
August 2024


Resolving Nigeria's Security Conundrum: A Comprehensive Regional Analysis

Lukman Ahmed Lawal
Oxford Brookes University, lukmanlawal34@yahoo.com

Beacon Mbiba
Oxford Brookes University, bmbiba@brookes.ac.uk

Salamatu Kassah
salamatu.kassah@yahoo.com

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.usf.edu/jacaps>

 Part of the [Defense and Security Studies Commons](#), [Peace and Conflict Studies Commons](#), and the [Urban Studies and Planning Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Lawal, Lukman Ahmed; Mbiba, Beacon; and Kassah, Salamatu (2024) "Resolving Nigeria's Security Conundrum: A Comprehensive Regional Analysis," *Journal of African Conflicts and Peace Studies*: Vol. 6: Iss. 1, .

Available at: <https://digitalcommons.usf.edu/jacaps/vol6/iss1/1>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Open Access Journals at Digital Commons @ University of South Florida. It has been accepted for inclusion in Journal of African Conflicts and Peace Studies by an authorized editor of Digital Commons @ University of South Florida. For more information, please contact digitalcommons@usf.edu.

Resolving Nigeria's Security Conundrum: A Comprehensive Regional Analysis

Abstract

Abstract

This article analyses the regional variabilities of insecurity in Nigeria to propose a suitable approach to understanding their peculiarities. It argues that the dominant military interventions and one-size-fits-all approaches are inappropriate for resolving the country's myriad security challenges. The Regional Security Complex Theory offers a theoretical basis to contextualise the complex security challenge in Nigeria. There is a need to unbundle the dynamics for each of the regions. Syntheses from the six geopolitical zones indicate that although the security challenges manifest in precarious living conditions, the drivers differ. The article recommends that interventions analyse and identify underlying factors for each region and adopt a suitable and sustainable approach to resolving the insecurity.

Keywords: Nigeria, Insecurity, Regions, Livelihoods, Diversity

Keywords

Nigeria, Insecurity, Regions, Livelihoods, Diversity

1. INTRODUCTION: PERSISTING INSECURITY IN NIGERIA

Like many post-colonial countries, Nigeria has witnessed increased, evolving and recurring conflicts since independence (1960). The series of civil disputes in the country include the 'Biafra War' - in the late 1960s (Orobator 1983; Diamond 2007; Iruonagbo and George 2007; Oparaku et al. 2017), and 'Maitatsine' uprising of the 1970s and 1980s (Hickey 1984; Kastfelt 1989; Adesoji 2011). Conflicts have also occurred after Nigeria's return to democratic rule (post-2000) (Okafor 2011). Increasingly, ethno-religious violence has also been witnessed across many regions. The Niger-Delta militancy, North-east Boko Haram insurgency and the farmer-herder conflicts in the North-central are examples of significant disputes in the country in recent times (Akinbi 2015; Nwankwo 2015; Dimelu et al. 2016; Ajodo-Adebanjoko 2017; Idowu 2017). Moreover, kidnapping and banditry are now rampant across the country, especially in the North-western region; while other forms of violence and crimes, uncertainty and fear continue unabated.

Researchers and policy analysts have widely described the security threats in Nigeria as ones that concern basic human needs (Katsina 2012; Ahmed 2014). However, reactive military interventions have formed the major response to address the myriad security challenges (Omoniyi 2021; Dahiru 2021). This approach of military interventions to security challenges may have been partly due to the narrow viewpoint of security as a physical personal safety concern. Whereas the security concept is much more encompassing and includes obvious and subtle grievances (e.g. political, ethno-religion, environmental, economic etc.), which are often the root of many personal safety concerns and unrests (CHS 2003; HDR 1994; Lawal 2019; Lawal and Mbiba 2020). Although the militaristic efforts should not be ignored, sustainable solutions to these security challenges significantly depend on fostering comprehensive sustainable household and community livelihood-related strategies (Odo 2012; Salkida 2016; Lawal and Mbiba 2020).

This sustainable livelihood view has informed a growing recognition of the need to diversify the approach to insecurity by complementing military efforts with improved socio-economic well-being to address the existing precarious living conditions in the country (Ajakor 2019; Dahiru 2021). The perilous livelihoods of a large proportion of Nigeria's population are often tied to the poor and ill-managed oil wealth that forms the basis of the country's economy (Chijioke and Olisah 2023; Nweke and Elem 2017). This mono-economic relation to Nigeria's security challenge may have informed the age-long unsustainable consideration that a one-size-fits-all intervention is sufficient to address insecurity in the country (Achumba et al. 2013). While this consideration may be relevant at the macro (national) level, or within the oil-rich regions (Lawal and Mbiba 2020); it undermines the critical understanding of the (in)security dynamics at the regional/subnational level in areas where the local economy may not be directly oil-dependent.

This review article considers the regional diversity in Nigeria as critical to any examination of the security dynamics, vulnerabilities and options for intervention to address the challenges. The analysis is particularly relevant in the Nigerian context where there is tremendous regional, economic and livelihood diversity and disparity (Anyaehe, and Areji, 2015; Onyima, 2016). A good starting point for insecurity interventions in a context with sizeable internal diversity and variability requires an understanding of the underlying causes and dynamics in the different regions (Achumba et al. 2013). Peterside (2014) and Dambazau (2015) argue that Nigeria's insecurity is regionally diverse with different factors which trigger

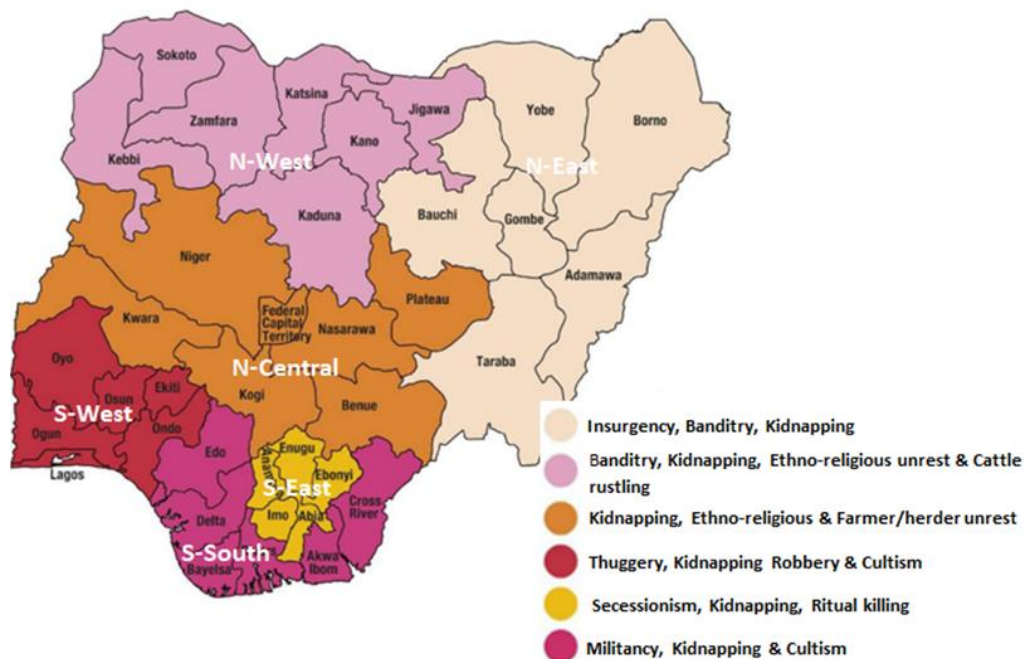
conflicts and general instability. Examining the peculiar conditions that cause regional instability is, therefore, pertinent to distinguish those dynamics as a critical strategy for unravelling the relevant concept for approaching the challenges. This analysis is important, considering that different insecurity drivers may require different approaches for sustainable interventions (Achumba et al. 2013; Lawal and Mbiba 2020).

The review of the diversity provides useful insight to help identify germane underlying causes of insecurity for each region, thereby informing the appropriate conceptual approach to tackling their peculiarities. To do this, it is relevant to explore the theoretical basis for approaching regional (in)security. This is considered in the next section.

2. REGIONAL SECURITY FRAMEWORK: CONSIDERATION FOR REGIONAL SECURITY COMPLEX THEORY

A regional security framework (RSF) connotes agreed-upon processes, strategies and/or collaborative actions by defined entities to address shared security problems. Whether this is a conceptualised (Cho 2020) or geographically localised regional context, the hierarchy of the spatial extents of the entities may vary considerably - e.g., subnational, state, regional and global (Zahid 2022). The RSF aims to promote stability and entrench peace in the face of existing or envisaged security challenges and conflicts. It provides a policy guide and strategic approach to addressing specific threats, such as military, economic, political, diplomatic, or a combination. For this article, however, the Nigerian State is the referent context whereas a group of states (subnational federating units) form the regions (see Fig. 1).

Figure 1: Broad Regional Pattern of Insecurity in Nigeria



Many security concepts exist (e.g. Regional Arms Control Agreements, Collective security, Comprehensive security) but the Regional Security Complex Theory (RSCT) revolutionised the inspiration for discourse and understanding of security dynamics at regional levels (Dennis 2022; Walsh 2020). The RSCT

(Buzam and Waeber 2003) builds on the notion that projects sovereign units within geographic entities (regions) as being threatened by similar and intertwined security challenges. This emphasises the roles of the regions in shaping security issues within their broader geographic context. It assumes that these threats are more effective and related within a proximate spatial extent, therefore, requiring collective actions within such entities. The utility of the theory is its comprehensiveness and alignment with the Human Security concept. This is a departure from the traditional state-centric approach to security as being construed around the socio-economic prism of security threats (Lawal and Mbiba 2020; Walsh 2020) to one which embodies both bottom-up and decentralised understanding and interventions.

However, Santini (2017) and Walsh (2020), for instance, underscore the analytical limitations of the RSCT to fully account for the 'complex fluidity' of the African security context. This criticism hinges on the inability of the theory to, among other things, accommodate the peculiar leadership influence on regional security and how these shape regional security dynamics in Africa. Notwithstanding this criticism, at a minimum, some of the key features of the RSCT speak to the prevailing security dynamics and failure in the context of Nigeria. Or at least, its primary considerations fall within the scope of the argument and analysis of this article, hence its relevance anchored on four interrelated components of regional security complexes, proximate security concern, regional security peculiarities, change and stability. Each of these is outlined below.

(a) Regional Security Complexes imply that proximate spatial entities within a larger context share similar security dynamics. These entities are interconnected by common challenges and should form the basis for security relationships and approaches to addressing the threats (Ali et al. 2023). This consideration fits Nigeria's vast and divergent geographic and cultural mix whose regional blocks share common and interwoven socio-cultural challenges.

(b) Proximate Security Concern suggests that regions within a larger context are or should prioritise the security threats within their domains outwardly, rather than approaching them from the larger context perspective (Xheladini 2016). This is a centrifugal bottom-up approach. Put differently, resolving regional security threats is more effective and translatable to the overall security of the larger context if addressed starting from within the region. As indicated earlier this regional focus sharply contrasts the state-wide approaches to security threats dominant in Nigeria.

(c) Regional Security Peculiarities notes that regions should approach their security threats with a focus on the regional peculiar dynamics and patterns which are often different from one another and the larger contexts. This call forms the crux of the debate in this article which argues that the apparent one-size-fits-all approach to security in Nigeria could hardly ever provide a sustainable outcome.

(d) Change and Stability imply that regional security dynamics are complex and dynamic. This means that security challenges evolve resulting in changes that are influenced by varied factors including the larger context behaviour, regime change, etc. This may explain the persisting nature of insecurity in Nigeria which has tended to take a divergent dimension with the change of political administration.

In essence, the RSCT offers a useful guide for understanding the complex security challenge of Nigeria, which, as argued in this paper, can best be addressed at the regional level. The theory echoes the need to approach the country's security challenges focusing on the regional peculiarities in the face of varying drivers and patterns. The next section discusses the regional security complexity of Nigeria,

highlighting the best approach to addressing them, regionally. At least six security regions can be identified based on the geopolitical zoning of states in Nigeria (Figure 1). Features of each of these regions are outlined below.

3. RESOURCE CURSE IN NIGERIA: THE NIGER DELTA EXPERIENCE

The social unrest and violence in the Niger Delta – South-south, region of Nigeria can be traced to the pre-colonial and independent periods (Ajodo-Adebanjoko 2017). Protests, accompanied by violence had been communities' response against economic domination, alienation and oppression (Joab-Peterside 2007). The discovery of crude oil and the subsequent attainment of Nigeria's independence in 1960 soon transformed the protests into the demand for a fair share of the proceeds of the region's resources - mostly oil and gas (Obi 2009). In recent times, strong demand for full control of the resources which form the mainstay of the country's economy and sometimes secessionist agitation dominates the violence and insecurity in the region (Joab-Peterside 2007; Obi 2009). The movement and campaign against apparent neglect primarily associated with the violence in the Delta region have led to further deplorable living conditions of people and communities in a region where resources that the country depends on are extracted (Nwankwo 2015; Ajodo-Adebanjoko 2017).

The impoverished communities (oil-producing) are also attributed to environmental degradation due to oil exploration and the spillages rendering arable lands into wastelands and waters (Asuni 2009). Oil exploration has also adversely affected the forest ecosystem in the region as the continued destruction of the rich and diverse ecological zones has caused the depletion of the region's biodiversity thereby distorting its ecological balance (Eragha and Irughe 2009). Oil spills contaminate water making it unsafe for human consumption and destroying aquatic plants and animals. Air pollutants due to gas flaring have been an atmospheric contaminant resulting in critical respiratory health challenges in the region (Ajodo-Adebanjoko 2017).

Despite all these problems, the level of economic and social support for the communities in the area has been widely acknowledged to be significantly inadequate to offset the continued damage to the local means of livelihoods of the indigenes (Nwankwo 2015). And where efforts are made to enhance the deplorable conditions of the people, they hardly reach the poor given the difficulties caused by poor governance and high levels of corruption by government officials, local elites and the oil companies alike (Ikelegbe 2005).

The combined effect and activities of genuine agitators for improved living and environmental conditions and the criminal gangs, mostly militants and cultists, who take advantage of the situation, have perpetuated violence and armed confrontations in the South-south (Asuni 2009). Johnson et al. (2010) note that depriving the indigenous people of the oil proceeds, competition for scarce resources and political exclusion form some of the significant causes of insecurity in the Delta region. The effect of these unresolved practices manifests in several communal clashes among communities as they struggle for scarce resources (Ikelegbe 2005; Joab-Peterside 2007). The armed clashes between the government forces and the rebel groups are a notable form of violent conflict in the region. The oil companies are not spared in the violence where both genuine agitating groups and criminals launch attacks on oil installations and pipelines purposely to scuttle oil activities and production and perpetuate oil theft (Watts 2007). The kidnapping of oil workers (especially

expatriates) and rich people for ransoms makes media headlines regularly (Obi 2009).

4. LEGACY OF SECESSIONISM IN THE SOUTH-EAST REGION: BEFORE AND AFTER BIAFRA WAR

The insecurity in the South-eastern region has widely been considered deeply rooted in the controversies that preceded the 1914 amalgamation which culminated in the creation of the current Nigerian State. As indicated by Ballard (1971) and Momah (2013), the then British colonial government merged the Northern (now North-west, North-central and North-east) and Southern (currently South-west, South-south and South-east) protectorates to form the Nigerian State for efficient administration. The Eastern region (present-day South-east) was said to have been coerced – against its will, into the union. According to Gould (2011), the rejection (by the Eastern region) of the proposed amalgamation was on the grounds of the region's consideration (or recognition) of being politically unique and the sharp cultural and religious differences that existed between its people and those from other areas. The discovery of oil in some parts of the region compounded the current unresolved issue leading to competition for the proceeds of the resources within the region and beyond. Concerning the Biafra War, for instance, Ken Saro-Wiwa contends

...competition between the three majority groups [Igbo, Hausa and Yoruba] in Nigeria brought about civil war (Saro-Wiwa 1989:11).

These historical legacies subsequently snowballed into the post-independence security challenges the country has had to endure.

Analysts (e.g. Gould 2011; Akresh et al. 2012; Muzan 2014; Heerten 2017) of the region's instability mostly hold that the South-east's unresolved grievances form part of the motivations for the planning and execution of the first military (bloody) coup d'état and the subsequent counter-coup and resistance that led to the first Nigeria civil war in 1967. This narrative is fuelled by the fact that, at least, the exercise was led and implemented mainly by the officers and soldiers of the Eastern extract (Oparaku et al. 2017). The Civil War - Biafra War, which lasted about three years (1967-70) was partly the result of the Eastern region's secessionist campaign. The campaign was triggered by grievances over the perceived economic and political unfairness (among other things) the area was said to have been subjected. As noted by James (2011) and Pellissier (2015), the Federal Government's overwhelming military response claimed the lives of no fewer than 2 million people and many more displaced. Hence some commentators (e.g. Orobator 1983; Diamond 2007; Iruonagbo and George 2007) have characterised it as genocide. The resultant destruction of lives, properties and the environment left the region and its people in a state of dire humanitarian crisis, disruption and almost total collapse.

However, the war ended with the re-integration of the region into the Nigerian State. The anticipated reconstruction of the livelihoods of the region remained largely did not happen. The demands for better living conditions were suppressed throughout the long period of military regimes in the country after the civil war (Obi-Ani 2009). Furthermore, the return to democratic rule in 1999 resurrected the Eastern region's secessionist spirit whose campaign has remained a significant source of insecurity in the area and beyond (Onuoha 2011; Ike 2012; Smith 2014). At the moment, the campaign is on the grounds of economic and political

marginalisation and exclusion. The evident poverty, coupled with decaying and deficient infrastructure and youth unemployment have been widely associated with the growing spate of violent conflicts in the region. Violent secessionist strife, communal clashes, ritual killings and cultism, armed robbery, human trafficking and kidnapping are some of the manifestations of insecurity in the South-east region (Peterside 2014; Dambazau 2015).

5. URBANIZATION-INDUCED INSECURITY: THE SOUTH-WEST UNSUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

The South-west region provides a relatively contrasting scenario of insecurity in Nigeria. Unlike the other southern parts, the security vulnerability in the region primarily emanates from decades of unguided and unsustainable urban development (physical and social) and the resultant challenges of urbanisation (Okwuashi et al. 2011). This region is among those that had the earliest contact with other parts of the world (including Europe) for commercial activities. Lagos, a city from the South-west was a colony of the British Government (Moore 1984; Adama 2007). This status was retained – as capital, following the amalgamation of the North and South, until 1991 (Adama 2007). This advantage is apparent in the region's prosperity and its unique role as the dominant economic and commercial centre of Nigeria (Campbell 2011). More than two-thirds of the country's commercial and industrial activities are located in this region according to Oyesola (2012). The consequent concentration of administrative, commercial and industrial activities in the area created the agglomeration of people and businesses and further rapid population growth due to migrations and natural births.

Okwuashi et al. (2011) and Oyesola (2012) observe that sudden population growth in the cities of the South-west exerted unprecedented pressure on all facets of the rural-urban interface. This pressure creates significant social, economic, environmental and political challenges exposing the region to threats and insecurity. Population increase caused urban sprawl where economic and social amenities are insufficient to cater for the needs of the inhabitants. Consequently, this challenge creates substantial urban poor, who live in the ever-expanding slums and poverty-stricken areas at the periphery of core areas of many cities in the region. This unhealthy and unsustainable growth manifests in the attendant increase in violent crimes including rampant armed robbery, cult activities and ritual killings, political assassinations, gangsterism, kidnappings, land grabbing, rapes and other forms of social insecurity (Peterside 2014; Dambazau 2015).

6. A COMPLEX SCENARIO: BEYOND LIVELIHOODS IN NORTHERN NIGERIA

In contrast, the northern half of Nigeria is entrapped in perpetual insecurity which results from a complex mixture of underdevelopment, and unresolved economic, political and ethno-religious challenges. At independence and beyond, the region was the most underdeveloped (human, socio-economic and physical) area relative to the more prosperous South (Campbell 2011). As stated by Campbell (2011) and Eze et al. (2014), the North is more impoverished and usually ranks lowest in most of the country's human development indicators such as income, education and literacy, mortality, healthcare, infrastructure and so forth. The poverty rates for North-central, North-east and North-west in 2013, for instance, were 39%, 47.6% and 59% whereas those of South-west, South-south and South-east were 15%, 25%

and 30% respectively (UNDP-NHDR 2018: p20). Similarly, UNDP-NHDR (2015: p6) for Nigeria, shows that education indices for North-east states are between 0.37 – 0.76, compared with the 0.85 – 0.98 points for the South-west. The low-level western education in the region is attributable partly to the negative perceptions about education held in the region for generations as being evil (Salihu 2012; UNDP 2018). The consequence is the high level of unemployable youths, given that the official measure of employability in Nigeria is western education. This condition explains the region's high rate of poverty and precarious livelihoods (Adekola et al. 2016; World Bank 2016).

Geographically, the Northern region of Nigeria has by far the largest land area, approximately 78% (Dear and Foot 1995; Dudley 1968; Sahara 2020), a great deal of which is arable. The development of agriculture and agro-related economy – the region's mainstay, has mainly remained underdeveloped due to the continued deindustrialisation and inadequate infrastructure (Campbell 2011; Sahara 2020). Consequently, agricultural activities have remained traditional subsistence farming and centuries-old nomadic animal herding practices. According to Tayo and Nasrullah (2016), these farming practices have fuelled considerable clashes between farmers and herders. Increased competition for cropland and grazing area worsened the occurrence and devastation of the conflicts in recent times. Traditionally, the pastoral animal herders practice seasonal migration in search of pasture to graze animals within the government-designated grazing areas in the Northern region. However, the combined effect of increased demand for spaces for physical development, crop production, corrupt land acquisition and climate change have reduced the areas reserved for grazing. A First-class Traditional ruler narrates this scenario about the North:

[The] Grazing routes have been taken away by politicians. We have demographic implosion in the North, desertification, reduction in water reserves and competition for resources among various aspects of agriculture – crop production, animal husbandry and fishing - Mohammad Sanusi II.
(Akinkuotu and Tyopuusu 2018: Sahara Reporters 14/01/2020).

These conditions force animal herders to seek pasture and water for their animals outside the designated grazing area and have resulted in many cases of violent clashes between farmers and herders in the North and beyond (Abbas 2012). Moreover, the Northern region is more populated (54% of the 2016 projected population of 193,392,517 persons) and ethnically and culturally more diverse than the South (National Bureau of Statistics 2016). This condition, together with other socio-political factors – e.g. poor education, poverty, religious misapplication, and political exclusion, have played a significant role in fostering many conflicts in the region. The cultural diversity coupled with religious bigotry has been exploited to fuel many internal struggles for political power, economic domination, territories, economic opportunism and insurgency (Meagher 2013). This sophisticated and interwoven peculiarity of the North explains the long history of ethno-religious tensions and conflicts in the region. It is more often than not related to the firmly held grievances, and perceptions – by minority tribes, of political and economic domination by the majority tribes or high social class (Hoffman 2017). The results create security vulnerabilities which escalate into violent conflicts on many occasions. Furthermore, the conditions provide fertile ground for exploitation and criminality. Influential personalities and politicians, criminal gangs and religious

extremists lure vulnerable youths into crimes including political thuggery, cattle rustling, farmer/herders clashes, drug abuse, kidnapping, and terrorism.

7. WAY FORWARD: APPROACHING SECURITY CHALLENGES BASED ON REGIONAL PECULIARITIES

A careful synthesis of the previous sections provides a useful insight into Nigeria-wide regional security variations. The analysis of the regional variabilities helps contextualise the regions' security challenges. It determines the specific approach that is suitable for providing sustainable solutions. This section summarises the concepts that should inform praxis interventions in each region (Table 1). It is discernible that the susceptibility to conflict and general insecurity in the various areas is primarily livelihood-related, fostering grievances and challenges associated at least with a lack of access or inequitable and unsustainable distribution of resources. Nonetheless, the underlying regional insecurity factors and their contextual interplay differ across the country. These variations support the assertion that insecurity in Nigeria requires a contextually different approach for analysing different regional instability as Achumba et al. (2013) advocate.

Unlike the relatively prosperous South, insecurity in Northern Nigeria relates more to the complex interplay of poverty-driven issues that have led to precarious living conditions. The delicate interaction of the ensuing low-level human capital, physical development and poor governance make the region susceptible to perpetual unrest (Collier and Sambanis 2002; Collier et al. 2004; Walter 2004). Vulnerability to conflicts and criminalities is particularly apparent in the North-east and the North-west; given how the populations are easily exploited for criminality and unrest (Otu 2014; Tella 2015; Ugwu, 2015; Bamidele 2016). Careful analysis of the Northern security dynamic suggests the relevance of approaching the region's challenges through the livelihoods lens as shown in Table 1. The analysis must focus on understanding the challenges at the micro level - individuals and communities, from these regions to achieve sustainable outcomes.

Table 1: Proposed Regional Security Approach in Nigeria

Security concept	Regional insecurity dynamic	Conceptual explanation
Livelihoods – precarious living conditions and governance failure	North-east – Insurgency, banditry, poor education, high rate of unemployment and poverty.	Collier and Sambanis (2002); Collier et al. (2004); Walter (2004); Eze et al. (2014); Tayo and Nasrullah (2016); Abbas (2012); Hoffman (2017); Otu (2014); Tella (2015); Ugwu (2015); Bamidele (2016)
Livelihoods – precarious living conditions and governance failure	North-west – Ethno-religious conflict, Cattle rustling, banditry, poor education, kidnapping, high rate of unemployment and poverty.	Collier and Sambanis (2002); Collier et al. (2004); Walter (2004); Eze et al. (2014); Tayo and Nasrullah (2016); Abbas (2012); Hoffman (2017); Otu (2014); Tella (2015); Ugwu (2015); Bamidele (2016)
Livelihoods – precarious living conditions and governance failure	North-central – Ethno-religious violence, farmer-herder disputes, banditry, kidnapping, high rate of unemployment and poverty.	Collier and Sambanis (2002); Collier et al. (2004); Walter (2004); Eze et al. (2014); Tayo and Nasrullah (2016); Abbas (2012); Hoffman (2017); Otu (2014); Tella (2015); Ugwu (2015); Bamidele (2016)
Unsustainable Urbanisation	South-west – Thuggery, robbery, cultism, kidnapping, high rate of youth unemployment.	Okwuashi et al. (2011); Oyesola (2012)
Resource Curse	South-south – Militancy, cultism, kidnapping, poor education, youths' unemployment and poverty.	Collier et al. (2004); Ross (2006); Joab-Peterside (2007); Obi (2009) Ajodo-Adebanjoko (2017); Nwankwo (2015); Ikelegbe (2005)
Political marginalisation and exclusion and Resource Curse	South-east – Secessionist agitation, kidnapping, human trafficking, youths' unemployment and poverty.	Collier et al. (2004); Oparaku et al. (2017); Obi-Ani (2009); Onuoha (2011); Ike (2012); Smith (2014)

Source: Adapted based on Peterside (2014) and Dambazau (2015)

It is vital to have a holistic re-examination of the security challenges to achieve human capital development. There must be deliberate policies and efforts toward improving education, employment, healthcare, fairer political and economic opportunities, religious tolerance and equitable access to natural resources - especially for farmers and herders (Bamidele 2016; UNHCR 2016). Investment must also be prioritised for the provision of critical development infrastructure e.g. roads, power, farming tools and implements, schools, etc. to support livelihoods in the region.

Although the Southern half of Nigeria has relatively better human development indicators, insecurity still abounds. The challenges emanate largely from the age-long and systemic problem of unsustainable resources and non-resource development. In the Niger Delta, for instance, deliberate effort must be targeted at

developing actionable policies for a fairer distribution of and access to local resources. This region's (South-south) challenges may best be resolved through resource-related policies and an approach whose benefits can be felt at individual and community levels. This viewpoint is consistent with Mehlum et al. (2006), Brunnschweiler and Bulte (2008) and Lawal (2019) that the provisions of a country's constitution and institutional quality for the management of its resources determine whether or not it would be resource-cursed. Resource dependence causes income and growth decline only when the policies and institutional framework for their management favour a few highly placed individuals who grab rent at the expense of the majority of the citizens. In other words, resources may be a curse when policies that guide the accruing benefits allow resource-related criminal activities to thrive (Mehlum et al. 2006; Lawal 2019).

The South-west is relatively advanced in many respects. The region owes this to the historical and geographic advantages it enjoys. However, this advancement may be sustainable only if the growth and development support the living standard of at least the people in the region. In other words, a sustainable approach to understanding the livelihoods vulnerabilities and resilience at the micro level must be prioritised. A careful policy for sustainable urban and rural development would not only help to slow rural-urban migration but also identify areas for appropriate investment for sustainable urban development. With regards to the South-east region, a political solution for fairer political representation would go a long way in encouraging stability. A good starting point may be a sincere regional and national reconciliation and peacebuilding process to correct the wrongs of the past and forge a better and inclusive. While this is being pursued, policies which aim to improve livelihoods and infrastructure must be prioritised. Although historical grievances are a factor, improved governance and the well-being of the majority remain critical as in the rest of the country.

8. CONCLUSION

This article argues for the need to unbundle the approach to security challenges in Nigeria based on the diverse regional contexts. It has identified and demonstrated the (in)security peculiarities for six geopolitical zones where the dynamics are examined as a basis for framing appropriate approaches to resolving insecurities. While the North's insecurity is underlaid by high levels of poverty and poor livelihoods, the relatively prosperous South is grappling with resource-related crises, unsustainable urbanisation and political marginalisation. This article advocates a holistic re-examination of Nigeria's security challenges based on the individual regions and proposes approaches which integrate a bottom-up dimension into the prevailing top-down dimension. Implementation would proceed based on further and more detailed empirical studies for the respective regions.

Reference

- Abbas, I. M. (2012) 'No Retreat No Surrender Conflict for Survival between Fulani Pastoralists and Farmers in Northern Nigeria'. *European Scientific Journal, Vol. 8:1, pp 331-346*.
- Achumba, I. C., Ighomereho, O. S. and Akpor-Robaro, M. O. M. (2013) 'Security Challenges in Nigeria and the Implications for Business Activities and Sustainable Developments'. *Journal of Economic and Sustainable Development, Vol. 4:2, pp 79-100*.

- Adama, O. (2007) *Governing from Above: Solid Waste Management in Nigeria's New Capital City of Abuja*. Sweden, Stockholm University.
- Adekola, P. O., Allen, A. A., Olawole-Isaac, A., Akanbi, M. A. and Adewumi, O. (2016) 'Unemployment in Nigeria; A Challenge of Demographic Change?' *International Journal of Scientific Research in Multidisciplinary Studies ISROSET*, Vol 2:5, pp 1-9.
- Adesoji, A. O. (2011) 'Between Maitatsine and Boko Haram: Islamic fundamentalism and the Response of the Nigerian State'. *Africa Today*, Vol. 57:4, pp 99-119.
- Ahmed, A. (2014) 'Physical Planning and the Emerging Security Challenge in Nigeria'. Conference Paper Presented During the 2014 Nigeria Institute of Town Planners Annual Conference at Musa Yar'adua Centre, Abuja.
- Ajako, E. I. (2019) 'Combating Security Challenges in Nigeria Through Cultural Revivalism'. *Journal of African Studies and Sustainable Development*, Vol. 2:1 pp 191-203.
- Ajodo-Adebanjoko, A. (2017) 'Towards Ending Conflict and Insecurity in the Niger Delta Region: A Collective Non-violent approach'. *African Journal on Conflict Resolution*, Vol. 17:1, pp 9-27.
- Akinbi, O. J. (2015) 'Examining the Boko Haram Insurgency in Northern Nigeria and the Quest for a Permanent Resolution of the Crisis'. *Global Journal of Art, Humanities and Social Sciences*, Vol. 3:8, pp 32-45.
- Akinkuotu, E. and Tyopuusu, J. (2018) 'Sultan and I are Miyetti Allah's Patrons, Says Emir of Kano, Sanusi'. Sahara Reporters, (14/01/2018).
- Ali, L. A., Abbas, H. and Abbasi, S. N. (2023) 'China-Iran Comprehensive Strategic Partnership: An Evolving New Security Complex and its Implications'. *CEMJP*, Vol. 31:2, pp.388-395.
- Anyaehe, M.C. and Areji, A.C. (2015) 'Economic Diversification for Sustainable Development in Nigeria'. *Open Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 5:2, p.87.
- Akresh, R., Bhalotra, S., Leone, M. and Osili, U. O. (2012) 'War and Stature: Growing Up During the Nigerian Civil War'. *American Economic Review*, Vol. 102:3, pp 273-77.
- Asuni, J. B. (2009) 'Blood Oil in the Niger Delta'. Washington, United States Institute of Peace: Special Report.
- Ballard, J. A. (1971) 'Reviewed Works: The Administration of Nigeria, 1900-1960: Men, Methods, and Myths by I. F. Nicolson; Lugard and the Amalgamation of Nigeria: A Documentary Record by A. H. M. Kirk-Greene'. *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, Vol. 9:1, pp 153-156.
- Bamidele, O. (2016) 'Combating Terrorism: Socio-economic Issues, Boko Haram, and Insecurity in the North-east Region of Nigeria'. *Military and Strategic Affairs*, Vol. 8:1, pp 109-131.
- Brunnschweiler, C. N. and Bulte, E. (2008) 'The Resource Curse Revisited and Revised: A Tale of Paradoxes and Red Herrings'. *Journal of Environmental Economics and Management*, Vol. 55:3, pp 248-264.
- Buzan, Barry and Waever, Ole (2003) *Regions and Powers: The Structure of International Security*. Cambridge University Press, pp.219-24.
- Campbell, J. (2011) 'Why Nigeria's North South Distinction is Important'. Huffpost, (02/02/2011).
- Chijioke, M. I. And Olisah, R. C. (2023) 'Oil Revenue and Poverty in Nigeria: The South-South Perspective in Post Covid-19 Era'. *Journal of Economics and Allied Research*, Vol. 8:1, pp240-251.

- Cho, Kyung Hwan (2020) 'Feasibility of Regional Security Framework in Northeast Asia'. *Journal of Peace and Nuclear Disarmament*, Vol 3:1, pp.129-143, DOI: 10.1080/25751654.2020.1747906.
- Commission on Human Security (2003) 'Human Security Now'. United Nations Publications.
- Collier, P. and Sambanis, N. (eds.) (2002) 'Understanding Civil War: A New Agenda'. *Journal of Conflict Resolution Vol. 46: 1, pp 3-12.*
- Collier, P., Hoeffler, A. And Söderbom, M. (2004) 'On the Duration of Civil War'. *Journal of Peace Research, Vol. 41:3, pp 253-273.*
- Dahiru, A. (2021) 'Solving Nigeria's Security Challenges Require Multidimensional Approach – Experts'. HumAngle, August 23, 2021.
- Dambazau, A. B. (2015) 'Election 2015: Making Nigeria the Winner'. Premium Times News Paper (February 19, 2015).
- Dear, I. C. B. and Foot, M. R. D. (1995) *The Oxford Companion to World War II*. Oxford, Oxford University Press.
- Dennis, Senam Amable (2022) 'Theorizing the Emergence of Security Regions: An Adaptation for the Regional Security Complex Theory'. *Global Studies Quarterly, Volume 2: 4.* ksac065, <https://doi.org/10.1093/isagsq/ksac065>
- Diamond, S. (2007) 'Who Killed Biafra?' *Springer, Vol. 31:1-3, pp 339-362.*
- Dimelu, M. U., Salifu, E. D. and Igbokwe, E. (2016) 'Resource Use Conflict in Agrarian Communities, Management and Challenges: A case of Farmer-herdsmen Conflict in Kogi State Nigeria'. *Journal of Rural Studies, Vol. 46, pp 147-154.*
- Dudley, B. J. (1968) *Parties and Politics in Northern Nigeria*. Routledge.
- Eragha, P. B. and Irughe I. R. (2009) 'Oil Induced Environmental Degradation in the Nigeria's Niger Delta: The Multiplier Effects'. *Journal of Sustainable Development in Africa, Vol. 11:4, pp 160-175.*
- Eze, T. C., Okpala, C. S. and Ogbodo, J. C. (2014) 'Pattern of Inequality in Human Development Across Nigeria's Six Geopolitical Zones'. *Developing Country Studies, Vol. 4:8, pp 97-102.*
- Gould, M. (2011) *The Struggle for Modern Nigeria: The Biafra War 1967-1970*. New York: I. B. Tauris.
- Heerten, L. (2017) *The Biafran War and Postcolonial Humanitarianism: Spectacles of Suffering*. Cambridge University Press.
- Hickey, R. (1984) 'The 1982 Maitatsine Uprisings in Nigeria: A Note'. *African Affairs Vol. 83:331, pp 251– 256.*
- Hoffmann, L. K. (2017) 'Violence in Southern Kaduna Threatens to Undermine Nigeria's Democratic Stability: A Wave of Devastating Attacks and Reprisals in the Southern Part of the State is a Chilling Reminder of Rural Nigeria's Vast Security Vulnerabilities and Communal Tensions'. London: Chatham House Publication (15 February 2017).
- Human Development Report (1994) 'New Dimensions of Human Security: United Nations Development Programme'. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Idowu, D. L. (2017) 'Causes, Consequences and Resolution of Environmental Conflict in Nigeria'. *International Journal of Social and Economic Research, Vol. 2:1.*

- Ike, O. (2012) 'Biafran Ghosts: The MASSOB Ethnic Militia and Nigeria's Democracy Process'. The DiVA: Nordic Africa Institute, Conflict, Displacement and Transformation.
- Ikelegbe, A. (2005) 'The Economy of Conflict in the Oil Rich Niger Delta Region of Nigeria'. *Nordic Journal of African Studies*, Vol. 14:2 pp 208-234.
- Iruonagba, T. C. and George, T. (2007) 'Conflict and Inter-group Relations in Nigeria: What Way Forward'. *Biudiscourse*, Vol. 2:2, pp 165-180.
- James, F. A. (2011) 'The Nigeria Civil War, 1967-1970: A Revolution'. *African Journal of Political and International Relations*, Vol. 5:3, pp 120-124.
- Joab-Peterside, S. (2007) 'On the Militarization of Nigeria's Niger Delta: The Genesis of Ethnic Militia in River State, Nigeria. Economies of Violence, Working Paper.
- Johnson, O., Akinpelu, F., Adegoke, F. and Ezeani, S. (2010) 'Causes of Conflict in the Niger Delta Region of Nigeria as Expressed by the Youth in Delta State'. *Elsevier*, Vol. 5, pp 82-89.
- Kastfelt, N. (1989) 'Rumours of Maitatsine: A Note on Political Culture in Northern Nigeria'. *African Affairs*, Vol. 88:350, pp 83-90.
- Katsina, M. A. (2012) 'Nigeria's Security Challenges and the Crisis of Development: Towards a New Framework for Analyses. *International Journal of Developing Societies*, Vol. 1:3, pp 107-116.
- Lawal, L. A. (2019) Human Security in a Post-conflict Livelihoods Change Context: Case of Buni Yadi Northeast Nigeria. A PhD Thesis at Oxford Brookes University.
- Lawal, L. A. and Mbiba, B. (2020) Human Security in the Northeast Nigeria: Some Conceptual Reflection. In *International Conference on Engineering, Applied Sciences and System Modeling* (pp. 397-409). Springer, Cham.
- Meagher, K. (2013) 'The Jobs Crisis behind Nigeria's Unrest'. *Current History*, Vol.1:112(754), pp 169-174.
- Mehlum, H., Moene, K. and Torvik, R. (2006) 'Institution and the Resource Curse'. *The Economic Journal*, Vol. 116, pp 1-20.
- Momah, S. (2013) *Nigeria Beyond Divorce (Amalgamation in Perspective)*. Ibadan, Safari Books Ltd.
- Moore, J. (1984) 'The Political History of Nigeria's New Capital'. *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, Vol. 22:1, pp 167-175.
- Muzan, A. O. (2014) 'Insurgency in Nigeria: Addressing the Causes as Part of the Solution'. *African Human Rights Law Journal*, Vol. 14:1, pp 217-243.
- National Bureau of Statistics (2016) 'National Population Estimate: Population 2006-2016'. National Bureau of Statistics and National Population Commission, Abuja.
- Nwankwo, B. O. (2015) 'Rhetorics and Realities of Managing Ethno-Religious Conflicts: The Nigerian Experience'. *American Journal of Educational Research*, Vol. 3:3, pp 292-300.
- Nweke, E. N. and Elem, E. O. (2017) 'Oil Wealth Dependence and Poverty in Nigeria'. *South East Journal Of Political Science*, Vol. 1:1, pp37-48.
- Obi, C. (2009) 'Nigeria's Niger Delta: Understanding the Complex Drivers of Violent Oil-related Conflict'. *African Development*, Vol. 34:2, pp 103-128.
- Obi-Ani, P. (2009) *Post-Civil War Political and Economic Reconstruction of Igboland, 1970-1983 (2nd ed)*. Nsukka: Great AP Express Publishers Ltd.

- Odo, L. U. (2012) 'The challenges of Boko Haram Insurgency to National Security in Nigeria'. *Lapai Journal of Management and Social Sciences*, Vol. 9:1, pp 36-61.
- Okafor, E. E. (2011) 'Youth Unemployment and Implications for Stability of Democracy in Nigeria'. *Journal of Sustainable Development in Africa*, Vol. 13:1, pp 358-373.
- Okwuashi, O., McConchi, J., Nwilo, P. and Eyo, E. (2011) 'The Challenge of Urbanization'. Development Network, Online Paper Accessed from DevNet.org.NZ.
- Omoniyi, T. (2021) 'Intelligence Failure Compounding Insecurity in Nigeria: Nigeria's Security Apparatus is Currently Overwhelmed with Criminals Having a Field Day Killing, Maiming and Extorting Victims'. Premium Times, April 19, 2021.
- Onuoha, G. (2011) 'Contesting the Space: The 'New Biafra' and Ethno-territorial Separatism in South-Eastern Nigeria'. *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics*, Vol. 17:4, pp 402-422.
- Onyima, B. N. (2016) 'Nigerian Cultural Heritage: Preservation, Challenges and Prospects'. *OGIRISI: A New Journal of African Studies*, Vol. 12, pp.273-292.
- Oparaku, O., Nwaneri, S. and Egbe, E. (2017). 'Weak State Performance, Kidnapping and Human Insecurity in the South-east of Nigeria'. *Research Journal of Humanities, Legal Studies and International Development*, Vol. 2:1, pp 2536-6572.
- Orobator, S. E. (1983) 'The Nigeria Civil War and the Invasion of Czechoslovakia'. *African Affairs* Vol. 82:327, pp 201-214.
- Otu, A. S. (2014) 'Towards a Humanistic Approach to Security in Africa: Nigeria as a Case Study'. Political Science Department, Calaba: University of Calaba.
- Oyesola, B. (2012) 'Urban Infrastructure: Urban Headaches'. Development and Cooperation, Online Paper Access from- <https://www.dandc.eu/en/article/lagos-city-dreams-and-nightmares>
- Pellissier, H. (2015) 'Biafra Survives: The Igbo People, 45 Years after the Civil War'. Institute for Ethics and Emerging Technologies.
- Peterside, Z. B. (2014) 'The Military and Internal Security in Nigeria: The Challenges and Prospects'. *Mediterranean Journal of Social Science*, Vol. 5:27, pp 1301-1307.
- Ross, M. (2006) 'A Closer Look at Oil, Diamonds, and Civil War'. *Annual Reviews in Political Science*, Vol. 9, pp 265-300.
- Santini, Ruth Hanau (2017) 'A New Regional Cold War in the Middle East and North Africa: Regional Security Complex Theory Revisited, The International Spectator Italian'. *Journal of International Affairs* Vol. 52:4, pp. 93-111.
- Salihu, H. M. (2012) 'Governance Failure and Political Violence in Nigeria: The Jama'atu Ahlis Sunnah lidda'awati wal-Jihad in Perspective'. In Mohammed H. (ed.) *Nigeria's Convulsive Federalism: Perspectives on Flash-Points of Conflict in Northern Nigeria*. Ibadan: Cypress Concepts & Solutions Ltd.
- Salkida, A. (2016) 'How Non-Military Intervention Can Resolve the Crisis in North- East Nigeria'. Premium Times News Paper (March 16, 2016).
- Saro-Wiwa, K. (1989) *On a Darkling Plain: An Account of the Nigeria Civil War*. Nigeria: Saros International Publishers.

- Smith, D. J. (2014) 'Corruption Complaints, Inequality and Ethnic Grievance in Post-Biafra Nigeria'. *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 35:5, pp 787-802.
- Tayo, S. and Nasrullah, F. (2016) 'Nigeria's Government Must Ensure a Balanced Response to the Pastoralist–Settler Crisis: A Securitized Response to Clashes between Armed Pastoralists and Settler Communities Could Escalate the Crisis to Widespread Conflict'. London: Chatham House Publication (06 May 2016).
- Tella, C. M. (2015) 'Insecurity in Northern Nigeria: Causes Consequences and Resolutions'. *International Journal of Peace and Conflict Studies*, Vol. 2:4, pp 23-36.
- Ugwu, O. L. (2015) 'Boko Haram and Insecurity in Nigeria: The Quest for a Permanent Solution'. *African Research Review: An International Multidisciplinary Journal, Ethiopia*, Vol. 9:1 pp. 47-61.
- United Nations Development Programme (2015) 'National Human Development Report 2015: Human Security and Human Development in Nigeria'. Abuja, UNDP.
- United Nations Development Programme (2018) 'Human Development Report 2018: Achieving Human Development in North East Nigeria'. Abuja, UNDP.
- United Nations High Commission for Refugees (2016) 'UNHCR Pledges Aid to Thousands of Displaced in Lake Chad Basin: Wrapping Up a 10-day Visit to Niger, Chad, Cameroon and Nigeria, Filippo Grandi Vows to Assist 460000 Displaces by Insurgency'. Geneva: UNHCR.
- Walsh, Barney (2020) 'Revisiting Regional Security Complex Theory in Africa: Museveni's Uganda and Regional Security in East Africa'. *African Security*, Vol.13:4, pp.300-324. DOI:10.1080/19392206.2021.1873507
- Walter, B. F. (2004) 'Does Conflict Beget Conflict? Explaining Recurring Civil War'. *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 41:3, pp 371-388.
- Watts, M. (2007) 'Petro-Insurgency or Criminal Syndicate? Conflict & Violence in the Niger Delta'. *Review of African Political Economy*, Vol. 34:114, pp 637-660.
- World Bank (2016) 'Poverty Reduction in Nigeria in the Last Decade. Poverty Work Program'. Washington: Office of the Publisher, The World Bank.
- Xheladini, F. M. (2016). Regional Security Complex: The Macedonian Context. *European Journal of Multidisciplinary Studies*, Vol. 3:1, P34-37.
- Zahid, Asra (2022) 'Understanding the Regional Security Complex Theory in South Asia'. Paradigm Shift.
<https://www.paradigmshift.com.pk/regional-security-complex-south-asia/>