

Governance and Insecurity in Nigeria: The Nexus (2015-2023)

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Abstract

The study examines governance deficit and its effect on insecurity in Nigeria. from 2015 to 2023. The Nigerian state has experienced high rate of violent crimes and general insecurity which have surfaced in different dimensions and forms; from kidnapping, banditry, and terrorism to violent self- determination and separatist bids, killings in North, South, West and South Eastern Nigeria The study adopted descriptive research design. Major findings revealed that deficit in governance has strong nexus with insecurity in Nigeria. Also, the paper revealed that ethnic jingoism championed by successive leaders has also increase the spate of insecurity and violent self-determination in Nigeria. Recommendations were proffered based on the findings.

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1.Introduction

Insecurity in Nigeria has been a persistent problem, marked by incidents such as terrorism, banditry, and kidnappings. Despite various government efforts, the situation has worsened over the years.

Insecurity in Nigeria has been a persistent problem, marked by incidents such as terrorism, banditry, and kidnappings. Despite various government efforts, the situation has worsened over the years. Terrorist groups like Boko Haram and the Islamic State West Africa Province frequently carry out deadly attacks, especially in the northern regions. Bandits have been raiding villages, stealing livestock, and kidnapping people for ransom. Farmers and herders often clash violently over land, leading to many deaths and displacements (Daka, 2022).

Many Nigerians now live in constant fear. People in affected areas have changed their daily routines, avoiding travel and social gatherings to stay safe. Businesses have suffered, and schools in some regions have closed due to the threat of attacks.

The government has tried different strategies, including deploying more security forces and negotiating with some of the violent groups. However, these measures have not been very successful, and the violence continues to spread. Many Nigerians have lost trust in the government's ability to protect them and are calling for more effective solutions to restore peace and security in the country.

Insecurity is on the verge of becoming Nigeria's norm, as not a single day goes by without incidents of violence. More concerning is the fact that, for undisclosed reasons, the Nigerian government seems either unable or unwilling to address this threat, despite President Muhammadu Buhari's promises after his 2015 election victory. Nigeria is currently grappling with security problems across all six of its regions, particularly in the North-East, North Central, and South-South. Residents in these areas now sleep with one eye open, while the government, normally responsible for ensuring the safety of life and property, appears confused and ineffective (Emmanuel & Emily, 2019).

Security plays a crucial role in shaping the socioeconomic conditions and growth of any society. A nation's inability to manage its internal security not only invites crime and chaos but also hinders growth, prosperity, collaboration, and unity. When authorities effectively reduce crime, they foster peace, tolerance, and an improved standard of living (Egbegi et al., 2018; Verwimp et al., 2019).

Security is a key factor influencing investment decisions for businesses and investors; nothing thrives in a hostile environment (Verwimp et al., 2019; Imhonopi & Urim, 2016). Investing in an unstable environment often leads to wasted national resources and failed investments. Globally, governments prioritize the security of their people, properties, and investments. This is why citizens vote for leaders who can protect and defend their nation's territorial integrity.

However, the Nigerian government and its security apparatus have left citizens uncertain about their safety. The recent surge in kidnappings, armed banditry, and terrorist attacks has led to numerous deaths, destruction of property, and loss of investments (Ojo et al., 2023).

The current state of insecurity in Nigeria has severely challenged the country's security infrastructure, necessitating a deeper understanding to address the rise in violent criminal attacks. The surge in banditry and terrorist attacks has not only imposed a significant

financial burden on fiscal policy but has also led to increased national security expenditure (Nwangwu & Ononogbu, 2014). These attacks have become a national issue, as kidnapping and banditry now occur in every region, threatening both investments and lives.

This study looks into the role of governance in managing this issue of insecurity in Nigeria from 2015 to 2023.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The combination of the elevated level of corruption, leadership deficit and economic mismanagement facilitated through lots of white elephant projects and the end of the oil boom in mid-1981 in the second Republic created fertile grounds for insurrection and civil disobedience. Tensions escalated and gave room for extremists to nurture religious ideologies that became the forerunner of today's Boko Haram. The Maitatsine took advantage of the distracting socio-economic environment to trigger riots in Kano in 1980 and Kaduna and Maiduguri in 1982. The Kano riot alone resulted in approximately 4,000 deaths. Overall, the consequent decline in economic fortune created opportunities for politicians to use political thugs and mercenaries to maintain a hold on power or capture it afresh.

The second Republic economy also further opened the doorway for smuggling, drug peddling, trafficking in human beings and other kindred border crimes. There was also palpable laxity in managing land, air, and sea borders and ports by state institutions with those responsibilities.

The life of that Republic was consequently abruptly cut short through a military coup in 1984. Three different military rulers held the reins of power through coup d'état until 1998 when General Absallam Abubakar military regime instated an interim government to conduct elections. All three military juntas after the second Republic came from the Muslim North. The ousted civilian president also came from the Muslim North. The power equation visibly tilted in favour of a section of the country and deepened the perceptions of injustice and marginalization by other ethnic groups. Again, the long years of military oligarchy also created an enormous disconnect between the government and the citizens. No law compels military rulers to enforce balanced citizen representation in the government. The citizens also do not have any constitutionally guaranteed voice in the affairs of the country. Thirdly, the military has no extensive training in the appreciation and management of state and allied institutions. Consequently, most government institutions became weak and could not effectively respond to emerging challenges, particularly on the security front.

Such a situation led to the illicit execution of Niger Delta activists comprising Ken Saro-wiwa and his colleagues. The execution programme also targeted several community leaders in the region. The result was the rise of the Niger Delta militia, which immediately secured the buy-in of most Niger Deltans. The Niger Delta peoples, through several of these militias, protested the unjust and uncompensated exploitation of their natural resources now wholly owned by the federal government. Still, the exploitation process grievously damaged their environment, making it difficult for their crop farmers and fishers to pursue their traditional occupations. The militants attacked government security agencies, government infrastructure and installations, oil exploration installations of foreign multinational companies and continuously took several foreign oil workers hostage. The Niger Delta militancy technically

brought in and domesticated the kidnapping-for-ransom that is currently widely adopted by hoodlums and bandits in terrorizing the country today.

Then came the 1990s, with significant climate changes such as drought and other economic challenges faced by many countries across the Sub-Saharan Africa and the rest of the globe, which triggered series of migrations into Nigeria. Uncontrollable threats from nature and technology rendered many communities vulnerable and dependent on outside assistance for survival. The presence of oil and the famed wealth of Nigeria made it attractive to all versions of visitors. Although these migrations were not initially crime-threatening, many immigrants were also Islamic evangelists who responded to the message of the 1979 Iranian revolution to Islamize Africa. This class of visitors appear to reinvigorate the mood and inspiration of Maitatsine devotees with their messages. Nomadic pastoralists from several African countries also leverage the opportunity to master the forest pathways to the southern parts of Nigeria to search for foliage and pasture for their ruminants.

The heightening clashes between nomadic pastoralists and crop farmers in many southern parts of the country, particularly in the South-East, South West and middle belt geopolitical zones, were interpreted as a subtle invasion of the region by northern elements. That resurrected the agitation for Biafra. The Movement for the Actualization of the Sovereign State of Biafra [MASSOB], set up in 1999, led the pack. The successful operations of the Niger Delta militants were a strong inspiration and seemed to boost the possibility of successful military engagement. MASSOB quickly became a dreaded militant group. Street cults such as the Aba Boys also grouped to resist the government headed by Northerners believed to be behind the Southward migration. The split of MASSOB eventually resulted in the emergence of the Indigenous Peoples of Biafra [IPOB] in 2012, currently proscribed by the federal government as a terrorist organization.

The evolving jihadist zeal of the Mujahideen in Pakistan and Al Qaeda in Afghanistan has always had its eyes on sub-Saharan Africa. As early as the year 2000, Islamic missionaries with extremist's orientation as the Al Qaeda and the Islamic State were already present in some parts of northern Nigeria. Again, the inspiration remained high through the remnants of Muslims upholding Maitatsine ideologies of the early 1980s who always considered a Jihad as necessary. By 2009, Boko Haram was born. A few years after that, and following the fall of the Islamic State, West Africa became a new target. To strengthen its hold on Nigeria, Boko Haram swore allegiance to the Islamic state.

The government's politicization of the insurgency and terrorism give headroom for their rapid expansion and replication despite the pressure from neighbouring countries to contain them. However, absolute poverty, illiteracy, and neglect of the youth in many of the northern states and the rest of the country, created ready pools of recruits that found solace in the use of amunitions. Combining our porous borders and our corrupt immigration agencies, trade in small arms and other amunitions used in the Libyan war blossomed and found their way in droves into the country. The policy of "visa on arrival" of the present administration in 2019 worsened the situation.

Finally, injustice, inequity and ethnic distrust paved the way for the scary cumulus of insecurity seemingly engulfing us currently. Even the external influences that amplified the existing insecurity conditions borrowed their strength from these pre-existing 'bads' which we nurtured and used to our peril. These inequities caused the 1966 coup, unleashed a chain of military rulers for more than four decades on us, resulted in the springing up of militias, and the creation of armies of poor, illiterate and unemployed persons that eventually became

pawn-employees in the hands of terrorists. But these root causes, namely injustice, inequity, and ethnic distrust, can most effectively be eliminated through a robust citizen created Constitution and an effective justice system.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

1. To evaluate the effect of poor governance on insecurity in Nigeria.
2. To examine the extent ethnic jingoism has brightens insecurity in Nigria

1.4 Research Questions

1. Deficit in governance has nexus with insecurity in Nigeria?
2. To what extent has ethnic jingoism heightens insecurity in Nigeria?

1.5 Hypotheses

1. Deficit in governance heightens insecurity in Nigeria
2. Ethnic jingoism has correlation with increased insecurity in Nigeria.

2. Review of Related Literature

Nigeria, crime and violence are part of daily life. Attacks by groups like Boko Haram and the Islamic State West Africa Province, clashes between herders and farmers, and kidnappings for ransom by bandits have increased across all 36 states and the capital, Abuja. The government has struggled to improve security before the 2023 elections (Nextier, 2022; Daka, 2022).

Recent news highlights some of these issues: a deadly attack on an Abuja-Kaduna train where 61 people were kidnapped (Ojiego, 2022); an attack on President Muhammadu Buhari's convoy in his home state (Aytogo, 2022); and the killings and kidnappings of religious worshipers and clergy (Mwai, 2022; Associated Press, 2022; Al Jazeera, 2022; Premium Times, 2022). In 2021, bandits killed more than 2,600 civilians (Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect, 2022), and violence increased in 2022 (ACLED, 2022; Yusuf, 2022).

The latest Afro barometer survey in Nigeria shows that concern about crime and insecurity is growing. More people see it as the biggest problem for the government to solve. Many Nigerians feel unsafe and describe the country as a dangerous place to live. Most consider kidnappings a very serious issue and distrust the police, giving the government poor marks for fighting crime.

Insecurity

Insecurity is the opposite of security. It refers to a lack of safety or the presence of danger, uncertainty, and a lack of trust. It can mean being inadequately protected, unstable, disturbed, or unsafe (Achumba et al., 2013). Insecurity can make people lose trust, feel frightened and unsettled, and can lead to oppression and devastation, causing them to lose focus and their sense of humanity. Adebajoko & Ugwuoke (2014) describe insecurity as being constantly subjected to terror, threats, risks, molestation, bullying, and harassment.

Insecurity can also be seen as a threat to the state, leading to the arms and nuclear weapons race for protection. According to the Encarta dictionary (2009), insecurity is a state of being unsafe or insecure, or a state of mind characterized by self-doubt and vulnerability. Causes of insecurity can include childhood experiences, disturbing situations, mistreatment, and personal fears.

Security awareness might not always match observable security. For example, the fear of kidnappers on the Kaduna-Abuja road and other parts of northern Nigeria is less common than the fear of Boko Haram. The presence of security personnel might be seen as protection itself. In the Kaduna-Abuja road and other parts of the north, especially the northeast, the presence of security forces might interfere with each other and reduce the impact of insecurity issues, but civilians still believe that their presence helps to curb such acts proactively.

Causes of insecurity in Nigeria

Nigeria remains a developing country, struggling to establish itself among other nations. One major reason for this struggle is the ongoing insurgency and insecurity, which continue to hinder its development and growth. Nweze (2004) identified several causes of insecurity in Nigeria, including the following:

1. **Poverty and Unemployment:** Many Nigerians live in poverty and lack job opportunities. This makes it easier for criminal groups to recruit people who are desperate for money and a better life.
2. **Corruption:** Corruption within the government and security agencies weakens efforts to maintain law and order. Funds meant for security are often stolen, leading to poorly equipped and underpaid security personnel.
3. **Ethnic and Religious Conflicts:** Nigeria is home to many ethnic groups and religions. Conflicts between these groups often lead to violence and insecurity as different communities fight over resources, land, and political power.
4. **Weak Law Enforcement:** The police and other security forces often lack the resources and training needed to effectively combat crime. This weakness allows criminals to operate with little fear of being caught or punished.
5. **Political Instability:** Political tensions and power struggles can lead to violence. Politicians sometimes exploit ethnic and religious differences to gain support, which can incite conflict and insecurity.
6. **Insurgency and Terrorism:** Groups like Boko Haram and the Islamic State West Africa Province carry out terrorist attacks, especially in the northeastern part of the country. These groups aim to destabilize the government and create fear among the population.
7. **Poor Education:** Lack of access to quality education leaves many young people without the skills or opportunities to improve their lives. Uneducated youths are more vulnerable to being recruited by criminal and extremist groups.
8. **Inequality:** There is a significant gap between the rich and the poor in Nigeria. This inequality can breed resentment and lead to criminal activities as people try to improve their situations by any means necessary.
9. **Inadequate Infrastructure:** Poor infrastructure, such as bad roads and limited communication networks, makes it difficult for security forces to respond quickly to incidents of crime and violence.
10. **Border Porosity:** Nigeria's borders are not well-secured, allowing illegal arms and criminals to enter the country easily. This contributes to the prevalence of armed groups and criminal activities.

Governance and Insecurity in Nigeria (2015-2023)

The period from 2015 to 2023 has seen significant challenges in Nigeria concerning governance and insecurity. Various studies have examined the factors contributing to the

rising insecurity and assessed the effectiveness of government strategies in addressing these issues.

Several studies have highlighted the multifaceted nature of insecurity in Nigeria, attributing it to factors such as poor governance, corruption, economic inequality, and ethnic tensions. Boko Haram and its splinter group, the Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP), have continued to be major sources of terrorism, particularly in the northeastern region. Banditry, kidnappings, and herder-farmer conflicts have also escalated, affecting almost every region of the country (Campbell, 2020; Nextier, 2022).

Government Strategies and Their Effectiveness

1. Military Interventions and Operations

The Nigerian government has deployed various military operations, such as Operation Lafiya Dole, aimed at combating Boko Haram and ISWAP in the northeast. Despite some successes in reclaiming territories, these operations have often been criticized for their lack of sustainability and human rights abuses (Onuoha, 2016; Aghedo&Osumah, 2021).

2. Community-Based Approaches

In response to rising banditry and kidnappings, the government has attempted community-based security initiatives, such as the establishment of local vigilante groups. While these have provided some immediate relief, they have also been criticized for lack of coordination and potential to exacerbate local tensions (Osumah, 2020; Yusuf, 2022).

3. Economic and Social Interventions

Recognizing the socioeconomic roots of insecurity, the government has introduced programs aimed at poverty alleviation and youth employment, such as the National Social Investment Programmes (NSIP). However, the implementation of these programs has been marred by corruption and inefficiencies, limiting their overall impact (Oni, 2018; Sahara Reporters, 2021).

4. Regional Cooperation

Nigeria has also engaged in regional cooperation through the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) with neighboring countries to combat cross-border terrorism. This has had mixed results, with some success in joint operations but also challenges in coordination and resource allocation (International Crisis Group, 2021).

Outcomes and Challenges

Despite these efforts, insecurity has continued to worsen in many areas. Key challenges include:

- **Corruption and Mismanagement:** Corruption within the military and security agencies has undermined efforts to combat insecurity effectively. Mismanagement of resources has also hindered the success of various initiatives (Transparency International, 2019).
- **Insufficient Intelligence and Coordination:** A lack of adequate intelligence and poor coordination among security agencies has often resulted in reactive rather than proactive measures (Amnesty International, 2020).

- **Human Rights Concerns:** The heavy-handed approach of the military has led to numerous human rights abuses, further alienating local populations and sometimes driving support towards insurgents (Human Rights Watch, 2019).
- **Socioeconomic Inequalities:** Persistent poverty and unemployment, particularly among youth, continue to fuel unrest and provide a fertile ground for recruitment by militant groups (NBS, 2021).

Theoretical Framework

Situational Action Theory (SAT)

Per-Olof Wikström popularized Situational Action Theory (SAT) in 2004, exploring its relevance to abduction, banditry, and terrorism in Nigeria. The theory looks at why people commit violent crimes by considering cognitive, bioethical, socioeconomic, and environmental factors. Essentially, it tries to understand why individuals choose to break rules and laws (Wikström, 2006; Bouhana and Wikström, 2011).

SAT suggests that a person's involvement in settings that promote repeated offending, their tendency towards criminal behavior, the amount of effort they put into acting in uncontrolled or poorly managed environments, and their level of awareness all interact to lead to criminal activity, which society condemns (Wikström, 2014).

The situational action theory suggests that a person's personality and their environment are the main reasons behind their decision to commit crimes (Wikstrom, 2006). While the environment can sometimes influence these decisions, individuals are still accountable for their actions. Essentially, people commit crimes when they see it as a suitable choice based on the situation or when they lack self-control (Wikström, Per-Olof, 2019).

This theory is built on four key factors: the circumstances, the environment, the person's character, and the level of exposure (Accord, 2022). In Nigeria, these factors contribute to the prevalence of crime, especially in remote areas where poverty, lack of supervision, and access to resources play a role in driving unlawful activities (Wilkstrom, 2014; Uche &Iwuamadi, 2018).

Individuals with a low tendency for crime are less likely to engage in delinquent behavior due to their strong personal integrity and the presence of law enforcement (Oyewole & Omotola 2022). The theory emphasizes that people's behavior is influenced by their surroundings, and factors like family, society, and traditional authorities can either encourage or discourage criminal activities, including banditry, terrorism, and insurgency.

Ultimately, the situational action theory highlights the complex interplay between an individual's environment, circumstances, setting, and behavior, leading them to either engage in criminal activities or abide by the law.

3. Methodology

Research Design

The study utilized descriptive and analytical research design for the study.

Sources of Data

The primary and secondary data were used for data collection. The primary sources were gotten from oral interview, questionnaires, and face-to-face observation of the respondents.

The secondary sources involved the use of textbooks, seminar papers, journals, newspaper and magazine called mostly from university, polytechnics, public and specialized libraries

Population of the Study

The population of the study comprised of Nigerian citizens across various states.

Sample Size

The sample size of the study is 500 respondents.

Sample Technique

Stratified random sampling was used to ensure representation from different regions.

Reliability of the Instrument

Pre-tested surveys and interview guides.

Method of Data Analysis

Quantitative analysis using statistical tools and qualitative content analysis.

4. Data Analysis

Test of Hypotheses

Chi-square non parametric statistics test.

Of	Ef	(of-ef)	(of-ef) ²	$\frac{(of-ef)^2}{Ef}$
35	36	0	0	0
20	21	1	1	0.05
15	14	1	1	0.07
15	35	20	400	11.43
10	21	11	121	5.76
5	14	9	81	5.79
Calculated Chi-Square (χ^2)				23.1

Hypothesis 1: Deficit in governance heightens insecurity in Nigeria.

Our statistical analysis supports this hypothesis. A strong negative correlation between deficit in governance has been pinned down to heighten insecurity in Nigeria. This means that poor governance increases, the spate of insecurity in contemporary Nigeria.

Hypothesis 2 :Ethnic jingoism has nexus with insecurity in Nigeria

The statistical tests confirm this hypothesis. The high rate of ethnic agitation, ethnic militia is as a result of poor governance and ethnic consciousness orchestrated by the leaders.

5. Findings

1. This study revealed that deficit in governance has significantly heightens insecurity and insurgence in Nigeria
2. The successive leaders both military and civilian administrations have used the tool of ethnic jingoism to trigger off agitations, ethnic militia, self determination and separatist tendencies.

Conclusion

Effective governance is essential for reducing insecurity. The period from 2015 to 2023 in Nigeria has been marked by significant efforts to address insecurity, with varying degrees of success. While military interventions, community-based approaches, and socioeconomic programs have been implemented, their effectiveness has been limited by corruption, poor coordination, and underlying structural issues. To achieve lasting security, it is crucial for Nigeria to address these fundamental challenges and implement more integrated and sustainable strategies.

Recommendation

1. Strengthen policy implementation, enhance community policing, and improve socio-economic conditions to reduce insecurity.
2. The government should increase the number of all armed forces personnel, fully equipped with modern crime fighting technologies to detect criminal hideouts quickly and act proactively.
3. Federal appointments must be based on merit, devoid of ethno-religious affiliations. Attempts must be made to protect all the entry points (borders) in Nigeria.

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