

INSECURITY AS ONTOLOGICAL RUPTURE: ELITE MIGRATION AND ECONOMIC FRAGILITY IN CONTEMPORARY NIGERIA

Oviemuno Wilfred Egara
Directorate of General Studies,
Southern Delta University, Ozoro

Bridget Gwa Oviemuno
Department of Business Management,
Moses Adasu University, Benue State

Charles Elijah
Guidance and Counselling Unit
Southern Delta University, Ozoro

Abstract

Nigeria's escalating insecurity, manifested in terrorism, banditry, kidnapping, oil theft, and communal violence, has evolved into a structural crisis with far-reaching economic and social consequences. Beyond immediate damage, persistent instability has weakened investor confidence, unsettled productive sectors, and redirected public expenditure towards security responses. One of the significant outcomes of this climate is the accelerating emigration of Nigerian elites, which include medical professionals, academics, engineers, entrepreneurs, etc., whose departure further limits national development. While existing analysis often treat insecurity and brain drain as separate challenges, this study examines their structural interconnection. Thus, drawing on a qualitative, hermeneutic methodology that is supported by systematic analysis of secondary data from institutional and policy sources, this study advances a relational ontological explanation of elite migration. It argues that insecurity in Nigeria represents not only a leadership or governance failure but also a rupture in communal ontology, a destruction of relational ethics and institutional trust that sustains social and economic life. By engaging African philosophical frameworks such as Igwebuiké and Ubuntu philosophies, the study interprets elite exodus beyond politics to an economic and moral crisis, creating a self-reinforcing cycle of human capital flight and structural fragility. The paper concludes that sustainable recovery requires more than militarized security measures; it demands institutional reform anchored in communal responsibility, ethical leadership, and inclusive governance structure capable of restoring confidence in our shared national purpose.

Keywords: Insecurity; Elite Migration; Brain Drain; Relational Ontology; Igwebuiké; Ubuntu; Economic Decline

Introduction

Nigeria, which was seen as one of Africa's *economic giant* has been ravaged by insecurity, evolved from sporadic violence into a structural condition that has shaped economic performance, institutional legitimacy, and human capital retention. From the bandit-infested highways of Zamfara to the insurgent enclaves of Borno and the volatile creeks of the Niger Delta, insecurity has become the nation's heartbeat, dictating the rhythm of daily life. Kidnappings, once rare, have now become a normal routine, with over 100 cases reported in early 2024.⁴⁰ Communal clashes, oil pipeline sabotage, and insurgent attacks weave a fabric of fear that stifles ambition and frays social bonds. This pervasive insecurity does not merely disrupt; it strangles Nigeria's economic vitality,

⁴⁰BudgIT Foundation, *Nigeria's Rising Insecurity: Implications for the Nigerian Economy* (Lagos: BudgIT, 2024), <https://budgit.org/nigerias-rising-insecurity-implications-for-the-nigerian-economy/>

choking investment, fracturing supply chains, and inflating costs to unsustainable heights. For the nation's elites, which comprise doctors, engineers, academics, entrepreneurs, etc.; the toll is deeply personal. The constant spectre of violence, coupled with economic stagnation, has fuelled a mass exodus known as “Japa,” a Yoruba term for “fleeing” that resonates as a national lament. This flight of talent is not just a personal escape but a national crisis, deepening an economic dilemma where growth remains a distant mirage and Nigeria's future teeters on the edge. The crisis however, cannot be said to be solely economic or political; it is also **philosophical**. The erosion of communal trust, moral accountability, and shared purpose reveals a deeper rupture in the nation's social fabric. Insecurity thrives where solidarity collapses, and violence persists where empathy and communal ethics have withered. Against this backdrop, African indigenous philosophies such as *Igwebuike* and *Ubuntu* offer profound insights into rebuilding the moral foundations of society. *Igwebuike*: from the Igbo expression *igwe bu ike* (“there is strength in unity”), emphasizes complementarity and collective strength, asserting that no individual can flourish apart from the community.⁴¹ *Ubuntu*: captured in the Zulu maxim *umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu* (“a person is a person through other persons”), affirms the intrinsic value of human interdependence.⁴² These frameworks remind us that Nigeria's security crisis is as much a failure of human relationships as it is of state institutions.

Rebuilding the nation, therefore, demands more than militarized responses; it requires a moral and philosophical renewal that restores trust, empathy, and responsibility across social strata. When leaders govern through inclusion, when elites see their success as tied to national progress, and when communities revive the ethics of mutual care, the cycle of insecurity and economic decline can be broken. The challenge before Nigeria is thus twofold; to restore physical safety and to rekindle the communal spirit that sustains coexistence. Only by merging pragmatic policy reforms with the humanistic insights of *Igwebuike* and *Ubuntu* can the country reclaim its destiny from the grip of fear and transform the “Japa” exodus into a bridge of return, solidarity, and collective renewal. This study therefore advances a relational ontological explanation of elite migration, arguing that insecurity in Nigeria constitutes a metaphysical rupture that undermines communal ontology, thereby accelerating economic decline. Through interpreting insecurity not just as a political or economic failure but as a breakdown of relational ethics embedded in African communal thought, the paper repositions elite exodus as both a structural and ontological crisis.

Methodology

This research adopts a methodological framework called **hermeneutics**, a philosophy that focuses on the art and theory of interpretation, particularly of texts, symbols, and human experiences, to uncover deeper meanings within their historical and cultural contexts. Rooted in the work of Friedrich Schleiermacher and Wilhelm Dilthey, hermeneutics evolved into a philosophical approach through Martin Heidegger and Hans-Georg Gadamer. Heidegger viewed hermeneutics as an ontological process, interpreting being itself, while Gadamer emphasized the “fusion of horizons,” where the interpreter's perspective merges with the text's historical context to create new understanding,⁴³ in this case contemporary empirical realities, such as insecurity trends, economic indicators, and elite migration statistics, which are placed in dialogue with African relational philosophies, particularly *Igwebuike* and *Ubuntu*. This approach enables the study to move beyond

descriptive correlation, toward a normative interpretation of insecurity as a rupture in communal ontology. Hermeneutics is particularly appropriate here because insecurity and migration are not merely measurable variables but socially embedded experiences shaped by trust, fear, moral obligation, and institutional legitimacy.

Empirical data were drawn from credible secondary sources, including reports from international institutions (IMF, World Bank, BudgIT, World Food Programme, WHO), Nigerian regulatory bodies (National Bureau of Statistics, NUPRC), professional agencies (e.g., UK General Medical Council), and recognized policy research organizations. Sources were selected based on institutional credibility, recency (primarily 2018–2025), and direct relevance to insecurity, economic performance, and migration trends. The analysis proceeded through thematic extraction, identification of structural correlations between insecurity and economic decline, and normative interpretation using the conceptual categories of relational complementarity and communal personhood. While the study does not employ econometric modelling or primary fieldwork, triangulation across multiple institutional datasets strengthens reliability and supports the interpretive conclusions advanced.

Insecurity's Economic Stranglehold

Nigeria's economy, despite fleeting moments of resilience, buckles under the weight of unrelenting violence. In 2024, gross domestic product grew at 3.9 percent in the first half, propped up by oil price rebounds and tentative foreign inflows.⁴⁴ Yet this growth masks profound vulnerabilities. Foreign direct investment, which was once a cornerstone of industrialization, has withered as global firms shy away from a landscape where risk eclipses reward. The Budg IT Foundation reports that northern banditry has caused many factories to shut down operations, while southern oil theft and pipeline sabotage have slashed production, costing billions in lost revenue.⁴⁵ In early 2024, over 100 kidnappings were reported, each case diverting resources to ransoms and private security, draining funds from productive sectors.⁴⁶ This is not just immediate destruction, it is a long-term chilling effect, as businesses (both local and foreign) retreat from a market where uncertainty reigns supreme.

Agriculture for example, which serve as a lifeline for millions of Nigerians, is also collapsing under this strain. In the northeast and northwest, banditry and insurgency have displaced farmers, leaving fertile lands fallow and markets deserted. According to the World Food Programme (WFP), it is estimated that by mid-2025, 33.1 million Nigerians are projected to face acute food insecurity, up from 25.1 million in late 2024, as violence compounds inflation and climate shocks.⁴⁷ Staple prices have soared; beans surged 282 percent year-over-year by October 2024, hammering

⁴⁴World Bank, *Nigeria Overview: Development News, Research, Data* (Washington, DC: World Bank, 2025), <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/nigeria/overview>.

⁴⁵BudgIT Foundation, *Nigeria's Rising Insecurity*.

⁴⁶Ibid.

⁴⁷World Food Programme, "Economic Hardship, the Climate Crisis and Violence in the Northeast Projected to Push 33.1 Million Nigerians into Food Insecurity in 2025" (Abuja: WFP, 2024), <https://www.wfp.org/news/economic-hardship-climate-crisis-and-violence-northeast-projected-push-33-1-million-nigerians>.

⁴⁸Nairametrics, "Approximately 33.1 Million Nigerians Could Face Food Insecurity by 2025 amid Inflation, ViolenceReport" (Lagos: Nairametrics, 2025), <https://nairametrics.com/2025/01/25/approximately-33-1-million-nigerians-could-face-food-insecurity-by-2025-amid-inflation-violence-report/>.

household budgets and fuelling urban unrest.⁴⁸ Transport costs on insecure routes have spiked 30-50 percent, choking supply chains and inflating consumer prices.⁴⁹ In Nigeria's oil sector, which is the major economic backbone of the country, sabotage and theft have driven output to historic lows, thereby diverting potential revenue while global energy price spikes burden Nigeria's import-dependent economy.⁵⁰ The loss is staggering as the report suggests that oil theft alone cost an estimated \$3 billion in 2023, undermining fiscal stability and infrastructure funding.⁵¹

Fiscal pressures also deepen the crisis. In 2025, security alone consumed 16 percent of the national budget, up from 12 percent the previous year, crowding out investments in education, health, and infrastructure.⁵² Econometric studies however reveal the ripple effects as insecurity correlates with reduced capital formation, soaring unemployment (33 percent in 2024), and shrinking GDP per capita.⁵³ Violence also erodes tax bases, forcing reliance on debt, with interest payments devouring budgets and locking Nigeria into fiscal fragility.⁵⁴ The government's ambitious 6 percent growth target for 2025 feels increasingly unattainable, undermined by a reality where insecurity not only destroys assets but also erodes the confidence needed for economic renewal.⁵⁵ This is not a mere downturn but a systemic unravelling, where violence amplifies structural flaws such as corruption, weak governance, and inequality; trapping Nigeria in a dilemma of deferred dreams.

The Elite Exodus: A Nation's Brain Drain

For Nigeria's elites, insecurity is not a distant headline but a daily calculus of survival. Doctors navigate kidnap-prone highways to underfunded hospitals; academics barricade campuses against raids; tech entrepreneurs weigh innovation against the cost of private security, and many more. The result is "Japa," a mass migration stripping Nigeria of its human capital. The healthcare sector is a stark casualty as records illustrate that between 2022 and 2024, an estimated 42,000 nurses emigrated, many to bolster the UK's National Health Service.⁵⁶ A large portion of Nigeria's licensed physicians have left, leaving a doctor-to-patient ratio of 1:5,000 against the World Health Organization's 1:600 benchmark.⁵⁷ Meagre hazard pay (\$11 monthly), outdated equipment, and targeted attacks drive this flight, as hospitals become fortresses rather than sanctuaries.⁵⁸ A 2024 narrative review also highlights how political volatility and violence push professionals to prioritize safety, with 17 healthcare strikes in 2016-2017, which signals systemic collapse.⁵⁹

⁴⁹BudgIT Foundation, *Nigeria's Rising Insecurity*.

⁵⁰O. A. Akindoyo, "Insecurity and Foreign Direct Investment by Oil Multinationals in Nigeria: Niger-Delta in Focus". *Kashere Journal of Politics and International Relations*, Vol. 3, Issue 3 (2025): 90–103. <https://journals.fukashere.edu.ng/index.php/kjpir/article/view/687>

⁵¹Ibid.

⁵²World Food Programme, "Economic Hardship."

⁵³A.A. Adekoya, Sule Magaji, Yahaya Ismail. "Impact of Insecurity on Economic Growth in Nigeria: 1990–2023." *International Journal of Research and Scientific Innovation* 12, no. 4 (2024): 1–15. <https://rsisinternational.org/journals/ijrsi/articles/impact-of-insecurity-on-economic-growth-in-nigeria-1990-2023/>.

⁵⁴A. Yusuf and S. Mohd, "Growth and Fiscal Effects of Insecurity on the Nigerian Economy," *European Journal of Development Research* Vol. 35, (2023): 743–769 <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41287-022-00531-3>.

PricewaterhouseCoopers International Limited, *2025 Nigerian Budget and Economic Outlook* (Lagos: PwC, 2025), <https://www.pwc.com/ng/en/assets/pdf/2025-nigerian-budget-and-economic-outlook.pdf>

⁵⁶D. I. Akindoyin and A. O. Obafemi, "Evaluating the Impact of Insecurity on Nigeria's National Development since the Fourth Republic," *African Journal of Stability and Development* 16, no. 2 (2025): 1–20, <https://doi.org/10.53982/ajsd.2025.1701.05-j>.

⁵⁷Ibid.

⁵⁸Ibid.

⁵⁹Ibid.

This mass exodus spans virtually all sectors. Universities also, which was once hubs of intellectual bubble, halts academic activities intermittently as lecturers seek tenure abroad amid campus insecurity. More so, tech and finance elites, which are often the vanguard of Lagos's start-up ecosystem, now eye Silicon Valley or London's fintech hubs, driven not only by stagnant wages but also by the psychological toll of perpetual vigilance. From 2016 to 2018, it is on record that about 4-5,000 doctors migrated to the UK, US, and Canada, a trend accelerating with 92,700 UK work visas issued to Nigerians by September 2023.⁶⁰ As one émigré physician disclosed, "Nigeria's chaos isn't just low pay; it's knowing your blade might defend your family." The academic sector itself fares no better as over 30 percent of university lecturers have left since 2020, citing insecurity and salaries as low as \$100 monthly. It is estimated that over 1,800 lecturers fled the country in five years.⁶¹

This brain drain is catastrophic as it is estimated that over 50 percent of doctors trained in the last decade have left, fuelling medical tourism that costs Nigeria ₦ 359.2 billion annually.⁶² Remittances, at \$20 billion (₦ 29 trillion) yearly, provide a lifeline but distort local markets, inflating property prices and fostering dependency.⁶³ The absence of elites (who once drove 20 percent of economic output) stifles innovation, entrenches oil dependence, and deepens inequality, as remaining resources concentrate among shrinking elite.⁶⁴ Nigeria's tech sector that is poised for a digital renaissance, struggles to retain talent. Its universities churn out graduates for foreign markets instead of taking care of the needs of local job markets. The economic dilemma therefore intensifies, as without its brightest minds, Nigeria cannot diversify, cannot stabilize, and cannot be compete.

Case Studies: Insecurity's Human and Economic Toll

For the sake of this work, four cases illuminate how insecurity drives economic disruption and elite migration, grounding abstract data in human realities.

Case 1: Industrial Collapse along the Kaduna–Zamfara Axis

In northern Nigeria, persistent banditry has crippled industrial operations along the Kaduna–Zamfara corridor. A series of abductions, hijackings of supply trucks, and violent attacks on transport routes has forced numerous factories, particularly textile and agro-processing plants to halt production between 2021 and 2023. Security analysts observe that these disruptions resulted in losses worth billions of naira, and the closure or relocation of several manufacturing outfits. Reports by SBM Intelligence confirm that ransom payments, destroyed logistics networks, and attacks on workers contributed significantly to the economic downturn in the region.⁶⁵ Likewise, the International Crisis Group attributes the retreat of industrial investors to the escalating farmer-

⁶⁰Africa Check. 'In search of greener pastures': Checking five claims about Nigeria's doctors and the brain drain.(2022). <https://africacheck.org/fact-checks/reports/search-greener-pastures-checking-five-claims-about-nigerias-doctors-and-brain>; Intelpoint. *Nigeria ranks second in UK work visa applications for 2023, behind India*. (2024, June 20).<https://intelpoint.co/insights/nigeria-ranks-second-in-uk-work-visa-applications-for-2023-behind-india/>

⁶¹Development Reporting. *Exclusive: 1,800 lecturers flee Nigeria's top university in 5 years*.(2025, April 22). <https://devreporting.com/headlines/9239/exclusive-1800-lecturers-flee-nigerias-top-university-in-5-years-yet-tinubu-approves-67-new-institutions/>

⁶²Economic Confidential. *Nigeria's Annual Loss to Medical Tourism Hits \$1.1bn*.(2025, June 26). <https://economicconfidential.com/2025/06/nigeria-medical-tourism/>

⁶³BusinessDay NG. *Remittances hit new level under Cardoso: Highest in 5 yrs*.(2025, April 9). <https://businessday.ng/business-economy/article/remittances-hit-new-level-under-cardoso-highest-in-5-yrs/>.

⁶⁴J. T. Dada et al., "Asymmetric and Threshold Effect of Military Expenditure on Economic Growth: Insight from an Emerging Market," *Peace Economics, Peace Science, and Public Policy* 30, no. 4 (2024): 477-503. <https://doi.org/10.1515/peps-2023-0067>.

⁶⁵SBM Intelligence, *The Economics of Nigeria's Kidnap Industry* (Lagos: SBM Intelligence, 2023).

herder clashes and the inability of local authorities to guarantee safe passage for goods and personnel.⁶⁶

Case 2: Mass Emigration of Nigerian Medical Professionals

Nigeria's healthcare sector has experienced severe strain as insecurity and deteriorating work conditions accelerate the emigration of medical professionals. According to data from the United Kingdom's General Medical Council registration statistics (GMC), over 12,000 Nigerian-trained doctors were licensed to practice in the UK between the periods of 2015 and 2023, marking one of the fastest-growing migration waves among Commonwealth nations.⁶⁷ According to the International College of Surgeons, Nigerian Section (ICS-NS), Nigeria's doctor-to-patient ratio prior to 2023 was estimated at 1:4,000 which was attributed to frequent attacks on rural clinics, kidnappings of health workers, and the collapse of medical infrastructure, far below the World Health Organization's (WHO) recommended threshold of 1:600. Many physicians cited insecurity as a central motivation for relocation, alongside stagnant wages and inadequate equipment.⁶⁸

Case 3: Oil Theft and Security-Driven Divestments in the Niger Delta

The Nigerian oil industry has faced a decade of instability, primarily due to rampant pipeline vandalism, crude oil theft, and militant sabotage. The Nigerian Upstream Petroleum Regulatory Commission (NUPRC) reports that the country lost more than 200,000 barrels of crude oil per day in 2022 alone, undermining both revenue generation and energy security.⁶⁹ Major international oil companies, including Shell, Chevron, and ExxonMobil, have responded by divesting from onshore assets and relocating operations offshore or abroad. In its 2023 report, Shell explicitly cited security concerns, sabotage-related losses, and the unsustainability of onshore operations as reasons for its exit strategy. These developments have driven many petroleum engineers, project managers, and high-level executives to migrate to safer and more stable energy markets abroad.⁷⁰

Case 4: University Attacks and Academic Migration

Nigeria's tertiary education system has also not been left out as it has consistently been destabilized by persistent insecurity. Between 2018 and 2023, over seventy universities and colleges reportedly suffered attacks, student abductions, or campus invasions, according to findings by the Global Coalition.⁷¹ High-profile incidents such as the Greenfield University kidnapping in 2021 and repeated raids on university campuses in Abuja, Zaria, and Gusau have heightened fears among academic staff. The Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) reports suggests that more than 5,000 lecturers left the country within the space of three years, i.e., between 2020 and 2023, seeking safer environments and better research conditions abroad. This exodus has hollowed out entire departments, restricted postgraduate supervision, and deepened Nigeria's dependence on foreign educational systems.⁷² These cases reveal a pattern: insecurity disrupts livelihoods, erodes economic stability, and prompts elites to flee the country, leaving behind communities and sectors in disarray.

⁶⁶International Crisis Group, *Stopping Nigeria's Spiralling Farmer–Herder Violence*, Africa Report No. 262 (Brussels: International Crisis Group, 2021).

⁶⁷General Medical Council (UK), *The State of Medical Practice in the UK* (London: GMC, 2023)

⁶⁸Akor, Ojoma. "Brain Drain: Nigeria's Doctor-Patient Ratio Now 1 to 5,000." *Daily Trust*, August 29, 2022. <https://dailytrust.com/brain-drain-nigerias-doctor-patient-ratio-now-1-to-5000/>.

⁶⁹Nigerian Upstream Petroleum Regulatory Commission, *Oil and Gas Industry Annual Report 2023* (Abuja: NUPRC, 2023).

⁷⁰Shell plc. *Annual Report 2023*. London: Shell, 2024. <https://www.shell.com/investors/results-and-reporting/annual-reports.html>.

⁷¹Global Coalition to Protect Education from attacks. "Education under Attack", 2024. https://protectingeducation.org/wp-content/uploads/eua_2024_nigeria.pdf

⁷²Dada, Peter, et al. "Lecturers shortage hits varsities, ASUU blames japa, IPPIS." *Punch*, November

Insecurity and Economic Decline: A Vicious Cycle

Insecurity and economic decline are viewed as symbiotic forces, each amplifying the other. Violence has displaced 2.6 million in the north, cratering agricultural output and fuelling unemployment at 33 percent.⁷³ Food insecurity, projected to affect 33.1 million by 2025, drives inflation (46 percent in 2024), thereby squeezing households and sparking unrest.⁷⁴ Elite migration exacerbates this, as departing professionals leave voids in healthcare, education, and technology, concentrating wealth among a shrinking elite and deepening poverty (39 percent extreme levels in 2022).⁷⁵ Investors are at the same time startled by projections of 1.8 million facing emergency hunger, withhold capital, locking in economic fragility.⁷⁶ The International Monetary Fund (IMF) warns that without addressing insecurity, Nigeria's economic recovery will remain stunted, as violence often undermines policy reforms and investor confidence.⁷⁷

For elites, the choice is brutal; you either stay and risk your life, or leave and thrive. Insecurity tips the scales, amplifying economic push factors like low wages, unreliable power, and crumbling infrastructure. A 2024 study notes that violence not only destroys assets but also erodes trust in governance, prompting elites to seek stability abroad.⁷⁸ The cycle is relentless, as insecurity breeds poverty, poverty in turn fuels unrest, and unrest drives the exodus, leaving Nigeria to grapple with a hollowed-out economy and a fractured future.

Indigenous Philosophical Frameworks as Pathways for Renewal

Nigeria's challenges, as this study demonstrates, are not purely economic or political; they are also deeply philosophical; the erosion of social trust, the collapse of solidarity, and the retreat into individual or ethnic survivalism point to a moral and ontological crisis, one that African indigenous philosophies such as *Igwebuike* and *Ubuntu* can help address. Both frameworks provide conceptual resources for reimagining collective responsibility, healing fractured communities, and restoring confidence in shared destiny, the very virtues undermined by insecurity and elite flight.

Igwebuike Philosophy: Strength in Unity (Complementarity)

The *Igwebuike* philosophy, rooted in Igbo metaphysics, is derived from *igwe bu ike*—“there is strength in unity.” Developed by African philosophers such as Kanu Ikechukwu Anthony.⁷⁹ *Igwebuike* emphasizes the **complementarity of being**, where individuals exist meaningfully only in relationship with others.⁸⁰ Insecurity, in this sense, is not merely a political failure but a metaphysical rupture, which is a breakdown of the web of interdependence that sustains community

⁷³ O.W. Egara, “Insecurity and its Attendant Effects in Nigeria: A Philosophical Perspective.” *Journal of Philosophy, Policy, and Strategic Studies* 1 (2025): 89-100. <https://jppssuniuyo.com/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/JPPSS-VOLUME-1-MARCH-2025-2.pdf#page=96>.

⁷⁴ International Monetary Fund, Nigeria: 2025 Article IV Consultation—Press Release; Staff Report; and Statement by the Executive Director for Nigeria, IMF Country Report No. 25/157 (Washington, DC: IMF, 2025), <https://www.imf.org/en/Publications/CR/Issues/2025/01/15/Nigeria-2025-Article-IV-Consultation-546789>.

⁷⁵ L. O. Ibrahim and A. Dauda, “Insecurity and Its Implications on Economic Development in Nigeria,” *International Journal of Research and Innovation in Social Science* 8, no. 7 (2024): 1563–1570, <https://ideas.repec.org/a/bcp/journl/v8y2024i7p1563-1570.html>.

⁷⁶ Nairametrics, “Approximately 33.1 Million Nigerians.”

⁷⁷ International Monetary Fund, Nigeria: 2025 Article IV Consultation.

⁷⁸ Ibrahim and Dauda, “Insecurity and Its Implications.”

⁷⁹ O. W. Egara, “Unlocking Sustainable Peace and Development in Africa: The Power of Igwebuike” *IGWEBUIKE: An African Journal of Arts and Humanities*. Vol. 10, No. 5, (2024): 2.; Kanu, “On the origin and principles of Igwebuike philosophy.”

⁸⁰ O.W. Egara, E.J.O. Ndubisi, and I. Uzundu. “The Philosophical Foundations of Terrorism: An Exploration of Igwebuike Philosophy as a Counter-Terrorism Strategy in Nigeria.” *Oracle of Wisdom Journal of Philosophy and Public Affairs*. Vol. 9, No. 2, (2025): 1-16.

life. In the Nigerian context, the disintegration of communal cohesion has allowed corruption, ethnic distrust, and violence to fester. *Igwebuike* proposes a corrective through **relational ontology**; the idea that rebuilding peace requires the recognition that “the good of the other is inseparable from the good of the self.”⁸¹ When applied to national security, this philosophy invites an ethics of mutual care that transcends religious or ethnic boundaries. It situates peace not only in military might but in **restored human relations**. Practically, *Igwebuike*-inspired governance would emphasize **inclusive dialogue, community-based conflict mediation, and leadership by service**, rather than domination. The elite's exodus, seen through this lens, represents a rupture of *igwebuike*, i.e., the withdrawal of those whose skills and wealth should reinforce the communal fabric.⁸² Restoring trust therefore, entails rekindling a sense of shared destiny, where elites see their prosperity as bound up with national well-being.

Ubuntu: The Humanism of Shared Existence

Ubuntu, from the southern African philosophical tradition, complements *Igwebuike* in its humanistic orientation. Often summarized by the Zulu proverb *umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu* (“a person is a person through other persons”), *Ubuntu* underscores the intrinsic worth of the human person within community.⁸³ It contrasts with the hyper-individualism that underpins corruption, inequality, and elite detachment in many postcolonial African states. Applying *Ubuntu* to Nigeria's insecurity and migration dilemma offers two key insights. First, it frames violence and economic decay as **failures of relational ethics**, i.e., the erosion of empathy, justice, and respect for human dignity. Second, it offers a **restorative philosophy of governance**, where power is oriented toward communal flourishing rather than self-interest. As Desmond Tutu and Nelson Mandela frequently noted, *Ubuntu* is not sentimental idealism; it is a political principle, a principle that is grounded in reconciliation and collective responsibility.⁸⁴

In practical terms, *Ubuntu* calls for policies that heal social fractures, not merely through punitive justice but through **restorative processes** that reintegrate offenders, victims, and communities. In the security context, this means prioritizing local peace-building, dialogue with marginalized groups, and reintegration of displaced persons and ex-combatants. Economically, it suggests that elite wealth must serve communal upliftment, a moral economy grounded in reciprocity rather than extraction.

Synergy of Igwebuike and Ubuntu: Rebuilding the Moral Economy

Together, *Igwebuike* and *Ubuntu* form what Innocent Asouzu calls a **complementary framework for African renewal**, bridging metaphysics and social ethics.⁸⁵ They challenge Nigeria's current trajectory of alienation and insecurity by reasserting that survival is collective. Their combined insight redefines national security as the **security of relationships**, between citizens and the state, elites and the poor, and humans and their environment.

Through this synthesis, the path to national renewal becomes not merely technocratic but ethical: rebuilding Nigeria requires reawakening communal consciousness, where the migration of

⁸¹ O. W. Egara, “Unlocking Sustainable Peace and Development in Africa: The Power of Igwebuike”

⁸² O.W. Egara, P. M. Etaware, B. G. Oviemuno, and C. Elijah. “Igwebuike Socio-Political Philosophy: A Catalyst for National Integration and Sustainable Peace in Nigeria” *Journal of Global Research in Education and Social Science* 19 (4):157–167. <https://doi.org/10.56557/jogress/2025/v19i49868>.

⁸³ Augustine Shutte, *Philosophy for Africa*.

⁸⁴ Desmond Mpilo Tutu, *No Future without Forgiveness* 1st Ed. (New York: Doubleday, 1999), 34–38.

⁸⁵ Innocent I. Asouzu. *The Method and Principles of Complementary Reflection in and beyond African Philosophy* (Calabar: University of Calabar Press, 2004).

elites is no longer seen as an escape but as a betrayal of communal responsibility. If these philosophies inform leadership training, civic education, and policy formation, they can anchor a moral renaissance capable of reversing Nigeria's economic and social decay, to the true essence of communalism.

Pathways to Renewal

Breaking this cycle thus demands bold, multifaceted action in all dimensions. Community policing, rooted in local trust, could secure volatile zones, freeing farmlands and markets from the grip of bandits and terrorists.⁸⁶ Agricultural reforms, such as subsidized inputs, secure transport corridors, and irrigation investments, could stabilize food prices, easing inflation and unrest.⁸⁷ To retain elites, Nigeria must offer competitive incentives such as tax breaks, modernized facilities, and hazard pay that reflect risks.⁸⁸ Diaspora engagement, through remote consulting platforms or investment incentives, could transform brain drain into brain gain, leveraging skills from abroad.⁸⁹ For instance, virtual health consultancies led by Diaspora doctors could bridge gaps in Nigeria's healthcare system, while tech incubators could attract returnee entrepreneurs.⁹⁰

In all these, hope lies in Nigeria's youth, a demographic bulge that could power tech hubs or green energy ventures in secure zones.⁹¹ The World Bank's 2025 framework emphasizes human capital investment, which signals a path to harness this potential through vocational training and start-up grants.⁹² Yet success hinges on addressing root causes of elite exodus such as leadership and governance failures, inequality, and the insecurity that binds them. Without systemic reform, Nigeria risks losing its elites and its future to a cycle where fear triumphs over ambition.

Evaluation and Conclusion

The evidence paints a sobering picture however, where insecurity is not just a peripheral issue but the fulcrum of Nigeria's economic and social crisis. The recorded data of 33.1 million facing food insecurity, 46 percent inflation, 80 percent of doctors emigrating, reveals a nation hemorrhaging potential.⁹³ The case studies underscore this, showing how insecurity disrupts industries (Kaduna's textile collapse), healthcare (Lagos surgeon's flight), energy (Port Harcourt executive's exit), and education (Kano academic's relocation). These incidents are not isolated but symptoms of a systemic failure, where violence amplifies economic vulnerabilities and drives away the very talent needed for recovery.

Critically, the interplay of insecurity and elite migration creates a feedback loop that is difficult to break. While remittances (\$20 billion annually) offer short-term relief, they cannot replace the long-term loss of human capital, which stifles innovation and entrenches oil dependence.⁹⁴ Policy responses, like increased security spending (16 percent of the 2025 budget), have been reactive, failing to address root causes like poverty and governance gaps.⁹⁵ Although community policing and agricultural reforms show promise, their success depends on execution,

⁸⁶O.W. Egara, "Insecurity and its Attendant Effects in Nigeria: A Philosophical Perspective."

⁸⁷World Food Programme, "Economic Hardship."

⁸⁸Akindoyin and Obafemi, "Evaluating the Impact."

⁸⁹World Bank, "Nigeria Overview."

⁹⁰Ibid.

⁹¹Ibid.

⁹²Ibid.

⁹³Nairametrics, "Approximately 33.1 Million Nigerians"; International Monetary Fund, Nigeria: 2025 Article IV Consultation; Akindoyin and Obafemi, "Evaluating the Impact."

⁹⁴Akindoyin and Obafemi, "Evaluating the Impact."

⁹⁵World Food Programme, "Economic Hardship."

transparency, and political will, which are elements that have long been undermined by distrust and fragmented governance.⁹⁶ The World Bank's focus on human capital offers a blueprint, but without curbing insecurity, such initiatives risk becoming hollow promises.⁹⁷

At this juncture, Nigeria's crisis must be understood as not merely economic or political but philosophical. The erosion of solidarity and communal trust reveals a moral void that cannot be filled by policy alone. Here, the indigenous philosophies of *Igwebuike* and *Ubuntu* offer crucial insight. As Kanu observes, *Igwebuike* envisions strength through unity and complementarity, where “the being of one finds meaning in the being of the other.”⁹⁸ Insecurity, seen through this lens, signifies a rupture in relational ontology, i.e., the breakdown of those human bonds that constitute the fabric of community; likewise *Ubuntu*, that emphasizes shared humanity as the basis of social order.⁹⁹ Together, these frameworks recast security as a communal ethic rather than a militarized objective. Applying these philosophies implies that rebuilding Nigeria demands a moral renaissance anchored in shared responsibility. Leadership must embody the ethics of service rather than domination; governance must prioritize inclusion, transparency, and reconciliation. Policies should be guided by the recognition that national prosperity depends on relational harmony between citizens and the state, elites and the masses, and humans and their environment.¹⁰⁰ A truly secure Nigeria would therefore be one where individuals perceive their flourishing as inseparable from the well-being of others.

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⁹⁶Ibid.

⁹⁷World Bank, “Nigeria Overview.”

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