

Poverty, Insecurity and Conflict Mitigation - The Nigerian Special Case?



Abstract

This article sets out to explore the connection between poverty and insecurity in Nigeria. It takes a multidimensional definition of poverty, relying on infant mortality rates and unemployment/underemployment rates as indicators. It focuses on insecurity as a community-based issue affecting individuals, rather than nations. The incidents of casualties in Nigeria attributable to insecurity are calculated using newspaper reports for the first half of 2020. When the data is compared with the main academic theories (e.g. Collier et al) on insecurity and poverty, it becomes clear that Nigeria is an exceptional case, as compared with other sub-Saharan African states it has not seen the connection of insecurity and poverty trigger civil war. The paper also discusses the percentage of the annual budget devoted to the security forces as the main policy paradigm to date for combatting insecurity. In conclusion the paper finds that, despite the dearth of data, there is a clear correlation between unemployment/underemployment patterns and insecurity incidents. The paper concludes by advocating a policy shift away from the focus on the security forces and temporary palliatives for the poor to a holistic approach to tackling the underlying causes rather than the symptoms.

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