

Insecurity and the Question of Socio-Economic Quagmires in Nigeria: The Role of the Military from 1999-2020

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Abstract

This study examines the role of the military in addressing insecurity and socio-economic challenges in Nigeria from 1999 to 2020. Adopting a historical and descriptive approach, the study explores Nigeria's geographical location, pre-independence military antecedents, and military interventions in politics. It analyzes contemporary security challenges, their impacts, and the military's role in addressing them. The findings reveal that insecurity in Nigeria is perpetuated by factors such as terrorism, banditry, and ethnic militancy, which have devastating effects on socio-economic lives. The military has played a crucial role in tackling these challenges, but inadequate resources, corruption, and political interference often hinder its efforts. The study concludes that a holistic approach is essential to address Nigeria's insecurity quagmires. It recommends increased funding, professionalization, and civilian oversight of the military, as well as addressing underlying socio-economic grievances. This study contributes to the understanding of Nigeria's security challenges and the military's role in addressing them, providing valuable insights for policymakers and stakeholders. The findings and recommendations of this study are intended to inform and shape policy decisions to promote peace and stability in Nigeria. By addressing the root causes of insecurity, Nigeria can overcome its socio-economic challenges and achieve sustainable development.

Keywords: Economy, Insecurity, Military, Nigeria

Introduction

Nigeria, a country located in West Africa, has been plagued by insecurity and socio-economic challenges since its return to democracy in 1999. Despite its vast human and natural resources, the country has struggled to provide basic services to its citizens, leading to widespread poverty, inequality, and social unrest. The military, which has played a significant role in Nigeria's political history, has been at the forefront of efforts to address these challenges. However, its effectiveness in tackling insecurity and promoting socio-economic development has been questioned. This study focuses on the role of the military in addressing insecurity and socio-economic challenges in Nigeria from 1999 to 2020.

It explores the historical and contemporary contexts of military interventions in Nigeria, the causes and consequences of insecurity, and the military's efforts to address these challenges. The study also examines the impact of military interventions on socio-economic development and the livelihoods of Nigerians. The study is justified by the need to understand the complex

relationships between insecurity, socio-economic development, and military interventions in Nigeria. Despite the significant literature on these topics, there is a gap in understanding the specific role of the military in addressing insecurity and promoting socio-economic development in Nigeria. This study aims to fill this gap by providing an in-depth analysis of the military's role in Nigeria's security and development trajectory.

The paper addresses the following subtopics: **A Brief Exploration into Nigeria's Territorial and Geographical Location:** This section provides an overview of Nigeria's geographical location, territorial boundaries, and physical features. It sets the stage for understanding the country's security and socio-economic challenges. **Background to the Pre-Independence Nigerian Military: Its Historical Antecedents:** This section examines the history of the Nigerian military before independence in 1960. It explores the colonial legacy, the role of the military in the independence movement, and the early years of the Nigerian army. **Military Interventions in Nigerian Politics: Since 1960-1998:** This section discusses the military's involvement in Nigerian politics, including coups, counter-coups, and military rule. It analyzes the impact of military interventions on political stability and socio-economic development. **Causes of Insecurity in Contemporary Nigeria:** This section identifies and analyzes the root causes of insecurity in Nigeria, including political, economic, social, and environmental factors. **Contemporary Security Challenges in Nigeria and its Effects on Socio-Economic Lives:** This section examines the current security challenges facing Nigeria, such as terrorism, banditry, and kidnapping. It discusses the impact of these challenges on the socio-economic lives of Nigerians. **The Nigerian Military and its Role in Tackling Security Challenges:** This section assesses the Nigerian military's efforts to address security challenges, including its strategies, successes, and failures. **Insecurity Challenges in Nigeria: The Way Forward:** This section offers recommendations for addressing insecurity challenges in Nigeria, including policy and practical solutions. **Conclusion:** This section summarizes the findings, implications, and recommendations of the study.

The findings of the study reveal that while the military has played a crucial role in tackling security challenges, its efforts have been hindered by inadequate resources, corruption, and political interference. The study argues that a holistic approach involving military and non-military strategies is essential to address Nigeria's security challenges and promote peace and stability.

A Brief Exploration into Nigeria's Territorial and Geographical Location

Until 1914, there was no such name called 'Nigeria'. Before the formation (amalgamation) of the Southern and Northern protectorate, what existed was a conglomeration of different black Africans living separately under different customs, norms, and traditional authorities. The name Nigeria, therefore appears first in 1914 when Lord Lugard unilaterally brought the different ethnic groups together under a single territorial control and named the present geographical territory- "Nigeria". According to J. O. Unnumen "Nigeria is an African country with a land mass of about 923,768 sq. km, an area that is the size of France, Britain, and the Netherlands combined."¹ Describing further, Unnumen further stated that:

Normally, this large landmass would be advantageous because it might accelerate socioeconomic development quickly, particularly in terms of area for agricultural activities. However, it appears that the opposite has been true recently, as violent crimes and insurgencies have increased. Unfortunately, conflicts with serious consequences have occurred since the year 2000. The safety of people and property in the nation has suffered as a result of these

events. Since the turn of the twenty-first century, security issues have grown more complex, particularly in light of the rising wave of insurgencies and terrorist attacks.²

In a related development, G. Olusoji, S. Seyi, and O. Oluwakemi maintain that; “Nigeria was supposedly named for the large area surrounding the River Niger and its basin, which was done by British colonialists.”³ The thought of these ebullient scholars had similar and complimentary assertions to T.M. Yesufu who opined that; “It was then called Niger- area, after a long usage it was shortened to Nigeria.”⁴ It is further reported that it was Mungo Park who first discovered the present place now called -Nigeria. Mungo Park was known to be an explorer, who in the course of his exploration stumbled into this vast land area along the coastal region. Olusoji, Seyi, and Oluwakemi provided more commentary on Nigeria's geographic location, stating that it is situated on the coast of West Africa in the farthest inner corner of the Gulf of Guinea. Nigeria is home to over 250 different ethnic groups, the three largest of which are the Yoruba in the southwest, the Ibos in the southeast, and the Hausa/Fulani in the north.”⁵

Nigeria is said to be one of the most populous black countries in Africa. Many scholars and researchers believe that the population of Nigeria outnumbered countries like France and Britain, combined. Thus, according to Cohen; “The population is about double that of all the former ‘French West African countries put together and about seven times as large as that of Ghana.”⁶ There are also indications that as of today, over 4000 native dialects are spoken in Nigeria. Its landmark covers an area of 923,768 sq. km (356,669 sq mile), extending 1,127km (700mi) E-W and 1,046 km (650mi) N-S. Cohen further remarks that: “The size of Nigeria is more than twice the size of California in the United States.”⁷

Background to the Pre-Independence Nigerian Military: Its Historical Antecedents

Studies into political development in Nigeria have revealed that the history of the formation of the Nigerian Arm Forces dates back before the creation (amalgamation) of present-day single territorial sovereigns called Nigeria. As Miners rightly pointed out; “The Nigerian Armed Forces have their origins in 1863, when Lt Glover of the Royal Navy, the Governor of Lagos, assembled eighteen Northern Nigerians to guard the lives and property of British citizens residing in and around Lagos.”⁸ Apart from the first intention; that is, to protect the lives and properties of the foreigners (British who were resident in Lagos at the given time in history, the army was also first established in Nigeria to protect the British traders, their routes around Lagos as well as to guarantee the safety of the lives of the Christian Missionaries.

In support of this claim, in an oral interview conducted for this research, Mr. Kpodee and Mr. Ukpabi opine that; “The military were also expected to protect the British traders, the Christian missionaries and to protect the British Trade routes around Lagos.”⁹ Buttressing further, Ukpabi reported that: “These small troops formed the nucleus of the Hausa Constabulary with a nucleus from the Royal Niger Company Constabulary- these were the troops of the Royal Niger Company raised in 1886 to form the West African Field Force. The first Battalion was formed on 26 August 1896 while the second Battalion was formed in 1898 and the third Battalion was added later in 1898.”¹⁰ According to D. Killingray “The West African Field Force and the Northern Nigeria Regiment were amalgamated in May 1900.”¹¹ Also, in 1914, the Southern Nigeria Regiment and the Northern Nigeria Regiment were eventually amalgamated to form what was known to be the Nigeria Regiment of the West African Frontier Force. It was after these long eras; particularly during the period prior and during the amalgamation (1863-1914) and on the eve of the eventual creation

of the Nigeria Independence in 1960 that the name “Nigerian Military Force” first appeared and came into existence with its name rebranded as the Nigerian Military Force. The gamut of this claim can be seen as A. R. Lukham posits:

The remaining soldiers from the North and South Regiments of the West African Frontier Force were renamed the Queen's Own Nigerian Regiment (QONR) during Queen Elizabeth II's 1956 visit. Later that year, the QONR was renamed the Nigerian Military Force (NMF) after Britain granted her dependent nations military authority.¹²

As evident above, it was around 1956 that the then-old Queen Own Nigerian Regiment was changed and renamed the Nigerian Military Force. Subsequently, history further reveals, according to J. B. Adekunle and Adekunle that; “Following independence in 1960, the name was once more changed to the Royal Nigerian Army. Following Nigeria's 1963 Republic declaration, the Army was renamed the Nigerian Army, while the Air Force and Navy were renamed the Nigerian Armed Forces, a moniker it still uses today.”¹³

It would also interest you to note that from 1960 to 1966 the Nigerian Military was only allowed to perform ceremonial functions. During these periods, the military never got direct involvement in the direct management of the affairs of the country. The Nigerian Military only had its first way to direct the affairs of Nigerians beginning on January 15th, 1966. This thought is further breathed upon by M. Janowitz and van Doorn; “Until January 15, 1966, Nigeria's armed forces were only visible to the general public at ceremonial events. This was particularly the case on October 1, the yearly anniversary of Independence Day, when the Air Force performed its customary spectacular aerial display.”¹⁴

This changed immediately after the coup of 15 January 1966; the military took over the management of Federal, State, and to some extent Local Council Affairs. Since Nigeria's independence in 1960, the country has experienced almost thirty years of military dictatorial rule. Having said this, it is instructive to clarify how previous researchers like S. J. Cooke had recorded that although the Northern and Southern protectorates were unilaterally amalgamated in 1914 under the administration of Lord Lugard, nevertheless, the amalgamation did not bring the two protectorates under one absolute control not until in 1946 that they were comprehensively brought into a single administrative component.¹⁵ V. E. Akorede, on his part, continues; “and with only fourteen years of the enforced union they were given nationhood and total sovereignty.”¹⁶ Ever since then, Nigeria as a Country has witnessed both civilian and military governments. Both governments have been struggling, trying to translate the artificial unity which was created for the sole economic benefits of the colonial masters, into a lasting and realistic cohesion; not coercion, which was unilaterally created by the British Government.

To sum up this section, it is imperative to bring to mind that in the past, history revealed that in the 3rd World Countries, like Nigeria, and most other African countries, many people and communities were said not to be parties to the defining and creation of the territories and relationships which they were forced to sustain at independence. It is in line with this that led Deutsch to succinctly opine that; “More often they have inherited boundaries drawn for administrative or political convenience by foreign colonial rulers, as in the cases of India, Pakistan, Argentina, Nigeria, and Ghana.”¹⁷ Similarly, Nigeria is “specifically a union of ethnic nationalities that had lived on this land under established Kingdoms, Empires, Caliphates and Chiefdoms,” according to D. Ojerinde.¹⁸ The point to note from the above is that the consent of the people of members of the Third World countries like Nigeria were not consulted during their creation by the British colonial masters. It has been argued that such a decision was done solely to satisfy purely

the socio-economic interest of the colonial rulers. Having established this, it is pertinent to continue in this study to discuss briefly the question of military intervention in the Nigerian polity.

Military Interventions in Nigerian Politics: Since 1960-1998

Here, the thrust is to examine the circumstances that led to the first military intervention in Nigeria. The 'Nigeria' inferring in this sense specifically looks at the Nigerian experience from 1960 when the country finally gained its freedom and became a sovereign State, and was said to be directly governed by Nigerian elites, even though the period within 1960 to 1963, was said to be overseen by the Queen of England. In line with this development, Yesufu, states that; "Nigeria gained independence on October 1, 1960, and the first military intervention occurred on January 15, 1966, during a bloody coup led by Major Nzeogwu. The coup was supposed to put an end to the misrule, incompetence, and corruption of the previous five years or more, but it only lasted a few days."¹⁹ One of the significances of military intervention in politics lies in its yearning that the military was to cleanse and ripe the country out of the many cases of corruption that were almost on the verge of plunging the country. Commenting on this view, Adegboyega Isaac Ajayi contends:

When the military took control of Nigeria's politics for the first time on January 15, 1966, it was enthusiastically greeted as a messiah who would make up for historical wrongs. But the answers that the administration of General Ironsi embraced made things worse. With the wisdom of its actions, the administration eliminated the regions and instituted a unitary government with Decree No. 34 of May 24, 1966, believing that regionalism was the scourge of the country. The same day saw the enactment of Decree No. 33, which dissolved the political, ethnic, and cultural associations that had provided a forum for the gathering of public opinion.²⁰

As evident above, it can be seen that the people were confident that with the timely intervention of the military, the failed democratic system that was almost at the point of consuming the entire nation, was no doubt, to be revived and to rights the wrongs of the succeeding government that took over from the colonial authority. Unfortunately, the expectations of the people were dashed as the military was also accused of committing the same offense committed by the civilian leaders. The military was guilty of the same wrongdoings. Besides this, their policies which were promulgated through decrees found to either be untimely or done out of hasty implementation. During this time, wide consultations were neglected and every military decision was hurriedly made and enacted. It is based on this understanding that Ajayi states that; "No matter the good intentions behind the enactment of these decrees the timing was most inauspicious. At that time the fear of Igbo domination was quite rife, especially in the Northern part of the country."²¹ Ajayi goes on to speak inter alia:

It will be remembered that a new generation of Igbo officers conducted the January 15, 1966 coup that resulted in the deaths of notable Northern politicians. In addition to not prosecuting the coup plotters, Gen. Ironsi, an Igbo who was appointed the residuary legatee of the coup, surrounded himself with Igbo technocrats as advisors.²²

The problem continued as evident from the above assertion. It was learned as perceived that the first was successfully executed in line with ethnic bias. The first was said to be led by an Igbo man, who used the coup to kill a majority of the Northern leaders (both in the military and civilian). A review of this sad scenario by the Northern Military personnel angered their men, and this led to the counter-coup which later dethroned the then-first military head of State. Commenting more about the ills inherent in General Aguiyi Ironsi's coup, Ajayi also explained that, He (Ironsi); "...also initiated moves to unify the civil service – a development that would have put the Northerners in a position of serious disadvantage vis-à-vis their Southern (especially Igbo) counterparts who had more personnel in the service. With this kind of background, the promulgation of Decrees 33 and 34 merely served to further inflame ethnic passions."²³

S. O. Osoba further opines that; "There was a counter-coup led by Aguiyi Ironsi that lasted till July 1966." He also contended that; "Another Northern - sponsored counter-coup came up on 29 July 1966 which brought General Yakubu Gowon in as the Head of State and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed forces."²⁴ It would interest you to note that it was under General Gowon as military head of State that Nigeria went through the civil war, which took place from June 1967 to January 1970. Of course, several factors were believed to have necessitated the civil war in 1967. According to S. O. Osoba, "The war was fought mainly because the Northerners accused Major Nzeogwu of the South-East of killing more Northern Hausas than his Igbo brothers' government officials during the first coup..."²⁵ This allegation was further defended on the ground that many of the leaders from the Eastern region were spared while only leaders from the Northern kingdom were killed. For instance, for Dr, Azikwe, the then Governor General (President) who was a leader from the Southern part of the country was not killed. On the contrary, his counterpart, Tafawa Balewa - Prime Minister from the Northern part of the country was killed. Buttressing these historic interventions, Osoba goes on to opine as thus:

On July 29, 1975, Gowon was succeeded by General Murtala Mohammed. General Olusegun Obasanjo, the Chief of Staff, was sworn in as the new Head of State after General Mohammed was slain on February 13, 1976, during an attempted coup. On October 1, 1979, General Olusegun Obasanjo successfully transferred control to Alhaji Shehu Shagari's civilian government. In reaction to the twin evils of corruption and indiscipline among the public officers of the Second Republic, the military struck again in 1984, ushering in General Mohammed Buhari's harsh and cruel administration.²⁶

The above penultimate quotation explains that at the end of Obasanjo's military regime, and by October 1st, 1979, Nigeria returned to another democratic dispensation. This successive return to civilian rule in 1979 is otherwise referred to as the Second Republic. During the Second Republic, the government was headed by Alhaji Shehu Shagari who hailed from the Northern Kingdom. Historical records further revealed that during these periods, several intrigues also played out. This led to the imprisonment of several top government functionaries at both the Federal and State levels for almost the whole tenure of the regime without being charged or even tried for any offense. Some were tried secretly by special military tribunals and they were sentenced to long terms of imprisonment, including life, for crimes ranging from unlawful possession of government properties (including cars, spoons, carpets, etc) to contributing to the economic adversity of the country.

While Shagari was still in power as a civilian President, as reported above, his government was later dethroned by another coup which brought in General Muhamadu Buhari Military Head of State in 1984. Buhari's led military government was also accused of gross incompetence and several violations and failures. Thus, by 1985, another palace coup was launched which toppled the Buhari regime and was replaced with General Badamonsi Babangida. Like others, Babangida was also accused of several displeasures. One of the things he did that angered the attention of the public was his annulment of the June 12th, 1993 Presidential elections which saw the emergence of Chief MKO Abiola as the democratically elected president. However, Olusoji, Seyi, and Oluwakemi noted that "After the annulment of the most peaceful elections in the history of Nigeria, he (Babangida) handed over to Ernest Shonekan-a civilian- who was overthrown by General Abacha on 17 November 1993, who later died on 8 June 1998."²⁷ With the emergence of Ernest Shonekan as a civilian president, Nigeria, once again, witnessed another democratic transition to power. And by this, the country was at its Third Republic.

Olusoji, Seyi, and Oluwakemi in their final submission reported that General Sani Abacha "... was succeeded by General Addulsalami Abubakar on 9 June 1998 who later on 29 May 1999 handed over to the civilian Government of Chief Olusegun Obasanjo - a former military ruler."²⁸ He was a civilian President for two terms of four years each and he handed over to another civilian President- Alhaji Umaru Musa Yar'Adua- on 29 May 2007; upon the death of Alhaji Umaru Musa Yar'Adua on 5 May 2010, Goodluck Jonathan was sworn as President and was fully elected in 2011 as a democratic president. It was in 2015 that he was defeated at the polls by the incumbent president- President Muhammadu Buahri. President Buhari was also re-elected in 2019 and he remains the President until May 29th, 2023, when President Tinubu was sworn into office.

Causes of Insecurity in Contemporary Nigeria

Nigeria is dealing with several security issues that have a huge influence on its people's lives. Nigerian insecurity has several underlying causes, including social, political, economic, and environmental elements.

Nigeria's security challenges are deeply entrenched in its political landscape.²⁹ Weak institutions and political corruption have created an environment where those in power operate with impunity, perpetuating a lack of accountability and trust in government.³⁰ O. Ojo rightly assert "that this has led to a sense of powerlessness among citizens, who feel disconnected from the political process and lack faith in their leaders".³¹ Ethnic and religious tensions, which frequently materialize as violent conflicts and insecurity, are another problem plaguing the nation's democratic structure. Social inequality has been sustained by the marginalization of some groups, which has fueled feelings of resentment and discontent. For instance, the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) and the Oodua Peoples Congress (OPC) have been vocal about their marginalization and exclusion from political power.³² , admitting that the security challenges seem to be surpassing the people, we saw in the most recent where both the State and Federal Governments are busy creating vigilante groups. Ironically, members of these vigilante groups, are most often drawn from amongst the same bad boys on the street who were already members of one secret cult or the other. Most of them are known notorious kingpins whose acts of terrorism are known and negatively felt by the public. It is against this backdrop that O. I. Eme and O. Anthony decry as they submit that; "What should have been the solution to the insecurity seems not be working: the introduction of vigilance groups in the states to be supervised by security personnel. The groups can comb their

environment effectively. But unfortunately, these groups turn out in most cases to be more hardened criminals.”³³

These ‘bad eggs’ that we now have in paramilitary are also found in the Armed Forces. Most of the young newly recruited men of the police, army, air force, etc. were already members of some of the different bad gangs that had been terrorizing the country before joining the military. Once absorbed into the military, a few minutes later, you see them begin to exhibit their bad eggs syndrome; their old ugly character which they had lived before joining any of the services in the military. Again, besides the fact that we now have some bad eggs in the various military apparatuses, another major and fundamental cause of insecurity in Nigeria lies in the country’s (Government) poor welfare packages, lack of provision of sophisticated working tools, illiteracy, and others amongst the Nigerian military men. The military is underpaid, such that their salary is below the minimum wage of other military counterparts in West Africa and the world at large. Another cardinal factor is inadequate or insufficient military personnel. As cited by O. Olonisakin, et al “the police-population ratio in Nigeria is 1:450. At a minimum, citizens ought to have easy access to the police and feel safer as a result of the protection they offer. Yet Nigeria has failed to meet the standard set by the United Nations for effective policing.”³⁴

Furthermore, the reliance on oil exports has made Nigeria vulnerable to global market fluctuations, exacerbating economic insecurity and perpetuating a lack of diversification.³⁵ A. Ogunsanya opines that the country's economy has suffered greatly due to its reliance on a single commodity, leading to a lack of investment in other sectors and a dearth of job opportunities.³⁶ Poverty and unemployment are rampant, creating an environment conducive to criminal activity and insecurity. In agreement with this, W. Adebaniwa asserts thus; “The wealthy elite are often seen as being above the law, perpetuating a sense of injustice among the poor.”³⁷ For example, the lavish lifestyles of Nigerian politicians and businessmen are often juxtaposed with the poverty and squalor of the masses.³⁸ Some scholars think that politicians are to blame for the country's insecurity. For a considerable amount of time, the nation has experienced instability in life, and politicians bear direct responsibility for this.³⁹ This means that one of the main issues plaguing Nigeria for a considerable amount of time has been the issue of insecurity in the nation. Many of the key factors contributing to the current insecurity crisis in Nigeria are certain politicians in the nation. To assist them win the election, they purchased the weapons and outfitted the guys. Once they have utilized them to reach their destination, they discard them.⁴⁰

Social inequality has also limited access to education and healthcare for marginalized groups, perpetuating ignorance and fueling insecurity⁴¹. According to D. Oriakhi, “the Almajiri system in Northern Nigeria, for instance, has been criticized for perpetuating poverty and ignorance among young boys.”⁴² Cultural and religious extremism has also played a significant role in fueling insecurity, perpetuating violence and intolerance. The Boko Haram insurgency in Northeast Nigeria, for example, has caused widespread devastation and death⁴³ Generally, there is a common saying that where there is hunger, there is anger. And where there is anger, there is crime. In their work, O. I. Eme and O. Anthony shared this same view as they contend; “Related to the above is the challenge posed by poverty level in Nigeria. Governments at all levels are unable to address this because there is no realistic social security programme in Nigeria to meet the people’s basic needs. As a result, the fear for the future and that of their children often provides the basis for the desperation exhibited in the pursuit of ill-gotten wealth.”⁴⁴ If the government had drawn out a perfect framework for eradicating poverty in Nigeria, the problem of insecurity facing the country today would have relatively been brought under control.

Election malpractice is another significant factor that contributes to the problem of insecurity in Nigeria. Nigeria's elections, historically, have been said to be characterized by acts of rigging. Many scholars have argued that there has never been any free election conducted in Nigeria. In such a situation, where an election is rigged, there is bound to be bitterness and acrimony. This often led to violence, crisis, and insecurity. Buttressing on this, O. I. Eme and O. Anthony O. write; "Electoral fraud poses a challenge to democracy in Nigeria and by implication threatens the security fabrics of the polity. Sham elections desecrate the sanctity of democracy and weaken its capacity as an instrument for social mobilization of natural and human resources for the development of the polity."⁴⁵ As supported above, electoral manipulation, no doubt, undermines the credibility, integrity, and progress of a nation's democratic process, and this by extension, renders the task of governance cumbersome and herculean. In a country, like Nigeria, where elections are rigged, citizens are often angered and out of frustration, most often resort to violence.

It is to be added that poor management of the country's resources is another important factor of insecurity in Nigeria. This is summarized as Eme and Anthony submit; "The poor management of the national economy cannot be excluded as far as insecurity of lives and property of Nigerians is concerned. Our avaricious leaders have virtually converted our national coffers into private establishments. Former governors and sacked bank executives are living examples. Nigeria is rich in black gold but suffers scarcity."⁴⁶

Climate change has exacerbated environmental degradation, further fueling insecurity by limiting access to basic resources like water and food.⁴⁷ Desertification and soil erosion are major concerns in Nigeria, particularly in the arid North.⁴⁸ Nigerians' sense of environmental insecurity has been exacerbated by the depletion of their natural resources, which has also made it harder to get basic requirements. Environmental degradation and oil pollution, for example, have ravaged the Niger Delta region.⁴⁹ As S. Ogundiya rightly asserts, "Nigeria's security challenges are deeply intertwined with its political, economic, social, and environmental realities."⁵⁰ Addressing these challenges will require a comprehensive approach that tackles the root causes of insecurity and promotes accountability, equality, and sustainability.

Contemporary Security Challenges in Nigeria and its Effects on Socio-Economic Lives

Today, there are diverse scholastic works which explored into the Nigerian contemporary security challenges. Such studies, no doubt, have been undertaken by historians, political philosophers, political scientists, sociologists and other inter-related disciplines as evident from the historical exposition done earlier in this work. It is worthy of note that Nigerian political development has never been discussed nor narrated without its corresponding military considerations. Like in the past, the present contemporary Nigerian State has been plagued and characterized with numerous challenges. One of such challenges lies in the problem of insecurity. The problems of the causes of insecurity, however, have been traced to many factors. In subsequent subsection, attempt is made towards unraveling some of these factors that are responsible for the presence of insecurity challenge in Nigeria.

Nigeria is now dealing with a number of security issues that have a big influence on the socioeconomic life of its people. These difficulties include, among other things, ethnic militancy, banditry, terrorism, and kidnapping. Nigeria's economy, for example, has suffered greatly as a result of terrorism. Roads, bridges, and buildings have all been destroyed by the Boko Haram insurgency in the northeastern region, which has interfered with economic activities and reduced

investment.⁵¹ For example, Human Rights Watch, 2015 declare that the group's attack on the town of Baga in 2015 resulted in the destruction of over 90% of the town's infrastructure, leaving thousands of people without access to basic necessities like food and shelter. In Nigeria, banditry has grown to be a serious security threat, especially in the northwest. Because of the bandits' actions, social cohesiveness has broken down as communities have been compelled to leave their homes and seek safety elsewhere in the nation.⁵² For example, the banditry attacks in the state of Zamfara in 2019 resulted in the displacement of over 50,000 people, with many more forced to live in squalid conditions in IDP camps.⁵³

In Nigeria, kidnapping has grown to be a profitable industry, with both individuals and organizations being taken hostage and held captive. People are no longer safe in their homes or on the highways as a result, which has significantly increased human insecurity. For instance, as declared by BBC more than 270 girls were abducted when Boko Haram kidnapped the Chibok schoolgirls in 2014; many of them are still being kept captive.⁵⁴ Again, there are researches in recent studies that also expose the danger and evil of insecurity on national growth and its peaceful coexistence. In every society where there is an issue of insecurity, there is always a corresponding problem of economic retardation. In such a situation, the quiet harmony of the people is often threatened. In furtherance on the issues above some scholars have specifically looked at the effects of the emergence of Boko Haram on contemporary Nigeria. According to Felix and Julius "The Boko Haram terrorism and other violent crimes in the country have negative implications on national security, democracy, good governance and economic development. This is because, among other things, their activities dismantle democratic structures; and prevent the provision of state services, such as health, education, commerce, and security."⁵⁵ Describing further the effects of Boko Haram, Sambo D. Mohammed tells us that "their activities have forced thousands to flee their homes, jobs, and communities, pushing them into poverty."⁵⁶ Moreover, According to Felix Oghi and Julius Unumen adumbrated that:

It's important to remember that security issues are a result of how people interact with one another and the society in which they live, but the growing trend has never taken on the scope that it has in recent years. The acquisition, ownership, and use of armaments have exacerbated the security environment globally, and in Nigeria specifically. The use of these weapons has had enormous negative repercussions on people and society as a whole because it has hindered the development of a friendly environment in which people can fulfill their potential and pursue their goals without interference.⁵⁷

All these according to Zainab Peterside "have had severe consequences on human and material resources of the nation hence the inevitability of military involvement in the internal security of the country."⁵⁸ In Nigeria, today, the problem of insecurity, no doubt, has continued to have a colossal effect on the people and their socio-economic lives.

The socioeconomic life of Nigerians have also been significantly impacted by ethnic militancy. The country's economy has suffered greatly as a result of the destruction of oil infrastructure caused by the actions of organizations like the Niger Delta Avengers.⁵⁹ For example, the group's attack on the Forcados oil terminal in 2016 resulted in the loss of over \$100 million in revenue.⁶⁰ "Social dislocation and population displacement, social tensions and a new pattern of settlements which encourages Muslims/Christians or members of an ethnic group moving to Muslim/Christian dominated enclaves, heightens citizenship question and encourages hostility between "indigenes" and "settlers", dislocation and disruption of family and communal life," are

some of the effects of insecurity on Nigeria that Eme and Anthony had highlighted..”⁶¹ The practice of deepening poverty and hunger in the political system, the general atmosphere of mistrust, fear, anxiety, and frenzy, and the tendency to experience dehumanization of women, children, and men, especially in areas where rape, child abuse, and neglect are used as instruments of war, and an atmosphere of political instability and insecurity, including a decline in confidence in the political leadership and apprehension about the system, are among the other factors. O. Igbuzor and J. Ibrahim,⁶² added.

The Nigerian Military and its Role in Tackling Security Challenges

This section seeks to investigate the relevance and usefulness of the Nigerian military in the fight against internal conflict cum insecurity in Nigeria as well as the challenges confronting them in their fight against insecurity. It would interest you to note that notable scholars have lamented the poor state of the present Nigerian socio-economic experience. The general public is not left out of this. The country at the moment is facing serious economic challenges, and it has been argued that the present economic crisis emanates from the rising cases of insecurity that have continued to threaten the country’s national interest. Having said this, what then is the role of the military, as provided in the constitution towards tackling the problem of insecurity in Nigeria? In response to the above question, Peterside in his research opine that:

The 1999 Nigerian Constitution, which mentions the military in section 217, states unequivocally that the Army, Navy, and Air Force's duties will be to defend Nigeria from foreign aggression, preserve its territorial integrity, secure its borders from isolation by land, sea, or air, put down insurrection, and assist civil authorities in restoring order when called upon by the President, subject to any restrictions imposed by a National Assembly Act.⁶³

The above quotation tries to correct the misgiving by the general public that the military is not required by law to fight internal conflict within its country. Those who had held on to such belief and assertion had failed to accept that the military is constitutionally empowered to defend the country against external aggression as well as to assist the police to fight and restore internal security challenges, when called upon by the President. What has been clarified here is that the role of the military is not restricted to only fighting against external invasion or war but also to aid the civilian government to maintain law and order if the need arises.

Since the return to democratic governance in 1999, the Nigerian military has been involved in internal security operations to address various security threats. Among other security challenges, the military has been involved in fighting Boko Haram, banditry, kidnapping, and ethnic militancy. For example, the military has been fighting Boko Haram in the Northeast and has made significant progress in degrading the group's capabilities.⁶⁴

The military has also been involved in joint operations with other security agencies to address the country's security challenges. The military has been dedicated to maintaining national security and unity in spite of the difficulties. To gain the support of the local populace, the military has also participated in a number of community development initiatives. However, corruption and violations of human rights have drawn criticism to the military. The military has also been charged with failing to adequately address the nation's security issues. To overcome these obstacles, the military must be reorganized and reformed to increase its efficiency and accountability.⁶⁵ The

military also needs to be provided with the necessary resources and equipment to enable it to effectively address the security challenges in the country.

Insecurity Challenges in Nigeria: The Way Forward

This study offers specific and actionable strategies that the Nigerian military should implement to address the various security challenges, as well as recommendations for improving cooperation between the military and the federal government. Since 1999, Nigeria has faced many security challenges, such as terrorism, banditry, kidnapping, and ethnic militancy. To effectively combat these challenges, firstly, the Nigerian military must first adopt a more proactive and intelligence-driven approach, which entails obtaining and analyzing intelligence on potential security threats, recognizing patterns and trends, and taking preventative action to prevent attacks.⁶⁶ The military should also invest in modern technology, such as drones and surveillance cameras, to enhance its intelligence-gathering capabilities. In addition, the government ought to enlarge Nigeria's security agencies, provide them with sufficient authority and motivation, and fortify neighborhood watch programs. The social infrastructure, which includes schools, skill-acquisition centers, street lights, and roads, should also be fixed by governments. Aside from the aforementioned, there is no denying that a major factor in the political system's social instability is the absence of programs aimed at empowering young people. The government ought to develop initiatives that give our young people technical empowerment. They will be able to resist criminal impulses and become self-sufficient as a result

Secondly, the military needs to improve its operational capacity and effectiveness. This involves providing adequate training and equipment to personnel, as well as ensuring that they are properly motivated and welfare.⁶⁷ The military should also adopt a more flexible and adaptable approach to operations, taking into account the changing nature of security challenges. Thirdly, the military needs to enhance cooperation with other security agencies and stakeholders. This involves building trust and fostering collaboration with the police, Department of State Services (DSS), and other security agencies.⁶⁸

The military should also interact with local communities and civil society organizations to gather intelligence and build support for its operations. Furthermore, the federal government must give the military enough money and resources to enable it to effectively address security challenges. This entails increasing the military's budget allocation and making sure that funds are used appropriately.⁶⁹ The government should also provide policy direction and support to the military, ensuring that its effort are aligned with national security objectives.

Finally, other ways to prevent the issues of insecurity include upholding the rule of law, respecting constitutionalism, avoiding unjustified layoffs, paying salaries and benefits on time, and compensating for damaged property.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this paper has presented a historical examination of the Nigerian military's role in tackling security challenges in Nigeria. Through a critical analysis of existing literature and primary data, this study has demonstrated that the military's effectiveness in addressing security challenges is hindered by several factors, including inadequate resources, corruption, and political interference. The study's findings highlight the need for the Nigerian government to prioritize the

provision of adequate resources and training for the military to enhance its effectiveness in addressing security challenges. Additionally, the study underscores the importance of addressing corruption and political interference in the military to ensure its accountability and professionalism.

This study adds to the body of knowledge in the field of security studies by emphasizing the complexity of Nigeria's security issues and the necessity of tackling them holistically. Because they offer fresh perspectives on the military's involvement in tackling Nigeria's security issues, the study's conclusions are helpful to the academic community. Furthermore, because the study's recommendations may influence policy choices that enhance Nigeria's security and stability, they benefit society as a whole.

The results of the study further emphasize the necessity of more investigation in this field. Future studies should particularly concentrate on investigating the underlying causes of insecurity in Nigeria, analyzing how security issues affect nearby populations, and determining practical approaches to dealing with security issues in Nigeria. All things being considered, this study shows how crucial it is to evaluate the military's involvement in resolving Nigeria's security issues and emphasizes the necessity for more research in this field. Future research can expand on the results of this study to offer even more thorough insights into the intricate security challenges in Nigeria by filling in the gaps found in this investigation.

Furthermore, politicians, security professionals, and other stakeholders can benefit from the study's practical conclusions. Policy decisions and the creation of successful plans for dealing with Nigeria's security issues can be guided by the study's recommendations. The study's conclusion may also contribute to a greater understanding of the significance of Nigeria's security issues and the necessity of tackling them from a comprehensive standpoint. In summary, the present study has significantly advanced our comprehension of the role played by the Nigerian military in addressing security issues within the country. The study's conclusions and suggestions could influence legislative choices and direct the creation of practical plans for dealing with Nigeria's security issues. As such, this study has the potential to improve Nigerians' quality of life and make a significant contribution to the field of security studies.

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