



Public sector security governance: A must for societal safety of Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

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This study aims to investigate how public sector security governance defects facilitate and aggravate insecurity in the Akpabuyo Local Government Area, Nigeria. This was achieved by the development of two research questions and goals which then evolved into two hypotheses that were put to the test in a null form. Methodologically, a cross-sectional survey research design was adopted for the study. Sources of data collection were both primary and secondary. The instruments for data collection were questionnaire and key informant guide. The findings revealed that covert security agency operations and the corrupt behavior of civil servants and politicians play a significant role in amplifying insecurity. The study concludes with practical recommendations, including establishing specialized government court for the expedited trial and punishment of individuals found guilty of sabotaging government efforts in securing its citizens with sentences ranging from 10 to 30 years of imprisonment. Additionally, it is suggested that a collaborative task force comprising personnel from the military, police, state security service (SSS), immigration and customs service be formed and trained specifically in intelligence gathering, sharing, and management. Furthermore, it is proposed that further research be conducted on this topic with a broader focus on public sector security governance.

Contribution/Originality: Security is essential for any sector to function optimally. This study acknowledges previous research on the public sector's role in delivering social services but explores how security can ensure a corruption-free, efficient system. It assesses policies and laws that eliminate administrative malfeasance in Nigeria's public sector.

1. INTRODUCTION

Security-related matters, particularly those concerning the safeguarding of lives and property are of paramount importance to every nation worldwide. The well-being of any entity relies on an inclusive system of governance that prioritizes accountability and transparency. This responsibility extends not only to the government's security agencies but also to civil servants, politicians and private citizens. On a global scale, public sector security governance encompasses the framework and practices established by governments to ensure the safety and security

of their citizens and nations. This encapsulates various facets, including national defense and intelligence agencies. It necessitates collaboration and cooperation among nations to collectively address common security challenges like terrorism, kidnapping and organized crime. International organizations such as the United Nations (UN) and Interpol play pivotal roles in facilitating this global governance. For instance, the UN advances global security through its security council which confronts threats to international peace and security. Regionally, entities like the European Union (EU), African Union (AU), and Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) have established their security architectures and strategies to address specific security concerns unique to their respective regions. These regional perspectives in line with [Sidney's \(2021\)](#) work in harmony to bolster security, foster stability and safeguard public interests on both global and regional scales. For instance, Nigeria has grappled with a persistent security crisis over the past few decades that has significantly hampered genuine efforts to promote socio-economic development. This security hiatus can be attributed to governmental institutions' policy inertia ([Sunday, 2023](#)).

According to [Celestine \(2019\)](#) the alarming insecurity crisis in recent times stems from heightened corruption and the failure of the governance system to effectively address this deadly threat to the lives and property of its citizens. Security experts widely attribute this situation to the bankruptcy of the security governance sector, a consequence of the actions and inactions of the Nigerian federal government in impartially handling the myriad security concerns ([Banjo, 2019](#)). According to [Oluwole \(2021\)](#) the government's actions continued to exacerbate insecurity including a combination of mutually reinforcing factors such as porous Nigerian borders, inadequately monitored by the government, arms and weapons trafficking, poor governance, weak institutional capacity within the police, extreme poverty, high unemployment rates and citizens' estrangement from the government. The issue of insecurity in Nigeria has prompted claims that it is a deliberate problem created by both internal and external factors. Internally, complicity within the security apparatus has greatly exacerbated the severe and unimaginable atrocities experienced by Nigerians. An illustrative instance is when former Nigerian President Goodluck Jonathan openly acknowledged the presence of moles and apologists for Boko Haram terrorists within his cabinet. He pointed out that some politicians were using insecurity to tarnish the reputation of the government in power without considering the adverse consequences on the economy, employment, food production, and human rights among other critical areas ([Samuel, 2022](#)).

Another former Nigerian president Muhammadu Buhari in 2012 stated that the fight against the Boko Haram terrorist group was perceived as a conflict between Muslims and the predominantly Muslim northern region of Nigeria. It is worth noting that former president Buhari was associated with an organization (Myetti Allah) alleged to have contributed to some of the security challenges faced by the country ([Tayo, 2022](#)). Numerous instances exist where high-ranking personnel within the military and the police force have been observed supplying arms, provisions and security resources to these armed extremist groups. According to [Premium \(2022\)](#) two terrorists who were captured by the Nigerian military in Kaduna state named Alhaji Abubakar as their funder and claimed to have the support of influential politicians and government military officers. Externally, the orchestration of insecurity is attributed to non-state actors. These individuals hold prominent positions within Nigeria though not directly involved in the day-to-day governance. According to [Ayuk, Chimaobi, Omang, and Nwankwo \(2020\)](#) and [Ayuk et al. \(2023\)](#) they are considered "untouchable" and deemed to be "above the law." This group includes traditional chiefs and rulers as well as religious leaders particularly imams who openly rally support and promote the activities of these perpetrators of insecurity.

According to [Celestine \(2019\)](#) Nigeria's current worldwide security assessment is a "Hobbesian horror," with widespread anarchy and reckless, destruction of property and lives in multiple regions of the country. A survey conducted by Amnesty International in 2015 revealed a death toll of 18,143 in 17 states of Nigeria while the United States Council on Foreign Relations reported an estimated 54,595 unwarranted and preventable deaths between 2011 and 2018 due to insurgent activities. Such a situation is deemed unacceptable in the 21st century where the challenges of insecurity can be effectively addressed through the use of advanced technological tools and skilled

human personnel. Furthermore, [Enyia et al. \(2022\)](#) argues that the prevalence of insecurity should not lead to complacency or indifference nor should it be rationalized as an insurmountable issue. They contend further that if insecurity remains unchecked, its consequences will erode the progress made in the economy, education, health and human capital development.

Public sector governance remains a pivotal tool for addressing the security requirements of any society because it involves individuals within the government who possess the authority to proactively identify and address threats in accordance with the laws of the land by their roles and positions. Unfortunately, in the case of Nigeria, those entrusted with these responsibilities often engage in collaboration and rampant corruption. However, these people's dishonest behaviour is largely responsible for Nigeria's security issues. [Christopher \(2019\)](#) maintained that it is imperative to shift from a culture of corruption and intervention to one focused on prevention, thereby validating the adage that "prevention is better than cure."

1.1. The Concern

The systemic failure caused by a leadership crisis that has affected every area of the Nigerian government is the present problem. This crisis has aggravated insecurity in the country to an unprecedented level. Professor Ango Abdullahi's remarks which [Celestine \(2019\)](#) state were expressed elegantly. Abdullahi characterized the situation as a "cataclysmic collapse of security and sanguinary... a colossal threat to the lives and property of Nigerians. "The role of leadership or the lack thereof has consistently hindered Nigeria's socio-economic and security progress. Major Kaduna Nzeogwu in his broadcast during the January 1966 coup stated: "Our enemies are the political profiteers, cheats in high and low places who seek bribes and demand ten percent. They are those who aim to keep the country permanently divided so they can remain in office as ministers and very important persons (VIPs) of waste. Tribalists and nepotists also pose a continued security risk."

The leadership deficit in Nigeria is at the center of various malpractices and security challenges currently plaguing the nation. This issue is closely linked to the flawed and corrupt recruitment processes within government institutions. For instance, it has been shown that Isa Pantami, a minister in the cabinet of former President Muhammadu Buhari openly supported the terrorist organization Boko Haram.

Furthermore, many anonymous supporters declare that public sector governance, whether directly or indirectly contributes significantly to Nigeria's serious insecurity issues ([Nduka, 2021](#)). Security agencies have also come under scrutiny beyond the direct involvement of politicians like the aforementioned minister. [Tunji \(2021\)](#) in his work (Driving Governance Process in Nigeria: Intelligent Policymaking for the 21st century) quoted, Uhumivuangho and Alufero who unapologetically described the Nigerian police force as a collection of 1934's motley crowd of incompetent, corrupt uniformed men and women contributing to crimes such as mass killings, rape, extrajudicial killings, kidnappings, and more against Nigerian citizens. Instances have even emerged in Kaduna state where a senior police officer, an Assistant Commissioner of Police was apprehended while transporting weapons and food items to terrorists and bandits in their hideouts.

Similarly, the persistent problems of inadequate equipment and corruption in the highest levels of the military, the Secret Service Directorate, the Directorate of Intelligence, the Immigration Service, the Customs Service and the Civil Defense Corps Intelligence are frequently cited as the cause for the high level of insecurity, apart from the compromise made by the police and military. The challenges of security seem not to decrease in Nigeria demonstrating that there is a strong relationship that exists in the exacerbation and systemic inadequacies between and among sectors governance as represented in the military, police and the civil servants. The numerous attempts by the government to address this risk of insecurity have been severely constrained by succeeding administrations.

For example, the former chief security adviser to the ex-president of Nigeria in 2014 Colonel Sambu Dasuki corruptly diverted the sum of 23.3 billion in various currencies to different bank accounts under the pretense of using the funds for the procurement of security equipment. Coupled with the weak institutions, lack of

accountability and the opaque nature of government business is conducted, it only adds to the incensed insecurity in Nigeria.

1.2. Study Location

The research was conducted in Akpabuyo Local Government Area, located in the Southern Senatorial District of Cross River State, Nigeria. Established on August 27, 1991, Akpabuyo has an estimated population of 360,000 residents, with its administrative headquarters in Ikot Nakanda. The area comprises ten council wards: Idundu/Anyananse, Atimbo East, Atimbo West, Ikot Edem Odo, Eneyo, Ikang North, Ikang South, Ikat Nakanda, Ikang Central, and Ikot Eyo.

The major ethnic groups inhabiting this area are the Quas, Efiks, and Efuts with the primary languages spoken being Efik and English. Despite these distinct groups, they share a common cultural and ancestral heritage. The majority of the population in Akpabuyo is engaged in farming and fishing, and the region can of boasts abundant mineral resources such as petroleum, gold, limestone, sand and salt deposits. Geographically, Akpabuyo Local Government Area falls within latitude 40 5' and 50 40' and longitude 80 25' East. It is situated within the southern Nigerian vegetation belt and shares its coastline with the Atlantic Ocean, bordering the Bakassi peninsular to the east and the Republic of Cameroon to the west. However, Akpabuyo faces challenges with essential infrastructure such as electricity, poorly maintained roads for transporting agricultural products to urban markets, lack of healthcare facilities, and limited access to clean drinking water despite its natural wealth and proximity to the state capital. According to former council chairman Mr. Saviour Nyong, these deficiencies contribute to the high crime rate in the area.

Moreover, the transfer of the Bakassi Peninsula to Cameroon and the loss of seventy-six oil wells to the neighboring state of Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria have heightened the challenges faced by Akpabuyo. This displacement resulted in Bakassians becoming homeless refugees who immigrated to selected communities within the study area, leading to social disorganization and a significant increase in crime. A report by Celestine (2019) highlights how the actions of politicians, civil servants and security personnel have contributed to the worsening insecurity in the region. The complicity of the police, military, customs and immigration services personnel in aiding criminals coupled with the failure of politicians and civil servants to provide necessary infrastructure and services have further inflamed the security issues in Akpabuyo (Kekerete Tripod.com.Akpabuyo Local Government Area) accessed 10-2-230.

1.3. Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this study was to examine how the inadequacies of public sector governance have influenced insecurity in Nigeria. Specifically, the study seeks to

1. Investigate the extent to which activities of security agencies contribute to insecurity.
2. Evaluate how corruption between politicians and civil servants has led to insecurity exacerbation.

1.4. Research Hypotheses Development

Public sector governance is a multifaceted concept crucial for the proper functioning of governments worldwide in ensuring transparency, accountability and citizen participation to address challenges like insecurity vis-a-vis civil servants and politicians malfeasances that may tend to diminish the safety of lives and property (Oatley, 2022). Furthermore, identifying and increasing investment in security training as maintained by Nwozor, Olanrewaju, and Ake (2019) tend to curb to a greater degree security lapses that would precipitate criminality. Studies by Egharevba and Ovenseri-Ogbomo (2018); Abdullahi (2019); Uzuegbu (2019) and Chinnah (2020) have shown that these correlates are all interrelated and can significantly impact worsening security if not properly articulated and handled. Conversely, a proper and well mapped out template would guarantee a safe public sector

that will manifest stability, public safety and order for public good and societal well-being. Impeccably, a nation is given appraisal first and foremost by its ability to identify both geographical and civil space and this task falls squarely on the security agencies with collaboration from civil servants and politicians. This suggests that if security agencies had paraphernalia that represents the conscience of the nation and acted accordingly insecurity would have been reduced by 85% (Ojo & Ayo, 2023).

According to Nwozor et al. (2019) Nigeria is a country grappling with various forms of insecurity; the dynamics among the key factors such as civil servants, politicians and security agencies must be interrogated. Precisely, civil servants as integral player in policies implementation and governance processes have a duty to directly or indirectly impact the security situation by diligently executing task that do not endangering to the well-being and welfare of the society. Maes, Jones, Toledano, and Milligan (2020) acknowledged the input of politicians in area of maintaining security or otherwise abating it. Politicians have the power to establish policies, allocate resources and make decisions that affect governance. If they do not exercise caution, their actions can significantly worsen instability. Nwozor et al. (2019) in his submission argued that police and other security agencies failures informed by incompetent, and inability to coordinate security intricacies has skyrocketed negatively safety of persons and institutions of a nation. The relationships between civil servants, politicians and security agencies demanded interactions and collaborations to mitigate insecurity. Johnson, Rubery, and Grimshaw (2021) warned advisedly that political interests, corruption and power dynamics can complicate security situation in Nigeria. Consequently, this research focuses on investigating the operations of the security agencies, civil servants and politicians actions as a potential cause of insecurity within the public sector. Thus, the hypotheses are formulated accordingly.

1.5. Hypothesis One

Alternative hypothesis (H₁): There is a significant relationship between security agencies operations and insecurity in public sector governance.

Null hypothesis (H₂): There is no significant relationship between security agencies operations and insecurity as public sector governance.

1.6. Hypothesis Two

Alternative hypothesis (H₁): There is a significant relationship between politicians, civil servants corruption and insecurity.

Null hypothesis (H₂): There is no significant relationship between politicians, civil servants corruption and insecurity.

1.7. Clarification of Concepts

Public sector: This is the part of the economy that comprises all units of government and controls businesses, programs, projects and ventures. Specifically, justice, healthcare, the military, public transportation, and law enforcement are merely some of its elements. According to Sidney (2021) it is designed to serve special function, intended to be of service to the generality of the population. It could also be known as the state sector which forms part of the business world that is concerned with goods and services that are intended to benefit the general public. These agencies do not make or are aimed at making profits and are funded by the tax payers and fees not by private investment.

Sector governance: This could also be referred to as public sector governance and represent a combination of processes and methods that a board implements, manages and monitors the activities of the organization to achieving its goals. According to the study, it is governance and basically a means by which government goals are determined and are accomplished. This is done by ensuring that appropriate behaviour establishes credibility.

Sector security: This is broadly a term used to describe the structures, institutions and personnel of competent and effective security personnel responsible for the management, implementing and providing security details for

the protection of the country. The Geneva center for sector governance 2022 report sees the security sectors which protect society from crime, disorder and violence including the armed forces and civil staff, police, intelligence services, educational and training establishments.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

This work shall be reviewed on the following sub-themes:

2.1. Security Agencies and Insecurity in Nigeria

A nation's identity and strength are primarily determined by its ability to safeguard and maintain its geographical space, a task that falls to the military. According to the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (as amended), section 217 (1 a-d) outlines the responsibilities of the armed forces which include

- i. Defending Nigeria from external aggression.
- ii. Maintaining territorial integrity and securing its borders on land, sea, or air.
- iii. Suppressing insurrection and assisting civil authorities in restoring order when requested by the president, subject to conditions prescribed by the National Assembly.
- iv. Performing additional functions as determined by the National Assembly.

The police depend on the community for essential information to handle safety issues even though they represent state authority and are crucial to socialization, internal security, and criminal control. There is a symbiotic relationship between the police and the community in maintaining security. Police duties in Nigeria include crime prevention and detection, protecting lives and property, preserving law and order, enforcing laws and regulations, and performing military responsibilities in cooperation with the Nigerian armed forces. The police focus on maintaining internal peace and law enforcement while the military defends the country from external threats and restores order in cases of insurrection (Cohn, Farrington, & Skinner, 2023).

Vulnerability would have been 90% reduced if these responsibilities and roles had been followed and executed carefully. Employees of security services, particularly the police have been criticized for being the main culprits in helping and abetting crimes that are contrary to the expectations as indicated in the tasks mentioned above. Nigeria has become a nation in terror even when the country is not in a state of civil war, yet Nigerians are living under daily threat, anxiety and fear, represent a framework that is roundly challenged (Aja, 2019). Fundamentally, security is measured by the extent to which a state creates and maintains law, order and the development process to guarantee freedom from threat and fear. The current Nigerian security architecture is plagued by numerous problems, including a shortage of manpower, inadequate working tools, absence of technological devices, poor welfare for personnel, and a lack of training. These issues have significantly contributed to the prevailing state of insecurity. For instance, the key players in the security sector in Nigeria are as follows:

- The Nigerian Armed Forces.
- Department of State Service (DSS).
- Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA).
- National Intelligence Agency (NIA).
- Nigeria Security and Civil Defense Corpse (NSCDC).
- Nigeria Customs Service (NCS).
- National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA).
- National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control (NAFDAC).
- Nigerian Correctional Service (NCS).
- Nigeria Immigration Service (NIS).
- Federal Road Safety Corps (FRSC).
- Nigeria Fire Service (NFS).
- Economic and Financial Crime Commission (EFCC).

- Federal Fiscal Responsibility Commission (FFRC).
- Independent Corrupt practices and other related offences (ICPC).
- National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA).

One would have expected that security challenges should be minimal, and not as the front-burner of social polemic (Aja, 2019; Enyia et al., 2022).

The presence or absence of security remains a critical concern because security profoundly influences the level of growth and development within any society. Indeed, security is an indispensable prerequisite for development, emphasizing the critical role of proactive, creative, skilled and dedicated service personnel and officers in ensuring the safety of individuals and society as a whole. Notably, some security experts in Nigeria, including figures like Sani Kukasheka, Kabiru Adamu and Barr. Bulama Bukarti have openly accused security agencies of aiding terrorists, criminals and bandits in carrying out heinous and audacious acts with impunity (Okonu, Anyoko-Shaba, Ogbuka, & Ulu, 2021). This assertion finds corroboration in the Network of Police Reform in Nigeria (NOPRIN) as cited in Celestine (2019) which characterized police stations in the country as "torture chambers" and lamented that "the police are more likely to commit crimes than prevent them. The situation prompted by Celestine (2019) to cite an editorial in The Guardian on August 3, 2017 which reflected the prevailing sentiment in Nigeria.

Currently, Nigerians have limited trust in their security forces leading many communities to establish their informal security bodies, similar to community policing. These local groups often prove more effective in combating crime than the regular police due to their familiarity with the area and its residents. This raises questions about why the Nigerian police have struggled to address organized crime and violence on the nation's highways and when this brutality will end. When will the Nigerian police effectively address and control the situation?

Instances abound in Nigeria where both policemen and military officers have been discovered leading criminal gangs in bank robberies, supermarket heists and cattle rustling. Some have been apprehended in kidnapping cases with the intent of demanding ransom money. Many others have become deeply involved in child trafficking, rape, and drug abuse and trafficking. Regrettably, they have transitioned from being protectors to agents of anarchy, intimidation, fear and security threats to the very people they are meant to safeguard.

According to USIP (2023) the rise in insecurity and criminality in Nigeria is partly attributed to military elites and powerful individuals or groups who wield disproportionate political power, wealth or influence over policy decisions and their implementation. These actors are often positioned to block policies or institutional changes that threaten their interests, creating opportunities for criminals to evade justice due to the complicity frequently displayed by security forces. They cited some factors as ethnic compromise, undue emphasis on technicalities in applying the law and the fear of criminals all combine to enthrone insecurity. Furthermore, he concluded that the incidences of unimaginable insecurity in Nigeria are result of the police and the general inefficiency replete in the security infrastructure, lack of intelligent recognition and exploitation of loopholes in the system. The alleged complicity by security was corroborated by Udora Orizu, a journalist, who reported that a member of the House of Representative at plenary passed a vote of no confidence on security agencies accusing them of ignoring distress calls and aiding terrorists to attack innocent citizens. He reported a series of attacks that have taken place without the criminals being apprehended to include terrorist attacks on Kaduna International Airport on March 25, 2022; the armed men occupied the runway, hijacked the airports flight system and murdered some staff of the Nigerian Airspace Management Agency. Two days later, terrorists attacked a train carrying hundreds of passengers, killing some and kidnapping others. A week later, a police station was attacked in the Ogbaru local government area of Anambra state killing 4 police officers and razing down the station. Several of these attacks go on almost on a daily basis without culprits being accosted and brought to justice. It is expedient to prioritize security through strategic high-level planning that involves stopping activities that are potential security albatross before they occur based on what insecurity portends to a country's socio-economic and political development. According to Ayuk et al. (2020) the government should vociferously invest in its security outfits through training and retraining, acquiring modern

security gadgets, re-enforcing intelligence gathering and sharing, introducing community policing, improving the welfare of the security and intelligence community.

2.2. Politicians, Civil Servants, and the Dual Predicament of Insecurity in Nigeria

The relentless pursuit of power to govern and manage a country's socio-economic resources has led many individuals down paths marked by malevolent and criminal behaviour. In particular, politicians who often wear the dual hats of politicians and civil servants have been characterized by Adam (2019) as individuals primarily interested in holding power, rather than governing with efficiency, accountability, transparency and participatory governance under the rule of law. With such a mindset, any form of misconduct is tacitly endorsed, including actions or behaviours that undermine the safety of lives and property. For instance, a Vanguard editorial dated December 29, 2020, reported that a coalition of 92 civil society organizations, led by the Centre for Credible Leadership and Citizens Awareness, attributed the current security challenges facing Nigeria to politicians and "high-ranking civil or public servants." Specifically, the group claimed that Nigerian politicians and privileged top civil servants were providing funding to dreaded groups such as Boko Haram, Niger Delta militants, kidnappers, and bandits. Consequently, when these attacks occur, these politicians and their associates often remain unscathed. Meanwhile, dishonest and corrupt civil servants, particularly those occupying top positions often focus on trivial matters rather than directing their efforts and expertise toward result-oriented policies that could generate employment opportunities for the youth and foster peace, security and prosperity in the country.

Some scholars passionately argued that Nigeria's economic, social, and political turmoil is largely the result of the actions of politicians, especially those who have embezzled the nation's resources (Ayuk et al., 2023). Olawumi (2023) asserts that the political process in Nigeria exemplifies the absence of requisite national spirit by political leaders, gives peculiarity to human values and these idiosyncrasies inflame insecurity, violence, underdevelopment, corruption, and poverty in the nation. He explains that collective insecurity erodes state protection and poses threats to infrastructure, placing the responsibility on political leaders to alter the perception of collective threats and unite society against criminality. Politicians and top civil servants have sadly become agents of crime and insecurity, pursuing their selfish interests at the expense of the nation's well-being despite being strategically positioned to drive change, particularly in developing African countries.

According to Amana, Aigbedion, and Zubair (2020) Nigeria faces numerous challenges with the ongoing battles against insecurity and corruption intricately linked to the actions of civil servants and politicians. Traditionally, a civil servant is a career bureaucrat selected on merit with a tenure that transcends changes in state or federal government leadership. They are entrusted with the responsibility of impartially implementing policies and laws to positively impact citizens' daily lives, particularly in crucial areas such as healthcare, education and housing. However, regrettably, some civil servants have deviated from their intended roles and become agents of terror and disarray. It's important to acknowledge that civil servants may find themselves caught in extenuating circumstances that contribute to their seeming involvement or catalytic role in insecurity. Civil servants are fundamentally different from politicians who often employ manipulative and dubious tactics for personal advancement within an organization. Instead, civil service includes some of the brightest minds who, if provided with the right tools and conditions, could achieve remarkable results. Unfortunately, the pervasive economic misery perpetuated by systemic corruption has hindered significant positive change within the civil service ranks. This is not to excuse or justify actions that are injurious and detrimental to Nigeria's security as is currently being experienced. Enyia et al. (2022) argue that one cannot readily guarantee the integrity and rectitude of every civil servant in the discharge of their duties. Amana et al. (2020) lament that values such as integrity, honesty, dedication, commitment, service and contentment have become increasingly rare virtues. Consequently, it is not surprising that some civil servants may be willing to compromise official security secrets for a paltry sum of money, potentially placing the nation's security at risk.

3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study employs Talcott Parsons' taxonomy framework to elucidate the functional prerequisites of the social system with a particular focus on public sector security governance as a paramount requirement for the safety and stability of Nigeria. Talcott Parsons is widely regarded as one of the most influential theorists of the 20th century, credited with modernizing functionalism and developing it into what is sometimes referred to as system theory. According to Parsons' functional prerequisites, there exist four principal subsystems that are indispensable for the seamless operation of any social system. These subsystems are adaptation, goal attainment, integration and latency. The theory assumed that every social system possesses goals as well as challenges and these goals can only be achieved if the system effectively addresses its fundamental problems. This theory perceives a social system as one comprising two or more actors occupying distinct positions or statuses and performing unique roles within an interconnected sequence to sustain the system for the collective benefit of its constituents. The social system maintains equilibrium or homeostasis by possessing mechanisms that enable its components, including politicians, civil servants, and security agencies, to function interdependently and interactively in managing security within the public sector.

The adaptation subsystem pertains to the relationship between the system and its external environment. In the context of public sector security governance, adaptation involves the identification and response to emerging security threats and challenges. This encompasses activities such as intelligence gathering, risk assessment, and policy development to ensure that security measures align with evolving threats. Failure can lead to system collapse as evidenced by corruption, lack of accountability, and insecurity in public sector governance in Nigeria. The proponents concur emphasizing that resolving goal attainment issues in any sector necessitates the government's fair and impartial enforcement of the law. The goal attainment subsystem centers on setting objectives and implementing strategies to achieve them. In public sector security governance, it encompasses defining security objectives, developing strategies and plans and allocating resources. Success in goal attainment requires collaborative and dedicated efforts from various entities, including civil servants, politicians, and security agencies, performing their responsibilities effectively. Failure can result in a breakdown of the entire system especially if different units abandon established goals in favour of self-interests or sectional objectives.

Integration pertains to the coordination and harmonization of various elements within a social system. In the context of public sector security governance, it involves ensuring collaboration and cooperation among different government agencies, establishing effective communication channels, and sharing information. Integration also extends to aligning security measures with other areas of governance such as public administration, policy-making, and the legal framework.

Latency encompasses a dual-faceted phenomenon involving tension management and maintenance. It entails the reproduction and preservation of social norms, values and cultural patterns within a social system. In public sector security governance, latency includes establishing a legal framework, ethical standards and professional norms that govern the behaviour of security personnel and government agencies. It also involves developing training programs, capacity-building initiatives, and awareness campaigns to foster a culture of security and ensure adherence to established norms. Conclusively, Adaptation Goal Integration Latency (AGIL) constitutes a necessary system prerequisite and all micro and macro systems must inherently face these problems. The minutest of a microcosm of any subsystem must solve these problems for the existence and survival of the system.

4. METHODOLOGY

This study used a cross-sectional survey design conducted in the Idundu, Atimbo East, Eneyo, and Ikot Nakanda regions of Akpabuyo Local Government in Cross River State, Nigeria. This specific area was selected due to its firsthand experience with severe security issues, including kidnapping, banditry, cult clashes, killings, and vandalism of oil installations. Data collection for this study comprised both primary and secondary sources. Primary

sources consisted of firsthand information obtained from respondents in the field using a structured questionnaire. The questionnaire underwent validation by two research experts specializing in test, measurement and evaluation. This validation process included face and content validation as well as interview sessions. Secondary sources included journal articles, internet resources and newspapers.

The questionnaire was titled "Public Sector Governance and Security in Cross River State (PSGSICRS)" and divided into two sections: A and B. Section A collected socio-demographic information, including sex, age, and educational level. Section B addressed substantive issues with 11 closed-ended questions designed to measure public sector governance and insecurity. Respondents were asked to indicate their answers based on their opinions. The instrument's adoption was based on its ability to cover a wide research area and its assurance of respondent confidentiality allowing participants to answer without fear of victimization or harassment.

The total population of the study area was 360,000. The local government was divided into wards and households and respondents were selected from each household. Respondents aged 20 to 50 years who had directly experienced insecurity in the local government area were purposively chosen. A sample size of 400 was determined using Yamane's (1973) sample size technique calculated as follows:

$n = N / (1 + N(e)^2)$ where: n = Sample size N = Total population (360,000) e = Error limit (0.05, representing a 95% confidence level).

$$n = 360,000 / [1 + 360,000(0.05)^2] \quad n = 360,000 / [1 + 900] \quad n = 360,000 / 901 \quad n \approx 400.$$

Qualitative data was collected from five participants through in-depth interviews (IDI) and from an additional fifteen participants through Focus Group Discussions (FGD) resulting in a total of 420 respondents. Qualitative data collection aimed to complement and corroborate the results of the quantitative study. The researcher obtained endorsements from clan and village leaders before collecting data from their subjects. The research adhered to established ethical principles governing social research, including disclosure policy, anonymity, and confidentiality, informed consent, and safety protocols. A pre-test was conducted in different locations (Etakpeni and Ikang communities) with 15% of the sample size before administering the main instrument. Data from the questionnaire were coded and analyzed using descriptive statistics such as percentages and frequency tables to present the results.

5. RESULT

A total of 420 copies of the questionnaire were distributed in the selected communities in the study area of Akpabuyo local government of which 410 copies (98.2 per cent) of the survey instrument were correctly filled and retrieved while 1.8 per cent were mutilated and considered unusable. The majority of the respondents (31.7 per cent) were from Ikot Nakanda village, the other villages of Idundu (24.4 per cent), Atimbo East (19.5 per cent) and Eneyo (24.4 per cent) respectively as their representation. Most of the respondents (39.1 per cent) were between the age bracket of 20-29 years followed by 34.1 per cent who are within the age regime of 30-39 years and only 26.8 per cent were in the age bracket of 50 and above years. The findings show that only 19.5 per cent were educated, 48 per cent were uneducated and 31.7 per cent only attempted education in the study area.

5.1. Types of Criminality that have Caused Insecurity in Akpabuyo Local Government Area

The indigents were asked to mention what is responsible for the heightened insecurity in Akabuyo Local Government Area. Table 1 shows that 48.8% mentioned unemployment as responsible for the state of criminality that has rendered the area insecure. The respondents (73.2) mentioned security agencies especially the police as a big problem of insecurity here. According to them, they are themselves the criminals. Lack of education (24.4 per cent) and corruption (84.4 per cent) form other predisposing factors as responsible for insecurity.

Table 1. Responses regarding the cause of insecurity.

Causes	Mentioned	Not mentioned	Total
Unemployment	200 (48.8)	210 (51.2)	410 (100.0)
Security agencies	300 (73.2)	110 (26.8)	410 (100.0)
Lack of education	100 (24.4)	310 (75.6)	410 (100.0)
Corruption	350 (85.4)	60 (14.6)	410 (100.0)

Source: Field study, 2023.

The following is a transcription of a participant's statement about the reasons for insecurity:

The insecurity ravaging this area today is fueled by unemployment among the youths. We, the youths are tired of sitting idle, not too sure where the next meal will come. To survive, we have to regularly involved in one crime and another. Apart from unemployment, the security agencies especially the police who are themselves criminals, constantly engage in kidnapping, oil bunkering, theft etc., making it a herculean task for insecurity to abet.

A 40 years man, Mr. A (not real name) stated during FGD session (that was composed of 10 youths: 5 males and 5 females respectively that the police and the military are responsible for all crimes and insecurity in Akabuyo local government. There are real militants, terrorists and kidnappers.

5.2. Victims of Insecurity

Table 2 expressly reveals the extent to which the indigene of the study area has been subjected to the needless and unprovoked attacks occasioned by insecurity. For instance, 48.8 percent agreed that, they had directly or indirectly victims of kidnapping. Direct involvement as victim is when the person himself is kidnapped while indirectly is when a relative is kidnapped and the family members are made to pay ransom for their release. While 3.7 per cent were victim of molestation and 46.3 percent were victims of armed robbery while rape had a negligible 1.2 per cent. Additional insights were gathered from a Focus Group Discussion (FGD) session involving victims of crimes resulting from insecurity. Participants included Mr. B (38 years old), Mr. C (33 years old), and Mrs. O (35 years old), who shared the following perspectives:

We are poor because of insecurity in this area. We cannot go to our farms because of fear of being kidnapped, raped or even killed. It is painful. Please, we need help; otherwise we will die of hunger.

Table 2. Shows responses victims of insecurity.

Crime caused by insecurity	Frequency	Percentage
Kidnapping	200	48.8
Molestation	15	3.7
Armed robbery	190	46.3
Rape	5	1.2
Total	410	100

Source: Field study, 2023.

5.3. Politicians versus Civil Servant and Insecurity

The table below shows the respondents opinions on the roles of civil servants and security agencies disposition towards insecurity in the Akpabuyo Local Government Area.

Table 3. Politicians and security agencies impact on insecurity.

Impact on insecurity	Frequency	Percentage
Politicians	220	53.7
Civil servants	190	46.3
Total	410	100

Source: Field study, 2023.

From the available data as shown in above Table 3, the majority of the respondents (53.7) vehemently expressed their displeasure with the security agencies as being the harbinger of insecurity, while 46.3 per cent agreed that civil servants actions or inactions contribute not only to insecurity but also to the humongous corruption that has rendered development in a comatose.

5.4. Additionally, Data from the FGD Had a Contrary Opinion

Seven of the civil servants indicated that I feel so sad and pained, seeing civil servants associated with insecurity in the study area. People should hold the police and the military responsible for any act of breach of the law. While Sergeant F., a 38 army personnel said, the security agencies (police, military, SSS, DSS etc.) should not be blamed for insecurity. The politicians should be held accountable and even swore that if the politicians want incidences of insecurity to end, it will definitely happen within 24 hours.

5.5. Hypothesis One

Alternative hypothesis (H₁): There is a significant relationship between the security agencies operations and insecurity in public sector governance.

Null hypothesis (H₀): There is no significant relationship between the security agencies operations and insecurity in public sector governance.

The independent variable in this hypothesis is the security agencies operations while the dependent variable is insecurity in public sector governance. Simple regression analysis was employed to test this hypothesis. The result of the analysis is presented in Table 4.

Table 4. Simple regression result of the relationship between the security agencies operations and insecurity in public sector governance.

Model	R	R. square	Adjusted R. square	Std error of the estimate	Sum
1	0.880	0.774	0.774	1.49032	000
Model	Sum of squares	Df	Mean square	F	p-value
Regression	1891.265	1	1891.265	1401.127*	0.000
Residual	550.819	408	1.350	000	000
Total	2442.084	409	000	000	000

Note: * significant at 0.05 level.

The simple regression analysis examining the relationship between security agencies' operations and insecurity in public sector governance resulted in a multiple regression coefficient (R) of .931, an R² of .867, and an adjusted R² of .774. This adjusted R² of .774 indicates that security agencies' operations account for 77.4% of the variation in insecurity within the study area. The f-value from the Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was 1401.127 with a significance value of .000 (p < .05) at degrees of freedom (df) 1 and 248. This finding suggests that the operations of security agencies are a significant predictor of insecurity in public sector governance.

5.6. Hypothesis Two

There is no significant relationship between politician, civil servants corruption and insecurity in public sector governance.

The independent variable in this hypothesis is politician, civil servants corruption; while the dependent variable is insecurity in public sector governance. Simple regression analysis was employed to test this hypothesis. The result of the analysis is presented in Table 5.

Table 5. Simple regression result of the relationship between politician civil servants corruption and insecurity in public sector governance.

Model	R	R. square	Adjusted R. square	Std error of the estimate	Sum
1	0.802	0.643	0.641	1.87529	000
Model	Sum of square	df	Mean square	F	p-value
Regression	1569.937	1	1569.937	737.302*	0.000
Residual	872.147	408	2.138	000	000
Total	2442.084	409	000	000	000

Note: * significant at 0.05 level.

The simple regression analysis examining the relationship between corruption among politicians and civil servants and insecurity in public sector governance yielded an adjusted R² of .641. This suggests that corruption accounts for 64.1% of the variation in insecurity within the study area. This finding highlights a significant level of corruption among politicians and civil servants in the region. Additionally, the f-value from the Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was 737.302 with a significance value of .000 ($p < .05$) at degrees of freedom (df) 1 and 248. This indicates that corruption among politicians and civil servants is a significant predictor of insecurity in public sector governance.

6. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The study reveals a clear relationship between security agencies, their operations within the public sector, and insecurity in Akpabuyo Local Government Area, Cross River State, Nigeria. These findings aligned with [Cohn et al. \(2023\)](#) assertion that the military's primary responsibility is to protect and defend the nation's territorial integrity while the police represent the symbol of state authority and play vital roles in controlling the economy and maintaining internal security. When security agencies fail to fulfill these roles, insecurity and its negative consequences can result and threaten the stability of the nation.

According to the findings presented in [Table 1](#) regarding the causes of insecurity, a significant majority of respondents (73.2%) agreed that the myriad security challenges stem from the incompetence, compromise, and corruption of security agencies. This finding supports the perspective put forth by [Bailey and Taylor \(2009\)](#) which suggests that criminals' ability to evade justice is often linked to the complicity of the police, army, state security services, and society at large. Furthermore, the study identifies unemployment (48.7%) as a strong predictor of insecurity in Akpabuyo Local Government Area, Cross River State, Nigeria. This finding aligns with [Ibrahim \(2023\)](#) argument that unemployment in Nigeria represents a ticking time bomb capable of undermining security and nation-building efforts. The unemployment rate in Nigeria has been on the rise, and this economic challenge is expected to persist posing a significant problem for the nation.

This research also establishes a significant relationship between civil servants, politicians, and insecurity in Akpabuyo. This finding is consistent with [Adam's \(2019\)](#) assertion that many politicians, some of whom are also civil servants, prioritize their interests over good governance, efficiency, accountability, and transparency. Their actions contribute to the security challenges witnessed in recent times in Nigeria.

6.1. Limitations of the Study

Several limitations constrained the achievement of the research objectives:

Location Accessibility: The selected communities' poor and inadequate road network made it challenging to collect data effectively, hindering the research process.

Uncooperative Attitude: Some indigenes, particularly youth leaders serving police officers, and politicians, exhibited an uncooperative attitude, which nearly stalled the research progress.

Non-Indigene Status: The researcher was not a native of the area which also posed a significant challenge as some respondents were initially reluctant to share information even after the research's purpose was explained. This

resulted in difficulties in scheduling meetings and adhering to set dates and times. Despite these limitations, the researcher persevered and successfully conducted the study, providing valuable insights into the relationships between security agencies, civil servants, politicians, and insecurity in the region.

7. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study delved into the intricate relationship between public sector governance, involving civil servants, security agencies, politicians and insecurity in the Akpabuyo Local Government Area of Cross River State, Nigeria. Insecurity is a consequence of failures characterized by disconnection and ineptitude, prominently displayed by individuals in positions of authority based on the findings unearthed in this research. These actions have undermined efforts to provide a secure environment, safeguard lives and property, and promote socio-economic development. Hence, the study recommends the following:

1. **Youth Empowerment Programs:** The federal government of Nigeria must take urgent and innovative steps to provide employment opportunities for the large population of unemployed youths. This can be achieved by designing programs that prioritize sectors like agriculture, offering interest-free loans and providing skill acquisition training in areas such as tailoring, car repair, carpentry, and others. These initiatives can significantly contribute to mitigating the problem of insecurity in Nigeria.

2. **Establishment of a Special Court:** The government should establish a specialized court dedicated to expeditiously try and punish individuals found guilty of sabotaging national security efforts. Stringent sentences ranging from 10 to 30 years of imprisonment should be imposed as a deterrent.

3. **Joint Task Force for Intelligence:** A joint task force comprising members from the military, police, state security service (SSS), immigration, and customs services. This task force should undergo specialized training in intelligence gathering, sharing, and management to prevent and counter acts that contribute to insecurity.

4. **Increased Security Budget and Improved Welfare:** The government must allocate more funds to the security sector and enhance the welfare of security personnel, including subsidies for transportation, healthcare and housing. Furthermore, establish a dedicated audit unit to continually monitor the allocation and expenditure of security funds, ensuring transparency and preventing misappropriation.

5. **Bridging Socioeconomic Disparities:** Initiatives should be implemented to bridge the socioeconomic class gap in Nigeria, fostering fairness, equity, and equality. The government should declare free and compulsory education for all Nigerians and provide support for those who pursue alternatives to formal education. The Ministry of Industry and Development should offer various developmental and entrepreneurial programs to assist individuals in their chosen trades, enhancing their socioeconomic well-being.

7.1. *Suggestions for Further Study*

This research has paved the way for further exploration of knowledge concerning the factors responsible for insecurity in public sector governance in Cross River State, Nigeria. To gain a comprehensive understanding of how insecurity affects public sector governance, it is recommended to:

1. Conduct similar studies in all six geopolitical zones of Nigeria to assess regional variations.
2. Explore additional correlates such as ethnicity, tribe, and religious influences, and their impact on public sector governance as it relates to security in Nigeria. These additional studies can provide deeper insights into the multifaceted nature of insecurity and its implications for governance across the country.

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Appendix 1. Public interest statement to/or for the general public.

Appendix 1 presents an overview of the critical role of public sector security governance in Nigeria.

Public sector security government is a vital component for ensuring the safety and wellbeing of the Nigerian society. It highlights how effective security management is essential for combating threats such as kidnapping, corruption, and organized crime. The appendix details the establishment of robust security policies, resource allocation, and the implementation of efficient strategies. It also underscores the public's vested interest in security governance, as it impacts their safety, livelihoods, and quality of life. The appendix illustrates how effective security governance enables citizens to live without fear, supports thriving businesses, and protects critical infrastructure. Furthermore, it emphasizes the importance of transparency and accountability in fostering trust between the government and its citizens.

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