20 Insurgencies, Insecurity, and Agitations among South-East States in Nigeria: A Critique

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INTRODUCTION

Insurgencies, insecurity, and political agitations have escalated into pressing challenges within Nigeria's South-East region, deeply impacting the area's socio-economic stability and development. The rise in regional dissent and calls for autonomy and self-determination, primarily led by movements such as the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB), reflect broader grievances tied to long-standing political marginalization, economic deprivation, and ethnic identities (Okeke & Udeh, 2021). These issues, while particularly prominent in the South-East, also resonate with Nigeria's broader challenges in governance, national integration, and resource allocation. Scholars, policymakers, and international observers have noted that the region's sustained unrest and security challenges pose significant implications for Nigeria's unity and threaten its efforts toward achieving social and economic goals (Nwozor, 2020; Oladipo, 2022).

The South-East's historical context significantly shapes current insurgencies and insecurity. Decades after the Nigerian Civil War (1967-1970), the region still grapples with the lasting socio-economic consequences and perceived inequalities rooted in the conflict. This history remains a mobilizing factor for many, who view current forms of governance as perpetuating the same injustices that led to the war (Nwankwo, 2019). Insurgent groups often capitalize on these collective memories to galvanize public support, reinforcing sentiments of ethnic nationalism and grievances against the Nigerian government. The post-war economic neglect and socio-political isolation experienced by the South-East have significantly fueled perceptions of political exclusion and motivated recent demands for regional autonomy and even secession (Nwankwo & Iroegbu, 2021).

The socio-economic landscape of the South-East also contributes to the rise of insecurity and insurgencies in the region. High levels of youth unemployment, inadequate infrastructure, and limited access to quality education and healthcare exacerbate residents' grievances, particularly among younger demographics who feel disenfranchised and disconnected from the national polity (Eze, 2020). The

economic hardship within the South-East region also fosters a conducive environment for insurgent recruitment, as impoverished youths often turn to extremist movements as an outlet for their frustrations and as a means of livelihood (Anyanwu, 2021). Consequently, the political agitation within the South-East extends beyond a struggle for political inclusion and touches on the need for economic transformation, job creation, and infrastructural development.

Nigeria's political structure, primarily its federal arrangement, further exacerbates these regional tensions. Scholars argue that the current governance model centralizes power in a way that marginalizes minority groups and regions, especially the South-East, which feels particularly excluded from influential federal positions and resources (Amadi & Chukwu, 2019). Such sentiments are supported by the limited representation of South-Eastern leaders in high-profile government roles, perpetuating the feeling of marginalization and mistrust in the central government. The inequitable distribution of resources and political appointments fuels a sense of alienation, fostering regional dissent and enhancing the legitimacy of groups demanding self-determination (Oladipo & Fagbemi, 2021). Thus, the South-East's call for a fairer share of power and resources is as much about inclusion as it is about a rejection of a federal system perceived as biased and unrepresentative.

Another critical factor contributing to the South-East's insurgency problem is the role of ethnicity and identity. Nigeria's multi-ethnic composition has consistently influenced its political dynamics, where ethnically motivated agitation is not unique to the South-East but has been a recurring issue in other regions as well. However, in the South-East, ethnic identity, primarily Igbocentrism, is a significant factor that insurgent groups use to create solidarity and mobilize support (Okoroafor, 2022). Ethnic affiliation has therefore become a basis for regional identity politics, in which movements such as IPOB appeal to the Igbos by invoking historical narratives of subjugation and marginalization. By tapping into this deep-rooted ethnic identity, insurgent leaders gain substantial public support, strengthening their call for an independent Biafra and other autonomous arrangements. This exploitation of ethnic consciousness has implications beyond Nigeria's borders, with diasporic Igbo communities also providing support, both ideological and financial, to the cause of independence (Obasi, 2021).

The Nigerian government's response to insurgency and agitation in the South-East, typically characterized by militarization and repressive measures, has inadvertently exacerbated these issues. Frequent military deployments and aggressive policing strategies to suppress protests and insurgent activities are perceived by locals as acts of oppression and disregard for civil rights, fueling anti-government sentiments (Adeyemi, 2020). These heavy-handed responses often trigger more violence, resulting in a vicious cycle of protest, repression, and radicalization. Rather than restoring stability, militarized approaches have inadvertently driven insurgent

groups further underground, making it harder to achieve a sustainable resolution. According to scholars, a lack of inclusive governance structures and constructive dialogue only worsens the problem, as local populations increasingly view the government as an adversary rather than a representative body (Nwozor & Okoro, 2020).

While the government's approach has its limitations, certain elements within the South-East exacerbate the situation as well. Local elites and political figures sometimes exploit these insurgent movements to further their agendas, using identity politics to secure loyalty and advance personal or regional interests. This manipulation creates an additional layer of complexity, as insurgent groups operate with the implicit support of influential figures who provide political cover and resources, complicating government efforts to contain the unrest (Anyanwu & Obioha, 2021). This relationship between political elites and insurgent groups underscores the challenges of addressing the root causes of insurgency in the South-East without addressing the entrenched political interests at play.

Furthermore, the South-East's agitation and insurgency problem cannot be analyzed in isolation from Nigeria's broader security and socio-political landscape. The increasing presence of armed non-state actors and porous borders have intensified insecurity across the country, with the South-East becoming a hotspot for criminal activities and violent clashes between insurgents and government forces. These dynamics reflect a nationwide failure to maintain internal security, an issue that continues to undermine the state's legitimacy and encourages the growth of insurgent groups as alternative sources of security and governance in affected areas (Eze, 2022). For instance, some insurgent groups in the South-East have begun to establish governance structures within certain communities, exploiting the void left by inadequate government presence and delivering basic services to win popular support.

To address the insurgency and insecurity in the South-East, a comprehensive approach is essential. Scholars argue that military action alone cannot solve the problem and may even worsen it. Rather, a strategy that emphasizes political inclusion, economic empowerment, and community engagement may hold more promise. Fostering dialogue between the government and community leaders, providing economic opportunities, and implementing policies that emphasize federal inclusivity are seen as sustainable measures to quell the unrest and promote national unity (Chukwudi et al., 2021). At the same time, strengthening Nigeria's institutions to effectively address crime and security issues can help deter the emergence of insurgent groups across the country.

In conclusion, the insurgencies and security challenges in Nigeria's South-East are a reflection of deep-seated grievances tied to political exclusion, economic marginalization, and identity-based agitation. The current dynamics not only pose

threats to Nigeria's internal stability but also reveal the limitations of traditional counterinsurgency measures in addressing issues of regional and ethnic discontent. Sustainable peace in the South-East, therefore, requires a multidimensional approach that goes beyond militarization to include socio-economic, political, and institutional reforms. In exploring these avenues, this study aims to provide a foundation for understanding the complex interplay between insurgencies, insecurity, and agitation, offering insights into strategies for lasting stability in Nigeria's South-East.

Modus Operandi of Insurgencies, Insecurity, and Agitations among South-East States in Nigeria

The modus operandi of insurgencies, insecurity, and political agitations in Nigeria's South-East region follows a complex, multifaceted approach that leverages regional discontent, historical grievances, and ethnic identity to mobilize support and advance separatist objectives. Insurgent groups in the South-East, notably the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB), have utilized a combination of grassroots mobilization, media campaigns, economic disruption, and violent tactics to pursue their goals. The strategies employed are distinct yet interconnected, involving the strategic exploitation of socio-political vulnerabilities in the region, which include political marginalization, economic underdevelopment, and cultural alienation from the broader Nigerian state (Nwankwo & Iroegbu, 2021; Obasi, 2022).

Grassroots Mobilization and Propaganda

The insurgency groups focus extensively on grassroots mobilization to gather support for their cause, drawing heavily on ethnic and historical narratives that resonate with the Igbo population in the South-East. Through public rallies, community gatherings, and social media, insurgent leaders promote messages of Igbo marginalization, reinforcing feelings of cultural alienation and historical grievances stemming from the Nigerian Civil War (1967-1970) (Okeke & Udeh, 2021). This mobilization effort is complemented by propaganda campaigns that highlight instances of perceived oppression, both current and historical, fostering a narrative that resonates with a sense of identity and solidarity among the Igbo people (Oladipo, 2021).

Media and Communication Tactics

Insurgent movements in the South-East leverage both traditional and digital media to disseminate their ideology and rally support. Social media platforms, particularly Facebook, Twitter, and WhatsApp, have become critical tools for these groups, allowing them to bypass government-controlled media and communicate directly with supporters (Obasi & Anyanwu, 2020). The use of online media enables rapid mobilization, reaching diasporic communities and creating an extensive support network that spans beyond Nigeria's borders. This digital insurgency not only fuels local agitation but also garners international awareness and support, complicating efforts to suppress the movements (Amadi & Chukwu, 2020).

Economic Sabotage and Targeted Disruptions

Economic sabotage is another key strategy used by insurgent groups to destabilize the South-East region and pressurize the Nigerian government. By disrupting economic activities, particularly in sectors critical to the regional economy, such as oil production, insurgent groups aim to create instability and draw attention to their demands. Roadblocks, attacks on critical infrastructure, and sporadic shutdowns orchestrated under "sit-at-home" orders are common tactics aimed at demonstrating power and influence over the local population (Adeyemi, 2020). Such economic disruptions have profound consequences, not only impacting local livelihoods but also sending a message of insurgent control over regional affairs.

Violent Tactics and Guerrilla Warfare

Insurgent groups in the South-East employ guerrilla tactics, taking advantage of the region's terrain and utilizing small, mobile units to carry out attacks. These tactics include ambushes on security personnel, destruction of public property, and coordinated attacks on government installations. The intent behind such violence is to challenge state authority and demonstrate the government's inability to control the region. These groups often justify their violent acts as defensive measures against what they perceive as military aggression from the Nigerian government (Eze, 2022). The violent approach further intensifies insecurity in the region, instilling fear among residents and creating an atmosphere conducive to insurgent influence.

Strategic Use of Cultural and Historical Symbols

A unique element of insurgency in the South-East is the strategic use of cultural and historical symbols, which insurgent leaders employ to galvanize support and strengthen the legitimacy of their cause. Symbols associated with the defunct Republic of Biafra, such as the Biafran flag and songs, are widely displayed in gatherings and protests. These symbols serve as powerful reminders of a separatist legacy and reinforce the cultural distinctiveness of the Igbo people. This tactic of cultural revival, combined with references to historical grievances, enhances the emotional and ideological appeal of insurgency efforts in the South-East (Nwozor & Okoro, 2020).

Coercion and Intimidation

Insurgent groups often employ coercion to enforce compliance and silence dissent within the communities they seek to represent. Residents in the South-East, particularly in areas heavily influenced by IPOB, are often subject to threats and intimidation if they oppose insurgent activities or refuse to comply with insurgent decrees, such as the "sit-at-home" orders. This coercive approach instills a culture of fear, ensuring that insurgent directives are followed and dissent is minimized (Okoroafor, 2022). By monopolizing the social and political narrative in these regions, insurgents establish themselves as the de facto authorities, making it challenging for the Nigerian government to assert control.

International Networking and Diaspora Funding

A notable dimension of the insurgency's modus operandi involves networking with the Nigerian diaspora and securing financial and ideological support from abroad. Many insurgent leaders have extensive networks in the diaspora, particularly in countries with significant Igbo populations. These networks provide funding, media support, and advocacy, amplifying the insurgency's reach and influence. By framing the agitation as a fight for ethnic preservation and human rights, insurgent groups attract international sympathy, which has led to increased scrutiny on the Nigerian government's handling of the South-East crisis (Chukwudi et al., 2021).

Strategy of Insurgencies, Insecurity, and Agitations among South-East States in Nigeria

The strategies of insurgencies, insecurity, and agitations in Nigeria's South-East region are shaped by a combination of socio-political grievances, historical factors, and ethnic identity. Key insurgent movements, particularly the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB), leverage these factors to sustain and legitimize their separatist objectives. This section comprehensively analyzes the strategies employed by insurgent groups and individuals to challenge the government's authority and to foster a distinct socio-political environment that advocates self-determination, autonomy, and regional rights.

Leveraging Historical Grievances and Ethnic Identity

One primary strategy employed by insurgent groups in the South-East is the utilization of historical grievances and ethnic identity to foster solidarity and unity among the Igbo population. Historical grievances largely stem from the Nigerian Civil War (1967–1970) and subsequent perceptions of political and economic marginalization of the Igbo people by the Nigerian government (Okeke & Udeh, 2021). By appealing to the memory of the Biafran struggle and the cultural heritage of the Igbo people, insurgents create an environment where ethnic identity is intrinsically tied to the push for regional autonomy and, in some cases, full independence. This sense of historical grievance is not only highlighted during public events and rallies but is also woven into the narratives circulated by IPOB leaders, further cementing the Igbo people's connection to the insurgent cause (Amadi & Chukwu, 2020).

Mobilizing Local Communities and Grassroots Engagement

Insurgent movements in the South-East region have focused on mobilizing local communities through grassroots engagement, which involves direct interactions with the community to foster support and increase participation. This strategy relies on building strong networks within communities, as insurgent leaders and supporters engage in local events, community meetings, and youth gatherings to promote their agenda (Obasi, 2022). In some cases, IPOB leaders have gone as far as establishing local cells or groups to ensure that their messages reach every part of the region,

including rural areas where communication barriers might otherwise exist (Nwankwo & Iroegbu, 2021). This grassroots strategy is instrumental in creating a bottom-up approach that ensures sustained engagement with communities and increases the movement's resilience.

Use of Digital Media and Propaganda

A significant strategy for these groups is the use of digital media and propaganda to broadcast their cause to a wide audience, both locally and internationally. Through platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and WhatsApp, insurgent leaders can disseminate their messages rapidly, rally supporters, and amplify incidents that they argue illustrate the government's unfair treatment of the Igbo people. Digital platforms provide insurgent groups a unique opportunity to frame narratives, report on real-time incidents, and foster a sense of urgency around their objectives (Chukwudi et al., 2021). Digital media allows them to reach not only local communities but also the Nigerian diaspora and international human rights organizations that may sympathize with their cause. IPOB, in particular, has utilized this strategy to attract international attention, raise funds, and influence international narratives regarding the Nigerian government's actions in the South-East (Amadi & Chukwu, 2020).

Economic Sabotage and Civil Disobedience

Economic sabotage and civil disobedience are key tactics within the strategy of insurgencies in the South-East. By enforcing "sit-at-home" orders and disrupting economic activities, insurgent groups aim to demonstrate their influence and compel the Nigerian government to address their grievances. For example, IPOB has frequently ordered such actions in response to perceived injustices or government actions against its leaders (Oladipo, 2021). These tactics cause significant economic disruptions, particularly in the South-East's commercial centers, as businesses shut down and public transport ceases operation in compliance with these orders. The economic impact of such strategies often puts pressure on the Nigerian government, as prolonged disruptions contribute to regional instability and potential economic downturns (Okoroafor, 2022).

Violent Tactics and Guerrilla Warfare

Insurgents have also employed violent tactics, often adopting guerrilla warfare techniques to avoid direct confrontation with Nigeria's well-equipped military forces. By utilizing hit-and-run tactics, insurgent groups create an environment of uncertainty, targeting police stations, government offices, and critical infrastructure to weaken the Nigerian government's presence in the region (Eze, 2022). These violent tactics are strategically carried out to undermine the state's authority and instill fear within communities. This approach is particularly effective in rural and semi-urban areas, where the government's presence is weaker and insurgents can leverage local support to evade capture (Obasi, 2022).

International Support and Diaspora Funding

International support, particularly from the Nigerian diaspora, has become an essential part of the insurgency's strategy in the South-East. Many Igbo individuals living abroad have strong affiliations with IPOB and other separatist groups, and they provide significant financial and moral support to the insurgency (Chukwudi et al., 2021). International support plays a dual role: it provides necessary funds for insurgent operations, and it also elevates the insurgent cause by bringing international awareness to the situation in the South-East. Advocacy groups in the diaspora frequently lobby foreign governments and human rights organizations to monitor Nigeria's handling of South-East insurgencies, often framing the cause as a human rights issue (Adeyemi, 2020).

Psychological Warfare and Coercion

Psychological warfare, which includes propaganda, misinformation, and coercion, has become another effective strategy for insurgents. By instilling fear, either through violent acts or the threat of violence, insurgents create an environment where compliance with their demands becomes a matter of personal safety for local residents. The threat of retaliation against dissenters within the community is an effective strategy that insurgents use to ensure their directives are followed. This atmosphere of coercion reinforces insurgent control in communities, as residents are less likely to report insurgent activities to government authorities (Okoroafor, 2022).

Cultural and Symbolic Representation

Lastly, insurgents have strategically utilized cultural and symbolic representations to unify the Igbo people around the cause. The use of Biafran symbols, including the Biafran flag, anthem, and colors, serves as a constant reminder of the region's historical struggle for independence and reinforces the insurgent identity within the South-East (Nwozor & Okoro, 2020). This cultural representation is particularly powerful, as it enables the insurgent movements to connect their cause with the broader history and identity of the Igbo people. Symbols serve not only as unifying elements but also as visual representations of resistance and the collective memory of Biafra, which are deeply embedded in the consciousness of the Igbo community.

Philosophical Foundation

The philosophical foundation underpinning the insurgencies, insecurity, and agitations in the South-East states of Nigeria is deeply rooted in the interplay of historical, sociopolitical, and existential dimensions. These dimensions shape the motivations and justifications for various movements seeking autonomy or self-determination. Central to this foundation are concepts such as identity, justice, governance, and social contract theory, which together provide a framework for understanding the complexities surrounding these issues.

Historical Context and Collective Memory

The historical context of the Nigerian Civil War (1967-1970) serves as a pivotal reference point for the agitations and insurgencies in the South-East region. The war resulted in significant loss of life, economic devastation, and a collective memory of trauma among the Igbo people (Okeke & Udeh, 2021). This historical grievance is critical in shaping the identity of the South-East population, contributing to a sense of marginalization and exclusion from the broader Nigerian socio-political landscape. Scholars argue that collective memory, particularly related to historical injustices, plays a crucial role in galvanizing communities to pursue political objectives that seek redress and recognition (Eze, 2022). Thus, the historical experiences of the Igbo people significantly inform their current aspirations and the motivations behind movements like the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB).

Identity Politics and Ethnic Nationalism

Identity politics is another philosophical foundation that profoundly influences the insurgencies in the South-East. The concept of ethnicity as a basis for political mobilization is prominent in Nigeria, where ethnic identities often shape political allegiances and conflicts (Nwankwo & Iroegbu, 2021). The Igbo people, as one of Nigeria's major ethnic groups, have articulated their demands through a lens of ethnic nationalism, emphasizing their unique cultural heritage, history, and experiences of marginalization. Philosophers like Benedict Anderson (1983) describe nations as "imagined communities" that emerge from shared histories and cultural practices. This perspective aligns with the current agitations, as groups like IPOB mobilize support by appealing to a shared Igbo identity, invoking symbols, narratives, and cultural practices that resonate with the community's collective consciousness.

Theories of Justice and Inequality

The philosophical discourse on justice is central to understanding the insurgencies in the South-East. Theories of distributive justice, particularly those proposed by philosophers such as John Rawls (1971), highlight the importance of fairness and equality in social arrangements. In Nigeria, persistent socio-economic inequalities, perceived political marginalization, and the exclusion of the Igbo people from the benefits of national development contribute to the unrest in the region (Okoroafor, 2022). The sense of injustice fosters grievances that fuel calls for greater autonomy and self-determination. Insurgent groups often frame their struggles as just causes, seeking to rectify perceived injustices and assert their rights in the face of systemic discrimination.

Social Contract Theory and Governance

The philosophical concept of the social contract is also instrumental in analyzing the insurgencies and agitations in the South-East. Social contract theorists like Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, and Jean-Jacques Rousseau emphasize the reciprocal

relationship between citizens and the state. In the context of Nigeria, the failure of the government to provide security, welfare, and representation to the South-East has led to a breakdown in this social contract. The perceived inability of the Nigerian state to address the needs and aspirations of the Igbo people has prompted many to question the legitimacy of the government and to seek alternative political structures (Eze, 2022). The philosophy of the social contract suggests that when a government fails to fulfill its obligations, citizens have the right to resist and seek self-determination, which aligns with the current insurgent movements.

Existentialism and the Quest for Meaning
Existentialist philosophy, which emphasizes individual freedom and the search for meaning in a chaotic world, provides another lens through which to understand the insurgencies in the South-East. Insurgents often articulate their struggles not only in terms of political objectives but also as quests for dignity, identity, and existence (Chukwudi et al., 2021). The existential crises faced by many in the region, characterized by economic hardship, political instability, and social marginalization, drive individuals to seek meaning and purpose through participation in insurgent movements. This philosophical approach highlights the personal dimensions of the conflict, illustrating how individuals find agency in their struggles against perceived oppression.

METHODS
This study employs a mixed-methods approach, integrating quantitative surveys with qualitative interviews. Quantitative data were collected through structured questionnaires administered to residents in South-East states, while qualitative data were gathered through in-depth interviews with political leaders, community heads, and security personnel (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). A multistage sampling technique was adopted, starting with a purposive selection of five states in the South-East region, which are Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu, and Imo. Stratified random sampling was then used to select participants from various socio-political backgrounds (Fowler, 2014). Data collection involved administering questionnaires to 500 respondents and conducting 25 in-depth interviews. The questionnaire covered topics related to perceptions of political marginalization, ethnic sentiments, and the role of security agencies in managing insurgent activities (Okeke & Udeh, 2021). Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and regression analysis to establish relationships between political discontent, insurgencies, and insecurity (Field, 2013). Thematic analysis was employed to interpret qualitative data and identify recurring themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

RESULTS
The findings indicate a significant relationship between perceived political marginalization and the rise in insurgencies in the South-East region ($\beta = 0.68$, $p < 0.05$). Respondents identified factors such as youth unemployment, lack of

infrastructural development, and political exclusion as key contributors to regional insecurity. Qualitative data revealed that local leaders perceive the central government's neglect as a primary driver of agitation and insurgency. Participants emphasized the role of traditional institutions and grassroots leaders in mediating conflicts and promoting dialogue.

Table 1 summarizes the mean scores, standard deviations, β coefficients, and p-values for various factors contributing to insurgency and insecurity in the South-East states of Nigeria. The results indicate that youth unemployment has the highest mean score (4.21), reflecting a strong consensus among respondents regarding its impact on insecurity. The perceived political marginalization shows the strongest correlation with insurgency (β = 0.68), followed by perceived government neglect (β = 0.61). All variables exhibit statistical significance (p < 0.05), suggesting their critical roles in understanding insurgency dynamics in the region.

Table 1: Representation of statistical Data

Variables	Mean (SD)	β Coefficient	p-value
Perceived Political Marginalization	3.89 (1.12)	0.68	<0.05
Youth Unemployment	4.21 (0.98)	0.56	<0.05
Lack of Infrastructural Development	4.05 (1.15)	0.59	<0.05
Ethnic Sentiments	3.92 (1.10)	0.45	<0.05
Perceived Government Neglect	3.78 (1.08)	0.61	<0.05

Source: Field work (2022)
Note: SD = Standard Deviation. All p-values were statistically significant at p < 0.05.

Table 2 presents respondents' perceptions regarding political marginalization and its contribution to insurgency. A significant proportion of respondents (80.5%) agree that political marginalization contributes to insurgency, highlighting the perceived disconnect between the government and the populace. Additionally, only 18.7% feel that the government adequately addresses regional grievances, reinforcing the notion of exclusion and its role in fostering unrest.

Table 2: Perceptions of Political Marginalization and Insurgency

Statement	Agree (%)	Neutral (%)	Disagree (%)
There is political marginalization in the South-East region.	76.3	12.4	11.3
Political marginalization contributes to insurgency in the region.	80.5	10.3	9.2
The government's actions address the grievances of the South-East.	18.7	25.6	55.7
Insurgency in the region is driven by feelings of exclusion.	72.1	15.9	12.0

Table 3 outlines the factors contributing to insecurity and agitations, along with their mean scores, standard deviations, and percentage agreement. Youth unemployment is identified as the most critical factor contributing to insecurity, with an agreement percentage of 81.3%. The findings emphasize the need for infrastructural development and addressing ethnic sentiments to mitigate the risks of agitation and conflict in the region.

Table 3: Factors Contributing to Insecurity and Agitations

Factors	Mean Score	Standard Deviation	Percentage Agreement (%)
Youth Unemployment	4.21	0.98	81.3
Lack of Infrastructural Development	4.05	1.15	79.5
Ethnic Sentiments	3.92	1.10	72.9
Perceived Neglect by the Government	3.78	1.08	69.4
Lack of Effective Dialogue	3.84	1.12	70.1

Table 4 presents the role of local leaders and traditional institutions in conflict resolution. The results indicate that traditional leaders play a significant role in conflict mediation, with a correlation coefficient of 0.59. Conversely, the effectiveness of government-led conflict resolution efforts (mean = 2.78) is viewed less favorably, suggesting that local institutions may be more trusted in fostering peace than government initiatives.

Table 4: Role of Local Leaders and Traditional Institutions in Conflict Resolution

Variables	Mean (SD)	Correlation (r)	p-value
Role of Traditional Leaders in Conflict Mediation	3.89 (1.02)	0.59	<0.05
Role of Community Heads in Promoting Dialogue	3.75 (1.09)	0.55	<0.05
Trust in Local Institutions to Foster Peace	3.92 (1.05)	0.57	<0.05
Effectiveness of Government-led Conflict Resolution Efforts	2.78 (1.22)	0.29	>0.05

Table 5 provides a regression analysis of factors influencing insurgency. The regression analysis highlights that perceived political marginalization ($\beta = 0.68$) and perceived government neglect ($\beta = 0.61$) significantly influence insurgency. This underscores the need for targeted policies that address the grievances of marginalized populations and enhance governance to mitigate insurgent activities.

Table 5: Regression Analysis of Factors Influencing Insurgency

Independent Variables	β Coefficient	Standard Error	t-value	p-value
Perceived Political Marginalization	0.68	0.14	4.86	<0.05
Youth Unemployment	0.56	0.13	4.31	<0.05
Lack of Infrastructural Development	0.59	0.15	3.93	<0.05
Ethnic Sentiments	0.45	0.12	3.75	<0.05
Perceived Neglect by the Government	0.61	0.14	4.36	<0.05

Discussion

The findings presented in the tables highlight significant factors contributing to the insurgencies, insecurity, and agitations in the South-East states of Nigeria. The results reveal complex interrelations between perceived political marginalization, youth unemployment, lack of infrastructural development, ethnic sentiments, and perceived government neglect.

The mean scores and standard deviations in Table 1 indicate that youth unemployment has the highest mean score (4.21) with a relatively low standard deviation (0.98), suggesting a strong consensus among respondents about its impact on insecurity. This aligns with research indicating that youth unemployment is a significant driver of conflict in Nigeria, leading to feelings of disenfranchisement and prompting many youths to engage in insurgent activities (Akanji, 2021; Akpan & Uduimoh, 2022).

The β coefficients for each variable further elucidate their influence. Political marginalization (β = 0.68) exhibits the strongest correlation with insurgency, followed closely by perceived government neglect (β = 0.61). This finding supports the assertion that perceived exclusion from political processes fosters a fertile ground for agitation and insurgent activities (Musa & Aliyu, 2022). The p-values for all variables indicate statistical significance, confirming that these factors are influential in understanding the dynamics of insurgency in the region.

Table 2 underscores the strong sentiment among the population regarding political marginalization. A significant 76.3% of respondents agree that political marginalization exists in the South-East, and 80.5% believe it contributes to insurgency. These perceptions reflect a widespread feeling of exclusion and discontent with the central government's actions (Obi & Eze, 2021). The low percentage (18.7%) of those who feel the government addresses their grievances further highlights the disconnect between the government and the populace, reinforcing claims that effective governance is crucial for mitigating insurgent tendencies (Onuoha, 2022).

Table 3 provides a detailed breakdown of factors contributing to insecurity. The highest agreement (81.3%) pertains to youth unemployment, reaffirming its role as a critical factor. The mean scores for other factors, such as lack of infrastructural development (4.05) and ethnic sentiments (3.92), indicate significant levels of agreement as well. The findings are consistent with the view that inadequate infrastructure can exacerbate social tensions and create environments conducive to unrest (Ekeanyanwu et al., 2021). Moreover, ethnic sentiments being a contributing factor reflects the historical context of ethnic divisions in Nigeria, which continue to fuel conflict (Ikpeze & Okeke, 2022).

Table 4: Role of Local Leaders and Traditional Institutions in Conflict Resolution
The role of local leaders and traditional institutions is highlighted in Table 4. The strong correlation (r = 0.59) of traditional leaders in conflict mediation indicates their importance in fostering dialogue and promoting peace at the grassroots level. This aligns with findings from recent studies emphasizing the need to leverage local leadership structures to address conflicts effectively (Nwafor et al., 2023). However, the effectiveness of government-led conflict resolution efforts (mean = 2.78) shows a lack of trust among the populace, suggesting that local solutions may be more acceptable than top-down approaches.

The regression analysis in Table 5 quantifies the influence of various factors on insurgency. Political marginalization and government neglect show the most substantial impacts, corroborating existing literature that suggests these factors contribute significantly to societal unrest (Oguonu et al., 2022). The coefficients indicate that each factor not only correlates with insurgency but also has a predictive capacity, emphasizing the need for targeted interventions that address these underlying issues

CONCLUSION
The study concludes that insurgencies and insecurity in the South-East states of Nigeria are driven by political marginalization, unemployment, and ethnic tensions. Addressing these issues requires multi-layered approaches involving political reforms, economic empowerment, and strengthening local governance.

RECOMMENDATIONS
Based on these findings, the following recommendations are made:
1. Policy Reforms: The government should implement political reforms that address the region's grievances and promote inclusive governance.
2. Youth Empowerment: Initiatives aimed at reducing youth unemployment should be prioritized to minimize the lure of insurgency.
3. Strengthening Local Governance: Local leaders and institutions should be empowered to mediate conflicts and foster peace.

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