PLASU Journal of Religion, Culture and Humanities
Vol: 2 No. 2. July, 2026

DIALECTICAL ON RURAL POVERTY AND ITS IMPLICATIONS TO THE SPIRALLING INSECURITY IN NIGERIA

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Abstract
Poverty has become a major socio-economic problem in Nigeria. The dialectical relationship between rural poverty and insecurity in Nigeria presents one of the most critical developmental challenges in modern times. Nigeria is blessed with vast natural and human resources, yet rural poverty has deepened alarmingly, with multidimensional poverty index rising to an all-time high of 63% among the population in 2022[108]. Therefore, this paper adopts dialectical materialism as its analytical prism to interrogate how the antithetical conditions of mass rural deprivation and few elite accumulations produce, sustain, and intensify the spiraling scale of insecurity in Nigeria. Thus, drawing from a critical review of array of secondary sources on unemployment, underdevelopment, banditry, insurgency, militancy and terrorism, the study argues that rural poverty is both a cause and consequence of insecurity, locked in a ripple of a self-reinforcing cycle. The study concludes that breaking the dialectical cycle requires a holistic and poverty eradication strategy/method, that confronts the structural contradictions of class struggle and dominance, inept governance, and the neoliberal neglect of the state for the provision of rural infrastructure.

Keywords: Rural Poverty, Dialectics, Banditry, Militancy, Insecurity, Insurgency, Neoliberalism, Underdevelopment

Introduction

Nigeria stands as a paradoxical nation, i.e. richly blessed with natural resources such as gold, tin, coal and crude oil among many, vast arable farmlands, and a youthful productive workforce population, yet a hub to over 90 million people living in abject poverty, a figure more than any other single nation globally[109]. According to the World Poverty Index, approximately 14 Nigerian citizens slump into extreme poverty every minute, an alarming trend that illustrates not only the scale, but also the velocity of rural immiseration[110]. This deeply-rooted rural poverty index has coincided dialectically with the spiralling cases of insecurity across the country's northern and Middle belt as well as southern / eastern parts through the Boko Haram insurgency and terrorism in the Northeast, banditry and kidnappings in the Northwest, farmer-herder conflicts in the North Central, and Separatists groups such as IPOB in the Southeastern zone.

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[109] Micheal, A., Tashikaima, A. K., Maurice, D. C., et al. "Analysis of Multidimensional Poverty in Rural Adamawa State, Nigeria. In *Journal of Agribusiness and Rural Development*, Vol. 53 No. 3, University of Life Sciences, Poland, 2019. P. 233
[110] Micheal, A., et al. "Analysis of Multidimensional Poverty in Rural Adamawa State, Nigeria, 2019. P. 234

However, the crux of this paper is that rural poverty and insecurity in Nigeria are not merely correlated, but exist in a dialectical unity, that is, each is the thesis and antithesis pair whose synthesis reproduces and deepens the other. Thus, drawing from Marxist dialectics, the paper contends that the inherent manifestations of insecurity, such as kidnappings and mass abductions, incessant terrorist attacks, chronic food insecurity due to collapsed agricultural systems, are the lucid expressions of a deeper structural contradiction; the systemic dispossession of the rural population alongside the consolidation of surplus among a few parasitic ruling class[111].

Conceptual Clarification / Framework Dialectical Materialism

Dialectical materialism framework / method of analysis understands phenomena through their internal contradictions and historicizes the relationships between the opposing forces. Hence, Ogele noted that "the political economy approach employs dialectical materialism as a method of analysis. It explores the ever-present and ongoing class conflicts historically." In that regards, development and underdevelopment are thus not opposites, but mutually constitutive products of the same historical process; the development of one class is the underdevelopment of another[112].

Therefore, by applying this concept to the Nigerian rural situation, the prosperity of the urban dweller class and the oil elites is dialectically tied to the abject rural impoverishments of peasant farmers and pastoral communities whose labour are structurally undervalued.

Rural Poverty

According to Obasanjo and Mabogunje in their book „Elements of Development", they define rural area as "An area characterized by their depleted workforce, their rudimentary and inefficient mode of production, their general lack of infrastructure and social amenities such as potable water, all-season access roads, telecommunications, electricity, schools, medical facilities, good houses and recreational facilities, paucity of processing factories, markets, banks, storage depots, and machine repair shops and their low levels of healthcare delivery, nutrition, hygiene, education and social awareness. For these reasons, rural areas are normally unable to harness their abundant natural resources"[113].

In consonance with the above, rural poverty is a multi-dimensional condition which encompasses income deprivation, food insecurity, poor access to education, healthcare, and clean water, as well as vulnerability, voicelessness and powerlessness[114]. Hence, multidimensional poverty as measured by the Oxford Poverty and Human Development

[111] Ogunrotifa, A. B., "Class Theory of Terrorism: A Study of Boko Haram Insurgency in Nigeria". *International Households Survey*, Vol. 3 No. 1, Online Publication, 2013, cited in Usman, S. A. "Unemployment and Poverty as Sources and Consequences of Insecurity in Nigeria: the Boko Haram Revisited". 2017
[112] Ogele, E. P. "Identity Conflict and Development Challenges in Nigeria's Fourth Republic, 2011-2020". *Saudi Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*, Scholars Middle East Publication, Dubai, United Arab Emirates (UAE), 2021
[113] Ogele, "Identity Conflict and Development Challenges in Nigeria's Fourth Republic", 2021.
[114] Obasanjo, O. and Mabogunje, A. "Elements of Development. A L F Publication, Abeokuta, Ogun State, Nigeria, 1991

Initiative (OPHI), considers the deprivations in healthcare, education, and living standards, and not just monetary poverty[115].

In Nigeria, indicates that a staggering figure of 97 million people are multidimensionally poor, the highest in Sub-Saharan Africa[116]. Similarly, according to the National Bureau of Statistics, 63% of Nigerians are poor due to lack of access to health, education, living standards, employment, and security - conditions that remain disproportionately concentrated in rural communities[117].

The term „rural poverty" has been variously defined. In fact, it is a multi-dimensional concept that denote a universally undesirable human condition. It vividly describes the varying kinds and degree of human deprivation in the society. Rural poverty is therefore a complex problem because there are many human problems to be found in the related subject, each stressing a given kind or degree of deprivation. However, the concept of poverty does not lean on any precise definition. While some scholar"s view poverty in quantitative terms, i.e. food intake per day of a given level of income, others see it in qualitative term, i.e. in terms of inability of certain people in the society to acquire or attain a given economic, social, cultural or other levels.

Thus, according to Muzale in his work „Rural Poverty and Development", he stated that "Absolute poverty is human deprivation in its extreme and most obvious forms.[118]" This refers to a lack of, or deficient supply of the basic necessities of life such as, food, safe drinking water, clothing, housing and good healthcare.

An individual is said to be in absolute poverty due to the deprivation of those basic needs. Hence, people suffering from absolute poverty also suffer from malnutrition and are chronically sick; they lack access to basic health-care delivery, educational facilities and usually live short life-span. Rural poverty in Nigeria is to a large extent covered by these definitions.

Insecurity

Insecurity broadly refers to a state of vulnerability, exposure to risk and absence of safety, which encompasses human, food, environmental, and political dimensions. In the context of Nigeria, contemporary insecurity is manifested in terrorism, banditry, kidnapping, militancy, farmer-herder skirmishes, communal and ethno-religious violence, and economic sabotage in the oil-producing Niger-Delta[119]. The phenomenal spike in insecurity in Nigeria have direct consequences in the wanton loss of lives and property, and ultimately in mass displacement of people and communities; and indirectly affected the flow of Foreign Direct Investments (FDI);

[115] Opanike, J., Ayantoye, K., and Faniposi Gbenga, E. "An Analysis of Multidimensional Poverty and Determinants in Rural Nigeria." In *Journal of Development and Agricultural Economics*, Vol. 9 No.1, Online Publication, 2017. P. 303
[116] Adepoju, A. "Determinants of Multidimensional Poverty Transitions Among Rural Households in Nigeria". *Review of Agricultural and Applied Economics (RAAE)*, Faculty of Economics and Management, Slovak University in Nitra, Slovakia, Vol. 23, No. 1, 2020.
[117] Micheal, et al. "Analysis of Multidimensional Poverty in Rural Adamawa State, Nigeria", 2019. P. 240.
[118] Bigwa and Ibrahim, "Multidimensional Poverty among Farming Households in Katsina State". 2024. P. 249
[119] Muzale, P. "Rural Poverty, Social Development and their Implications for Fieldwork Practice". In *Journal of Social Development in Africa*, 1987. P. 75-85

widening the gap in food production, resulting in soaring food prices, and deterioration of the educational institutions[120].

Theoretical Framework

The Dialectic of Poverty, Underdevelopment and Insecurity

The paper adopts dialectical materialism and the theory of related deprivation as its analytical base. These choices are informed by the fact that the conventional and sectoral interpretations of the nexus between rural poverty and insecurity in Nigeria have been insufficient enough to address the subsisting structural conditions that reproduce both phenomena[121]. According to Okolie et al., they observed that "the recent wave of terrorism in Northeast Nigeria cannot be adequately explained by recourse to governance deficit or Islamization agenda's alone; what is needed is an interrogation of the „neoliberal economic tunic" that foisted a failed system capable of providing social safety nets to the people[122]. Hence, this perspective aligns with the postulation of Etim and Akpabio's views on Hegelian study / analysis of violent militancy in Northern and Eastern Nigeria, which they succinctly captured thus: "though masqueraded as a religious uprising, feeds on the political, social and economic polarities that define the region"[123].

Thus, furthermore dialectical standpoint, the original theses of "peace and order" perpetrated by those in power or authority are negated by the violent acts of those excluded from the dividends of the state; the synthesis that emerges is not reconciliation, but intensified violence and instability[124]. Therefore, the recent spikes in the coordinated attacks by the nihilist groups of Boko Haram insurgents, bandits, militants and kidnappers are the antithetical responses of an excluded rural population to the wave of structural violence of an exclusionary ruling class order.

Statement of the Problem

In recent times, rural poverty in Nigeria has surged from 28.3% to about 63.8% between the period of 1980 and 2024, while urban poverty index soared from 16.2% to 43.1% during the same period, an indication that rural areas have consistently shouldered a disproportionate share of the country's deprivation[125]. The persistence / frequency of this trend, despite successive government's poverty alleviation programmes such as Operation Feed the Nation (OFN), Green Revolution, Directorate for Food, Roads and Rural Infrastructure (DFRRI),

[120] Mukhtar, A. "A Vicious Cycle: How Poverty Fuels Crime, Insecurity and Conflict in Northwestern Nigeria". *Global Journal of Economics and Finance Research*, Vol. 2 No. 8, Klavecimbelstraat, Netherlands, 2025.
[121] Oladoyin, A. M., Osimen, G. U., Adi, I., et al. "The Rising Insecurity in Nigeria: Interrogating the Linkage Between Poverty and Banditry". *Educational Administration: Theory and Practice*, Vol. 30 No. 5, Online Publication, 2024.
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[124] Etim, F. and Akpabio, M. K. "Hegelian Dialectics: Implications for Violence and Peace in Nigeria". In *Open Journal of Philosophy*, Vol. 8 No. 5, United States of America, 2018.

[125] Etim and Akpabio, "Hegelian Dialectics", 2018.

Family Economic Advancement Programme (FEAP), Better Life for Rural Women, National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP), Anchor Borrower Initiative of the CBN etc, it raises a critical question of why do such efforts at poverty eradication continue to fail despite the huge financial investments; and what is the relationship between this failure and the spiraling insecurity that has enveloped rural Nigeria since the late 2000s after the emergence of Boko Haram insurgency?

To give credence, Egwemi and Odo observe that "Poverty seems to have defied solutions in spite of the humongous investment of resources and several advocacy programmes to tackle it, hence it has grown severe, acute and chronic, contributing to underdevelopment, generalized insecurity and instability in the country[126]." They further argue that the failure, stems from „sectoral scope" of these programmes, which have not confronted the structural or foundational contradictions that breed poverty in the first place[127]. Thus, the problem this study addresses is therefore not merely the empirical co-occurrence between rural poverty and insecurity, but the dialectical mechanism that intertwine them as a reciprocal of both causes and effects.

Empirical Dimensions of Rural Poverty in Nigeria

The challenges of rural poverty in Nigeria are both historically entrenched and rapidly expanding. According to Adeoti's foundational analysis documentation, poverty incidence in Nigeria was estimated at 69% in 2010, with 61.2% of Nigerians living below the global $1.00 per day international poverty line[128]. The fact that Nigeria declined to become one of the 25th poorest countries in the world at the threshold of the 21st century from a previous ranking among the top 50 economies in the early 1970's signals, in dialectical terms, the development of an electoral democracy in relation with the underdevelopment of the rural masses[129].

Furthermore, multidimensional poverty studies amplify this picture[130]. According to OPHI 2008 data, Nigeria is home about 97 million multidimensionally poor people, the worst in Sub-Saharan Africa, with the North-East sub-region reportedly having a very high incidence of both income and multidimensional poverty[131]. In addition, the 2022 National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) report identifies 63% of Nigerians as poor due to lack of access to health, education, living standards, employment, and insecurity, and notes that poverty is more widespread among rural residents where structural / infrastructure and social services are insufficient[132].

The foundational causes are well documented as follows: limited income-generating opportunities, restricted access to infrastructure and services, weak educational and health systems, and the dispossession of peasant livelihoods by extractive economic structures[133]. These conditions however combined to mutually reinforce poverty, and poverty breeds low

[126] Adeoti, A. I. "Trends and Determinants of Multidimensional Poverty in Rural Nigeria". *African Development Review*, in *Journal of Development and Agricultural Economics*, Vol. 6 No. 5, Ibadan, Nigeria, 2014, P. 220-231
[127] Egwemi, V., and Odo, L. U. "Rural Development and Poverty Eradication in Nigeria". In *Journal of Research in National Development* 11, 101, Paris, France, 2013, P. 101-110.
[128] Egwemi and Odo, "Rural Development and Poverty Eradication in Nigeria", 2013. P. 104.
[129] Adeoti, "Trends and Determinants of Multidimensional Poverty in Rural Nigeria", 2014. P. 227.
[130] Adeoti, "Trends and Determinants of Multidimensional Poverty in Rural Nigeria", 2014. P. 228.
[131] Micheal, et al, "Analysis of Multidimensional Poverty in Rural Adamawa State, Nigeria". 2019, P. 238.
[132] Bigwa and Ibrahim, "Multidimensional Poverty among farming Households in Katsina State". 2024, P. 231.

[133] Micheal et al. "Analysis of Multidimensional Poverty in Rural Adamawa State, Nigeria". 2019, P. 239.

educational attainment, which constrains access to productive employment, thereby deepening the vicious cycle.

Brief on the Nature of Insecurity in Nigeria

Over the years, insecurity in Nigeria has undergone mutation across, at least four identifiable theatres. They consists of: Boko Haram and the splinter group of Islamic State in West Africa Province (ISWAP) domicile in the Northeast; rural banditry and Lakurawa group in the northwest; farmer-herder and sectarian conflicts in North Central; and Separatist agitation by the Indigenous Peoples of Biafra (IPOB) as well as the militant Eastern Security Network (ESN), kidnapping, oil pipeline vandalism and bunkering by different militant gangs in the South-South and South-East respectively[134]. Each theatre carries distinct triggers, but they fundamentally share a common material substrate; rural poverty and the collapse of state presence in the periphery.

Hence, empirical evidence underscores the connection. According to Kennedy et al., employing „total differential modelling" to access the economic impact of Boko Haram and banditry in Nigeria, found that this violent insurrection damaged the economy „notably agriculture and services", causing growth to decline by ₦87.95 billion at a rate of 0.24%.[135] Consequently, Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) dropped by ₦314.7 billion, and the population on less than one-dollar per day, increased by 142.861 million; an additional 21.6 million privileged Nigerians slipped below the poverty line[136]. Their analysis registered an „insurgency occurrence" of 24,000 times, with an exchange rate inflation of ₦12.65 against the US dollar[137]. Thus, these figures are not merely statistics but the dialectical synthesis of rural poverty that crystallised into macro-economic ruin.

Poverty-Insecurity Nexus

A body of existing robust literatures has identified rural poverty as both a pre-condition and a product of insecurity. Usman argues that "a society bedeviled with the problem of endemic rate of unemployment and poverty, especially among its productive workforce of the population as it is the current case in Nigeria, will have its peace and stability endangered with dire consequence of retrogression instead of progress[138]."

In a related study, Adenike asserted that poverty lowers the opportunity cost of recruitment into violence, softens the ground for radicalization, and supplies the foot soldiers of insurgencies[139]. Similarly,[140], Mukhtar's study on mixed-methods conducted in Northwest Nigeria states of Zamfara, Kebbi, Sokoto and Katsina, establishes that unemployment, low income, and inadequate education are significant predictors of susceptibility to criminal activities or

[134] Mukhtar, "A vicious Cycle: How Poverty fuels crime, insecurity and Conflict". 2025.
[135] Onota, E., A-C Ogbonna, C., and Alfred Igbokwe, N. "Cross-border Migration, Banditry and Challenges of Development In Nigeria". *Discover Global Society Publication*, Online Publication, 2024.
[136] Onota et al. "Cross-border Migration, Banditry and Challenges of Development in Nigeria". 2024.
[137] Onota et al. "Cross-border Migration, Banditry and Challenges of Development in Nigeria", 2024.
[138] Usman, "Unemployment and Poverty as Sources and Consequences of Insecurity in Nigeria". 2015, P. 92.

[139] Egunjobi, T.A. "Poverty, Unemployment and Insecurity challenges in Nigeria". In *Journal of Tanzania Economic Review*, University of Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, 2021.
[140] Mukhtar, "A vicious Cycle: How Poverty fuels crime, insecurity and Conflict". 2025.

victimization, and that economic hardship, climate related issues and institutional neglect combine to produce "cycles of violence"[141].

Conversely, insecurity devastates the productive hub base of rural areas. Nwankpa's study discovered that rural banditry in Plateau, Benue, Oyo, Nasarawa, Niger and Kaduna states led to massive loss of income and economic opportunities / activities, displacement and migration of the rural population, reduced productivity and infrastructural degradation[142]. These disruptions produced food shortages, spike in food prices, malnutrition, and a deepening poverty levels among affected households and communities. Similarly, Adekoya, cited in Nguoke and Akabike, made a similar observation: the instability caused by insecurity and violent confrontations between herders and farmers has driven food prices upwards and rendered farmers jobless. In addition, Babangida et al. in their study further buttressed that farmers in insecure communities without year-round cultivation now suffer low yields and low revenue[143].

The Dialectical Implications: Synthesis in the Cycle

From Poverty to Violence: The Pathway of The Antithesis

The dialectical pathway from rural poverty to insecurity is well established in the study. Egunjobi affirms that "high rates of unemployment and inequality, combined with low levels of education and development, are thought to soften the ground for the recruitment and provision of motives to fight[144]." Oladoyin et al. in their work on the „Integration of Insecurity-poverty bondage in Northern Nigeria", concludes that "Poverty was identified as a major cause of banditry, with related factors of religion and lack of education themselves, indirectly related to poverty[145]."

Furthermore, when poverty is extreme, the dialectical transformation unfolds as follows: a youth denied access to legitimate livelihood may embrace banditry because the opportunity cost of doing so is negligible; the rural community's vulnerability to attacks deepens; the absence of state protection allows criminals networks to flourish; and the collapse of agricultural livelihoods deepens the very poverty that gave rise to the criminality describe as the indirect consequences of banditry, i.e. a decrease in foreign investment, a widening gap in the production of food items, a spike in food prices, a deterioration of educational institutions, and loss of confidence of local and foreign investors.

Shift from Violence to Poverty

Conversely, insecurity produces poverty in a reverse loop, scholarly observation, herders and bandits have „disrupted farming activities" and produced a string of „psychological distresses

[141] Mukhtar, "A vicious cycle: How poverty fuels crime, insecurity and Conflict". 2025.
[142] Nwankpa, N. "Effect of Rural Banditry and Poverty Reduction in Nigeria". In *European Journal of Sustainable*

Development, Vol. 13 No 4., Online Publication, 2024.
[143] Nwankpa, "Effect of Rural Banditry and Poverty Reduction in Nigeria". 2024.
[144] Ngwoke, P. N., and Akabike, G. N. "Insecurity and its Implications for Sustainable Development in Nigeria: The Role of Religion". *African Online Scientific Information Systems (Pty)*, Cape Town, South Africa, 2022.
[145] Ngwoke and Akabike, "Insecurity and its Implication for Sustainable Development in Nigeria". 2022.

and loss of livestock", among the farming populations[146]. For instance, in the North-West region where banditry is more intense, have particularly been subjected to „disruption of agricultural activities through displacement of communities, creation of food crisis and the distortion of economic activities of the rural dwellers[147]." The result is a „food emergency" that compounds pre-existing poverty levels among rural residents.

The internally displaced persons (IDP) phenomenon crystallizes this dialectic in human terms. Ngwoke et al reported that many farmers, especially from the Northern region are driven away from their ancestral lands and settled in the internally displaced persons camps scattered across various areas affected by the incessant ^violent^ conflicts[148]. Thus, displaced farmers invariably become unemployed urban migrants, swelling the shanty town or ghetto populations and deepening both urban and rural poverty.

Political Economy of the Cycle

The theory of dialectical materialism propounded the political economy of this cycle. The neoliberal economic reforms orchestrated by the Bretton Woods institutions, have dominated Nigeria Since the 1980s, have systematically withdrawn the state from rural provisioning, liberalizing the economy by the removal of subsidies on fertilizer and petroleum, weakening extension services, and privatizing public goods, even as rural infrastructure continued to decay[149]. Okonie and other scholars observed that "the neoliberal economy foisted a failed system which could not provide safety nets, qualitative education and affordable health care delivery to the people. Indeed, the ensuing condition of hopelessness and despair generated by the withdrawal of the state in providing essential services to the citizens undoubtedly, provide a fertile ground for the birth of Boko Haram insurgency[150]"

In consonance to this, Ogunrotifa referred to it as the "lumpen class", that is, the human sediment of this contradiction, a population deprived of a meaningful integration into a productive economic life and ripe for recruitment into the violent negation of the existing order[151]. The cycle then is not random but determined; each phase determines the next, according to the logic of class antagonism inscribed in the rural-urban relations of production.

Spiraling Insecurity in Nigeria: Implications for National Development Economic Implications

The macroeconomic effects of these dislocations created by the spiraling insecurity reinforce rural poverty in several ways. The sharp decline in agricultural activities due to displacement and disrupted farming activities reduces food supply and inflates prices[152]. In fact, the collapse

[146] Egunjobi, "Poverty, Unemployment and Insecurity Challenges in Nigeria". 2021
[147] Nwankpa, "Effect of Rural Banditry and Poverty Reduction in Nigeria". 2024.
[148] Kazeem, O. L., James, M. T., and Abdul, J. G. "Scourge of Rural Banditry and Food Security in Nigeria's North West: The Economic Implications". In *Journal of Accounting Finance Research*, Vol. 4 No. 1, Federal University of Dutsin-Ma, Katsina State, 2022.

[149] Ngwoke and Akabike, "Insecurity and its Implication for Sustainable Development in Nigeria". 2022.
[150] Okolie et al. "A Dialectical Inquest into the Boko Haram Insurgency in Nigeria". 2020, P. 980.
[151] Okolie, et al. "A Dialectical Inquest into the Boko Haram Insurgency in Nigeria". 2020, P. 981.
[152] Ogunrotifa, "Class Theory of Terrorism". 2013.

in foreign direct investment (FDI) from ($13.8 billion) and domestic investment of (₦ 314.7 billion) starves the productive sectors of capital[153]. In addition, the depreciation of the naira by over 12.65 against the US dollar, further squeezes rural households dependent on foreign imported goods. Hence, the 21.6 million previously privileged Nigerian citizens who crossed the poverty line as a result of the insurgency, represents a seismic shift in the country‟s poverty geography[154].

Social and Humanitarian Implications

The humanitarian costs of the spiraling insecurity are quite alarming. Scholars pointed to the wanton destruction of lives and properties, and the mass displacement of people, which are directly attributed to banditry and insurgency. The 24,000 insurgency occurrences documented by Kennedy and other scholars suggest the pervasiveness of violent disruption[155]. Thus, rural communities which are already fragile, are being dissolved; the social fabric of communal life, intergenerational knowledge transfer, and rural governance is eroded.

Political and Governance Implications

The dialectic also identifies political consequences, where the state fails to provide security to rural communities, non-state actors, bandits, vigilantes, religious extremists, and ethnic militias, invariably fill the vacuum. This ultimately erodes state legitimacy and reproduces the conditions for further cycles of violence[156]. In a related study, ^for instance^, Mukhtar found out that „Institutional neglect‟ feeds „cycles of violence‟ in Northwestern Nigeria, requiring not only security responses but also integrated, pro-poor development initiatives aimed at breaking this cycle[157].

Food Security Implications

The agricultural sector, which is dominant in rural Nigeria, has been particularly devastated. Many scholars observed that because of the insecurity, farmers do not farm for the whole year because of the fear of being attacked and killed in the face of ravaging insecurity in their community, and in some cases, destruction of crops planted[158]. The result of these devastations are associated with low yield and thus, low revenues, precipitating acute food shortages, malnutrition and outrageous spike in food prices.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The dialectical nexus between rural poverty and insecurity in Nigeria reveals that both phenomena are not separate crises, but as a profound surface manifestation of a single underlying contradiction; the structural denial of rural economic, social and political rights, alongside the consolidation of wealth among a small group of elites. Thus, drawing from the

[153] Onota, et al. "Cross-border Migration, Banditry and the Challenges of Development in Nigeria". 2024.
[154] Onota, et al. "Cross-border Migration". 2024.
[155] Onota, et al. "Cross-border Migration". 2024
[156] Onota, et al. "Cross-border Migration". 2024
[157] Mukhtar, "A Vicious Cycle: How Poverty Fuels Crime, Insecurity and Conflict". 2025.
[158] Mukhtar, "A Vicious Cycle: How Poverty Fuels Crime, Insecurity and Conflict". 2025.

dialectical materialism theory, the study has demonstrated that rural poverty hatches insecurity by lowering the opportunity cost of recruiting into violence, weakening state legitimacy, and creating a pool of disgruntled youth ripe for mobilization. Insecurity in turn deepens rural poverty by destroying livelihoods, displacement of mass populations, frightening local and foreign investments, and collapsing public provisioning of infrastructures.

Furthermore, the implication for policy makers is that the security crisis or conflicts cannot always be defeated through heavy militarized operations alone. Thus, armed intervention should be paired with structural interventions targeting the dialectical points of the recurring cycle. Therefore, the study seeks to specifically recommend the following panacea:

1. Provision of integrated rural development programmes that holistically address the productive, infrastructural and human capital deficits of rural Nigeria, thereby eroding the material core of insecurity[159].
2. The centric reactivation of government presence in rural communities through robust and functional agricultural extension services, rural healthcare delivery, basic and compulsory education, and establishment of security institutions that rapidly responds to community needs[160].
3. A holistic approach targeted at poverty eradication in insurgency-ravaged states especially in the Northeast and Northwestern regions of the country, where multidimensional poverty is most pervasive, leveraging the National Bureau of Statistics report on multidimensional poverty index as a foundation for differentiated intervention[161].
4. Provision of decent jobs and youth employment programmes that raise the opportunity cost of participation in violent activities and reduce the pool of redundant youth susceptible to extremist recruitment[162].
5. Total reform of the rentier political economy to diversify the productive base away from over-dependence on crude oil and chart a course toward inclusive agricultural, ^industrial^ and technology driven developments that benefits rural communities[163].
6. Holistic confrontation of the few elites‟ capture of national resources through the state anti-graft reform and equitable resource distribution, addressing the salient issue of class antagonism at the heart of the rural-urban divide[164].

Finally, to ultimately break the dialectical cycle requires confronting the foundational contradictions identified by the political economy tradition, transforming the rural-urban class relationship from one of dispossession and exclusion into one of inclusive partnership of

[159] Egwemi and Odo, "Rural Development and Poverty Eradication in Nigeria". 2013, P. 105.

[160] Bigwa and Ibrahim, "Multidimensional Poverty among Farming Households". 2024, P. 250.
[161] Bigwa and Ibrahim, Multidimensional Poverty among Farming Households". 2024. Micheal, A., et al. "Analysis of Multidimensional Poverty in Rural Adamawa State, Nigeria". *Journal of Agribusiness and Rural Development*, Vol. 53 No. 3, Poland, 2019, P. 235.
[162] Ogunrotifa, "Class Theory of Terrorism". 2013.
[163] Okolie, et al. "A Dialectical Inquest into the Boko Haram Insurgency in Nigeria". 2020, P. 976.
[164] Etim and Akabike, "Hegelian Dialectics". 2018

development. Thus, without a comprehensive structural intervention, the spiral of rural poverty and insecurity will continue to consume Nigeria‟s vast human and material resources, thereby impoverishing the present generation and mortgaging their future.

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