



## Impact of kidnapping on economic security in Enugu State, Nigeria

By

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### Abstract

*Kidnapping has become a pervasive and pernicious phenomenon in Enugu State, Nigeria, with far-reaching consequences for economic security. This paper attempts to interrogate the devastating impact of kidnapping on the economic security of Enugu State, highlighting the effects on economic activity, investment, and human capital. The research employed a descriptive research design which is a design that provides and explains what is common, prevalent, or already exists in a population under study. The study adopted the Queer Ladder Theory (QLT) as its theoretical base which credits the notion that organised crime such as kidnapping thrives in contexts where the government's capacity to dictate, sanction and deter crime is poor, public corruption is endemic, and legitimate livelihood opportunities are slim. It is in the opinion of this paper that kidnapping has led to a significant decline in economic activity, as widespread fear and uncertainty discourage entrepreneurship, innovation, and productivity. The resultant economic paralysis has culminated in reduced economic growth, decreased revenue, and diminished economic security. Moreover, kidnapping has discouraged investment in Enugu State, as both domestic and foreign direct investors are deterred by the prevailing insecurity. This has deprived the state of much-needed capital, hindering economic development and exacerbating poverty. Furthermore, kidnapping has resulted in a brain drain, as talented individuals seek safer environments to pursue their endeavors. This has depleted Enugu State's human capital, compromising its economic potential and undermining its economic security. In conclusion, kidnapping poses a significant threat to economic security in Enugu State, Nigeria. Efforts to address this menace are imperative to restore economic stability, attract investment, and ensure the economic well-being of the state's citizens. The paper recommends that enhanced security measures be put in place, engage the communities more on security awareness, support MSMEs to boost more business activities, promote tourism by creating attractions, and to diversify the economy of Enugu State for more economic activities.*

**Keywords:** Economic Security, Human Security, Kidnapping, Security

### Introduction

Kidnapping is a crime that is not limited to a nation, tribe, or country alone, but a global phenomenon that has bedeviled the world today. The kidnapping of children of the rich family for ransom can be traced as far back as the 17th century in Britain, as observed by Tzanell (2009) in Okoli and Agada (2014). The criminal phenomenon and behaviour, such as kidnapping, is not new. It is a worldwide phenomenon with criteria

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differences and scenarios. Kidnapping for human trafficking has become prominent in some European, Asian and North American countries where young ladies are abducted and illegally transported to Europe and America for prostitution.

Kidnapping in Africa has a long history, with incidents reported in various countries, including Nigeria, South Africa, and others. Kidnapping is a serious problem in Africa, with both children and adults being abducted. In South Africa alone, a child goes missing every five hours, and there were over 4,100 kidnappings in the 2013/2014 period. In other African countries, bride kidnapping is a widespread problem, and is especially prevalent in Rwanda, Ethiopia, Kenya and Somalia. Kidnapping in Africa is often driven by economic motivations, with criminals seeking ransoms or other forms of financial gain (Onuoha & Okolie-Osemene, 2019).

In Nigeria, kidnapping has been a significant security concern since the early [2000](#), as the current wave of kidnapping in Nigeria started on 25th February 2006 with the abduction of expatriates working for the oil companies in the Niger Delta area. Since then, the menace has become boldly commercialised in several parts of the country, especially in the southwest (Malik, 2023). In contemporary Nigeria, the implications of kidnapping are not only on the foreigners; sadly, it now includes locals, such as adult females and males, the poor and the rich, the aged, and children. Kidnapping has, in recent times in Nigeria, become very challenging because this criminal activity has led to considerable loss of life and livelihood in almost every geo-political zone of the country. Kidnapping for ransom is not limited to any zone. Kidnappers abduct people, whether nationals or experts and demand ransom payments from families, employees and the government. The wave of kidnapping phenomenon has become so absurd and terrible.

Kidnapping for ransom has become pervasive, particularly in the southeast region of Nigeria, with criminal groups exploiting the security vacuum and socio-economic challenges. Enugu State, located in the southeastern region of Nigeria, has faced a significant challenge with kidnapping in recent years. The phenomenon of kidnapping has become a pervasive threat to human security, causing fear, anxiety, and disruption to the daily lives of citizens.

Kidnapping in Enugu State has had far-reaching consequences on economic security. The fear of abduction has instilled a sense of insecurity among residents, impacting their daily lives and livelihoods. Families live in constant fear of their loved ones being taken, leading to psychological distress and trauma. The economic impact is also severe, as businesses suffer from decreased investment and tourism due to the perception of insecurity. The root causes of kidnapping in Enugu State are complex and multifaceted. Socio-economic factors such as poverty, unemployment, and inequality contribute to the vulnerability of individuals to being targeted by kidnappers. Additionally, the lack of effective law enforcement and judicial systems has created a sense of impunity among criminal syndicates, further exacerbating the problem. Political instability and

corruption also play a role in enabling kidnapping to thrive in the state. The consequences of kidnapping extend beyond the immediate victims to the broader community. Social cohesion is undermined as trust erodes among neighbors and community members. The breakdown of social networks and solidarity hampers efforts to combat kidnapping collectively, as individuals are reluctant to report suspicious activities out of fear of retaliation. This fragmentation of social bonds weakens the fabric of society and makes it easier for criminal elements to operate with impunity.

Therefore, addressing kidnapping is crucial to ensuring economic security in Enugu state, requiring a comprehensive approach that prioritizes prevention, protection, and justice.

This study aims to investigate the impact of kidnapping on economic security in Enugu State, examining the causes, consequences, and responses to this complex issue. By exploring the experiences of victims, families, and communities, this research seeks to provide a comprehensive understanding of the effects of kidnapping on economic security that have directly affected the people of Enugu state and inform evidence-based strategies for prevention, mitigation, and response.

### **Objective of the Study**

The study's main objectives is to investigate the impact of kidnapping on economic security in Enugu State.

However, the specific objectives of the study are to;

- i. Enquire on how kidnapping affects enhanced security measures in Enugu State,
- ii. Ascertain the impacts of kidnapping on community engagement in Enugu State,
- iii. Examine what ways kidnapping affects support for businesses in Enugu State
- iv. Investigate the measures taken by the government of Enugu State to promote tourism within the state,
- v. Establish what alternative measures the government of Enugu State can use in diversification of the Economy.

### **Conceptual Clarification**

#### **Security**

Security, as a concept and as a phenomenon, is a relative term. It means different things to different people, hence differences in approach to pursuing it. Despite these differences, there is some agreement among security experts and scholars as to what the term means. By implication of these definitions, it is clear that security is not just the protection of the national territorial integrity of the state. Security, like development, must have a human face. A man without assurance about where his next meal comes from is not secure, even

if the best army in the world protects him with the most sophisticated military hardware. This brings us to the logic of economic security.

Pham Prevention, (2014) in the Development Programme (2014) defines Security as protection from hidden and hurtful disruptions in daily activities at homes, offices, communities, etc. This implies that security borders on ensuring the safety of lives and properties. Kalu, (2018), who sees security from the socio-political perspective, opines that security involves the capacity to pursue cherished political and social ambitions. That is, security is socio-political, as without security, there can be no political stability and consequently, social activities will be in chaos.

Buzan (2020) sees security as a political, economic, social and environmental threat that affects the individual and the state at national and international levels. To other scholars, security is the absence of threat to acquire values or tendencies that would undermine national cohesion and peace as criteria for determining the meaning of security. Security is the condition or feeling of safety from harm or danger and the defence, protection, and absence of threat to acquire values (Oladeji & Folorunso, 2017).

Therefore, this work adopts the Human Security approach, which ensure access to basic needs like healthcare, education, and social services, as well as protecting individuals from violence, abuse, and exploitation. It also involves addressing the impact of natural disasters, climate change, and environmental degradation on human well-being, as well as promoting peaceful conflict resolution and post-conflict reconstruction.

### **Insecurity**

Insecurity refers to a feeling of vulnerability or lack of safety. It can manifest in various ways, such as social anxiety or physical danger. Insecurity is defined as a condition of social being characterised by openness to danger and threat that is usually detrimental to life and property in a given society (Raimi, 2017). Ajodo, Adebajoko & Ugwuoke (2014) opine that insecurity is the state of being subject in every respect to terror, threat, risk, molestation, bullying, harassment, etc. Insecurity, for example, can be conceived as a threat to the state that often accounted for the arms and nuclear weapons race to protect the state.

Beland (2015) opined that insecurity is the state of fear or anxiety stemming from concrete or alleged lack of protection. It refers to a lack, or inadequate freedom from danger. Achumba, (2018) define insecurity from two perspectives. Firstly, insecurity is the state of being open or subject to danger or threat of danger, whereas danger is the condition of being susceptible to harm or injury. Secondly, insecurity is the state of being exposed to risk or anxiety, where anxiety is a vague, unpleasant emotion that is experienced in anticipation of some misfortune. From the exposition above, the phenomenon of security or insecurity implies both

physical occurrence and psychological state of mind that constitutes a challenge to the peace and development of individuals and societies.

Ishaya (2021) defined insecurity as fear or anxiety from concrete or alleged lack of protection. It is inadequate freedom from danger. This definition reflects physical insecurity, the most visible form of insecurity, and it feeds into many other forms of insecurity, such as economic and social security. Insecurity comes from anything threatening people's survival, livelihood and dignity. It is exacerbated by social, economic, political, legal and other forms of injustice perpetrated against a person, group or nation. Insecurity is the absence of security from both military and human security perspectives.

The operational definition of insecurity on human security as regards this research, refers to the presence of threats, vulnerabilities, and fears that undermine the well-being and dignity of individuals and communities. It encompasses a range of factors that compromise human security, including fear of violence, abuse, and exploitation, want and poverty, including lack of access to basic needs like food, water, shelter, and healthcare, indignity and discrimination, including social exclusion and marginalization, political instability and conflict, economic instability and inequality, social injustice and human rights violations

### **Economic Security**

Economic security is a multidimensional concept that protects individuals, households, and communities from economic risks and uncertainties (Ajah, Nwokeoma, & Okpan, 2017). It involves ensuring stability, predictability, and well-being in the face of economic challenges. Economic security goes beyond financial stability and includes access to essential resources, employment opportunities, and the ability to withstand economic shocks (Ishaya et al., 2019). Economic security is the most critical area that the ever-increasing cases of kidnapping have negatively affected and are still affecting Nigerian citizens. Economic security refers to the ability of people to meet their needs consistently. The concept is important for individuals and nations, where it is a factor in assessing national security and is connected to economic well-being. Cultural standards are involved in determining economic security. This means that an individual has enough income for them to be able to sustain their livelihood. Economic security requires an assured basic income from productive and remunerative work or, in the last resort, from some publicly financed safety net. Nevertheless, only about a quarter of the world's people may be economically secure in this sense. Many people in the rich nations today feel insecure because jobs are increasingly difficult to find and keep. In the past two decades, the number of jobs in industrial countries has increased at only half the GDP growth rate and failed to keep pace with the growth in the labour force.

The International Labour Organization, in the socio-economic security programme, adopted the definition of economic security to mean several conditions which guarantee a sense of security in terms of basic social security (health, housing, social protection, etc.) and work-related safety (income, representation, labour market, employment, job security among others). However, within the context of this study, household economic security refers to the ability of individuals or households to provide and sustain their basic needs, maintain a steady income, and ensure the general well-being of the household.

Economics security has different dimensions, but three 3 dimensions shall be considered in the course of this work, namely, Income security, employment security and food security

### **Income Security**

Income security refers to the assurance of having a stable and sufficient income to meet basic needs and maintain a decent standard of living. It encompasses various aspects, including:

- i. **Job security:** Protection against unjust dismissal, layoffs, or termination.
- ii. **Adequate wages:** Earning a living wage that covers basic needs and provides some disposable income.
- iii. **Regular income:** Receiving a consistent and predictable income stream.
- iv. **Social benefits:** Access to government programs or employer-provided benefits, such as unemployment insurance, sick leave, or family support.
- v. **Pension and retirement plans:** Having a secure source of income for old age or retirement.
- vi. **Protection from income shocks:** Having a financial safety net to absorb unexpected events like job loss, illness, or economic downturns.
- vii. **Opportunities for income growth:** Possibilities for career advancement, promotions, or higher earnings.
- viii. **Access to education and training:** Opportunities to acquire new skills and enhance earning potential.
- ix. **Labor rights:** Protection from exploitation, discrimination, and unfair labor practices.
- x. **Social inclusion:** Equal access to income-earning opportunities, regardless of gender, race, or other factors.

Income security is essential for individuals and families to lead a dignified life, plan for the future, and contribute to economic growth and social stability.

### **Employment Security**

Employment security refers to the assurance of having a stable and secure job, with protection against unjust termination, layoffs, or other forms of job loss. It encompasses various aspects, including:

- i. **Job protection:** Legal or contractual safeguards against unfair dismissal.

- ii. **Tenure:** Long-term employment with a single employer, providing stability and seniority.
- iii. **Collective bargaining:** Negotiated agreements between employers and employees or unions, setting terms and conditions of employment.
- iv. **Worker's rights:** Legal entitlements, such as fair labor standards, safe working conditions, and social benefits.
- v. **Career advancement opportunities:** Possibilities for professional growth, promotions, and skill development.
- vi. **Job satisfaction:** A positive work environment, meaningful work, and a sense of fulfillment.
- vii. **Work-life balance:** Reasonable working hours, leave policies, and flexibility to manage personal and family responsibilities.
- viii. **Social support:** Colleague and supervisor support, mentoring, and access to employee assistance programs.
- ix. **Job security policies:** Employer-provided guarantees, such as no-layoff policies or severance packages.
- x. **Government support:** Labor market policies, such as unemployment benefits, training programs, and employment services.

Employment security is crucial for individuals to build a stable career, plan for the future, and contribute to economic growth and social stability. It also benefits employers by fostering loyalty, productivity, and talent retention.

### **Kidnapping**

Kidnapping, by nature, is an acquisitive crime of a very high violent crime standing, which is an offence against the value system of a society.

Fage and Alabi (2017) conceived kidnapping as “forceful or fraudulent abduction of an individual or a group of individuals for reasons ranging from economic, political, and religious to [struggle for] self-determination”. However, the authors later admitted that the forcefully or fraudulently abducted individuals are carried off as hostages for ransom purposes. This implies that while political and economic factors can instigate kidnapping, the economic reason is the most common predisposing factor of the phenomenon.

Ahmed and Abanimebon (2021:3) sees kidnapping as the taking of a person from one place to another against their will, or the confinement of a person to a controlled space (Find Law, 2019). These denote compulsion or coercion on the part of the abductors. As realised, the taking or confinement of the individual must be for

an unlawful purpose like extortion or the enhancement of another crime. When a parent is without custody rights, they can be charged with kidnapping in the process of taking their child (Find Law, 2019).

Fenemore, (2020), Kidnapping has also been seen as false imprisonment in the sense that it involves the illegal confinement of an individual against his or her own will by another individual in such a way as to violate the confined individual's right to be free from the restraint of movement. This implies that the kidnapped victim can even be kept in the country or community where they reside. In a developing country like Nigeria, with a high poverty rate, kidnapping is often done for ransom, as witnessed in recent times. In the same vein, Ibrahim and Mukhtar (2017) see kidnapping as the act of seizing and detaining an individual. When kidnapping occurs, as could be seen from the definition above, there is the use of force on the individual or persons to get such an individual into submission. In addition, kidnapping can be viewed as a criminal offence consisting of the unlawful taking and abduction of a person by coercion or fraud or the unlawful seizure and detention of a person against his will.

## **Theoretical Framework**

### **Queer Ladder Theory (QLT)**

This theory was influenced by an American sociologist, Daniel Bell (1965), who coined the idea of the queer ladder. In an attempt to explain the functional significance of organised crime as a desperate tactic for socioeconomic empowerment and social climbing. This theoretical perspective has since fertilised into a popular theoretical framework widely used in contemporary crime studies (Bell, 1965). The theory is credited with the notion that organised crime thrives in contexts where the government's capacity to dictate, sanction and deter crime is poor, public corruption is endemic, and legitimate livelihood opportunities are slim.

Queer Ladder Theory intersected with the economic impact of kidnapping as seen in unequal access to resources: Individuals higher on the queer ladder (e.g., white, cisgender, gay men) may have greater access to financial resources, social support, and legal protections, making it easier for them to recover from the economic impact of kidnapping. Those lower on the queer ladder (e.g., transgender individuals, queer people of color) may face increased vulnerability to kidnapping due to systemic inequalities, such as poverty, homelessness, or limited access to healthcare. Kidnapping can exacerbate existing economic insecurities faced by marginalized communities, perpetuating cycles of poverty and financial instability. Fear of stigma, shame, or rejection may prevent queer individuals from seeking help or reporting kidnapping incidents, further exacerbating economic insecurity.



## **Impact of Kidnapping on Economic Security in Enugu State**

Kidnapping has had a significant impact on the economic security of Enugu State in Nigeria. The prevalence of kidnapping in the region has created a climate of fear and uncertainty, which has had detrimental effects on various sectors of the economy.

**Impact on Foreign Direct Investment (FDI):** The high incidence of kidnapping has deterred foreign investors from investing in Enugu State. The lack of security and the risk of kidnapping have made the state unattractive for businesses looking to expand or establish operations in the region. This has resulted in a loss of potential revenue and economic growth for the state.

**Impact on Local Businesses:** Local businesses have also been adversely affected by kidnapping incidents. The insecurity has led to increased operating costs as businesses are forced to invest in security measures to protect their employees and assets. This has reduced profitability and hindered the growth of small and medium enterprises in Enugu State.

**Impact on Tourism:** Enugu State, known for its beautiful landscapes and tourist attractions, has seen a decline in tourist visits due to security concerns stemming from kidnapping incidents. The tourism industry, which once contributed significantly to the state's economy, has suffered as a result, leading to job losses and decreased revenue for local communities.

**Impact on Government Revenue:** The economic impact of kidnapping extends to government revenue as well. The state government has had to allocate a significant portion of its budget to security measures and anti-kidnapping efforts, diverting funds that could have been used for infrastructure development and social programs. This has limited the government's ability to stimulate economic growth and improve the standard of living for residents.

## **Conclusion**

In recent years, Enugu State in Nigeria has grappled with the scourge of kidnapping, a criminal activity that has not only threatened the safety and security of its residents but has also significantly undermined the economic stability and growth of the region. The impact of kidnapping on economic security in Enugu State is profound and far-reaching, affecting various sectors of the economy and posing significant challenges to the development and prosperity of the state.

One of the primary consequences of kidnapping in Enugu State is the adverse effect it has had on foreign direct investment (FDI). The prevalence of kidnapping incidents has created a climate of fear and uncertainty, deterring potential investors from establishing businesses or expanding operations in the state. The lack of

security and the risk of abduction have made Enugu State unattractive for foreign businesses, resulting in a loss of potential revenue, job opportunities, and economic growth for the region.

Moreover, local businesses in Enugu State have also felt the impact of kidnapping on their economic security. The need to invest in additional security measures to protect their employees and assets has increased operating costs for businesses, reducing profitability and hindering growth. Small and medium enterprises, which are crucial drivers of economic development, have been particularly vulnerable to the effects of kidnapping, leading to job losses and a slowdown in economic activity.

The tourism industry, once a vibrant contributor to the economy of Enugu State, has also suffered as a result of kidnapping incidents. The insecurity stemming from abductions has deterred tourists from visiting the state, leading to a decline in tourist arrivals, revenue loss for local businesses in the hospitality sector, and job losses in communities reliant on tourism. The negative perception of Enugu State as an unsafe destination has further exacerbated the challenges faced by the tourism industry, hindering its recovery and growth.

Furthermore, the impact of kidnapping on economic security in Enugu State extends to government revenue and expenditure. The state government has had to allocate a significant portion of its budget to security measures and anti-kidnapping efforts, diverting funds that could have been used for essential services, infrastructure development, and social programs. The strain on government resources has limited the state's capacity to stimulate economic growth, create employment opportunities, and improve the standard of living for its residents.

In conclusion, the impact of kidnapping on economic security in Enugu State is a complex and multifaceted challenge that requires urgent attention and concerted efforts from government authorities, security agencies, businesses, and communities. Addressing the root causes of kidnapping, enhancing security measures, supporting affected businesses, promoting tourism, and diversifying the economy are crucial steps towards mitigating the impact of kidnapping and restoring economic security in the state.

By prioritizing security, fostering a conducive business environment, and promoting sustainable economic development, Enugu State can overcome the challenges posed by kidnapping and pave the way for a resilient, prosperous, and secure future for its residents and businesses. Collaboration, innovation, and a shared commitment to building a safe and thriving environment are essential to overcoming the impact of kidnapping on economic security and unlocking the full potential of Enugu State as a key player in Nigeria's economic landscape.

In conclusion, the impact of kidnapping on economic security in Enugu State is profound and multi-faceted. It has hindered foreign investment, harmed local businesses, damaged the tourism industry, and strained government resources. To address these challenges and improve economic security in the state, the following recommendations are proposed:

### **Recommendation**

The prevalence of kidnapping in Enugu State, Nigeria, has posed significant challenges to the economic security and development of the region. To mitigate the adverse effects of this criminal activity and foster a secure and conducive environment for economic growth, a series of targeted recommendations are essential. By implementing these recommendations, Enugu State can work towards addressing the impact of kidnapping on economic security and laying the foundation for sustainable prosperity.

- i. That Enugu state government should collaborate closely with security agencies to improve surveillance, intelligence gathering, and response capabilities. By strengthening law enforcement efforts and deploying resources effectively to combat kidnapping, the state can create a safer environment for businesses, residents, and visitors, thereby restoring confidence and stability in the region.
- ii. That the South East Development Commission and Enugu State government should engage local communities in crime prevention efforts as such is essential for addressing the impact of kidnapping on economic security in Enugu State. Such efforts will build trust between residents and security forces, encouraging community policing initiatives, and fostering a culture of vigilance can help gather crucial information, prevent crime, and enhance the overall security landscape in the state.
- iii. To mitigate the impact of kidnapping on local businesses, the state government should consider providing financial incentives, support programs, and security assistance to affected enterprises. Offering tax incentives, grants for security upgrades, and access to low-interest loans can help businesses recover from the economic impact of kidnapping incidents, strengthen their resilience, and facilitate their growth in a secure environment. Supporting businesses is essential for revitalizing economic activity, creating job opportunities, and fostering a thriving business ecosystem in Enugu State.
- iv. Promoting tourism and showcasing the cultural, historical, and natural attractions of Enugu State is essential for reviving the tourism industry and attracting visitors to the region. Implementing targeted marketing campaigns, improving infrastructure and hospitality services, and ensuring the safety and security of tourists can help rebuild confidence and interest in Enugu State as a

desirable destination. By leveraging its unique assets and promoting tourism responsibly, the state can diversify its economy, create employment opportunities, and stimulate economic growth.

- v. Encouraging diversification of the economy beyond traditional sectors is crucial for reducing the vulnerability of Enugu State to security threats like kidnapping. The state government should prioritize investments in sectors such as agriculture, manufacturing, technology, and renewable energy to create a more resilient and dynamic economy.

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