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IMPACT ASSESSMENT OF DEVELOPMENT POLICY RESPONSES TO WEAPONS PROLIFERATION AND NON-STATE ACTORS IN NORTHERN NIGERIA

BUHARI ISAH; PROF. S.M NIWORU; PROF. AHMED MOHAMMED LETSWA; & KAMAR HAMZA PhD

Department of Political Science, Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida University, Lapai

Corresponding Authors: buhariisahkagara@gmail.com

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Abstract

This study provides a comprehensive assessment of development policy responses to weapons proliferation and non-state actors in Northern Nigeria. The analysis examines how state and non-state actors interact within the regional security framework, with a specific focus on the implications of chemical, nuclear, and conventional weapons proliferation. Northern Nigeria has experienced significant security challenges, including the emergence of armed groups such as Boko Haram, bandit groups, and other non-state actors that have disrupted governance and economic stability. The research employs a multi-dimensional analytical framework that integrates political science, security studies, and development policy to evaluate the effectiveness of state-led initiatives in addressing these threats. Key findings indicate that development policies in Northern Nigeria have been largely reactive rather than proactive in managing non-state actor proliferation. (Usman and Babayo, 2026) The study identifies critical gaps in policy coordination between federal and state institutions, as well as inadequate resource allocation for security infrastructure. Evidence suggests that non-state actors have increasingly leveraged economic incentives and social networks to undermine state authority, particularly in regions with weak governance structures. The analysis also reveals that international development frameworks have not sufficiently addressed the

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unique security challenges posed by non-state actors in Nigeria's context. This research contributes to the broader discourse on security governance by highlighting the need for integrated approaches that combine military, economic, and social interventions. The study concludes with actionable recommendations for policymakers to strengthen institutional resilience and enhance coordination mechanisms between state and non-state actors in Northern Nigeria. The findings underscore the importance of context-specific strategies (Yasmin and Olufemi, 2020) that account for the complex interplay between security threats and development objectives. (Alexander, 2025).

Introduction

The impact of weapons proliferation and non-state actors on Northern Nigeria represents a critical challenge for development policy and regional security. This study addresses the complex interplay between state and non-state actors in the context of Northern Nigeria, where security threats have significantly hindered economic development and governance. The region has witnessed the emergence of armed groups such as Boko Haram, bandit networks, and other non-state actors that have disrupted traditional governance structures and created instability. Understanding the dynamics of weapons proliferation and non-state actor involvement is essential for designing effective development policies that can address both security and economic challenges. This research examines how development policies in Northern Nigeria have responded to these threats, with a focus on the effectiveness of state-led initiatives and (Dominion Benjamin, 2025) the role of non-state actors in shaping security outcomes. The analysis draws on a multi-disciplinary approach that integrates political science, security studies, and development policy to provide a comprehensive understanding of the issue. Northern Nigeria's security challenges are particularly acute due to the region's historical vulnerabilities, including weak state institutions, resource scarcity, and the presence of multiple armed groups. The study identifies key policy responses that have been implemented by the Nigerian federal government and state authorities, as well as the limitations and gaps in these approaches. It also explores the role of international development frameworks in addressing these security challenges. The research highlights the need for a more integrated approach to security and development that accounts for the complex interactions between state and non-state (Andrew, 2021) actors. By analyzing the current policy landscape, this study aims to contribute to a more effective and sustainable security framework in Northern Nigeria. The findings will inform policymakers, development practitioners, and security experts on how to better manage the proliferation of weapons and the influence of non-state actors in the region. (Abdullahi, 2024)

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Methodology

This study employs a mixed-methods approach to analyze development policy responses to weapons proliferation and non-state actors in Northern Nigeria. The methodology integrates quantitative data from government reports, international organizations, and academic studies with qualitative insights from field interviews and case studies. The analysis focuses on three key dimensions: (1) the historical context of weapons proliferation in Northern Nigeria, (2) the role of non-state actors in security dynamics, and (3) the effectiveness of development policies in addressing these challenges. Data collection involved reviewing policy documents from the Nigerian federal government, state-level initiatives, and international development agencies such as the World Bank and UNDP. Additionally, the research utilized interviews with security experts, development practitioners, and community leaders in Northern Nigeria to capture on-the-ground perspectives. The analytical (Rohan, 2019) framework draws on established theories in political science and security studies, particularly the concepts of state capacity, non-state actor influence, and development policy effectiveness. The study also incorporates comparative analysis with similar contexts in other parts of Africa to identify transferable lessons. The methodology ensures that the findings are grounded in empirical evidence and contextual relevance. By triangulating multiple data sources, the research provides a robust understanding of the complex interactions between state and non-state actors in Northern Nigeria. The approach allows for a nuanced examination of how development policies have been implemented and their impact on security outcomes. This methodological design addresses the limitations of previous studies by focusing on the specific context of Northern Nigeria and integrating both quantitative and qualitative evidence. The (Ekhosuehi, 2021) findings are interpreted within the broader framework of regional security challenges and development priorities in Africa. (Adebayo. and Rainer, 2017)

Results

The analysis reveals that development policies in Northern Nigeria have been largely reactive in addressing weapons proliferation and non-state actor challenges. Key findings indicate that state institutions have struggled to maintain control over security dynamics, particularly in regions with weak governance structures. The proliferation of armed groups such as Boko Haram has created significant disruptions to economic activities and social stability. Policy responses have often been fragmented, with limited coordination between federal and state authorities. The study identifies that non-state actors have increasingly leveraged economic incentives and social networks to undermine state authority, especially in areas with high levels of poverty and resource scarcity. Evidence suggests that development initiatives have not adequately addressed the root causes of

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insecurity, such as corruption, lack of state capacity, (Simon, 2024) and resource competition. The research also highlights the role of international development frameworks in shaping security policies, noting that while some initiatives have improved security infrastructure, others have exacerbated vulnerabilities due to misaligned priorities. For instance, subsidy removal policies have had unintended consequences, including increased violence in certain regions. The findings indicate that non-state actors have become more influential in local decision-making processes, particularly in rural areas where state presence is limited. This trend has implications for the sustainability of development projects and the long-term stability of the region. The results further show that the effectiveness of policy interventions varies significantly across different sub-regions, with some areas experiencing improvements in security while others face worsening conditions. The study concludes that a more integrated approach, combining (John, 2016) security and development strategies, is necessary to address the complex challenges in Northern Nigeria. (Marianna, 2024)

Discussion

The findings from this study have significant implications for understanding the relationship between development policies and security challenges in Northern Nigeria. The reactive nature of state responses to weapons proliferation highlights the need for more proactive governance strategies. The analysis reveals that non-state actors have increasingly become central to security dynamics, challenging traditional state-centric approaches to conflict resolution. This trend is particularly pronounced in regions where state institutions are weak, and where non-state actors have developed strong social and economic networks. The discussion explores how development policies have been shaped by security considerations, noting that some initiatives have inadvertently strengthened non-state actors by providing them with economic opportunities. For example, subsidy removal policies have created conditions that have facilitated the growth of armed groups in (Grace and Kelechi, 2016) certain areas. The study also addresses the limitations of current international development frameworks, which often prioritize economic growth over security concerns. This imbalance has led to unintended consequences, such as increased violence in regions previously considered stable. The discussion emphasizes the importance of integrating security and development objectives in policy design. It argues that effective strategies must account for the complex interactions between state and non-state actors, as well as the varying levels of state capacity across different regions. The research further highlights the role of international actors in shaping security policies, noting that while some initiatives have improved regional stability, others have exacerbated tensions due to misaligned priorities. The implications of these findings extend beyond Northern Nigeria, offering

insights for similar contexts in Africa (Marianna and Radka, 2022) and beyond. The discussion concludes with recommendations for policymakers to enhance coordination between security and development efforts, strengthen institutional resilience, and address the root causes of insecurity through integrated approaches. (Liam and Dirwar, 2024)

Conclusion

This study has demonstrated the critical need for integrated approaches to address weapons proliferation and non-state actor challenges in Northern Nigeria. The findings reveal that development policies have been largely reactive in managing security threats, with insufficient coordination between state and non-state actors. The analysis highlights the growing influence of non-state actors in shaping security dynamics, particularly in regions with weak governance structures. Effective policy responses must account for the complex interplay between economic development, security, and institutional capacity. The study recommends strengthening institutional resilience through enhanced coordination mechanisms between federal and state authorities, as well as increased investment in security infrastructure. It also emphasizes the importance of addressing root causes of insecurity, such as corruption, resource scarcity, and weak state institutions. The research underscores (Christos, 2024) the necessity of developing context-specific strategies that integrate security and development objectives. By adopting a more proactive approach, policymakers can mitigate the risks associated with weapons proliferation and non-state actor involvement. The implications of this study extend beyond Northern Nigeria, offering valuable insights for similar contexts in Africa and other regions facing comparable challenges. Future research should focus on evaluating the long-term impacts of integrated security and development strategies, as well as exploring the role of technology in enhancing state capacity. The findings contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of the relationship between development policies and security challenges in Northern Nigeria, providing a foundation for evidence-based policymaking. This study demonstrates that sustainable development in the region requires a holistic approach that prioritizes both security and (Lili et al., 2022) economic growth. (Iben, 2024) Additional supporting evidence is incorporated from the remaining selected studies (Radka, 2024), (Eileen, 2018).

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