



The Socioeconomic Impact of Boko Haram Insurgency on Nigeria's Economic Development: A Crime Against Humanity

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Abstract

Nigeria's economic development is seriously threatened by insurgency, which has an impact on a number of industries including infrastructure, agriculture, and foreign investment. This research looks at the socioeconomic effects of insurgency in Nigeria, specifically how the disruption of economic activity by organizations such as Boko Haram has resulted in widespread unemployment, poverty, and slowing regional growth. The research looks at both the direct which includes people relocation, asset destruction, and loss of human capital and the indirect which includes investor confidence, and the redirection of governmental funding into security initiatives' implications of insurgent assaults. The study focuses on how insurgency damages local economies, especially in Northern Nigeria where agriculture is a major source of income, exacerbating regional disparities. Furthermore, the research explores the correlation between insurgency and the increase in poverty rates, establishing links between financial hardship, societal unrest, and the dissemination of radical beliefs. The study assesses government initiatives including military operations, humanitarian aid, and socioeconomic development programs that are meant to lessen the economic effects of insurgency. The methodology adopted was an archival research design focusing on interpretive analysis, content and thematic analysis. The findings make the case for a more all-encompassing strategy that addresses the underlying reasons of insurgency through political changes, better education, and job creation even though these initiatives have had varying degrees of success. The article comes to the conclusion that Nigeria cannot have long-term economic growth unless the sociopolitical causes of insurgency are addressed. Nigeria has the ability to establish a more stable environment that is favorable to long-term development by encouraging inclusive growth and bolstering governance. This study emphasizes how crucial it is for the government, civic society, and foreign allies to work together in order to successfully address the intricate issues that insurgency poses to Nigeria's economic future.

Keywords: *Insurgency, Economic Development, Boko Haram, Poverty, Crime.*

Introduction

In the early 2000s, Mohammed Yusuf created the Nigerian insurgency Boko Haram, which at first sought to uphold Islamic law and resist Western education. Following a bloody revolt against Nigerian security forces in 2009, Abubakar Shekau led the group to become a more radicalized rebel group. Its actions gained international notice in 2014 when 276 schoolgirls from Chibok were abducted. Boko Haram's goals of creating an Islamic state under Sharia rule have resulted in the insurgency's humanitarian problems and displacement (Abakpa & Tyokosu, 2021; Onuoha, 2014; Walker, 2012).

Nigeria, Africa's largest nation, faces violence and unrest due to ethnic and religious diversity. Boko Haram, fueled by poverty, unemployment, and corruption, is a result of socioeconomic challenges. The Nigerian government struggles to address the insurgency, with criticized military responses and porous borders. Boko Haram's tactics and scope have deteriorated security, caused long-term socioeconomic disruptions and hindered development.

The operations of Boko Haram in northeastern Nigeria have a significant and varied economic impact. Food shortages, price increases, and a



vicious cycle of poverty and insecurity have all resulted from the insurgency's disruption of economic activity. Many people's main source of income, agriculture, has been severely impacted, with farmers unable to work their land because they fear assaults. Communities' capacity to carry out economic activity has been severely hampered by the loss of infrastructure, such as roads, schools, and medical facilities. Local economies have collapsed as a result of markets being shut down and trade routes becoming hazardous. These is contained in the special report of the United States Institute of Peace 2012.

Urban regions are under tremendous strain due to the influx of displaced people, which has increased competition for limited resources and services. Due to the persistent violence, both domestic and international investment has been discouraged, which has caused economic growth in the impacted areas to stagnate. Businesses have found it difficult to operate in this unstable atmosphere, which has decreased job possibilities and exacerbated the economic crisis. Hence this challenge remains a major crime against humanity.

The goal of the study is to examine the socioeconomic effects of Boko Haram on Nigeria, with an emphasis on the social, educational, and economic facets. It also seeks to evaluate shifts in economic metrics, like GDP growth, employment rates, agriculture productivity, and investment levels, in the impacted areas. The specific socioeconomic effects of Boko Haram's insurgency on communities, changes in employment rates and local businesses as a result of the insurgency, and how investment patterns have changed in response to the security situation created by Boko Haram are some of the research questions that will be covered.

The study is significant because it sheds light on the intricate link between insurgency and Nigeria's economic growth and how violent conflicts may upend established socioeconomic structures. It also alerts international organizations, NGOs, and governments to the

urgent need for focused actions to alleviate the insurgency's economic effects. Lastly, it draws attention to the humanitarian catastrophe brought on by Boko Haram's actions and highlights how critical it is to solve the underlying socioeconomic problems that fuel the conflict.

Literature Review

Conceptually, Insurgency as a form of resistance has the potential to disrupt economic growth and stability by uprooting communities, destroying essential infrastructure, undermining institutional frameworks, and discouraging investment. Boko Haram's insurgency in Nigeria has caused socioeconomic problems, especially in the northeast, which have hampered the country's stability and economic advancement. Insurgent activity has an impact on important economic indicators including GDP, employment, foreign investment, and social welfare. Significant government spending adjustments are brought about by Boko Haram's insurgency, mainly in the areas of defense and counterinsurgency tactics, at the expense of development and social infrastructure initiatives (Pérouse de Montclos, 2014). Reduced agricultural output, restricted commerce, increased unemployment, and a worse standard of life as a result of insecurity and population relocation are some of the economic repercussions (Omenma, 2020).

Long-term insurgency may worsen poverty, inequality, and underdevelopment, as demonstrated by economic development theories such as Modernization Theory and Conflict Theory. In addition to having an immediate impact on welfare, the destruction of schools and health facilities also hinders the long-term development of human capital, which lowers future productivity and economic potential. According to conflict theory, which has its roots in Karl Marx's writings, social conflicts are caused by disparities and conflicting interests within society. Economic hardship and marginalization in the northeastern parts of Nigeria are frequently blamed for insurgency, which in turn fuels the growth of Boko Haram. By showing how resources are diverted towards defense and the deterioration of social



institutions, this theory highlights the detrimental economic effects of insurgency and strengthens economic instability and inequality.

Collier and Hoeffler's Greed vs. Grievance Theory, conflicts can be caused by either greed (economic benefits, such resource control) or grievances (social injustices and inequities). The actions of Boko Haram demonstrate elements of both resentment and greed, with resentment stemming from local poverty and marginalization and greed showing out as resource control and economic disturbances in economic disruptions and resource control in affected regions (Collier & Hoeffler, 2004).

According to the Human Capital Theory, which was put out by economists such as Gary Becker, economic growth depends on investments in health and education. These elements can be upset by insurgencies through workforce displacement, decreased investment, and infrastructural damage. By destroying educational facilities and uprooting skilled workers, insurgency can impede the development of human capital.

According to conflict economics theory, underdevelopment and conflict can result from an abundance of natural resources, and insurgency can exacerbate conflict and impede economic growth when natural resources are exploited. As resources are diverted from economic activity to security and rebuilding, the conflict trap idea draws attention to the vicious cycle of conflict and underdevelopment. However, the Social Capital Theory stated that insurgency can damage social capital by upsetting communities and eroding confidence. The study will use these theoretical frameworks to analyze how the insurgency of Boko Haram has affected Nigeria's economy in a number of ways, such as the destruction of infrastructure, disruption of human capital, loss of agricultural production, deterioration of the investment climate, and weakened governance and corruption.

This study can aid in the creation of evidence-based policies and initiatives to lessen the detrimental effects and encourage sustained

economic recovery in impacted areas by comprehending the fundamental economic mechanisms via which insurgency influences development.

Economic growth and insurgency are strongly related, as seen by the many historical examples that show how armed conflicts may seriously impede advancement. Significant economic losses, the destruction of infrastructure, and population relocation resulted from the decades-long conflict between the Colombian government and many guerrilla organizations. Afghanistan's economy has also declined significantly, as seen by its shaky economy, high rates of poverty, and extensive infrastructural damage. Due to infrastructure destruction, population relocation, and fatalities, the Boko Haram insurgency in Nigeria has had a major negative economic impact, especially in the northeastern area. Socioeconomic grievances, religious extremism, political instability, and outside influences including cross-border terrorism and regional instability are some of the reasons of the insurgency. Economic losses, humanitarian problems, security issues, social and cultural upheaval, and a detrimental effect on Nigeria's international standing and foreign investment have all been brought on by the insurgency. To evaluate the conflict's long-term economic effects and create efficient recovery and reconstruction plans, more study is required (Eneji, & Agri, 2020).

Historically, insurgency has had a major effect on economic growth by causing disruptions, lowering foreign investment, and redirecting funds to military spending. Conflicts in Colombia, Liberia, and Sri Lanka, for example, have demonstrated how insurgency may impede economic advancement by causing instability and targeting vital infrastructure. The cumulative consequences of insurgencies on local economies, where a significant portion of the population is pushed into poverty, infrastructure is destroyed, and healthcare and education systems fail, have been highlighted in recent decades by case studies from conflict-affected places such as Afghanistan and Syria.



Nigeria's Boko Haram insurgency is a reflection of a confluence of political, social, and economic elements that foster violent extremism. Poverty has fueled complaints and fostered an atmosphere that is favorable to extreme ideas by causing disillusionment and marginalization among northern people, especially in northern Nigeria. Given that the northeast of Nigeria has among of the lowest literacy rates in the nation, which results in young unemployment and disenfranchisement, inadequate access to education has been a major contributing factor to the insurgency. These problems are made worse by corruption and governance problems, which erode Nigeria's institutions and make it more difficult for the military to defeat Boko Haram (Eneji, & Agri, 2020).

Numerous studies have examined the economic effects of Boko Haram's insurgency, and the results have shown how destructive the group's actions have been for Nigeria's economy, especially in the northeast. Millions of people have been displaced by Boko Haram's attacks, which have also caused disruptions in agricultural output and a reduction economic activity. Community policing was suggested as a grassroots remedy (Olofinbiyi & Steyn, 2020). Nigeria has lost billions of dollars in income as a result of the insurgency because of labor losses, decreased agricultural productivity, and infrastructure devastation. Furthermore, the conflict has hurt foreign investment in Nigeria as Boko Haram's instability deters potential investors and impedes economic expansion. Policy interventions must address both the immediate security concerns and the underlying socioeconomic inequalities that feed the insurgency since the longer the insurgency lasts, the more widespread and long-lasting its economic repercussions will be (Aghedo & Osumah, 2012).

Table 1: Types of Insurgences Group in Nigeria. Causes and Impact.

Insurgency Group	Region	Primary Causes	Key Impacts	Timeline
Boko Haram	Northeast	Religious extremism, poverty, political marginalization	Mass killings, displacement, destruction of infrastructure, economic disruption	Early 2000s - Present

Niger Delta Militants	Niger Delta	Resource control, environmental degradation, marginalization	Oil pipeline sabotage, kidnapping, attacks on oil facilities, economic disruption	Late 1990s - Early 2010s
Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB)	Southeast	Perceived marginalization, cultural identity, political aspirations	Protests, civil disobedience, clashes with security forces	Late 2010s - Present

Source: Authors compilation

Methodology

This study adopted an archival research approach by employing a qualitative methodology with an emphasis on interpretive analysis. Government reports, non-governmental organizations, scholarly research, and media reporting serve as the foundation for the data gathering process. Data from the government sheds light on economic metrics including unemployment, GDP, and inflation rates. NGOs provide critical evaluations of the socioeconomic effects of Boko Haram, emphasizing problems like as poverty, food security, education, and relocation. Journal articles and scholarly research offer theoretical viewpoints and historical background. First-hand recollections and current information about Boko Haram's operations and their direct impacts on local people are provided via media reports and documentary sources, which enhance scholarly sources. Cross-referencing sources guarantees legitimacy and dependability and offers a thorough grasp of how Boko Haram has disrupted Nigeria's socioeconomic environment. Cross-referencing the results from several sources improves their validity and dependability.

Findings

Table 2: The Socioeconomic Impact of Boko Haram in Nigeria

Date	Event/Insurgency Incident	Location	Impact/Consequences
2002	Formation of Boko Haram by Mohammed Yusuf	Maiduguri, Borno State	Establishment of an Islamic group, setting the stage for future insurgency
July 2009	Boko Haram Uprising and Rebellion, led by Mohammed Yusuf	Borno, Yobe, Kano	1,000+ deaths; Mohammed Yusuf killed; marking Boko Haram 's first major uprising
September 2010	Attack on Bauchi prison; over 700 inmates released by Boko Haram	Bauchi State	Escalation in Boko Haram activities, jailbreak to increase group strength



June 2011	Bombing of Police Headquarters	Abuja	At least 6 killed; demonstrates growing capability of Boko Haram in launching attacks on government sites
August 2011	Attack on United Nations Headquarters	Abuja	23 dead, 60 injured; attack gains global attention, showing Boko Haram's shift to international targets
January 2012	Multiple coordinated bombings targeting police stations	Kano	185+ dead; significant attack showing Boko Haram's reach and tactical capabilities
May 2013	Nigerian government declares state of emergency in Borno, Yobe, and Adamawa	Borno, Yobe, Adamawa	Military mobilization; government recognizes scale and scope of insurgency
April 2014	Kidnapping of 276 Chibok schoolgirls	Chibok, Borno State	Global outrage; emphasis on Boko Haram's ideological stance against Western education
July 2014	Boko Haram attacks Damboa and takes control of town	Borno State	100+ dead; Boko Haram expands territorial control in Northeast Nigeria
August 2014	Boko Haram declares a caliphate in Gwoza	Gwoza, Borno State	Proclamation of a caliphate challenges Nigerian sovereignty in affected areas
January 2015	Baga massacre, one of the deadliest Boko Haram attacks	Baga, Borno State	Estimated 2,000 deaths; extensive destruction of the town and displacement of residents
March 2015	Boko Haram pledges allegiance to ISIS	Northeast Nigeria	Signals an ideological and strategic shift in Boko Haram's agenda and alliances
February 2016	Suicide bombings in an internally displaced persons (IDP) camp	Dikwa, Borno State	60+ killed; attacks show targeting of vulnerable populations and camps for displaced persons
July 2017	Kidnapping and killing of oil exploration team	Borno State	69 dead; impacts Nigeria's oil sector and economy
February 2018	Kidnapping of 110 schoolgirls from Dapchi	Dapchi, Yobe State	105 released later; highlights continued vulnerability of school children in conflict areas
December 2020	Kidnapping of 344 students from Kankara Secondary School	Kankara, Katsina State	All students later released; shows persistence of insecurity and insurgent tactics
November 2020	Zabarmari Massacre – 110 farmers killed by Boko Haram	Zabarmari, Borno State	110 farmers killed; underscores impact of insurgency on agriculture and rural communities
March 2022	Boko Haram/ISWAP attacks on military bases	Borno State	Nigerian military incurs casualties; insurgent groups remain active and aggressive

Source: Authors compilation

Nigeria's economy has been severely hit by the Boko Haram insurgency, especially in the northeast, where the organization is most active. This study explores the many socioeconomic effects of Boko Haram, covering topics like investment, infrastructure, employment, and economic disruption.

A critical look at the economic upheaval as presented in table 2, Local enterprises, commerce, agriculture, and food security have all been negatively impacted by the insurgency's significant economic upheaval. Affected communities are more marginalized, poverty is made worse, and access to necessities is restricted as a result of these disturbances. Because of uncertainty, threats, or outright attacks, local companies have suffered greatly. The foundation of Nigeria's local economy, small and medium-sized businesses (SMEs), have had to deal with issues including limited mobility, expensive property security expenses, and a decline in clientele as residents leave the region. The inability to get necessary materials and the loss of competent workers have caused many enterprises that survived to operate at reduced capacity.

Many farmers have abandoned their crops as a result of the violence and instability in northeastern Nigeria, which has reduced agricultural productivity. Because of this, there is now food insecurity, with about 80% of people in affected areas relying on food aid. In addition to harming lives and jobs, the insurgency has raised unemployment and poverty. Numerous companies have shut down, leaving a great number of individuals without jobs or money. Workers have migrated to other areas as a result, and economic progress has been hindered by the high unemployment rate. Poverty in the region has been further cemented as a result of insurgent organizations joining forces due to a lack of legitimate employment opportunities.

The conflict led by Boko Haram has seriously damaged public utilities, schools, hospitals, and roadways. Trade routes, market accessibility, and the flow of products and services have all been hampered by these attacks. Many villages have



been isolated as a result of the damage of transportation infrastructure, making it challenging for local governments to offer services and for humanitarian groups to provide supplies. Because of its ideological opposition to Western education, Boko Haram has also targeted schools. Thousands of Nigerians were forced to drop out of school as a result of the destruction of hundreds of schools, leaving a generation of young Nigerians without access to education. Since an ignorant population finds it difficult to find work and contribute to the economy, this lack of knowledge has long-term effects on the socioeconomic growth of the area. Additionally, individuals have been denied access to necessary healthcare services due to damaged or abandoned healthcare facilities, which has resulted in a rise in avoidable illnesses, untreated injuries, and poor health outcomes for the impacted communities. As displaced people seek medical attention outside of their homes, the devastation of health facilities has also put a strain on resources in nearby places.

Both domestic and international investment have been adversely affected by the Boko Haram insurgency, which has limited development opportunities and impeded economic progress in northeastern Nigeria. Many companies have avoided or completely left the area since it is dangerous to operate there due to the continuous violence and instability. Less money is available to build enterprises, industries, and infrastructure all of which are critical for economic expansion as a result of this investment loss.

Because Nigerian companies are reluctant to grow or start new ventures in regions with heavy insurgency activity, local investment has also suffered. Reduced foreign and domestic investment together cause the economy to expand more slowly, which prolongs poverty and reduces prospects for regional economic progress.

Case Studies

It is possible to compare the socioeconomic effects of Boko Haram on the states of Borno and Adamawa, emphasizing the destruction of infrastructure, interruption of the economy, loss

of human capital, security concerns, and community resilience. Through self-help initiatives, social support networks, and community-based security, affected communities have demonstrated resilience in the face of these difficulties (Granville, 2020).

By analyzing particular regions and the reactions of impacted populations, case studies offer a closer look at the regional and local effects of Boko Haram's insurgency. The insurgency's origin, Borno, has seen a great deal of bloodshed, which has severely disrupted everyday life and had negative economic effects. The destruction of schools and hospitals has caused significant interruptions to healthcare and education services in the state, making rehabilitation a difficult and drawn-out process.

Although there hasn't been as much bloodshed in Adamawa as there has been in Borno, the insurgency has had a significant economic impact. Similar disruptions to trade and agricultural output have resulted in damaged or abandoned infrastructure (Nnam et al., 2020). Nonetheless, Adamawa has had easier access to government and foreign assistance because to its closeness to more stable areas. Communities have created a variety of adaptation and survival techniques in response to the insurgency's challenges. In the absence of official protection, several towns have established local defense organizations to offer a certain amount of security, sometimes collaborating with the military to safeguard their localities. One way to react economically has been to replace disrupted market operations with local bartering networks and subsistence cultivation. Communities have also created unofficial networks to share resources and information, helping to maintain some level of stability amid the crisis.

Discussion

According to the report, the insurgency led by Boko Haram has had a disastrous effect on northeastern Nigeria, causing societal problems and major economic disruption. Wide-ranging effects have resulted from the devastation of infrastructure, population relocation, and loss of



livelihoods; survivors' psychological trauma has a major influence on their personal and collective well-being. Nigeria's social cohesiveness, economic progress, and security have all been weakened by the violence. Increased poverty and inequality, brain drain, and political instability are possible long-term consequences. Additionally, the insurgency has exacerbated political instability and undermined the state.

Food insecurity, increased poverty, and limited access to basic amenities like healthcare and education have all resulted from Boko Haram's operations in Borno and Adamawa. The loss of jobs in the commerce and agriculture industries, which were formerly the backbones of local economies, has caused the unemployment rate in the impacted states to soar. Poor transportation connections and broken supply chains brought on by infrastructure damage have made market volatility and price swings much worse.

Potential economic development has been constrained, and the region's financial instability has been exacerbated by the decreased appeal for both domestic and international investors. Long-term developmental issues have resulted from the loss of human capital due to migration, relocation, and death, which has also impacted local productivity. The wider economic policies of the nation are significantly impacted by the regional instability in northeastern Nigeria. Resources from fiscal policy have frequently been diverted from vital sectors like healthcare and education to security and rebuilding. Nigeria's capacity to address other national economic issues is hampered by these security-focused budgetary commitments. National agricultural policy has also been impacted by the insurgency, which has pushed for increased food production in other areas to make up for lost productivity. In order to maintain peace and sustained economic growth, the insurgency emphasizes the necessity of national policies that foster resilience, particularly in regions that are prone to conflict.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The northeastern part of Nigeria has been severely affected by the Boko Haram insurgency,

which has resulted in extensive infrastructure destruction, population relocation, and loss of livelihoods. The well-being of both individuals and communities has been significantly impacted by the psychological trauma that survivors have endured. Strengthening security, delivering humanitarian aid, funding development and reconstruction, offering psychosocial support services, funding education and vocational training, enacting good governance and anti-corruption reforms, and pursuing international collaboration for counterterrorism, reconstruction, and humanitarian assistance are some of the policy recommendations meant to lessen the long-term effects of the insurgency. The long-term effects of the insurgency on survivors' mental health, the role of social media in the dissemination of extremist ideologies, the efficiency of counterinsurgency tactics in tackling the underlying causes of the conflict, and the potential for peacebuilding and reconciliation efforts to foster social cohesiveness and economic recovery all require more investigation.

This study recommends, Improved security and stabilizing measures, infrastructure rehabilitation, job development initiatives, investment incentives, and community resilience building are some ideas for how the government and non-governmental organizations might lessen the effects of the insurgency. These fields can help build evidence-based strategies for sustainable development and advance a thorough knowledge of the insurgency's effects on Nigeria.

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