

More Funding, More Insecurity: The Paradox of the Fight against Violent Conflict, Insecurity and Corruption in Nigeria

Prince EZE,
Faculty of Arts, Management and Social Sciences
Admiralty University of Nigeria
Email: ezeprince87@gmail.com; prince.eze-intrel@adun.edu.ng
Phone no: +2347063084464

Abstract:

Against the background to address violent conflict and rising insecurity that have bedeviled the Nigerian State, this paper, using primary and secondary data and the Marxist Political Economy Approach as a framework for analysis, examined how corruption in Nigerian system has contributed to and hindered the fight against insecurity. The findings of the study revealed that in the last 6-7 years, budgetary provisions to fight violent conflict and insecurity have significantly increased without a corresponding increase in security. To this end, funds budgeted to fight insecurity are diverted into private hands for personal enrichment and aggrandizement. It is in this regard that it is recommended among other things, that to win the war against corruption and insecurity, priority and consideration must be placed on the fight beyond political statements and conference speeches. Patriotism, dedication, political will, sincerity, integrity, and commitment are needed both on the part of the government, those fighting corruption and insecurity, and the citizens. Beyond these, Government should establish a special court to hear matters of corruption and insecurity, to avoid unnecessary delays that hinder justice from being served at the end of the day.

Keywords: Corruption, Insecurity, Nigeria, Peace, Violent Conflict

1. Introduction

Corruption is a global phenomenon; it is however common in Nigeria, even before the creation of Modern Public Administration in the country, there have been many cases and records of corrupt practices in the country. What has become worrisome is the new dimension of corruption in Nigeria; it has attained an endemic status as there is hardly any facet of the Nigerian state devoid of it (Salawu 2010; Dimant & Tosato 2017). Transparency International, an independent global watch on corruption ranks Nigeria among the most corrupt nations in the world, Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) for Nigeria varies from 2.5 in 2009 to 2.4 in 2010 and currently Nigeria is among the top most corrupt countries in the world (Transparency International, Corruption Perception Index 2009, 2010, 2015, 2020, 2021). It is not surprising, therefore, to note that inefficiency or failure in any aspect of our national life is blamed on corruption, corrupt government officials and corrupt practices (Achebe 1983; Mustapha 2015; Aja 1988; Begovic 2005).

Corruption has been identified not just as evil but as the remote and immediate cause of insecurity, poverty, unemployment, and other social evil in Nigeria (Ngwube & Okoli 2013; Agbekaku, Itakpe & Okoye

2006). The connecting link between corruption and insecurity is not difficult to identify, as it is the solid foundation upon which other evils are executed. Poverty, unemployment, terrorism, armed robbery, cultism as well as other factors which are contributing to insecurity in Nigeria cannot be disconnected from corruption (Odia 2006; Shehu 2011; Ogundiya 2010). Corruption in the military sector has successfully diverted resources and funds budgeted to fight insecurity into private hands, thereby increasing the rate of death and insecurity. Nigeria is described as the third country most impacted by terrorism and second most dangerous place to live in the world. The figures and statistics of death in Nigeria have the probability of being doubled if necessary measures are not put in place, and this has had several economic as well as social, and political implications. Therefore, this study investigates how corruption in the Nigerian system has contributed to and hindered the fight against violent conflict and insecurity. It will also promote an understanding of insecurity in Nigeria and make recommendations that will help in tackling it.

The remaining component of this study is structured in six segments. At the end of this introduction is the methodology. The

next section seeks to conceptualize violent conflict, insecurity and corruption. The third part provides theoretical legitimacy to the study. The fourth section explains how corruption contributes to and hinders the fight against violent conflict and insecurity, while the fifth section discusses how to tackle violent conflict, insecurity, and corruption. In the sixth section, some recommendations are provided, and some conclusion is drawn. The paper utilized qualitative records, and baseline results, to examine issues highlighted in the study. Data collected were analysed using the Summarizing Content Analysis Method.

II. Conceptualizing Corruption, Insecurity and Violent Conflict

Concepts in the Social or Behavioural Sciences are constantly subjected to different explanations and interpretations, depending on the ideological leaning of the analyst. Given this situation, a brief explanation of the key concepts that appear in this study is justifiable. The first concept to be considered in this regard is corruption. Corruption has been differently defined by scholars. The difficulty of defining corruption notwithstanding its negative impact on society cannot be de-emphasized. IMF (1998) provided the most widespread and simplest definition of corruption. According to IMF, it is “the abuse of public power for private benefit”. This suggests that corruption has to do with

taking from the public treasury and abusing public trust for private gain. When such abuse is without gain, it is mismanagement. When the abuse is for private gain, it is corruption. It involves the practice of using one’s privileged position mostly in public spaces to acquire advantages, wealth or benefits that should not accrue to an individual. This means that for there to be corruption, there must be deliberate abuse of processes, procedures, systems and established values, particularly, the deliberate abuse of processes, procedures, values and systems that are generally accepted in any society. It is in line with this thinking that Ekiyor (2009) argued that “corruption is the intentional non-compliance with arm’s -length principle aimed at deriving some advantages for oneself or a related individual from this behaviour”. He further argued that “corruption underscores the unlawful use of official power or influence by an official of the government either to enrich himself or further his course and/or any other person at the detriment of the public”

The next concept that requires clarification is insecurity. Insecurity relates to a threat, basically, against the well-being or the safety of a person. That is, it is those things that cause danger to the existence of the human beings. This suggests that insecurity relates to things that cause threat to a person’s life, his or her existence and safety in an environment. However, there are

other instances of insecurity that are directly or indirectly related to humans. One of such instance is food security. Nevertheless, human insecurity is not necessarily focused on arms or conflicts. So, there are different levels of insecurity. The insecurity discussed in this paper is the threat of insurgency, and bodily harm. Within the Nigerian context, insecurity has made Nigerians unable to enjoy peaceful, physical, emotional and psychological pleasure and existence.

The last concept that requires clarification in this study is violent conflict. Though, conflict is an inevitable aspect of human interaction, it becomes more dangerous to the society when it turns violent. Frère & Wilen (2015:2) described violent conflict as one that ‘involves at least two parties using physical force to resolve competing claims or interests. While a violent conflict may involve only non-state actors, often, the term is used as a synonym for war which involves at least one government’. Implicit in this definition is the fact that when a conflict becomes violent it leads to casualties and the loss of lives and properties.

III. Theorizing Violent conflict,

Insecurity and Corruption in Nigeria

In countries like Nigeria, it is argued that managers of the State see the privilege to occupy public office as an opportunity to

enrich themselves, instead of rendering services to the people they were elected or appointed to serve. This is in contrast to the universally held notion that the State exists to serve the interest of all. This informed the adoption of the Marxist Political Economy Approach as a framework of analysis in discussing violent conflict, insecurity and corruption in Nigeria. This Marxian method of thinking and analysis started with the German scholar, Karl Marx (1818-1883) and Frederick Engles (1820-1895). Although the method has been utilized and adopted in different senses by different scholars, its potency in explaining social realities remains unquestioned.

While the Bourgeois or Orthodox Political Economy focuses on the growth and development of capitalism with little or nothing said about classes or class contradiction, the Marxian method focuses its energy, attention and study on class analysis i.e the type of social relationships that arise from the organization of production. Furthermore, this method underlines the vital relationship existing between the economy, politics and other spheres of human existence but contends that the economy plays a defining or critical role. This informed the statement that:

Students must take into account systematically of the interactions of different elements of social life, especially

economic structure, social structure, political structure and belief system... but that it is the economic factor which is the most decisive of all these elements of society and which largely determine the character of others. Thus if knowledge of the economy is available, the general character of the social system, the political system, the belief system etc of the relevant society can be conjectured (Ake 1981:4).

This method, therefore, gives more attention to material conditions, particularly the economic factor in the explanation of social life or reality. It is argued that economic need is man's most fundamental need and unless a man can meet his economic needs he cannot exist in the first place. This suggests that this approach focuses its analysis on dialectical/historical materialism which highlights the need to pay adequate attention to the economic realities of any society and use such a foundation to explain other aspects of society, in this regard, the Marxist Political Economy Approach seeks to understand the relationship that exists between economic and political substructure, particularly in developing countries.

Applying the Marxist Political Economy Approach to our study, we can see clearly

how the political class that has access to State power and resources uses the resources meant for fighting violent conflict and insecurity for their personal enrichment, and personal group protection. Corruption by the political class has heightened the rate of insecurity as funds budgeted for the purchase of military hardware, ammunition, equipment and payment of wages, allowance and salaries to those fighting insecurity is not utilized for those purposes. Furthermore, you would recall that the Marxist method uses the economic sphere as a point of departure for understanding other aspects of society as the economic element is treated as the most decisive element of society. Using the lenses of this theory, we see how those saddled with the responsibilities of fighting violent conflict and insecurity pay more attention to how they can enrich their pocket, and accumulate wealth for themselves and their families than how to protect lives and properties. This further explains the rising insecurity witnessed in Nigeria as argued in this paper.

In the last six years and more, budgetary provisions to fight violent conflict and insecurity in Nigeria have significantly increased without a corresponding increase in security. It is important to ask again: Why is the budgetary provision to fight violent conflict and insecurity on the increase without a corresponding increase

in security? Why are military personnel complaining of poor remuneration despite a huge fund budgeted for their salaries and wages? Who are the conflict entrepreneurs benefiting from these conflicts and bloodshed? Why has the Federal Government of Nigeria not taken proactive steps to identifying these criminal elements and prosecute them? These and other related questions must be answered to end the war against violent conflict and insecurity. These issues go beyond the conventional theoretical explanation of violent conflict in Nigeria persisting as a result of religious ideology. Hence, the need for a more detailed and comprehensive explanation and this theory enjoyed this important advantage as it does not just give a holistic view of society but as Ake (1981) pointed out it treats problems more concretely and not abstractly.

IV. Corruption and the Fight against Violent conflict and Insecurity in Nigeria

Corruption which is a deliberate abuse of processes, procedures, values, and systems that are generally accepted in any society has done more harm than good to humanity. In Nigeria, corrupt practices which include using one's privileged position mostly in public space to acquire advantages, wealth, or benefits that should not accrue to a person are widespread and almost becoming a culture. This is evident

in the rising cases of abuse of public office for private gain. This private gain could be nepotism- giving undue advantage to your brothers, sisters, friends or relatives, stealing from the public treasury; it could also be a bribe. It is in recognition of this widespread corruption that the current President, Muhammadu Buhari said "we must kill corruption or corruption will kill us" (Vanguard Newspaper, May 7, 2015). As regards corruption and the fight against violent conflict and insecurity in Nigeria, in the last six years and more, budgetary provisions to fight violent conflict and insecurity in Nigeria have significantly increased without a corresponding increase in security. The tables below provide further insight into this claim:

Table1: Budgetary provision for security for the past six years

S/N	YEAR	BUDGETARY PROVISION
1	2015	N988,892,506,442
2.	2016	N1.07trillion
3.	2017	N1.15trillion
4.	2018	N1.35trillion;
5.	2019	N1.4trillion
6.	2020	N1.8trillion

Source: Compilation by the author from Budget Office of the Federation

Table 2: Security budget vs. Violent conflict and Insecurity

Year	Security Budget (N'Trillion)	Political Stability /Absence of Violence (%)	Control of Corruption (%)
2015	0.99	6.19	12.5
2016	1.07	6.19	13.46
2017	1.15	5.24	12.5
2018	1.35	4.72	13.46

2019	1.4	4.72	12.5
2020	1.8	4.72	13.46

Source: World Governance Indicators

Table 3: Correlation Statistics

			Security Budget	Political Stability	Corruption Control
Spearman's rho	Security Budget	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	-.926**	0.293
		Sig. (2-tailed)		0.008	0.573
		N		6	6
	Political Stability	Correlation Coefficient		1.000	-0.211
		Sig. (2-tailed)			0.688
		N			6
	Corruption Control	Correlation Coefficient			1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)			
		N			
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).					

Table 1 above shows the continuous increase in security budget on annual basis, while table 2 and 3 show the association or relationship between security vote and political stability and absence of violent conflict and insecurity. As shown in table 3, Spearman correlation was carried out and the result indicates that security vote provision has 92.6% significant negative association with political stability and absence of violent conflict and insecurity in

Nigeria using data from World Governance Indicator and Budget Office of the Federal Republic of Nigeria as shown in the tables above. The statistical import of this finding is that increase in security vote leads to a decrease in national political stability. This declining impact of increasing budgetary votes for the security and defence sectors has become a paradox and this is largely as a result of the fact that funds meant for military hardware, purchase of equipment, and other military operations are diverted to private hands. The questions that beg for answer are: Should Nigerian security vote be reduced annually in order to increase political stability and absence of violent conflict and insecurity? Who are the conflict entrepreneurs that benefit from conflict and insecurity in Nigeria? These and many more questions need to be answered. It is indeed a surprise of the 21st century in Nigeria, that despite the above security vote, violent conflict and insecurity challenges in Nigeria have continued to resist efforts at mitigating them, thereby threatening the corporate existence of the Nigerian state and abetting growing violence and loss of lives and properties. No doubt, insecurity and violence in Nigeria are a threat to the entire West African continental sub-region, and indeed, other parts of Sub-Saharan Africa. There is banditry, Boko Haram, political assassination, and violent conflicts between herdsmen and farmers, all of these

have resulted in bombing, kidnapping/hostage taking, destruction of lives and properties, and creation of fear and uncertainty, to mention but a few (Adisa & Adekunle, 2010; Omotayo, 2010; Tonah 2006). What is, however, more worrisome is the new dimension to these conflicts and insecurity. Sadly, these killings have been unrelenting and no appropriate measures have been put in place to stop them. In February and March 2016, more than 350 deaths were recorded (Mikailu, 2016) and 80 death tolls in July 2016 (Akinwotu, 2016). Most, if not all, of the villages in Benue State have experienced one form of attack or other from herders. Only Shengev community recorded 200 people killed by the Fulani herdsmen. Again, for the Agatu people, still, in Benue State, more than one hundred people were killed by the herdsmen (Omoleye and Segun, 2018). In the attacks on the 5th of March 2018 in Omosu Village in Ojigo Ward Edumoga of Okpokwu Local Government, not fewer than ten persons were killed in the attack (Godwin, 2018). Christian leaders in Nigeria claimed that 6,000 people were killed in the beginning part of the year 2018 in the Middle Belt by Muslim Fulani during the herdsmen and farmers' conflicts, while 62,000 people have been displaced. The numbers of death and casualties in the different regions have increased by 100 per cent in 2019, 2020, 2021 and 2022. The

table below shows the recent incidence of banditry:

Table 2: New Incidences of killing by Banditry in Nigeria

S/ N	Newspaper	Reporter(s)	Dates of Publication	Nature and Place of Attack	Causalities
1	The Punch	Gbenro Adeoye	March 31, 2018	Bandits attacked Bawan Daji village of Anka LGA of Zamfara State and killed over 30 people	Over 30 people were killed
2	The Nation	The Nation	March 1, 2019	21 killed in Kawaye village in Bagega community of Anka LGA of Zamfara State	16 people were killed and 40 others got abducted
3	The Punch	The Punch	June 9, 2019	25 killed in bandit attacks in Klahu, Tsage and Geeri villages in Rabah LGA of Sokoto State	25 people were killed
4	The Punch	Olaide Oyelude	July 4, 2019	11 killed in bandit attacks on Kankara and Danmusa LGA of Katsina State	11 people were killed

5	The Nation	The Nation	August 19, 2019	Four villagers were killed in banditry attacks in Tsayu village of Jibiya LGA of Kastina State	Death of 4 villagers						i LGA and Makosa Village in Zurmi LGA of Zamfara State	
6	The Punch	Maharaj Altine	January 17, 2020	Zamfara bandit kill 31 persons in attacks at Babban Rafi Village in Gumm	Death of 31 persons						Bandits kill 50 people in villages in Igabi and Giwa LGA of Kaduna State	50 people were killed while

					several others injured
8	The Punch	Olaide Oyelude	April 20, 2020	Bandits kill 47 villagers in multiple attacks on Kurecin Atai, Kurecin Giye, Kurecin Duste, Makauwachi and Daule Villages in Kastina State	A total of 47 people were killed in all the villages
9	The Nation	Abdul Gafar Alabelwe	April 24, 2020	Bandits kill seven and kidnap	7 persons were killed and

					one in Akwunakwo, Kabirasha and Damba villages in Chikun LGA of Kaduna State.	1 person was kidnapped
10	Nigerian Tribune	Muhammed Sabiu	May 6, 2020		5 killed and DPO shot in multiple bandit attacks at Faskari and Sabuwa LGA of Kastina State	5 people were killed, 1 was kidnapped and DPO was shot
11	The Punch	Maharaj Altine	May 20, 2020		Bandits kill 12 in	Death of 12 people

				attack on three communities in Tsafe LGA of Zamfara State	and cart away animals
12	The Punch	Maiharaji Altine	June 5, 2020	Bandits kill 21 people in Maru and Talata-Mafara LGA of Zamfara State	Death of 21 people
13	The Nation	Justina Asishana	June 25, 2020	Four feared killed in Sunko, Gavya and Marafa communities in Manta District of Shiroro LGA of Niger State	Death of 4 persons
14	The Nation	Justina Asishana	July 21, 2020	16 persons kidnaped in bandit attacks in Magani and Tungana-Bajo communities of Rafi LGA, Niger State	16 persons were kidnaped
15	The Nation	Abdul Gafar Alabelewe	July, 26, 2020	Bandits kill 10 in two attacks on 3 villages of Jem'aa and Kaura LGA of Kaduna State	10 persons were killed
16	The	Olaide	August 9,	Eight bandits, two others	Death of 2
	Punch	Oyelude	2020	killed after bandit attacks on Zamfarawa village in Batsari LGA of Kastina State	Villagers and 8 bandits
17	Vanguard	Vanguard	September 4, 2020	Bandits kill 22 people, including 19 vigilantes in Dukku and Kagara towns, Niger State	22 people were killed
18	Vanguard	Ibrahim HassanWuogo	September 13, 2020	Bandits abduct 16 family members at Udawa farming community of Kaduna State	16 people were abducted
19	Vanguard	Ibrahim HassanWuogo	September 18, 2020	Bandits invade Police Station in Tangaza LGA of Sokoto State	DPO and 1 Inspector were killed and 2 women abducted
20	Vanguard	Wole Moadmi & Shehu Danjuma	October 12, 2020	Bandits kill 14 persons in Ruwan Godiya village of Faskari LGA of Kastina State and Kagara town of Rafi LGA of Niger State	14 people were killed, 3 injured and 1 kidnapped
21	Vanguard	Ibrahim HassanWuogo	November 17, 2020	Bandits kill Southern Kaduna State Bandits kill Southern Kaduna State Bandits kill Southern Kaduna State	8 Students were kidnapped

				District head and son at Gidan Zaki, Zangon Kataf LGA	
22	Vanguard	Wole Mosadomi	November 20, 2020	Bandits kidnap 14 and kill mobile policeman in Mariya LGA of Niger State	14 people were kidnapped and death of a policeman
23	Vanguard	Ifeanyi Nwannah	November 23, 2020	Armed bandits kidnap Imam, 17 worshippers from a mosque in Kanoma District, Maru LGA,	18 persons were kidnapped

28	Vanguard	Vanguard	December 12, 2020	Banditry: Police confirm attack on Government Science Secondary School (GSSS) in Kankara LGA of Katsina state	About 333 Students missing
29	The Nation	Justina Asishana	December 13, 2020	Bandits kill ECWA Gospel Kubwa Kuta in Chukuba village of Shiroro LGA of Niger State	1 person was Killed and 20 others were kidnapped

Source: Adapted from Rosenje & Adeniyi (2021)

In this regard, it is important to ask: Why is the budgetary provision to fight violent conflict and insecurity on the increase without a corresponding increase in security? Why are military personnel complaining of poor remuneration despite huge funds budgeted for their salaries and wages? Nigeria's political history is replete with cases of corruption as it relates to the fight against insecurity. Corruption, therefore, has a lot of roles to play in explaining why insecurity has continued to be an issue in the country despite the huge financial investment.

V. Tackling Violent Conflict, Insecurity and Corruption in Nigeria

The need to tackle corruption and insecurity cannot be over-emphasized. The consequence of corruption and insecurity is terrible and should be resisted at all costs, this includes loss of lives and properties as

				Zamfara State.	
24	Vanguard	Bashir Bello	December 1,	Bandits invade Tashar Bama, Dogun Muaze and Unguwar Maigayya villages of Sabuwa LGA of Kastina state	7 farmers including nursing mother were killed and abduct 30 others
25	Vanguard	Vanguard	December 5,	Bandits attack Kasuwan Magani town in Kajuru LGA of Kaduna State	1 person was killed
26	Daily Post	Daily Post	December 10, 2020	Kidnappers raid Pmahbe Layout in Ushafa, Abuja	3 persons were abducted
27	The Nation	Ujama Emmanuel	December 12, 2020	Gumen kill four and injure seven in Tse-Angbande in Makurdi LGA of Benue State	Death of 4 persons and 7 person injured

witnessed across the Nigerian state, low life expectancy and other dangers. The life expectancy of an average Nigerian is put at 39 and the life expectancy of a Nigerian woman is put at 53, because of corruption and insecurity. The economy is not left out, people can no longer go about their businesses, work and farms and this is seriously affecting the economy. Insecurity has a very enormous effect on the living standard, and the living pattern of the people, it affects governance, and it causes so many accidents and several harm (Abbass, 2014; Galtung, 1969).

It is sad to discover that despite these negative effects of corruption and insecurity, several factors continue to threaten the fight against corruption and insecurity (e.g. lack of independence of the judiciary, ethnicity, religion, party affiliation, etc). This study argued that winning the war against corruption and insecurity is possible and the following factors were identified as fundamental: According to Economic and Financial Crime Commission (EFCC), citizens have roles of whistleblowing. What is meant by whistle-blowing? It is alerting anti-corruption agencies about the cases of corruption in their environment. The EFCC is effective, but the EFCC is not omnipresent only God is omnipresent. They argued, "If you see something, say something and we will do something". So

citizens have a role to give credible information, to give intelligence. This is what is called whistle-blowing. As it is for the cases of corruption so it is for the cases of insecurity. The only reservation about this is that most citizens are usually in danger after providing sensitive information. In recent time, they have continued to protect individuals who provide them with useful information about corruption. A cross-section of CSOs and people interviewed in the course of this study agrees that to tackle corruption and insecurity, the following factors must be considered:

1. Patriotism on the part of government officials and citizens;
2. Independence of anti-corruption agencies;
3. Increase in reportage of corruption;
4. Strengthening security agencies and improving their welfare;
5. Restructuring security agencies and the need for the state police;
6. Addressing injustice and the issue of equal opportunities as the root causes of various agitations.
7. Dedication, commitment, integrity, sincerity, and political will are other factors identified to fight corruption and insecurity in Nigeria.

VI. Conclusion/Recommendation

This study focused on corruption and insecurity in Nigeria. The paper argued that corruption has a lot of roles to play in explaining why insecurity has continued to be an issue in Nigeria. It is sad to discover from the findings of the study that corruption is the major factor threatening the fight against insecurity and the existence of the Nigerian State, as the war against insecurity would have been won or brought to the barest minimum if not for corruption. It is disheartening to discover that the Nigerian State has failed in its primary duty of protecting life and property, corruption and insecurity are fueling disintegration and threatening the very existence of the Nigerian State. Worst still, in the last 6-7 years, budgetary provision to fight insecurity has significantly increased without security improvement. To win the war against corruption and insecurity, this study recommends that it must be given utmost priority and consideration beyond political statements and conference speeches. Patriotism, dedication, political will, sincerity, integrity, and commitment are needed both on the part of the government, those fighting corruption and insecurity, and the citizens. Beyond these, Government should establish a special court to hear matters of corruption and insecurity, to avoid all unnecessary delays that hinder justice from being served at the end of the day. Government should also

increase the welfare packages of security agencies saddled with the responsibility of fighting insecurity and hire independent bodies or consultants to monitor the implementation of the funds provided to fight insecurity and staff of security agencies.

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