



Security and Economic Development in Karim Lamido Local Government Area of Taraba State, Nigeria

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Abstract

This study assesses the effects of insecurity on economic growth in Karim Lamido Local Government Area of Taraba State, Nigeria. The region faces ongoing conflicts primarily driven by herders' insurgency, banditry, and communal violence. Using qualitative method, the study investigates how security challenges impede economic development by disrupting agricultural activities, trade, and investment, which are vital economic drivers in the area. It identifies critical issues such as population displacement, infrastructure destruction, and loss of livelihoods. Additionally, it examines the ensuing decline in GDP, employment rates, and government revenue. Findings demonstrate the negative impact of insecurity on local economies and an increased reliance on humanitarian assistance. The paper concludes with policy recommendations, including enhancing security infrastructure, encouraging peacebuilding initiatives, and promoting regional economic diversification to address the long-term consequences of insecurity on economic growth in Karim Lamido, Taraba State, Nigeria.

Keywords: Security, Insecurity, Economic development

Introduction

Security is essential for the survival of a State, with governments primarily responsible for protecting citizens and creating an environment that encourages growth (Amoyibo & Akpomera, 2013). The 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria emphasizes this duty, stating, "the security and welfare of the people shall be the primary purpose of government." Nevertheless, Nigeria's ongoing security issues have compromised this responsibility, adversely impacting lives and economic stability nationwide. Recently, insecurity in Nigeria has surged, taking various forms such as ethnic strife, kidnappings, terrorism, militancy, and clashes involving herdsmen. The repercussions of these crises are evident in reports of fatalities, declining populations, business stagnation, reduced investments, and escalating unemployment.

Insecurity in Karim Lamido Local Government Area has become alarming, as many residents now struggle to sleep soundly, while the state government faces challenges in tackling this menace. This situation has resulted in the displacement of rural individuals, destruction of farms, and increased fatalities among men, women, and children. Those dependent on farming as a livelihood now live in constant fear of being killed, kidnapped, or assaulted by insurgents. Despite the involvement of quasi-security agencies like vigilante groups and the Taraba Marshal to combat insecurity, their efforts have proven largely ineffective. The revised 1999

Constitution mandates the government to safeguard citizens' lives and properties, yet this has not curtailed recurring issues such as farmer-herder conflicts, kidnappings, cattle rustling, banditry, armed robbery, and ethno-religious tensions. Insecurity has spread throughout Taraba State and Nigeria as a whole; consequently, it predominantly affects Taraba and has led to clashes between farmers and herders, aggravating the proliferation of ethnic militias and extrajudicial killings (Africa Center for Strategic Studies, 2020).

Taraba State possesses fertile land suitable for both nomadic pastoralists and farmers to coexist harmoniously. However, despite the past implementation of a grazing routes law by the former state governor Darius Dickson Ishaku, conflicts between farmers and herders persist (Taraba State Government, 2017). This paper aims to analyze the precarious security situation in Karim Lamido, aiming to propose lasting solutions. The study will explore the definition of insecurity, causes of insecurity in Karim Lamido, the effects of insecurity on economic development, how instability affects development, consequences of insecurity, a theoretical framework, and concluding recommendations.

Literature Review

Various literatures exists on the effects of insecurity on economic development, but little research focuses specifically on the impact of insecurity on economic growth in Karim Lamido Local Government Area, Taraba State, Nigeria. The literature review will be organized for clarity. Insecurity is the antithesis of security; thus, it's crucial to conceptualize security first. Wolfers (1952) defines security in two senses: objectively, as the absence of threats to acquired values, and subjectively, as the lack of fear of such attacks. Security and power could be equated if security could solely stem from accumulating power, which is not the case. In a subjective sense, security does not necessarily correlate with a nation's power position. Ultimately, security represents the absence of insecurity, a negative value. Buzan (1991) views security as encompassing political, economic, social, and environmental threats impacting individuals and states. Scholars define security as freedom from threats to cherished values, particularly when dealing with essential criteria for defining security. William (2008) suggests that security chiefly relates to alleviating threats to cherished values endangering survival. Security embodies a state of safety from peril, harm, danger, and anxiety concerning the preservation of core values (Oladeji & Folorunso, 2007). Ogaba (2010) posits that security pertains to freedom from danger or threats to a nation's capacity for self-protection and development while enhancing the well-being of its people. Bodunde et al. (2014) argue that security involves processes connected with mitigating threats to people and their values. Buzan et al. (1998) assert that security encompasses freedom from threats and a state's ability to maintain its identity against hostile forces, prioritizing survival. In summary, security encompasses feelings of safety from harm, fear, oppression, danger, poverty, and the need for defense and preservation of core values.

Insecurity, as the opposite of security, refers to a state arising from the ineffective measures protecting individuals, information, and properties from hostile actions. It represents a condition where individuals in a society cannot conduct their daily activities due to threats and disruptions to their lives. Beland (2005) defines insecurity as a state of fear stemming from a lack of protection. Achumba and Akpor-Robaro (2013) categorize insecurity into two aspects: the state of being susceptible to danger and the state of being exposed to risk or anxiety, reinforcing the point that affected individuals are vulnerable to arising threats. In this study, insecurity is defined as any breach of peace and security whether historical, religious, ethno-regional, civil, social, economic, or political that contributes to recurring conflicts and leads to significant destruction.

Numerous studies have shown that insecurity hampers national economic growth. For instance, Nwanegbo and Odigbo (2013) affirm that security enables national development, while Ewetan

and Urhie (2014) contend that insecurity undermines business operations and deters investment. Adegbami (2013) suggests that insecurity adversely affects citizens' welfare, causing businesses and properties to suffer and prompting industrial relocation. Udeh and Ihezie (2013) assert that insecurity challenges Nigeria's national development efforts and hinders foreign investment attraction. Otto and Ukpere (2012) studied national security and development, observing a positive relationship between security and development while noting that insecurity inhibits economic development, particularly in less developed economies. Sandler and Ender (2008) argue that the economic consequences of terrorism are generally modest and fleeting, primarily affecting specific sectors facing increased terrorist risks. Notably, despite extensive literature on insecurity, no study has yet assessed its impact on economic development in Karim Lamido, particularly concerning ethno-communal tensions and other contributing factors, which is the focal point of this research.

Despite extensive research on insecurity's impact on economic development, a significant gap exists in the literature regarding the specific context of Karim Lamido Local Government Area, Taraba State, Nigeria. No study has yet assessed the impact of insecurity on economic development in this area, particularly concerning ethno-communal tensions and other contributing factors. This study aims to fill this gap by investigating the impact of insecurity on economic growth in Karim Lamido, with a focus on ethno-communal tensions and other relevant factors.

Ethno-communal tension:

Karim Lamido consists of over twenty-seven (27) ethnic groups, belonging to diverse religious sects. Since its establishment, this local government has been one of Nigeria's most multi-ethnic areas, often emphasizing political rivalry and competition that fosters volatility and has led to challenges in managing ethnic and ethno-religious conflicts. Over the years, the dynamics of ethnicity and religious intolerance have precipitated recurrent ethno-communal and ethno-religious crises, such as the 2023-2025 Karimjo-Wurkun ethnic strife over traditional leadership. These ethnic differences have resulted in various crises that severely impact economic development and heighten insecurity.

Ethno-religious conflicts:

Ethno-religious conflicts are significant contributors to insecurity in Nigeria (Ibrahim & Igbuzor, 2002; Hazen & Horner, 2007; Salawu, 2010; Igbuzor, 2011). Such conflicts occur when social relations between members of different ethnic or religious groups deteriorate into mutual suspicion, fear, and violent confrontations. Competing for scarce resources such as land, political power, and local governance has also intensified tensions among these groups, leading to considerable violence and loss of life (Adagba et al., 2012). These conflicts typically arise from entrenched distrust and suspicion among various ethnic groups and major religions within the country. Persistent ethnic and religious tensions, especially between the dominant Christian population and other factions, pose significant security challenges in Karim Lamido. The ongoing crisis between the United Methodist Church in Nigeria (UMCN) and the newly established Global Methodist Church in Nigeria (GMCN) has claimed numerous lives and displaced many citizens.

Farmer-herder conflicts:

In Karim Lamido, persistent tensions between herders and farmers, particularly in areas like Bandawa, Mungadoso, Mungalelau, and Jen, often revolve around crop destruction by cattle and retaliatory killings. Conflicts arise among communities that historically coexisted peacefully but now find themselves embroiled in clashes that take on ethnic and religious dimensions. Farmers are largely from the same ethnic group and predominantly Christian,

while most pastoralists are Fulani and Muslim. Therefore, conflicts are often perceived as ethnic or religious confrontations due to these underlying identities. The 2013-2015 Wukari crisis, which resulted from farmer-herder clashes, serves as a stark illustration of how such tensions can lead to widespread violence and destruction.

Politically based violence:

Nigeria has endured a long history of politically motivated violence, dating back to the collapse of the first republic in January 1966. Electoral politics in Nigeria have been marred by conflicts, thuggery, and assassinations. Politicians frequently resort to violence rather than dialogue or negotiation (Eme & Onyishi, 2011). This violent political culture stems from the desperate pursuit of power among politicians, often resulting in catastrophic consequences, including loss of life, disruption of economic activities, and destruction of property. The absence of internal democracy within political parties fosters discontent and fear regarding upcoming elections, creating an atmosphere of political insecurity that permeates the Nigerian Fourth Republic. Systemic corruption poses another significant challenge to national security, contributing to government failure and the breakdown of institutional infrastructure. The pervasive insecurity in Nigeria largely stems from governance failures linked to systemic corruption, resulting in violent conflicts that undermine national values. Corruption not only shifts public resources to selfish interests but also erodes societal norms, exacerbating the security crisis (Nwanegbo & Odigbo, 2013).

Major Causes of Insecurity in Karim Lamido

Elite exploitation of Ethnicity and Religious Differences:

While ethnic diversity itself is not inherently a cause of insecurity, political and religious leaders often manipulate ethnic sentiments for selfish gains. This manipulation fosters distrust and resentment among different groups, contributing to insecurity not only in Karim Lamido but across Nigeria. In a multi-ethnic setting like Karim, fostering peaceful coexistence should take precedence over polarizing strategies. Adagba et al. (2012) and Achumba et al. (2013) note that competition over scarce resources often leads to conflict, resulting in widespread destruction. Dominance, corruption, injustice, and victimization frequently provoke ethnic and religious conflicts (Nasiru, 2020).

Loss of Socio-Cultural and Communal Value System:

The erosion of moral values in Nigeria has played a significant role in the ongoing security challenges. The collapse of communal values that once upheld human life and condemned greed and exploitation has created a toxic security environment. Contemporary values emphasizing greed and individualism have supplanted beneficial communal ethics.

The Effect of Insecurity on Economic Development

The devastating impact of insecurity on economic development has long been acknowledged. UNDP (1994) defines human security as both protection from chronic threats such as hunger and disease and safeguarding against abrupt disruptions in daily life. This includes economic security, personal safety, and community stability. Inadequate security threatens individual freedoms and the capacity to achieve personal potential. As Achumba and Akpor-Robaro (2013) affirm, individuals affected by insecurity experience uncertainty and vulnerability. Collier (2006) pointed out that countries reliant on primary commodity exports face heightened conflict risk, particularly those facing social inequalities and political decline. Documented evidence consistently shows that insecurity negatively impacts economic growth.

Stewart (2004) found that insecurity affected economic growth across several countries between 1960 and 1995, particularly harming the agricultural sector and reducing overall

production. Furthermore, SIPRI Yearbook (2015) highlights that security threats often have socioeconomic roots, including conflicts over resources and social disparities. This study diverges from previous literature by investigating insecurity's effects on economic growth using a purely economic lens.

Consequences of Insecurity in Karim Lamido

The fear instigated by insurgency and violent activities has prompted many individuals to migrate from affected areas within Karim Lamido, leading to economic depression in the region. Consequently, commercial activity has plummeted, causing inflation to rise sharply due to limited supply chains. Essential goods such as food, clothing, and car parts are now scarcer and more expensive. Additionally, insecurity has stunted government revenue efforts, as farmers, fearing conflict, are reluctant to cultivate their lands, impacting farming-based revenue generation in the region.

Social activities have also suffered as a result of these security challenges. Numerous schools, both public and private, especially in areas like Bandawa, Mungadoso, Mungalelau, and Jen, remain closed for extended periods. This disruption leaves students behind in their educational development, while many staff members have fled, rendering local institutions inactive.

Theoretical Framework

This paper adopts the securitization theory articulated by Barry Buzan, Waever, and de Wilde in 1998. Securitization theory posits that language shapes reality and can prompt specific actions. When issues are framed as security concerns, they often necessitate extraordinary measures. Securitization unfolds as a continued social process, requiring consensus on threats and the mobilization of resources. Buzan et al. (1998) define securitization as a series of claims that present particular incidents as existential threats, effectively justifying exceptional responses beyond conventional political dealings.

Applied to the insecurity challenges in Karim Lamido, the theory illuminates how various actors frame specific problems such as ethnic conflicts and farmer-herder disputes as security threats. Understanding these framing dynamics is essential in addressing the underlying causes of insecurity. The theory emphasizes the process of convincing audiences that particular issues require urgent action, allowing us to assess how policymakers and local leaders have defined insecurity in Karim Lamido. By analyzing these framing processes, we can evaluate the effectiveness of responses and proposed solutions to improve economic stability and security.

Conclusion

The findings indicate that insecurity critically impacts Karim Lamido Local Government, characterized by ethnic discord that detracts from community unity. The rising tide of violence, particularly from extremist groups, has led to significant loss of life and property. It is evident that ethno-communal conflicts, religious strife, farmer-herder issues, and power tussles underlie the insecurity that hampers economic development in Karim. This study suggests that the inability to combat the identified security issues contributes to the region's economic underperformance; thus, the involvement of community cooperation is imperative for security agencies combating these challenges.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are proposed:

- i. Community-based conflict resolution platforms be formed to ensure a peaceful coexistence for vital economic development.
- ii. The government must avoid politicizing traditional leadership processes, which exacerbate conflicts and loss of life in Karim Lamido.
- iii. The Nigerian government should establish a joint committee to review the relationship between the farmers and herders, ensuring strict adherence to rights related to each freedom.
- iv. The government must take proactive measures to tackle security threats through enhanced intelligence gathering, modern surveillance technologies, and strategic resource mobilization.
- v. land tenure reforms be prioritize by government to avoid communal clashes which undermines local economic growth

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