
EMPIRICAL UNDERSTANDING OF THE PROBLEM OF INSECURITY IN ANAMBRA STATE FROM 1999–2024

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Received: June 24, 2024 | **Revised:** June 29, 2024 | **Accepted:** June 30, 2024

DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.12701329

Abstract

Security is one of the essential needs of people in Anambra State which has not been considerably ensured by government for more than two decades. For this reason, this study investigated the reason for the persistence of insecurity and commensurate measures for winning the war against insecurity in Anambra State, Nigeria through survey research method. The population of the study is 4,117,828. Using Taro Yamani formula, the researchers arrived at the sample size of 400. However, the study was established with one hundred and seventy-five valid questionnaire as 56 questionnaires were unreturned while 169 were either not completely responded to or mutilated. This paper revealed five key causes of insecurity in the state and also five applicable remedies. It is the conclusion of this paper that Nigeria has retrogressed in all areas because the political gladiators has refused to tackle the problem of insecurity. We recommended that Anambra state should run a responsive government that effectively tackles the factors that led to the wanton rate of insecurity in the state through well implemented: poverty alleviation programmes, education for all initiative, mass employment of qualified but unemployed graduates, and revitalization of the security operatives in the state.

Key words: Bakassi Boys, Insecurity, Good Governance, Quality Education, Survey Approach, War Against Corruption.

Introduction

Without security as claimed by Charas (2015), social, economic and political achievements will not be actualized. This entails that security of persons and properties remains important for socio-economic survival of a clime (Zubairu, 2020). To buttress these assertions, it is reasonable to add that without security, it will be hard for people to contribute to the socio-economic wellbeing of the state. This is where Nigeria has been found wanton. Clearly, Nigeria is not functioning (Nwankwo, 2022), because insecurity has assumed a pervading form in the country (Iregbenu & Uzonwanne, 2015) and not just in Nigeria, insecurity is the major challenge in Africa (Chioke & Umeokafor, 2023). The security of this country has been further exacerbated, according to Nwadiakor (2011), by the deliberate concentration of Nigeria's capital resources to the development of a few cities in the name of federal and state capitals, culminating in the prevalence of a large population of rural and underdeveloped communities who later came to see the developing cities of Lagos, Port-Harcourt, Kano, Enugu, Ibadan, Kaduna and Calabar and others as different countries. Thus, the politics of concentrating capital resources to the development of a few cities and leaving others to

languish in penury and severe underdevelopment. Emphatically, insecurity is currently troubling socio-economic existence of Anambra State citizens.

Over the years, Anambra state government has made efforts targeted at terminating traces of security threats in the state. To this end, the state government had previously recruited security operatives known as, Bakassi boys for the fight against the spate of insecurity in the state. However, this attempt did not culminate into complete extinction of traces of security challenges in Anambra state. Today, we have in the state's security landscape bad eggs that infiltrated the genuine demands for self-determination in Igbo land particularly Anambra state. These boys whose majority did not enjoy quality education and some unemployed who have rich educational background have been bought by politicians to politicize the demands for agitation of Biafra in the Southeast Nigeria in order to score cheap political goals. This means that security challenges in Anambra State are championed by state and non-state actors.

Insecurity poses a significant threat to Nigeria's stability and development (Akingbohunge, 2024). Insecurity as the absence of security (Iregbenu & Uzonwanne, 2015) has been perceived by Nigerian citizens in Anambra State as the problem in the state affecting both the economic and educational sectors of the State. In the economic sector, it is on record that business which is part of human existence in particular and global world in general (Okonkwo, Ndubuisi-Okolo & Anagbogu, 2015) has been retrogressive in Anambra State given the incessant security challenges in some local government areas. Independence Corrupt Practices Commission (ICPC) and Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) should have greatly curbed corruption but they are only scratching it. These agencies have done little to totally eradicate corrupt practices in Nigeria (Okonkwo, et al, 2015) and this has occasioned serious security problems in Nigeria and Anambra state in particular. To this end, this paper is interested in understanding the reasons for security challenges and possible solutions for tackling insecurity in the state through quantitative research paradigm. To do this, the researcher put into consideration issues concerning the security challenges in Anambra State from 1999 – 2024. The reason is that since the beginning of the country's fourth republic (1999) till date, security challenges in Anambra State appears to be endemic.

Result and Discussion

Theorizing Insecurity for Effective Understanding

A better understanding of the word insecurity or security challenges should begin with a conceptual overview of the term, 'security'. Some scholars in conceptualizing security placed emphasis on the absence of threats to peace, stability, national cohesion, political and socio-economic objectives of a country (Igbuzor, 2011; Olabanji & Ese, 2014). Differently, insecurity only portrays the absence of security (Iregbenu & Uzonwanne, 2015). Omede (2012) sees security as a dynamic condition, which involves the relative ability of a state to counter threats to its core values and interests. In this regard, we agree with Udentia (2007) who posited that, instability and incessant crisis are the antithesis of government as they only indicate aberrations.

Scholars perceived insecurity as a worrisome problem troubling the safety of properties and lives of the citizens of a country (Chioke & Umeokafor, 2023). Beland (2005) perceived insecurity as the state of fear or anxiety stemming from a concrete or alleged lack of protection. It could thus be regarded as lack or inadequacy of freedom from danger (Okonkwo, Ndubuisi-Okolo & Anagbogu, 2015). In Nigeria, there is great dearth of protection arising from the poorly crafted foreign policy and relationships thereof in recent time (Chioke & Umeokafor, 2023). As germane as it stands, insecurity was perceived by Achumba et al (2013) from two perspectives: 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; and 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 (Okonkwo, Ndubuisi-Okolo & Anagbogu, 2015).

Research Method

This study was established through quantitative research design. Quantitative studies centre on the data collected in form of numbers and scores of the participants who were selected by the researchers (Asma, 2022). This means that instead of qualitative data analysis that focuses on expressive data that provide descriptive details majorly in narrative form to examine the aim and specific objectives of the study (Chioke, 2022a), this current study's method of data collection and analysis thereof is quantitative. The type of quantitative approach adopted by the researchers is survey method. Survey helps in explaining what exists, in what quantity, and in what context; and to ascertain whether or not particular objectives have been realized. (Isaac & Michael, 1997). This is the reason for choosing survey approach. Adopting survey approach implies that the quantitative data were derived through close ended questionnaire that was shared to residents of Anambra State who have lived in the state for a period of twenty five 25 years or more through face to face method questionnaire distribution. This indicates that the delimitation of the study is Anambra State and the population of the state according to the 2006 population and housing census projected figure by the National Population Commission (NPC) is 4,117,828. Using Taro Yamani formula, the researchers arrived at the sample size of 400. However, the study was established with one hundred and seventy five valid questionnaire as 56 questionnaires were unreturned while 169 were either not completely responded to or mutilated. The data for this investigation was gotten through newspapers in Nigeria, journal articles, inaugural lecture material, and internet materials.

Data Analysis

Question 1: What are the reasons for the high rate of insecurity in Anambra State?

Table 1: Respondents' responses regarding the reasons for the high rate of insecurity in Anambra State.

N=175				
S/N	Statements	Σfx	X	Decision
Factors accounting for insecurity in Anambra State				
1	Wide spread corruption has caused significant increase in the rate of insecurity in Anambra State.	608	3.47	Agreed
2	Unemployment and underemployment gave rise to insecurity in the state.	597	3.41	Agreed
3	Porous borders is a factor that has caused the rate of insecurity in Anambra State, Nigeria.	546	3.12	Agreed
4	Poverty and inequitable distribution of scarce resources accounts for high rate of insecurity in Anambra State.	617	3.52	Agreed
5	Weak security system contributed to inability of security operative to tackle security threats thereby skyrocketing insecurity in Anambra State.	697	3.98	Agreed

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Data on table 1 shows that five statements make up this subsection. The respondents in table I agreed to all the statements in this subsection. Therefore, all the variable depicting the factors accounting for insecurity in Anambra State were accepted by the respondents.

Question 2: How would you rate the solutions to the problem of insecurity in Anambra State?

Table 2: Respondents' responses to the sub variable, Equitable Social Development. N=175

S/N	Statements	Σfx	X	Decision
Solutions to the problem of insecurity in Anambra State				
6	Creation of employment opportunities will reduce insecurity in Anambra State.	566	3.22	Agreed
7	Good governance will reduce insecurity in Anambra State.	647	3.69	Agreed
8	Committed war against corruption in all aspect of Anambra state public life will curb insecurity in the state.	567	3.24	Agreed
9	Fortification of security operatives in Anambra will help ensure security of lives and properties in the state.	589	3.36	Agreed
10	Insecurity in Anambra state could be overcome by quality education and collaboration with the residents and international community in safeguarding lives and properties.	603	3.44	Agreed

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Similar to table 1 above, table 2 has five statements make up this subsection. The respondents in table 2 agreed to all the statements in this subsection. Therefore, all the variable demonstrating the solutions to the problem of insecurity in Anambra State were accepted by the respondents.

Discussion of Findings

It is important to note that there are chances of insecurity in a heterogeneous political setting like Nigeria. In the same manner, there are chances of insecurity in Anambra not only because of the political differences in the state, but because of the growth of many businesses. In fact, it is on record that despite being culturally rich and endowed with abundant mineral resources, Nigeria grapples with insecurity primarily due to negligence on the part of both the government and its citizens (Akingbohunde, 2024). Be that as it may, this study revealed and brought to the fore other pertinent reasons for insecurity in Anambra State, Nigeria as the first objective of this study was to ascertain the reasons for insecurity in Anambra State.

The study found that wide spread corruption has caused significant increase in the rate of insecurity in Anambra State. This implies that public policies with respect to war against corruption in Nigeria are not quite impressive when you consider the quantum of success recorded as a result of their implementations. Soon after the enactment of anti-graft laws, studies show that they became politicized. Buttressing this, extant literature opined that EFCC failed when it became the tool of the Obasanjo government to silence and witch hunt Obasanjo's political opponent (Iyare, 2008) and has also been the predominant practice during Buhari's administration from 2015 – 2023 (Chioke, 2022a; Thompson, Afolabi, Raheem & Onifade, 2020) which derailed the effectiveness of EFCC (Duke & Abaji, 2017) within the already mentioned time frame in all the states of Nigeria including Anambra state. Corroboratively, the achievement made by EFCC regarding its mandates is low thereby encouraging the prevalence of corruption in Nigeria (Adetayo, 2019). The anathema called, corruption promotes the persistence and consistence of insecurity. For example, the issue of farmers and herders clashes in Nigeria have been perceived as political gimmicks and an act of

corruption which is capable of derailing Nigeria's sustainable development (Chioke, 2020). Therefore, previous study described corruption as cancer militating against Nigeria's development, because corruption deeply threatens the fabric of the Nigeria society (Nwanegbo & Odigbo, 2013). Regrettably, corruption in almost all the states in Nigeria is ethnicised and thus, rules are frequently manoeuvred to favour relatives and cronies of the ruling and non-ruling elites (Chioke, 2022b). Corruption hampers economic growth, disproportionately burdens the poor and undermines the effectiveness of investment and aid (Iyare, 2008) and when this is done, insecurity becomes the order of the day as seen in Anambra State. Aside this, in education sector, studies indicate that academic corruption remains a major issue hindering development in Nigeria and deeply eating deep into the fabrics of the country, Nigeria (Chioke, 2020; Chioke & Agbodike, 2021; Chioke, Agbodike & Nnaji, 2021; Iduh 2011; Nwankwo & Nweke, 2016; Nwaokugha & Ezeugwu, 2017). The implication of this is that the intelligence or rather the quantum of human capital needed to stampede security threats would be insufficient leaving the country with no other choice than to hire well trained security operatives from educationally developed countries.

Data for the study revealed that unemployment and underemployment gave rise to insecurity in the state. What this implies is that with mean score 3.41, the data for this study drew our attention to the fact that unemployment and underemployment are pointers to a volatile society. Previous study buttress this. For instance, Zubairu (2020) observed that, unemployed people become frustrated to the extent that they engage in criminal activities like kidnapping, militancy and robbery. Furthermore, it was claimed that due to the high level of unemployment among Nigerians, they are adversely attracted to violent crime (Adagba, et al, 2012) which constitute security challenges in Anambra State and other component units of Nigeria. Hence, Nwagbosa (2012) rightly contended that the inability of successive administrations in Nigeria to address challenge of unemployment is among the major causes of insecurity in the country. Unemployment has a severe negative implication on national development in Nigeria as most of its productive force is unemployed (Okonkwo, et al 2015). What this means theoretically is that unemployment increase the number of people who are prepared to kill or be killed for a given course at a token benefit (Salawu, 2010). It could predispose one to engaging in illicit activities that would undermine security of the environment (Okonkwo, et al 2015).

Our study's quantitative data revealed that porous borders is a factor that has caused increase in the rate of insecurity in Anambra State, Nigeria. Insecurity in Anambra State and Nigeria at large is as a result of porous borders linking Nigeria with her neighbouring countries. It is from these borders that criminal elements from Nigeria's neighbor maneuver to enter Nigeria and then infiltrate the rest of the country because the country is made up of negligent and irresponsible governance system. Corroborating this, "borderlands are both meeting points and security hot spots which are often neglected in the development strategies of post-colonial states (Akpan & Umelo, 2020). Also, it is the position of Achumba et al (2013) that the porous frontiers of the country, where individual movements are largely untracked have contributed to the level of insecurity in Nigeria. Currently, the herders that are responsible for posing security threats in Nigeria are those who migrated into Nigeria through the country's borders and their migration has apparent negative outcomes on the peace of the geopolitical zones in Nigeria (Chioke & Umeokafor, 2023). As a result of the porous borders there is an unchecked inflow of Small Arms and Light Weapons into the country which has aided militancy and criminality in Nigeria (Hazen & Horner, 2007) and Anambra State in particular. Nigeria is battling with influx of migrants from sister countries Niger, Chad and Benin (Adeola & Oluyemi, 2012) whose vast number of citizens are now sources of threats to their host country. It is therefore not surprising that Nwadiakor (2011) insisted that, security challenges that was one of the lowest in the hierarchy of social problems facing Nigeria, seems to have assumed an alarming proportion since the end of the Nigerian civil war which ended in

1970. Nigeria's porous borders portend critical security implications for Anambra State, other southeastern states and Nigeria at large. To depict this, data reported by Edeko (2011) indicate that Nigeria host over 70 percent of about 8 million illegal weapons in West Africa.

This study validated the fact that poverty and inequitable distribution of scarce resources accounts for high rate of insecurity in Anambra State. Poverty which is a state of acute deprivation of essential needs to good and considerable standard of living (Chioke, 2021) or a situation in which humans live below a defined standard of living (Aliyu, 1998) has enabled the rising rate of security challenges in Nigeria. To curtail this, Nigeria had over the years made policies and policy statements on poverty alleviation (Chioke, Umeokafor & Abasili, 2021) but to no avail as poverty and inequitable distribution of scarce resources has continued to disturb the people without remedy. Study therefore shows that extreme poverty leads to crime that give rise to insecurity (Zubairu, 2020). Although statistics indicate that generally, Anambra state is not one of top 20 poorest states out of 36 states in Nigeria (Thabit & Wangare, 2023), there are still poor and indigent citizens and foreigners in the state who are now significant sources of security threats in the state.

Lastly, this research found that weak security system contributed to the inability of security operatives to tackle security threats thereby skyrocketing insecurity in Anambra State. Weak security system emanates from inadequate equipment for the security arm of government, both in weaponry and training (Achumba, et al, 2013). This is in addition to poor attitudinal and behavioural disposition of security personnel. In Anambra state, poor attitudinal and behavioural disposition of security officers of the Army and police have reduced the once respected security personnel to the class of mere tax collectors as they are seen collecting monies from drivers. So, what happens to drivers carrying heavy ammunitions and weapons? What happens to those being kidnapped? What happens to human traffickers? Unfortunately, these are among the least concerns that Nigerian security officers are concerned about when they are collecting money from road users in Anambra state and southeast Nigeria at large. Furthermore, "In many cases, security personnel assigned to deal with given security situations lack the expertise and equipment to handle the situations in a way to prevent them from occurring. And even when these exist, some personnel get influenced by ethnic, religious or communal sentiment and are easily swallowed by their personal interest to serve their people, rather than the nation (Okonkwo, et al, 2015)". Therefore, survival of the people has become survival of the fittest which consequently produced insecurity in Anambra State and Nigeria at large.

Concerning the second cluster, this study demonstrated that there are applicable solutions to the problem of insecurity in Anambra state. First, the data revealed that creation of employment opportunities will reduce insecurity in Anambra State. Unemployment increases governments' expenditure or transfer payments where welfare programs are implemented in favor of the unemployed (Okonkwo, et al, 2015). Creating employment for the unemployed youths and older persons is viewed as a panacea to the problem of insecurity championed by the unemployed population of the state. The implication is that there is need for urgent adoption international best practices on state and community policing in Anambra state. Scholars such as Okonkwo, et al (2015) perceived the social effects of unemployment and underemployment thus: Social effects of unemployment include personal hardship, depression, decay of acquired but unused skills, involvement in crime (mostly among youth) as well as dispute among married people, delayed marriages among singles and sometimes broken homes." We are also aware that the joblessness of a husband can lead to infidelity of the wife (Okonkwo, et al, 2015) and thus, poses serious security threat to the husband or the entire family from her numerous sexual partners as soon as the man or the entire family members rises against the woman's promiscuity.

Public administration challenges in Nigeria have derailed her from becoming a developmental country and therefore lacks appropriate governance structures that lead to

sustainable development (Chioke, 2024) in all the states including Anambra State. To this end, data for this study revealed that good governance will reduce insecurity in Anambra state. Oluwarotimi (2012) was in pact with this present study as it concord that good governance is the solution to the problem of insecurity in Nigeria. Therefore, to adequately address the problem of insecurity in the state, “the underlying principle of good governance is the focus on people (Okonkwo, et al, 2015).” The ultimate objective of governance in Anambra state for some time now has shifted from the masses to members of the ruling party (Obianeri, 2024; Oluwasanjo, 2024) and in general, the culture of self-centered administration has been the prevalent public administration practice in Nigeria (Chioke, 2024). In the words of Governor Chukwuma Soludo of Anambra State, “I rejected the advice to Nwokedi Street because the House member representing the area was formerly in the opposition. Today, he is in our party, and he is a mainstream member so we have listened to him (Obianeri, 2024).” This is a sign of bad or selective governance which constantly poses security challenge in Anambra state.

This study also buttressed the fact that committed war against corruption in all aspect of Anambra state public life will curb insecurity in the state. For the fact that corruption has been engraved in the system to the extent that: it has become a household name (Chioke, 2022a), everybody both primary and post primary school children engage in academic corruption (Abugu, 2014, Chioke, 2022b, Chioke & Agbodike, 2021; Nwankwo & Nweke, 2016) and other abnormalities in Nigeria, and all factors of the economy are now caught in the web of corruption (Okonkwo, et al, 2015); there is need for the adoption of anti-graft strategy in order to discourage those benefiting from the current spate of insecurity in Anambra State from furthering their businesses (kidnapping, maiming, assassination and so on). The implication of these corrupt practices is that Nigeria is ranked among the top most corrupt countries in the world (Onimajesin, 2013). Given this war against corruption is need for Nigeria and her component units especially Anambra state to stem the tide of insecurity in the state.

With mean (3.36), this study further revealed that fortification of security operatives in Anambra will help ensure security of lives and properties in the state. Although the issue of policing is the function of the federal government, there should be a synergy between the federal government and her federating partner, Anambra State in strengthening the Police for better service delivery in the troubled areas like: Ihiala local government area, Onitsha and other volatile communities in Anambra State. In other words, there should be “Training and retraining of officers must be carried out on a regular basis with special focus on human rights, weapon handling, communication skills, new interrogation techniques, exposure to new equipment and technology (Okonkwo, et al, 2015)”. Therefore, urgent measures should be executed in order to reform Nigerian Police Force (Chioke & Umeokafor, 2023).

Data revealed that insecurity in Anambra state could be overcome by quality education and collaboration with the residents and international community in safeguarding lives and properties. Efforts to combat terrorism must be complemented by comprehensive education and awareness campaigns targeting vulnerable population, particularly the youth (Akingbohungebe, 2024) in Anambra state. For the fact that quality education ensures the transformed of an individual into a participant in the socioeconomic development of the society (Daura & Audu, 2015); investing in education that respects and celebrates Nigeria’s diverse culture while promoting critical thinking and civic responsibility, can lead the state into transition from a state of insecurity to one of stability and progress (Akingbohungebe, 2024). It follows then that quality educational system from 21st century realities should consider the dynamics of the labour market and its teeming population by equipping human resources with occupational skills that enable them become self-reliant for a better society (Chioke, et al, 2023). Also, enhanced collaboration with international partners is crucial for dismantling transnational criminal networks involved in kidnapping and other illicit

activities (Akingbohunge, 2024) that are currently ravaging Anambra state. It is believed that those involved in criminal activities are largely from the class of those denied quality education and as such, there should be collaboration in fighting security challenges posed by this class and other classes in the state. These if taken into consideration by Anambra state government will lead to termination of security challenges.

Conclusions

Since state and non-state actors are hugely involved in security challenges bedeviling the state, it is expected that all hands should be on deck in order to really make Anambra state a peaceful home for all. At the larger political scene (Nigeria), we add that the country retrogressed in all areas because the political gladiators at various component units refused to collectively tackle the problem of insecurity which ahead to hinder democratic governance and development in the country. Therefore, there is need for good governance – contextually seen as governance that has zero tolerance for myriad of security challenges.

Having seen that there is a mass of reasons for insecurity in Anambra state, we thus recommend that Anambra state should run a responsive government that effectively tackles the factors that led to the wanton rate of insecurity in the state through well implemented: poverty alleviation programmes, education for all initiative, mass employment of qualified but unemployed graduates, and revitalization of the security operatives in the state. This paper has added to literature on security of lives and properties by using survey approach to unravel the reasons for the persistence of insecurity within our scope of study and have equally thrown up solutions to checkmate insecurity in the state which could Nigerian government could benefit from.

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