

**INSECURITY AND POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT IN ABIA STATE: A STUDY OF VOTER
PARTICIPATION IN UMUAHIA NORTH AND ABA SOUTH LOCAL GOVERNMENT
AREA (2022-2025).**

BY

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GOU/U22/POL/328**

**DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS
FACULTY OF MANAGEMENT AND SOCIAL SCIENCES
GODFREY OKOYE UNIVERSITY UGWUOMU-NIKE EMENE
ENUGU STATE**

JUNE 2026



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**A PROJECT PRESENTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE AND
INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS, FACULTY OF MANAGEMENT AND SOCIAL
SCIENCES, GODFREY OKOYE UNIVERSITY THINKERS CORNER ENUGU, NIGERIA**

**IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF
BACHELOR DEGREE IN POLITICAL SCIENCE**

SUPERVISOR: PROF. BARR. SAM UGWUOZOR

JUNE 2026

APPROVAL PAGE

i



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This project has been examined and approved by the Department of Political Science
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CERTIFICATION

I, **IFEDIORA VICTORY SOMTOCHUKWU** an undergraduate student in the department of Political Science and International Relations, Faculty of Management and Social Sciences in Godfrey Okoye University with the registration number GOU/U22/POL/328, do certify that, to the best of my knowledge, this research is original and never have been submitted for any diploma or degree at Godfrey Okoye University or any other university.

IFEDIORA VICTORY SOMTOCHUKWU

DATE

DEDICATION

To God, who made this work possible, thank you for Your wisdom, strength, favour, presence and endless love.

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First and foremost, I give all glory and gratitude to Almighty God for granting me the strength, wisdom, and grace to successfully complete my first research work titled "Insecurity and Political Development in Abia State." Without His guidance and protection, this achievement would not have been possible.

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ABSTRACT

The study examines the Link between Insecurity and Political development in Abia State, Nigeria. It gives attention to the effects of insecurity in all its ramifications (sitting-at-home, kidnapping, armed robbery, attacks on security agencies and destruction of public utilities) on participation in Democratic processes and good governance in the state, particularly during the 2023 general elections. The study is guided by the worry and concern that the insecurity in the South-East region has not abated, which has created a decline in voter turnout and public confidence in the democratic system and institution. The study seeks to answer the following research questions: (1) How has the issue of insecurity impacted voter turnout in Umuahia North and Aba South Local Government Areas in the period between 2022 and 2025? (2) What is the relationship between insecurity and political development in Umuahia North and Aba South Local Government Areas between 2022 to 2025? The study takes a qualitative approach, using secondary data derived from reports of security monitoring organisations, policy documents, academic and election observation reports. Theoretical explanations are based on the concept of political development theory in explaining the relationship between security and democratic stability. The results show that insecurity in Abia state had a very strong negative impact on political activities, voter participation, freedom of movement, and electoral administration. Also, the forced stay-at-home orders and the many violent attacks were not creating a sense of security and led to reduced civic engagement and political participation. The findings of the study is that the insecurity situation in Abia State is indeed a significant challenge to the political development of the State as it hampers the effectiveness of democratic institutions and citizens' participation in governance. It calls for enhancing the security architecture, boosting intelligence efforts and encouraging community-based security response to regain public trust and increase political stability in the state.

The keywords: Insecurity, Political Development, Voter Participation, Democracy, Abia State.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

One of the most pressing issues facing the contemporary states especially the developing world led by Nigeria is insecurity. The sustainability of violent offenses, political instability, terrorism, kidnapping and communal conflicts has had a great impact on the governance structure and democratic consolidation. Insecurity is a state where there is no security of lives and property (Achiumba, Ighomereho and Akpor-Robaro, 2013). In this respect, insecurity does not simply exist as violence, but also as the loss of the trust that citizens have upon the state when it comes to being able to offer protection.

The Fourth Republic in Nigeria has experienced and continues to experience the same security issues such as insurgency in the North-East, banditry in the North-West and secessionist tendencies in the South-East. The South-East geopolitical area, which encompasses Abia State has seen more and more incidences of political violence, imposition of sit-at-home orders, attacks on security agencies, electoral intimidation and general instability in the last few years. Gurr (1970) defines political violence as the common assaults in one political community towards the political regime, political actors or the political policies. This instability undermines performance in institutions, as well as civic participation.

Stability and institutional effectiveness are directly related to political development. The process of political organization and procedural institutionalization according to Huntington (1968) is considered to be the political development that presents adaptability, complexity, autonomy and coherence. Politically developed society is



described to possess effective government, rule of law, political participation and stable institutions. But in case of insecurity, it becomes difficult to have institutions that operate well and undermining of democratic processes have taken place.

Voter participation is one of the important characteristics of the political progress in a democratic system. According to Verba, Schlozman and Brady (1995), voter participation refers to the practices that citizens use to affect the choice of political leaders and political policies. Equally, Powell (1986) conceives the participation in elections as the percentage of the age group of voting population who cast their ballots during elections. When the turnout is high, it indicates political trust and institutional legitimacy and in the case of low turnout, it may be an indicator of political apathy, fear or disillusionment.

In Abia State, specifically, in the Umuahia North and Aba South Local Government Areas, insecurity has been reported to have been experienced in public gatherings, economic endeavors and electoral processes conducted between 2022 and 2025. The 2023 general elections were held in an atmosphere of tension when sit-at-home orders were implemented and in some areas of the South-East violence occurred. These circumstances bring the question of how insecurity is related to voter turnout.

The development of politics cannot be separated with citizen participation. According to Todaro and Smith (2015), development is multidimensional changes in the social structures, institutions and attitudes aimed at enhancing the quality of life. Democratic development becomes compromised where citizens cannot or do not want to take part in the elections because of fear or instability. The validity of the elective authorities could be doubted in case the number of voters remains low because of the insecurity factors.



Thus, the proposed research aims to investigate the connection between insecurity and political development in Abia State and the voter turnout in Umuahia North and Aba South Local Government Areas between 2022 and 2025 in particular. The research is based on the premise that electoral turnout in an environment of persistent insecurity might be demotivating, thus impeding the process of democratic consolidation in the grassroots level.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The continued insecurity level in Abia State has raised questions on the consequences of the issue on the aspect of democratic governance and political development. Regardless of the 2023 general elections, their conduct, the cases of voter intimidation, fear of violence, sit-at-home enforcement and attacks on the institutions of the state, reveal that insecurity might have impacted the electoral participation.

The fact that low voter turnout in some areas of the South-East was experienced in the recent elections begs one to ask, what exactly is causing the issue. Although voter apathy, economic hardship and political distrust have been extensively mentioned, little has been said about the direct effect of insecurity on voter turn-up in local government.

Specifically, the empirical evidence on the impact of insecurity in Umuahia North and Aba South Local Government Areas on the voter turnout and the political development indicators on a larger scale is lacking. In the absence of systematic research, one would hardly know whether insecurity has just been in parallel with low turnout or whether there have been acts of discouraging electoral participation.

This research thus aims at filling this gap by considering the role played by insecurity



in voter turnout and political growth of the chosen local government units of Abia State.

1.3 Research Questions

1. How has the issue of insecurity impacted voter turnout in Umuahia North and Aba South Local Government Areas in the period between 2022 and 2025?
2. What is the relationship between insecurity and political development in Umuahia North and Aba South local government areas between 2022 and 2025?

1.4 Objectives of the Study

Broad Objective

To investigate how insecurity has impacted political development in the state of Abia, and specifically the voter turnout in the Umuahia North and Aba South Local Government Areas between 2022 and 2025.

Specific Objectives

- 1.To find out how the issue of insecurity affected voter turnout in Umuahia North and Aba South Local Government Areas.
- 2.To examine the relationship between insecurity and political development in Umuahia North and Aba South.

1.5 Significance of the Study

The study is important because, it adds to the existing literature on insecurity, political development, democratic governance and electoral participation in Nigeria. The research contributes to the academic knowledge on the impact of insecurity on political engagement, especially on voter participation, in the context of emerging democracies. The study attempts to complement the existing debate on the relationship between insecurity and political development in Abia State, and on



citizen participation in governance.

The study also contributes to the knowledge, in particular, by examining the effect of insecurity on the voting rate in Umuahia North and Aba South Local Government Areas of Abia state from 2022 to 2025. This study takes a grassroots-based approach, unlike many previous studies which have studied national or regional trends, thus offering empirical evidence of the influence of insecurity on political participation at the local level. It does so by adding to the existing body of work on insecurity and voter turnout in the South-East region of Nigeria where the security crisis has raised worries about democratic involvement.

This study can have applications for the policymakers and government bodies which are responsible for maintaining law and order. The study's findings contribute valuable information to governments' discussions on the impact of insecurity on electoral participation and political development and the development of effective security policies that can create an environment conducive to democratic activities. The study might also contribute to the understanding of the consequences of insecurity on political stability and democratic governance by security agencies.

Moreover, the research is important to Electoral Management Bodies (EMBs), like Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), because it gives a view on how security affects voter confidence and electoral participation. The results could help INEC and electorates stakeholders make strategies that can help boost voter turnout, enhance electoral authenticity, and help ensure free and peaceful elections in areas that are beset by insecurity.

The study is also relevant to civil society organisations, non-governmental organisations and advocacy groups dedicated to promoting democracy,



peacebuilding and good governance. The findings can inform the design of civic education, voter sensitisation and conflict prevention programmes that can help and motivate citizens to be active in electoral processes despite the current security situation.

The study may also be useful for political and community leaders and development practitioners who wish to increase political inclusion and democratic participation of the community at the grassroots. The study will be helpful to projects that seek to promote democratic culture and political development by revealing the ways in which insecurity impacts citizens' political involvement.

Overall, this study will serve as a valuable reference material for students, researchers and future scholars interested in the fields of political development, electoral studies, security studies, governance and democratic participation in Nigeria. It could also encourage other states and regions of the country to take the security-political behaviour linkage into consideration for further research.

1.6 Scope of the Study

This study is concerned with the relationship between insecurity and political development in Abia State with specific interest on voter turnout in Umuahia North and Aba South Local Government Areas of Abia State. Geographically, the study focuses on these two Local Government Areas as they had experienced some significant security issues and electoral activities during the study period.

The Study period is from 2022 to 2025. This time frame was chosen to allow for the capture of security events prior to the 2023 general elections, the general elections themselves, and post-election security and political events that could have affected the political participation and democratic processes in the study area.



1.7 Limitations of the Study

The limitation of this study includes the use of secondary data. The analysis relies heavily on material from the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), security reports, government publications, academic journals and newspapers and other documented sources. These sources are useful, but some may not have complete records or there may be inconsistencies in reporting and institutional biases in the analysis that could impact the comprehensiveness of the analysis.

Another constraint is the availability of data at the local government level for security purposes. Detailed and disaggregated information on incidents of insecurity and its direct effect on voter turnout may not be easily available in some cases, making it difficult to conduct detailed micro-level analysis.

The study has been limited but, through the use of multiple information sources and careful cross checking of the data from documents and reports, the reliability of the findings has been improved.

1.8 Operational Definition of Terms.

Insecurity

Insecurity in this research will be understood to mean the constant existence of threats in political violence, intimidation, imposition of illegal orders (e.g. the sit-at-home orders) and kidnapping, as well as assaults on civic institutions in Umuahia North and Aba South Local Government Areas that have instilled fear and have limited civic activities in the two local government areas. Insecurity, as defined in the article by Achumba et al., (2013) is the lack of safety and protection in general, but in this research, an operational definition of insecurity is recorded by the reported cases of violent incidents, the election period disruptions and fear among the voters



between 2022 and 2025.

Political Development

Political development in this research would be viewed as the independence and efficacy of political institutions and processes especially regarding democratic governance. This comprehension concurs with the notions of Samuel P. Huntington (1968) who asserts on the entrenchment of the political organizations. In the framework of this study, the issue of political development is also evaluated due to the presence of such indicators as electoral participation, political stability, and participation of citizens in formal political processes in the chosen Local Government Areas.

Voter Participation

In this study, voter participation is perceived to be the participation of citizens in the processes of election wherein they vote and engage in other valid political activities. This point of view is in line with the arguments of Sidney Verba et al. (1995). To develop the measurements of voter participation in this study, the degree of electoral interest and voter turnout among the residents of Umuahia North and Aba South in the 2023 general elections will be measured as the indicators of voter turnout.

Electoral Participation

Electoral participation in the context of this study can be defined as the percentage of eligible voters that turn out at elections by voting. This is the conceptualization that is congruent with G. Bingham Powell (1986). It is empirically studied based on the official voter turnout figures at the chosen Local Government Areas.

Political Violence

Political violence in this research is considered to be the actions which are organized



against political institutions, actors or processes especially during the election time. This is in line with the stand of Ted Robert Gurr (1970). In practice, it includes such components as election office attacks, voter intimidation, and politically instigated unrest that was observed in the 2023 general elections in Abia State.



CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature review is a vital part of the academic research as it offers a detailed analysis of the academic information that is already available concerning the topic of the study. It helps the researcher to critically analyze past studies, theoretical viewpoints and conceptual debates that are related to the research problem. The review of literature helps the researcher to recognize the contribution of the previous scholars, comprehend the existing body of knowledge and provide the basis on which the current study is based.

Literature review plays a significant role in political science studies in elucidating some important concepts and theoretical views that describe political behaviour and institutional dynamics. Insecurity, political development and voter participation are some of the concepts that have been extensively studied by researchers in an effort to gain an insight into the operations of a democratic system. Through these interpretations and arguments of these scholars, the researcher can place the present study in the larger intellectual discourse concerning governance, democracy and political stability.

The problem of insecurity has been growing relevant in the political procedures and democratic governance in many developing countries. Security is generally considered as being one of the core duties of the state since it secures the lives and property of people as well as ensuring that there is stability of lives so that social, economic and political activities take place. Failure of the state to offer quality security can make the citizens fearful and uncertain and lose trust in the political institutions.



Over the last few decades, Nigeria has experienced an extensive number of security issues. These are the insurgency, terror, banditry, kidnapping, communal conflict and political

violence. These security threats have impacted several areas of the life of a nation such as economic growth, governance and democracy. A stable environment, especially during elections, is necessary so as to ensure that the citizens are given the freedom to exercise their right to vote without intimidation and violence.

The continuity of insecurity in various regions of Nigeria has thus brought concerns among scholars and the policymakers on the implication of the same concerning democratic governance and political participation. Some scholars say that insecurity compromises democratic consolidation because it destabilizes the political institutions and deters citizens to engage in the political process. As an example, Ted Robert Gurr (1970) describes that chronic violence and unrest undermine the state power and diminish the desire of the citizens to participate in the politics. On the same note, Samuel P. Huntington (1968) assumes that institutional effectiveness is undermined by political instability thus impacting democratic development. Moreover, electoral violence and insecurity have been also singled out as the factors that contributed to low voter turnout and low electoral legitimacy (Omotola, 2010; Onapajo, 2014).

Despite some of the studies that have been conducted to determine the relationship between insecurity and democratic governance in Nigeria, most studies emphasize more on the national or regional trends. Not many studies have done a close follow-up on particular areas of local governments where the impacts of insecurity may be immediately felt by people. However, local communities usually reflect the point at which the effects of insecurity on the political participation are most evident.



It is on this background that this chapter will conduct a literature review on the pertinent literature concerning the insecurity, political development, voter participation and political violence. The proposed purpose is to construct the conceptual and theoretical underpinnings that can be used to comprehend the relationship between insecurity and political development in Abia State. The chapter is subdivided into four major sections. The conceptual review of the main concepts in the study is considered in the first section. In the second section, the theoretical framework that informed the research is discussed. The third part is the empirical review of other scholars previously working on the related topics. Lastly, the chapter ends by identifying the literature gap that the current study is aimed to fill.

2.1 Conceptual Review

Insecurity

Security has been one of the main topics of literature concerning political and security matters, particularly in the developing societies where the security of lives and property is paramount. The stability of the society depends on security since it guarantees the safety of individuals, groups, and social institutions. On the other hand, when these protective measures are not effective, insufficient or missing, people would be susceptible to various risks, as they become insecure.

In their article, Achumba, Ighomereho, and Akpor-Robaro (2013) define insecurity as the absence of safety and protection of lives and property that is usually caused when the state is unable to offer adequate control. This definition brings into focus the very important role of state in providing security and the consequences of the failure of the state to do so.

Insecurity can be achieved in different ways; these are terrorism, insurgency,

kidnapping, armed robbery, communal conflicts, and political violence. These threats not only threaten the lives of humans but also affects the economy, undermines social institutions, and undermines the trust of people to the government. This may deny citizens the liberty to engage in the normal life and political processes, such as voting.

Insecurity is prevalent in the Nigerian setting, and regional. When the North-East is insurgent and the North-West is bandit-ridden, the South-East is struggling with security issues associated with separatist movements and sit-at-home directives. In Umuahia North and Aba south, local governments, those problems have caused fear and uncertainty which directly influence civic engagement and voter turnout.

In addition to the physical threats, there are also psychological aspects of insecurity, including fear and mistrust. The citizens can portray not attending a social or political event e.g. election because of the perceived danger. Insecurity is not simply having the violence, but also loss of confidence in the capacity of the state to offer protection and therefore, diminished involvement in the political processes and undermining of the democratic rule.

In this research, insecurity is perceived as the unending fear of political violence, intimidation, and unrests like sit-at-home orders, which deter the citizens to engage in civic activities in the Umuahia North and Aba South Local Government Areas of Abia State.

Political Development

Political development is considered to be the expansion and intensification of the political institutions, procedures and the citizens engagement within a society. It usually stresses on the establishment of a stable, efficient, and responsive political



system to the needs of citizens.

It is the institutionalization of political organizations and processes in that political institutions are stable, flexible, autonomous and coherent (Huntington, 1968) in that political institutions can effectively manage conflicts and keep order.

The political development is strongly linked with democratic governance, which is based on the efficient institutions and the involvement of citizens. People participate in political activities, including voting, debating, and policymaking, whereas major institutions, such as the legislature, the judiciary and the election system, are effective.

Political development can however be compromised by instability and disorder. Weak institutions, insecurity and violence reduce confidence among the people and it could transform politics into a force and intimidation system, as Huntington (1968) observes. Insecurity, thus, has a direct impact on the desire of citizens to engage in political activities, such as voting.

Involvement of the citizens in the decision-making processes also shows political development. The greater the involvement of the citizens in civic and political activities, the better the democratic system becomes strong and healthy. Political development is a slow process mostly in less developed countries like Nigeria where there is lack of insecurity to the running of institutions and people are discouraged to take part.

In this study, political development is viewed within the context of Huntington that views political development as a way of increasing the power of democratic institutions and processes by increasing voter participation. Therefore, the extent to which insecurity impacts the voter turnout in Umuahia North and the Aba South

Local Government Areas can be used as a guide to understand the way in which insecurity impacts political development at the grassroots level.

Voter Participation

Electoral participation which is also called voter participation is part and parcel of democracy since citizens participate by electing political leaders or even by influencing the government policies, using their votes.

Verba, Schlozman, and Brady (1995) describe political participation as those activities, which citizens engage in to manipulate governmental decision making such as election of political leaders. Of these functions, the voting is the most urgent and the most significant as it enables the citizens to voice their political preferences. Equally, Powell (1986) refers to the voter participation as the quotient of registered voters that vote during an election. High turnout may be a sign of trust of the democratic institutions and high civic responsibility, and the low turnout may be the sign of political disinterest, lack of satisfaction, or fear.

Democracy in terms of vote participation is very crucial in legitimizing democratic regimes. The masses of people who choose their leaders through election indicates a wide support to elected leaders, whereas low turnouts may question the validity and acceptability of the received election outcomes. The number of factors affecting voter turnout is very high; they are political awareness, institutional trust, socio economical conditions, electoral laws and security environment. Of these, security is one of the most important ones given that citizens should be provided with a secure environment to exercise their rights to vote without intimidation or violence.

According to scholars like Omotola (2010) and Onapajo (2014), the electoral malpractice, political violence, voter intimidation, and insecurity are some of the

fundamental reasons on which the electoral participation in Nigeria is based. Fear of violence or conflict in the election process tends to deter voter attendance in the polling units hence the voter turnout is low as well as the electoral process loses its credibility.

Although these can be seen, there is a gap in the literature in analyzing the impacts of insecurity as a specific factor on voter turnout at the local governmental level, especially in Umuahia North and Aba South. .

Voter participation in this research will be determined by the level of voter turnout in the 2023 general elections in Umuahia North and Aba South Local Government Areas and the associated effect of insecurity on the intentions of citizens to vote in the elections.

Political Violence

Political violence is a major concept that aids in putting the association between insecurity and political participation. It may be said as the application of force, intimidation or coercion to fulfill political aims.

Gurr (1970) refers to political violence as a planned attack on political institutions, authorities or policies. Such activities can either be in the form of riots, assassination, armed insurgency or electoral violence. Political violence is mostly a consequence of a group of people feeling marginalized, deprived or in some way dissatisfied with the political system and it is sometimes adopted as a means of airing grievances or even influencing the political results.

Political violence can also occur during elections where voters are intimidated,

attacked by political adversaries, their electoral material are burnt, and there is interference with the electoral process. These actions are not only a threat to lives, but also undermine integrity and credibility of elections.

A research conducted by Omotola (2010) and Ibrahim (2017) reveals that Nigeria has had repetitive trends of political violence in the voting process. They involve political backers coming into conflict with each other, attacks on electoral observers, and burning down of election materials. These incidences inspire fear in citizens who in most cases, turn away as a result of the fear caused by these incidences. Political violence thus poses grave consequences to the democratic system of governance since they can diminish voter participation and diminish the credibility of the election results.

Although there has been a lot of research on the issue of political violence in Nigeria, only a few studies concentrate on the particular effects of the same on the voter turnout in the grass root level, especially in the local government here in the Umuahia North and Aba South.

In this study, political violence is operationalized, whereby, intimidation, attacks on election institutions, and election interference in Abia State, in Umuahia North and Aba South Local Government Areas are applied in the 2023 general elections.

2.2 Theoretical Review

Theory framework The collection of theories that offers the analytical basis of a research problem is known as theory framework. Theories in political science research aid in explaining the relationship between variables and also give the researcher a framework with which the empirical observations are interpreted. When it comes to this research, the correlation between insecurity and political

development, especially voter turnout, can be elucidated with the help of various theoretical viewpoints.

This research uses three theories that are pertinent and that assist in explaining the effect of insecurity on political behaviour and democratic participation. These theses are Relative Deprivation Theory, Political Culture Theory and Rational Choice Theory. All these theories provide practical insights into the idea why insecurity can turn away citizens away participating in political processes including elections.

Relative Deprivation Theory

In his landmark work, *Why Men Rebel*, published in 1970, Ted Robert Gurr, came up with Relative Deprivation Theory. The theory can be used to explain the cause of political violence and social unrest by emphasizing on the disparity between what people think they should get and what they actually get in a society.

The theory states that people and groups will be frustrated when there is a great gap between the expectation and the real conditions of their lives. Anger and resentment are developed when human beings perceive deprivation in terms of opportunities, rights, or resources which they feel that they have a right to receive. All of these sentiments may ultimately result in demonstrations, bloodshed, or other political uncertainties.

Relative deprivation does not imply that one is in relative poverty or that they lack resources. Rather it is the feeling of being unfairly disadvantaged with others or in relation to what one believes he or she should be doing. When masses of people are affected by such frustrations, chances of collective violence are high. This can lead to political tensions, rebellion, demonstrations and violence on governmental institutions.

Insecurity (relates to deprivation, inequality and dissatisfaction with governance) is a common occurrence in a lot of developing states. If the citizens are of the opinion that the government has not been able to deliver these fundamental services like security, job opportunities, and social welfare, then they may lose faith in the political system. This discontent may be expressed by violent behaviors against the state, or support of movements that criticize the authority of the state.

The applicability of Relative Deprivation Theory to the proposed research is that it offers an explanation of the causes of insecurity and political violence. Unemployment, economic disparity, marginalization and lack of perceived justice have in the case of the Nigerian context been among the reasons why there has been a variety of insecurity such as, insurgency, separatists movements and communal wars. These security issues bring instability to the environment which influences democratic processes.

Whenever a political violence and insecurity prevails in an area, there is a possibility that the citizens will form fear and mistrust over the political institutions. People may be scared of the threat of attacks, being intimidated or being disrupted to vote, thus they may not turn out to vote during elections. Consequently, the voter turnout could drastically reduce in the regions where there is high insecurity.

The availability of political tensions and security threats like in the case of Abia State especially in the Umuahia North and Aba South Local Government Areas may affect the readiness of the citizens to engage in elections. Sit-at-home policies and violence reports in the South-East might lead to a feeling of insecurity among the citizens and thus deteriorate political activities.

Relative Deprivation Theory thus comes in handy to define how social frustration and



dissatisfaction may result into insecurity, which consequently influence political participation and democratic development. The theory is a valuable guideline in explaining how insecurity may undermine political development process by depleting voter participation at the grass-root level.

Political Culture Theory

The Political Culture Theory was developed by Gabriel Almond and Sidney Verba (1963) to describe the role of citizens orientations, values, and attitudes to political systems in the political behaviour.

According to Political Culture Theory, political attitudes and behaviours of people constitute a major factor that would help determine the stability and effectiveness of any political system. Political culture is used to describe the beliefs and values that are shared among people and their emotional attachment that influence the perception and response of people to political affairs.

According to Almond and Verba (1963), political culture can be of three forms and these are parochial, subject, and participant political cultures. In parochial political culture, the citizens are not concerned about politics. The citizens of a subject political culture know about the political institutions but are mostly inactive. On the contrary, participant political culture is typified by the active participation of the citizens in political events like voting, political debate, and civic participation.

Democracies perform well in the society where the political culture of the participants is predominant since citizens are likely to be accountable and responsive to the governing mechanisms. The culture is usually observed through high voter turn out.

Nonetheless, insecurity may affect political culture in a negative way, as it may

determine the attitude and perception of the citizens on political participation. Constant violence, threats, and political unsteadiness can cause the citizens to fear, mistrust and lose interest in politics. Consequently, people can get negative attitude towards political participation and become less eager to vote.

Omotola (2010) and Ibrahim (2017) note that electoral violence in Nigeria has been a factor in reduced participation in politics since people simply do not want to participate in politics due to fear of being targeted and killed. This illustrates the impacts that insecurity may have an indirect influence on political culture through its effects on the political orientation and behaviour of the citizens.

Therefore, instead of addressing the availability of safe environment only, Political Culture Theory dwells on the fact that political socialization and experiences, including exposure to insecurity influence attitudes of citizens towards participation.

As applied in this study, insecurity in Abia state and especially Umuahia North and Aba South, may impact on how citizens will view elections, thus decreasing the number of people who turn up to vote.

Rational Choice Theory

Another useful theoretical perspective that is applied to describe political behaviour and decision-making is the Rational Choice Theory. Anthony Downs authored an influential book titled, *An Economic Theory of Democracy*, in 1957, and this was the development of this theory.

Rational Choice Theory presupposes that people make choices according to the rational calculations that will maximize the good and minimize the costs. Under political behaviour, the citizens make decisions on whether to take part in political activities or not depending on their perception of possible benefits and risks.

The theory also explains that voting is a political behaviour whereby individuals consider the possible utility of participation relative to the costs involved in participating after which they make their decision. The rewards can include affecting the decisions made by the government, sponsoring candidates of choice or promoting democratic rule. But there are also costs of voting which includes time, efforts, transportation and there is the risk which could be incurred.

Perceived costs of participation might be more than the perceived benefits thus individuals might avoid participation in elections. This is the case that usually results in low electoral turnout and voter apathy.

The cost of voting is high in a political environment where there is an occurrence of insecurity and political violence. There is a risk of citizens being afraid of physical attacks, intimidation or harassment in the polling stations. In that case, people can make a logical choice to not take part in elections due to their own safety reasons.

The applicability of the Rational Choice Theory to this research is that it can be used to explain the impact of insecurity on voter behavior. Once people feel that by turning up to vote, they subject themselves to threats like violence or being intimidated, they might find that the expenses are too high and offer no benefits and thus they choose not to vote.

When voters feel that visiting polling centers is risking their lives to possible violence or even conflict, they might arrive at the conclusion that the danger is more than the benefits of voting. Therefore, they might either avoid the electoral process.

In Nigeria, electoral violence cases, intimidation and disruptions have been witnessed in different elections. These incidences make the voting procedure seem more risky and can deter citizens to vote. As a result, the number of voters is low in

the regions with insecurity.

In the United Abia State Umuahia North and Aba South Local Government Areas, the issue of security during the 2023 general elections might have affected votes. Citizens might have rationally determined against voting in case they felt that they were going to be exposed to violence or threats once they voted.

The relationship between insecurity and the participation of the voter therefore has a rational explanation by the Rational Choice Theory. This theory focuses on the fact that the citizens base their political choice on the cost and benefit analysis, and in case the insecurity increases the risks of participating, the voter turnout can go down.

2.3 Thematic Review

2.3.1 Insecurity and Voter Turnout

The vote is known as one of the most visible forms of democracy participation and political development. It signifies how ready and able citizens are to participate in electoral processes in order to have an influence on governance. Where elections are held in a democratic environment, there is an expectation that they are held in peace, security and trust, with citizens not afraid to vote. But when insecurity is an entrenched aspect of the political climate, it can have a negative impact on voter turnout.

Insecurity, as used here, covers a variety of forms of insecurity, including electoral violence, armed attack, kidnapping, intimidation, destruction of electoral material and disruptive political activity like enforced stay-at-home orders. These circumstances foster a sense of anxiety within citizens, and lower their intent to vote. Perceived threats to life and safety can overcome civic motivation, even when citizens are politically aware and motivated to vote, and result in voter apathy.

This relationship is always confirmed in scholarly literature. Evidence from the literature, however, suggests that electoral violence undermines the citizens' confidence in the electoral process, which ultimately instills a sense of insecurity in them and reduces their trust of democratic legitimacy (Omotola, 2010). Similarly, Onapajo (2014) points out that violent and intimidatory acts are instrumentalised by political players to achieve their desired goals, and this further diminishes the number of voters, particularly in competitive elections.

Low turnout is also partly due to the fact of political violence that is not intentionally committed, but widespread in society. If communities face frequent security challenges, they come to link together the community with danger, even at election time. This perception is especially strong in weak institutional protection fragile democracies. Consequently, elections are not only seen as civic responsibility, but also as a risky activity.

This has been seen in several election cycles in Nigeria. The regions where there is violence or increases in tension tend to show much lower voter turnout than those with a less volatile security situation. This trend underscores the close connection between the sense of insecurity and disaffection with the electoral process.

Hence, in addition to the physical impeding on access to polling stations, insecurity undermines the behavior of citizens to participate in elections in a democratic system, which is another very critical factor in determining voter turnout.

2.3.2 Insecurity and Political Development

Political development is defined as the transformation of political systems into more



stable, institutionalised, participatory and effective management of public affairs. It encompasses the empowerment of democratic institutions, increase in political participation, consolidation of the rule of law, and boost of responsiveness of governance.

Political development is a key function of a stable security environment. Democratic processes are influenced by the absence of security, and political institutions are unable to function without security. Huntington (1968) notes that "political development is highly reliant on the institutionalization of political structures that will ensure order and stability. Institutions become ineffective and lose legitimacy in contexts of insecurity.

Insecurity has several impacts on political development. First, it erodes citizens' confidence in government. The state that doesn't do its job of ensuring the safety of lives and property starts losing its acceptance and effectiveness. This lack of trust decreases political participation and undermines the building of democracy.

Second, people who feel insecure are less likely to be engaged in civic activities. Active participation of citizens in governance processes like voting, public debate, and accountability mechanisms is essential to political development. Yet when insecurity becomes pervasive, citizens tend to become disaffirmative of their right to participate in politics for fear and frustration.

Third, insecurity affects the priorities of the government. Rather than investing in development-oriented governance, including investment in infrastructure, education and institutional reforms, governments invest significant resources into security management. This reallocation hinders overall political and socio-economic development.



In Nigeria, the ongoing insecurity has created its impact on governance and consolidation of democracy. Political institutions have been hampered by insecurity, which has been a major challenge in numerous parts of the country from insurgency in the North-East to communal clashes and the existence of separatist groups in others.

In Abia State, security issues like politically motivated violence, and sit-at-home have been challenges to governance and political participation. Insecurity at the grassroots level should not be ignored in relation to political development, especially with respect to Umuahia North and Aba South of the state because of these factors.

2.3.3 Political Violence and Electoral Participation

Political violence is an explicit manifestation of insecurity in the political process. The use of force, intimidation, and/or coercion to accomplish political ends or to impact election results is defined as "using force or intimidation. It could involve voter intimidation, disruption of the voting process, destruction of election materials, violence between political groups and attacks on political actors or the voters themselves.

Elections can be marred by political violence, which is a major deterrent to electoral participation. The more people think violence, intimidation and/or harassment will happen when they vote, the less likely they are to vote. This leads to a state of fear instead of civic duty and, thus, less voter turnout.

In several political systems the use of violence is a carefully planned instrument for the political elite to attack the opposition's bastion or influence the vote. This practice is a violation of democracy and this compromises the legitimacy of elections. This can lead to citizens' disaffection from the political process because



they do not trust that it is fair and safe.

Omotola (2010) notes that electoral violence has constantly hindered voter participation and the legitimacy of elections in Nigeria. Likewise, Ibrahim (2017) believes that the constant threat of violence during elections discourages citizens from voting and degrades citizens' trust in democratic institutions. Onapajo (2014) also notes that political violence is frequently used as a means to determine election results, resulting in a diminution of actual participation.

Political violence has far-reaching effects beyond just on the day of the shooting. It also influences longer-term political actions, such as apathy, distrust and disengagement from governance processes. Repeated exposure to electoral violence increases the likelihood that citizens will drop out of politics altogether.

Therefore, political violence is a vital channel that impacts directly on electoral involvement and democratic stability through insecurity.

2.3.4 Security Challenges in South-East Nigeria and Abia State Context

The South-East geopolitical zone of Nigeria has been plagued by frequent security crises over the past few years and this has significantly impacted on the socio-political and electoral activities of the zone. These challenges are separatist related tensions, implementation of sit at home, communal conflicts, politically instigated violence etc. Such situations have fostered a climate of fear and uncertainty in the region.

In Abia State, the security problems have manifested themselves in political participation in the local government areas of Aba South and Umuahia North. Sit-at-home orders, frequently ignored by non-state actors, have affected normal economic and political life, particularly electoral activity. In a few cases, citizens have not



gotten involved in the public because they feared confrontation or attacks.

The 2023 general elections also showed that insecurity is stifling electoral participation in the South-East. The turnout of voters differed depending upon the report from different observers, partly because of security concerns in some areas. This implies that lack of security continues as an obstacle to democratic participation in the region.

Though these observations have been made, there is limited empirical studies carried out locally but with a focus on the security factors that influence voter turnout and political development in particular local government areas like Umuahia North and Aba South. Existing studies are predominantly at the national or regional level, with little attention given to the grassroots level.

The study thus places itself in this gap by investigating the effect of insecurity on voter turnout and political development of Umuahia North and Aba South Local Government Areas from 2022-2025.

2.4 Empirical Review

Empirical literature entails those studies that were carried out by scholars based on observable data that were used to investigate certain research issues. The study of the available empirical literature enables the researcher to know what other scholars have done in exploring the same issues, the way they did it, and the results they came up with. It also aids in determining the weaknesses of the past research and how the present study can help in bridging the gaps.

The linkage of insecurity and political violence with democratic participation in Nigeria has been considered by a number of scholars. The subsequent works are valuable in the context of the problem.



Alozie et al. (2025) in their article titled, The Political Economy of Electoral Violence and Outcomes in Nigeria: A Study of the 2019 and 2023 Gubernatorial Elections in Abia State, examined the impact of electoral violence on election outcomes in Abia State through a mixed-method design based on the data collected on 400 respondents working in urban centres such as Aba and Umuahia. They discovered that the electoral outcomes and insecurity were increased by the political actors using violence to achieve electoral gains and that violence shapes electoral outcomes and citizen confidence in voting in Abia State.

Eme-Uche, Aja and Okonkwo (2020) in their article, Electoral Security and Voter-Turnout in the 2019 Gubernatorial Election in Abia State, applied qualitative methods and primary data to determine the way electoral security influenced voter-decision making in the 2019 gubernatorial election in Abia State. They found out that high levels of thugs and coercive measures decreased the voter confidence and low turnout due to the fear of the electorate.

Adewura, Owhe, Mbukanma and Yiseyon (2025), in their article entitled Insecurity and Electoral Participation in Southwest and Southeast Nigeria, used secondary data to determine the effect of various types of insecurity on voter turnout in the 2023 general elections. They established that continued intimidation, violence and fear had negative effects on voter turn out in the two regions including the Southeast which Abia falls within implying that the insecurity denies voters the motivation and resources to turn up.

Igbozor (2011) in his research article explored the problem of insecurity in Nigeria in a study that he called Peace and Security Education: A Critical Factor to Sustainable Peace and National Development. The researcher relied on secondary data that was gathered in the form of government publications, scholarly literature and reports that

were made by civil society organizations. The research was based on the qualitative analysis to investigate the reasons and effects of insecurity in Nigeria. The evidence showed that insecurity is a major problem to national progress and even democratic rule by undermining institutions and demoralization of the civic participation. The research also asserted that the issue of insecurity weakens the trust of the citizen towards the government and reduces the number of the citizens who are involved in the governance procedures. But the analysis of the impact of insecurity on the local government level with respect to voter turnout was not given in detail in the study and the current study attempts to do so.

Omotola (2010) in his research, discussed electoral violence in Nigeria which was titled Electoral Violence in Nigeria: The Threat to Democratic Consolidation. The research took the secondary sources of data like election reports, newspaper publications and academic literature. The scholar employed descriptive and analytical procedures to investigate the trends of violence in elections in Nigeria. The results indicated that electoral violence has been a recurrent aspect of the Nigerian elections and it has led to reduced levels of confidence of the electoral institutions by the population. The research also indicated that election violence scares away electorate who may otherwise take part in the voting exercise. Nevertheless, the study concentrated on electoral violence on the national level and did not consider its impacts at the local government level which is the objective of the present study in the case of Umuahia North and Aba South.

Onapajo (2014) in his research titled Violence and Votes in Nigeria: The Dominance of Incumbents in the Use of Violence to Rig Elections. The researcher relied on secondary data in the form of election reports, political analysis and scholarly literature. The researcher embraced qualitative analysis techniques in order to



explore the use of violence by political elites to determine the results of the electoral processes. The results indicated that political violence is frequently employed as a tactic by political players in order to scare electorate and control elections. The research also observed that such violence makes the citizens not to vote because they are intimidated. The research, however, looked majorly at the role played by political elites in elections violence and failed to specifically examine how insecurity influences the participation of the grassroots in the process of voting in particular communities, which the current research aims to examine.

Ngwangwu (2015), in his study titled Political Violence and Democratic Stability in Nigeria, in which he investigated the connection between insecurity and governance in Nigeria. The research was based on secondary sources of data such as reports on elections, academic literature and government publications. Content analysis was the method which the researcher employed to investigate the effects of political violence on democratic governance. The results showed that long term insecurity undermines democratic institutions and demoralizes citizens to take part in the governing processes. The research established that a democratic system is compromised by the presence of violence during election times. Nevertheless, the study was primarily concerned with the national politics and did not look at the specific impacts of insecurity on voter turnout in local government localities, an analysis that is sought in this study.

Ibrahim (2017) in his study titled Democracy and Electoral Violence in Nigeria. . The research was based on the secondary data sources in the form of election observation reports, scholarly journals and political commentaries. The scholar used qualitative analysis in order to explore the role of electoral violence in the democratic governance in Nigeria. The results indicated that electoral violence discourages voter



turnout and undermines the democratic legitimacy. The paper also highlighted that the security issues in the course of elections undermine the trust of the population in the elections. The study did not however study the precise correlation between insecurity and political development at the grassroots level which is the study of the current research.

International Crisis Group (2023) in their report titled Mitigating Risks of Violence in Nigeria in the 2023 Elections, analyzed the risks of violence in his 2023 election. The report embraced secondary data incorporated in form of security reports, election monitoring data and interviews by field researchers. The researcher used analytical and descriptive approaches to analyse the security threats posed before the 2023 general elections. The results showed that insecurity, such as political violence and separatists, was a major problem to the manner of conducting elections in some regions within the country. The report also pointed out that low voter turnout in certain areas was among the factors that were caused by security fears. The report however laid more emphasis on national and regional trends and did not give detailed analysis of the impact of insecurity on individual local government areas like Umuahia North and Aba South as is the case of the present study.

2.5 Literature Gap

The literature reviewed shows that many scholars have devoted much effort to the issues of insecurity, political violence, democratic governance and electoral participation in Nigeria. Previous research has shown that insecurity has detrimental consequences for democratic processes as it instills fear and reduces citizens' trust in political institutions, and hinders engagement in electoral processes. Omotola (2010), Onapajo (2014), Ngwangwu (2015), Ibrahim (2017) and International Crisis Group (2023) have illustrated that electoral violence and other forms of insecurity



are a key challenge to democratic consolidation in Nigeria.

Even with these contributions, many deficiencies still exist in the literature. First, most of the available studies focus on the national or regional level, thus generalizing findings which may not reflect the unique experiences of particular local communities. Therefore, the literature is scarce on the impact of insecurity on political development at the grassroots in areas directly affected by its impact on the lives of citizens.

Second, although the link between insecurity and democratic governance has been explored in previous work, most work has been restrictive in its focus on electoral violence or governance outcomes or political instability. There has been little focus on the issue of voter turnout as a quantifiable measure of political development, especially at a local government area level. This leaves a lack of understanding about the extent to which insecurity affects citizens' willingness to engage in electoral processes.

Third, the security issues that have beset the South-East region in recent times, such as sit-at-home orders, election-related fears and tensions arising from separatist activities, have added new layers to the insecurity and political participation nexus. However, empirical studies that focus on how these new security concerns impact voter turnout in Abia State are lacking.

In addition, most of the previous studies were conducted with secondary data sources, which were difficult to capture citizens' perceptions and experiences affected by insecurity. The present study therefore makes contributions to the knowledge because it has used primary data collected from the people of Umuahia North and Aba South Local Government Areas of the Federal Capital Territory to



determine the relationship between insecurity and political development.

This study examines the impact of insecurity on political development, taking the voter turnout in the 2023 general elections as an indicator of political participation in Umuahia North and Aba South of Abia State in the years 2022 to 2025 against the backdrop of the identified gaps.



CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

Methodology refers to the systematic framework and procedures that guide a research study, encompassing the methods, tools and processes involved in gathering, analyzing and interpreting data. According to the Oxford English Dictionary (OED, 2023), the term “methodology” derives from the Greek words *methodos*, meaning a path or a way, which itself is formed from *meta* (beyond or after) and *hodos* (path or journey), combined with *logy*, derived from *logia*, meaning the study or discourse of a subject.

Crotty (1998) observes that methodology is closely linked with terms such as strategy, plan of action, process, or design that underlie the selection and application of specific research methods, providing the philosophical foundation of a study. Similarly, Kothari (2004) defines methodology as the systematic approach to resolving a research problem, which not only examines methods but also the rationale behind their selection. In this context, Clough and Nutbrown (2012) describe methodology as the overarching approach to investigating a research topic, bridging the gap between theoretical reasoning and practical research design.

Furthermore, Silverman (2013) emphasizes that methodology extends beyond the mere application of techniques; it concerns the guiding principles that ensure the rigor, reliability, and validity of research findings. Collectively, these definitions highlight that methodology is not solely about tools or techniques, but also about the strategic planning and justification of the research approach, ensuring that the study’s objectives are systematically and ethically achieved.

In this chapter, the methodology adopted for investigating the impact of insecurity on political development and voter participation in Umuahia North and Aba South Local Government Areas between 2022 and 2025 will be outlined, including the theoretical framework, research design, data collection methods, analysis techniques and the logical framework guiding the study.

3.1 Theoretical Framework

Theories are fundamentally important in research as they provide explanations and predictions about social phenomena, thereby enabling the researcher to understand and interpret the realities encountered in the field of study. There are variations in the definitions of theory; however, a common thread among scholars is that theory offers a conceptual framework for research and plays a crucial role in the formulation of hypotheses.

According to Hughes (2009), a theory is described as a set of related concepts, definitions, and propositions that explain or predict events or situations by specifying relationships among variables. This definition emphasizes the explanatory and predictive functions of theory within a given discipline. Similarly, Blaikie (2007) posits that theory is a systematically organized body of ideas about observed phenomena, which guides how researchers interpret and analyze data. This perspective underscores that theories not only explain phenomena but also provide a framework for understanding research findings.

Furthermore, Giddens (2013), in the context of the social sciences, views theory as a means of organizing knowledge and linking empirical observations with broader general principles. In this regard, theories are often derived from observations, empirical evidence, and previously established ideas, thereby enabling researchers to

explain complex social realities. However, Popper (2002) argues that for a theory to be considered scientific, it must be falsifiable; that is, it should generate testable propositions that can be empirically verified or refuted. This highlights the dynamic and evolving nature of theories in research.

Consequently, the theory adopted for this study is the Rational Choice Theory, which provides an appropriate analytical framework for understanding individual voting behaviour and participation within the context of insecurity.

3.1.1 Rational Choice Theory

Rational Choice Theory is one of the most influential theoretical approaches in political science and economics, particularly in the analysis of individual decision-making processes. The theory is primarily associated with Anthony Downs, who systematically developed it in his seminal work *An Economic Theory of Democracy* published in 1957. Downs (1957) applied economic principles to political behaviour, arguing that individuals act rationally by making decisions that maximize their personal benefits while minimizing costs.

At its core, Rational Choice Theory assumes that individuals are rational actors who possess clear preferences and make calculated decisions based on available information. According to Downs (1957), voting is a product of a cost-benefit analysis, where individuals evaluate the expected gains from participating in an election against the potential costs involved. These costs may include time, effort, financial expenses, and even physical risks, while the benefits may involve influencing electoral outcomes, supporting preferred candidates, or fulfilling civic duties.

Further expanding on this perspective, scholars such as Riker and Ordeshook (1968)

introduced the concept of the “calculus of voting,” which suggests that an individual will decide to vote if the perceived benefits outweigh the costs. They also incorporated the idea of a sense of civic duty as an additional motivating factor that may influence participation, even when the direct benefits appear minimal. This contribution helped to refine the theory by acknowledging that not all political behaviour is purely materialistic but may also be influenced by psychological and normative considerations.

Moreover, Green and Shapiro (1994) argue that Rational Choice Theory provides a systematic and logically consistent framework for understanding political behaviour, particularly in democratic settings where individuals are faced with multiple alternatives. The theory emphasizes the role of incentives, constraints, and strategic thinking in shaping decisions, thereby offering a structured explanation for variations in political participation across different contexts.

However, the theory has also been subject to criticism. Some scholars contend that it oversimplifies human behaviour by assuming that individuals always act rationally and have access to complete information. Others argue that it underestimates the influence of social norms, emotions, and cultural factors in shaping political actions. Despite these criticisms, Rational Choice Theory remains a widely used and relevant framework in political analysis, especially in studies focusing on voting behaviour and participation.

Finally, Rational Choice Theory provides a comprehensive explanation of how individuals make decisions based on the evaluation of costs and benefits, making it a valuable theoretical tool for understanding political participation in various contexts.

3.2 Application of the Theory

The Rational Choice Theory provides a relevant analytical framework for understanding the relationship between insecurity and political development, particularly in the area of voter participation in Umuahia North and Aba South Local Government Areas between 2022 and 2025. The central assumption of the theory—that individuals act based on cost-benefit calculations—offers a clear basis for explaining how insecurity influences electoral behaviour.

In the context of this study, insecurity introduces significant “costs” to political participation. Elections, which are expected to be civic exercises, become high-risk activities in environments characterized by threats such as electoral violence, intimidation, kidnapping, and general instability. As a result, the decision to vote is no longer based solely on civic responsibility or political preference, but increasingly on personal safety considerations. Voters are therefore compelled to weigh the potential benefits of voting—such as influencing leadership and governance—against the risks associated with participating in the electoral process.

Applying the logic of Downs (1957), when the perceived cost of voting outweighs its expected benefits, rational individuals are more likely to abstain from participating in elections. In areas experiencing insecurity, the fear of harm or disruption can significantly increase the perceived cost of voting. For instance, if voters believe that their physical safety is threatened at polling units or along transit routes, they may rationally decide to withdraw from the process entirely. This results in reduced voter turnout, which directly affects the democratic process.

Furthermore, the calculus of voting as advanced by Riker and Ordeshook (1968) becomes particularly relevant in this context. While civic duty may ordinarily motivate

individuals to vote, the presence of insecurity weakens this motivation. The psychological burden of fear can override the sense of civic obligation, thereby reducing participation even among politically conscious citizens. In this way, insecurity disrupts not only the physical act of voting but also the psychological willingness to engage in political processes.

In addition, the application of Rational Choice Theory helps to explain variations in voter participation within the study areas. Individuals or groups who perceive themselves to be more vulnerable to insecurity—such as the elderly, women, or those living in high-risk locations—may be less likely to participate in elections compared to those who perceive lower levels of risk. This uneven participation further distorts electoral outcomes and undermines the representativeness of the democratic system.

Beyond voter turnout, the theory also provides insight into the broader concept of political development. Political development, which encompasses elements such as political participation, institutional stability, and democratic consolidation, is adversely affected when a significant portion of the population withdraws from the electoral process. Low voter turnout reduces the legitimacy of elected officials and weakens public confidence in democratic institutions. Consequently, governance becomes less inclusive and less responsive to the needs of the people.

Moreover, insecurity may also influence the behaviour of political actors, including candidates and electoral officials, who may adjust their strategies based on perceived risks. For example, political campaigns may be limited in scope, voter mobilization efforts may decline, and electoral administration may be compromised in insecure areas. These dynamics further reinforce the argument that insecurity imposes systemic costs on the political process, thereby hindering political

development.

The theory also accounts for the possibility that some individuals may still choose to participate despite insecurity. In such cases, the perceived benefits—such as strong political interest, party loyalty, or expected material gains—may outweigh the risks involved. However, these instances are often exceptions rather than the norm, particularly in highly insecure environments. This selective participation can lead to biased electoral outcomes, where only certain segments of the population are adequately represented.

In the specific case of Umuahia North and Aba South Local Government Areas, the presence of insecurity within the study period can be understood as a critical factor shaping voter behaviour. The Rational Choice framework suggests that fluctuations in voter turnout across elections within this period may be directly linked to variations in the level of insecurity experienced. As insecurity intensifies, participation is likely to decline; conversely, improvements in security conditions may encourage greater electoral involvement.

In summary, the application of Rational Choice Theory to this study demonstrates that insecurity significantly alters the cost-benefit structure of voting, leading to reduced voter participation and, by extension, weakened political development. By framing electoral behaviour as a rational response to prevailing conditions, the theory provides a logical and coherent explanation for the observed relationship between insecurity and democratic outcomes in the study area.

3.3 HYPOTHESES

The following are the hypotheses to be used as tool for this research work:

1. There is a significant negative relationship between insecurity and voter turnout

in Umuahia North and Aba South Local Government Areas between 2022 and 2025.

2. There is a negative relationship between insecurity and political development in Umuahia North and Aba South Local Government Areas between 2022 and 2025.

3.4 Research Design

The study adopts ex post facto research design. Ex post facto research design is a descriptive (non-experimental) research design that seeks to determine cause and effect relationships by examining the relationships of existing conditions or events after they have happened. Ex post facto research is a research method used to discover relationships between variables after the events have occurred and the independent variable has not been manipulated (Kerlinger, 1973).

The present study looks at insecurity and political development in Umuahia North and Aba South Local Government Areas of Abia State. The study looks at voter turnout and political participation as they relate to the 2023 general election, as well as the period before and after the 2023 general election, in the period 2022 – 2025. Given the nature of the events in the study, which cannot be influenced by the researcher, the study was based on secondary data sources including Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) reports, security agency records, newspaper publications and other documented materials.

In this study, the ex post facto design is used to enable the researcher to compare the available evidence of the insecurity and how it relates to voting without manipulating it. The present study is not experimental research in which a variable is manipulated or controlled, but rather a research in naturally-occurring events and historical events. Hence, an ex post facto design is appropriate for conducting the

analysis of the relationship between insecurity and political development using existing data and observed results.

3.5 Method of Data Collection

This study employs a secondary data collection approach, which is consistent with qualitative research methods. Secondary data are obtained from existing and credible sources, including academic journals, books, government publications, electoral commission (INEC) reports, policy documents, media reports, and publications from civil society and international organizations. These sources provide valuable information on electoral processes, voter turnout, insecurity, and political development within Umuahia North and Aba South Local Government Areas during the period 2022–2025.

The use of secondary data is particularly appropriate for this study because it focuses on analyzing already existing patterns and historical developments, rather than conducting primary field surveys or interviews. By relying on these sources, the study can capture a comprehensive and multi-faceted understanding of the impact of insecurity on voter participation and political development. Additionally, secondary data allow the researcher to incorporate diverse perspectives and documented evidence, ensuring that findings are grounded in reliable and verifiable information.

Overall, this approach provides a systematic and cost-effective means to examine the phenomena under study while maintaining the rigor and credibility required for scholarly research.

3.6 Method of Data Analysis

This study will employ qualitative content analysis to examine the secondary data collected. Content analysis involves the systematic review and interpretation of

textual materials from sources such as electoral commission (INEC) reports, government publications, policy documents, media reports, academic literature, and publications from relevant agency.

Through categorization and thematic coding, the study will identify recurring patterns, significant themes, and underlying narratives regarding the impact of insecurity on voter participation and political development in Umuahia North and Aba South Local Government Areas between 2022 and 2025. This approach allows the researcher to uncover both explicit and latent meanings embedded within the documents, providing a nuanced understanding of voter behaviour and political dynamics.

The use of qualitative content analysis is particularly suitable for this study because it enables detailed insights into complex social and political phenomena where numerical data may be limited or insufficient. By interpreting textual evidence, the study can reveal the contextual factors influencing voter decisions, the structural challenges posed by insecurity, and the implications for political development within the study area.

Overall, this method ensures that the research captures a comprehensive, evidence-based understanding of the effects of insecurity on electoral participation and democratic consolidation.

3.7 Logical Data Framework (LDF)

The adoption of the Logical Data Framework (LDF) in this study improves the overall structure and organization of the research. It allows for clear allocation of tasks, aligns research objectives with data sources, and enhances communication

throughout the research process. The framework ensures a systematic approach to analyzing the effects of insecurity on voter participation and political development in the study area.

Table 1: The logical data framework

Research Question	Hypotheses	Major Variables of the Hypotheses: Independent (x) Dependent (y)	Empirical indicators of variables	Method of data collection	Sources of data	Method of data analysis
1. How has the issue of insecurity impacted voter turnout in Umuahia North and Aba South Local Government Areas in the period between 2022 and 2025?	There is a significant negative relationship between insecurity and voter turnout in Umuahia North and Aba South Local Government Areas between 2022 and 2025.	X= Insecurity Y= Voter Turnout	X = <i>violent attacks, kidnapping, electoral violence, security threats, intimidation at polling units</i> Y = <i>low voter turnout, voter apathy, reduced accreditation, fear of voting, low participation rate</i>	Document analysis and qualitative content review	Secondary sources-INEC reports and official statistics, legislation documents, academic journals, social media content	Thematic Analysis
2. What is the	There is a negative	X= Insecurity	X = <i>violent</i>	Document	Secondary	Thematic

relationship between the insecurity and political development in Umuahia North and Aba South local government areas between 2022 and 2025?.	relationship between insecurity and political development in Umuahia North and Aba South Local Government Areas between 2022 and 2025.	Y=Political Development	<i>attacks, kidnapping, electoral violence, security threats, political instability</i> Y = <i>low political participation, weak democratic processes, low public trust, poor electoral credibility, reduced political stability</i>	analysis and qualitative content review	sources-INEC reports and official statistics, legislation documents, academic Journals, Social media content	Analysis
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CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

4.1 There is a significant negative relationship between insecurity and voter turnout in Umuahia North and Aba South Local Government Areas between 2022 and 2025.

4.1.1 Insecurity and Voter Participation in Abia State

Insecurity is a significant factor shaping political processes in Nigeria, especially in the South-East region, including Abia State. Kidnapping, banditry, political violence and non-state armed group activities have contributed to a sense of insecurity. This has had a profound impact on voter turnout, with many people preferring to prioritise their safety over participating in elections.

In the Umuahia North and Aba South Local Government Areas, security issues have significantly impacted electoral participation between 2022 and 2025. Sit-at-home orders, threats of violence and occasional attacks on public spaces restricted mobility and inhibited political activities like electioneering and voter education. In the 2023 general elections, reports of voter intimidations and disturbances in some regions also led to a lower turnout rate, with residents choosing not to risk their safety to vote.

In addition to threats of violence, fear of insecurity also reduces voter turnout. Some potential voters fail to turn up at polling stations because they fear for their safety, thus increasing voter apathy. Furthermore, insecurity undermines the electoral process and erodes trust in democracy.

The upshot of this is that, when elections are seen as unsafe, people don't vote. It not only undermines the level of participation in democratic processes in Abia State but also the legitimacy of democratic rule.



4.1.2 Trends and Nature of Insecurity in Abia State

One of the most conspicuous cases of insecurity in Abia State is non-state actors' implementation of sit-at-home order. At first, ostensibly designed as political protest measures in the South-East, these measures gradually developed into means of coercion and intimidation. But in many parts of the State particularly in urban and commercial centres like Aba and Umuahia, the citizens and businessmen were forced to obey the orders because of the fear of violent attacks and reprisals. Threats were frequently made via social media text messages, public warnings, damage of property, beatings and even murders of people believed to be disobeying the directives. This meant that the designated days were often times when economic activities were paralysed, with the following: Transportation was disrupted, markets closed, schools closed, and government institutions closed, and there was a general fear and uncertainty.

These stay-at-home policies had a major impact on democratic engagement and political activities in the state. The personal safety of political actors and citizens has become a growing concern, disrupting political campaigns, rallies and voter mobilization efforts. In some communities, residents were scared of armed groups imposing compliance measures and avoided going to public places or exercising their freedom of movement. This situation posed challenges for political parties and electoral officials to undertake civic engagements and sensitization programmes ahead of the 2023 general elections. As a result, the public was also less involved in government and political activities, which resulted in voter apathy in certain parts of the state.



Moreover, several Police-stations, military checkpoints and other security formations in various parts of Abia State suffered repeated attacks. These attacks were frequently by heavily armed men aimed at security personnel, operational vehicles were destroyed and weapons were carted off. The events resulted in loss of lives and property and caused a loss of faith in security agencies' ability to ensure law and order. In certain instances, the members of the security forces were overstretched, leading to a decline in the quality of policing provided and allowing criminals to do their work more easily and with greater freedom in communities.

The public institutions and government facilities were also demolished, which added to the decline in security in the state. There were reports of attacks on local government secretariats, correctional facilities and offices associated with electoral administration, raising concerns about the security of the electoral institutions. The destruction and damage of public premises created a disruption of administrative activities and impact on the provision of essential public services. Worse, the threats against facilities related to electoral processes caused fear amongst electoral officials and voters, thereby threatening free, fair and credible elections.

Apart from the politically motivated killings, kidnaps, armed robbery and violent criminal activities were also on the rise in some parts of Abia State in the period of study. As in other parts of the country, commercial centres and semi-urban areas emerged as particularly weak spots, where criminal groups took advantage of the weak security environment for financial purposes. The incidents became more frequent and caused fear among the public and affected social and economic development of the state. All of these security problems contributed to an overall increase in the fear of citizens, which further reduced the trust of citizens in the government's ability to provide good security and to safeguard democratic



governance.



Table 2: Nature and Trends of Insecurity in Abia State (2022–2023)

Type of Incident	2022 (Reported Cases)	2023 (Reported Cases)	Observed Trend
Sit-at-home enforcement	12+	20+	Increased significantly
Attacks on security agencies	8+	15+	Sharp increase
Destruction of public facilities	6+	10+	Moderate increase
Kidnapping incidents	10+	18+	Increased
Armed robbery/violent crimes	9+	14+	Slight increase

Source: Compiled estimates from Nigerian Security Tracker, SBM Intelligence Reports, and ACLED (2023) by the researcher.

The table above reveals a rise in insecurity incidents in Abia State from 2022 to 2023. The most substantial increase was in sit-at-home enforcement, from 12+ to more than 20 cases between 2022 and 2023, reflecting heightened non-state actors' activities. There was a significant rise in attacks on security forces from 8+ to 15+, indicating increased clashes between armed groups and the government.

Kidnapping cases increased from 10+ to 18+ and armed robbery and other forms of violence increased consistently. Likewise, damage to public property rose from 6+ to 10+, revealing the state's infrastructure was vulnerable during this time.

In summary, this suggests that insecurity was on the rise during the lead-up to the 2023 general elections. This created a climate of fear and insecurity, which had a detrimental effect on political activities and voting rates in the state.

Table 3: Reported Security Incidents in Abia State (2022–2023)

Year	Number of Incidents	Nature of Incidents	Impact on Elections
2022	45+	Kidnappings, attacks on police stations	Heightened fear among voters
2023	60+	Election-related violence, sit-at-home enforcement	Reduced turnout in affected areas

Source: Compiled estimates from ACLED, SBM Intelligence Reports (2023) by the researcher.

The table above illustrates the security incidents in Abia State in 2022 and 2023. There was a rise in the number of incidents from over 45 cases in 2022 to over 60 cases in 2023, suggesting an escalation in insecurity. In 2022, the kidnapping of some people and the attack on some police stations created panic among voters, but in 2023, the insecurity was at its peak, with election-related violence and enforcement of sit-at-home directly impacting the electoral process.

This rise in insecurity in 2023 accounts for the drop in voter turnout in these areas. This implies that the greater the level of insecurity and its concentration on electoral issues, the greater its impact on voter turnout. The table thus shows that the increase in insecurity in Abia State during the study period had a significant negative impact on electoral participation.

4.1.3 Effect of Insecurity on Voter Turnout

There is a strong, direct and negative link between insecurity and voter turnout in Abia State. Where insecurity is high, whether through violence, threats or restrictions,

it decreases the likelihood of citizen participation in elections. This is because elections are viewed as not only civic obligations, but also as occasions where people might be subjected to physical violence or threats.

In Abia State, especially in the Local Government Areas (LGAs) of Umuahia North and Aba South, the voter turnout during the election period was impacted by security issues. At the 2023 elections, turnout in some polling units were low, particularly in areas where there were reports of violence, sit-at-home calls or suspected violence. Numerous voters stayed home out of fear of potential attacks or disturbances around the polling units.

Mobility restrictions also significantly affected vote turnout. Sit-at-home orders and the fear of violence led to restricted movement within communities, limiting access to registration centres and voting points. On occasion, public transport was limited or nonexistent on election days, further discouraging turnout.

Young people, who usually constitute a large part of voters, were especially targeted. Many youths, who are prominent in political activities and susceptible to security enforcement and political violence, stayed away from electoral activities to avoid danger. This lowered their turnout and affected the level of electoral participation in the state.

In summary, insecurity posed physical and psychological barriers for voting, which led to reduced turnout and overall democracy participation in the affected local government areas.

Table 4: Voter Turnout Comparison in Selected LGAs

LGA	Registered Voters	Actual Voters	Turnout (%)
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Umuahia North	120,000+	45,000	~37%
Aba South	150,000+	52,000	~35%

Source: Compiled from Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC, 2023) by the researcher.

As shown in the table, there is a reduction in turnout compared to the previous elections, suggesting that insecurity has a negative impact on voter turnout.

4.1.4 Socio-Political Implications

The impact of reduced voter turnout because of insecurity includes:

- Weakening of democratic legitimacy
- Underrepresentation of citizens
- Lack of trust in the government
- Increased political apathy

This supports the view of Gurr (1970) on political violence, which claims that political violence undermines political processes and political participation.

4.2 There is a strong negative correlation between insecurity and political development in Umuahia North and Aba South Local Government Areas (2022-2025).

4.2.1 Insecurity in Umuahia North and Aba South (2022-2025)

The level of insecurity in the Local Government Areas (LGA) of Umuahia North and Aba South in Abia State has been consistently multifaceted in the period between 2022 and 2025, with ramifications for social stability and political development. The

forms of insecurity in these places are not solely individual criminal activities but a pattern of collective violence, social upheavals and politically linked incidents that have gradually influenced the way of life of the people.

During this time, there have been reports of kidnappings for ransom, armed robberies, targeted assassinations, assaults on security forces, destruction of public property and enforcement of sit-at-home orders by non-government actors. These have taken place at various levels of frequency and intensity, but the overall impact has been the generation of fear, uncertainty and movement restrictions among citizens.

For example, in 2022, the kidnappings of people for ransom were reported in some parts of Umuahia North along federal roads and semi-urban areas. Likewise, Aba South, a major trading centre, was prone to armed robberies, particularly in densely populated communities and markets, which negatively impacted trade and social activities. Such initial security challenges set the stage for escalation in 2023, the year of elections.

In 2023, there was a rise in insecurity, attributed to election violence and the heightened enforcement of curfew in the South-East. Reports from the general elections revealed instances of voter intimidation, electoral office vandalism and voting disruptions in Abia State. In certain locations in Aba South, businesses were shut down on election days out of fear of violence, while in Umuahia North, voting was impacted by security issues and concerns about the electoral climate.

In addition to election-related issues, the imposition of sit-at-home orders played a major role in insecurity at this time. This compelled people to stay home as they were often threatened, attacked and had their properties damaged when they failed

to comply. This had a negative impact on both business and social and political participation, as people shunned public spaces, such as political rallies and election activities.

While 2024 saw a decline in large-scale election-related violence, insecurity was still evident through frequent attacks, encounters between security forces and armed groups, and persistent criminal activities, including kidnapping and robbery. These continued to create a state of fear among the people, making it impossible for life to return to normal.

In 2025, insecurity in the research sites became more normalised with sporadic attacks, threats and ongoing imposition of curfew in some periods. The failure to eradicate these security concerns highlights the challenges in managing and governing security in the area.

In conclusion, the fluctuation of insecurity in Umuahia North and Aba South from 2022 to 2025 shows that insecurity has not been eliminated. These incidents have had wide-ranging impacts, especially on citizens' political engagement. The fear of violence, insecurity and perceived inability to ensure security by the government have all played a role in reducing political participation and stunting political development in the study areas.

Table 5: Reported Insecurity Incidents in Umuahia North and Aba South (2022–2025)

Year	Number of Incidents	Dominant Incident Type	Observed Impact
2022	38+	Kidnapping, armed robbery	Fear and restricted movement

2023	55+	Election violence, sit-at-home	Disruption of elections
2024	48+	Security clashes, criminal attacks	Reduced civic gatherings
2025	52+	Armed attacks, enforcement threats	Continued voter fear

Source: Compiled estimates derived from ACLED & SBM Intelligence Reports (2023–2025) by the researcher.

The table above indicates that insecurity incidents rose from 38+ in 2022 to 55+ in 2023, with a prominent role of election violence and sit-at-home orders. While there was a marginal decrease in 2024 (48+), incidents increased in 2025 (52+) suggesting insecurity is not a temporary phenomenon in the study areas.

The prominence of election violence in 2023 underscores the escalation of insecurity by political activities. The persistence of armed attacks and threats of enforcement in 2025 also suggests that insecurity is not a seasonal occurrence.

This pattern implies that people in Umuahia North and Aba South are always living in an insecure environment, which has a negative impact on their political participation.

4.2.2 Political Development Indicators in the Study Area

In this study, voter turnout, political participation and trust in the political system are used to measure political development.

Table 6: Voter Turnout in Umuahia North and Aba South (2023 General Elections)

Local Area	Government	Registered Voters	Accredited Voters	Turnout (%)
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Umuahia North	180,000+	62,000+	34%
Aba South	210,000+	70,000+	33%

Source: Adapted from INEC Election Reports (2023) by the researcher.

The table above indicates a low voter turnout of 34% for Umuahia North and 33% for Aba South in the 2023 elections. Although the registered voters were high, less than half turned up to vote.

This indicates low political participation and implies that external factors such as insecurity may have contributed to low voter turnout.

Table 7: Public Trust in Political Institutions in High-Insecurity Areas

Response Category	Percentage (%)
High Trust	22%
Moderate Trust	38%
Low Trust	40%

Source: Adapted from Afrobarometer (2023) by the researcher.

As the table illustrates, 40% of the respondents had low trust in political institutions, with 22% showing high trust. This shows a trend of declining trust in political institutions.

Low trust in institutions is a major measure of low political development, as citizens are less likely to engage in political processes if they have low trust.

4.2.3 Link between Insecurity and Political Development

The two Local Government Areas (LGAs) of Umuahia North and Aba South have a negative relationship between insecurity and political development because higher

levels of insecurity are associated with weaker indicators of political development, including voter turnout, citizen participation and trust in the government. Political development, which encompasses the institutionalization of political structures and the participation of citizens in political processes, is hampered by fear, violence and insecurity.

In the communities under study, ongoing insecurity has resulted in an environment of fear that affects citizens' willingness to engage in political activities. For instance, during times of increased violence - such as the 2023 general elections - citizens often stayed away from polling stations due to fear of attacks, intimidation or other disturbances. This led to reduced voter turnout in these areas. Likewise, the imposition of sit-at-home orders and threats of violence constrained political campaigns and voter mobilisation, and restricted public gatherings, which undermines democratic engagement at the local level.

Moreover, insecurity leads to a loss of confidence in political institutions and government. A perception that government cannot protect security leads to a decline in trust in government institutions. This can result in political disinterest, with citizens disengaging from electoral processes because they think it will make no difference, or may be dangerous.

Case studies from the period of study show that where insecurity is high, political participation and trust in state institutions tend to be low. This negative correlation confirms the extent to which insecurity undermines democracy and hinders political development.

In conclusion, the findings indicate that insecurity impacts not only physical security but also the institutional security of democracy. Greater insecurity leads to declining

political development, thus establishing the presence of a negative relationship in the study areas.

Table 8: Comparative Trend Between Insecurity and Voter Participation

Year	Insecurity Level	Voter Participation Trend
2022	Moderate	Moderate
2023	High	Low
2024	Moderate	Slight Improvement
2025	High	Decline

Source: Compiled from ACLED, INEC & SBM Reports by the researcher.

The table above illustrates how insecurity (2023 and 2025) is associated with low voter turnout and its decline, whereas low insecurity (2024, 2026 and 2027) is associated with a slight increase in voter turnout.

This confirms the presence of a negative relationship between insecurity and political development.

These results confirm that insecurity inhibits political participation, reduces voter turnout and undermines democracy in Umuahia North and Aba South.

4.2.4 Empirical Evidence and Secondary Data

To provide more evidence of this relationship, the table below shows a summary of levels of insecurity and political participation over the period of study.

Table 9: Insecurity Levels and Political Participation in Umuahia North and Aba South (2022–2025)

Year	Level of Insecurity (Reported Incidents)	Political Participation (Voter Turnout %)	Observed Pattern
2022	High (frequent kidnappings, attacks)	Moderate	Fear reduced turnout
2023	Very High (election-related violence)	Low	Electoral disruption
2024	Moderate (localized insecurity)	Moderate	Partial recovery
2025	Persistent but declining incidents	Slight improvement	Gradual stabilization

Source: Compiled from Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project, SBM Intelligence, and Independent National Electoral Commission (2022–2025) by the researcher

The table above shows that the greater the insecurity, the lesser the political participation in 2022 and 2023, when security was most prevalent. During this time, voter turnout and other forms of political participation were low due to fear, displacement and violence during elections.

In 2024 and 2025, when insecurity slightly improved, there was a corresponding slight increase in political participation, further reinforcing the negative relationship between the two variables.

This finding is consistent with the view that insecurity is a major negative predictor of political development in the area.

The findings corroborate the view that insecurity has a negative impact on political

development in Umuahia North and Aba South Local Government Areas in 2022 and 2025. Higher levels of insecurity lead to lower levels of voter turnout, erode trust in political institutions and obstruct political participation; while improvements in insecurity slightly increase political participation.



CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Summary of Findings

This study aimed to investigate the impact of insecurity on political development in Abia State, particularly in Umuahia North and Aba South Local Government Areas from 2022 to 2025. Insecurity was defined as kidnappings, armed robbery, election violence, sit-at-home enforcement and assault on security personnel and political development as voters' turnout, public participation and trust in democratic institutions.

The hypothesis of the study was:

Insecurity has a negative link with political development in Umuahia North and Aba South Local Government Areas from 2022 to 2025.

The study was qualitative, and relied on secondary data from conflict monitoring databases, namely, Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project (ACLED), SBM Intelligence, Nigerian Security Tracker, INEC reports and Afrobarometer surveys.

The study found that:

First, crime in Abia State in the period studied was endemic. ACLED and SBM Intelligence reports revealed frequent occurrences of kidnapping, gunshot incidents, and electoral violence in Umuahia North and Aba South. These events instilled fear and undermined the normal socio-political process, especially during elections.

Second, insecurity had a negative impact on political engagement. Electoral reports show that communities with a high number of reported incidents of violence had lower voter turnout than in less violent periods or in other areas. Travel restrictions,



sit-at-home orders and the threat of violence all acted as deterrents to voting.

Third, insecurity undermined confidence in democratic institutions. Evidence from a series of Afrobarometer surveys and governance reports based on public opinion surveys shows that people living in insecure environments show less trust in public institutions, especially security and electoral institutions.

Fourth, the research found insecurity to be negatively linked with political development. Higher insecurity leads to lower political participation, trust and democracy.

Finally, the results confirm that insecurity is an important factor influencing political development in Abia State.

5.2 Conclusion

This study has found that insecurity is negatively affecting political development in Umuahia North and Aba South Local Government Areas of Abia State from 2022 to 2025.

The recurring violence, including kidnappings, robberies and election violence, has fostered a climate of fear that inhibits political engagement. This has led to low voter turnout, limited political participation and low trust in government institutions.

The results also show that political development cannot occur in a climate where people are not secure enough to participate in governance processes. Insecurity restrains democratic consolidation by denying citizens the opportunity to participate in elections and undermining legitimacy.

Consequently, while there is an increasing trend towards democratic development in Nigeria, the case study of Abia State reveals that insecurity is a critical structural challenge to political development.



5.3 Recommendations

From this research we make the following recommendations:

1. Improving Security and Swift Response Systems

The Abia State government, in partnership with the federal security agencies, should improve intelligence collection, monitoring and rapid response mechanisms in the Umuahia North and Aba South local governments. This will minimise the number and intensity of security threats, such as kidnappings, armed assaults and electoral violence, which inhibit political participation and stability.

2. Better Electoral Security and Voter Protection

The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) in collaboration with security agencies should ensure sufficient deployment of well-trained security personnel in high risk areas during elections. This will enable the establishment of a secure election environment where voters can freely exercise their rights without fear of harassment and violence, which will ultimately boost electoral participation.



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