weapons and imposing penalties for infringements of relevant laws, craft weapons are relatively easy and cheap to acquire. A number of measures that could help to control their supply are worth consideration.

- **Implementation of relevant laws.** Even without a revised Firearms Act, existing legal measures could help to stem supply if they are properly implemented. For example, section 28 (iv) of the Firearms Act prohibits the unlawful manufacture or repair of small arms (Nigeria, 1959). The implementation of the law has reportedly led to a reduction of craft production, at least in the case of Anambra state (see Table 1). Producers there report that production has decreased substantially due to police action and increased pressure on them, including seizures of weapons and arrests. LEAs in Nigeria act against the illicit possession of craft weapons by seizing considerable numbers of weapons: police action against criminal users of craft weapons (including armed robbers, kidnappers, and Boko Haram members) has led to almost 2,000 weapons being seized between 2014 and 2017, of which most (1,150) were reportedly craft weapons (Small Arms Survey, 2017). This approach could yield positive results if the security environment were made conducive to

individuals who are willing to renounce the possession of firearms for self-defence purposes.

- **Licensing, marking, and record-keeping measures.** Such measures would permit certain types of production by licensed actors who are registered, possess a licence, and carry out production and repairs according to regulations and laws. For such measures to function, a census of producers at the local level would be paramount, in order to fully understand their number, the type of production capacity they have, and the types of weapons they produce. Registered producers could be required to comply with a range of record-keeping and control measures, including by putting permanent and unique markings on their weapons, as well as keeping proper records of the weapons they have produced, sold, and repaired. Markings would not be a technical challenge for skilled producers, although agreeing on the type of identification would require considerable administrative effort at the state and federal level. Significantly, all surveyed producers, without exception, declared their willingness to submit to potential state regulations and control. As one producer stated:

by regulating [craft production], the government would be able to have a list of producers in each community, initiate mechanism for monitoring their production and even assist in vetting their clients. This would reduce the rate of crimes in the society.⁶¹

Interestingly, almost half of the LEAs interviewed (five out of 11) also said that they favoured an approach that would bring craft production under state control via a licensing and registry system, as opposed to the current practice of pursuing craft producers via criminalization and prohibition.⁶² The downside of this type of measure, however, would be an increase in the number of licensed weapons being produced, and therefore of firearms in circulation. With new profits, lawful producers would be able to invest in better tools and more workers, increasing both production quality and quantity. The potential positive and negative outcomes of such a measure would need to be carefully assessed, in combination with the outcomes of other measures, such as criminalization.

- **Alternative livelihoods for craft producers.** The economic reasons for producing craft weapons and the importance of the income generated indicate that alternative livelihoods may represent an entry point to reduce illicit production in Nigeria. Half of the interviewed producers stated that their main income stems from craft production (48 per cent, $n = 23$) (see Figure 6). Twelve stated that a switch to other activities would be difficult for them, given their lack of other skills, combined with the lack of job opportunities and sustainable income sources, such as farmland. However, the other 11 producers considered such a switch to be feasible and even welcome. The production of farming tools, agriculture, and teaching were among the activities that producers proposed as being viable alternative sources of income.

Conclusion

While the bulk of the research undertaken for this Briefing Paper is not nationally representative, the findings undoubtedly help to advance knowledge on the little-studied area of craft small arms production in Nigeria, as well as suggesting pathways for possible interventions.

The data collected for this research project and the preliminary findings from the NSALWS data show that craft production is an important source of illicit weapons proliferation and that the production of these weapons poses a serious challenge to the Federal Government of Nigeria and state-level authorities. In each of the states surveyed—and reportedly in all states in Nigeria, according to the NSALWS results—craft production takes place, responding to demand from a wide range of users. These weapons are believed to be used in the majority of crimes in Benue and Plateau states.

Crime, insecurity, and conflict are among the most important drivers of demand, necessitating a response that focuses on the security—both real and perceived—of affected communities. Findings from Anambra state show that improved safety in communities can have a direct effect on reducing demand for craft weapons. This in turn can have a positive impact on curbing the supply of such weapons. Some producers who were interviewed would welcome a return to other forms of blacksmithing or income generation if security improved and therefore the need for weapons for protection purposes disappeared.

Demand for and supply of craft weapons are also matters of tradition and pride. In some communities weapons-related traditions are strong and the use of ceremonial and status-related craft small arms may thus be difficult to eradicate. A census, or registration, of such craft producers coupled with the provision of state-controlled licences (and record-keeping measures) could be an innovative way to regulate their trade, and also satisfy the demand for repair services for industrially produced weapons. Nigeria's 1959 Firearms Act provides guiding rules on weapons production and repair by licensed individuals. This opens the door to the possibility of bringing certain types of craft producers under state control, although it would be important to balance the potential outcomes of such a move against the risk of increased production from licensed producers, which would lead to more firearms in circulation.

The type of weapons produced, the materials involved, and the skills acquired for production vary widely across the country. Crude production techniques inherited through family ties yield basic models of muzzle-loading single-shot firearms, whereas more modern welding and technical training yield self-loading pistols that look very much like Beretta pistols. Producers who make simpler designs of craft weapons for hunters and vigilantes are different to the manufacturers who sell more advanced designs to dealers and community leaders. Understanding these differences is also key to developing potential responses to different kinds of producers.

The building of trust among, and outreach to, different types of craft small arms producers to better understand the potential entry points for the control and regulation of the trade would assist the authorities in developing more effective responses. The current focus on the criminalization of craft producers seems to have had mixed results to date. On the one hand, criminalization and the risk of being arrested for producing craft weapons have pushed many producers to work in secluded areas and continue their business underground. On the other hand, action by the police can lead to a reduction of supply and demand, as has reportedly taken place in Anambra state, due to fear of arrests among both producers and end users.

Establishing what combination of holistic measures might produce positive and lasting effects on the craft-weapons trade will require careful adaptation to each specific context of conflict and insecurity, crime, local culture, type of production, and local economy. In-depth

assessments in the geographical areas in which the federal and state governments wish to plan interventions will thus be an important next step in advancing the control of craft weapons in Nigeria. ●

List of abbreviations and acronyms

CJTF	Civilian Joint Task Force
CTDC	Technical Commission on Civilian Disarmament and the Fight against the Proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons (Burundi)
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
KII	Key informant interview
LEA	Law enforcement agency
MNJTF	Multinational Joint Task Force
NGN	Nigerian naira
NPF	Nigerian Police Force
NSALWS	National Small Arms and Light Weapons Survey
PoA	Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects
PRESCOM	Presidential Committee on Small Arms and Light Weapons
PSSM	Physical security and stockpile management
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
USD	United States dollar

Notes

- 1 Unless otherwise stated, in the discussion below the term 'small arms' includes light weapons.
- 2 Boko Haram is frequently translated as 'Western education is forbidden' from the words *haram*, forbidden in Arabic, and *boko*, meaning fake in the Hausa language.
- 3 UNREC (2016, p. 21); Hazen and Horner (2007, p. 33); Onuoha (2011, p. 50); FES (2014, p. 95).
- 4 CAST et al. (2003); Ikelegbe (2017); Berghezan (2016); Nowak and Acko (2017).
- 5 In fact, 'Awka-made' is a generic term used as a denomination for craft weapons in Nigeria, given the fame of the weapons produced in this area during the anti-colonial struggle and later in the Biafran civil war (1967–70) (Ikelegbe, 2017, p. 17).
- 6 The term 'Dane gun' stems from the introduction of Danish-made muzzle-loading flintlock rifles during the early 19th century. Today the term is used to designate craft-produced muzzle-loading rifles in Nigeria.
- 7 Conventional recognized categories of small arms tend to be broad and non-technical in nature; see Parker and Wilson (2016, p. 14) on the established categories.
- 8 'Modern firearms—with the exception of shotguns—primarily feature rifled barrels. Rifling refers to the internal geometry (typically spiral grooves) inside the bore,

- which engages the projectile and cause it to rotate as it is accelerated up the barrel' (ARES, 2017).
- 9 See Jenzen-Jones and Schroeder (forthcoming) for descriptions of the various weapon types and actions discussed in this Briefing Paper.
- 10 In the context of small arms, a *projectile* (bullet) is fired from a firearm; a *propellant* charge, when ignited, generates the gas pressure that propels the projectile out of the barrel of the weapon (ARES, 2017).
- 11 Firearms are generally either manually operated or self-loading: a manually operated firearm 'relies on the user, rather than the potential energy stored within a cartridge, to cycle the weapon'; a self-loading firearm 'uses the potential energy stored in a cartridge to cycle the weapon's action, extracting and ejecting the cartridge case immediately after firing, and chambering a new cartridge from the weapon's magazine' (ARES, 2017).
- 12 Break-action and pump-action types are among the most common 'operating systems' for manually operated firearms (Jenzen-Jones and Schroeder, forthcoming).
- 13 The CJTF was formed as a response to Boko Haram's onslaught on Borno state, and Maiduguri in particular. The Nigerian army quickly recognized the group, comprising civilian vigilantes and reportedly repentant Boko Haram fighters, as a key ally in fighting the insurgency (ICG, 2017a, p. 5).
- 14 Budgetary, access, and security considerations affected the choice of field locations. Borno state, for example, was excluded as a possible location due to security concerns.
- 15 The six newspapers were *Punch*, *Pulse*, *The Nigerian Voice*, *Vanguard*, *The Nation*, and *Leadership*.
- 16 *Ogbunigwe* took many different forms and shapes including hand grenades, land mines and rockets (Umoh, 2011, p. 347).
- 17 The NSALWS was conducted in all 36 Nigerian states and the Federal Capital Territory of Abuja. A total of 8,548 household surveys, 546 LEA surveys, and 105 civil society surveys were conducted.
- 18 The results of this survey will be made publicly available in 2018. The findings of Small Arms Survey and PRESCOM (2018) are based on this survey.
- 19 The weapons categories provided by the NPF are somewhat confusing. There is a special category for locally made weapons, yet it only refers to pistols and 'Dane guns'. There is a possibility that categories such as single- and double-barrelled shotguns may also contain locally made firearms. Despite this shortcoming, the data shows clearly that craft-produced weapons are seized more frequently than other types of weapons.
- 20 It is important to note that the media analysis relies on journalists' interpretations of the types of weapons seized. These may be subject to errors or misidentification.
- 21 For the purposes of the media review, the first crime mentioned in the article was used as the coding category to enable the quantification of crimes or conflict events.
- 22 The MNJTF was initially established in 1998 to fight organized crime in the Lake Chad basin. In 2014 the force was reactivated and strengthened to fight Boko Haram. The five contributing countries to the MNJTF are Benin, Cameroon, Chad, Niger, and Nigeria (Comolli, 2015, p. 110).
- 23 The Niger Delta, for example, has been marred by violence associated with the struggle for self-determination due to frustrations about the distribution of oil revenues. A spate of local kidnappings, thefts, youth criminality, and associated violence, in addition to militias associated with youth emancipation, ethnic minority solidarity, and 'freedom fighters' prompted military interventions and a subsequent amnesty in 2009 (Abdu, 2013, p. 171; see also Amadi, Imoh-Itah, and Obomanu, 2016, p. 180).
- 24 KII with security provider, Abakaliki, Enugu state, June 2017.
- 25 KII with LEA, undisclosed location, Nigeria, 2017.
- 26 KII with producer 4, undisclosed location, Nigeria, 2017.
- 27 KII with Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) official, Abuja, May 2017.
- 28 KII with producer 4, undisclosed location, Nigeria, 2017.
- 29 See Figure 5; see also FES (2014, p. 77).
- 30 KII with National Security Agency, Abuja, June 2017.
- 31 Blacksmiths in all four surveyed states also produce metal items for regular household use such as machetes, metal beds, kitchen utensils, and agricultural tools, in addition to firearms. Other reported sources of revenue include activities such as farming, carpentry, and teaching (Small Arms Survey, 2017).
- 32 Location withheld for security reasons.
- 33 KII with producer 1, undisclosed location, Nigeria, 2017.
- 34 KII with producer 5, undisclosed location, Nigeria, 2017.
- 35 KII with producer 17, undisclosed location, Nigeria, 2017.
- 36 KIIs with producers 6 and 11–15, undisclosed locations, Nigeria, 2017.
- 37 KII with producer 6, undisclosed location, Nigeria, 2017.
- 38 KIIs with producers 16 and 20, undisclosed locations, Nigeria, 2017.
- 39 KIIs with producers 16 and 20, undisclosed locations, Nigeria, 2017.
- 40 KIIs with producers 16 and 20, undisclosed locations, Nigeria, 2017.
- 41 In 30 interviews with LEAs and specialists, 15 interviewees said that craft weapons were purchased via direct contact with producers or dealers.
- 42 KII with producer 21, undisclosed location, Nigeria, 2017.
- 43 'Dane guns' are not included in Table 2 because they are not industrially produced.
- 44 Analysis of KII responses containing pricing information of ammunition in Nigeria.
- 45 See the UN Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All its Aspects (PoA) (UNGA, 2001b) and the International Tracing Instrument (UNGA, 2005), which are politically—but not legally—binding.
- 46 These states are Benin, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Côte d'Ivoire, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, and Togo.
- 47 The ECOWAS Convention entered into force in 2009, upon ratification by the ninth ECOWAS member state (Small Arms Survey, 2016, pp. 44–45).
- 48 These are the Robbery and Firearms (Special Provisions) Decree No. 5, which was promulgated in 1984 (Nigeria, 1984), and later the Robbery and Firearms (Special Provisions) of 1990 (Nigeria, 1990) and its amended version of the Robbery and Firearms (Special Provisions) Act of 2004 (Nigeria, 2004).
- 49 'Mechanical action' covers pump or revolving actions, but not break actions.
- 50 This is in line with the UN PoA and in particular section II, which compels states to 'put in place, where they do not exist, adequate laws, regulations and administrative procedures to exercise effective control over the production of small arms and light weapons within their areas of jurisdiction' (UNGA, 2001b, sec. II.2).
- 51 There is evidence that at least some craft producers used to mark their products. After sustained police action against producers (due to weapons being linked to crimes), this practice stopped and further attempts to reintroduce it have not been successful (Hazen and Horner, 2007, p. 41).
- 52 A range of other institutions deal with small arms control in one way or another. These include the Nigeria Customs Service, Nigeria Immigration Service, Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps, National Intelligence Agency, and Defence Intelligence Agency.
- 53 The term 'traditional institutions' refers to indigenous political systems and arrangements in a community.
- 54 One traditional ruler in Plateau state said that in most cases traditional rulers provided 'intelligence' to security agencies on the trafficking of small arms (Stolpe, 2017, p. 27).
- 55 These were community-based institutions regulating the work and activities of craft-weapons producers in Anambra state.
- 56 KII with producer 12, undisclosed location, Nigeria, 2017.
- 57 In January 2018 an announcement was made that PRESCOM will be transformed into the National Commission on Small Arms and Light Weapons, as prescribed by the ECOWAS Convention (art. 24.1) (Essen, 2018).
- 58 This Briefing Paper is part of the Small Arms Survey's wider support to PRESCOM's efforts.
- 59 NSALWS results will be made publicly available in 2018. The findings of Small Arms Survey and PRESCOM (2018) are based on this survey.
- 60 KII with LEA 2, Benue state, June 2017; KII with specialist 2, Adamawa state, May 2017.
- 61 KII with producer 14, undisclosed location, Nigeria, 2017.
- 62 KIIs with LEAs 1 and 5, Adamawa state; LEA 2, Benue state; LEAs 1 and 7, Plateau state.

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About the Small Arms Survey

The Small Arms Survey is a global centre of excellence whose mandate is to generate impartial, evidence-based, and policy-relevant knowledge on all aspects of small arms and armed violence. It is the principal international source of expertise, information, and analysis on small arms and armed violence issues, and acts as a resource for governments, policy-makers, researchers, and civil society. It is located in Geneva, Switzerland, and is a project of the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies.

The Survey has an international staff with expertise in security studies, political science, law, economics, development studies, sociology, and criminology, and collaborates with a network of researchers, partner institutions, non-governmental organizations, and governments in more than 50 countries.

For more information, please visit: www.smallarmssurvey.org.

Contact details

Small Arms Survey
Maison de la Paix
Chemin Eugène-Rigot 2E
1202 Geneva
Switzerland

t +41 22 908 5777

f +41 22 732 2738

e info@smallarmssurvey.org

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