**JOURNAL OF PEACE, SECURITY AND DEVELOPMENT STUDIES**
*JPSDS 5 (2), 1 – 18 June (2026)*
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OPEN ACCESS
ORGINAL ARTICLE

# EVALUATING PEACEBUILDING EFFECTIVENESS IN AWKA CAPITAL TERRITORY: NATURE, DRIVERS, AND PATHWAYS TO SUSTAINABLE SECURITY

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**Abstract**

Insecurity in Nigeria's South-East, particularly in Awka Capital Territory, has intensified in recent years, driven by separatist agitations, criminal violence, weak governance, and socio-economic exclusion. This study evaluates the effectiveness of peacebuilding initiatives implemented between 2015 and 2025, with a focus on both state-led and community-driven interventions. Guided by Conflict Transformation and Governance and Legitimacy theories, the research employed a quantitative design using structured questionnaires (372 valid responses) and purposive interviews with 20 stakeholders. A multi-stage sampling technique ensured representation across urban and rural communities in Awka North and South Local Government Areas. Findings reveal that militarized responses, such as security crackdowns, have largely failed to address root causes, often exacerbating tensions. In contrast, initiatives like the Truth, Justice and Peace Committee established in 2022 demonstrated moderate success in fostering dialogue and rebuilding trust. Respondents emphasized that sustainable peace requires tackling structural drivers of insecurity, including unemployment, marginalisation, and weak institutions. The study concludes that peacebuilding in Anambra remains fragmented and overly reactive, underscoring the need for inclusive, locally grounded strategies. Key recommendations include strengthening governance legitimacy, promoting socio-economic empowerment, institutionalizing community-based security, prioritizing dialogue over militarization, enhancing regional coordination, and establishing monitoring frameworks. These measures provide a holistic roadmap for achieving durable peace and stability in Awka Capital Territory and beyond.

**Keywords:** Peacebuilding, Insecurity, Awka Capital Territory, Community-based security, Governance and legitimacy, South-East Nigeria

## Introduction

Peacebuilding has become a central global strategy for addressing insecurity in fragile and conflict-affected states. The United Nations (1992) defines peacebuilding as "actions undertaken to identify and support structures which will tend to strengthen and solidify peace," emphasizing institutional resilience and reconciliation. Scholars such as Lederach (1997, 2003) argue that peacebuilding must go beyond ceasefires to address structural inequalities and rebuild relationships.

In Nigeria, insecurity manifests in diverse forms: terrorism in the Northeast, banditry in the Northwest, farmer–herder conflicts in the Middle Belt, and secessionist violence in the Southeast (Buzan, Waever & de Wilde, 1998; Onyebukwa, 2024). Anambra State, particularly Awka Capital Territory, has become emblematic of these challenges, experiencing persistent violence despite multiple interventions.

The persistence of insecurity in Awka raises critical questions about the effectiveness of peacebuilding policies. While commissions, community policing initiatives, and security reforms have been introduced, violence continues to undermine social stability. Beetham's (1991) theory of legitimacy suggests that governance structures must be perceived as fair and accountable to sustain peace. Yet, weak institutions, socio-economic exclusion, and political interference have eroded trust between communities and the state (Nextier SPD, 2024). This aligns with empirical findings from Cameroon, where Ngoh (2020) shows that militarized responses without inclusive governance perpetuate instability. Thus, the problem in Awka is not merely the presence of insecurity but the inadequacy of policy frameworks to address its root causes.

Against this backdrop, the study sets out to systematically assess the nature and drivers of insecurity in Awka Capital Territory. Drawing on the OECD's (2010) multidimensional framework for evaluating policy effectiveness, relevance, coherence, efficiency, and sustainability, the research examines whether peacebuilding initiatives between 2015 and 2025 have achieved their intended objectives. Mukherjee and Bali (2019) argue that effectiveness must be measured not only by immediate outputs but by long-term impacts on governance and social cohesion. Applying this lens allows for a nuanced evaluation of interventions such as the Truth, Justice and Peace Commission, Operation Udo Ga-Achi, and Homeland Security reforms.

The objectives of this study are twofold: first, to assess the nature and drivers of insecurity in Awka Capital Territory; second, to evaluate the effectiveness of peacebuilding initiatives implemented between 2015 and 2025. By situating the analysis within both theoretical and empirical literature, the study contributes to broader debates on peacebuilding in fragile states. Ultimately, it seeks to demonstrate that sustainable peace in Awka requires inclusive governance, socio-economic empowerment, and institutional accountability, echoing lessons from global cases such as Colombia (Delgado, 2022) and the Basque Country (Martinez, 2018).

The remainder of this paper is organized as follows. Section One provides the introduction, while Section Two presents the literature review, structured into three subsections: conceptual, theoretical, and empirical perspectives. Section Three outlines the materials and methods employed in the study, detailing the research design, sampling techniques, and data collection procedures. Section Four discusses the data presentation, results, and interpretation of findings. Finally, Section Five offers the summary, conclusion, and recommendations, highlighting the key insights and policy implications derived from the study.

**Conceptual Review**

Peacebuilding as a concept has evolved significantly since its formal articulation in the early 1990s. The United Nations (1992) defined peacebuilding as actions designed to strengthen and solidify peace by addressing structural causes of conflict. Lederach (1997, 2003) advanced this understanding by emphasizing reconciliation, relationship-building, and the transformation of conflict dynamics rather than mere cessation of hostilities. Newman (2009) further highlighted the institutional dimension, arguing that peacebuilding must involve reforms that strengthen governance, justice systems, and socio-economic structures. Together, these perspectives underscore that peacebuilding is multidimensional, requiring both relational and institutional interventions to achieve sustainable peace.

Insecurity, as a conceptual category, is equally complex. Buzan, Waever, and de Wilde (1998) conceptualize insecurity as multidimensional, encompassing political, economic, societal, and environmental dimensions. This framework is particularly relevant in Nigeria, where insecurity manifests in terrorism, banditry, communal clashes, and secessionist violence. The multidimensionality of insecurity implies that peacebuilding cannot be narrowly focused on military or policing solutions but must address broader socio-economic and governance challenges. Scholars such as Acharya (2011) and IEP (2023) reinforce this view, noting that insecurity often arises from weak institutions, exclusionary politics, and structural inequalities.

Policy effectiveness provides another critical lens for conceptualizing peacebuilding. The OECD (2010) defines effectiveness as the extent to which objectives are achieved, emphasizing the importance of relevance, coherence, efficiency, and sustainability. Mukherjee and Bali (2019) expand this definition by stressing that effectiveness must be measured not only in terms of short-term outputs but also long-term impacts on governance and social cohesion. In fragile contexts such as Anambra State, effectiveness requires policies that are context-sensitive, inclusive, and adaptable to evolving security dynamics. This conceptual framing highlights that peacebuilding initiatives must be evaluated not only by their immediate ability to reduce violence but also by their capacity to foster durable institutions and community trust.

Taken together, the conceptual literature suggests that peacebuilding in Awka Capital Territory must be understood as a multidimensional process that integrates reconciliation, institutional reform, and socio-economic empowerment. Insecurity is not merely the absence of safety but a complex interplay of political, economic, and societal factors. Policy effectiveness, therefore, must be judged by the degree to which interventions address these root causes and contribute to sustainable peace. This conceptual foundation provides the basis for analyzing the effectiveness of peacebuilding initiatives in Anambra State between 2015 and 2025.

**Theoretical Framework**

Conflict Transformation Theory, as articulated by Lederach (2003), provides a basis for understanding peacebuilding in fragile contexts such as Anambra State. Unlike conflict management approaches that focus on short-term containment of violence, conflict transformation emphasises addressing the underlying causes of conflict through dialogue, reconciliation, and structural change. Lederach argues that sustainable peace requires transforming relationships, institutions, and cultural patterns that perpetuate violence. Applied to Awka Capital Territory, this theory suggests that interventions must go beyond security operations to include community dialogue, trust-building, and socio-economic reforms that address grievances fueling secessionist violence and criminality. The emphasis on relational change is particularly relevant in contexts where distrust between communities and state institutions undermines peacebuilding efforts.

Governance and Legitimacy Theory, advanced by Beetham (1991), complements this perspective by highlighting the centrality of legitimacy in sustaining peace. Beetham posits that governance structures must be perceived as just, accountable, and inclusive to command authority and foster stability. In Anambra, weak institutions, political interference, and exclusionary practices have eroded legitimacy, thereby limiting the effectiveness of peacebuilding initiatives. This aligns with empirical findings from Nextier SPD (2024), which show that communities often distrust state-led security interventions, perceiving them as politically motivated rather than genuinely protective. Governance and Legitimacy Theory thus underscores that peacebuilding cannot succeed without reforms that enhance transparency, accountability, and inclusivity in governance structures.

The two theories provide a robust framework for analyzing peacebuilding in Awka Capital Territory. Conflict Transformation Theory highlights the need to address structural and relational dimensions of insecurity, while Governance and Legitimacy Theory emphasises the importance of institutional credibility and inclusivity. Their combined application suggests that peacebuilding initiatives must integrate both community-driven dialogue and institutional reforms to achieve sustainable outcomes. This dual focus is consistent with global experiences: in Colombia, inclusive dialogue and socio-economic empowerment reduced violence (Delgado, 2022), while in Cameroon, exclusionary governance perpetuated instability despite military interventions (Ngoh, 2020). These comparative insights reinforce the relevance of combining relational and institutional approaches in Anambra's peacebuilding efforts.

Ultimately, the theoretical literature demonstrates that peacebuilding in fragile contexts is not merely about suppressing violence but about transforming the conditions that sustain it. In Awka, this means fostering trust between communities and the state, addressing socio-economic exclusion, and reforming governance structures to enhance legitimacy. By grounding the analysis in Conflict Transformation and Governance and Legitimacy theories, the study provides a comprehensive framework for evaluating the

effectiveness of peacebuilding initiatives between 2015 and 2025. This theoretical foundation ensures that the research moves beyond descriptive analysis to offer deeper insights into the structural and relational dynamics shaping insecurity and peacebuilding in Anambra State.

**Empirical Studies**

The literature on insecurity and peacebuilding in Nigeria's South-East highlights the persistence of violence driven by separatist movements, criminal gangs, weak governance, and structural inequalities. Onyebukwa (2024) stresses that military crackdowns and regional outfits like *Ebube Agu* have failed to address root causes, often worsening tensions, while community-based approaches and inclusive dialogue show greater promise. Similarly, Nextier (2024) underscores that the government's predominantly kinetic responses exacerbate unrest and marginalisation, noting over 1,500 fatalities between 2020 and 2024, with Anambra most affected. Both studies converge on the need for socio-political reforms, inclusive dialogue, and structural interventions to achieve sustainable peace.

The socio-economic consequences of insecurity are profound. Ukwu, Mamah, and Ojonta (2024) estimate $3 billion in economic losses in 2021, citing disruptions to education, agriculture, and trade, alongside forced migration and brain drain. Nwagbo and Nwagbo (2024) similarly document severe impacts on commerce, transportation, and investment, with a 600% rise in killings between 2020 and 2021. These findings highlight that insecurity undermines development, erodes livelihoods, and perpetuates cycles of poverty and instability. The authors argue that equity, justice, youth empowerment, and genuine federalism are essential to restoring stability.

Community-driven and culturally grounded approaches emerge as critical alternatives. Ossai and Nweke (2023) emphasize the role of traditional institutions, elders, and communal networks in indigenous security systems, advocating for culturally sensitive community policing aligned with Igbo socio-cultural values. Ogakwu and Isife (2016) highlight women's education as a catalyst for peacebuilding, noting that educated women contribute significantly to conflict resolution and governance. These perspectives reinforce the importance of inclusivity, local ownership, and gender-sensitive strategies in peacebuilding.

Broader comparative insights further strengthen these arguments. Manuwa (2023) and Babatunde (2025) show that holistic, community-led, and development-oriented peace architectures in other Nigerian regions have achieved measurable successes, such as conflict mediation and psychosocial support. Delgado (2022) demonstrates how humanitarian interventions, like equitable food distribution, can reduce violence and foster stability in the North-East. Collectively, these studies argue that sustainable peace in the South-East requires moving beyond reactive, militarized responses toward inclusive, locally driven, and development-oriented strategies that address structural inequalities and governance deficits.

## Material and Methods

*Research Design*

The study adopted a quantitative research design, employing structured questionnaires as the primary instrument for data collection. This approach enabled the systematic gathering of measurable data from a broad sample, ensuring objectivity and statistical reliability. By relying on standardized questions, the study was able to capture respondents' perceptions consistently, thereby facilitating robust analysis of peacebuilding policy effectiveness.

*Area of the Study*

Awka Capital Territory was chosen as the case study because of its strategic position in Anambra State and its exposure to diverse peacebuilding interventions. The area has faced serious insecurity challenges, including sit-at-home enforcement, attacks on security agencies, and widespread criminal violence. It also hosts the Truth, Justice and Peace Committee established in 2022, making it an important context for examining both the nature and drivers of insecurity, as well as the effectiveness of the government peacebuilding initiatives.

*Population of the Study*

The study population was diverse, encompassing residents directly affected by insecurity, government officials, civil society actors, traditional rulers, youth and women groups, as well as security personnel and vigilantes. This inclusive selection provided a comprehensive view of both policy formulation and implementation processes. By capturing experiences and grassroots perspectives, the study ensured a holistic understanding of how peacebuilding policies shape realities at the community level.

*Sample and Sampling Techniques*

The study employed a multi-stage sampling technique to ensure representativeness and analytical depth. First, two local government areas in Awka Capital Territory were purposively selected based on their high insecurity levels and relevance to the research. Within these LGAs, stratified sampling was used to include both urban and rural communities, after which households and individuals were randomly chosen to participate, thereby capturing geographic and socio-economic diversity.

*Sample size determination*

We adopted Cochran's sample size determination for a large or infinite population. This method is also widely used for an unknown population. This makes it very appropriate for our study, since we do not have a precise estimate of our population. Although the sample is considered large, our target group were the residents of the selected communities aged 18 years and above who had been living in the community for at least 2 years.

The formula is expressed as:

$$n = \frac{Z^2.P.(1-P)}{e^2}$$

Where:

n = The required sample size; Z = 1.96 (for 95% confidence level); P = 0.5, and e = 0.05 (margin of error).

$$n = \frac{1.96^2(0.5*0.5)}{0.05^2}$$

$$n = \frac{1.96^2(0.5*0.5)}{0.05^2}$$

$$n = \frac{(3.8416*0.25)}{0.0025} = 384.16$$

The sample size used for the study, to the nearest 10, is 380. Therefore, a sample size of 380 was used for the analysis. In addition to the 380 respondents who were the target respondents to the questionnaire, twenty (20) respondents were engaged as key informants for in-depth interviews using a purposive technique.

**Methods and Instruments of Data Collection**

The study used two instruments for data collection. The questionnaire and the Key Informant Interview guide. The questionnaire was subdivided into sections, covering the demographic information through the issues covered in the research questions/objectives, to opinions on the probable solutions. The study used a 5-point Likert-style questionnaire to indicate the level of agreement or disagreement with statements in the questionnaire regarding *the impact of government peacebuilding initiatives on insecurity in Anambra State, Nigeria.*

**Validity and Reliability of Data**

To ensure the validity of research instruments, expert reviews were conducted to evaluate content relevance and conceptual alignment, followed by pilot testing in a non-sampled community to identify ambiguities and optimise clarity. Reliability was rigorously assessed using Cronbach's alpha, which measures the internal consistency of survey items, with thresholds above 0.7 indicating acceptable coherence. Furthermore, triangulation, through the integration of multiple data sources and methodological approaches, strengthened the credibility and dependability of the findings by mitigating bias and enhancing interpretive depth.

**Methods of Data Analysis**

Quantitative data were analysed using both descriptive statistics, such as mean, frequency, percentage, and cross-tabulation. To answer the research questions and test the hypotheses, we converted five-point Likert responses into clear, testable decisions for each hypothesis using mean cut-offs. We specified the coding, thresholds, and decision rules as follows:

*Scale coding and item construction*

Note the following: Scale points: 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral/Undecided, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree. Coding: x ∈ {1,2,3,4,5}. Item mean: $\bar{X}_{item} = \frac{1}{n} \sum_{i=1}^{n} Xi$. Reverse-coded items: If an item is negatively worded (e.g., "Peacebuilding increases fear"), recode as x′ = 6 - x before computing means.

The Cut-off threshold is computed as follows:

Cut-off Mean = $\frac{1+2+3+4+5}{5} = 3.0$

The mean cut-off is 3.0; however, we use 3.50 as a practical acceptance threshold for "significant" agreement/effect to avoid classifying mild neutrality as support.

**Ethical Considerations**

This study adhered to strict ethical standards to ensure the rights, dignity, and safety of all participants. Participants were informed about the objectives of the study, their right to withdraw at any time, and the measures in place to protect their confidentiality. Informed consent was obtained verbally and in writing. All data were anonymised, securely stored, and used solely for academic purposes. Efforts were be made to minimise any potential risks or distress arising from discussions on sensitive security-related experiences.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Data Presentation

***Analysis of Research Questions***

A total of 380 structured questionnaires were distributed across selected communities in Awka North and South, including Awka, Okpuno, and Amansea. Of these, 372 were successfully completed and returned, representing a high response rate of 97.89%, which strengthens the reliability and validity of the findings.

**Demographic Profile of Respondents**

As a preliminary step, the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents are presented to provide context and insight into the profile of participants involved in the study. These details are summarised in the Table 4.1.

The demographic profile of respondents reveals important insights into participation in peacebuilding in Awka Capital Territory. The sample was predominantly male (76.1%), reflecting cultural norms that position men as primary actors in community security, while women accounted for only 23.9%. Most respondents were between 26–45 years (63.7%), particularly those aged 36–45, underscoring the involvement of economically active groups who are both drivers and victims of insecurity. Education levels were high, with nearly half holding tertiary qualifications and 24.5% possessing postgraduate

degrees, suggesting respondents were well-informed and capable of critically engaging with governance and peacebuilding issues.

Occupationally, business/traders (29.8%) and civil servants (25.5%) dominated, followed by artisans (20.7%) and farmers (17.2%), reflecting the socio-economic structure of Anambra State. Although students represented only 6.7%, their limited participation is concerning given youth centrality in both insecurity and peacebuilding. Geographically, respondents were concentrated in Awka South (75.3%) compared to Awka North (24.7%), indicating an urban bias in sampling. Communities such as Amansea, Awka, and Okpuno were represented, all of which have experienced insecurity and government interventions, making them relevant contexts for evaluating peacebuilding initiatives. This demographic distribution provides a nuanced understanding of the socio-political dynamics shaping peacebuilding in Anambra.

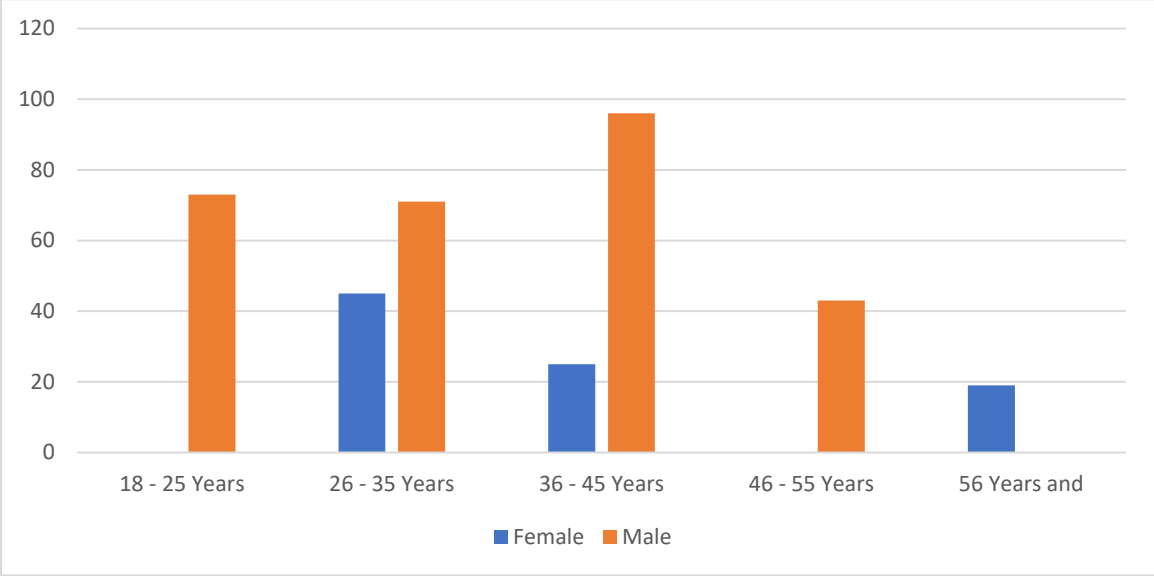
**Table 4.1: Demographic Information of the Respondents**

| Variable | Responses | Frequency (F) | Percentage (%) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Gender | Male | 283 | 76.1 |
| | Female | 89 | 23.9 |
| | **Total** | **372** | **100** |
| Age | 18 – 25 Years | 72 | 19.6 |
| | 26 – 35 Years | 116 | 31.2 |
| | 36 – 45 Years | 121 | 32.5 |
| | 46 – 55 Years | 43 | 11.6 |
| | 56 Years and Above | 19 | 5.1 |
| | **Total** | **372** | **100** |
| Educational Qualifications | Secondary | 100 | 26.9 |
| | Tertiary | 181 | 48.7 |
| | Postgraduate | 91 | 24.5 |
| | **Total** | **372** | **100** |
| Occupation | Civil Servant | 95 | 25.54 |
| | Business/Trader | 111 | 29.84 |
| | Farmer | 64 | 17.20 |
| | Artisan | 77 | 20.70 |
| | Student | 25 | 6.72 |
| | **Total** | **372** | **100** |
| **Local Government Area** | Awka North | 92 | 24.7 |
| | Awka South | 280 | 75.3 |
| | **Total** | **372** | **100** |
| **Community/Town** | Amansea | 92 | 24.7 |
| | Awka | 206 | 55.4 |
| | Okpuno | 74 | 19.9 |
| | **Total** | **372** | **100** |

***Source: The Researcher's Field Survey (2025)***

**Analysis of Demographic Information**

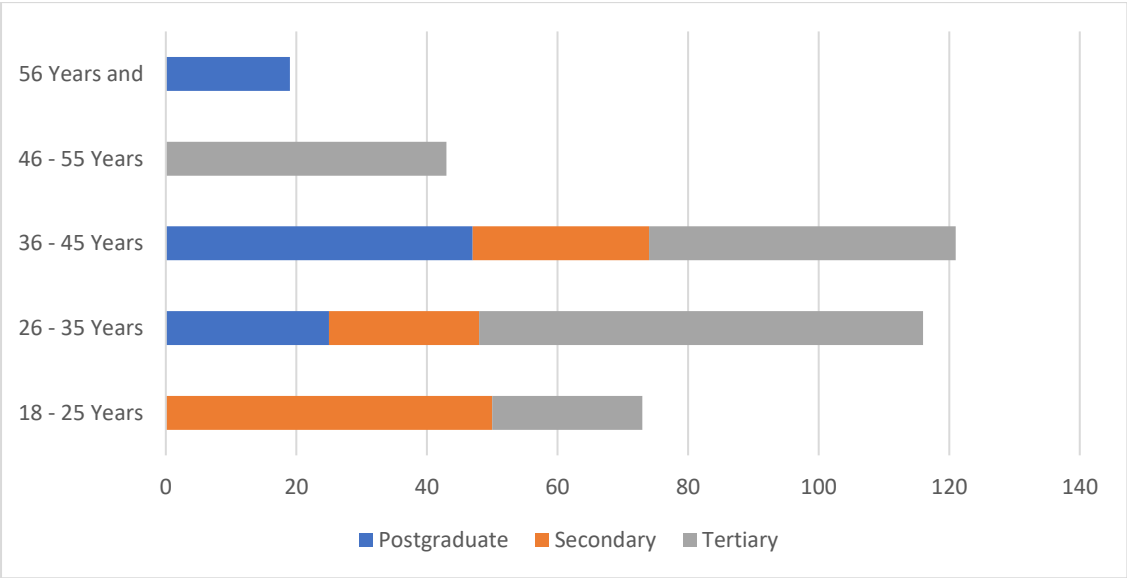
**Gender and Age of the Respondents**




***Source: The Researcher's Field Survey (2025)***

The bar chart in Figure 4.1 highlights a clear male predominance across all age categories, with the most striking disparity in the 36–45 years group where men significantly outnumber women. This age bracket also represents the largest cohort overall, underscoring the central role of middle-aged men in peace and security discussions, consistent with Ibeanu's (2006) observation that men in their prime working years are often pivotal in both conflict and peacebuilding processes. Although younger groups show slightly more balanced participation, particularly among those aged 26–35, the overall trend still points to male dominance, which may shape the perspectives captured in the study. In older age brackets, participation declines for both genders, reflecting reduced accessibility and engagement among older citizens.

**Age and Educational Qualification of the Respondents**




***Source: The Researcher's Field Survey (2025)***

Figure 4.2 illustrates the relationship between respondents' age and educational qualifications, showing that the 26–35 and 36–45 age groups have the highest levels of tertiary and postgraduate attainment. This reflects the expansion of higher education opportunities in Nigeria, particularly in urban centres like Awka, and suggests that individuals in their prime working years are better equipped to engage in structured peacebuilding initiatives, consistent with UNESCO's (2011) view that education fosters civic engagement and critical thinking. By contrast, younger respondents (18–25) display a mix of secondary and tertiary education, while older groups (46–55 and 56+) are predominantly secondary-educated, reflecting historical limitations in access to higher education. Despite lower formal qualifications, older respondents contribute experiential knowledge and traditional wisdom, which remain valuable in community-based peacebuilding efforts.

**Local Government Area and Community/Town of the Respondents**

LGA * Town Crosstabulation

| | | Town | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Amansea | Awka | Okpuno |
| LGA | Awka North | 92 | 0 | 0 |
| | Awka South | 0 | 206 | 74 |
| Total | | 92 | 206 | 74 |

***Source: The Researcher's Field Survey (2025)***

Table 4.2 reveals that the sample is geographically concentrated, with all 92 respondents from Awka North drawn exclusively from Amansea, while Awka South contributes a much larger share of 280 respondents, split between Awka (206) and Okpuno (74). This distribution highlights a strong urban bias, as Awka South, particularly the capital town of Awka, dominates the dataset, likely due to its population density, accessibility, and administrative significance. However, the lack of diversity within Awka North limits the generalizability of findings, suggesting that future studies should broaden sampling across more communities to capture varied local experiences and perspectives on insecurity.

**Analysis of Research Questions**

**Research Question One:**

*What are the underlying causes and key drivers of insecurity in Anambra State, particularly in relation to secessionist movements, criminal networks, and other non-state actors?*

**Table 4.3: Nature and Drivers of Insecurity in Anambra State**

| Item | SD (1) | D (2) | N (3) | A (4) | SA (5) | Total | Mean | Remark |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Insecurity in South East Nigeria is primarily driven by the activities of secessionist groups. | 187 | 0 | 69 | 46 | 70 | 372 | 2.49 | 2.49 < 3.00 |
| Criminal elements significantly contribute to insecurity in Anambra State and the South East. | 47 | 0 | 25 | 112 | 188 | 372 | 4.06 | 4.06 > 3.00 |
| Non-state actors (such as vigilante groups or militias) play a major role in the region's security challenges. | 0 | 0 | 66 | 163 | 143 | 372 | 4.21 | 4.21 > 3.00 |
| Economic hardship is a major driver of insecurity in South East Nigeria. | 47 | 0 | 0 | 229 | 96 | 372 | 3.88 | 3.88 > 3.00 |
| Political grievances have significantly fueled insecurity in the region. | 22 | 0 | 22 | 136 | 192 | 372 | 4.28 | 4.28 > 3.00 |
| **Overall Mean** | | | | | | **372** | **3.78** | **3.78 > 3.00** |

***Source: The Researcher's Field Survey (2025)***

The data presented in Table 4.3 offers an insight into the perceived drivers of insecurity in Anambra State, based on responses from 372 participants. The overall mean score of 3.78 indicates a general agreement among respondents that multiple factors contribute significantly to the region's insecurity. However, the variation in mean scores across individual items reveals detailed perceptions of the relative importance of these drivers. Notably, political grievances emerged as the most significant driver, with a mean score of 4.28, suggesting widespread agreement that unresolved political tensions, such as marginalisation, lack of representation, and governance failures, have fueled unrest. This aligns with findings from Ibeanu (2006), who emphasised that political exclusion and historical injustices often serve as catalysts for conflict in Nigeria's southeastern region.

Criminal elements also received strong acknowledgement (mean = 4.06), indicating that organised crime, including kidnapping, armed robbery, and extortion, is a major contributor to insecurity. This reflects broader national trends, as documented by Alemika (2013), who noted the proliferation of criminal networks in areas with weak law enforcement and high unemployment.

The role of non-state actors, such as vigilante groups and militias, was similarly emphasised (mean = 4.21). Respondents overwhelmingly agreed that these groups, while sometimes formed for community protection, often operate outside legal frameworks and contribute to instability. This supports the

argument by Okoro and Agbo (2018) that informal security outfits can escalate violence when not properly regulated or integrated into formal peacebuilding structures.

Economic hardship was also identified as a key driver (mean = 3.88), underscoring the link between poverty, unemployment, and insecurity. The high level of agreement here reflects the socio-economic realities of the region, where economic deprivation can push individuals toward criminality or radicalisation. UNESCO (2011) has similarly highlighted the role of economic disenfranchisement in fueling conflict, particularly among youth. Interestingly, the item regarding secessionist groups received the lowest mean score (2.49), indicating that respondents generally disagreed or were neutral about their role as the primary cause of insecurity. This challenges dominant narratives that often attribute unrest in the South East solely to separatist movements like IPOB. Instead, the data suggests that while secessionist rhetoric may be visible, it is not perceived as the central threat compared to more immediate issues like crime, poverty, and political grievances.

The findings point to a multi-dimensional understanding of insecurity, where structural, economic, and governance-related factors are seen as more pressing than ideological movements. This has critical implications for policy: effective peacebuilding in Anambra State must go beyond military responses to secessionism and instead address the root causes, economic inequality, political alienation, and the unchecked rise of non-state actors. A holistic approach that integrates community voices, strengthens institutions, and promotes inclusive development is essential for sustainable peace.

**Research Question Two**

*How effective have government-led peacebuilding initiatives, such as the Truth, Justice and Peace Commission and Operation Udo Ga-Achi, been in reducing insecurity and rebuilding public trust in Anambra State?*

**Table 4.4: Effectiveness of Government-Led Peacebuilding Initiatives**

| Item | SD (1) | D (2) | N (3) | A (4) | SA (5) | Total | Mean | Remark |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| The Truth, Justice, and Peace Commission has been effective in reducing insecurity. | 23 | 25 | 83 | 153 | 88 | 372 | 3.69 | 3.69 > 3.00 |
| Operation Udo Ga-Achi has contributed to restoring peace in Anambra State. | 135 | 77 | 93 | 44 | 23 | 372 | 2.31 | 2.31 < 3.00 |
| Government-led peacebuilding programs have improved public trust in the authorities. | 48 | 95 | 22 | 119 | 88 | 372 | 3.28 | 3.28 > 3.00 |
| The peacebuilding initiatives have addressed the root causes of insecurity. | 124 | 105 | 48 | 47 | 48 | 372 | 2.44 | 2.44 < 3.00 |

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Overall, government interventions have significantly improved security in the region. | 68 | 51 | 53 | 123 | 77 | 372 | 3.24 | 3.24 > 3.00 |
| **Overall Mean** | | | | | | **372** | **2.99** | **2.99 < 3.00** |

***Source: The Researcher's Field Survey (2025)***

In Table 4.4, we provide a critical assessment of the perceived effectiveness of government-led peacebuilding initiatives in Anambra State. With an overall mean score of 2.99, the findings suggest a mixed perception among respondents, indicating that while some initiatives have made progress, others are viewed as falling short in addressing the region's complex insecurity challenges.

The Truth, Justice and Peace Commission received a relatively high mean score of 3.69, suggesting that a majority of respondents agree it has been moderately effective in reducing insecurity. This reflects a level of public confidence in its reconciliatory and investigative approach, which aligns with Lederach's (1997) emphasis on truth-telling and restorative justice as pillars of sustainable peace. The Commission's ability to engage diverse stakeholders and address historical grievances may explain its favourable rating.

In contrast, Operation Udo Ga-Achi, a security-focused intervention, scored significantly lower (mean = 2.31), indicating widespread scepticism about its impact. The high number of respondents who strongly disagreed (135) or disagreed (77) suggests that militarised responses are perceived as ineffective or even counterproductive. This supports findings by Ibeanu (2006), who cautioned against relying solely on force-based strategies in regions where insecurity is rooted in socio-political and economic grievances.

The item assessing whether government-led peacebuilding programs have improved public trust yielded a mean of 3.28, reflecting moderate agreement. While some respondents acknowledge efforts to rebuild trust, the relatively high number of dissenting views (143 combined SD and D) indicates that confidence in authorities remains fragile. This is consistent with Alemika's (2013) argument that trust in government institutions is often eroded by corruption, poor service delivery, and lack of transparency.

Regarding whether these initiatives have addressed the root causes of insecurity, the mean score of 2.44 reveals a clear perception of ineffectiveness. Respondents appear to believe that underlying issues, such as poverty, political exclusion, and youth unemployment, have not been adequately tackled. This finding reinforces UNESCO's (2011) position that peacebuilding must go beyond surface-level interventions and target structural inequalities. Again, the statement that government interventions have significantly improved security received a mean score of 3.24, suggesting moderate optimism. While some progress is acknowledged, the overall sentiment remains cautious, likely due to persistent incidents of violence, criminality, and unrest in parts of the region.

The data paints a picture of partial success and lingering challenges. While initiatives like the Truth, Justice and Peace Commission are viewed positively, others, particularly force-based operations, are met

with scepticism. The findings underscore the need for a holistic, inclusive, and community-driven approach to peacebuilding, one that prioritises trust-building, socio-economic empowerment, and political dialogue over militarization. For lasting impact, government efforts must be transparent, locally grounded, and responsive to the lived realities of the people they aim to serve.

## Summary, Conclusion and Recommendations

### Summary

This study examined the drivers of insecurity in Awka Capital Territory and assessed the effectiveness of peacebuilding initiatives implemented between 2015 and 2025. Findings revealed that insecurity is primarily fueled by political grievances, criminal networks, non-state actors, and economic hardship, rather than secessionist movements alone. Government-led initiatives such as the Truth, Justice and Peace Commission showed moderate effectiveness in reducing insecurity and rebuilding trust, while militarized interventions like Operation Udo Ga-Achi were perceived as largely ineffective. Overall, respondents emphasized that peacebuilding efforts have not adequately addressed the structural causes of insecurity, particularly poverty, exclusion, and weak governance institutions.

### Conclusion

The persistence of insecurity in Awka underscores the limitations of reactive, force-based responses and highlights the need for holistic, inclusive, and context-sensitive peacebuilding strategies. Sustainable peace requires more than temporary reductions in violence; it demands structural reforms that enhance governance legitimacy, socio-economic empowerment, and community trust. The study concludes that while progress has been made through initiatives like the Truth, Justice and Peace Commission, peacebuilding in Anambra remains fragmented and insufficiently grounded in local realities. Without deliberate efforts to integrate community voices, address socio-economic grievances, and strengthen institutions, insecurity will continue to undermine development and stability.

### Recommendations

There is the need for a holistic and inclusive approach to peacebuilding in Awka Capital Territory. Strengthening governance and legitimacy through transparency and accountability is essential to rebuild trust, while socio-economic empowerment programs targeting youth and women can reduce marginalisation and unemployment. Institutionalising community-based security by integrating traditional institutions, vigilante groups, and civil society into formal frameworks ensures culturally sensitive and accountable practices. Equally important is shifting from militarised responses to dialogue and reconciliation, drawing lessons from global experiences where restorative justice has proven more sustainable.

In addition, enhancing regional coordination among Southeast governors would harmonize strategies and address cross-border insecurity more effectively. Establishing monitoring and evaluation frameworks is

critical to track progress, adapt interventions, and ensure responsiveness to evolving dynamics. Together, these measures provide a comprehensive roadmap for sustainable peacebuilding, balancing structural reforms with grassroots participation to address both immediate and long-term drivers of insecurity in Anambra State.

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