

# **CHALLENGES OF INSECURITY AND ECONOMIC DYNAMICS IN NIGERIA**

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## **ABSTRACT**

*This study examined the influence of the high level of insecurity on the economic growth of Nigeria for the period 1999 to 2020. In a bid to actualize this objective it collected data from secondary sources such as the various editions of the Central Bank of Nigeria Statistical Bulletin. The data were analyzed using Augmented Dickey-Fuller (ADF) Unit Root test, Johansen co-integration test, and Error Correction Model. The selected variables (i.e. Gross domestic product, national terrorism index, militancy and ethno-religious conflicts) had a co-integrating relationship indicating long-run relationship among the variables. The result of the Error Correction Mechanism (ECM) had the expected negative sign and statistically significant at the 0.05 level, an indication that any disequilibrium in the system will be adjusted. Based on the conclusion made, it was recommended that government should solicit for correlated international assistance in the areas of sustainable economic growth, good governance, human rights protection, and environmental preservation plus promote the unity of the citizens along ethnic and religious lines. This would provide the enabling environment for people to work especially in the area of security of lives and property as no meaningful economic activity can thrive in the face of insecurity.*

**Keywords:** Insecurity, terrorism, militancy, ethno-religious conflict, economic growth.

## **INTRODUCTION**

The current insecurity situation in Nigeria is deplorable as lives are lost on daily basis, businesses are in comatose, settlements are displaced, and investments are constrained, while people live in fear amid abject poverty due to low productivity and rising unemployment. Bombings especially in the Northern part of Nigeria have posed serious challenges and threat to the peace and stability of the country's macroeconomic environment (Ajufo, 2013 as cited in Aghaulor, 2020). In any nation with security challenges, governance and economic growth are

threatened (Aghaulor, 2020). Since independence, Nigeria has witnessed crisis caused mainly by political, social and religious factors and in recent times, incessant killings by Fulani herdsmen in Plateau, Taraba, Benue, Nassarawa and terrorists' attacks in Gombe, Borno, Kaduna, and the Niger-Delta resource crisis have left the country with image problem (Gurama, 2013). The spike in the activities of separatist groups like the Indigenous People of Biafa (IPOB) and the Eastern Security Network (ESN) and their seat-at-home order on Mondays in the Eastern part of the county result in the loss of billions of naira (Yusuf & Mohd, 2022). There are also cases of banditry and kidnapping in the south-west. A case in point is the Owo church massacre where a mass shooting and bomb attack occurred at a Catholic church killing scores of worshipers as reported (Odhiambo & Andrew, 2022).

Insecurity is the state of being unsafe or insecure or a state of mind characterized by self-doubt and vulnerability (Chinedu, 2012). In modern times, the protection of lives and properties is very fundamental to the socio-economic survival of any given society. Consequently, it falls within the responsibility of government to provide adequate security of lives and properties in a particular social formation. Security is the most important element in human life. Without security, social, economic, and political achievements cannot be attained nor sustained. Every responsible government deploys every strategy in protecting and deepening its fundamental values, aimed at encouraging people to live their lives in free, secure and safe environments in line with their shared common beliefs by preserving their national interest, identity, and sovereignty (Eme, 2011). As Aghaulor (2020) rightly puts it the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria in section 14(2) specifically states that "The security and welfare of the people shall be the primary purpose of government". Unfortunately, government on this constitutional responsibility has failed to provide a secured and safe environment for lives, properties and the conduct of business and economic activities. According to Onime (2018) depleted businesses in comatose, investments are nose-diving, multi-nationals closing shops and vacating the country, unemployment soaring and the populace in fear due to high level of insecurity in Nigeria.

Stewart (2004) has it that the economic cost of insecurity is enormous. People who joined the fighting forces, who are killed or flee, can no longer work productively: schools, power stations

and roads that are destroyed reduce the productive capacity of the economy. Further displacement of people reduces the production of exports, thereby reducing foreign exchange earnings, import potentials and consequently further constraining output, leading to a decline in employment and earnings. The menace of insecurity remains a threat to governance and economic growth in Nigeria. Given the inadequate response or inaction on the part of government, it is considered that the Nigerian government is unable to solely secure its citizens. Despite the acclaimed huge recurrent expenditure on internal security both at the national and state levels, individuals in their various rights, work place and houses spend heavily to provide security for their personal lives and properties, yet the menace keep increasing uncontrollably. It has therefore been observed by Pillah and Wilson (2020) that the insecurity prone areas in the country are lagging behind with respect to economic activities and other variables.

Gleditsch and Theisen (2016) states that national security covers crucial dimensions including food security, community security, economic security, personal security, environmental security, health security and poetical security. In all parts of Nigeria ethno-religious conflicts have assumed alarming rates. These ethno-religious identities have become disintegrative and destructive social elements threatening the peace, stability and security in the country (Eme & Onyishi, 2011). Factors responsible for insecurity in Nigeria as posited by Nzubechukwu, Zain, Ab. Halim, Ismail and Ismail (2022) are unemployment and poverty, ethnicity and religious differences, corruption, marginalization and inequality, unguarded and porous borders and bad governance cum poor leadership.

### **Objective of the Study**

The general objective of this study is to examine the influence of the high level of insecurity on the financial and economic growth of the country. However, the specific objectives are:

- i. To determine the extent to which terrorism influences economic growth in Nigeria;
- ii. To ascertain the influence of militancy on the economic growth of Nigeria;
- iii. To examine the influence of ethno-religious conflict on economic growth in Nigeria.

### **Hypotheses**

The following hypotheses for the study have been stated in null form:

HO<sub>1</sub>: Terrorism has no influence on the economic growth of Nigeria;

HO<sub>2</sub>: Militancy has no influence on the economic growth of Nigeria;

HO<sub>3</sub>: ethno-Religious conflict has no influence on the economic growth of Nigeria.

## **Literature Review**

### **Insecurity**

The concept of insecurity connotes different meanings such as the absence of safety, danger, hazard, uncertainty, lack of protection, and lack of safety. Achumba, Ighomereho and Akpor- Robaro (2013) defines insecurity from two perspectives. Firstly, insecurity is the state of being open or subject to danger or threat of danger, where danger is the condition of being susceptible to harm or injury. Secondly insecurity is the state of being exposed to risk or anxiety, where anxiety is a vague unpleasant emotion that is experienced in anticipation of some misfortune. These definitions of insecurity underscore a major point that those affected by insecurity are not only uncertain or unaware of what would happen but they are also vulnerable to the threats and dangers when they occur. Beland (2005) on its part described insecurity as the state of fear or anxiety stemming from a concrete or alleged lack of protection. It states further that it refers to lack or inadequate freedom from danger. Aghaulor (2020) describes insecurity as a breach of peace and security, whether historical, religious, ethno-regional, civil, social, economic, and political that contributes to recurring conflicts and leads to wanton destruction of lives and property. Nzubechukwu et al. (2022) posits that the factors responsible for insecurity in Nigeria include unemployment and poverty, ethnicity and religious differences, corruption, unguarded and porous borders, marginalization and inequalities as well as bad governance and poor leadership. Pulla and Wilson (2020) posits that the pathetic insecurity situation in Nigeria can be examined under the following dimensions:

**Militants-** These arose in the Niger-Delta due to tension between foreign oil corporation and some of the Niger-Delta minority ethnic groups who felt they were being exploited, particularly the Ogonis and the Ijaws (Osungade, 2008). Thus, the inability of the Government to address the root cause of the agitations resulted in the proliferation of ethnic groups causing the militarization of the entire region by ethnic militia groups such as the Movement for the survival of the Ogoni people (MOSOP), Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger-Delta (MEND),

Niger-Delta People Volunteer Force (NDPVF) and Niger-Delta Vigilante (NDV) (Pulla & Wilson, 2020).

**Terrorism-** Another major insecurity challenging Nigeria which has adversely affected the Nigerian economic growth is the activities of the Boko Haram group (Pulla & Wilson, 2020). This group is considered the most dangerous militant Islamic group in the northern part of Nigeria that seeks the imposition of Sharia Law in the Northern States. Other terrorist groups in the country are the Islamic State of West Africa Province (ISWAP), Bandits and the activities of militia Fulani Herdsmen. Terrorism has been defined by Onuoha (2011) as the premeditated use or threat of use of violence by an individual or group to cause fear, destruction or death, especially against unarmed targets, property or infrastructure in a state, intended to compel those in authority to respond to the demands and expectations of the individual or group behind such violent acts.

**Kidnapping and Armed-Robbery-** Kidnapping is the act of illegally taking somebody away and keeping him or her as a prisoner in order to get money or something in return before the person is released. Ozoigbo (2019) posits that kidnapping and armed robbery were inseparable twins that had wrecked unprecedented havoc in Nigeria and that no single day passes without at least ten cases of kidnapping or armed robbery operations. It further mentioned that it was so worrisome that even security agents (policemen) were abducted and ransom demanded for their release and that Nigeria was so unsafe as a result of this unfortunate state of affairs that a sitting governor in the northern part of the country did not vote in the last February 2019 general elections for fear of being kidnapped.

**Ethno-Religious Crises-** Ethno-religious conflict is a situation in which the relationship between members of one ethnic or religious group and another of such group in a multi-ethnic and multi-religious society is characterized by lack of cordiality, mutual suspicion and fear, and a tendency towards violent confrontation (Achumba et al. 2013). Frequent and persistent ethnic conflicts and religious clashes between the two dominant religions (Islam and Christianity), present the country with a major security challenge. In all parts of Nigeria, there exist ethno-religious conflicts and these according to Igbuzor (2011) have emerged as a result of new and particularistic forms of political consciousness and identity often structured around ethno-

religious identities. The claim over scarce resources, power, land, chieftaincy, local government, councils, control of markets and sharia among other trivial issues have resulted in large scale killings and violence amongst groups in Nigeria (Adagba, Ugwu & Eme 2012).

### **Economic Growth**

Dwivedi (2006) defined economic growth as a sustained increase in per capital national output or net national product over a long period of time. This implies that the net increase in total output must be greater than the rate of population growth. Economic growth, being the growth in output per capital is an important objective of government since it is associated with rising average real increases in living standard. Samuelson and Nordhaus (2010) define economic growth as the expansion of a country's potential GDP or national output. Putting it differently, economic growth occurs when a nation's production possibility frontier (PPF) shifts outwards. It iterates that a closely related concept is the growth rate of output per person which determines the rate at which the country's living standard is rising. Economic growth according to Osinubi, 2005 is often interpreted by many economists to mean increase in the volume of goods and services (output) produced by a country for a given period of time usually one year. Some other economists also viewed economic growth quantitatively by measuring output. Aghaulor (2020) defined it simply as more output. Economic growth is measured by the amount of increase in goods and services produced in a country.

### **Gross Domestic Product**

The Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) defines Gross Domestic Product (GDP) as an aggregate measure of production equal to the sum of the gross values added of all resident and institutional units engaged in production (plus any taxes, and minus subsidies on products not included in their output). Samuelson and Nordhaus (2010) described GDP as the final goods and services produced within a country during a given year. It further stated that GDP equals the total production of consumption and investment goods, government purchases and net export to other countries ( $GDP=C+I+G+X$ ). GDP at purchaser's prices, according to a World Bank report (2011), is the sum of gross value created by all resident producers in the economy plus any product taxes minus any subsidies not included in the product's worth. It is estimated without taking into account depreciation of manufactured assets or natural resource

depletion and degradation. GDP is defined by the Central Bank of Nigeria (2010) as the monetary worth of goods and services generated in an economy over time, regardless of the nationality of those who generated the goods and services. It's commonly estimated without factoring in capital expenditures (or deductions for depreciation).

### **Empirical Review**

The impact of insecurity on investment in Nigeria from 2007 to 2017 was examined by Jelivov, Ozden and Biggs (2018) using the Nigeria terrorism index, foreign direct investment inflow and oil prices as variables. The study employed the use of descriptive charts and graphs, correlation and regression techniques to analyse the collected data. The Nigeria terrorism index was used as proxy for insecurity while foreign direct investment inflow was proxy for investment. The study revealed that the Nigeria terrorism index and oil price fluctuations had significant impact on economic growth in the country while foreign direct investment inflow had no significant impact on economic growth. It was recommended that government must be pre-emptive in dealing with security issues and threats, in view of managing security challenges. It stated further that the real solution lies in government accelerating the pace of economic growth by creating an economy with a relevant social, economic and physical infrastructure to support business and industrial growth.

Chuku, Abang and Ima-Abasi (2019) adopted the ARDL and Structural Vector Auto-regressive (SVAR) technique to examine the growth and fiscal consequences of terrorism in Nigeria using different measures of terror incidence, government expenditure and economic activity. The empirical results indicated that terrorism leads to the reallocation of economic activity away from private investment spending to government counter-terrorism spending thereby impacting negatively on growth. The study omitted the revenue side of fiscal policy and proxy growth using the inflation-unadjusted GDP.

Growth impact of insecurity on the Nigerian economy was investigated by Aghaulor (2020) for the period 1981 to 2017 the data for the study were collected from secondary sources such as the various editions of Central Bank of Nigeria Statistical Bulletin. The data were analyzed using Augmented Dickey-Fuller (ADF) Unit Root test, Johansen co-integration test, Error Correction

Model. The selected variables (i.e. Gross Domestic product, Life expectancy at birth, terrorism risk index, discomfort index, adult literacy rate, corruption perception index and unemployment rate) had a co-integrating relationship indicating long-run relationship among the variables. The result of the Error Correction Mechanism (ECM) had the expected negative sign and statistically significant at the 0.05 level, an indication that any disequilibrium in the system will be adjusted. Based on the conclusion made, it was recommended that government should restructure and decentralize security architecture, increase capital expenditure on security and provide the enabling environment for people to work especially in the area of security of lives and property. This is against the back-drop that no meaningful economic activity can thrive in the face of insecurity.

The impact of national insecurity on economic growth: The case of Nigeria was examined by Pulla and Wilson (2020). The objective of the study was to address the challenges of kidnapping, robbery, and herders-farmers conflicts, ethno-religious crisis and terrorism, and proffer solutions to the attendant impacts that negatively affect the economy. Descriptive analysis was adopted as a method of the study. It was discovered that national insecurity has not only impeded the attainment of sustainable economic growth but that there had been a drastic decline in economic activities in all geo-political zones in the country. The study recommended that government should develop strategies to enhance good governance, increase recurrent and especially capital expenditures on internal security, workable anti-terrorism measures, build strong and legitimate institutions that can safely curb the menace of insecurity.

Yusuf and Mohd (2022) used annual time-series data from 1980 to 2019 and the ARDL methodology to analyse the fiscal and socioeconomic consequences of insecurity on economic growth in Nigeria. The empirical findings demonstrated that high unemployment rate, domestic capital formation, foreign direct investment, government spending on education and security are negatively affected by the growing level of insecurity and consequently retarded growth in the long and short run. Conversely, improved health services, equitable income distribution and productive use of public borrowing were positively correlated with security and, therefore, stimulated growth in the long and short run. Government revenue and inflation rate accelerated growth in the long run whereas their short-run effect was deleterious. The findings suggest that



good governance, provision of a safe and secured environment for human capital development and businesses, improved access to social and economic services will curb violent tendencies, create jobs, reduce poverty, increase government revenue and engender long-term inclusive growth.

### **Theoretical Framework**

This study was anchored on the relative deprivation theory developed by Gurr T.R. in 1970. The theory stipulates that insecurity stems from a collective discontent induced by a sense of economic and social deprivation. Three ideas, each concentrating on a different component of deprivation, lend support to the concept that deprivation is likely to lead to violence. First, there is the notion of frustration and aggression, which state that frustration generates aggressive behavior (Hogg 2016). Second, there is the expectation theory, which holds that failure to achieve an expected outcome will result in violence (Ozdamar 2008). Third, the reactance thesis proposes that the removal of behavioural freedom, which causes the arousal of reactance, may lead to violence (Baumeister, Catanese, & Wallace 2002). These three ideas emphasize the fact that different types of insecurity in Nigeria may be the result of varying levels of impoverishment.

Many developing countries, like Nigeria, have unusually poor material conditions, as well as problems with governance and the economy. The political process is plagued with inept, corrupt administrations and bad leadership. Poverty, inflation, unemployment, access to education and to social services and decrepit services and infrastructures continue (Evans & Kelikume 2019). Similarly, it is certain that significant socio-economic inequalities could generate conflict especially when the economic growth prospects are negative. The pervasive hardship and permissive settings for violence cause widespread disillusionment, outrage and public mistrust, which manifests as the people resist and undermine society's principles. As a result, there will be a significant number of furious people who are vulnerable to various political, cultural and other manipulations that can easily turn their rage and frustration into violence.

## **METHODOLOGY**

This study employed the *ex-post facto* research design using ordinary least squares (OLS) method, Augmented Dickey-Fuller (ADF) unit Root Test, Johansen Co-integration test and Error Correction Model (ECM) to analyse the data collected. Qualitative and quantitative tools were adopted in order to obtain viable data as regards the extent to which insecurity had impacted on the growth of the Nigerian economy. Augmented Dickey-Fuller Statistics was used to test for the stationery status of all the variables to determine their order of integration. The Johansen co-integration technique was used to test for the long-run relationship among the selected variables in the models. Also, the Error Correction Mechanism was employed to determine the speed of adjustment from the short-run disequilibrium to the long-run equilibrium.

The data used for this study were secondary data derived from journals, internet, National Bureau of Statistics, Central Bank of Nigeria Statistical bulletin and World Bank publications for the period 1999 to 2020. The dependent variable, economic growth, was proxied by gross domestic product (GDP) while the independent variable, insecurity, was proxied by national terrorism index, militancy and ethno-religious conflicts in Nigeria.

### **Model specification**

To examine the influence of insecurity on economic growth in Nigeria a multiple linear model was built to capture the effect of terrorism, militancy and ethno-religious conflicts on the gross domestic product of country. This was represented in the following function:

$$\text{GDP} = f(\text{NTI}, \text{MLT}, \text{ERC})$$

From the above function, the following model is derived:

$$\text{GDP} = \alpha + \beta_1 \text{NTI} + \beta_2 \text{MLT} + \beta_3 \text{ERC} + e$$

Where: GDP is gross domestic product

NTI is national terrorism index

MLT is militancy

ERC is ethno-religious conflict

$\alpha$  is constant

$\beta_1, \beta_2$  &  $\beta_3$  are the coefficient of the parameter estimates

$e$  is the error term

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The study undertook empirical investigation regarding national security for economic growth in Nigeria which spanned from 1999 to 2020 using unit root test, co-integration and error correction technique to determine the relationship between the dependent and independent variables.

### Stationarity, Lag length and Bounds Test

In order to determine the order of integration, of the variables and to be sure that the series are integrated of order I(0) and I(1), a unit root test was carried out using the Dickey-Fuller test (ADF) on these variables. The results showed that all the variables were integrated at first difference except GDP which was integrated at level. The result of ADF testing is presented in table 1 below.

Table 1: Augmented Dickey Fuller (ADF) Test

Variable	Lag	@Level	First Difference	Order of Integration
GDP	0	4.296800(0.0110)	- 4.858479(0.3468)	1(0)
NTI	0	2.517051(0.9120)	-7.098790(0.0000)	1(1)
MLT	0	-0.290174(0.9162)	-6.312348(0.0000)	1(1)
ERC	0	0.355691(0.9778)	-3.984043(0.0043)	1(1)
5% C.V		5% = -2.951125	5% = -2.954021	

*Sources:* Extract from E-view 9.0

### Co-Integration Result

Co-integration is a long-run relationship that exists among two or more variables. To establish co-integration, the study employed the Johansen co-integration test as shown in table 2 below.

Table 2: Johansen Co-integration Test

Hypothesized No of CE(s)	Eigen Value	Trace Statistics	0.05 Critical Value	Prob.**
None	0.9067	142.256	69.818	0.000
At Most 1*	0.5687	63.968	47.856	0.000
At Most 2*	0.4036	36.209	29.797	0.008
At Most 3*	0.0838	2.8889	3.841	0.009

*Source:* Extracted from E-views

The Trace test shows that there are three co-integrating equations among the series. It is concluded that there is a long run relationship among the series.

**Error Correction Representation**

This section deals with error correction estimation of the relationship among the series, since there was evidence of co-integration among the series through Johansen Co-integration Test. The ECM results are depicted in table 3 below.

Table 3: Error Correction Representation Results

Regressor	Coefficient	Std. Error	T-Stat.	Prob.
C	6615381.00	1883579.00	3.512136	0.0015
NTI	1097610.00	152765.50	7.184929	0.000
MLT	404868.00	173620.70	2.331911	0.0271
ERC	-1261494.00	618075.40	-2.041004	0.0508
N+ECM(-1)	-0.408289	0.205383	-1.987938	0.0567

*Source:* Extracted from E-views 9

Table 3 presents the error correction model (ECM) result. The coefficients of national terrorism index (NTI), militancy (MLT) and ethno-religious conflict (ERC) were significant at 5% level. The result indicates that a one percent increase in NTI and MLT will cause GDP to rise by 1097610.00 and 1261494.00 respectively, because they have direct and positive relationship with the GDP. While (ECR) with coefficient of -1261494.00 has inverse relationship with the GDP. This relationship was found to be statistically insignificant at the 0.05 level and it does not conform to theoretical expectation. The error correction coefficient estimated at -0.4082 is highly significant and negative as expected. This implies that the speed of adjustment to the equilibrium is high and this further confirms a stable long run relationship among variables of interest.

**Diagnostic Test**

To confirm the robustness of the model, the diagnostics test was performed as show in table 4 below.

Table 4 Key Regression and Diagnostic Statistics

R-Squared	0.918614	Mean dependent var.	12351724
Adj. R-Squared	0.904080	S.D. dependent var.	15487602
S.E. of regression	4796653	Akaike info. criterion	33.76352
Sum squared resid	6.44E+14	Schwarz criterion	34.03288
Log likelihood	-567.9798	Hannan-Quinn criterion	33.85538
F-Statistics	63.20749	Durbin-Watson stat.	1.897847
Pob(F-Statistics)	0.000000		

*Source:* Extracted from E-views 9

The estimation results reveal that the independent variables jointly account for 0.904 systematic changes in gross domestic product as adjudged by the adjusted R<sup>2</sup>. This implies that approximately about 90% of the systematic and dynamic variation in gross domestic product was explained by the independent variables in the model. The Durbin Watson statistic (1.897) and F-Statistic (63.20749) illustrates the absence of auto correlation and statistical significance of the model.

## **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The unit root test showed that GDP was significantly stationery at level and the series of NTI, MLT and ERC were significantly stationary at first difference. The selected variables (i.e. gross domestic product, national terrorism index, militancy, and ethno-religious conflicts) had a co-integrating relationship indicating the fact that there is a long-run relationship among the variables. Result indicated that national terrorism index (NTI), militancy (MLT) and ethno-religious conflict (ERC) have a direct relationship with GDP in the long run. The result of the Error Correction Mechanism (ECM) had correct negative sign and statistically significant at 0.05 level, an indication that any disequilibrium in the system will be adjusted. Thus the study concluded that 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 stifle and retard socio-economic growth and development in Nigeria.

The study recommended that:

- i. Government should provide the enabling environment for people to work especially in the area of security of lives and property. This is against the back-drop that no meaningful economic activity can thrive in the face of insecurity.
- ii. The Nigerian government should solicit for correlated international assistance in areas including sustainable economic growth, good governance, human rights protection, and environmental preservation. This would provide a lasting solution to the agitations of the Niger-Delta militants and terrorism in the northern part of the country rather than the granting of amnesty and pardoning of “repentant” terrorists.
- iii. Ethnic and religious sentiments have fueled many conflicts in Nigeria leading to loss of lives and properties and retarded economic growth in the country. The government can use all available means such as the media and social networks to promote the unity of the citizens along ethnic and religious lines.

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