

THE SECURITIZATION PARADOX: ANALYSING HOW PERSISTENT INSECURITY SHAPES DEMOCRATIC PRACTICE AND CITIZEN PARTICIPATION IN NIGERIA'S CONTEMPORARY DEMOCRACY

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Abstract

Nigeria's democratic consolidation since 1999 has been severely undermined by persistent insecurity, creating a paradoxical situation where the state's securitization efforts intended to protect citizens have inadvertently constrained democratic practice and citizen participation. The multidimensional security challenges, including terrorism, banditry, kidnapping, and ethno-religious conflicts, have created an atmosphere of fear that discourages electoral participation and civic engagement. This study examines how the securitization paradox manifests in Nigeria's contemporary democracy, specifically investigating the relationship between persistent insecurity and declining democratic participation. The objectives of this research include examining the conceptual dimensions of the securitization paradox in Nigeria, analyzing how persistent insecurity affects voter turnout and citizen participation, and evaluating the implications for democratic consolidation. The study adopts a qualitative research methodology, relying on secondary data from academic journals, government reports, international organization publications, and credible media sources published between 2018 and 2026. The theoretical framework draws on the Copenhagen School's Securitization Theory and Social Contract Theory to provide analytical depth. Findings reveal that Nigeria's voter turnout has declined dramatically from 69.08% in 2003 to a record low of 26.74% in 2023, with insecurity identified as a major contributing factor. The securitization of various threats has led to the deployment of extraordinary measures that often violate civil liberties, creating a tension between security imperatives and democratic freedoms. The study also finds that electoral violence, displacement of citizens, and destruction of electoral infrastructure have significantly disrupted democratic processes. The research recommends comprehensive security sector reforms, strengthening of democratic institutions, inclusive governance approaches, and community-based security initiatives to address the securitization paradox while enhancing citizen participation in Nigeria's democracy.

Keywords: *Securitization Paradox, Persistent Insecurity, Democratic Practice, Citizen Participation, Nigeria, Electoral Violence, Voter Turnout.*

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1. INTRODUCTION

When Nigeria embraced democracy back in 1999 after years of military dictatorship, the move was welcomed by Nigerians with hopes that the country will be able to experience good governance, enjoyment of human rights, and improve socio-economic well-being (Ezeh, 2019). Despite the country's twenty years in the Fourth Republic, it is still facing the task of ensuring that the dividends of democracy are reaped; however, security problems have emerged as one of the major obstacles to democratic consolidation. Security issues and democracy have interacted in such a manner as to give rise to what experts call the "securitization paradox", a scenario whereby attempts made to combat security threats end up undermining the democratic values and institutions that are supposed to be protected.

The security situation in Nigeria has evolved into one marked by numerous crises such as the Boko Haram terrorist attacks in the Northeast, the kidnappings and banditry attacks in the Northwest and North Central areas, the separatist tendencies in the Southeast, the militancy activities in the Niger Delta, and the recurring conflict between farmers and herders in different geopolitical zones (Adesina, 2024). According to the Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project (ACLED), Nigeria was among the top five countries in the world with the most extreme cases of conflict as of December 2024, with at least 365 violent events taking place in May 2025, which is more than in any other country in Africa in that month (Madueke, 2025). Such constant insecurity has huge implications for democratic practice, especially in relation to citizen involvement in electoral processes.

The 2023 general elections exemplified the problems brought about by insecurity to the democratic process. Despite the country having the largest number of registered voters in the history of Nigeria at more than 93 million voters, only 24.9 million (26.74%) participated in the presidential elections, which was a new record-low level of voter turnout (Hassan, 2024). The International Crisis Group (2023) highlighted how insecurity hindered the preparation for the elections, hampered voter registration in insecure regions, and provided an environment where voter intimidation became possible. This drastic fall in citizens' participation in politics brings to light some very basic issues regarding the state of Nigeria's democracy.

The current study investigates the securitization paradox in Nigeria by considering the influence of persistent insecurity on democracy and political participation. This study is important because it tackles the significant gap in knowledge regarding the intricate connection

between security governance and democratic consolidation in the most populous country in Africa. Through exploring the influence of securitization on political participation and democracy, this study will help enrich the theoretical and policy debate on the management of democracy and security in fragile democracies. The research objectives include: Investigating the conceptual aspects of the securitization paradox in Nigeria; Analyzing the means through which persistent insecurity influences political participation in the country; and Evaluating the consequences of this phenomenon for democratic consolidation and presenting evidence-based policy recommendations for resolving these issues.

2. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Securitization Paradox

The securitization paradox denotes the ironic effects as the steps that are taken to ensure security to assist people and organizations end up destroying the very values, freedoms, and systems they are supposed to protect. The paradox is especially clear in democratic settings where the conflict between the security needs and civil liberties introduces a complicated governance issue (Dreyer & Holm, 2025). The paradox of securitization in Nigeria is exemplified by the situation when, in order to fight terrorism, banditry, and other forms of security threats, extraordinary powers are used, which leads to curtailment of political freedoms, lack of space to exercise a civic space, and lack of trust to the democratic institutions. This paradox is further intensified by the fact that these security measures are actually causing insecurity and disrespect towards political processes instead of bringing confidence and participation in political processes by the citizens. This paradox is evident in the politicization of security in Nigeria where security apparatus is no longer a tool of protection by the society but rather an instrument of politics by the political elites (Okolie and Ugwueze, 2015).

2.2 Persistent Insecurity

Persistent insecurity refers to prolonged state of weakness whereby individuals and groups of persons and institutions are constantly threatened by the insecurity of their safety, wellbeing and existence after a long duration of time. Afolabi (2015) defines insecurity as a lack of peace, safety, and protection of human and physical resources or crisis and threats to human dignity that erode development and progress. In Nigeria, long standing insecurity has turned out to be multidimensional and includes, terrorism, armed banditry, kidnapping to ransom, ethno-

religious violence and politically instigated violence. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP, 2021) estimated that there have been more than 350,000 direct and indirect deaths as a result of the Boko Haram conflict alone, and the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre recorded that the number of internally displaced persons in Nigeria increased to more than 3.7 million people in 2023 compared with an estimated number of 200,000 in 2009. This chronic insecurity has caused what Madueke (2025) defines as the multidimensional crisis, which has major humanitarian, economic, educative, and social implications, which jeopardize internal solidarity and democratic progression.

2.3 Democratic Practice

Democratic practice refers to the institutional procedures and arrangements, as well as collective and individual behaviours through which democratic politics is realised within a political regime. It encompasses the behaviour of free and fair elections, safeguarding civil liberties and political rights, rule of law, division of powers, accountability and responsiveness of the government to the needs and demands of citizens. Diamond (2005) highlights that the attractiveness of democracy is witnessed in its ability to guarantee popular sovereignty and generate development in the form of development practices. The Fourth Republic of Nigeria has practiced democracy whereby, there is the practice of periodic elections, there are numerous political parties and constitutional guarantees of rights and freedoms. Nevertheless, democratic practice has been criticized on the basis of electoral anomalies, a lack of institutional checks and balances, rampant corruption and the difficult problem of insecurity limiting the full implementation of democratic ideals (Izom, 2023). According to the SAIS Review evaluation of the twenty-five years of democracy in Nigeria, the press freedom and better organization of the election have been improved dramatically but the challenges are enormous, they include the worsened security situation that is endangering democratic practice.

2.4 Citizen Participation

Citizen participation can be discussed as the different methods of how people can be involved in political process and impact on governance decisions making the authorities accountable to the people. According to Pateman (1970) and Dahl (1989), the citizen participation in all the electoral process such as voter registration, civic education, electoral debates and voting and post election advocacy is the key towards the establishment of democratic legitimacy and accountability. Baum (2015) and Bullock (2014) also add that the participation of citizens goes

beyond the electoral process and involves community organizations; the work of the civil society; public consultations and direct action. Citizen participation in Nigeria has normally been through the election process, political party membership, involvement in community development associations, and involvement in civil society groups, and civic activism among others. Nevertheless, the quality and scope of such participation have drastically changed, and the voter turnout has dropped to 26.74% in 2023 compared to 69.08% in 2003 (Hassan, 2024). Such a decline is an indicator of both disappointment with the results of governance as well as the cooling off effect of insecurity on the choices and capacity of the citizens to engage in the democratic processes.

3. THEORETICAL REVIEW

3.1 Securitization Theory (Copenhagen School)

The theory of Securitization which was formulated by the Copenhagen School of security study is a very critical tool of insight into how security matters are framed and what the effect of framing is on democratic governing. Barry Buzan, Ole Waever and Jaap de Wilde were the original creators of the theory, which was best expressed in their seminal work of 1998, *Security: A New Framework to Analysis*. The theoretical ideas were formulated by the Copenhagen Peace Research Institute (COPRI) in the mid-1990s, and the conceptual basis had been laid down by Waever's previous work, especially by the article, "Securitization and Desecuritization" (1995).

The main principle of the securitization theory is that security is neither a goal state nor an objective state, but a social phenomenon that is produced by speech acts. By presenting an issue in the form of an existential threat to a cherished referent object such as the state, nation, or community, a securitizing actor (usually a political leader or a representative of a state) is said to have made a securitizing move. When the concerned audience embraces this framing, then this issue is securitized i.e. the issue is raised above the ordinary politics and extra-ordinary solutions are justified as a solution to the perceived problem (Buzan et al., 1998). According to the theory, three important elements of successful securitization are the securitizing actor that claims the security, the referent object to which the claim is presented and the audience whose acknowledgment legitimizes the securitizing move. Waever (1995) points out that saying security, a state representative shifts a certain development into a certain space hence acquiring a special right to employ any means that is deemed necessary to deal with it.

The efficiency of the securitization theory is based on the fact that the problems that used to be managed via the regular political procedure are lifted to the level of security problems that need to be addressed in an extraordinary manner. This analytical tool enables academics to investigate how power works with the help of discourse and the way the language of security can be employed to legitimize actions that would otherwise be thought of as illegitimate (Stritzel, 2014). The multisectoral approach of the theory which acknowledges security dynamics in military, political, economic, societal, and environmental levels gives a holistic approach to the application of analysis on security problems today. The theory has however suffered a number of criticisms. Its Eurocentric orientation and the lack of gender aspects are criticized by Hansen (2000). The analysis on speech acts is doubted by Balzacq (2011), since the author argues that securitization is affected by material factors and practices that are not part of the discourse. Time also criticizes that the theory has the unintended consequence of legitimizing securitization as it provides an analytic of securitization processes without exercising normative critique, and that its focus on elite actors does not take into account the impact of the grassroots in securitization processes.

On the situation in Nigeria, the theory of securitization sheds some light on the way the construction of different issues as existential threats necessitating extraordinary solutions has been done. Securitization of the Boko Haram insurgency by the Nigerian government, as an example, has served to legitimize the protracted military action, state of emergency, curtailment of civil liberties, and the mobilization of massive resources to security machineries (Okolie & Ugwueze, 2015). In the same manner, securitization of migration also contributed to the notorious closure of the land border in 2019, allegedly in response to the security concerns (Society, 2023). The theory assists in understanding the contradiction of securitization processes where, as much as the drives are to deal with threats, they also deal with the democratic space by restricting it by authorizing exceptional measures bypassing the normal democratic process. This is especially clear in the manner in which security discourse has been invoked to legitimize those acts which suppress political dissent, curtail press freedom and limit citizen participation in a manner that suppresses democratic practice.

3.2 Social Contract Theory

The Social Contract Theory is a conceptual basis that gives an insight into the mutual responsibility between the state and individuals that forms the basis of valid democratic rule. The intellectual tradition of the theory begins with the writings of Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679),

John Locke (1632-1704) and Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778), who developed different views on the nature and conditions of the social compact. As Hobbes focused on security as the main reason why people should give up their natural freedoms to an absolute sovereign, Locke described a less powerful government the legitimacy of which is based on the capacity to ensure the inalienable rights of citizens to lives, liberty, and property. Rousseau introduced the notion of the general will, according to him the legitimate authority is based on the general will of the ruled.

The main principles of the social contract theory define the fact that political power is not a gift bestowed by God but is created as the result of a contract between the people that agree to be ruled and get some guarantees and advantages. The main duty of the state in this contract is to guarantee the safety of the citizens and their property, order and to offer the environment of human prosperity (Gauthier, 1977). Citizens, in turn, forfeit part of their natural freedom, submit to the rule of the law and perform civic duty such as complying with legal governmental commands. Importantly, the formulation of Locke states that, in the event of breach of the government of its contractual duties or failure to defend the rights of the citizens, the people are empowered by moral authority to recover the political government (Ibrahim and Nurudeen, 2024).

The positive aspects of the social contract theory are its normative certainty in defining the principles of the legitimate government, as well as its focus on consensual foundation of political power. The theory will offer clear guidelines upon which the performance of government can be assessed in reference to its performance in regards to contractual obligations with the citizens. There are however, critics who highlight a number of weaknesses. The historical validity of a real social contract has been doubted with many considering it as a hypothetical myth as opposed to historical reality. The structural inequalities and power differences as well as the varying conditions on which political communities can be constituted are left aside in the assumption of rational, equal persons in the theory, negotiating on the terms of governance. Moreover, a theory based on voluntary agreement of the governmental arrangements that were implemented without the input of the indigenous population has also been put into doubt in the area of colonially built states, such as Nigeria (Asogwa and Nnamchi, 2021).

When using the social contract theory to the Nigerian democratic experience, the scholars have pointed out the continuous failure by the Nigerian state to uphold its basic obligation as per the

social compact. Ezech (2019) states that the increasing lack of competence of the state in the delivery of the basic needs, especially the security, has been orchestrating the fading away of the trust in the functioning of the state and democracy, developing discontent, mistrust, and political indifference toward democracy. A 2015-2024 evaluation by Adugo (2024) established that the Nigerian democratic process was not entirely based on the principles of Locke because the Nigerian state did not sufficiently utilize the sovereignty given to them by citizens to their utmost good in terms of security and welfare. This violation of the social contract is most evident in the dreadful insecurity that has taken away the lives of hundreds of thousands and displaced millions of Nigerians. As long as the citizens see that the state has neglected its main duty to offer protection to their lives and property, they will be less motivated to take their own responsibilities, such as showing up in the democratic processes. Declining voter turnout and political disengagement can then be explained as logical responses to a broken social contract with the aid of the theory.

4. THE MANIFESTATION OF INSECURITY IN NIGERIA'S DEMOCRATIC EXPERIENCE

The security situation in Nigeria since the restoration of democratic governance in the country in 1999 has been identified with increase in the numbers of various threats that have not reduced over the years, but instead escalated. According to scholars, the country is experiencing an overlapping of security crisis that spans across all the six geopolitical areas to form an atmosphere where no region can escape violence (Adesina, 2024). The Boko Haram insurgency that arose in 2009 in the Northeast has turned into one of the most lethal terrorist campaigns in the world to date, causing over 350,000 deaths and displacing over 3.7 million individuals (UNDP, 2021; IDMC, 2024). The insurgency has brought down key sectors such as agriculture, education, and healthcare further establishing poverty and regional instability.

The Northwest and North Central areas have also experienced the devastating advent of armed banditry and aggravation of the farmer-herder struggle. The reports by Adesina (2024) on how these conflicts have emerged to be the most common security threat in the whole of Nigeria, affecting the food security and displacing the farming communities. News Agency of Nigeria (2024) estimated that the number of kidnapping cases was 2.2 million cases where armed groups conduct their activities in uncontrollable forests and cattle rustling, ransom kidnappings, and robbery with the armed forces are profitable ventures. The mass abduction has come to be a tragic norm, such as the kidnapping of 276 schoolgirls in Chibok (2014), 300 schoolboys in

Kankara (2020) and 121 students in Bethel Baptist High School, Kaduna (2021). According to Human Rights Watch (2024), since 2014, more than 1,600 children have been abducted or kidnapped in the northern part of Nigeria.

The agitation of self-determination of the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) and its armed wing, the Eastern Security Network (ESN) that started in the Southeast, is another layer of insecurity. According to the SAIS Review (2024), office attacks by violent secessionist groups have occurred several times to derail the elections. Sit-at-home orders imposed weekly by separatist groups who complain about the continued imprisonment of IPOB leader Nnamdi Kanu have crippled business every Monday in major cities such as Onitsha, Aba and Enugu, with the Southeast region losing at least 7.6 trillion nairas since 2021 because of forced closures (Madueke, 2025). These economic shocks increase the security issues and also estrange the citizens of the democratic process.

5. INSECURITY AND THE EROSION OF ELECTORAL PARTICIPATION

The case of decreasing voter turnout in Nigeria in insecurity-prone areas offers a good piece of evidence of the securitization paradox in place. The turnout of voters has been on a steady decrease since the early years of the Fourth Republic and the 2023 elections have reached a historic Low. This decline is recorded by Hassan (2024), which states that turnout dropped down to 52.26 in 1999 and 69.08 in 2003, and then reduced gradually with 26.74 in 2015, 26.74 in 2019, and 26.74 in 2023. As the Chatham House (2023) analysis confirms, out of the 93.5 million registered voters in 2023, only 87.3 million of them received permanent voter cards and only a third of them eventually vote.

This deterioration is directly related to insecurity in a variety of ways. To begin with, the fear of violence makes citizens avoid going to polling stations during the election day. The International Crisis Group (2023) reported the disenfranchisement of those communities as 240 polling stations were declared unusable since they were located in insecure localities. Second, the lack of insecurity interferes with electoral preparations as the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) finds it hard to access volatile territories to register voters and distribute cards. These logistical difficulties ensured that many of the over three million internally displaced individuals in the Northeast, Northwest and North Central zones could not vote in the 2019 and 2023 elections (Premium Times, 2023).

Third, electoral violence that has been a constant occurrence in the Nigerian elections introduces an atmosphere of fear that dampens turnout. According to ACLED (2023), there were 767 violent incidents and 2,016 deaths in the 2023 elections in the period between February and April. Nigeria Civil Society Situation Room recorded that during the campaign season back in October 2018 until the 2019 elections, at least 626 individuals were killed during election related violence. This violence involves the assault of the candidates, voters, and election officials or the destruction of electoral materials (Frontiers in Political Science, 2025). Human Rights Watch (2023) stressed the veil of violence that surrounds elections that belittle the basic right of people to vote.

Fourth, terrorist organizations directly attack the election process. The 2023 elections were attacked in the southeast of the country, when the offices of the INEC were attacked, disrupting the democratic process, and in the states of Lagos, Rivers, and Bayelsa, political thugs attacked people, denying some the opportunity to vote (African Arguments, 2023). This strengthens the idea that when the political elites weaponize poverty by exploiting the economic vulnerability of voters to buy their votes or even recruit political miscreants to commit electoral violence, this weakens the security paradigm of the election (Faluyi, 2023; Nnabuife, 2024).

6. THE PARADOX OF SECURITIZATION AND DEMOCRATIC CONSTRAINTS

The way the Nigerian government has reacted to the issue of insecurity, which has persisted, is a good illustration of the securitization paradox whereby efforts aimed to tighten security grounds end up limiting democracy. Several extraordinary measures have been made to the threat of Boko Haram, such as the declaration of states of emergency, the implementation of military forces to perform internal policing tasks, and the limitation of movement and communication in the afflicted regions, have been justified by securitization. Although Amnesty International (2020) reported on the many human rights violations committed by Nigerian security agencies such as arbitrary arrests, torture, and extrajudicial murders, the fact that this very body is still trusted by the government with its counterterrorism efforts creates what is termed as a legitimacy paradox by the International Journal of Research and Innovation in Social Science (2025).

This paradox is even enhanced by the politicization of security. According to Okolie and Ugwueze (2015), the process of securitization of politics in Nigeria can be attributed to the quest of primitive accumulation that resulted due to the application of the state power by the

political elites. The security gadgets are not being used to safeguard the citizens; rather, they are being used to serve the political interests such as suppressing the opponents and winning elections. This securitization of security compromises the trust that people have in the institutions of security and in the process of democracy itself. According to the SAIS Review (2024) the situation in Nigeria does not reflect the tension between the securitization and the democratic openness because, although the human rights situation in the country has been improving since the days of the military rule, the current administration still puts an enormous pressure on the press and other freedoms.

This paradox is further depicted by the securitization of migration, which was carried out by the land border closing in 2019, under the pretext of security challenges. According to Society (2023), this securitization was a representation of the interests of political elites who failed to rationalise fundamental domestic and external factors leading to insecurity instead of a legitimate security action. These moves though couched in terms of security end up limiting economic liberties and democratic responsibility without remedying the underlying causes of insecurity.

7. IMPLICATIONS FOR DEMOCRATIC CONSOLIDATION

Nigeria is deeply affected by the securitization paradox as far as the democratic consolidation of Nigeria is concerned. To begin with, the fact that voter turnout has continued to decline is a major issue that casts doubt on the legitimacy of democracy. Once less than 10% of the electorate in Nigeria give their mandate to President- elect Tinubu, as was the case according to Chatham House (2023), the representative nature of democratic governance is seriously undermined. When Hassan (2024) points out that the credibility of electoral results when there is an unprecedented turnout of apathetic voters is questionable, and that the degree to which the elected officials are actually elected by the people is insignificant.

Second, the delegitimacy of democratic institutions is undermined even faster. The Edelman Trust Barometer and other such tests have recorded a deteriorating trust of the populace on electoral activities and institutions of governance in Nigeria. Rational disengagement is a natural reaction when people believe that their votes will not count because of the manipulation, violence, or institutional failures. This gives rise to a vicious cycle of a further delegitimization of the results of democracy by the low participation, which then solidifies the disengagement.

Third, the securitization paradox puts in danger social cohesion and national integration. According to Chatham House (2023), the geographic lining of the vote allocation of the 2023 elections indicates a growing salience of ethno-religious identities in Nigerian politics. The displacement based on insecurity, the targeting of specific groups, and the way of a perceived disparity in the provision of security to the different regions would all bolster divisions, which would hinder the national unity required in the democratic consolidation.

Fourth, economic impacts of insecurity also limit the development of democracy. Madueke (2025) records how insecurity has compromised the consolidation of democracy through the mass migration, reduction of agricultural production, deterring the foreign direct investments and increasing deindustrialization. According to the African Development Bank (2024), Nigeria is a net food importer in spite of favorable conditions, and insecurity is one of the structural weak points. The state of economic hardship, in its turn, sets the grounds to be used by the political elites in the form of vote-buying and manipulation.

8. CONCLUSION

This paper has explored the securitization paradox in the modern democracy of Nigeria by discussing the way the endemic insecurity determines democracy practice and citizen engagement. The fact itself shows that there is a complicated and mutually supporting relationship where insecurity weakens democratic participation and securitization is a response to insecurity which further restricts the freedoms of democracy. The voter turnout in Nigeria has decreased significantly by an over 69 percentage in 2003 to below 27 percentage in 2023 with insecurity being one of the key factors as well as institutional weaknesses, poverty and loss of hope in the outcomes of governance.

Securitization theory and social contract theory theories have become solid theoretical frameworks that can be used to explain this phenomenon complementarily. The securitization theory uncovers the way in which the presentation of the problems as existential threat justifies extra-ordinary actions that circumvent the democratic process and limit the civic space. The social contract theory can be used to explain why the state inability to meet the basic duty of provision of security has caused the lack of trust and motivation among its citizens to engage in the democratic processes. The violation of the social compact by the Nigerian state is most evident in the loss of hundreds of thousands of lives and millions of displaced people due to the insecurity that the government has not been effective in dealing with.

The consequences of this on democratic consolidation are extensive. The refusal to participate weakens the legitimacy of democracy, institutional confidence, and strengthens ethno-religious polarities and worsens the economic situation, further disengaging citizens in the political practice. The way out of this cycle is to take into account the paradox of securitization and seek the methods to deal with the security issues without dealing a blow to democratic principles. There is a way to a strong democracy in Nigeria, and it is the dedication to security governance reform, democratic institutions, inclusive development and reconstruction in the social contract between the state and the citizens. Such broad-based strategies are the only ones that can make Nigeria live up to the democratic dreams that met the transition of military rule in 1999.

Recommendations

- i. The Nigerian government needs to embark on reforms of its security sectors by focusing on professionalism, accountability and human rights observance in security operations without infringing on the basic rights of its citizens in carrying out counter-terrorism and counter-insurgency activities.
- ii. The Independent National Electoral Commission should put in place effective security measures in the conduct of elections, particularly in respect to internally displaced persons and people living in conflict zones to guarantee their participation irrespective of security challenges.
- iii. The government should deal with the root causes of insecurity such as poverty, unemployment, inequality, and governance problems instead of concentrating only on the militaristic aspects which further perpetuate the securitization paradox.
- iv. The democratic institutions such as the legislative, judicial, and civil societies need to be reinforced in order to act as a counterbalance to the executive branch and prevent the use of security measures as a tool of politics.
- v. Local community security programs that would allow community members to identify the threats and design a context-specific response should be encouraged as an addition to the security system.

- vi. The legal structure surrounding elections needs to be changed so that there is a speedy trial of electoral crimes, including violence and intimidation, to prevent future recurrences and restore faith in the process.
- vii. There needs to be increased civic education in order to restore confidence of the citizens in the process of democracy, in spite of the difficult conditions of security.
- viii. The international community needs to assist in security sector reform and strengthening democracy while making sure that the government of Nigeria is held responsible for human rights abuses committed under the guise of security.

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