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## **Insecurity and Political Participation in the 2023 Presidential Election: A Study of Rafi Local Government Area of Niger State, Nigeria**

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### **Abstract**

*The insecurity situations in Rafi local government area in Niger state has no doubt create a very serious level of fear, tension and anxiety in the minds of residents invariably leading to disenfranchisement of people from participating in the political affairs of their country. This study was embarked upon to examine insecurity and political participation in Rafi LGA of Niger State. The study adopts a quantitative method of data collection, the data was analyzed using simple percentage. This work is anchored and the theory was developed on structural-functionalism. This theory was developed by Gabriel Almond and James S. Coleman in 1960, which sees society as a complex system whose parts work together to promote solidarity and stability. Findings reveals that; ethno-religious conflicts among communities, electoral violence and intimidation, weak law enforcement agencies, socio-economic challenges, disenfranchisement and marginalization, insurgency and terrorism are the causes of insecurity on political participation in the 2023 general election in Rafi LGA of Niger State. The study recommends that, Strengthening Law Enforcement agencies, Community Policing, Intelligence Gathering and sharing among security personnel, address border security and other Socioeconomic Factors, etc, are the ways of curbing insecurity for effective political participation in Rafi LGA, Niger state.*

**Keywords:** Election, Insecurity, Political Participation, Presidential Threat.

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### **1. Introduction**

Deterioration of internal security has characterized Nigeria since the return to democratic rule in 1999. While democracy is often associated with good governance, the situation in Nigeria seems very contrasting. Nigeria's democratic experiment is characterized by conflicts, insecurity, political assassinations and unemployment among other challenges (CLEEN Foundation, 2016). The north-central region has in the last few years been ravaged by spates of violence and insecurity. "The region is currently going through a complex mix of security challenges, including armed banditry, some in the international border areas, different shades of ethnic and religious violence and ferocious insurgency of Boko Haram ravaging almost all the states within the region" (CLEEN Foundation, 2016).

Democracy implies that all voices are being heard. According to the renowned former American President-Abraham Lincoln, democracy can be representative or participatory (Igwe, 2010). Therefore, participating in governance is not just being attentive in politics (that is, watching news, discussing politics with friends etc.), but doing politics. People can be involved in democratic participation in different ways including voting, working in and contributing to electoral campaigns and organizations, contacting government officials and attending protests, marches, or demonstrations (Hix, 2005; Ogundiya, 2010; Arowolo & Aluko, 2012). Political participation refers to the direct or indirect involvement of the citizens of a country in the governance of their country. Political participation can be broadly divided into two, namely, conventional and



unconventional political participation (Efemini, 2013).

Prior to the 2023 general elections in Nigeria, the INEC Resident Electoral State Commissioner of Niger state, stated that elections may not hold in about 14 out of the 25 local government areas of Niger state, as it appears that those places have been taken over by armed bandits. He further stated that “the no go area due to insecurity are shiroro, Rafi, Mariga and parts of Munya local government areas” (RipplesNigeria, 15<sup>th</sup> March, 2022). In a political system, the citizens can be involved in the political process and decision making by joining political party, voting during election, participating in electoral campaign, community affairs and other political activities. The insecurity situations in Rafi local government area in Niger state has no doubt create a very serious level of fear, tension and anxiety in the minds of residents invariably leading to disenfranchisement of people from participating in the political affairs of their country. The menace of insecurity in Niger state has bedeviled and affected the progress of the Rafi local government area in recent times. In light of this, newspaper report on the daily-post on 2<sup>nd</sup> March (2022) reported that a joint security taskforce killed over 200 bandits in a gun battle across Bosso and Rafi local government area of Niger State. Further investigations revealed that the level of insecurity in Rafi local government area and Niger state as a whole has been alarming in recent times. The incidence of armed bandits has in recent times has led to a drastic halt of socio-political and economic activities in the state. Daily trust (2023) reported that health care activities, schools, market activities have been totally shutdown due to the unexpected attacks by armed bandits in Rafi local government and some part of Niger state. Several scholars like Olaniyi and Ikechukwu (2019); Abdulrasheed, Amir and Matazu (2018); Gabriel (2017); Olusegun (2016); Joda and Abdulrasheed

(2015); Ifeanyi (2014); Abdullahi (2012); Umeifekwem (2022); Gabriel (2019); Aminu & Aminu (2020); Abdullahi (2022); Igiebor (2019); have done studies on Insecurity in Northern Nigeria but none has specifically examined insecurity and political participation in Rafi Local Government Area of Niger State. Therefore, this attempt bridges the gap in literature. This study will heighten the awareness of government on the need to come up with credible and implementable policies to curb the incessant attacks on common man and improve their livelihood. It will hamper the criminal justice system of Nigeria on the need to be re-positioned and revitalized through progressive reforms to enable it acquire the integrity and competences to sanction crime aright. The specific objectives include the following:

1. To examine the causes of insecurity on political participation in the 2023 general elections in Rafi Local Government Area of Niger State.
2. To determine the consequences of insecurities that affects political participation in the 2023 general elections in Rafi Local Government Area of Niger State.
3. To identify the ways of curbing insecurity for political participation amidst insecurity in Rafi Local Government Area of Niger State.

## **2. Literature Review**

### **2.1 Conceptual Clarification**

#### **2.1.1 Democracy as a Concept**

The term democracy is derived from two Greek words: demos which mean people and kratos which means rule. Literarily, democracy means ‘rule by the people’ Appadorai (2004) described democracy as a system of government under which the people exercise the governing power either directly or through representatives periodically elected by them. In the ancient states, direct democracy was possible because all adult members of the community could easily take part in



decision making. Population growth and expansion in political boundaries have made direct democracy impracticable in the modern political system. This is the reason why representative democracy has replaced direct democracy in different parts of the world. Representative democracy is an indirect democracy where sovereignty is held by the people's representatives. Watter Lanqueur cited in Idowu (1998) pointed out that although the conditions of modern state make direct participation of all the people in government of the state impossible, the concept of democracy still emphasizes the rule of the people. That is, the sovereign power is indirectly exercised by the people through a system of representation. Consequently, political participation, particularly in the electoral process, is a fundamental requirement of representative democracy. This is the reason why Appadorai (2004) argued that where, on account of an atmosphere of fear and coercion, people do not feel free to discuss or vote, democracy cannot be said to exist, even though the other political rights are enjoyed by the people. Sovereignty (2010) identified some of the requirements of democratic rule as: at least two party system to give room for freedom of choice; periodic election that is based on universal adult suffrage; free and fair election to allow the political party that has the support of the majority to control the machinery of government and civil liberties such as freedom of association, religion, speech and freedom from arbitrary arrest.

Representative democracy rests on the assumptions that the citizens possess and demonstrate some civic capacities. These civic capacities involve three qualities: intelligence, self-control and conscience. The citizens must be able to understand the interest of the community, to subordinate his own will to the general will and must feel his responsibility to the community and be prepared to serve it by voting (Appadorai, 2004). In the contrary, indolence, indifference and political apathy

have hindered the entrenchment and sustenance of representative democracy in Nigeria. Falade and Orungbemi (2010) argued that true democratic governance is absent in Nigeria and many parts of Africa. The political culture in Nigeria is characterized by intolerance, intimidation, thuggery, assassination, bitterness, apathy, indolence, money and ethnic politics. As a result of this, the ingredients of democracy have not been able to thrive after many years of political independence in Nigeria. According to Oke (2010) democracy involves the opportunity to participate in decision making in the political process. It repudiates arbitrariness and authoritarianism. It extols the consent of the governed and it protects human personality and values (Ake, 1991). Democracy, whether liberal, African or modern, includes equal opportunity for all, fundamental recognition of popular sovereignty, representativeness, majority rule, minority rights, popular consultation, right of choice between alternative programmes, consensus on fundamental issues, as well as essentially periodic elections (Oke, 2005). The concept of democracy confers the opportunity to participate in decision making by all.

### **2.1.2 Political Participation in Nigeria**

Political participation is the involvement of the citizens in the political system. Eakin cited in Adelekan (2010) described political participation as the process through which the individual plays a role in the political life of his society and has the opportunity to take part in deciding what common goals of the society are and the best way of achieving these goals. According to Akamare (2003) political participation is an aspect of political behaviour and it focuses on the way in which individuals take part in politics. It is a voluntary activity and one may participate directly or indirectly. The various ways by which the people can be involved in the political system include selection or election of political leaders, formulation of policies, community



activities and other civic engagements. According to Awolowo and Aluko (2010), the essence of political participation in any society, either civilized or primitive, is to seek control of power, acquisition of power and to influence decision making. Political participation is a means of contributing ones quota to the political system and overall development of the nation. Political participation is one of the fundamental requirements of democratic governance. This is the reason why Adelekan (2010) emphasized that ideally, democracy means individual participation in the decisions that involves one's life. In a democratic system, there is the necessity for the citizenry to be fully involved in the democratic procedures of the choice of rulers and effective communication of the public policies and attitudes. Any claim to democratic regime or state must essentially embrace a high degree of competitive choice, openness, and enjoyment of civic and political liberties and political participation that involves all groups of the society (Arowolo and Aluko, 2010). The extents to which people participate in the political system differ from person to person. Falade (2008) identified six types of political participants. These are:

**The Inactive:** These are the people that take no part in any political activity

**Voting Specialists:** These are the people that get eagerly engaged only in voting. Besides voting, they are not concerned about other political activities.

**Parochial Participants:** These people participate in politics occasionally. They vote or get involved in any other political activity only when it affects their personal interest.

**The Communalist:** These are those who get engaged in voting regularly, they also get involved in community affairs but they are not involved in political campaign activities.

**The Campaigners:** They are actively involved in political campaign but inactive in other community affairs.

**Complete Activists:** They are highly involved in all political activities. They actively participate in voting, political campaign, community activities and make contact with public officials. Some of the factors that determine political participation are: cultural, economic, political, religious and educational backgrounds of individuals. Also, the level of political awareness as well as the measure of confidence in the political process determines the extent to which the citizens participate in the political system. In Nigeria, politics is influenced by money, ethnic and religious factors. Since independence in 1960, religious and ethnic politics characterize electioneering process in Nigeria. This is the reason why Albert Legogie, former deputy Senate President, pointed out that it was clear from the trend of the election that there was a big gulf, a dichotomy between the north and the south and between Christians and Muslims (Adeyemo, 2011).

### **2.1.3 Concept of Insecurity**

Insecurity is simply the very opposite of what we have as security. Insecurity just as security is seen also in diverse ways. Some people would take it to mean absence of safety or presence of danger; hazard; uncertainty; want of confidence; doubtful; inadequately guarded or protected; lacking stability; troubled; lack of protection and unsafe (Achumba et al, 2013). Insecurity can make one to lose confidence, be afraid, unsettled, oppressed, lose focus, and be devastated and lose one's humanness.

### **Causes of Insecurity**

Myriads of factors have been attributed to have contributed to magnitude of insecurity in Nigeria. Many erudite scholars have identified several causes of insecurity in Nigeria that are inimical to socio-economic growth and development (Ali, 2013; Okorie, 2011; Jega, 2002; Salawu, 2010; Onyishi, 2011; Ezeoba, 2011; Lewis, 2002; Achumba and Akpor 2013). These causes have bedeviled the smooth flow of business



activities in Nigeria. They include but not limited to the following:

The existence of innumerable political parties has caused havoc in Nigeria. This is because majority has not really comprehended the ethics of politics. Misconceptions, uprisings from diverse parties have landed many politicians to their untimely grave. Politics is a game of luck and not „„a Do or Die affair““ business. For instance, few years ago, the unexpected power shift from the northern hegemony to a minority geo-political zone of South-south, as a result of the death of President Yar’adua could be linked to the initial high tempo of insecurity. That is, the death of President Yar’adua resulted in an alteration of the northern perpetual claim on political power in Nigeria. In addition, the refutation of the North-South agreement on rotational presidency within the People’s Democratic Party (PDP) is also another major element, thus the death of Yar’Adua and the ascendancy of Good luck Ebele Jonathan as the president disarrayed planned and articulated political arrangement (Ferrell, 2012). In addition, there is incessant rancour among political leaders even within same party and rancor between the ruling party and the opposition parties. There are also several economic related assassinations all over the nation which creates problems to the nation’s economic growth and development. Furthermore, there is the power inter-play and over-ambition of politicians who willfully encourage the procurement of weapons in order to pursue their inordinate political ambitions (Egbewole, 2013). The struggle for political power, religious imposition and land disputes and the lack of aid for victims or punishment for troublemakers, corrupt persons, and the mismanagement of the economy have all fuelled tensions in the country, Akonbede (2013). Tom (2012) maintained that three things are interwoven in Nigeria - religion, politics and ethnicity - and the three are beclouded with corruption, poverty and insecurity.

Also, leadership and power tussle has resulted in putting the square peg in a round hole. This has deprived Nigerians the benefit of being administered by good leaders as most of the political leaders are in office for their own selfish gains. Often, sadly, these crops of political leaders oppress the citizens with the looted money, train thugs and hooligans who later turn to armed robbers, kidnappers, drug pushers etc when they are dumped by the politicians after elections thus constituting a serious threat to national growth and development. In addition, Unemployment and Poverty Issue have contributed to the extent which unemployed youths are roaming about the street is alarming. These unemployed youths at present employ themselves by engaging in illegal activities such as kidnapping, robbery, child abduction, and other nefarious activities. As a result of the high level of unemployment and poverty among Nigerians, especially the youths, they are adversely attracted to violent crime (Adagba, et al, 2012). This is depicted by recent development in Anambra State where reports by Fides (2018) unveiled a 70-year-old farmer butchered by disgruntled, hunger-infested and jobless youths residing in their villages owing to unemployment palaver. Nwagbosa (2012) posits that the failure of successive administrations in Nigeria to address challenges of poverty, unemployment and inequitable distribution of wealth among ethnic nationalities is one major causes of insecurity in the country. Unemployment has a severe negative implication on sustainable and national development in Nigeria. Poverty also is a threat to human existence and reduces a man to a perpetual state of infancy. International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD, 2007) opines that despite Nigerian huge resources and oil wealth, poverty is still rampant to the extent that the country is ranked one of the 20th poorest countries in the world”. Indeed, over 70 percent of the population is



classified as poor, with 35 percent living in abject poverty (Andenrele, 2014).

Moreover, Achumba, Ighomeroho and Akpor-Robaro (2013) observe that the porous frontiers of the country, where individual movements are largely untracked have contributed to the high degree of insecurity in Nigeria. As a result, there is an unchecked inflow of Small Arms and Light Weapons into the country which has aided militancy and criminality in Nigeria (Hazen and Horner, 2007). Available data show that Nigeria host over 70 percent of about 8 million illegal weapons in West Africa (Edeko, 2011). Also, the porosity of the Nigerian borders has aided the uncontrollable influx of migrants, mainly young men, from neighboring countries such as Republic of Niger, Chad and Republic of Benin responsible for some of the criminal acts (Adeola and Oluyemi, 2012). The porosity has raised a lot of dust which has degenerated into the ugly experiences we are currently facing today. Nigeria is the only country people troop in and out without adequate tracking and checkmating.

Furthermore, ethno-religious conflicts do arise from distrust among various ethnic groups and among the major religions in the country, Ibrahim and Igbuzor (2002), Hazen and Horner, (2007), Salawu (2010) and Igbuzor, (2011) identified ethno-religious conflict as a major source of insecurity in Nigeria. Ethno-religious conflict was defined as a situation in which the relationship between members of one ethnic or religious group and another of such group in a multi-ethnic and multi-religious society is characterized by lack of cordiality, mutual suspicion, fear, and tendency towards violent confrontation. Frequent and persistent ethnic conflicts and religious clashes between the two dominant religions (Islam and Christianity), present the country with a major security challenge. In all parts of Nigeria, there exist ethno-religious conflicts and these according to Ibrahim and Igbuzor (2002) have emerged

as a result of new and particularistic forms of political consciousness and identity often structured around ethno-religious identities. The claim over scarce resources, power, land, chieftaincy, local government, councils, control of markets and sharia among other trivial issues have resulted in large scale killings and violence amongst groups in Nigeria (Adagba, et al, 2012).

Weak security system resulted from inadequate equipment for the security arm of government, both in weaponry and training (Achumba et al. 2013). This is in addition to poor attitudinal and behavioural disposition of security personnel. In many cases, security personnel assigned to deal with given security situations lack the expertise and equipment to handle the situations in a way to prevent them from occurring. And even when these exist, some security personnel get influenced by ethnic, religious or communal sentiment and are easily swallowed by their personal interest to serve their people, rather than the nation. Thus, instead of being national watch dogs and defending national interest and values, and protecting people from harm by criminals, they soon become saboteurs of government effort, by supporting and fuelling insecurity through either leaking vital security information or aiding and abetting criminals to acquire weapons or to escape the long arm of the law (Achumba and Akpor, 2013).

Similarly, wrong perception between the public and government official over the years has been a standing mismatch between public and government perceptions. A situation which often result in the reactions of the public to the excesses of the military regimes which governed Nigeria and has continued after the end of military regimes and created a sensitivity by those in government at public intrusion in matters of state. Frequently, on any given incident, public and government reactions diverge. In such situations, the media has never helped matters. Media practices have always focused on the dramatic and the



spectacular view of the given situations. Such reports have always been capitalized on in sophisticated ways by various groups, some of which are violent to incite public clamour for a change and immediate reaction through strategically provocative violence. The point here is that the approach of media report over the years has contributed to exacerbate insecurity or perception of insecurity in Nigeria. President Jonathan alluded to this situation when he made reference to the popular axiom that the pen is mightier than the sword. In his statement, the sword is used to kill and destroy but what we use the pen to do is also very critical. When you have a society with these unending political conflicts, it is there on the media whether print, electronic or social media and this brings a lot of insecurity to the system” (Bello & Oyedele, 2012).

Also, poor image in the international community resulting from the insecurity situation in the country has given Nigeria a very poor image abroad to the extent that investors are no longer considering the country as an investment zone. They now consider other countries around Nigeria and even some investments in the country are being relocated to nearby West African countries (Campbell, 2009). Nigerians travelling abroad are now being subjected embarrassingly to extra checks because of where they are coming from.

Lastly, lack of institutional capacity resulting in government failure resulting result from what Fukuyama (2004) describes as the corrosion or breakdown of institutional infrastructures. The foundations of institutional framework in Nigeria are very shaky and have provoked a deterioration of state governance and democratic accountability, thus, paralyzing the existing set of constraints including the formal and legitimate rules nested in the hierarchy of social order. Evidently, as Igbuzor (2011) observed, the state of insecurity in Nigeria is greatly a function of government failure, or can be linked to

government failure. This is manifested in the incapacity of government to deliver public services and to provide for basic needs of the masses. The lack of basic necessities by the people in Nigeria has created a pool of frustrated people who are ignited easily by any event to be violent. The argument here, is that, Nigeria has the resources to provide for the needs of her people, but corruption in public offices at all levels has made it impossible for office holders to focus on the provision of basic needs for the people. Hazen and Horner (2007) describe the Nigerian situation as a “Paradox of Plenty”. A situation where the country earns a great deal of revenue through oil sales, but fails to use these earnings to meet the needs of her people and to develop infrastructure as well as the economy. When these situations exist, crime rate is bound to rise and the security of lives and properties are in jeopardy.

## **2.2 Empirical Review**

Olaniyi and Ikechukwu (2019) in their study “Impact of poverty, unemployment, inequality, corruption and poor governance on Niger-Delta attacks, Boko Haram terrorism, Fulani herdsmen attacks in Nigeria”. Employing fully modified ordinary least squares (FMOLS) estimation technique on the time series data for the variables under study, the study discovered that Niger-Delta militancy, Boko-Haram terrorism and herdsmen attacks in Nigeria are significantly attributed to the worsened rate of poverty, unemployment, inequality, corruption and poor state of governance in the country. Therefore, the study resolved that in agreement with the relative deprivation theory, various deprivations in the country resulted in violence and conflicts in the form of Niger-Delta militancy, Boko haram terrorism and herdsmen attacks. Thus, violence and security crime are as a result of governance problem as it relates to socio-economic life of citizenry in the country.

Also, study by Abdulrasheed, Amir and Matazu (2018) on Incidence and impact of



cattle rustling in some rural communities in Katsina state. Inferential statistics and classical independent t-test statistics was adopted on the cross-sectional data of 1,488 respondents sampled from the eight (8) frontline local government areas of the state. The data was obtained via the use of structured questionnaire and focus group discussion in which there exist a huge variation in socio-economic variables of the respondents in the sampled local government areas between the pervasive period of the menace and the period before. The study therefore inferred that, though, there is no significant displacement and vacation of people of the rural communities, but the cattle rustling menace distort economic well-being of the people through reduction in income level.

A study on “determinants of human insecurity in Nigeria and their impact on economic growth using time series data from 1994-2016” By Gabriel (2017) Mix methods were utilized based on the two classes of data used in the study. Autoregressive Distributed Lagged model was used as the estimation technique on the time series data; while the descriptive statistics was employed to analyse surveyed data. The study discovered that insecurity in Nigeria were mostly caused by unemployment, poverty, ethno-religious violence, terrorism, corruption, lack of specialized skills/sources of livelihood and unresolved agitations owing to inefficient system of governance.

Similarly, Olusegun (2016) in his study “Economic growth amidst insecurity: The Nigerian experience”, utilized time series data for Real GDP, Total expenditure on security, Gross Fixed Capital Formation, Total Labour Force, Corruption Perception Index and Poverty Index to show the relationship that exist between economic growth and insecurity. With the use of OLS regression method, the study reveals that expenditure on security and other related variables do not only contribute positively to economic growth in Nigeria, but their

impacts on economic growth are strong and statistically significant.

Joda and Abdurashheed (2015) studied the effect of insurgency on girls’ education in North Eastern Nigeria. The study used descriptive statistics in the form of mean and standard deviation as methods of analysis of the data retrieved via structured questionnaire from sampled 180 primary and secondary schools’ teachers. The sample was done on the basis of 30 teachers from each state of the 6 states that constitute north-eastern region of Nigeria. The findings revealed that the insurgent attacks have affected the girls’ education through mindless attacks on their schools and consequent frequent abduction of school girls from their dormitories, occasional kidnapping of school girls on their way to school; traumatic tendency of female teachers and school girls generated fears in them to going to schools.

Empirical study by Ifeanyi (2014) on “causes and effects of insecurity in Nigeria: the challenges and relevance of the Nigerian Police Force as a panacea”. Employing descriptive statistics in the form of frequency distribution table and percentages on the 520 retrieved questionnaires from sampled respondents, the study found that lack of accountability consciousness in Nigerian Police Force make them less-effective in tackling the current insecurity in Nigeria as shown by 86.4% of the respondents. Also, 61.4% of the respondents responded positively that insecurity in Nigeria is aggravated by the high level of poverty and unemployment owing to loss of accountability indices by those at the helms of government. Consequently, upon this finding, it can be factually drawn that there is direct relationship between insecurity and indicators of governance in Nigeria.

Also, study by Abdullahi (2012) on good governance as panacea to socio-economic crises in Nigeria. The study used descriptive statistics on the secondary data obtained from various documented sources. The





findings revealed that, the absence of good governance is responsible for a lot of social and economic crises like political tension, unemployment, poverty, lack of quality education and inequitable resources allocation that further exacerbated the state of insecurity in the country since return of democratic rule in 1999 in Nigeria.

Umeifekwem (2022) carried out a research on "Insecurity Issues in Nigeria and the Encumbrances of the Nigeria police Force: Rethinking the Roles of the Upper Class: Implications and Solutions". The findings from the study were that the Nigerian Police Force has not adequately tackled insecurity in Nigeria and that the inability of the police force to adequately secure the lives and properties of Nigerian Citizens is as a result of class meddlesomeness on the activities of the police. The study recommended that the NPF should be supported in terms of training and equipment to be able to contain the rising insecurity and they should be strong institutional activation that will protect men and women of the force while on duty against any form of harassment or intimidations from outside.

A study by Gabriel (2019), the study revealed that total expenditure on security had a negative impact on GDP in both the short-run and long-run respectively due to accountability and transparency that is lacking in security expenditure. Again, corruption showed no significant impact on economic growth but a one-year lag unemployment rate and inflation rate had a significant impact on economic growth respectively. However, the analysis of the surveyed data revealed that unemployment and lack of special skills and education are significantly responsible for the heightened level of insecurity bedeviling the nation and therefore 96% of the respondents jointly agreed that job creation and skill acquisition will reduce insecurity in the country.

A study on 'an empirical investigation of the indicators of governance and insecurity in Nigeria: 1984-2018' by Aminu & Aminu

(2020) revealed that, the study revealed that the bad shape of the indicators of governance contribute to the weak governance system that consequently exacerbate insecurity situation in Nigeria. The study then recommends among others, strengthening and advancing the Nigerian anti-corruption war to match the changing ways of perpetrating corruptions by public office holders particularly officers of the Nigerian security departments should be strictly enforced so as to abate the upsurge of corruption among public office holders thereby suppressing the hiking level of insecurity in the country due to corruption; ensuring full application of law on the insecurity culprits irrespective of the social status and connections so as to serve as deterrent to other defiant in the mix of conformists in the society.

A study by Abdullahi (2022) on "Insecurity as an Impediment to Development in Nigeria". This study therefore identified insecurity as a major cause of Nigeria's poor national development profile. The study equally identified enhanced welfare package to security personnel, community policing, purging of security outfits of undesirable elements, revamping the judiciary to strengthen the criminal justice system, economic empowerment for the teeming population of youths as some of the solutions to address the insecurity situation in Nigeria in order to achieve accelerated national development.

A study by Igiebor (2019) "the effects of security challenges on electoral participation in Nigeria: the fourth republic in focus". The study asserts that voter participation in the electoral process is affected by widespread violence and feeling of insecurity resulting in low-level participation. Consequently, some policy advices are made. The governments at all levels should strengthen security mechanism to forestall outbreaks of violence during election periods and ensure prompt prosecution of electoral offenders. Appropriate security network and



intelligence should be organized to monitor electoral activities to mitigate incidences of violence. The Independent National Electoral Commission should conduct transparent and credible elections while the political parties and candidates should ensure strict compliance with electoral regulations.

### **2.3 Theoretical Framework**

The theoretical framework adopted for research work is “structural-functionalism approach”.

#### **2.3.1 The Structural-Functionalism Theory**

This work is to be anchored on the synthesis of structural-functionalism. This theory was developed by Gabriel Almond and James S. Coleman in their book *Introduction to the Politics of Developing Area (1960)*. Further development of the approach was carried out by Gabriel Almond and G.B Powell in their book *comparative politics: A Development Approach (1966)*. Almond and his group contend that all political systems, regardless of their type, must perform a specific set of tasks if they are to remain in existence as a system in working order or in equilibrium. Structural functionalism is a framework for building theory that sees society as a complex system whose parts work together to promote solidarity and stability (Macionis, 1944).

#### **2.3.2 Assumptions of the Theory**

- i. Structural functionalism employs an organic analogy to understand society. It perceives society as a living organism in which each part performs specific functions to contribute to the overall stability and well-being of the whole.
- ii. Structural functionalists assume that every aspect of society, including social institutions, norms, and values, serves a particular function that is necessary for the smooth functioning and survival of society as a whole.
- iii. The theory emphasizes the importance of social order and stability. It assumes that society tends to maintain equilibrium and that social institutions

and norms play a crucial role in achieving and preserving social stability.

- iv. Structural functionalism assumes that there is a general consensus and agreement among members of society regarding fundamental values, norms, and social roles. This consensus promotes social integration and cohesion.
- v. Structural functionalists distinguish between manifest functions and latent functions. Manifest functions are the intended and recognized consequences of social institutions or actions, while latent functions are the unintended and often unrecognized consequences.
- vi. Structural functionalism focuses on the maintenance and reproduction of social systems over time. It examines how social institutions and structures adapt and change to meet the needs of society and ensure its survival.

#### **2.3.3 Strength/Application of the Theory**

Applying this theory to our research, it implies that the government function against democracy serves as a framework for political participation as there was a very close link between functionalism and political development; the idea that countries had to develop in the capacity to perform certain functions which includes effective governance that entails political participation of the majority of its people with the application of norms, customs, traditions and institutions of the society. The theory highlights the importance of social order and stability in society. It recognizes the role of social institutions in maintaining social cohesion and minimizing social conflicts. Structural functionalism focuses on understanding the functions performed by different aspects of society. The theory provides insights into the intended and unintended consequences of social institutions and actions. Structural functionalism assess the manifest functions of political participation, such as representation and decision-making, as well



as the latent functions, such as fostering social integration and providing avenues for social mobility. It would also examine the manifest and latent functions of insecurity, including its impact on social cohesion and the potential unintended consequences.

### **2.3.4 Weaknesses of the Theory**

Structural functionalism tends to overlook power dynamics and conflicts within society. It assumes a harmonious and consensus-based view of social interactions, which may not accurately reflect the reality of power struggles and inequalities that exist in many societies. The theory assumes a relatively stable and static view of society, focusing on the maintenance of social order and equilibrium. This perspective may overlook the dynamic nature of social systems and the potential for social change. Also, the theory places less emphasis on individual agency and tends to focus more on the functions performed by social institutions. This can lead to a limited understanding of how individuals actively shape and influence society.

## **3. Methodology**

### **Research Design**

The research design addresses the planning of scientific inquiry, designing a strategy for finding out something. In this research therefore, survey design will be used to examine the Impacts of impact of insecurity on political participation in Rafi Local Government Area of Niger State. Survey design is adopted for the study as it gives a detailed and systematic way to view and analyze data.

### **Research Area**

The study will be carried out in Rafi Local Government Area. Rafi is one of the 25 Local Government of Niger State. The headquarters of Rafi LGA are in the town of Kagara. The most commonly found languages in the area are Bassa, Ura, Fulah, Pangu, Kamuku, Gwari, Kambari, Ngwe, Hausa, Nupe, and many more languages who cohabits peacefully with one another.

The natives of the Rafi LGA are predominantly farmers who are described to be very hospitable and accommodating, hence the tremendous socio-economic development of Rafi local government area in Niger State.

### **Population of the Study**

Population as used in research is the total number of elements, subjects, items that possess a specified set of one or more common characteristics of interest in a study. The research will be carried out among residents in Rafi Local Government Area, Niger State. Rafi LGA estimated population is 181,929 according to NPC projection (2006-2022)

### **Sampling and Sampling Technique**

In order to ensure validity of the data, the researcher employs simple random sampling technique, so as to represent the value of the population of the research. For the sample size, at an estimated population of 181,929, the number of sample size for this research was adopted using Research Advisors (2006) Sample Size Table at 95% Confidence Level and 5% Margin of Error. Therefore, 383 respondents were selected as sample size for the study.

A multi-stage sampling procedure has been adopted to select respondents for this study. This involves the use of more than one sampling technique to select a sample. A random sampling technique is used to select respondents from the ten (10) political wards of the Rafin-Dadi LGA, of Niger State. The random sampling technique is adopted to ensure objectivity in the selection process. This is further achieved by folding and picking ten (10) squeezed papers containing the numbers of respondents in the various political wards.

### **Determination of Sampling Size**

To get a sample size of the population of business people in Rafin Local Government area, the study considers sample size formula proposed by Fisher, Laing, Stoeckel and Townsend (1998) the formula to determine sample size for populations less than 10, 000 is:



$$nf = 1 + \frac{n}{N}$$

Where  $n = \frac{Z^2 pq}{d^2}$

Therefore;  $n = \frac{(1.96)^2 (0.5) (0.5)}{0.05^2} = 384$

Thus; the sample size now is calculated below:

$$nf = \frac{384}{1 + \frac{384}{1500}} = 384$$

**Table 1: Sample Size**

Ward	Population	Sample size (n x 306/N)
Kagara Gari*	383	78
Kakuri	Nil	Nil
Kongoma Central*	379	77
Kongoma West*	396	81
Kusherki North	Nil	Nil
Kusherki South*	170	71
Kundu	Nil	Nil
Sabon Gari	Nil	Nil
Tegina Gari	Nil	Nil
Tegina West*	172	77
Yakila Ward		
<b>Total</b>	<b>1500</b>	<b>384</b>

**Source:** Researcher’s Compilation, 2023

**Sources of Data Collection**

This study will use both primary and secondary data generated from the questionnaire. Secondary data, on the other

hand, deals with the information that is relevant to the study that has already been generated and stored in texts and files for different purposes.

**Instrument for Data Collection**

Questionnaire will be used for data collection in this study. The copies of the questionnaire which will be administered to 384 samples aged 18 and above in five randomly selected wards (Table 1). The questionnaire shall be administered personally by the researchers to the respondents. The objectives of the research work will be clearly explained to the subject before the administration of the questionnaire. A closed-end questionnaire will be structured to obtain information concerning the impact of insecurity on economic development in the study area. In most cases, questions will be administered in direct face-to-face interaction by the researcher. Those who can read and write will be allowed to fill out and return the questionnaire, while those who cannot neither read nor write shall be assisted by the researcher. The questionnaire will be divided into five sections. The first part will contain demographic information about respondents, including gender, age, occupation, marital status, etc. The second section will contain the items on the nature of insecurity in the study area. The third part will contain questions on items which focus on the main factors responsible for insecurity in the study area. The fourth part will also contain questions on the impact of insecurity on economic development in the study area; and the fifth part will provide questions on the solution to the menace of insecurity in the study area.

**Pre-Testing**

To identify ambiguous, vague questions, make wording clear provide enough time and options for respondents, the questionnaires for this study will be pre-tested on 20 respondents. Dillman (2007) recommended that, questionnaires be pre tested to detect problems with understandability and wording of the



survey. The researcher personally distributed the instruments to 20 respondents' who were purposively selected. The pre-test group consists of business people from some of the wards that was not part of the sample but within the study location.

The pre testers were asked to complete the questionnaires as well as provide feedback regarding the construct and understandability of the instruments. The questionnaires were also tested on peers and critique regarding the items and finally, supervisor's observations comments help improve data collection.

**Validity**

Validity is the appropriateness of the instrument in measuring whatever it is intended to measure. Therefore, content validity for the instruments of this study will be checked to determine the extent to which the instruments for this study will be appropriate to achieve the purpose of this study. This was done through expert judgment technique and peer critique, where the instruments will be given to experts to judge whether all items in the instruments are really related to and representatives of the intended objectives. Their opinions and judgments will be incorporated before administering the instruments for data collection process (Babbie, 2014). In addition, the item validity was also measured using test and retest.

**Reliability**

The reliability for internal consistency of the instrument will be tested using Cronbach Alpha coefficient. This measure the extent to which the measurement is without bias (error-free) and offers consistent measurement across time and across the various items in the instrument

(Brown, 2011 and Sekaran and Bougie, 2010). The reliability coefficient ranges from 0.6-1.0, the most acceptable factor is 0.67 and above, the more the coefficient gets to 1.0, the more reliable of the instrument.

**Method of Data Analysis**

Data analysis is a process of inspecting, cleansing, transforming and modeling data with the goal of discovering useful information, suggesting conclusions, and supporting decision-making. Data analysis has multiple facets and approaches, encompassing diverse techniques under a variety of names, in different business, science, and social science domains. In analyzing the data, the researcher will make use of simple percentage method to fully describe the responses from the respondents.

The method presented will include:

$$\frac{\text{Total No. of responses}}{\text{Total No. of respondents}} \times 100$$

**4. Results and Discussion**

This section presents the data collected through the instruments mentioned in chapter three, analyzed them, provided answers to the research questions and summarize as well as discusses the finding of the study. Three hundred and eighty-three (383) questionnaires were administered to the target population sampled for the collection of their responses. However, three hundred and forty-three (348) questionnaires were recovered, as thirty-seven (37) of the questionnaires distributed were considered invalid due to physical damages and double-ticking of answers by respondents, thereby, rendering the questionnaire invalid.



4.1 Data Presentation

Table 1: Gender

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Male	217	62.36%
Female	131	37.64
Total	348	100%

Source: Researcher’s survey 2023

The above table shows that 62.36% of the respondent are male, while 37.64% of the respondent are female.

Table 2: Age Group

Response	Frequency	Percentage
18 – 25	106	30.46%
26 – 30	117	33.62%
31 – 40	83	23.85%
41 and above	42	12.07%
Total	348	100%

Source: Researcher’s survey 2023

Table 2 above shows that 30.46% of the respondent are within the age bracket of 18-25, 33.62% of the respondent are within the age bracket of 26-30 years, 23.85% of the respondent are within the age bracket of 31-40 years, while 12.07% of the respondent are within the age of 41 years and above.

Table 3: Highest Educational Qualification

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Islamic School	145	41.66%
Primary	69	19.83%
SSCE	94	27.01%
Tertiary	40	11.49%
Total	348	100%

Source: Researcher’s survey 2023

The above table shows 41.66% of the respondent gained Islamic education, 19.83% of the respondent attend primary school, 27.01% of the respondent attained SSCE, while only 11.49% of the respondent have tertiary education.

Table 4: Occupation

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Students	51	14.65%
Traders	87	25%
Farmers	127	36.49%
Unemployed	83	23.85%
Total	348	100%

Source: Researcher’s survey 2023

The above table shows 14.65% of the respondent are students, 25% of the respondents are traders, 36.49% of the respondent are farmers while 23.85% of the respondents are unemployed.



**Table 5: What are the causes of insecurity on political participation in the 2023 general election in Rafi Local Government Area of Niger State?**

SN	Opinion	Agree	Disagree	Total (%)
1.	Ethno-Religious Conflicts among communities	279	69	79.88% Agree 19.82% Disagree 100%
2.	Electoral Violence and intimidation	312	36	89.65% Agree 10.35% Disagree 100%
3.	Weak law enforcement agencies	294	54	84.48% Agree 15.52% Disagree 100%
4.	Socio-economic challenges	267	81	76.73% Agree 23.27% Disagree 100%
5	Disenfranchisement and marginalization	312	36	89.65% Agree 10.35% Disagree 100%
6.	Insurgency and Terrorism	292	56	83.91% Agree 16.09% Disagree 100%

**Source:** Researcher’s survey 2023

Item 1 on the table above shows that 79.88% of the respondent indicate their agreement while 19.82% of the respondent indicate their disagreement that ethno-religious conflicts among communities is among the causes of insecurity on political participation in the 2023 general election in Rafi LGA.

Item 2 shows that 89.65% of the respondent indicate their agreement, while 10.35% of the respondent indicate their disagreement towards electoral violence and intimidation is one of the causes of insecurity on political participation in the 2023 general election in Rafi LGA.

Item 3 shows that 84.48% of the respondent indicate their agreement while 15.52% of the respondent indicate their disagreement that weak law enforcement agencies is one of the causes of insecurity on political participation in the 2023 general election in Rafi LGA.

Item 4 shows that 76.73% of the respondent indicate their agreement while 23.27% of the respondent indicate their disagreement that socio-economic challenges is one of the causes of insecurity on political participation in the 2023 general election in Rafi LGA.

Item 5 shows that 89.65% of the respondent indicate their agreement, while 10.35% of the respondent indicate their disagreement that disenfranchisement and marginalization is one of the causes of insecurity on political participation in the 2023 general election in Rafi LGA.

Item 6 shows that 83.91% of the respondent indicate their agreement, while 16.09% of the respondent indicate their disagreement that insurgency and terrorism is one of the causes of insecurity on political participation in the 2023 general election in Rafi LGA of Niger State.



**Table 6: What are the consequences of insecurities that affect political participation in the 2023 general elections in Rafi Local Government Area of Niger State?**

SN	Opinion	Agree	Disagree	Total (%)
1.	Loss of lives and properties	348	0	100% Agree 0% Disagree 100%
2.	High rate of voter apathy	305	43	87.64% Agree 12.36% Disagree 100%
3.	Undermines democratic institutions	327	21	93.96% Agree 6.04% Disagree 100%
4.	Creates weak security system	285	63	81.89% Agree 18.11% Disagree 100%
5	Creates Political instability	271	77	77.87% Agree 22.13% Disagree 100%
6.	Low voter turnout	325	23	93.39% Agree 6.61% Disagree 100%
7.	Increases the level of corruption	339	9	97.42% Agree 2.58% Disagree 100%

**Source:** Researcher’s survey 2023

Item 1 on the table above shows that 100% of the respondents indicated their agreement that loss of lives and properties is one of the consequences of insecurity that affect political participation in the 2023 general elections in Rafi LGA.

Item 2 shows that 87.64% of the respondent indicate their agreement while 12.36% of the respondent indicate their disagreement that high rate of voter apathy is one of the consequences of insecurity that affect political participation in the 2023 general elections in Rafi LGA.

Item 3 shows that 93.96% of the respondent indicate their agreement while only 6.04% of the respondent indicate their disagreement that one of the consequences of insecurity that affect political participation in the 2023 general elections in Rafi LGA undermines democratic institutions.

Item 4 shows that 81.89% of the respondent indicate their agreement while 18.11% of the respondent indicate their disagreement that one of the consequences of insecurity that affect political participation in the 2023 general elections in Rafi LGA, it creates weak security system.

Item 5 shows that 77.87% of the respondent indicate their agreement, while 22.13% of the respondent indicate their disagreement that one of the consequences of insecurity that affect political participation in the 2023 general elections in Rafi LGA is, it creates political instability.

Item 6 shows that 93.39% of the respondent indicate their agreement while 6.61% of the respondent indicate their disagreement that one of the consequences of insecurity that affect political participation in the 2023 general elections in Rafi LGA is low voter turnout.

Item 7 shows that 97.42% of the respondent indicate their agreement while 2.58% of the respondent indicate their disagreement that one of the consequences of insecurity that affect





political participation in the 2023 general elections in Rafi LGA is it increases the level of corruption.

**Table 7: What are the ways of curbing insecurity for political participation amidst insecurity in Rafi Local Government Area of Niger State?**

SN	Opinion	Agree	Disagree	Total (%)
1.	Creation of awareness among electorate	324	24	93.11% Agree 6.89% Disagree 100%
2.	Electoral reforms and transparency	336	12	96.55% Agree 3.45% Disagree 100%
3.	Voter education and sensitization	287	61	82.47% Agree 17.53% Disagree 100%
4.	Community engagement and dialogue	304	44	87.36% Agree 12.64% Disagree 100%
5	Strengthening security measures	342	6	98.27% Agree 1.73% Disagree 100%
6.	Collaboration with civil society and private individuals to enhance democracy	246	102	70.69% Agree 29.31% Disagree 100%
7.	Protection and value for lives and properties of citizens	332	16	95.41% Agree 4.59% Disagree 100%

**Source:** Researcher’s survey 2023

Item 1 on the above table shows that 93.11% of the respondent indicate their agreement while 6.89% of the respondent indicate their disagreement that creation of awareness among electorate is one of the ways of curbing insecurity for political participation amidst insecurity in Rafi LGA.

Item 2 shows that 96.55% of the respondent indicate their agreement, while 3.45% of the respondent indicate their disagreement that electoral reforms and transparency is one of the ways of curbing insecurity for political participation amidst insecurity in Rafi LGA.

Item 3 shows that 82.47% of the respondent indicate their agreement while 17.53% of the respondent indicate their disagreement that voter education and sensitization is one of the ways of curbing insecurity for

political participation amidst insecurity in Rafi LGA.

Item 4 shows that 87.36% of the respondent indicate their agreement while 12.64% of the respondent indicate their disagreement that community engagement and dialogue is one of the ways of curbing insecurity for political participation amidst insecurity in Rafi LGA.

Item 5 shows that 98.27% of the respondent indicate their agreement while 1.73% of the respondent indicate their disagreement that one of the ways of curbing insecurity for political participation amidst insecurity in Rafi LGA is strengthening security measures.

Item 6 shows that 70.69% of the respondent indicate their agreement while 29.31% of the respondent indicate their disagreement that collaboration with civil society and private individuals to enhance democracy is



one of the ways of curbing insecurity for political participation amidst insecurity in Rafi LGA.

Item 7 shows that 95.41% of the respondent indicate their agreement while 4.59% of the respondent indicate their disagreement that protection and value for lives and properties of citizen is one of the ways of curbing insecurity for political participation amidst insecurity in Rafi LGA of Niger State.

#### **4.2 Discussion of Findings**

From the study above, male respondents are the majority of respondents with a frequency of 217 at 62.36%, while the female gender form the minority of respondents for the study with a frequency of 131 at 37.64%. The majority of respondents that form the study are those within the age range of 26-30 at 33.62%, while the minority of people are those within the age range of 41 and above at 12.07%. The highest educational qualification of majority of respondents for this study are those who attended Islamic schools at a percentage of 41.66%, while those who attended tertiary institution are the minority at 11.49%. The majority of respondents for the study indicated to be farmers with a frequency of 127 at 36.49%, while those who indicated to be students are the minority at 14.65%.

Findings from the study base on the first objective reveals that; ethno-religious conflicts among communities, electoral violence and intimidation, real law enforcement agencies, socio-economic challenges, disenfranchisement and marginalization, insurgency and terrorism are the causes of insecurity on political participation in the 2023 general election in Rafi LGA of Niger State.

Findings on the second objective of the study revealed that; loss of lives and properties, high rate of voter apathy, undermines democratic institutions, creates weak security system, creates political instability in the state, leads to low voter turnout during election, and increases the level of corruption in government offices by

officials are the consequences of insecurities that affect political participation in the 2023 general elections in Rafi LGA of Niger State.

Lastly, findings on the third objective of the study revealed that; creation of awareness among electorate, electoral reforms and transparency, voter education and sensitization, community engagement and dialogue, strengthening security measures, collaboration with civil society and private individuals to enhance democracy and protection and value for lives and properties of citizens, are the ways of curbing insecurity for political participation amidst insecurity in Rafi Local Government Area of Niger State.

#### **5. Conclusion and Recommendations**

Nigeria has witnessed an unprecedented level of insecurity since the inception of the immediate past administration till the present democratic political dispensation. The nature of insecurity has been regionalized: militia groups in the south, insurgency in the north, kidnapping in the east and south, ritual killings in the east and west, political and non-political calculated assassinations across the nation. Deterioration of internal security has characterized Nigeria since the return to democratic rule in 1999. While democracy is often associated with good governance, the situation in Nigeria seems very contrasting. Nigeria's democratic experiment is characterized by conflicts, insecurity, political assassinations and unemployment among other challenges. Insurmountable challenge to security is evident given the formation, proliferation and challenges pose by non-state actors across the different parts of the country. Political participation is relevant in achieving an enduring democracy and democratization process, and in essence, good governance. Participation serves as the instrument for the attainment of a viable and representative government in democratic societies. Voting then becomes



the contact linkage between the representatives and the citizenry and provides the foundation for discussions, deliberations, and citizens engagement in the operation of the political system. Consequently, if turnout declines, the primary linkage between the citizen and the political system may become weakened, this may threaten the legitimacy of the democratic system. Citizens' participation in the process of governance is necessary to accomplish an equitable and civilized society. These tenets will not be achieved if a majority of citizens continue to stay away from political activities as a result of recurring violence. The Nigerian political space has become enmeshed in violence, fierce confrontation, bitter competition and repression. This type of environment would negatively impact on citizen's participation. It is important to note that addressing insecurity requires a comprehensive and multi-faceted approach involving various stakeholders, including the government, security agencies, civil society, and citizens.

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