



Research Paper

The Impact of Insecurity on Economic Development in Rivers State

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ABSTRACT

The study examined the influence of insecurity on the economic development of Rivers State from 2000 to 2015. The study gathered data through a historical research approach, utilizing both primary and secondary sources. To select primary participants for interviews, the study employed purposive sampling techniques to target key individuals for face-to-face discussions. Consequently, primary data was collected through oral interviews, observations, and conversations focusing on economic locations and infrastructure affected by insecurity during the specified time frame. Secondary data, drawn from various published and unpublished sources such as reports, monographs, journals, newspapers, and magazines, was used to enrich the study's theoretical and conceptual framework. Both primary and secondary data were analyzed through qualitative content analysis. The findings revealed that insecurity negatively impacted the economic growth of Rivers State within the examined period, leading to the relocation of businesses, increased tax evasion, and a decline in revenue collection efficiency. Furthermore, insecurity hindered economic activities and reduced the income of taxpayers in the state. The study recommended prioritizing socioeconomic empowerment initiatives, given that youth unemployment and underdevelopment were identified as root causes of insecurity. It also emphasized the importance of community development programs and access to quality petroleum products, especially in coastal areas.

Keywords: Economy, Economic development, Development, Impact, Insecurity.

Received 07 July, 2024; Revised 19 July, 2024; Accepted 21 July, 2024 © The author(s) 2024.

Published with open access at www.questjournals.org

I. INTRODUCTION

Human beings, by nature, possess self-centered and acquisitive tendencies, yet they are also susceptible and live within a vast environment characterized by scarcity and limitation of resources. The imperative to thrive in a world teeming with billions of individuals vying for scarce and finite resources has fostered a sense of brutality and danger in humanity. Man is bound by essential requisites - sustenance, attire, and habitation - and in order to endure, he must also be safeguarded.¹In order to procure sustenance and maintain a healthy diet, individuals must prioritize safety. Similarly, for the creation of garments for both functionality and aesthetics, individuals must prioritize protection. Moreover, when constructing shelter, individuals must seek out secure environments. Indeed, the fundamental necessities for human survival revolve around the concepts of safety and protection. The existence of mankind is contingent upon the presence of security. Therefore, security is an inevitable and essential component of human survival. Essentially, security encompasses the presence of tranquility, safety, contentment, and the safeguarding of both human and physical assets, while also addressing

¹ L. Raimi. Environmental Conflict: Benefit Captor Behaviour and New Class Relations in the Niger Delta. *Journal of Humanities (Special Edition on the Niger Delta)*, vol.3 no. 24, 2017: pp. 66 – 76.

the absence of crises or threats to human dignity. These elements collectively contribute to the advancement and prosperity of any human society.²

The development of the state can be traced back to the imperative of ensuring security. Thomas Hobbes expounded on the concept in *Leviathan* by delineating a hypothetical state of nature in which all individuals existed on an equal footing, each pursuing survival through their own means.³ Consequently, all individuals endured a persistent state of apprehension and peril regarding their potential demise. He believed that human existence in its natural state would be isolated, impoverished, unpleasant, savage, and brief.⁴ In the state of nature, devoid of laws or law enforcement, Hobbes posited that the only remedy was for individuals to establish a supreme authority to enforce peace universally. Drawing inspiration from English contract law, Hobbes proposed that people collectively relinquish their inherent rights of equality and freedom, granting absolute authority to a ruler or sovereign. This sovereign, whether an individual or a collective entity, would be responsible for legislating and enforcing laws to ensure societal tranquility, thereby safeguarding life, liberty, and property. Hobbes referred to this arrangement as the "social contract."⁵

In the year 1690, John Locke released his seminal work, the *Two Treatises of Government*. Locke shared a similar viewpoint to Hobbes regarding the harsh realities of the state of nature, acknowledging the necessity of a social contract to maintain order and tranquility. However, Locke diverged from Hobbes in his interpretation of the social contract. In Locke's perspective, the social contract was not merely a pact among individuals, but rather a covenant between the people and the ruling authority.⁶ According to Locke's philosophy, the inherent rights of individuals served as a check on the authority of the monarch, indicating a departure from Hobbes' notion of absolute power. Locke contended that the role of the government was primarily to uphold and safeguard the natural rights of its citizens. This principle has laid the groundwork for modern democracies worldwide, where the government is tasked with ensuring the safety of its people, allowing them to pursue their lives without fear. Additionally, William posits that security primarily involves mitigating risks to cherished values, particularly those that jeopardize the existence of a specific entity.⁷ In line with the above, Ogaba states that:

Security pertains to the safeguarding of a nation's capacity to safeguard and advance itself, uphold its cherished principles and lawful concerns, and improve the welfare of its citizens. Consequently, internal security can be perceived as the absence of any factors that may jeopardize internal unity, the collective existence of a nation, and its capability to sustain essential institutions in order to uphold its fundamental principles, socio-political and economic goals, and fulfill the legitimate desires of its populace.⁸

Security pertains to the mitigation of potential risks to individuals and their cherished assets. Buzan argues that security entails the absence of threats and the capacity of nations to uphold their distinct identity and operational integrity in the face of perceived adversarial influences, with survival as its ultimate objective.⁹ From the aforementioned discussion, security is commonly understood as the assurance of safety from harm, fear, anxiety, oppression, peril, impoverishment, safeguarding, protection, and conservation of fundamental principles and the risks posed to them.

Rivers State was established on May 27, 1967, carved out of the former Eastern Region of Nigeria, with Port Harcourt serving as its capital. A portion of the original Rivers State was subsequently hived off in 1996 to create Bayelsa State. The state comprises twenty-three (23) local government areas, spanning an area of 11,077 km². It is bordered by the Atlantic Ocean to the south, Bayelsa and Delta states to the west, Akwa Ibom

² M. Afolabi. Concept of Security. In K. Ajayi, (ed.), *Intelligence and security studies programme*. ABUAD, 2015, p.23

³ A. Egobueze. *The State and the people*. Port Harcourt: Pearl Publisher, 2020, p.28.

⁴ A. Egobueze. *The State and the people*. Port Harcourt: Pearl Publisher, 2020, p.26 - 27

⁵ L. Raimi & S. E. Boroh, Incentivizing Violent Behaviour in the Niger Delta Region: The Commodification Hypothesis. *Development Studies Round Table: A Journal of Development*, vol.6 no.2, 2018, pp. 53-66

⁶ L. Raimi & S. E. Boroh, Incentivizing Violent Behaviour in the Niger Delta Region: The Commodification Hypothesis. *Development Studies Round Table: A Journal of Development*, vol.6 no.2, 2018, pp. 53-66

⁷ P. D. Williams, *Security Studies: An Introduction*. London: Routledge Taylor and Francis Group, 2008, p.3.

⁸ O. Ogaba, Security, Globalization and Climate Change: A Conceptual Analysis. In E. E. Osita & Ogaba O. [ed.] *Climate Change and Human Security in Nigeria*. Lagos, NIIA, 2010, pp.35-36

⁹ D. O. Bodunde, A. A. Ola & M. B. Afolabi, Internal Insecurity in Nigeria, The Irony of Multiplicity of Security Outfits and Security Challenges, *International Journal of Research in Humanities, Art and Literature*, vol. 2, no. 5, 2014, pp.213 – 220.

State to the east, and Imo and Abia states to the north.¹⁰ A primarily flat pluvial region, its interior is characterized by tropical rainforests and freshwater marshes, while closer to the coast, there are numerous mangrove swamps and coastal sand ridges. The population is estimated to exceed seven million residents.¹¹ Rivers State is inhabited by a diverse array of ethnic groups such as the Ikwerre, Ijaw, Ndoni, Ogoni, Etche, and Ekpeye, who primarily engage in fishing, agriculture, and the extraction of resources from mangrove forests as their traditional means of sustenance.

Rivers State in Nigeria is home to vital oil and gas infrastructure and has, for the past sixty years, served as a major source of revenue for the country's socio-economic stability and advancement. The state's economic strength, which has elevated it to the prestigious position of being the hub and epicenter of Nigeria's petroleum industry, has significantly increased its importance in the nation's political arena over the past twenty years.¹² The Niger Delta region in Rivers State, as reported by the Armed Conflict Location Event Data (ACLED), holds political significance owing to its substantial size, strategic location, and abundant natural resources. As per the Nigerian National Bureau of Statistics, Rivers State boasts the second highest GDP in the country, following Lagos, and is home to extensive reserves of crude oil and natural gas.¹³

In contemporary economic terms, the state serves as a central hub for the oil, gas, and maritime sectors, housing numerous multinational oil companies (MNOCs), the Liquefied Natural Gas Company situated in Bonny, the Port Harcourt Refinery, the Indorama Eleme Petrochemical Company, and the Port Harcourt and Onne ports.¹⁴ The state's revenue profile has been greatly impacted by the influx of oil revenue from the federation account and internally-generated revenue (IGR). This economic boon not only offers opportunities but also poses threats, as the state's strategic position in Nigeria's oil-dependent economy heightens the likelihood of social risks stemming from oil-related conflicts and political violence. This is due to the federal government's longstanding focus on maintaining uninterrupted oil production and revenue flow in the Niger Delta region, often at the expense of the wellbeing of the local populace.¹⁵

The socio-economic and political advantages linked to its esteemed position have also drawn a multitude of related adverse effects, including insecurity, extensive environmental degradation due to oil and gas exploration, as well as various environmental disputes and political unrest that are frequently intensified by competition over resources and the protests of armed militia factions. In light of these circumstances, this research is undertaken to examine the influence of insecurity on the economic progress of Rivers State from 1999 to 2015.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The paper adopted the social conflict theory to elucidate the relationship between security and economic development is the social conflict theory. Originating from the works of Max Weber, the social conflict theory posits that competition for power and economic gain serves as a catalyst for societal discord.¹⁶ They have delineated two societal strata, the affluent and the impoverished, as potential sources of conflict. However, modern social conflict theory extends beyond this notion, illustrating how various factions

¹⁰ J. Sofiri, K. Nyiayaana & J. Jack, Insecurity in Rivers State: The Issues, Actors and Solutions. In T. M. Ebiede, C. O. Bassey & J. B. Asuni (Eds.), *Insecurity in the Niger Delta: A Report on Emerging Threats in Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa, Cross River, Delta, Edo and Rivers State*, Port Harcourt, Adonis & Abbey Publication, 2021, pp.349-417.

¹¹ J. Sofiri, K. Nyiayaana & J. Jack, Insecurity in Rivers State: The Issues, Actors and Solutions. In T. M. Ebiede, C. O. Bassey & J. B. Asuni (Eds.), *Insecurity in the Niger Delta: A Report on Emerging Threats in Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa, Cross River, Delta, Edo and Rivers State*, Port Harcourt, Adonis & Abbey Publication, 2021, pp.349-417.

¹² S. Joab-Peterside, Election and Violence in 2016 Rerun Elections in Rivers State, Nigeria: African Research Review. *An International Multi-Disciplinary Journal, Bahir Dar, Ethiopia*. vol.12, no.4, 2018, p.231

¹³ The Fund for Peace, *Time is of the Essence: Prevailing Electoral Violence in Rivers State*. Nigeria, Partnership Initiative in the Niger Delta, 2018, p.3.

¹⁴ S. Joab-Peterside, Security Challenges in Contemporary Nigeria: Implications for Sustainable Development. *Pan- African Social Science Review in Journal of the Department of Sociology*, University of Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria, 2016, p.34

¹⁵ A. L. Jinadu, *The Oil & Gas Industry & The Niger Delta Crisis: Implications for the Nigerian State*. Paper presented at the Conference on Democracy, Security and Development: Implications for the Oil and Gas Industry in Nigeria. Hotel Presidential, Port Harcourt from 31st July -3rd August, 2006.

¹⁶ G. I. Sheriff, A. Sadeeque & B. Faruq, Resource Based Conflicts and Political Instability in Africa: Major trends, Challenges and Prospects. *International journal of Humanities, Social Sciences and Education*, vol.1, no.9, pp.71- 78

such as tribes, ethnicities, religions, and other interest groups are susceptible to discord as they vie for control over political, economic, and social resources.

According to Mucha, theories of social conflict emphasize the importance of conflict as a foundational element in shaping social conditions and the complexities of social life.¹⁷ Weber perceives class through an economic lens. He posits that classes form within market economies where individuals vie for economic advancement. He defines a class as a cohort of individuals who occupy a comparable position within the market economy and consequently reap similar economic benefits. Consequently, an individual's class status fundamentally reflects their market position. Those who share a congruent class status also share akin life prospects. Their economic standing will directly impact their opportunities to acquire the socially coveted assets.

From a social conflict theorist/Marxist perspective, social class and inequality materialize due to the fact that the social framework is rooted in conflict and inconsistencies. Contradictions in interests and competition over limited resources among factions serve as the bedrock of social society, as per social conflict theory.¹⁸ The upper echelon will endeavor to uphold their privileges, authority, prestige, and social standing - and consequently seek to exert influence over politics, education, and other institutions to safeguard and restrict access to their various forms of capital and resources. Conversely, the lower class - in contrast to the upper class - harbors distinctly divergent interests. They lack particular forms of capital that necessitate protection. Their sole focus lies in acquiring access to the resources and capital possessed by the upper class.¹⁹

For instance, individuals of the lower socioeconomic strata will strive diligently to access the resources available to the upper class by advocating for the democratization and liberalization of health systems, as these forms of capital are perceived as valuable for achieving future success. The various societal institutions, such as the legal and political systems, function as tools of dominance by the ruling class and are utilized to advance its interests. According to Marx, Western society progressed through four primary epochs: primitive communism, ancient society, feudal society, and capitalist society. Primitive communism, exemplified by prehistoric societies, is the sole instance of a classless society. Subsequently, all societies have been characterized by the division into two primary classes: masters and slaves in ancient society, lords and serfs in feudal society, and capitalists and wage laborers in capitalist society.

Weber elaborated on the Marxist ideology regarding class in economic terms. He posited that classes emerge in capitalist economies where individuals engage in competition for financial advancement. According to Weber, a class is comprised of individuals who occupy comparable positions within the market economy, thereby receiving similar economic benefits. Consequently, an individual's class status essentially mirrors their market standing. Those belonging to the same class status also experience comparable opportunities in life. Their economic standing significantly influences their ability to acquire the resources deemed valuable within their society.²⁰ The foundational principles of social conflict theory are grounded in historical materialism, which posits that the social framework and progression of a society are intricately tied to its economic activities. Marx contended that the disparities in wealth distribution have been the catalyst for class distinctions across time, leading to social disparities and ultimately revolutions. Consequently, human interactions in society are essentially centered around the competition for scarce resources, leading to conflict. It is through competition, rather than agreement, that social classes or factions are formed and the overarching societal framework is established. Changes in power dynamics bring about alterations in these social structures.

This theory establishes a connection between security and economic development in Rivers State. One of the contributing factors to the heightened insecurity in Rivers State in recent years is the oil boom in the Niger Delta. This has led to a struggle for resources between the citizens, indigenous people, and the government, resulting in various forms of attacks to gain economic dominance. According to Marx, the unequal distribution of wealth has historically led to class distinctions and social disparities, often culminating in revolutions. Therefore, the wealth distribution in Rivers State has given rise to distinct classes within society: the state, government, multinational corporations, and the local communities.

Henceforth, as per the ideology of Marx, the clash of social classes engenders disparity, ultimately culminating in revolution and fostering instability. In Rivers State, the populace is stratified into the affluent and the impoverished, with the former exerting influence over governmental decisions, thereby exacerbating the rift between the privileged and the underprivileged. These disparities contribute to a myriad of security issues such as abductions, cult activities, theft, and armed robbery. The social conflict theory has effectively elucidated the root causes of the insecurity prevalent from 2000 to 2015, attributing it to political elites and influential figures.

¹⁷ J. Mucha, *Konflikt i społeczeństwo: z problematyki konfliktów społecznych we współczesnych teoriach Zachodnich*. Warszawa: PWN, 1978.

¹⁸ K. Marx & F. Engels, *Manifest der Kommunistischen Partei*. Londen: J.E. Burghard, 1858, p.34.

¹⁹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social_conflict_theory .

²⁰ H. Haralambos, *Sociology: Themes and Perspectives*, Hammersmith, HarperCollins, 1995, p.23.

II. METHODOLOGY

The article utilized a historical research approach to gather data. Historical research involves the collection and analysis of information on past events or concepts to understand their impact on current events and concepts. Both primary and secondary sources were utilized in this investigation. When selecting primary participants for interviews, purposive sampling techniques were employed to identify and interview only the most significant and crucial individuals. Consequently, primary data was gathered through face-to-face interviews, observations, and discussions. The interviews discussions took place in the senatorial district, focusing on economic sites and infrastructures affected by insecurity between 200 and 2015. Secondary data was gathered from various published and unpublished sources, such as historical reports, monographs, academic journals, newspapers, and periodicals, to enrich the paper's theoretical and conceptual framework. Finally, the data were analysed using content analysis.

III. DISCUSSION AND FINDINGS

I) Impact of Insecurity on Economic Development in Rivers State

Before the escalation of insecurity, Rivers State was rapidly emerging as one of the fastest-growing states in Nigeria. However, the impact of insecurity on business operations has been substantial, posing numerous challenges to progress. Persistent security issues lead to disruptions in regular business activities, resulting in increased costs, reduced productivity, and potential business closures. An unstable environment has also led to a decline in foreign direct investment (FDI), making it harder for the region to attract crucial external funding. Rising poverty rates are a direct consequence of business closures and job losses, contributing to an increase in unemployment. The deterioration of infrastructure due to insecurity is hindering the provision of essential services and impeding long-term growth. A decrease in economic activity has negative implications for government revenue, limiting the state's capacity to invest in key industries. To address the objectives of this thesis, the subsequent impacts of insecurity on economic activities will be further explored.

The Banking Sector

The findings elucidate the grave threat that insecurity poses to the banking sector in the state. Ecobank Nigeria Plc., a prominent Commercial Bank, acquired a property in Bori at the well-known polytechnic junction along hospital road in Bori to establish one of their branches. Following the construction of the structure, during a visit by one of their senior regional managers in preparation for the grand opening and commencement of operations, he was abducted and held captive in total seclusion, leading to the bank abandoning their plans to inaugurate what could have been a commercial bank within the Bori metropolis. To this day, the abandoned building at Bori Polytechnic junction still stands as a testament to this unfortunate event. Furthermore, prior to Access Bank's acquisition of Inter-Continental Bank, the latter had established a branch at the main gate of the then Rivers State Polytechnic (now Ken Saro Wiwa Polytechnic, Bori). The bank operated as one of the commercial banks in the Bori Metropolis but faced an armed attack by individuals wielding sophisticated weapons, compelling the bank to vacate its premises and close the branch. In Omoku, numerous commercial banks were operating, yet they chose to depart the area due to frequent incidents of officials being kidnapped. At the time of reporting, only one out of five commercial banks remained operational in the region.²¹ Consequently, the populace experienced difficulties with banking transactions as the sole bank option was consistently overcrowded.

Socioeconomic Development

Based on the study's findings, there have been multiple cases of abductions, ongoing fatalities, destruction of property worth millions of Naira, and various other violent acts in the study region. The origins of these diverse forms of insecurity stem from aggressive resistance to governmental and corporate exploitation. The repercussions of insecurity in the study area involve fostering disunity among community members and diverting developmental resources and efforts towards crisis management. Consequently, this has led to the neglect of development initiatives in the state and the departure of individuals capable of fostering community progress from these communities.²²

²¹ Azubuikwe, V. Insecurity: Four Banks Suspend Operations in ONELGA, Rivers State. Daily Post 2017. Retrieved from <https://dailypost.ng/2017/03/17/insecurity-four-banks-suspend-operations-onelga-rivers-state/>

²² Adekola, G, and Enyiche, C. C. Effects of Insecurity on Community Development Projects in Ogba/Egbema/Ndoni and Ahoada East Local Government Areas of Rivers State, Nigeria. Journal of Education and Practice. Vol. 8 No. 14. 2917. Pp 34-39

Since the onset and proliferation of this threat in the region, there has been a consistent deterioration in the progress of the area under examination. The government and oil corporations are hesitant to allocate resources to the locality. Due to the prevalent societal issue plaguing the region, numerous government and corporate initiatives have been halted, and potential investors have been deterred from the area due to the constant threat of abduction. In Ogbaland, there are numerous forsaken endeavors scattered throughout the area, with some road construction projects left incomplete, subsequently transforming into hazardous zones for the populace and prime locations for kidnappers to carry out attacks.²³ The deterioration of infrastructure due to insecurity impedes the advancement and upkeep of essential infrastructure such as roadways, bridges, and electricity distribution. This not only impacts the daily functions of enterprises but also obstructs the sustained economic expansion and progress of the area.

In Etche, it is known that the area served as a bustling commercial center due to its adjacency to the neighboring Abia State between 1999 and 2011. However, with the advent of democracy, this once tranquil region has transformed into a haven for kidnappers, dissuading any prudent investor from allocating their hard-earned capital in Etche. The surge in criminal activities in Etche, particularly since 1999, is primarily attributed to the incessant clashes between rival cult factions vying for territorial dominance, illicit oil bunkering, abduction for ransom, armed robbery, disputes over land boundaries, speculative real estate dealings, human trafficking, and the recent spike in the gruesome trade of human organs for ritualistic purposes. At present, there is a noticeable absence of any commercial banks in Etche, including Igbo-Etche. Numerous potential business proprietors who might have otherwise considered investing in Igbo-Etche due to its close proximity to Port Harcourt have refrained from extending their ventures into the area. It is worth noting that the journey from Eleme Junction to Igbo-Etche is merely a 10-minute drive, yet the residents are devoid of any signs of progress or development, given the recurrent violence and animosity directed towards business investors.²⁴ In further interrogations at Elibrada, a respondent narrated as follows:

I was on the path to becoming a proficient welder as an apprentice; however, my training was cut short due to the unrest in the community resulting from the ongoing conflict between rival cult factions. Despite my initial reluctance to join, I was coerced into becoming a member of the Green Lander cult out of fear of retaliation from the opposing Ice-Landers. Exploiting our vulnerability, influential politicians lured us with promises of employment opportunities to generate revenue for the Local Government if they were successful in the upcoming election. Subsequently, I yielded to the pressure and joined the cult, only to be deceived by the triumphant politician who failed to fulfill his pledges, leaving us to fend for ourselves. With no prospects or alternatives in sight, I felt compelled to resort to criminal activities such as abduction, armed robbery, and illicit oil refining in order to sustain myself.²⁵

The mentioned report provides concrete evidence of the profound influence of insecurity on businesses. As a result, it supports the argument that insecurity impeded economic activities in Rivers State.

The Oil Industry

Ever since the discovery of crude oil in Nigeria on a large scale, the oil and gas industry has undergone a significant transformation, attracting numerous local and international investors. However, the recent surge in insecurity surrounding the oil and gas sector has emerged as a substantial threat to both investors and the Rivers State government in achieving their revenue targets. A prominent security concern plaguing the oil and gas sector is the abduction of officials, particularly skilled personnel, from various companies. Additionally, the industry grapples with unrest from the youth in host communities, resulting in the destruction of company infrastructure and instances of oil theft. The rise in insecurity has impeded the progress and advancement in various localities within the state. For example, the town of Omoku, which serves as the administrative center of the Ogba, Egbema Ndoni Kingdom, was rapidly evolving into one of the most promising urban hubs in Rivers State. The presence of the Nigerian Agip Oil Company, a subsidiary of the ENI Group in Italy, as well as Total Company in the Egi community, contributed to the transformation of Omoku into a land of opportunities. This led to a consistent supply of electricity, clean water, peaceful cohabitation among locals, an enhanced standard of living, and ultimately, a boost in revenue generation for both local and state authorities.

There was a significant presence of skilled artisans in Omoku due to the consistent power supply, leading many contractors for the International Oil Company to relocate their operational headquarters from Port Harcourt. The local residents were actively involved in various occupations, ranging from vocational training to taking advantage of job opportunities provided by the community. Life was fulfilling and prosperous. However, a shift occurred when the influence of politics disrupted the once peaceful, industrious, and efficient youth

²³ Chibor, M. C. (2022). *An Ethical Response to the Challenge of Kidnapping in Ogba Land, Rivers State, Nigeria*. University of North Carolina, Greensboro, NC, USA.

²⁴ Elekwachi, A. 2023.

²⁵ Chibuike, I. 2023

population, convincing them that the quickest path to success was through political manipulation. Consequently, following political unrest that resulted in increased insecurity, the youths, who had been exploited for political gain and subsequently neglected, became a source of trouble for the oil companies. They resorted to stealing oil to support their illicit activities, as well as carrying out attacks, robberies, and kidnappings of company personnel for ransom.

As a result, Okrika is a co-host to the Port Harcourt Refining Company in Alesa, Eleme. Numerous contracting firms, previously based in Okrika, have now moved their operations to Port Harcourt due to the escalating conflict over the selection of the Amanayabo of Okrika. Consequently, economic activities in this once-thriving coastal region have significantly declined, leading to a mass exodus of residents and businesses. Many marine service companies have relocated to more secure coastal communities to conduct their operations, including the prominent Daewoo Construction, which has had to move its equipment yard from the heart of Okrika in the Abam community to safer environs. This shift has resulted in a loss of revenue for the local government, a disruption of economic activities, and widespread job losses among the indigenous population. As a result, many natives have been forced to flee for safety, becoming refugees in their own land.²⁶

In Harris Town, a source disclosed that individuals plagued by feelings of insecurity (specifically young people), after experiencing a more affluent lifestyle introduced to them by their leader, could no longer tolerate being subordinate to the same leader who had initially taught them the illegal practices of oil theft. Consequently, in an attempt to outdo one another, conflicts arose resulting in the dominant faction expelling rival groups from their control over the oil theft territory. The formidable faction led by the late Soboma George triumphed over their adversaries. Subsequently, the ousted faction regrouped and launched assaults on oil installations, kidnapping individuals they perceived as affluent in order to acquire more funds to purchase weapons. They also engaged in acts of piracy by seizing crews of coastal and ocean-going vessels to generate additional funds for procuring advanced weaponry to retaliate against the rival faction that had seized control of the oil theft sites.²⁷

Small and Large Scale Businesses

The research findings indicate that a sense of uncertainty ultimately resulted in the closure of numerous enterprises within the region. One prevalent economic pursuit in Rivers State was the cultivation and distribution of fish. Individuals would procure dried fish from fishermen and supply them to various establishments such as restaurants, hotels, and private consumers. The trade involved in the buying and selling of fish is inherently sustainable, as the demand for this commodity is constant and universal. Unfortunately, the pervasive issue of insecurity significantly impacted this particular industry. As per Sunebari, the practice of fish farming began to decline shortly after the inception of democracy in 2023.²⁸ Aquaculture, among various industries, flourished until the re-election of the President/Governors in 2003. The increased political awareness resulted in the recruitment of young, talented individuals who were previously involved in fish farming. These youths left their customary occupations after observing their peers effortlessly amassing wealth due to the generosity of their political sponsors. The departure of these young fishermen into the political sphere had a detrimental impact on the fish farming sector, leading to a reduction in the supply of the product to the eager markets. As the electoral campaigns intensified in 2003, the fishermen found themselves unable to partake in fishing activities due to conflicts between rival political factions, viewing each other as opponents striving for the success of their respective candidates. Consequently, there was a shortage of goods available for purchase at the fishing settlements despite high consumer demand. The situation deteriorated as tensions rose among the competing political factions in their quest for political dominance. Many of these young individuals, who were skilled workers before the 2003 election, abandoned their trades to become devoted followers of their political sponsors. This trend continued as these youths refused to go back to their original professions even after the elections ended, enticed by substantial amounts of money bestowed upon them by their political supporters.²⁹ This resulted in a surge in gang activity and a rise in violence in Bori and surrounding communities, prompting the shutdown of businesses due to frequent conflicts between rural gangs triggered by the absence of their political benefactors.

The significant influence of instability was deeply felt by the community members involved in diverse commercial activities within the region throughout the research phase. Most of our respondents voiced their concerns throughout the duration of the investigation. While commenting on the challenges of insecurity on economic activities, a respondent at Okwale in Khana narrated the following:

²⁶ Ngowari, A. 2023.

²⁷ Tamunokoroye, T. 2023.

²⁸ Sunebari, 2023.

²⁹ Sunebari, 2023.

I am an independent entrepreneur engaged in the trade of procuring and distributing dried fish. I have been involved in this industry since the early 1980s. My primary activities involve supplying dried fish, obtained from fishermen, to restaurant proprietors, hotels, and individual consumers. I initiated this enterprise with an initial investment of N100,000.00 (One Hundred Thousand Naira), and over time, it expanded significantly. I now possess multiple fish retail outlets catering to the hospitality sector. Prior to 1999, my business witnessed a surge in clientele, establishing a strong reputation among restaurant operators, homeowners, hotel managers, and residents of my community, Okwale, as well as neighboring areas. Before 1999, my trading of fish yielded substantial profits. For instance, purchasing fish for N50,000.00 (Fifty Thousand Naira) resulted in sales of N80,000.00, generating a profit of N30,000.00 (Thirty Thousand Naira). The fish trade is characterized by a consistent demand, eliminating the necessity for customer solicitation. Profits improved, allowing for prompt payment of wages to employees. The income from my business supported my family of six children, my ninety-nine-year-old parents, and the workers at my Bori-Main Market branch. However, the political landscape shifted after the 2003 presidential and gubernatorial elections, leading to heightened political consciousness. This resulted in the recruitment of young, talented individuals, who transitioned from farming to politics. The departure of these young fishermen from their trade to pursue political affiliations disrupted the fish supply chain, causing shortages in the market. Political tensions prevented fishermen from going out to sea, further exacerbating the scarcity of fish. As political rivalries intensified in 2003, the fish supply dwindled, leading to layoffs at my Bori outlet. The situation worsened as political factions clashed, causing widespread violence. Many previously skilled workers abandoned their trades to serve political interests, perpetuating gang activity and insecurity in Bori and surrounding areas. The closure of my business in Bori was inevitable due to escalating conflicts between rival factions and the disruption of the local economy. This unfortunate turn of events led to the downfall of the business empire that I had painstakingly built over the years.³⁰

The escalation of insecurity trends became more pronounced following the 2003 general elections, as many young people who felt exploited and discarded turned to activities such as cultism, kidnapping, oil pipeline vandalism, theft, and armed robbery. Consequently, business owners were left vulnerable to these individuals, having been forsaken by their political benefactors.³¹ A considerable number of businesses faced challenges and ultimately failed due to insecurity issues. As stated by Woko in an interview in 2023, stated that:

Both of my palm-oil milling facilities were looted, my machinery was stolen, I was abducted and had to pay a ransom, and my palm-oil fruit farms were being unlawfully harvested daily without any repercussions. Attempting to intervene would result in premature demise. This pattern persisted throughout all the communities in Ikwerre without any sign of abating, leading many business investors, whether private individuals or contractors for the former "Risonpalm" now known as "SIAT", to withdraw. To survive in this environment, one had to comply with the demands of the criminal gangs, redirecting revenues that were once paid to local and state governments to recognized cult leaders instead.³²

At Elele, the narratives remain consistent. A palm kernel trader disclosed that business individuals are vulnerable to the machinations of criminal elements. He explained that these individuals, who were previously hired by politicians and accustomed to receiving substantial payments, have now found themselves idle since the politicians have relocated to Abuja. Some of these individuals, armed and emboldened by their previous activities, have resorted to using their weapons for criminal activities, realizing that illicit activities yield quicker profits than palm kernel trading. Consequently, they have transitioned into cultism, posing a significant threat to the business community. Many traders have consequently chosen to relocate to safer areas, as these individuals now dominate the region, engaging in activities such as kidnapping, robbery, pipeline vandalism, and illegal oil refining for immediate financial gain. The predominant economic activity in the region has shifted from palm kernel trading to the illicit refining of petroleum products, which offers a quicker and more lucrative source of income.³³ These are the testimonies of stakeholders who have experienced vulnerabilities in their entrepreneurial pursuits during our investigation.. Poultry farmer at Ndele reiterated that:

I am a poultry farmer, and my birds have been targeted by hostile cultists since 2010. They now view me as their Automatic Teller Machine (ATM), visiting my farms whenever they are hungry to steal birds without resistance. They also demand regular payments from me, which I comply with to sustain my business. I have since relocated to Choba, where I am now engaged in menial jobs to support my family. The community has been overrun by thugs who were previously involved in legitimate businesses. However, due to exposure to

³⁰ Ndeezia, P. S. 2023.

³¹ Woke, A. 2023.

³² Woke, A. 2023.

³³ Alumini, C. A. 2023.

a lavish lifestyle by politicians, they have become reliant on illicit activities as a source of income, turning them into cash cows.³⁴

The aforementioned points serve to illustrate the profound impact of insecurity on economic activities in Rivers State. Consequently, it has led to the shutdown of businesses and the departure of investors, consequently diminishing the revenue generated in the state, both on a large and small scale. Baridoo Supermarket stands out as a prominent establishment that once thrived in the urban center. It was one of the initial supermarkets to emerge in Bori during the late 1970s, prior to the onset of democracy in 1999. This particular supermarket is under the ownership of CEO Chief Baridoo Fonisi, who hails from Bane in the Khana Local Government Area. Employing a staff of over 10 individuals, each receiving a monthly salary as modest as N30,000.00, the supermarket faced a decline due to the fallout of individuals who had previously been productive in their own trades and businesses but chose to align themselves with political figures for personal gain. Following a series of elections from 1999 to 2011, these political affiliates found themselves cut off from their influential connections in Abuja or from positions as Governors or members of the House of Assembly. Consequently, they began targeting perceived entrepreneurs and other individuals they deemed to be of affluent status. The managing director of Baridoo Supermarket in Bori was repeatedly abducted at gunpoint and only released upon the payment of a substantial ransom. Subsequently, the business operations came to a halt as the managing director closed the supermarket and sought refuge overseas, resulting in significant financial strain on the employees, their families, and dependents.³⁵

Internally Generated Revenues (IGRs)

The obstacles presented by insecurity on the internally generated revenue of Rivers State during the period being analyzed are multifaceted. Among these challenges is the relocation of businesses outside the state, leading to tax evasion and a decrease in value-added tax. Insecurity has also resulted in a flawed revenue collection system and a reduction in the income of taxable businesses and taxpayers in Rivers State. Despite these challenges, the study reveals that numerous companies moved from Port Harcourt and Obio-Akpor to other states deemed safer, thereby depriving the state of its internally generated revenue. Below is a list of companies and their address;

Table 4.1: Companies and their addresses that relocated from Rivers State due to insecurity between 2000 and 2015

Company	Address	Date of Relocation
1. First Move Logistics	#122B NTA Choba Road Mgbougba, Port Harcourt.	
2. Peritoneum Global	#Sallation Street, Opp. Holy Rock Church of Christ, Ada George Services Ltd. Port Harcourt	
3. Industries Safety	#152 Aba Road, Port Harcourt beside Platinum Mortgage Bank, Port Harcourt Nigeria	
4. Laser Med SPA	#35 King Perekule Street, New GRA Port Harcourt	
5. Westcot – Gulf Integrated Solutions	#57, Ebitu Ukiwe, Jabi Port Harcourt	
6. Abili Integrated Services George Ltd. Road, Port Harcourt	#5 ADC close, by Omega Children’s Clinic, off Ada	
7. Multi-Digital Nigeria Ltd.	#20 Mbonu Street, D/line Port Harcourt	
8. Skuline ICT Logistics Consult Ltd	#11 Ede Street, Ogbunabali, Port Harcourt	
9. Aubuin Oil Services	#270 Trans Amadi Industrial Layout, Port Harcourt	

³⁴ John, U. 2023.

³⁵ Piamene, A. 2023.

10. Vigeo Energy Ltd Port Harcourt #1 School Road, Trans Amadi Industrial Layout,
11. Fayples Nigeria Ltd Road, Trans Amadi Industrial Layout, Port Harcourt #49B School Road, junction, Azuabie, off Peter Odili
12. Micheline & Dunlop Nigeria Ltd #Plot 129-132, Trans Amadi Industrial Layout
- 13 Albento Micheletti Ltd Harcourt Npkpogu Road, Trans Amadi Industrial Layout, Port
- 14 Tecon Oil Services Ltd Harcourt #10 Tecon Road, Trans Amadi Industrial Layout, Port
- 15 Panalpina Logistics Service Harcourt #Plot 463/464 Trans Amadi Industrial Layout, Port
- 16 Dredging International Ltd Borokiri, Port Harcourt #1 Kolokuma Street, Old Port Harcourt Township,
- 17 Sirpi – Alusteel Construction #Plot C Nkpogu Road, Trans Amadi Industrial Layout, Port Harcourt
18. Alitun Hotenls & Catering Services Ltd #411 Trans Amadi Industrial Layout, Port Harcourt
- 19 First Aluminum Nigeria Plc Elf Road, Trans Amadi Industrial Layout, Port Harcourt
- 20 Tranter International Ltd Port Harcourt Plot 42 Birabi Street, GRA, Opposite Hotel Presidential,
21. Anadrill Schlumberger Nigeria Ltd Plot 161 Trans Amadi Industrial Layout, Port Harcourt
- 22 Schlumberger Wireless Nigeria Ltd Plot 159-165 Trans Amadi Industrial Layout, Port Harcourt
- 23 Zenith Containers Company Ltd Plot 136 Trans Amadi Industrial Layout, Port Harcourt
- 24 Macoba Nigeria Ltd #3 Macoba Road, off Reclamation Road, Port Harcourt
- 25 Snig Nigeria Ltd Port Harcourt #56 Onumini Ahia, Oginigba, Trans Amadi Industrial Layout,
- 26 Alcon Nigeria Ltd #Plot 17 Trans Amadi Industrial Layout, Port Harcourt
- 27 Sun Flower Manufacture Coy. #Plot 70 Trans Amadi Industrial Layout Port Harcourt
- 28 Femina Hygienical Products Nigeria Ltd #Plot 28 Trans Amadi Industrial Layout, Port Harcourt
- 29 Tobinso Nigeria Ltd #242 Abuloma Road, Port Harcourt
- 30 Crocodile Matchets Nigeria Harcourt #Plot 66 EIF Road, Trans Amadi Industrial Layout, Port Ltd
- 31 Agriculture & Agro – Allied Plot 30 Trans Amadi Industrial Layout, Port Harcourt

Nigeria Ltd

32	Gulf Agency & Shipping	#193 Woji Road, GRA Phase 2, Port Harcourt
33	BJ Services Nigeria Ltd	#Plot 470 Trans Amadi Industrial Layout, Port Harcourt
34	Remm Oil Services Ltd	# Plot 57 Trans Amadi Industrial Layout, Port Harcourt
35	G. Cappa Nigeria Ltd Port Harcourt	Ordinance Junction, Trans Amadi Industrial Layout,
36	Okmas Nig. Ltd Port Harcourt	#90 East-West Road, Rumuokoro –Rumuoduara, Expressway,
37	Cooper Cameron Corporation Nig. Ltd	#Plot 45 Trans Amadi Industrial Layout, Port Harcourt
38	Siemens Nig. Ltd Port Harcourt	#Plot 129 – 131 Trans Amadi Industrial Layout,
39	Diesser Rand Corporations Nig. Ltd	#Km 12 Port Harcourt – Aba Expressway
West African Oilfield Service (WAOS)	#Plot 72/73 Trans Amadi Industrial Layout, Port Harcourt	
40	West African Offshore	#28 Omerdu Street, GRA Phase 1, Port Harcourt
41	Eastern Enamelware Factory Ltd	# Plot 31 Trans Amadi Industrial Layout, Port Harcourt
42	Ponti – Celli Nig. Ltd Port Harcourt	#Plot 100 Rivoc Road, Trans Amadi Industrial Layout,
43	Almarine Nig. Ltd	#Plot 28 Kolokuma Street, Borokiri Port Harcourt
44	Motter Cat Nig. Ltd	#Plot 48 Trans Amadi Industrial Layout, Port Harcourt
45	Chevron Nigeria Ltd	#Plot 46 Trans Amadi Industrial Layout, Port Harcourt
46	AMNI International	#1 St. Thomas Close, Nkpogu Road, Port Harcourt
47	Development Petroleum	Off Trans Amadi Industrial Layout, Port Harcourt

Source: Company Directory in Port Harcourt. Retrieved from: <https://www.businesslist.com.ng>> cities <https://www.directory.org.ng>>lga-Rivers-State

In the midst of this prevailing insecurity that has plagued the State from 2000 to 2015, the State capital has witnessed a surge in rural-urban migration as a result of these insecurities. There has been a proliferation of arms, with residents being confronted by frequent incidents of robbery, attacks, kidnappings, killings, and a loss of revenue. The table below displays the estimated oil revenue losses attributed to the insecurity.

Table 4.2: Estimated Oil Loss Owing to Insecurity

s/no	Year	Oil production (BPD)	Estimated loss (BPD)
1	2000	2,440,000	200,000 per day
2	2001	2,350,000	260,000
3	2002	2,208,000	259,000
4	2003	2,200,000	251,000
5	2004	2,219,000	260,000
6	2005	2,200,000	260,000
7	2006	252,000	270,000
8	2007	252,000	270,000

9	2008	2,367,000	273,000
10	2009	2,455,000	271,000
11	2010	2,550,000	182,000
12	2011	2,520,000	236,000
13	2012	2,367,000	176,000
14	2013	2,300,000	200,000
15	2014	2,200,000	420,000
16	2015	2,000,000	400,000

Source: NNPC Statistical Bulletin, 2015

There was also a significant loss of revenue owing to attacks on oil pipelines in the state. See table below.

Table 4.3: Attacks on Oil Pipelines and Installations by Militant Groups

s/n	Year	Cases of attacks	Cases of total Vandalization
1	1999-2002	Not available	2,374
2	2003-2009	746	14,403
3	2010	258	5,518
4	2011	54	4,468
5	2012	24	3,708
6	2013	20	3,571
7	2014	18	3,732
8	2015	23	3,700

Source: Department of Petroleum Resources (DPR), Pipeline and Product Marketing (PPMC) Retrieved from: <https://www.channelstv.com/tag/national-association-of-energy-> correspondents

In a bid to stem down the spate 7 attacks, the oil companies awarded local contracts to the leaders of these militant groups which include:

- i. General Government Tompolo Ekpemupolo – USD22, 000,000) for oil pipeline security contracts in 2015.
- ii. Alhaji Asari Dokubo (USD 9,000,000)
- iii. ‘General’ Ateke Tom (USD 3,000,000)
- iv. ‘General’ Ebikabowei ‘Boyloaf’ Victor Ben (USD 3,000,000) (Adibe, 2016)

In 2015, the International Maritime Bureau (IMB) reported that the majority of attempted attacks on coastal and ocean-going vessels occurred in the coastal Delta and Rivers States. Furthermore, it is estimated that a significant portion, over 85%, of Nigeria's foreign exchange earnings are derived from crude oil exported through the Gulf of Guinea, a crucial international oil transportation route.

Following a thorough analysis, the paper presents the key findings related to its objectives as follows:

1. Gross mismanagement of the amnesty program by the administration.
2. Dominance of non-indigenous individuals in the management of most multinational corporations in Rivers State, resulting in limited employment opportunities for natives.
3. Neglect by the Federal Government of projects in Rivers State, despite the substantial revenue generated from the state's oil and gas resources.
4. Insecurity negatively impacted businesses of all sizes in Rivers State during the study period, leading to the closure of numerous small and medium enterprises, discouragement of business investors, departure of multinational corporations, and increased employer redundancy.
5. Insecurity posed challenges to internally generated revenue in Rivers State within the study timeframe, compelling companies to operate outside the state, promoting tax evasion and reduced value-added tax, causing flaws in revenue collection mechanisms, and diminishing the income of taxable businesses and taxpayers in the state.
6. Security and economic progress in Rivers State can be advanced through effective and data-driven strategies such as: providing employment and de-radicalization training for youth, strengthening security measures and technological capabilities of security agencies, investing in agricultural technology and industrialization, facilitating access to loans and grants for small and medium-sized enterprises and entrepreneurs, organizing agricultural festivals to promote export and tourism, bolstering community policing and disarmament efforts, and addressing environmental pollution in the land, sea, and air of Rivers State.

IV. CONCLUDING REMARKS

The problem of insecurity in Rivers State is a multifaceted one, originating from a myriad of factors across the political, economic, social, and cultural domains. These factors interact in a manner that results in the emergence and perpetuation of violent conflicts within the state. These conflicts can vary in magnitude, arising among distinct groups, communities, or organizations, and can be triggered by a variety of issues such as ethnic tensions, political disputes, or economic inequalities. Moreover, conflicts may stem from disparities in values, beliefs, and attitudes towards different issues.

The manifestations of insecurity in Rivers State are varied and profound. They encompass political upheaval, maritime piracy, oil theft, artisanal refining, cultism, and criminal activities like abduction, armed robbery, arms, and drug trafficking. Furthermore, armed conflicts within and between communities often stem from disagreements over chieftaincy positions and competition for environmental resources. These diverse forms of insecurity have had a detrimental impact on the economic advancement of Rivers State, impeding growth and stability within the region.

Based on the aforementioned findings, the paper proposes the following recommendations:

1. The future disarmament of cultists and militants should be based on a comprehensive framework that includes amnesty, employment opportunities, and reintegration programs. Law enforcement approaches should not be based on biased information about the actual perpetrators.
2. Socio-economic empowerment plays a critical role as the research indicates that high levels of insecurity are linked to widespread youth unemployment and a lack of socio-economic advancement. Therefore, there is an urgent need to advocate for community development projects and ensure the availability of high-quality petroleum products, particularly in coastal areas.
3. The problem arises from the harmful business and environmental practices of major oil companies in the region. Therefore, it is imperative for these corporations to promptly address oil spills, stop gas flaring, promote conservation measures, and participate in environmental restoration projects within affected communities.
4. The companies should initiate the distribution of specific reparations to the communities that have been severely impacted by the environmental devastation resulting from oil exploration and exploitation.

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