



(RESEARCH ARTICLE)



## The effects of insecurity on think home philosophy in the South East: The issues, challenges and problems

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### Abstract

Insecurity in Nigeria has assumed a weird situation to the extent that no region of the country is immune from the nauseating experience that has led to the death of hundreds of thousands of people. For instance, a total of 1,486 people in the country were victims of insecurity in January 2022 – 915 of whom were killed and 571 were kidnapped. The south east which hitherto was a peaceful zone has turned to a theatre of killings occasioned by the intolerable activities of the unknown gunmen who take delight in the forceful sit-at home that has turned the south east into a fearful zone devoid of free movement of people. This by all intent and purposes have truncated the laudable think home philosophy of the Igbos. The dramatic surge in the activities of the unknown gunmen was as a result of the separatist agitation associated with the designation of the Indigenous People of Biafra as a terrorist organization by the Federal Government. This study will be guided by three objectives of the study among which is to examine the extent to which insecurity has affected business investments in the south east. A qualitative descriptive research design will be adopted; it is recommended that the governors of the south east should establish a security network that can fight the insecurity in the south east otherwise the region will continue to depreciate in terms of business investment.

**Keywords:** Insecurity; Think Home Philosophy; Business Investment; Unknown gunmen; Infrastructural development

### 1. Introduction

The southeastern region of the country is renowned for its strong commitment to entrepreneurial pursuits, characterized by a healthy competitive spirit aimed at personal development. This distinctive ethos is particularly prevalent among the predominantly Igbo population residing in this region. Their achievements are attributed to a tireless work ethic, a penchant for creativity, and a penchant for innovation. The historical roots of Igbo commerce are deep-seated, with archaeological sites such as Igbo-ukwu attesting to their engagement in long-distance trade involving metals, beads, salt, cloth, and other commodities along the eastern banks of the Niger River.

During the early 19th century, two distinct trade networks held sway in Igbo territory. The first network was composed of various trading states collaborating to manage trade activities along the Niger River and its primary riverine markets. The second was orchestrated by Aro traders from Arochukwu and its colonies, who controlled significant trade in the eastern region (Northrop, 1972). The entrepreneurial spirit of the Igbo people flourished to such an extent that many migrated to other regions for trading ventures. Gradually, these migrants established themselves in these areas, forming a diaspora community.

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However, this trajectory of expansion was abruptly interrupted by the ravages of a thirty-month civil war. The conflict inflicted profound human, infrastructural, and material losses on the entire southeastern region. In the aftermath, the Federal Government provided a modest initial investment of twenty pounds to help reignite Igbo trading activities. This stimulus, coupled with the indomitable resilience inherent in the South Eastern populace, led to remarkable prosperity, contributing to over 40% of Nigeria's overall investments (Okwuosa, Nwaoga & Uroko, 2021).

Regrettably, the bulk of these investments is concentrated outside the South East, spanning cities like Abuja, Lagos, Ibadan, and Ogun State, with limited evidence of substantial investments within the region itself. The "think home" philosophy (Aku luo uno) was conceived as a strategic initiative to encourage Ndigbo, especially those in the diaspora, to redirect their investment decisions toward their homeland. The underlying objective was to rally South Eastern professionals, academics, entrepreneurs, and businesswomen and men, both domestically and abroad, to prioritize investments within the region while still maintaining business ventures in their current locations (Okpalakum, 2021).

Remarkably, the "think home" philosophy has resulted in an infusion of over six trillion naira in investments within the South East, as a growing number of individuals, particularly those residing in Northern Nigeria, are embarking on the process of relocating their businesses to this dynamic region.

However, this promising trajectory is under threat as the region grapples with escalating insecurity. For instance, the annual diaspora remittances to the South East, which have been a substantial source of funds for the "think home" philosophy, have dwindled from \$98 million to \$26.3 million. Moreover, the security challenges have severely impacted business activities, causing a precipitous decline in revenue generation, with losses amounting to N4 trillion over a two-year period. This alarming situation presents multifaceted costs, both tangible and intangible, that undermine the well-being and prospects of the region.

Given these developments, this study aims to comprehensively explore the ramifications of the prevailing security conditions on the viability and sustainability of the "think home" philosophy (Chukwu, 2021). By delving into the intricate interplay between security and economic initiatives, this research seeks to offer insights that can inform strategic measures to safeguard the future of the South East region's economic growth and development.

### **1.1. Statement of the Problem**

The resilient spirit of the South East Nigerian population has been a driving force behind their remarkable economic accomplishments worldwide. However, these invaluable achievements are frequently undermined by recurrent assaults originating from their host communities. Notably, Igbo businesses have repeatedly been targeted and attacked in urban centers like Lagos, Kano, Kaduna, Sokoto, Yobe, where they are often perceived as unwelcome "foreign" interests. The situation is exacerbated by the persistent threats from influential individuals who perceive themselves as untouchable and exploit their power to wreak havoc on Igbo enterprises. To counteract this troubling pattern, the "think home" philosophy has emerged as a rallying cry among key leaders in the South East, aimed at repatriating businesses to the Igbo heartland.

Unfortunately, the prevailing state of insecurity has dealt a severe blow to this well-conceived initiative. Over the span of two years, the South East has suffered staggering losses exceeding N4 trillion. This dire situation is compounded by the toll of human lives claimed by the actions of a group referred to as the "unknown gunmen." Consequently, this atmosphere of insecurity has cast a shadow over the viability of the "think home" philosophy. Many individuals have chosen to relocate their businesses and families from the region, potentially precipitating a decline in business investments within the area. Anudu (2023) asserts that the growth of business investments in the South East has been hampered by insecurity, leading to a trend of business relocations to the South South region—a phenomenon closely aligned with the principles of the "think home" philosophy.

Even more disconcerting is the erosion of social events, a fundamental aspect of the "think home" philosophy, due to the prevailing insecurity. As Ezenwile (2019) suggests, South Easterners have a strong sense of attachment to their homeland, preferring to celebrate their traditional activities within the region's borders. These vibrant gatherings not only contribute significantly to the local economy but also support the principles of the "think home" philosophy.

The lack of cohesive action among the South East governors may be a contributing factor to the escalating insecurity within the region. The governors have consistently demonstrated divergent viewpoints on how to address the security challenges. At times, their inaction or pursuit of alternative agendas hinders collective efforts to secure the region. Compounding the issue, the South East Governors Forum has remained dormant for an extended period, resulting in significant regional disadvantages. The region not only grapples with security concerns but also contends with various

socio-economic issues. A notable anomaly is the accusations against some South East governors of exacerbating insecurity to facilitate embezzlement of state funds. These allegations arise from a perceived lack of commitment and proactive measures to counteract the menace. An illustrative case is the establishment of the Ebubeagu security outfit, which, unlike its counterpart Amotekun in the South West, has not received substantial funding or equipment support from the South East governors (Oguntola, 2021).

### **1.2. Objectives of the Study**

The study is set out to achieve the impact of insecurity on the think home philosophy of the south east. However, this broad objective is broken down as follows:

- To determine whether insecurity in the south east has affected the business investment ideals of the think home philosophy of the south east.
- To determine the extent to which insecurity in the south east has affected traditional social events in the region.
- To find out whether the non-cooperation of the south east governors has affected insecurity in the region.

### **Research Questions**

- How does insecurity affect the business investment ideals of the think home philosophy of the south east?
- To what extent has insecurity affected the traditional social events in the south east?
- How does non-cooperation of the south east governors affect insecurity in the south east?

### **Research Hypothesis**

- Insecurity affects the business investment ideals of the think home philosophy of the south east.
- The traditional social events in the south east have been affected by the high level of insecurity in the south east.
- The non-cooperation of the south east governors has negatively affected insecurity in the south east.

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## **2. Conceptual and theoretical framework**

### **2.1. Insecurity**

Insecurity is the state of being unsafe or insecure, liability to give way, be lost or become unsafe or fraught with danger, want of secureness or instability, liability to damage or loss as the insecurity of a staircase or of a foundation. Insecurity is the state of fear and danger occasioned by the distortion of law and order by non-state actors for their own benefits.

### **2.2. Think Home Philosophy**

Think Home Philosophy is the mobilization of all Igbo professionals, academia, businessmen and women at home and in diaspora to begin to think home in their investment decisions as part of Igbo development agenda while maintaining their diversified investment (Okpalakunne,2021). It is the assemblage of all Igbo sons and daughters who have business investments outside the shores of the south east to gradually begin the relocation of some part of their businesses to the south east for the growth and development of the region.

### **2.3. Business Investment**

Business Investment is the spending by private businesses and nonprofit Organizations on physical capital or long lasting assests used to produce goods and services, through business investments, businesses can build up their stocks of physical capital which increase their capacity to produce goods and services. It is the process of growing businesses through deliberate and calculated efforts so as to achieve great capacity in capital for greater goods and services. As a deliberate effort it takes time to grow the investment into a great business that will last long in the ladder of economic achievements.

### **2.4. Infrastructural Development**

Infrastructural Development is the construction and improvement of foundational services with the goal of sparking economic growth and improvements in quality of life. Infrastructural Development can improve efficiency and productivity in a society, through well-articulated edifices and structures for the greater good of the society. Infrastructural development is a wholistic action of activities laid down in concrete structures so as to improve the lives of the citizens.

## 2.5. Theoretical Framework

This study will apply the democratic peace theory propounded by Doyle in 1998. (Ndubuisi & Anigbuogu, 2019) the crux of this theory is that every liberal democracy encourages liberal institutions to discharge their responsibilities in a way that justice would not seem to be met, but justice is met.

In other words, every institution must as a matter of urgency discharge their duties in an acceptable manner and without fear or favour; no matter whose Ox is gored. In the south east, the issue of unknown gunmen, high level kidnapping and other nefarious activities gained intense momentum with the EndSars protest in 2020; and ever since then, the south east has never known peace, to cap the matter up, the federal government on the 27<sup>th</sup> of June, 2021 rearrested Mazi Nnamdi Kanu the leader of IPOB and brought him back to Nigeria from Kenya to face his trial. This act further aggravated the anger of the members of the unknown gunmen who hide under the shield of the IPOB and ESN to demand for the release of Kanu. More so, the continuous marginalization of ndi Igbo has been the trade mark of Nigerian government. To start with, during the tenure of President Buhari, no Igbo man was appointed to serve as Service Chief an act seen by many south east people as a deliberate attempt to sidetrack the region. Even in the last Presidential election of 2023, the Igbos were not given the chance in the two major political parties of PDP and APC that led to the pulling out of Mr. Peter Obi to join the Labour Party. Liberal democracy allows for justice, equal right and equity but in a case where a certain zone is discriminated against is completely out of sync with the ethos of democratic principles. Thus, in their bid to secure justice the unknown gunmen used all sorts of unconventional ways to pursue it; this has amounted to the sacking of people from their communities while thousand lose their lives on daily basis. This by implication has affected the think home philosophy as people who hitherto believed in homeland investment do not come back again even to bury or celebrate their loved ones.

## 2.6. Review of Related Literatures

In the course of this research work a lot of related literatures were read to spice up the study. These literatures are anchored around the objectives of the study thus,

- Insecurity and business investment in the south east
- Insecurity and traditional social events in the south east
- Non-cooperation of the south east governors and persistent insecurity in the region.

### 2.6.1. *Insecurity and business investment in the south east.*

The south east region is known for its boisterous business activities, with a business output of over 31.39 billion on daily basis. But the insecurity in the region appears to have hampered the progressive dimension of these investments. As Igbinalolor (2022) observed through a study conducted by SBM intelligence for DevEast Foundation Ltd that the losses in business investment could be traced to factors like loss of between four and five working days per week, job losses due to outbreaks by business owners in response to the reduced working hours and other loss opportunities, lost of clients and customers who find alternatives because of the unstable business environment in the south east; and increased cost of service delivery because of extra logistical costs. Losing approximately five days in a month from October, 2020 means that about 120 days have been lost which takes the number of lost earning on only sit-at-home days to between N655.38 billion N3.77 trillion. The quantum of lost has made some businesses to fold while those with substantial capital have relocated their business to Asaba and Port Harcourt. This business movement out of the South East has equally extended to the northerners who have gradually moved their businesses to nearby states where security is relatively okay. For instance, the goat and fish markets that were originally in relief market Onitsha have relocated to Asaba. (Chukwu, 2021).

Again, goods and services worth millions of naira have been destroyed on Monday sit at home, for instance, on the 21<sup>st</sup> of April, 2022, four masked unknown gunmen destroyed goods of people who went out to do some business in Enugu on a sit- at- home. The IPOB initially declared the holidays for only Mondays but later extended it to the days Mr. Nnamdi Kanu will go court. Since then the south east zone has become a ghost of itself as businesses are shut down on such days (Ugwu, 2022). Similarly, Imo state is known for its service-driven posture owing to the numerous luxury hotels and clubs which dot its landscape especially Owerri but the activities of the unknown gunmen have crippled the hotel and club businesses (Anudu, 2023)

### 2.6.2. *Insecurity and Traditional Social Events in the South East*

The South East of Nigeria believed so much in tradition such that they do everything to uphold it; this accounts for the reason why every traditional functions and events are held in the south east. For instance, it is hard to see an Igbo man bury his loved one outside the shores of the Igboland; no matter where the death occurred, most corpses are returned

to the south east for burial. Similarly, traditional marriages are held in Igboland; in fact, it is even regarded as the most important in the marriage process, because of its obvious traditional colourations that project the beauty of the Igbo culture. It is equally a time when the kindred will know that their sister or daughter has got married. These traditional events are intrinsically linked to the think home philosophy of the south east ostensibly because it shows the connection between the Igboman and his culture as well as the love they have for their hometown. As Onuorah (2019) argued that the think home philosophy did not just start from when it was officially pronounced but it has been an integral part of an Igboman life who always see his hometown as the first point of contact. More importantly, the traditional social events like burial and traditional marriage cannot not be separated from the think home philosophy, beyond the fact that it brings them closer home, it brings a lot of social economic growth to the zone through event planning, food vendor and other activities in the value chain of social event.

For instance, death in Igboland is mostly seen as reincarnation, thus if somebody most reincarnate, he must be given the necessary burial rites in accordance with the custom and traditions of the deceased town. The Igbo traditional society believes that burial or burying a loved one or a family can do for their dead ones. Because according to Igbo tradition when a man receives a proper burial, he moves on to join his ancestors, if and only if he lived a good and proper life while on earth (Nwaobodo, 2018). This accounts for the reason why burial in the south east is a ceremony with its attendant chains of both social and economic activities. In terms of the social economic outcome, the food vendor, the event planners, the cloth sellers, the drinks distributors and masters of ceremonies who hitherto do brisk businesses are left with very low or no patronage since the insecurity gained momentum as most burial activities now take place outside the south east. Collaborating further, Onwuka (2021) contended that there are about three categories of burial in the south east. The first category has its expenses below N1.5m; this is for lowly placed people.

The second category has a total expense of about N5m while the last category is the flamboyant burials exclusives for the super-rich from the south east. In all, social economic activities are triggered off and those in the business chain within the zone make serious profit. For Njoku, Nkwopara, Obinna, Ajayi, Duncce, Latona and Egole (2016), the cost of living is cheaper than the cost of dying due to the enormous expenses involved in the burial of loved ones. For example, the job of the undertaker is a huge business, as all manner of expensive caskets are built by the makers and family members still go ahead to buy the caskets and hire undertakers. More oddity is that these businesses do no longer thrive as many people now carry out their burial activities in other zones apart from the south east. More disturbing is the fact that traditional marriages are not left out as many now do the traditional affairs in Abuja, Lagos, Asaba etc. instead of the south east. The resultant consequences of this shift of burial and traditional ceremonies to other zones are enormous to the think home philosophy. This is because during these ceremonies the celebrants come home with lots of monies and these monies are spent on those who are in the value chain of event planning and management as well as drinks and food vendors. The profits from the businesses are wittingly or unwittingly invested in the economy of the south east.

### *2.6.3. Non-corporation of the governors in the South East and insecurity*

Since the inception of the activities of the unknown gunmen in 2020 with its attendant killings and lost of properties in the south east, it is the expectation of most people in the region that the governors of the region would have risen up to the occasion with a view to tackling the menace. Unfortunately, nothing tangible has been achieved; as Ede (2022), opined that the governors have been working at cross purposes on the issue of providing adequate security in the zone. For instance, ever since the establishment of Ebubeagu security outfit on the 12<sup>th</sup> of April, 2021, it was the expectation of everyone that the outfit whose mandate was to protect the zone would have erupted into action in terms of providing adequate security for the south east. Unfortunately, the implementation process has been stalled as the governors did not provide the logistics for it to take off. More worrisome is the fact that some governors from the south east are being accused of sponsoring insecurity in the region for their selfish political ambitions as a way of looting the treasury in guise of fighting insecurity. Regrettably, the Ebubeagu security outfit are yet to get funding and equipment that will aid than to commence their job (Leadership Editorial, 2022). Again, the Human Rights Writers Association of Nigeria (HURIWA) “has accused the South East governors of constantly adopting the same outdated and unworkable techniques in fighting terrorism which is purely kinetic and lacks hard core intelligence”. The group implored the governors to use a sustainable top-quality human intelligence which would inevitably complement the advanced technology in crime fighting methodologies (Mghaelurike 2022). Collaborating with the above, Njoku (2022) argued that the governors have constantly reneged on the promises they made to the zone as properties and public infrastructures as well as human lives are wasted. As other regions were busy preparing for Christmas celebration, many residents across the zone were not prepared to celebrate the Christmas with their loved ones apparently because there is no home to return to or the fear of being killed or kidnapped. Again, the Ebubeagu outfit was accepted to have been converted into a hit group against members of opposition parties by some governors. Apart from the allegation of abuse, the Ebubeagu could not

get the desired support from the governors which prompted the south east security committee Major General Obi Umahi (Rtd) to resign.

## 2.7. Insecurity and Business Investment

The south east is a zone known for its robust economy occasioned by the enormous business investments. Between 2013 and 2020, the Foreign Direct Investment for the South East zone was pegged at \$199, 291,000; however, this has continued to dwindle because of the Monday sit at home. The sit at home began in the south east on the 9<sup>th</sup> of August, 2021, and ever since then, the Small and Medium Enterprises Development Agency in the South East according to Audu (2023) have lost N4.618 trillion in 52 Mondays. Cumulatively, there are 94 Mondays from 9<sup>th</sup> August, 2021 to May, 29, 2023 and if the south east lost N4.618 in 52 Mondays, it then means that the region has lost a whopping sum of N7.116 trillion in 94 Mondays

**Table 1** The Business lost in the South East as a result of Monday sit at home

State	Amount in billion per Monday	No of Mondays	Total per Monday
Anambra	38.140	94	3,585 trillion
Enugu	9.334	94	877 billion
Imo	13.739	94	1,291 trillion
Ebonyi	4.079	94	383 billion
Abia	10.412	94	978 billion
Total			<b>N7.16 trillion</b>

Source: The Authors, 2023

## 2.8. Social events and Insecurity in the South East

The south east people are known for the love they have for their culture and tradition particularly in the areas of burial ceremonies, traditional wedding, naming ceremonies etc. These occasions in line with the culture of the south east are mostly held in the region. The implication of this is that the south east zone is always inundated with ceremonies which in real terms is translated to huge sum of monies for event planners, masters of ceremonies, food vendors etc. who use these activities to make money. Unfortunately, the challenges of insecurity have compelled people from the zone to carry out some of these activities outside the region. For instance Rt. Hon. Rita Maduagwu a former Speaker of Anambra State House of Assembly buried her father in Lagos because of insecurity, more importantly Senator Andy Uba gave her daughter out in traditional marriage in Abuja due to security challenges in the South. These examples from the litany of other examples are pointers to the fact that many people no longer carry out traditional functions in their hometowns. This has affected the activities of the event planners, food vendors, masters of ceremonies etc. who rely on these occasions to make brisk businesses. In fact, there are some communities like Lilu, Isseke, Orsumoghu, Mbosi and some parts of Ukpok that are ghost of themselves; more nauseating is the fact that some of their traditional rulers now live in Awka the state capitals of Anambra for fears of the unknown gunmen.

Below are some of the Rental services in some parts of Anambra, Enugu and Imo States as well as their business experiences between 2019 and 2022. The 218 used as the number of days activities was gotten from the four days of peak activities in Igbo land that is Thursday to Sunday in a year.

**Table 2** Business Activities of some Rental Organizations between 2019 and 2022

Name of Rental service	Total no of days rental activities were carried out	2019	2021	2022
Mama Mama Nnobi	218	218	148	77
Exceptional Awka	218	200	120	40
Frank Pat Onitsha	218	205	110	67
Cally P Atta Njaba	218	212	180	32
Akudo Rental Nenwe Enugu	218	210	114	32

Source: Authors, 2023

**Table 3a** Number of deaths between January, 2022 and May, 2022 in the South east

Period	State	Number of Deaths
Jan – May 2022	Anambra	95
Jan – May 2022	Enugu	53
Jan – May 2022	Imo	60
Jan – May 2022	Ebonyi	55
Jan – May 2022	Abia	24
		287 deaths

Source: Abe, Bankole, 2022

**Table 3b** Non-cooperation of South East Governors and insecurity in the region

Area of non-cooperation	Implication
Ebubeagu	The South East governor in April, 2021 unveiled the Ebubeagu security outfit. The main reason among other things was to fast track crime-busting in the south east. The heads of the security agency were directed to give a comprehensive list of logistics needed for the take-off of the outfit. A committee was set up to coordinate and monitor the implementation of the outfit. Up till now, the out has not commenced operation as the needed logistics and take off grant have not been given to them ostensibly because the governors after that meeting went their different ways.
Political interest	The political interests of the south east governors have continually stalled any serious cooperation and collaborations for the growth and development of their region. It was alleged that some governors due to political reason are doing the bidding of their god fathers who do not wait to see the unity of the South east. The Governors Forum as a forum of the governors of the south east has never agreed and fully executed a single project in the name of the forum for the benefits of their people. Rathe personal interests and ambition as well as external manipulations have always distorted the common interest of the region.
Non commitment to the Governors Forum	The south east Governors forum started in 1999 by the five (5) governors of the Peoples Democratic Party, but ever since then, the forum has continued to suffer from lack of committee of its members. By 2006 APGA and later PPA joined the forum subsequently APC has now come on board. This mixed grill according to pundits has continued to expand the commitment focus of the governors. However, if the governors are committed on the goals of the forum their different political parties would not be an issue especially when insecurity was ravaging the zone. Part of the deals that set up the forum reads “to offer the various governors of the south east region opportunity to pool ideas and resources together to confront common socioeconomic challenges and undertake projects that will uplift the well-being of the people of the region. The body has remained dormant over the years without a remarkable achievement to its name. this is because its members hardly attend their meetings when it eventually holds.
Indifference on the continuous imprisonment of Mazi Nnamdi Kanu	The federal government on the 28 <sup>th</sup> of June 2021 rearrested the leader of the Indigenous People of Biafra. This followed a compulsory sit-at-home imposed on the south east from 9 <sup>th</sup> August, 2021 till date. Ever since then, the social economic life of the south east has continued to dwindle to the extent that the zone has lost resource to the tune of N7 trillion. Unfortunately, the governors of the South east appeared indifferent about his unlawful detention even when the supreme court had discharged his matter. It is only governor Soludo that has written several letters to the President while others continued to play to the gallery.

Source: The Authors, 2023

### 3. Findings and Discussions

Think home philosophy was well conceived to achieve the sound economic development of the south east. Even before the idea was made known, Igbos are people that love their homestead a lot. This accounts for the reason why no matter where an Igbo man resides, he must always visit home at least once in a while, with the mindset of establishing or building in his hometown. In fact, you are not regarded a full man in Igbo land, if you do not have a building of your own.

However, the intense call for think home philosophy began in the early 90's when it became imperative that the people of the Southeast should begin to relocate some of their investments back home so as to develop the zone into a prosperous society. In Nnewi for example almost every wealthy person in the town has an investment in Nnewi. Recently, an Organized Igbo Personalities in their bid to re-launch, the think home philosophy gave a target that by 2025 every well Igbo person must have relocated at least 80% of his investment in Igbo land (This Day, 2020). This call indeed was very apt; unfortunately, the 2021 re-arrest of Mazi Nnamdi Kanu and the subsequent insecurity occasioned by the unknown gunmen short-lived this idea to the extent that the south east is now a zone that is seriously bleeding in terms of lost of business investments.

For instance, about N7 trillion has been lost in terms of business investments since the commencement Monday sit-at-home. Besides, the absence of commercial activities in the zone, a lot of businesses have moved their businesses to other parts of the country. For example, Asaba is now a beehive of commercial activities as a result of the mass movement of business activities from Onitsha to the place. Expectedly, the Delta State government has cashed in on that to create a conducive business environment which has attracted boisterous business growth and development to the city. The GDP per capita for Delta State has steadily increase to 51% as a result of the disadvantaged posture of the south east. Again, the deteriorating security situation in the eastern Nigeria has equally affected Igbo relatives abroad as most of them do not invest again in the zone. More importantly, the high cost of construction in the region due to high number of armed securities needed to stay at construction sites is another issue that is growing out of proportion. Thus, the combined impacts of refusal to diaspora person coming home and high cost of construction lead to capital flight (Chukwu, 2021). Similarly, the Head of Service in River State Rufus Godwin observed that many businesses in the South east have collapsed because of sit-at-home order by the Indigenous People of Biafra; he urged those in the southeast to come to Rivers State for business since the state was safe and conducive for investments. (Godwin, 2022). More so, insecurity has reduced the business outfits in Anambra State as many investments in the state and by extension the region have either relocated or are battling survival due to poor and low patronage among other factors (Njoku, 2022).

Significantly, the south east people are known for traditional social activities and these activities add to the growth and development of the region. Expectedly, there is a nexus between the traditional social events and think home philosophy in the south east; as the people do not carry out any traditional social event outside the region. From traditional marriage, to burial ceremonies are done in the region. In fact, it is a misnomer to celebrate any of these activities outside the shore of the Igbo land. In the course of these celebration, a lot of economic activities are witnessed to the extent that those in the value chain of the event make brisk businesses. However, insecurity has reduced the financial strengths of these businessmen as many people now celebrate these traditional social events in Lagos, Abuja, Port Harcourt etc. where security is assured. The Association of Anambra State Rental Services have decried low patronage since insecurity commenced in the south east. This decline in social activities will continue until insecurity abates.

More nauseating is the fact that the governors of the southeast do not collaborate or cooperate so as to punctuate the ugly trends of insecurity in the zone. The governors under the South east Governors Forum have not achieved anything in terms of securing the zone. In fact, the forum is just a mere forum of pleasantries without focus; they just meet to discuss issues that concern their self aims and aspirations. It was alleged that some governors sponsor this insecurity in the southeast so as to enrich themselves and further increase their political frontiers. Since the inception of the forum, they cannot point to any meaningful project jointly executed by the forum. Even the attempts made to establish Ebubeagu security outfit died at conception because of self-reasons and lack of trust for each other. This lack of cooperation may be traced to the inherent nature of an Igbo man that is anchored on pride and self-ego that do not give room to submissiveness. More worrisome is the fact that the governors do not attend meetings regularly, most of them send their deputies to represent them with little or no power of decisive opinion on important matters. When compared with other Governors Forum in other regions one will understand the gravity of this non-cooperation, that has continued to dwarf the region within the circle of political horse trading in Nigeria.



#### 4. Conclusion

In conclusion, this study yields the following key findings: a. Insecurity in the South East has substantially impeded the realization of the business investment objectives set forth by the think home philosophy within the region. b. The pervasive insecurity has significantly curtailed the vibrant traditional social events that are integral to the South East's cultural identity. c. The lack of cohesive cooperation among the South East governors has contributed to the exacerbation of insecurity across the region.

In light of the above, the following recommendations are put forward:

- It is imperative to devise a comprehensive and strategic security plan tailored to counteract insecurity in the South East. This plan should intricately involve key stakeholders such as traditional leaders (Igwes), community leaders (President Generals), vigilant groups, and conventional security agencies. Enhanced information sharing and timely security reports will be vital components of this strategy, fostering a cohesive effort to counteract insecurity and consequently bolster the business investment ideals of the think home philosophy within the zone.
- A robust security framework should be established at both village and kindred levels. Each kindred should have its dedicated security unit, working collaboratively with the broader village security apparatus. This collaborative approach will be instrumental in ensuring the safety of attendees at traditional social events, preserving the region's cultural heritage while countering the security challenges.
- The South East Governors Forum necessitates a substantial repositioning to enhance its effectiveness. Originally envisioned to propel the socio-economic development of the South East, the objectives of the forum must be broadened to encompass security provision as a priority. Furthermore, the commitment of the governors must be tangible and practical, moving beyond mere lip service. Addressing the present fluidity of decision-making will require mechanisms of enforcement that render the forum a proactive and impactful entity in addressing the multifaceted challenges faced by the region.

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#### Compliance with ethical standards

##### *Disclosure of conflict of interest*

No conflict of interest statement to be disclosed.

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