



Corruption, Urbanization, and Insecurity in Nigeria: Unraveling the nexus and pathways to national stability

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Abstract

This study investigates the nexus between corruption and insecurity in Nigeria from 1994 to 2022, focusing on how urbanization and political stability influence the country's security landscape. Secondary data were sourced from the World Development Indicators and the CBN's Statistical Bulletin. Insecurity was modeled as the dependent variable, with corruption, urbanization, and political stability serving as independent variables. The Auto Regressive Distributed Lag (ARDL) technique was employed to analyze both short- and long-term dynamics. The ARDL bound test reveals a long-run relationship among the variables. Corruption was discovered to have a positive but not significant effect on insecurity in the short and long run, this is due to the fact that corruption is institutional in nature and it undermines the efficacy of law enforcement and governance. Political stability positively influenced insecurity but with no short-term impact but is important in the long term, possibly because stable government takes time to generate better security results. Urbanization contributes importantly to increased insecurity, with positive signs in both the short and long run, possibly because fast urbanization outruns available infrastructure and increases socioeconomic inequalities. The study concludes that corruption is at the epicenter of increasing insecurity in Nigeria, followed by urbanization and long-term political stability. Therefore, efforts to enhance national security should primarily be directed towards anti-corruption, complemented by managing urbanization and establishing long-term political stability to initiate lasting security improvements.

Keywords: Insecurity; Corruption; Political Stability; Urbanization; ARDL.

Introduction

Urbanization, Corruption, and insecurity are interlinked factors that have pursued Nigeria for decades and possibly destabilize the country and its development. Sharp growth in Urbanization has occurred in recent years in Nigeria. Exponential growth is the outcome of various causes such as growing population, rural-to-urban migration, and economic opportunities in towns. Urbanization will enhance economic growth and prosperity but, thereby, has given rise to social ailments and insecurity at the collective level that deplete the solidity of the nation. The biggest problem with the urbanization process in Nigeria is that the inhabitants are concentrated within the towns. While the towns are expanding, the rural settlers migrate to the towns for good living and livelihood. By as early as 2050, more than 70% of Nigerians will be living in urban cities, as the World Bank estimate projections have already predicted. Urban cities' population growth has seen exponential rise in slum settlements and overcrowding communities and placed a stronger strain on public amenities. All of them have a direct bearing on some of the socioeconomic factors at the core of the national security problem, such as poverty, crime, and violence.

As one of the most populated nations in Africa and the economic powers of the continent, Nigeria is beset by hundreds of problems that have been caused by highly entrenched corruption in its political, economic, and judicial systems. Gigantic corruption not only kills good governance but also widens social inequalities, generating the high rates of insecurity that are being tackled in most of the nation. Effects of corruption to Nigerian development are experienced in

every area of quantifiable elements. Quality and effectiveness of public service, for instance, have been undermined by corruption and corruptive activities, exposing the country to substandard health centers, poor-quality educational facilities, and humiliating infrastructure. The corruption also leads to the misallocation of resources under the guise of nepotism and favoritism showing poverty as well as exclusion to the broader majority of its citizens. The trust of governments has also decreased considerably as testified by low scores on the basis of transparency in Corruption Perceptions Index of Transparency International that still ranks Nigeria among the world's most corrupt countries (Transparency International, 2020). It is a trend of persistent corruption and general trend of corruption that undermines public confidence in institutions and causes the public to lose confidence in leaders. Corruption also squanders precious public resources that can be diverted into development initiatives and social services, further increasing existing inequalities between segments of society. This has established a political culture of institutional impunity, whereby government accountability and oversight are made ineffective. In this foreboding environment, political elites become obsessed with personal riches at the cost of the populace, widening a gigantic chasm between the ruling elite and the governed (Uslaner, 2013). In this way, the impacts of corruption go far beyond financial loss, as they create an environment of insecurity that further destabilizes the country and jeopardizes its future.

Urbanization affects the economy but also leaves a significant imprint on public safety

and governance in a country. Inadequate law enforcement capability and weak systems of government plague most Nigerian cities. The urban residents lack confidence in the police because they are corrupt and ineffective. This will cause vigilantism and people's self-policing, still deteriorating the rule of law and inducing circles of violence. With dissipated local societies being suspicious of the state institution, this exerts pressure on national security. Nigeria's insecurity is of diverse and composite kinds such as typical violence, constant terrorism, large-scale banditry, and reoccurring communal violence. These among the threats are groups such as Boko Haram that have become so prevalent with their guerrilla warfare, thus resulting in millions of deaths and displacing millions. Such presence and existence have been greatly caused by rampant corruption as well as weak governance institutions that exacerbate the impact of widespread local grievances. This correlation of corruption with lawlessness establishes a vicious circle that erodes the ability of the state to create order and public security. Corruption of the security institutions renders it ineligible for complete functionality. Adefolaju (2013) gives an illustration of the extent of corrupt practice by military and police institutions. They highlight the exorbitant cost to them in the area of effectiveness. Disbursement of finances towards acquiring required military resources and treatment of personnel welfare are most often prone to diversion or theft. This not only results in a shortage of sufficient resources to combat crime and terrorism, but also results in low morale among troops, which in turn impacts their response to security threats.

Also, politicization of the security institutions makes the problem difficult. Political allegiance is usually stronger than the need for professional morality and national defense in most cases. Political allegiance, in such a manner, can produce tainted integrity within institutions since officers prefer serving their political masters than protecting the people whom they were hired to protect, Jega (2019) elaborates. Moreover, the socio-economic impact of corruption is the core of establishing a culture of insecurity. Odukoya and Osanaiye (2017) assume that corruption's waste of funds dissuades investment in essential infrastructure and social services, further, among the poor communities worst hit by such ailments. Injustice in access to good education, healthcare, and sustainable economic advantages is a recipe for instability. Its marginalized and left-behind members will turn to crime or violence as a means of survival and further aggravate the cycle of insecurity.

The urgency to partner in order to mitigate corruption and insecurity is now or else, in that order; else, and in that likelihood, Nigeria stands the risk of destabilization. Reforms leading to change into good governance by enhancing transparency, accountability, and investments in public goods will be crucial in order to stop the cycle and provide a more secure and safe scenario for Nigerians in general. Apart from home troubles, spillover effects of multinational businesses reflect serious difficulties in terms of corruption and the harmful effect upon the establishment of insecurity in Nigeria. Because of these serious difficulties, efforts at curbing corruption have been carried out by Nigeria's government

through the introduction of new codes of law and procedures for enforcement.

The start has been the establishment of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) and the Independent Corrupt Practices Commission (ICPC), established in a bid to combat the corrupt culture so prevalent in the nation. But effectiveness of EFCC and ICPC operations and that of such firms has been extensively questioned quite rightfully for a very long time now. Its independence is not stated to be, is underfunded, and is plagued by bureaucratic inefficiencies (Eze 2021). Politically entrenched political elite interests also provide the source of a culture of impunity undermining accountability. This is also a result of under-funding and overall lack of political will to facilitate substantial reforms. Despite all the corruption wars fought in Nigeria, the core issue still remains insecurity, with corruption aggravating the issue as well as encroaching on the achievement of a secure and stable country. The government's security budget always ends up being wasted, with the security agents thus ending up being underbudgeted and ill-equipped to tackle insurgencies, banditry, and kidnappings (Oghuvbu and Oghuvbu, 2020).

Furthermore, corruption within the security sector erodes public trust, and citizens are not willing to cooperate with authorities. Experts believe that confronting corruption at all levels of government is central to tackling the underlying causes of insecurity (Adamaagashi et al., 2023). It is necessary to probe into the connection between corruption and insecurity in Nigeria to attain the gateways to national stability. This study therefore adds to the literature by investigating the impact of

corruption and urbanization on insecurity, especially in the face of the apparent increasing trend in corruption and urbanization levels and mounting security challenges in Nigeria.

Literature Review

Theoretical Literature Review

The current research also borrowed hypotheses from the Frustration-Aggression Theory. Dollard et al. had formulated the theory in 1939. The theory says frustration a state in the way of a goal is an aggressor. According to this theory, individuals give expression to aggression while feeling frustration by using aggressive behavior as an alternative to mitigating emotional tension. This reaction might be either direct or displaced where the object causing frustration is unreachable or hazardous. Berkowitz (1989) subsequently elaborated on the theory, proposing that aggression will be more likely to occur if frustration is accompanied by cues to aggression, rather than as an unavoidable consequence of frustration. The theory has been a useful explanation for much aggression, particularly in social psychology.

Empirical Review

Scholarly initial works by researchers Olumide and Ebun (2011) examine the pervasive and in the majority of cases catastrophic effect corruption has on governmental abilities in the provision of law and order. and rule of law. They assert that pervasiveness of corruption lowers the efficacies of public institutions of the state mandated with public security. Misallocation of funds in such critical areas as the police force and the armed forces is also referred to

as the largest obstacle to effective governance. Misuse of security funds has the consequence of making institutions that are intended to deliver law and order susceptible to failure or collapse. This kind of weather is likely to generate suspicion among the members of the same institutions charged with their protection. In even stronger support of such a position, Adefolaju (2013) illustrates how corruption offers the fertile ground in which lawlessness takes root. With eroding state institution trust, the people can be driven towards self-defense and vigilantism as the default route in addition to the non-state redress mechanisms. This kind of movement does not make society safer and cultivates a culture of violence, aggravating an already fragile security situation. Idris (2013) used Spearman's Rank Correlation Coefficient to determine the correlation of Nigeria's insecurity and corruption from 2001-2010. The research identified that corruption is a causative factor of insecurity as a result of the failure in governance to uphold the Fundamental Objectives and Directive Principles of State Policy as contained in the Constitution of Nigeria. Ebo (2016) echoes the imperative need for thorough security sector reform in Nigeria as a structural corruption cure ingredient. In his opinion, the lack of effective monitoring mechanisms, accountability of police leaders, and special interests in the security establishment render available weaknesses more intricate and deeper, thus compromising citizens further. The study requires multi-dimensional interventions aimed at addressing institutional reform, other public accountability mechanisms, and professional standards definition for law enforcement

institutions. Institutional reforms are required in an attempt to rebuild the public's trust in such institutions and deliver improved security outputs to citizens throughout the country. Socio-economic dimensions of corruption and insecurity have also received significant attention from scholars like Odukoya and Osanaiye (2017).

They argue that corruption-driven resources misallocation is most damaging in its effect on investment in core infrastructure and social services. Misallocation disproportionately affects poor communities and tends to predispose high violence and civil conflict. Poor communities decimated by extensive poverty, limited schooling and employment opportunities, are most likely to be subjected to maximum destabilization. The authors observe that war against corruption can only be successful if there is institutionalized coordination of the socio-economic policy to ensure even distribution of resources to facilitate efficient distribution of resources. Through provision of social stability and coherence through equitable distribution of resources, the policies help in demolishing the seeds that bear fruits of violence and insecurity.

Nigeria's urbanization is marked both by its unplanned natural development and its armed expansion of city population, led mainly by rural-urban migration. Nigeria's urban population rose from over 30% in the year 2000 to over 50% in the year 2022, according to the National Bureau of Statistics (2023), and estimates were made that the urban populations would keep rising exponentially for two more decades. The majority of the socioeconomic issues, ranging from poverty,

unemployment, and infrastructural decay, have been attributed to this urbanization. The issues, according to some researchers, are determinants of insecurity (Ogunode, 2022; Abubakar et al., 2023). Urbanization increases socioeconomic inequality, which is one of the primary ways in which it produces insecurity. Nigerian urban centers are typically made up of crass contradictions of affluent suburbs and slums in which the residents live filth and loneliness (Oladipo and Oyedele, 2022). Polarization can also sharpen and harden poor societies, and therefore crime like gang war, robbery, and insurrection (Okafor, 2023). Aside from that, the rise in urban town youth unemployment has been found to be a reflection of social revolution and militancy due to a sense of disenfranchisement (Akinwunmi and Olarinmoye, 2022). Poor governance and institutional frailty in managing the city ensure the perpetuation of the violence and insecurity trend. Poor policing, poor housing, and sanitation problems in most Nigerian cities are some of the elements that create the landscape that feeds crime. Adeola (2022) empathizes with the view that people would be most inclined to take the law into their own hands if they lose faith in the local authority. Such autonomy can erode rule of law and perpetuate insecurity in the form of cycles of violence and vigilantism. Urbanization also allows for the growth of informal settlements with poor or weakly institutionalized governance institutions. Without access to good public services and formal economic opportunities, these settlements become incubators of violence and crime. Igbinovia and Akinsola (2023) attest that the shadow economies are also sanctuaries for criminal

networks that take advantage of the local grievances and conduct illegal activities of drug and human trafficking. Ajala's (2018) question investigates the intricate network of political corruption and instability, in this instance, Nigeria's democracy.

The study speaks to the way in which political elites utilize security agencies at their discretion, as articulated by Jega (2019). Utilization of security agencies inevitably safeguards the interests of the political elites against the security and well-being of the ordinary man. This consequently erodes the confidence of citizens of the state and subjects the state to crime, such powers being unaccounted for and free. According to Jega (2019), there is an urgent need to reestablish the integrity and independence of security institutions so that one can adequately respond to the twin epidemics of corruption and insecurity and restore public trust and enhance security.

Furthermore, the impact of corruption does not stop at an individual case but overflows into national identity and social cohesion. Osaghae and Suberu (2010) describe how corruption is able to develop covert animosities across various ethnic and religious groups, and tensions are heightened and latent violent conflict when the allocation of resources is perceived as unfair. Their argument is that if segments of society start to believe that they are benefiting disproportionately through unjust means, it leads to outrage and unrest in society, ultimately damaging the social fabric required in order to be able to have a harmonious and peaceful society. As a response to such polarizing dispositions, they positively encourage embracing inclusive governance

procedures that avowedly counteract the perceptions of discrimination and inequality to reduce sociopolitical cost borne by corruption and enable citizens to be incorporated.

In his book, *Corruption and Insecurity in Nigeria's Fourth Republic*, Chinnah (2020) discussed how corruption has seeped into Nigerian society to the point that individuals have now grown to live it as a lifestyle. From research, it is seen that even individuals who are assigned to curb corruption are greatly compromised, and therefore the country is headed towards an empty society. The research verifies that corruption is very deeply rooted in all institutions, religious institutions, and the government responded superficially. The research illustrates that higher corruption is associated with higher insecurity, and which is an undisputed proxy for poor governance. In a more recent analysis, supporting this assertion, Igbesi et al., (2022) found that corruption and insecurity have significantly hindered the growth of Nigeria's economy. The study suggests that widespread corruption diverts resources from essential sectors, while insecurity discourages both local and foreign investments, leading to reduced economic development.

Often times, literatures had also identified urbanization a one of the major causes of rise in insecurity level in Nigeria. A study by Udeuhele (2018) revealed that urbanization exacerbate insecurity in Nigeria. African

urbanization process has also been used to denote "pseudo-urbanization." This has led to a feeling of adequate insecurity, which has been a significant impediment to the development of cities in Nigeria. For this reason, there exists an urgent necessity for national action in order to correct and end this status. Support evidence for the aforementioned contention is exhibited in Out's (2022) study. Evidence reveals that high-rate urbanization, mass unemployment, rural-urban migration, oppressive social pressures, abuses of power, politicization of security issues within the cities are the major determinants of insecurity in Nigeria. The coincidence of all these factors improves Nigeria's long-run sustainable development trajectory. These questions collectively encapsulate the multi-dimensioned and multi-layered nature of corruption in Nigeria, once more underscoring the need for comprehensive reform and pre-emptive measures with local as well as global considerations at stake in this vice.

Methodology

Model Specification

The theoretical basis of this study is adopted from Dollard et al.'s (1939) Frustration-Aggression theory. The model adopted in this study is the Ehrlich (1996), Levitt (1996), Grogger (1998), and Corman and Mocan (2000) model, employed in examining the effect of corruption on insecurity in Nigeria.

The structure of the model is:

$$INSEC = f(CORR, URBAN) \quad (1)$$

Incorporating the various control variables as used in the literature, Equation 2, however, specifies this.

$$INSEC = f(CORR, URBAN, UMP, POLSTB) \quad (2)$$

In a simple linear equation and log form, model (2) becomes:

$$INSEC = \alpha_0 + \alpha_1 CORR + \alpha_2 URBAN + \alpha_3 UMP + \alpha_4 POLSTB + \eta \quad (3)$$

Where:

INSEC is the insecurity level; CORR is the corruption index; URBAN is urbanization; UMP is unemployment rate and POLSTB is the political stability index; the error term is denoted by η , the intercept by α_0 , and the parameter estimations by $\alpha_1, \alpha_2 \dots \alpha_4$. The mathematical expression for the apriori expectation is $\alpha_1 > 0, \alpha_2 > 0, \alpha_3 > 0$, and $\alpha_4 < 0$.

This study employed the ARDL (Autoregressive Distributed Lag) model to determine how corruption and other included variables influences insecurity in Nigeria. This model is crucial as it allows for the simultaneous examination of both short-run and long-run relationships within a unified framework, irrespective of whether the variables are integrated of order I(0), I(1), or a mixture of both.

The ARDL model derived from Equation 3 is presented as follows:

$$\begin{aligned} \Delta INSEC_t = & \beta_0 \\ & + \sum_{j=1}^n \partial_j \Delta CORR_{t-1} + \sum_{j=1}^p \alpha_j \Delta URBAN_{t-1} + \sum_{j=1}^p \varphi_j \Delta UMP_{t-1} + \sum_{j=1}^p \phi_j \Delta POLSTB_{t-1} \\ & + \beta_1 CORR_{t-1} + \beta_2 URBAN_{t-1} + \beta_3 UMP_{t-1} + \beta_4 POLSTB_{t-1} \\ & + \mu_t \end{aligned} \quad (4)$$

Equation 4 is reparametrized to specify the Error Correction Model (ECM), which is used to evaluate the short- and long-term

effects of corruption on insecurity as well as the rate at which insecurity reacts to long-term changes in corruption.

$$\begin{aligned} \Delta INSEC_t = & \beta_0 \\ & + \sum_{j=1}^n \partial_j \Delta CORR_{t-1} + \sum_{j=1}^p \alpha_j \Delta URBAN_{t-1} + \sum_{j=1}^p \varphi_j \Delta UMP_{t-1} + \sum_{j=1}^p \phi_j \Delta POLSTB_{t-1} \\ & + \beta_1 CORR_{t-1} + \beta_2 URBAN_{t-1} + \beta_3 UMP_{t-1} + \beta_4 POLSTB_{t-1} + \tau ECM_{t-1} \\ & + \mu_t \end{aligned} \quad (5)$$

In Equation (4) β_{1-4} represent the convergence of short-run dynamic coefficients to long-run equilibrium while τ is the error correction model and speed of adjustment parameter derived from the predicted equilibrium relationship. The

aforementioned ECM could be considered as including both short-term transient effects and long-term consequences.

Definitions and Measurement of Variables

The measurements of the many variables in the model for the study are quickly explained

and expressed as follows, drawing from the literature.

Table 1. Variables, measurements, and sources of data

Variable	Descriptions	Symbol	Data source
Insecurity	The government's spending on security	INSEC	Central bank of Nigeria Statistical Bulletin
Corruption	reflects opinions about how much official authority is used for personal benefit, encompassing both minor and major corruption.	CORR	International Country Risk Guide (ICRG) assembled by the Political Risk Services (PRS) group.
Urbanization	Urban population (% of total population)	URBAN	World Development Indicator (WDI)
Unemployment	The fraction of the total labor force that is unemployed	UMP	World Development Indicator (WDI)
Political stability	This gauges opinions about the probability of political unrest and/or violence with political motivations, such as terrorism.	POLSTB	International Country Risk Guide (ICRG) assembled by the Political Risk Services (PRS) group.

Source: Author's Compilation

Results And Discussion of Findings

Descriptive Statistics

The mean and median values of the descriptive statistics are shown in Table 1 below, where they fall between the maximum and minimum values and are reasonably close to one another. According to this, the distribution is almost symmetrical. Insecurity had the largest variability in the series (standard deviation: 238.0170), whereas corruption had the lowest (standard

deviation: 0.297660). The low variability in corruption means that it has stayed relatively constant throughout time, but the high variability in insecurity indicates that this metric has seen substantial variations. Since every variable has a positive skew, their distribution is likely to have lengthy right tails. The Jarque-Bera statistics for all variables, except POLSTB and URBAN, were below 10%, suggesting a normal distribution and randomness in the series.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics of the Variables.

	INSEC	CORR	POLSTB	UMPL	URBAN
Mean	247.2077	1.459770	7.487069	4.077931	41.95221
Median	196.9018	1.500000	7.125000	3.836000	41.70200
Maximum	770.2352	2.000000	10.50000	5.712000	53.52100
Minimum	4.395766	1.000000	4.833333	3.556000	31.69100

Std. Dev.	238.0170	0.297660	1.172557	0.582282	6.969266
Skewness	0.861447	0.064320	0.668836	1.610472	0.104727
Kurtosis	2.617748	2.870113	4.265939	4.293907	1.693437
Jarque-Bera	3.763328	0.040381	4.098627	14.55881	2.115766
Probability	0.052336	0.080012	0.128823	0.000690	0.347190
Sum	7169.022	42.33333	217.1250	118.2600	1216.614
Sum Sq. Dev.	1586259.	2.480843	38.49689	9.493466	1359.979
Observations	29	29	29	29	29

Source: Author's Computation

Correlation Test

This correlation matrix provides insights into the relationships among the variables: insecurity (INSEC), corruption (CORR), political stability (POLSTB), unemployment (UMPL), and urbanization (URBAN).

Insecurity has a positive correlation with urbanization (0.7504), indicating that as urbanization increases, insecurity tends to

increase as well. The correlation between insecurity and unemployment (0.7185) is also strong and positive, suggesting that higher unemployment rates are associated with increased insecurity. In contrast, insecurity and political stability show a moderate negative correlation (-0.3102), meaning greater political stability might be linked to lower insecurity levels.

Table 2: Correlation Matrix

	INSEC	CORR	POLSTB	UMPL	URBAN
INSEC	1				
CORR	0.0622	1			
POLSTB	-0.3102	-0.3433	1		
UMPL	0.7185	0.1791	-0.2094	1	
URBAN	0.7504	-0.0185	-0.3243	0.6176	1

Source: Author's Computation

Corruption shows low correlations with other variables, particularly a weak positive correlation with unemployment (0.1791) and a slight negative correlation with political stability (-0.3433). This indicates that corruption's direct influence on these variables may be limited in this context. Urbanization is positively correlated with unemployment (0.6176), suggesting that as urbanization increases, unemployment may rise, possibly due to increased migration without matching job opportunities.

Urbanization also has a weak negative correlation with political stability (-0.3243), suggesting that urban growth may modestly challenge political stability. Overall, these relationships highlight that urbanization and unemployment are key factors related to insecurity, while corruption's impact appears less pronounced in these associations.

Additionally, understanding the time series properties of both dependent and explanatory variables is essential; therefore, a unit root test was conducted.

Unit Root (Stationarity) Test

Table 3: Unit Root Test (Augmented Dickey-Fuller and Phillips-Peron)

Variable	Augmented Dickey-Fuller (ADF) Test			
	Level	First Difference	Critical value	Remarks
INSEC	-0.150346	-3.452793**	-3.261452	I(1)
CORR	-6.597500***	-	-3.622033	I(0)
URBAN	3.619946	-4.942683***	-3.644963	I(1)
UMP	-3.661704***	-	-3.587527	I(0)
POLSTB	-3.703519***	-	-3.580623	I(0)
Variable	Phillips-Perron Test			
	Level	First Difference	Critical value	Remarks
INSEC	-0.150346	-3.452793**	-3.261452	I(1)
CORR	-6.597500***	-	-3.622033	I(0)
URBAN	3.619946	-4.942683***	-3.644963	I(1)
UMP	-3.661704***	-	-3.587527	I(0)
POLSTB	-3.703519***	-	-3.580623	I(0)

Source: Author's Computation. Note: *** and ** represent 5% and 10% significance level respectively

Cointegration test

As is common in time series modeling, the limits test for co-integration was used to determine whether a long-term link between the variables was present because of their mixed order of integration. Table 4 displays the results of the ARDL limits test. At the 5% significance level, the corresponding F-statistic of 4.826941 is greater than the lower and upper bound values. This demonstrates a long-term link between the variables and validates their co-integration.

Table 4: Bounds Test for Co-integration Relationship

Test Statistics	Value	K
F-statistic	4.826941	4
Significance	1(0) Bound	1(1) Bound
10%	2.45	3.52
5%	2.86	4.01
1%	3.74	5.06

Source: Author's Computation.

Autoregressive Distributed Lag Model

Table 4 shows the short-run estimates on the influence of corruption on insecurity in Nigeria. In the short run, the current level of corruption with a coefficient of 0.005860 has a very positive and minimal effect on insecurity, with a t-statistic of 0.001941 and a p-value of 0.9985, which is statistically insignificant. Indicating that a unit increase in corruption would on average increase level of insecurity by 0.5%. this implies that corruption's effects on insecurity may not be immediately visible, potentially requiring cumulative, long-term impacts to become noticeable.

The apriori expectation is met by this. Additionally, this aligns with the research findings of Igbesi et al. (2022), Chinnal (2020), and Idris (2013). However, the lagged value of corruption, D(CORR (-1)), shows a

significant negative effect (-1.402163) on insecurity with a p-value of 0.0213 (significant at 5%). This suggests that a previous period's reduction in corruption may have a stabilizing effect on insecurity. Political stability's effect on insecurity is positive with a coefficient of 0.009183 but insignificant, as shown by a p-value of 0.9019, implying no significant short-term effect on insecurity. This positive relationship could imply that political stability, while generally beneficial, may coexist with factors that inadvertently contribute to insecurity, such as limited institutional reform or stagnant governance practices and the non-significance of the relationship implies that short-term fluctuations in political stability may not have an immediate impact on insecurity in Nigeria.

Additionally, with a p-value of 0.0053 and a coefficient of 144.279867, urbanization significantly increases insecurity. This indicates that increases in urbanization are associated with rising insecurity. This may be due to factors like population density, resource competition, inadequate infrastructure, and weakened community cohesion, contributing to higher crime rates. This also conforms with the apriori expectation. This is in line with Udehede (2018) and Out (2022). The lagged value, D (LNURBAN (-1)), also shows a significant positive effect (70.052236) with a p-value of 0.0346, reinforcing the positive association between urbanization and insecurity in both the current and previous periods.

Table 4: The Short Run (Error Correction Representation) of the ARDL Model

Dependent Variable: INSEC				
Variables	Coefficient	Std. Error	t. statistics	Prob
D(CORR)	0.005860	0.442998	0.001941	0.9985
D(CORR(-1))	-1.402163	0.545273	-2.571485	0.0213***
D(POLSTB)	0.009183	0.073248	0.125366	0.9019
D(LNURBAN)	144.279867	44.324840	3.255057	0.0053***
D(LNURBAN(-1))	70.052236	30.143571	2.323953	0.0346***
D(UMPL)	-0.002426	0.110827	-0.021888	0.9828
CointEq(-1)	-1.165596	0.211977	-5.498690	0.0001***

Source: Author's Computation. Note: *** 5% significance level.

Unemployment's effect on insecurity is minimal and statistically insignificant (-0.002426, p-value of 0.9828), suggesting no immediate short-run impact on insecurity. The minimal and statistically insignificant negative effect of unemployment on insecurity (-0.002426, p-value of 0.9828) suggests that changes in unemployment do not directly translate to changes in the level of insecurity in the short run. This could be

because the effects of unemployment on insecurity, such as increased poverty or social frustration, typically require time to accumulate and influence behaviors like crime or unrest. The ECM (-1.165596) is negative and highly significant (p-value of 0.0001), establishing the presence of a long-run equilibrium connection. The coefficient value of -1.165596 implies that variations from the long-term balance are rectified by

approximately 116.6% in the following period, indicating a rapid adjustment towards long-run stability.

Table 5 presents the empirical results of the long-run model. The correlation between corruption and insecurity is positive, albeit statistically insignificant, as indicated by the coefficient of corruption of 0.352715 and the p-value of 0.2214. A unit increase in corruption would on average increase insecurity level by 35%. This suggests that, while higher corruption might be associated with increased insecurity, this effect is not statistically meaningful in the long run, suggesting other factors may drive insecurity more strongly over time. The coefficient political stability 0.107215 with 0.0967 as p-value, which shows that political stability positively influence insecurity and significant

at the 10% level. Indicating that a unit increase in political stability would increase insecurity on average by 10%. This implies that as Nigeria experience a stable political system, insecurity may slight increase, due to complexities within the political landscape. Suggesting that in politically stable economies, the consolidation of resources and power might unintentionally deepen social inequalities or marginalize certain groups, leading to frustration and heightened insecurity. Furthermore, urbanization has a significant and strong positive impact on insecurity at the 5% significance level with a coefficient of 9.336673 and a p-value of 0.0000. This implies that as urbanization increases, insecurity significantly rises in the long run, possibly due to rapid urban growth challenges like inadequate infrastructure or resource competition.

Table 5: Estimated ARDL Long Run Coefficients and Estimates

Dependent Variable: INSEC				
Variables	Coefficient	Std. Error	t. statistics	Prob
Long run estimate				
CORR	0.352715	0.276476	1.275755	0.2214
POLSTB	0.107215	0.060504	1.772021	0.0967**
URBAN	9.336673	0.413895	22.558093	0.0000***
UMPL	0.153421	0.132677	1.156354	0.2656
C	-35.249937	2.255249	-15.630179	0.0000***

Source: Author's Computation.

Also, in Table 5, the coefficient for UEMPL is 0.153421 with a p-value of 0.2656, indicating an insignificant positive relationship with insecurity. Though unemployment is positively associated with insecurity, this effect is not statistically significant in the long run. This may be because, in the long run, factors like urbanization or political stability may exert a stronger influence on insecurity,

overshadowing unemployment's impact. Moreover, informal employment or social support systems could mitigate the effect of unemployment on insecurity, diminishing its long-run significance. The constant term is significant at the 5% level, with a value of -35.249937, suggesting a baseline reduction in insecurity when the other variables are held constant.

Conclusion

This study examined the effect of corruption and urbanization on insecurity in Nigeria. The study adopted the Autoregressive Distributed Lag Model on secondary data from 1994 to 2022. The long-run ARDL estimation reveals that urbanization is the most significant factor influencing insecurity in Nigeria, with a strong positive correlation indicating that rapid urban growth creates challenges like inadequate infrastructure and resource competition. Political stability also has a positive, albeit weaker, association with insecurity, suggesting it may not directly reduce it. Meanwhile, corruption and unemployment show positive correlations but lack statistically significant long-term effects on insecurity. This study thereby concludes that corruption plays a central role in exacerbating insecurity in Nigeria, while urbanization and long-term political stability also contribute significantly. Therefore, policymakers should focus on enhancing urban infrastructure, promoting equitable resource distribution, improving political stability, and implementing strategies to reduce corruption and unemployment effectively. The study however, finds urbanization to be the most influential long-run predictor of insecurity in Nigeria, directly correlated with increased hardships such as poor infrastructure and contest over scarce resources. Even as corruption and unemployment do find correlations with insecurity as well, these correlations for the long run fail to remain significant. Political stability, interestingly, appears in contradiction with possible expectation and does correlate poorly yet positively with

insecurity, hinting that political stability does not automatically reduce insecurity in the long term.

Implications of The Study

These findings indicate that insecurity in Nigeria has to be addressed on multiple fronts. The policymakers have to accord more importance to stemming the effects of rapid urbanization by way of better infrastructure development and resource allocation. Even though corruption and unemployment lack robust statistical long-term effects, their effect remains current, and efforts should continue to combat corruption and expand employment. Political stability alone is not sufficient and has to be accompanied by broader reforms to generate visible security outcomes.

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