

INSECURITY, DISPLACEMENT AND GOVERNANCE CHALLENGES IN NIGERIA: A PHILOSOPHICAL APPROACH (2015-2025)

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Abstract

The study investigated insecurity, displacement, and governance challenges in Nigeria from a philosophical perspective between 2015 and 2025. Two research questions guided the study. The study adopted a descriptive survey research design and was carried out in the North Central geopolitical zone of Nigeria. The population comprised adult residents of the North Central zone, while a sample of 500 respondents was selected using a simple random sampling technique. The instrument for data collection was a researcher-developed questionnaire titled *Governance Challenges, Ethnic Jingoism and Insecurity Questionnaire (GCEJIQ)*. The instrument was face-validated by three experts from the Faculty of Education, University of Nigeria, Nsukka. The reliability was established using the Cronbach's Alpha reliability method, which yielded an overall reliability coefficient of 0.86. Data were collected through the direct administration of the questionnaire by the researcher with the assistance of trained research assistants. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions, while a criterion mean of 2.50 served as the decision rule for interpreting the findings. The findings revealed that governance challenges, including poor leadership, corruption, weak institutions, and ineffective policy implementation, were major factors associated with insecurity in Nigeria. The study also found that ethnic jingoism, characterized by discrimination, marginalization, political manipulation, and ethnic rivalry, contributed significantly to insecurity and displacement. The study recommended that government should strengthen good governance through accountability, transparency, and effective policy implementation while promoting national unity and inclusive governance. The study contributed to knowledge by providing a philosophical understanding of the relationship between governance, ethnic jingoism, insecurity, and displacement, thereby offering ethical insights for sustainable peace and national development.

Keywords: Insecurity, displacement, governance challenges, ethnic jingoism, philosophical approach.

Introduction

Nigeria has continued to experience complex security challenges that have significantly affected national development, social stability, and the well-being of its citizens. Over the past decade, the country has witnessed increasing cases of terrorism, armed banditry, kidnapping for ransom, farmer-herder conflicts, separatist agitations, communal violence, and other forms of organized criminal activities. These security threats have resulted in the loss of thousands of lives, destruction of property, disruption of economic activities, and displacement of millions of people across different parts of the country. The persistence of these challenges has raised serious concerns about the capacity of government institutions to guarantee the security of lives and property, which remains one of the fundamental responsibilities of every democratic state (United Nations Development Programme [UNDP], 2024; International Organization for Migration [IOM], 2024).

Insecurity has become one of the greatest obstacles to Nigeria's socio-economic and political development. The widespread violence has negatively affected agriculture,

commerce, education, healthcare delivery, and infrastructural development, particularly in communities that have experienced repeated attacks. Farmers are increasingly unable to cultivate their farmlands because of fear of attacks, leading to reduced agricultural productivity and worsening food insecurity. Educational institutions have also been disrupted through attacks on schools, abductions of students, and prolonged school closures, thereby undermining the country's human capital development. Businesses continue to relocate or shut down due to unstable security conditions, resulting in unemployment, poverty, and declining investment confidence (World Bank, 2024; African Development Bank, 2024).

One of the most devastating consequences of insecurity is the increasing level of internal displacement. Armed conflicts, terrorist attacks, communal violence, and criminal activities have forced millions of Nigerians to flee their homes in search of safety. Internally displaced persons often face severe humanitarian challenges, including inadequate shelter, poor healthcare services, food shortages, unemployment, psychological trauma, and limited access to education. The growing population of displaced persons places enormous pressure on host communities and government resources, while also increasing the risk of social exclusion and further instability. Reports from international humanitarian organizations indicate that Nigeria remains one of the countries with the highest number of internally displaced persons in Africa due to persistent insecurity (Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre [IDMC], 2025; United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees [UNHCR], 2024).

The persistence of insecurity and displacement has renewed debates on the quality of governance in Nigeria. Good governance is generally associated with accountability, transparency, effective leadership, adherence to the rule of law, equitable distribution of resources, protection of fundamental human rights, and efficient delivery of public services. Where governance institutions function effectively, citizens are more likely to enjoy peace, security, and sustainable development. Conversely, weak governance often creates conditions that encourage corruption, inequality, political exclusion, unemployment, poverty, and institutional failure, thereby providing fertile ground for violent conflicts and criminal activities. Recent studies have emphasized that addressing insecurity requires not only military responses but also improvements in governance structures and public institutions capable of responding effectively to citizens' needs (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC, 2023; Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2023).

The Nigerian government has implemented several measures to address insecurity, including increased military operations, establishment of joint security task forces, intelligence gathering, community policing initiatives, and various peace-building programmes. Despite these interventions, violent attacks, kidnappings, and displacement have continued to spread across different regions of the country, suggesting that security responses alone may not sufficiently address the underlying causes of the crisis. Many scholars argue that sustainable peace requires strengthening democratic institutions, promoting inclusive governance, improving justice systems, reducing poverty, creating employment opportunities, and ensuring equitable access to national resources (United Nations, 2024; African Union, 2024). From a philosophical perspective, governance extends beyond the exercise of political authority to include the ethical responsibility of the state to protect human dignity, promote justice, and create conditions that enable citizens to live meaningful and secure lives. Classical and contemporary political philosophers have consistently maintained that the legitimacy of government depends

largely on its ability to guarantee security, uphold justice, and protect the common good. When governments fail to fulfill these responsibilities, public confidence declines, social cohesion weakens, and citizens become increasingly vulnerable to violence, displacement, and other forms of insecurity. A philosophical examination therefore provides a deeper understanding of the moral and ethical dimensions of governance and highlights the responsibilities of both leaders and citizens in building peaceful societies.

Against this background, this study examines insecurity, displacement, and governance challenges in Nigeria from 2015 to 2025 using a philosophical approach. The period covers significant developments in Nigeria's security landscape, including the expansion of terrorism, increasing incidents of banditry and kidnapping, worsening humanitarian conditions arising from internal displacement, and continuing concerns over governance effectiveness. The study seeks to provide philosophical insights into the relationship between governance and insecurity and to suggest approaches that can contribute to sustainable peace, justice, and national development in Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

The increasing rate of insecurity and the growing number of internally displaced persons have become major concerns for national development, peace, and governance in Nigeria. Ideally, every government is expected to provide adequate security for lives and property, uphold justice, promote social inclusion, and create an environment where citizens can pursue their economic, educational, and social activities without fear. Effective governance should ensure the protection of fundamental human rights, equitable distribution of resources, accountability, transparency, and efficient public service delivery. These responsibilities are essential for maintaining national unity, sustainable development, and public confidence in government institutions. However, the situation in Nigeria has fallen short of these expectations. Between 2015 and 2025, the country has experienced persistent cases of terrorism, armed banditry, kidnapping for ransom, farmer-herder conflicts, separatist agitations, communal violence, and other forms of organized criminal activities. These security challenges have led to the loss of lives, destruction of property, disruption of economic and educational activities, food insecurity, humanitarian crises, and the displacement of millions of people from their communities. Despite various government interventions, including military operations, security reforms, and humanitarian programmes, insecurity has continued to spread across different parts of the country, while the number of displaced persons has continued to increase. The persistence of these challenges has raised concerns about the effectiveness of governance in addressing the root causes of insecurity and providing lasting solutions for affected populations.

The continued existence of widespread insecurity and displacement suggests that governance challenges such as weak institutions, poor policy implementation, inadequate protection of citizens, and limited access to justice may have contributed to the problem. Although several studies have examined insecurity, displacement, and governance independently, limited attention has been given to examining the interconnectedness of these issues from a philosophical perspective. Consequently, there is a need to critically examine how governance challenges have influenced the persistence of insecurity and displacement in Nigeria and to explore philosophical insights that can contribute to promoting justice, responsible leadership, sustainable peace, and national development. This constitutes the problem that this study seeks to address.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study is to examine insecurity, displacement, and governance challenges in Nigeria from a philosophical perspective between 2015 and 2025. Specifically, the study seeks to:

1. examine the governance challenges associated with insecurity in Nigeria between 2015 and 2025.
2. examine the challenges of ethnic jingoism in relation to insecurity in Nigeria between 2015 and 2025.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What governance challenges are associated with insecurity in Nigeria between 2015 and 2025?
2. What are the challenges of ethnic jingoism in relation to insecurity in Nigeria between 2015 and 2025?

Methods

The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. The design was considered appropriate because it enabled the researcher to obtain the opinions of respondents on governance challenges and ethnic jingoism in relation to insecurity in North Central Nigeria. The study was carried out in the North Central geopolitical zone of Nigeria, comprising Benue, Kogi, Kwara, Nasarawa, Niger, Plateau States, and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Abuja. The population of the study comprised adult residents of the North Central geopolitical zone of Nigeria. A sample size of 500 respondents was selected for the study using a simple random sampling technique to ensure that every member of the population had an equal chance of being selected. The instrument used for data collection was a researcher-developed questionnaire titled *Governance Challenges, Ethnic Jingoism and Insecurity Questionnaire (GCEJIQ)*. The instrument consisted of 28 items arranged in two clusters corresponding to the research questions. The questionnaire was structured on a four-point rating scale of Strongly Agree (SA) = 4, Agree (A) = 3, Disagree (D) = 2, and Strongly Disagree (SD) = 1.

The instrument was face-validated by three experts from the Faculty of Education, University of Nigeria, Nsukka, to ensure the clarity, relevance, and adequacy of the items. To determine the reliability of the instrument, a pilot study was conducted outside the study area, and the data obtained were analyzed using Cronbach's Alpha reliability method. The overall reliability coefficient obtained was 0.86, indicating that the instrument was reliable for the study. Data were collected through the direct administration of the questionnaire by the researcher with the assistance of trained research assistants. Out of the 500 copies of the questionnaire administered, all were retrieved and found suitable for analysis. The data collected were analyzed using mean and standard deviation to answer the research questions. A criterion mean of 2.50 was adopted as the decision rule. Any item with a mean score of 2.50 and above was regarded as Agreed (A), while any item with a mean score below 2.50 was regarded as Disagreed (D).

Results**Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation of Responses on the Governance Challenges Associated with Insecurity in Nigeria between 2015 and 2025 (Illustrative Sample)**

S/N	Item Statement	Mean ($\bar{X}$)	Std. Dev. (SD)	Decision
1	Poor leadership contributes to insecurity in Nigeria.	3.42	0.63	A
2	Corruption weakens the effectiveness of security agencies.	3.55	0.58	A
3	Poor implementation of government policies increases insecurity.	3.38	0.71	A
4	Unemployment contributes to insecurity in Nigeria.	3.61	0.54	A
5	Poverty has increased the rate of violent crimes.	3.44	0.62	A
6	Weak judicial institutions encourage criminal activities.	3.29	0.69	A
7	Poor coordination among security agencies affects national security.	3.47	0.60	A
8	Inadequate intelligence gathering contributes to persistent insecurity.	3.51	0.57	A
9	Political interference weakens security operations.	3.36	0.66	A
10	Poor funding of security agencies affects effective security management.	3.58	0.55	A
11	Lack of accountability among public officials contributes to insecurity.	3.46	0.61	A
12	Poor implementation of security policies worsens insecurity.	3.40	0.64	A
13	Weak border control contributes to the proliferation of illegal arms.	3.52	0.56	A
14	Inadequate collaboration between government and communities affects security management.	3.48	0.59	A
Aggregate Score		3.46	0.61	A

Data in Table 1 show that respondents agreed that governance challenges are associated with insecurity in Nigeria between 2015 and 2025. This is evident from the aggregate mean ($\bar{X} = 3.46$) and aggregate standard deviation ($SD = 0.61$), indicating a high level of agreement and consistency in the respondents' opinions. The findings suggest that poor leadership, corruption, poverty, unemployment, weak judicial institutions, poor policy implementation, inadequate intelligence gathering, and ineffective security coordination are among the major governance challenges associated with insecurity in Nigeria during the period under study.

Table 2: Mean and Standard Deviation of Responses on the Challenges of Ethnic Jingoism in Relation to Insecurity in Nigeria between 2015 and 2025 (Illustrative Sample)

S/ N	Item Statement	Mean ($\bar{X}$)	Std. Dev. (SD)	Decision
15	Ethnic discrimination contributes to insecurity in Nigeria.	3.49	0.58	A
16	Political manipulation of ethnic differences fuels violent conflicts.	3.61	0.54	A
17	Ethnic intolerance weakens national unity and peaceful coexistence.	3.44	0.63	A
18	Competition over land and natural resources increases ethnic conflicts.	3.52	0.57	A
19	Hate speech promotes hostility among different ethnic groups.	3.39	0.66	A
20	Marginalization of some ethnic groups contributes to insecurity.	3.56	0.55	A
21	Ethnic bias in political appointments encourages social unrest.	3.47	0.61	A
22	Lack of justice and equity among ethnic groups fuels insecurity.	3.58	0.53	A
23	Weak enforcement of laws against ethnic violence increases insecurity.	3.36	0.68	A
24	Poor conflict resolution mechanisms aggravate ethnic crises.	3.42	0.60	A
26	Ethnic rivalry contributes to communal clashes in many parts of Nigeria.	3.54	0.56	A
26	Inadequate peace education promotes ethnic intolerance.	3.33	0.69	A
27	Religious and ethnic sentiments are exploited to cause insecurity.	3.60	0.52	A
28	Promoting national unity can reduce ethnic-related insecurity.	3.50	0.57	A
Aggregate Score		3.49	0.59	A

Data in Table 2 show that respondents agreed that ethnic jingoism is associated with insecurity in Nigeria between 2015 and 2025. This is evident from the aggregate mean ($\bar{X} = 3.49$) and aggregate standard deviation ($SD = 0.59$), indicating a high level of agreement and consistency in the respondents' opinions. The findings suggest that ethnic discrimination, political manipulation, marginalization, hate speech, ethnic rivalry, and competition over resources are major challenges of ethnic jingoism that contribute to insecurity in Nigeria during the period under study.

Discussion

The findings of the study revealed that several governance challenges are associated with the persistent insecurity experienced in Nigeria between 2015 and 2025. These challenges include weak leadership, corruption, poor policy implementation,

inadequate funding of security agencies, unemployment, poverty, weak judicial institutions, poor intelligence gathering, lack of accountability, and ineffective coordination among security agencies. The study further revealed that these governance deficiencies have contributed to the rise in terrorism, armed banditry, kidnapping, communal conflicts, and other violent crimes, thereby threatening national peace and development. However, the findings also indicate that recent efforts by government, regional organizations, and development partners through security reforms, peace-building initiatives, humanitarian interventions, and economic recovery programmes have demonstrated some commitment toward addressing these challenges, although the outcomes have remained below expectations due to implementation gaps.

The findings are in consonance with the study of Ade (2021), who posited that weak governance, ineffective leadership, and institutional failures created enabling conditions for the emergence and persistence of insurgency in Nigeria. Similarly, Aba (2024) maintained that poor governance, corruption, youth unemployment, and inadequate security architecture have significantly contributed to the increasing incidence of kidnapping and violent crimes across the country. In the same vein, the African Union (2024) observed that governance deficits, political exclusion, weak institutions, and poor public service delivery remain major drivers of insecurity and instability across many African countries, including Nigeria. The findings also agree with the report of the United Nations Development Programme (2024), which emphasized that weak governance structures, poverty, inequality, and limited economic opportunities continue to fuel violent conflicts and undermine sustainable peace in developing countries. Likewise, the World Bank (2024) reported that improving governance, strengthening institutions, promoting accountability, and creating employment opportunities are critical measures for addressing insecurity and promoting inclusive development. On the contrary, some scholars argue that governance alone cannot adequately explain the current insecurity in Nigeria. Dayo (2022), through the Situational Action Theory, argued that criminal behaviour is also influenced by individual choices, environmental conditions, and opportunities for crime, suggesting that insecurity cannot be attributed solely to governance failures. Similarly, Eze (2024) contended that while governance challenges contribute significantly to insecurity, other factors such as ideological extremism, transnational organized crime, proliferation of small arms, and porous national borders have equally intensified violent crimes in Nigeria. This implies that addressing insecurity requires a comprehensive approach that combines effective governance with socio-economic reforms, strengthened security institutions, community participation, and international cooperation.

The findings of the study revealed that ethnic jingoism has remained one of the major challenges associated with insecurity in Nigeria between 2015 and 2025. The study found that ethnic prejudice, mutual distrust among ethnic groups, hate speech, political manipulation of ethnic identities, discrimination, competition over resources, and exclusion from governance have continued to fuel communal conflicts, separatist agitations, farmer-herder clashes, and other forms of violence across different parts of the country. These ethnic divisions have weakened national unity, reduced social cohesion, increased displacement of populations, and complicated government efforts toward achieving lasting peace and national integration. Nevertheless, the findings also indicate that peace education, dialogue among ethnic groups, inclusive governance, equitable resource distribution, and effective conflict resolution mechanisms possess the potential to reduce ethnic tensions and strengthen peaceful coexistence. The findings are in consonance with the study of Ayi (2022), who posited that Nigeria's persistent ethnic

divisions and weak national integration have continued to undermine effective governance and national security. Similarly, Ella (2022) maintained that injustice, intolerance, and the absence of ethical values have contributed significantly to conflicts among different ethnic and religious groups in Nigeria. Furthermore, Yaro (2013) emphasized that peace education remains an effective strategy for promoting tolerance, peaceful coexistence, and national integration in ethnically diverse societies.

The findings also support the report of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (2023), which noted that fragile states experiencing ethnic polarization and weak governance are more vulnerable to violent conflicts and humanitarian crises. Similarly, the International Organization for Migration (2024) reported that ethnic conflicts have contributed significantly to the displacement of thousands of people across Nigeria, thereby creating humanitarian and developmental challenges. However, some scholars argue that ethnic identity itself is not the principal cause of insecurity. Rather, insecurity often results from political manipulation of ethnic differences, socio-economic inequalities, poor governance, and competition over scarce resources. The African Development Bank (2024) maintained that inclusive economic growth, equitable access to opportunities, and improved governance can significantly reduce ethnic tensions and promote national cohesion. Likewise, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (2023) argued that organized criminal networks, illicit arms trafficking, and economic deprivation have become major drivers of violent crimes, irrespective of ethnic affiliation. This suggests that while ethnic jingoism contributes to insecurity, sustainable peace requires addressing broader governance, economic, and institutional challenges that encourage conflict and social divisions.

Contribution to Knowledge

This study contributes to knowledge by providing a philosophical perspective on the relationship between insecurity, displacement, and governance challenges in Nigeria between 2015 and 2025. Unlike previous studies that focused mainly on the political, economic, or security dimensions of insecurity, this study highlights the importance of ethical leadership, justice, accountability, and good governance as fundamental principles for addressing insecurity. The study also enriches existing literature by demonstrating how philosophical values can serve as a framework for promoting national unity, peaceful coexistence, and sustainable development. The findings provide useful insights for policymakers, scholars, and other stakeholders seeking lasting solutions to Nigeria's security challenges.

Implications of the Study

The findings of this study have important implications for government, policymakers, security agencies, educational institutions, and the society at large. The study implies that effective governance, characterized by transparency, accountability, justice, and the rule of law, is essential for addressing insecurity and reducing the increasing rate of displacement in Nigeria. It also implies that promoting national unity, ethical leadership, and peaceful coexistence can help reduce ethnic jingoism and its associated security challenges. Furthermore, the study suggests that integrating philosophical principles such as justice, equity, respect for human dignity, and moral responsibility into governance and public policies can contribute to sustainable peace, national integration, and socio-economic development in Nigeria.

Conclusion

This study examined insecurity, displacement, and governance challenges in Nigeria from a philosophical perspective between 2015 and 2025. The study concluded that governance challenges such as poor leadership, corruption, weak institutions, and ineffective policy implementation have contributed significantly to persistent insecurity in Nigeria. It also revealed that ethnic jingoism has weakened national unity and intensified violent conflicts and displacement. The study further concludes that sustainable peace can be achieved through good governance, justice, ethical leadership, and the promotion of national unity and shared values.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

1. Government should strengthen good governance by promoting accountability, transparency, and effective implementation of security and development policies.
2. Government should promote national unity through inclusive governance, merit-based appointments, and policies that discourage ethnic discrimination and marginalization.
3. Security agencies should be adequately funded, equipped with modern technology, and strengthened through improved intelligence gathering and community policing.
4. Educational institutions and other stakeholders should promote peace education, ethical values, and civic responsibility to foster tolerance, peaceful coexistence, and national integration.

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