

**Insecurity Problems and Socio-Economic Development in Nigeria: An
Historical Reassessment, 1999-2017**

By Peter Adebayo and Adewale Adepoju

Abstract

The challenges of insecurity and its devastating effects on socio-economic development in Nigeria especially since 1999 when Nigeria's nascent democracy began have remained an intriguing one. Indeed, the various problems related to the challenges of insecurity such as terrorism, kidnapping and so on as they affect socio-economic development in Nigeria raises a lot of issues, viz: What are the main causes of these problems of insecurity in Nigeria and how have they affected socio-economic development, why is the Nigerian government so proactive in tackling the issue of insecurity; why has government efforts continued to fail, what pragmatic and practical measures can the government take in curtailing the issue so as to enhance development? It is against the background of the aforementioned issues that this chapter reassesses the problems of insecurity challenges and socio-economic development in Nigeria. The findings of the study are that government needs to adapt a more pragmatic, creative and practical approach in tackling the issue. The methodology adopted for this chapter is based on historical cut multidisciplinary approach. It is hoped that the chapter will contribute to the literature on peace and security studies as well as development studies.

Key words: Democracy, Insecurity; Socio-Economic Development; Nigeria

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Introduction

In modern history, internal strife has burdened Africa's most populous nation, Nigeria. After independence, Nigeria experienced frequent coups and long periods of autocratic military rule from 1966 until 1999 when a democratic civilian government was established. The end of Nigerian civil war in 1970 brought about a peaceful atmosphere in the country, there was peace and freedom to move without threat, properties of citizens were safe due to watch of security agencies like the police, soldiers and vigilante groups. The several ethnic groups were at peace and Nigerians worked together to promote peace and socio-economic development. However, this peace was short lived, since the beginning of the first republic in 1999, Nigeria has faced series of security threats that constantly crumbles her socio economic development. Ethnic tensions, religious differences, unemployment and numerous social and political grievances fuel unrests in Nigeria, thereby creating flashpoints for violence and subsequently, insecurity in the country.

Security, according to Nwagboso (2012) is the act of being safe from harm or danger, the defense, protection and preservation of values, and the absence of threats to acquired values. Adejumo (2011) also opines that that security is the act of keeping peace within the governing territories. Accordingly, Adebakin,(2012) also viewed security as freedom from danger or threats, and the ability of a nation to protect and develop itself, promote and cherish values and legitimate interests and enhance the wellbeing of its people. This can be maintained through internal security system. Usually, internal security system in any society is very important because it is use to prevent violence and criminal activities in different societies. Internal security also ensures freedom of people from any criminal disturbances and ensures the absence of criminal tendencies which can undermine internal cohesion and co-operate existence of the nation and its ability to maintain its core values and meet the legitimate aspiration of the people. In general terms, security is the act of seeing the survival of all and sundry in the society. It is the search to avoid, prevent, reduce, or resolve violence and conflict in any society. Usually, general peace and security in any society is associated with lack of violence, absence of civil disorder and insurgency to mention but a few. However, this study attempts to discuss the origin and causes of insecurity and violence in Nigeria and its effect on socio-economic development.

Origin and Causes of Insecurity in Nigeria

According to Ali (2013) the dread of insecurity in Nigeria is on the expansion and this has been intensified by the rising influxes of terrorism oppression since the nation came back to democratic control in 1999. Vicious wrongdoing has a root and history in Nigeria, and could be followed back to the period from 1960 to 1970. Wheare (1963) conceptualizes federalism as an established division of energy between two levels of government that are independent in their individual ranges of prominence. Lamentably, the federal structure granted to Nigeria at independent did not comply with Professor K.C. Wheare's principles of federalism as an arrangement of government where two levels of government exist with each sovereign in its sphere of jurisdiction (Awotayo et al, 2013).

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The discontinuation of civilian rule by the military and the subsequent burden of military command structure in the federation set the tone for the mutilation of Nigeria's federalism. Consequently, the act of federalism in Nigeria has been misshaped by overpowering predominance of the federal government that conveys national assets to lower level government at its own particular impulses and whims (Ewetan, 2011). Since independence, the urge for genuine federalism, monetary and political restructuring by various ethnic nationalities in Nigeria has not lessened. These fomentations have added to vicious insubordinate responses by bothered ethnic gatherings in the nation, imperiling the security, solidarity, and corporate presence of Nigeria as one nation. A Federalism that undermines the freedom and independence of its unifying units will only achieve strife, danger to national union and peace, and extreme disintegration (Ali, 2013; Adamu, 2005) Insecurity difficulties can be followed to the early years of military rule when vast amounts of arms were imported into the nation for the utilization of the military aid and after the Nigerian civil war, some of which got into the hand of civilians. Not long after the civil war these arms were utilized by regular citizens and ex-military men for underhanded purposes, for example, outfitted burglary. There was additionally the group of jobless young people some of whom lost their livelihood amid the civil war.

The level of frailty in the country reached disturbing heights during a long time of military rule starting from 1970 amid which civilians obtain arms and light weapons for individual protection. Some of these arms and light weapons got under the control of jobless young people who utilized them for degenerating reasons While a few analysts ascribe youth viciousness to peer group impact and other mental variables related with growing up, others underscored the effect of political and monetary factors, for example, ethnic tumult, political instability, joblessness, Structural Adjustment Program (SAP) as triggers of brutal response among the young. Many researchers have recognized a few reasons for insecurity and frailty in Nigeria that are antagonistic to socio-economic and national development (Ali, 2013; Okorie, 2011; Jega, 2002; Salawu, 2010; Onyishi, 2011; Ezeoba, 2011; Lewis, 2002). These causes have been ordered into internal and external causes. In Nigeria the internal reasons for instability posture significant test to socio-economic advancement than the external factors. The cause of insecurity in Nigeria according to Okereke (2012) can be distinguished among the following factors;

Internal Security Disorder

Usually, internal security rest on the authority of interior minister and defense minister in the federation. They are to initiate and supervise the mode of operation by the police and other security agents in the country to ensure that peace and harmonious living exist in every nooks and crannies of the country. More so, in different states and local government areas of this country, the governors and chairmen as the chief security officers are to maintain and sustain the security situation in their territory. This can be done by making sure that the law enforcement agencies deployed to their areas do their work diligently. However, in most cases, many of these security agents according to Iygeal (2012) sometimes seem to be ignorant of what is happening around them but depend on information from the general public before there action. Sometimes, some of them may hear about violence and criminal activities but for the fear of death may neglect their action resulting to security disorder by some security agents in the country. Usually, this type of security disorder is very disastrous to the security situation in the country.

Poor System of Governance and the Concentration of Political Power to the Center

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In any economy, government activities are expected to agree with norms and aspirations of the people within the area of governance. This is because, for effective administration to take place, government is challenged to focus attention mostly on programmes and policies that have direct bearing on the teeming population. However, more often than not, some political office holders use to neglect their promises during campaign after being elected into power and concentrate on activities that can enriches their pockets. This poor attitude and negligence, often results to anger among people and leads to insecurity in many part of the country (Iygeal 2012). Also, most of the government functions are concentrated at the seat of the government which is usually in the headquarters either of the federal, state or local governments. In this case, high security may be maintained in the center while people living in the hinterland are left with little or no protection. This according to Nwagboso (2012) can create a lot of security threat to the hinterland.

Weak Judicial System, Injustice, Nepotism and the Culture of Impunity

According to Fukuyama (2004), some people commit all manner of crimes and get away with it scot-free. For instance, a rich man or some people in high authority can commit a lot of atrocity and get away with it because of nepotism and impunity but ordinary person is punished for a trivial offense. This type of favouritism in Nigeria legal system is detrimental to professionalism of legal practice for better service delivery (Okorie 2011).

Bribery and Corruption

Bribery and corruption according to Fukuyama (2004) is one of the major problems confronting Nigeria economy. Most people that occupy strategic positions in the administration of this country take advantage of their positions to loot the treasure of the government without query of molestation. In fact, most of them embezzle through inflated contracts to an increasing army of party loyalists who have neither the desire nor the competence to execute their contracts, to over invoicing, consumption of escalating salaries of grossly over-staffed and unproductive public servant and a host of others without queries or harassment. This type of practice have made some elites to believe that justice can be bought or sold in this country depending on one's bargaining power (Nwadiolor 2011).

State of Origin/ Indigeneship Syndrome or the “Quota System”

Most Nigerians identify themselves with their tribe or state of origin rather than as a Nigerian any where they live or find themselves. Usually, a person born and bred in an area and whose parents and grand-parents are also born in that area but are originally from another place, are still seen as none indigene. Such people may be tolerated in the place but in most cases they may not be entitled to some of the privileges with the „owners“ of the land. Also, the quota system syndrome in Nigeria society has generated a lot of problems in employment opportunity and political appointments. This is so because most political appointments and employment opportunities in the country according to Okorie (2011) are based on god fathers and whom you know instead of the so called quota system. From this scenario therefore, the indigeneship and quota system syndrome has a lot of threat in security situation, most especially if there is agitation between indigene and none indigenes on political appointment and employment opportunity in certain area. This can trigger a lot of anger and result to violence and clash in some areas of the country (Okorie 2011).

Wasteful Resources

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Iygeal (2012) also states that some individuals in Nigeria are power-brokers and are stronger than the government. They see themselves as untouchables and boast about themselves. Even if contracts are awarded to them in any part of the country, such contracts are paid for without execution. Likewise because of personal aggrandizement, some political office holders award contracts to themselves without execution. This attitude leads to wasteful resources by the government. Sometimes if the government uses force on them to return such money embezzled using law enforcement agents like the Police, Economic & Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), Independent Corrupt Practices Commission (ICPC) etc, permission and clearance or permission "have to be obtained from their so-called godfathers or powerful individual involved (Onouha2011) . Likewise, unscrupulous money-bags and criminals are celebrated because of their wealth without asking how and where the wealth is acquired (Okorie 2011). This behaviour results to a lot of wasteful resources in the country.

Religious Fanatics

Most religious groups in Nigeria both Islamic and Christian religion preaches peace and unity but some religious extremist believe that violence and destruction is the only way to achieve heaven. Good example of this set is Boko Haram insurgency. Current and general state of insecurity in most part of the country today is weighted to different report of Boko Haram (Ezeoha 2011). However, the first serious stage of insecurity in the country was that of Niger Delta crisis, since that was resolved, several acts of bombings and killings in all nook and crannies of the North by some religious extremist, Boko Haram results. Also, the carnage between ethnic Birom and the Hausa/Fulani in Jos, and the political violence that followed immediately after the 2011 Election, mostly in the Northern part of the country, have further cemented the insecure state of the country (Okorie 2011). Starting with the usual religious/ethnic oriented conflicts, to the Jos ethnic/religious/political conflict of 2008, regrettably, the Northern states have shown that security of persons and properties is still far from being secured (Bello (2012). However, one may believe that there are elements of theocratic opinionated ambitions in the current crisis which started in Bauchi and engulfed other states in the North. This is so because the demand by the fundamentalist groups Boko Haram's for the removal of western behavioural pattern may have been masterminded by some unscrupulous elements in the country which is ridiculous to the entire nation.

Political Praise Singers

Political praise singer sometimes aggravate anger on the populace when they see that the praises and encomium poured on some political office holder does not commensurate with the work they do in the society. Thus, such anger could result to violence and destruction of lives and properties in such area (Okorie 2011). Such crises have happened in different part of this country. Usually, the political praise singers are often sponsored by some people in power who used dubious means to gaining power. In this case therefore, the political praise singers use such praises to confuse the populace about the activities of the governance. This attitude is very disastrous to the development of the country because it encourages some people in governance to divert funds meant for development into private pockets at the expense of human and capital resource development.

Unemployment

Unemployment situation in Nigeria is worrisome. Most educational institution in the country turns out thousands of graduates every year but there are no institutional arrangements for

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their employment (Okorie 2011). However, in a bid to survive, many of them are agitated and that results into violent and criminal activities against the society. Such criminal activities include militancy, kidnapping, bombing, armed robbery, destruction of government and private properties, among others. In fact, violent, conflicts, whether social, political or environmental according to Adejumo (2011) have seriously contributed to the crises situation in terms of loss of human lives and material capital. Nigeria in the last four years has experienced the breach of peace in some geopolitical zones of North-Eastern States of Adamawa, Bauchi, Borno, Gombe, Taraba and Yobe and Some parts of North-West States of Kaduna, Kano, Jigawa and Zamfara to mention but a few (Suleiman 2012). All these violent and conflicts have contributed to the state of insecurity in the country. There have been losses of lives, livelihoods, destruction of infrastructure and natural resources as a result of violence in so many communities. Employment opportunities which are out of place has weakened social safety and caused a decline in the capacity of the state to provide services to sectors like health, education and indeed security for the people (Onouha (2011)). Likewise, the peace and security and indeed wellbeing of the people have been seriously tampered with. From this scenario therefore, the cost and effect of insecurity in the country can never be underestimated.

Insecurity and Socio-Economic Development in Nigeria

After fifty three years of nationhood Nigeria still ranks among the poorest countries in the world, also ranks low in all socio economic indicators such as life expectancy, death rate, access to water, poverty rate, mortality rate, and crime rate, and still carries the tag of a developing economy. Nigeria is a classic illustration of an oxymoron, a poor country in the midst of abundant human and natural resources. This scenario has contributed to security challenges that have bedeviled the country since independence till now with grave consequences for socio-economic development. There is no nation that can achieve socio-economic development in an environment of socio and physical insecurity. The increasing challenge of insecurity in Nigeria has also been linked to failure of leadership to deliver good governance, and secure the welfare of persons on the principles of freedom, equality, and justice. The ruling elites in Nigeria in both the military and democratic dispensation are dependent, parasitic, and very corrupt in nature, and mal-administration (Ali, 2013).

The various constitutions that Nigeria has operated including the 1999 constitutions make provisions for the rights of citizens to include; right to life, right to social security, right to work, right to livelihood, just and favourable remuneration, right to a standard of living adequate for the health, and well-being of individual and his family, including food, clothing, housing, and right to education. No doubt, Nigeria is blessed with abundant human, and natural resources to guarantee the attainment of these rights (Ali, 2013; Bako, 1998). Regrettably previous and present governments have failed to guarantee these rights and thus the onus is on individuals to seek for means to provide the basic necessities of life for him and his family.

The inability of government to provide a secure and safe environment for lives, properties and the conduct of business and economic activities has led to resentment and disaffection among ethnic groups. This has resulted in ethnic violence, communal clashes, and religious violence in different parts of the country that has destroyed lives and properties, disrupted businesses and economic activities, and retarded economic growth and development of Nigeria. There is no investor whether local or foreign that will be motivated to invest in an unsafe and insecure environment. In a globalized world investors are not only looking for high returns on their investments but also safe haven for their investments. Thus the alarming

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level of insecurity in Nigeria has made the economy unattractive to foreign investors, and this has impacted negatively on economic growth and development.

The table below shows available data on the level of some of the crimes from 2000- 2008.

Table 1: Level of Crimes from 2000 to 2008

Year	Theft	Armed Robbery	Kidnapping	Assassination	Fraud
2000	29127	1877	243	1255	7927
2001	40796	2809	349	2120	10234
2002	35231	3889	337	2117	9134
2003	33124	3497	410	2136	9508
2004	37289	3142	349	2550	9532
2005	46111	2074	798	2074	9580
2006	41901	2863	372	2000	6395
2007	21082	2327	277	2007	5860
2008	23927	2340	309	1956	5058

Source: Adapted from Achumba et al. (2013)

Table 1 shows that on the average the rate of all the insecurity variables increased between 2000 and 2008 with the exception of fraud which decreased within the same period. In recent time there has been an increase in the rate of theft, armed robbery especially in the banks, kidnapping and assassination in different parts of the country. However these vices are not equally distributed in the country. For instance, the South East states of Nigeria have the highest incidence of kidnapping, the South South and South West states of Nigeria have the highest incidence of armed robbery and fraud, while the Northern states are characterized by bombing by the Islamic sect, Boko Haram (CLEEN, 2012).

Socio economic development is the primary goal of every well-meaning government, and it is essentially dependent on the level of economic activities in a country; the level of economic activities is in turn enhanced by peaceful co-existence by people. In the absence of security, socio-economic development cannot be sustained as it destroys economic, human and social capital. The Boko Haram insurgency in Northern Nigeria has almost crippled economic activities in that region. Also activities of other militia groups in other parts of the country pose serious threat to the economic health of these regions. The security crises in different parts of Nigeria is destroying existing infrastructure and preventing a peaceful environment for the development of further infrastructure, and a safe environment for economic activities by individuals to give them economic empowerment that will enable households not only to cater for their present generations, create wealth, but also to provide for future generations. The report by World Bank (2011) on “Conflict, Security and Development” reveals that about 1.5 billion people live in countries affected by political and criminal violence, which has exacerbated human misery, and disrupted development. The

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bane of Nigeria's development is insecurity. Insecurity situation is costing Nigeria its leadership role in Africa in terms of development. Consequently, more proactive initiatives regarding tackling menace of insecurity are needed in Nigeria since security is central to development, and the national transformation agenda of the current administration may not be achieved if there is no solution to the menace of insecurity ravaging the country.

Conclusion and Recommendation

The presence of insecurity in any environment constitutes threat to lives and properties, hinders business activities, and discourages local and foreign investors, all of which stifles and retards socio-economic development of a country. In Nigeria there has been rising wave of insecurity since the country attained independence in 1960. This rising wave has not abated but has assumed a dangerous dimension which is even threatening the corporate existence of the country as one geographical entity. The elimination of these threats should be the number one goal of governments in Nigeria at all levels as the country cannot achieve any significant development amidst insecurity and violence. Government must be proactive in dealing with security issues and threats, through modern methods of intelligence gathering, and intelligence sharing, training, logistics, motivation, and deploying advanced technology in managing security challenges. The real panacea for solving insecurity challenge in Nigeria is for government to accelerate the pace of development. Development in this context consists of creating an economy with relevant social, economic and physical infrastructure for business operations and industrial growth, to provide gainful employment, high level of educational facilities, and medical care for the people. Governments at all levels should ensure that rising poverty indices are reversed and a realistic social security programme is pursued and systematically implemented to ensure that the populace meets their basic needs.

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