



POLAC INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF ECONS & MGT SCIENCE (PIJEMS)  
DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMICS & MANAGEMENT SCIENCE  
NIGERIA POLICE ACADEMY, WUDIL-KANO



## EXPLORING THE SOCIOECONOMIC DRIVERS OF BANDITRY IN NIGERIA: CHALLENGES, AND STRATEGIES FOR NATIONAL SECURITY

**Akeem A. Kenku**

Department of Psychology, Nasarawa State University, Keffi

**Jerry James Doka**

Department of Psychology, Nasarawa State University, Keffi

**Yunana Ulea Salihu**

Department of Psychology, Nasarawa State University, Keffi

### Abstract

*The increasing prevalence of banditry in Nigeria poses severe threats to national security, economic stability, and social cohesion. This study explores the socioeconomic drivers of banditry, analyzing how factors such as poverty, unemployment, weak governance, and social inequality fuel this form of organized crime. Banditry disrupts the livelihoods of communities, hampers economic development, and contributes to a pervasive sense of insecurity across affected regions. By examining recent empirical studies and socioeconomic data, the paper identifies underlying causes and discusses the challenges these present for national security agencies. Additionally, it reviews current intervention strategies, including military responses, community-based initiatives, and government policies, and assesses their effectiveness in curbing banditry. The findings suggest that solely security-focused approaches may be insufficient and argue for a comprehensive strategy that integrates economic empowerment, education, social welfare, and inclusive governance to address the root causes of banditry. This review concludes with recommendations for policymakers on adopting a multidimensional approach to restore security and promote sustainable development in Nigeria.*

**Keywords:** Socioeconomic Drivers, Banditry, Nigeria, Challenges, Strategies, National Security

### INTRODUCTION

Over the past decade, Nigeria has witnessed a significant increase in banditry, particularly in its northern regions. Defined as a form of organized crime involving armed groups engaged in violent acts, including robbery, kidnapping, cattle rustling, and rural attacks, banditry has inflicted severe social and economic harm on affected communities. Reports from the Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED) indicate that incidents of banditry increased by more than 70% between 2019 and 2023, causing severe social and economic disruptions across affected communities. Banditry-related violence has also driven over one million people from their homes, leading to an unprecedented number of internally displaced persons (IDPs) and aggravating

food insecurity as rural farmers abandon their lands. A recent study by Amnesty International (2023) found that over 200 schools in Northern Nigeria have been shut down due to banditry, depriving thousands of children of access to education and exacerbating social vulnerabilities.

Research consistently points to socioeconomic factors, particularly poverty, unemployment, and social inequality, as major drivers of banditry in Nigeria. A report by the World Bank in 2021 indicated that about 40% of Nigerians live below the poverty line, with youth unemployment rates among the highest in the world. Likewise, as of 2023, Nigeria's unemployment rate is estimated at 33%, with youth unemployment reaching over 50% in some northern regions (National Bureau of Statistics

(NBS), 2023). The World Bank's 2021 report indicated that over 40% of Nigerians live below the poverty line, with poverty levels particularly high in the Northeast, Northcentral and Northwest regions where banditry is most prevalent. In Zamfara State, one of the most affected states, over 1,000 incidents of banditry were reported in 2023, with an estimated economic loss exceeding \$1 billion due to disruptions in agricultural activities and displacement. According to the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), over 1.5 million people have been displaced due to banditry and communal violence in Northern Nigeria, contributing to severe food insecurity in affected states. The Northern regions, which bear the brunt of banditry, are particularly affected by these socioeconomic challenges. Youth in these areas, faced with limited opportunities for education and employment, are increasingly turning to banditry as a means of economic survival. This is echoed in studies by Okoli and Igwe (2020), who argue that banditry is not merely criminal behaviour but a manifestation of underlying economic and social distress in Northern Nigeria.

Social inequality and marginalization also play a crucial role in the emergence of banditry. The lack of political representation and historical neglect of certain ethnic groups have created feelings of resentment and alienation. Adamu and Emmanuel (2022) note that many bandit groups gain local support by capitalizing on these grievances, often positioning themselves as protectors or defenders of marginalized communities.

Environmental challenges, exacerbated by climate change, further contribute to the rise in banditry. Desertification and drought in the Sahel region have forced pastoralists southward in search of arable land and water, leading to violent conflicts with farming communities. The International Crisis Group (2022) reports that environmental degradation, combined with competition over limited resources, has intensified communal tensions, creating conditions that bandit groups exploit. By filling a void in local security and offering protection services, bandit groups have gained influence in some rural areas,

further complicating efforts to combat this form of organized crime.

The Nigerian government has implemented various initiatives to curb banditry, including deploying military forces to affected regions and establishing local vigilante groups. However, these responses have yielded limited success. Many analysts argue that the government's reliance on military force has not addressed the socioeconomic roots of banditry and may even exacerbate tensions between security forces and local communities. Furthermore, issues such as corruption, inadequate training, and limited resources have undermined the effectiveness of these interventions. According to Abubakar, Ibrahim, and Bello (2023), endemic corruption within security agencies has led to frequent lapses in intelligence and operational inefficiencies, allowing bandit groups to continue their activities with minimal interruption. Policy responses, such as amnesty programs and peace dialogues, have also had mixed results. While some communities have embraced amnesty initiatives, others argue that these programs lack meaningful socioeconomic support, failing to offer viable alternatives to individuals involved in banditry. The absence of comprehensive social policies that address root causes like poverty and unemployment means that many youths in affected regions continue to view banditry as their only means of survival.

Against the backdrop of the upsurge in incidences of banditry in recent times, this paper examined the socioeconomic drivers of banditry in Nigeria, examining how factors like poverty, unemployment, weak governance, and environmental challenges contribute to this complex phenomenon. For the purpose of analytical progression, this paper is divided into six sections. The first section deals with the introduction and methodology. Of course, the second section espouses the review of related literature and theoretical framework, while the third section traces the historical development of banditry in Nigeria. The fourth section discusses the analysis of socioeconomic drivers of banditry in Nigeria and challenges to addressing banditry. The fifth section reviews the strategies for national security and combating banditry in Nigeria, while the section offers conclusion and policy recommendations

## METHODOLOGY

The design of this research study is qualitative. It employed document review method of data collection with strong reliance on secondary sources including journals, textbooks, magazines and the internet.

## REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This section presents a review of related studies relevant to the variables investigated in the study. The review focuses on theoretical and empirical works on the key constructs of the research and examines existing scholarly contributions that explain the relationships among the variables under investigation. Specifically, the section discusses the conceptual clarifications of the major variables, relevant theoretical frameworks that underpin the study, and empirical studies that have examined similar relationships in previous research.

### Concept of Banditry

Conceptually, banditry is a derivative of the term bandit meaning an unlawful armed group terrorising people and confiscating their properties. It is synonymous with the establishment of gang groups who use small and light weapons to carry out attacks against people. In this regard, banditry could mean a set-up criminal activity deliberately designed and carried out for personal gains. Due to the complex nature of bandits' activities, Egwu (2016) in a restricted manner, described banditry as a practice of stealing cattle and animals from herders or raiding of cattle from their ranches. In the same vein, banditry is reflected in criminal escapades like cattle rustling, kidnapping, armed robbery, drug abuse, arson, rape and the brazen and gruesome massacre of people of agrarian communities with sophisticated weapons by suspected herdsmen and reprisal attacks from surviving victims, a development that has been brought to the front burner of national security (Uche & Iwuamadi, 2018).

In his perception, Shalangwa (2013) regards banditry as the practice of raiding and attacking victims by members of an armed group, whether or not premeditated, using weapons of offence or defense,

especially in semi-organised groups for the purpose of overpowering the victim and obtaining loot or achieving some political goals. Such bandits are usually perceived as outlaws, desperate and lawless marauders who do not have a definite residence or destination but roam around the forest and mountains to avoid being identified, detected and arrested. However, where the term banditry is connected to rural, it implies a group of rural outlawed involved in illicit activities such as raiding of villages, kidnappings and cattle rustling for primitive accumulation of wealth. Thus, bandits are gang groups terrorising and dispossessing local people or travellers of their valuable items or properties such as merchandise, money, cattle, camel, and sheep, among others. They operate within and along rural borders with the assistance of their local collaborators including in some cases, state agents deployed to work for the safety and security of the people (Abdullahi, 2019).

In another sense, banditry refers to the incidences of armed robbery or allied violent crimes, such as kidnapping, cattle rustling, and village or market raids. It involves the use of force, or threat to that effect, to intimidate a person or a group of persons in order to rob, rape or kill (Okoli & Okpaleke 2014). Economic or political interests motivate banditry. The former refers to banditries motivated by the imperative of material accumulation while the latter has to do with those driven by the quest to rob, to assault or to liquidate a person or a group of persons based on political or ideological dispositions (Okoli & Ugwu, 2019).

Thus banditry, in the context of this paper, is defined as the totality of incidences of armed robbery or allied violent crimes, such as kidnapping, cattle rustling, village raids as well as highway raids which involves the use of force, or threat to that effect, to intimidate a person or a group of persons in order to rob, rape, kidnap or kill the victims.

## THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Several theories have been propounded by different analysts to explain the incidence of security challenges in Nigeria such as frustration-aggression theory, deprivation theory, etc, which have provided insight into the existence of the phenomenon but are inadequate to explain their persistence in spite of measures exerted to curb the menace. This has prompted the present study to resort to the strain, social disorganization and frustration and aggression theories provide three distinct frameworks for understanding the emergence of banditry, particularly in the context of Nigerian society.

**Strain Theory**, developed by Robert K. Merton in 1938, posits that societal structures exert pressure on individuals to achieve socially accepted goals, such as wealth or status. When individuals cannot achieve these goals through legitimate means, they may turn to deviant behavior, including criminality, as a coping mechanism (Merton, 1938). Merton identifies five responses to strain: conformity, innovation, ritualism, retreatism, and rebellion. Individuals resorting to “innovation” may seek wealth or status through unlawful or violent means, including banditry, to overcome their sense of deprivation and frustration.

In Nigeria, socio-economic disparities, unemployment, and poverty are significant stressors that contribute to banditry. A high poverty rate, particularly in northern Nigeria, has created environments where youth and other vulnerable groups turn to banditry for survival and financial gain. Banditry has thus become a means to meet otherwise unreachable socio-economic goals, leading individuals to pursue illegal means in response to their unmet needs and societal pressure. The application of Strain Theory to Nigerian banditry is evident in research, including works by scholars such as Eze (2021), who argues that economic deprivation and youth unemployment are key drivers of banditry in Nigeria. According to recent statistics from the Nigerian Bureau of Statistics (NBS), unemployment rates remain high, with a significant portion of youth lacking access to gainful employment, especially in rural regions prone to bandit attacks (NBS, 2023).

**Social Disorganization Theory**, introduced by Shaw and McKay (1942), argues that crime is more likely

to occur in communities with weakened social institutions, such as family, education, and law enforcement. In such communities, there is less social cohesion and more opportunity for deviant behavior to thrive, especially when formal social controls are weak or absent (Shaw & McKay, 1942). Factors such as poverty, ethnic diversity, and residential instability contribute to social disorganization. Social Disorganization Theory can be applied to banditry in Nigeria, particularly in rural northern areas where weak law enforcement, poor infrastructure, and limited social services create conditions conducive to crime. Rural communities in northern Nigeria, lacking adequate policing, have become fertile grounds for bandits who operate with minimal interference from authorities. The lack of cohesive community networks and the absence of robust law enforcement efforts further exacerbate this issue. Literature supports this connection, as noted by Ahmed and Isah (2022), who emphasize that weak governance and social structures in northern Nigeria contribute to the breakdown of societal order and enable banditry. Similarly, community-level disruptions have been linked to increased bandit activity, as the Nigerian Police Force has been unable to effectively secure certain rural areas (Ahmed & Isah, 2022). Empirical evidence suggests that regions with weaker social infrastructure experience higher rates of banditry. For instance, Abubakar and Suleiman (2021) found that communities with fewer local governance resources are more vulnerable to bandit attacks, as social disorganization leads to a lack of social control and protection from law enforcement (Abubakar & Suleiman, 2021).

According to a report by the International Crisis Group (ICG) in 2022, Nigeria has experienced over 5,000 incidents of bandit-related violence in the past five years, with the majority occurring in socially disorganized rural areas with minimal state presence. Furthermore, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) highlights that weak local governance is a major contributor to the rising levels of violence in Nigeria (UNODC, 2022).

The **Frustration-aggression theory** was propounded by Fererabend & Feirauben, (1972) and captured in a monograph by five scholars in Yale Institute of

Human Relations in 1939. The major assumption of the model is that aggression is always a consequence of frustration, and that the occurrence of aggressive behaviour always presupposes the existence of frustration and, contrariwise, that the existence of frustration always leads to some form of aggression (Dollard et al., 1939; Fererabend & Feirauben, 1972). They also defined frustration as an interference with the occurrence of an instigated goal response at its proper time in the behaviour sequence (Dollard et al., 1939). The interrogations and disputations that the perspective generated led one of the proponents to intervene with some modifications of the central thesis.

Thus, Miller (1941) noted that it was too general to assume that frustration must always lead to aggression or that aggression is always propelled by frustration. His intervention led to the second lap of the hypothesis which reflected a more acceptable reality that frustration produces instigations to a number of different types of response, one of which is instigation to some form of aggression. However, some years later, a significant modification came from Berkowitz (1989) who argued that aggression can be driven by inherent personal benefits to the aggressor and not necessarily by past wrongdoings and that people are more akin to attack when they discover that they are willfully sabotaged or denied what it's legitimately theirs than when the interference is an accidental occurrence. He surmised that frustrations are aversive events and generate aggressive inclinations only to the extent that they produce negative effect (Berkowitz, 1989).

Thus, the increasing attacks of bandits across the country, most especially in the northwest region, are largely driven by frustrations and struggles to generate economic assets. The alarming acts of banditry such as cattle rustling, kidnapping, physical attacks and encroachments on farms are bred by frustrations (Uche & Iwuamadi, 2018). Furthermore, Fererabend & Feirauben (1972) stipulates that aggression is as a result of frustration which results from an individual's inability to attain their goals. Accordingly, banditry is the product of aggressive behaviour which results from issues such as poverty and unemployment, among others (Maureen &

Blessing, 2018; Adegoke, 2019). Applying this to the paper, banditry in the country is caused by the need of the disgruntled elements of the society to get out of poverty and climb up the ladder in socio-economic considerations. That is why the phenomenon of ransom taking is prevalent in banditry operations. However, where the ransom is not forthcoming, bandits became more tensed and frustrated and resort to killing their victims. This is why the two theories become mutually reinforcing and complementary in explaining the crisis at hand.

Strain, social disorganization and frustration-aggression theories offer valuable perspectives on the socio-economic and structural drivers behind banditry in Nigeria. Strain theory highlights the role of economic pressures, social disorganization theory underscores the impact of weak social controls and governance, while frustration-aggression theory stipulates that aggression is as a result of frustration which results from an individual's inability to attain their goals. Together, they provide a comprehensive lens through which to understand the complex factors contributing to banditry, particularly in under-resourced and socially fragmented regions of Nigeria.

## **HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF BANDITRY**

The concept of banditry has been changing over time, space and circumstances. A bandit in the 19th century Europe and Americas was a freedom fighter whose aim was partly to ensure the emancipation of the downtrodden from the upper class or colonised over the colonizer (Warto, 1994). Furthermore, bandits like Chucho el Roto, Herachio Bernel and Santanon were often celebrated as heroes of Mexican independence (Robinson, 2009). Therefore, Mexicans have warm regards and respect for those "social workers" termed bandits, while on the contrary, the State often considered them as nuisance and outlaws that need to be eradicated (Watts, 1987).

Therefore, in some pre-industrial societies, peasants see bandits differently from the State not as outlaws, hoodlums and miscreants but as avengers and bread winners. However, a bandit in traditional African setting is entirely opposite to that of America and

Europe. The former specialised in armed robbery and other related crimes (Curott & Fink, 2008). The most common feature of banditry in Africa has been maiming, killing and wanton destruction of property, hence, it has a direct relationship with cattle rustling (Rufa'i, 2018). Since most herdsmen could do anything possible to prevent the rustling of their herds, then the bandit also apply force with the aid of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALWs) to effect the stealing of livestock (Addo, 2006). Hence, the application of force during livestock theft is what is herein considered cattle rustling and armed banditry (Murtala, 2018).

From historical perspective, however, banditry is not something novel to West Africa. Its origin and development are as old as the sub-region itself dating back to inter-tribal periods characterised by conflicts and wars over scarce economic resources and territorial expansion for political influence. Most parts of Africa experienced these forms of conflicts during the slave trading, colonial, and post-colonial periods. Though there have been remarkable changes on the nature and pattern of banditry and other forms of conflicts in West Africa, the socio-economic and political reasons remain significant in explaining the prevalence of the phenomenon in the sub-region (Abdullahi, 2019).

Perhaps, this explains why the struggle for political independence and the subsequent establishment of the post-colonial state in West Africa were considered as some of the major events which shaped the pattern of banditry in the sub-region. It also suggests that socio-economic and political realities could be used to explain the intensity, prevalence, and the dynamics of banditry as evident in different parts of West Africa. For instance, in Tillaberi and Tahoua region of Niger Republic, banditry such as cattle and sheep rustling as well as the killing of innocent citizens in border communities has a strong connection with the general poverty situation of the people arising from poor governance of the country (Abdullahi, 2019)

In Mali, the evolution and development of banditry have been related to religious extremism by sectarian religious groups but further aggravated by weak state institutions as it relates to service delivery. According

to United Nation Office for West Africa and the Sahel report (2018), weak state institutions, insurgency, and lawlessness have pushed more pastoralists into religious extremism, leading to rising in bandits' activities in northern Mali. The frequency of bandits' activities has created tensions between farmers and herders as well as exacerbated the proliferation of armed groups in different regions of Mali (Abdullahi, 2019).

However, in Mauritania, trans-border banditry by the local groups as well as challenges relating to resource management and distribution of pastoralists' lands explains the nature and pattern of rural banditry in the country. Unlike Mali and Niger, competition over resources, particularly water resources, pasture, and animal feeds led to a rapid increase of banditry in Mauritania (UNOWAS, 2018). Similarly, livestock theft is becoming a trans-border criminal activity affecting movement and relations along Burkina Faso and Ghanaian border. Local bandit groups mostly Burkinabe connived with traditional elites to rustle livestock and share the proceeds of their criminality (Abdullahi, 2019).

The historical development of banditry in Nigeria can be traced to several socio-political and economic factors that have evolved over time. Banditry in Nigeria encompasses various forms, including armed robbery, kidnapping, and insurgent activities. It started with organized crime, such as armed robberies following the Nigerian Civil War, fueled by the demobilization of soldiers who, lacking proper reintegration, resorted to crime. The post-war environment in the early 1970s saw figures like Ishola Oyenusi, who terrorized Lagos and became a symbol of the lawlessness that emerged during this period. This prompted the government to respond with public executions aimed at curbing urban crime, with over 400 armed robbers executed by firing squad by 1976.

In the 1980s, notable criminals like Lawrence Anini further highlighted the rise of organized crime, often with support from corrupt police officers. Anini's exploits in Bendel State, which included targeting police officers, underscored how systemic corruption within law enforcement exacerbated criminality. Over time, the northern regions of Nigeria saw a

transition from small-scale criminal activities to more organized banditry, especially in rural areas with limited government presence. The 1990s and early 2000s introduced political violence and militancy, particularly in the Niger Delta, where resource conflicts and a lack of economic opportunities drove youth toward violence and banditry. Statistics indicate a sharp increase in banditry-related violence in the last decade, particularly in the North-West, where states like Zamfara, Kaduna, and Katsina have been severely affected. In Zamfara, for example, over 3,000 people were reported killed and 200,000 displaced due to banditry from 2011 to 2019. Kidnapping for ransom has also escalated, with data from 2019 showing that Nigeria had the highest number of kidnapping incidents in Africa, largely attributed to armed bandits.

The Nigerian government's response has involved deploying military forces and negotiating with bandits, though these efforts have been criticized as ineffective. Despite these interventions, banditry remains a significant threat, driven by issues such as poverty, youth unemployment, and ungoverned rural areas. Efforts to address these root causes have been limited, leaving banditry as a persistent challenge in Nigeria.

### **Analysis of Socioeconomic Drivers of Banditry in Nigeria**

Banditry in Nigeria has evolved into a complex security crisis, especially in northern regions like Zamfara, Katsina, Kaduna, and Niger. The root causes of this surge in violence and crime are widely understood to be socioeconomic, with poverty, unemployment, and social inequality contributing significantly:

#### **1. Poverty and Inequality**

Poverty remains a core driver of banditry in Nigeria. With over 70 million Nigerians living below the poverty line, the financial desperation among large portions of the population exacerbates crime rates. Research shows that bandits often exploit

impoverished communities, as members in these areas are more susceptible to being recruited into criminal activities (Okoli & Ugwu, 2021). In states where banditry is prevalent, poverty rates are typically higher than the national average. For instance: Zamfara State: Poverty rate of 73.8%; Sokoto State: Poverty rate of 87.7% (National Bureau of Statistics, 2020). Such extreme poverty creates a breeding ground for banditry as impoverished individuals seek alternative sources of livelihood. Although not all forms of criminal acts could be linked to poverty, it has been contended that economic deprivation influences people to resort to illegal means of meeting their daily needs. It was discovered that because of the attractive benefits accruing from banditry activity, most people, especially the youths tend to join the bandit gangs in the Northwest of Nigeria (Epron, 2014; Adegoke, 2019).

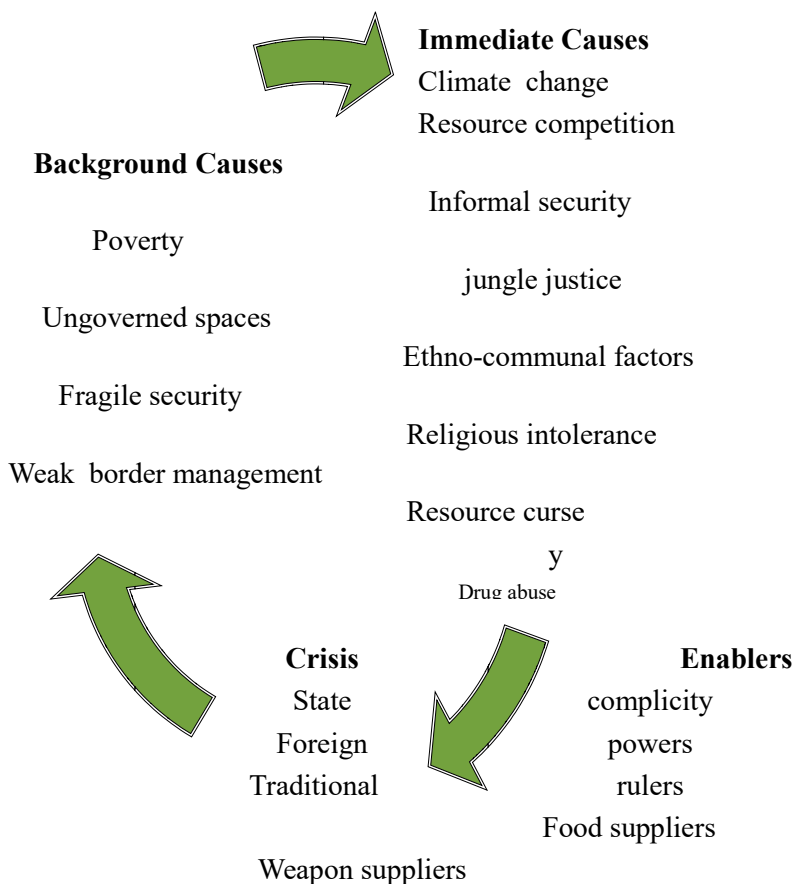
#### **2. Unemployment**

High unemployment rates, especially among the youth, play a significant role in driving banditry. According to the National Bureau of Statistics, Nigeria's youth unemployment rate was around 42.5% in 2021. Unemployment leaves many young people vulnerable to recruitment by bandits who often provide financial incentives (Ibrahim, 2022). Areas with high youth populations but limited economic opportunities witness more organized crime and violence as youths search for viable income sources.

#### **3. Lack of Education and Social Mobility**

Educational attainment is low in regions prone to banditry, particularly in the northern states, where literacy rates are below the national average. Low levels of education limit job opportunities, creating a cycle of poverty and violence. The lack of access to education prevents individuals from escaping poverty and increases susceptibility to involvement in bandit activities. A study by Bello & Yusuf (2022) found that in communities where literacy rates are low, banditry incidents are more frequent.

**Figure 1. The conflict catalyst cycle.**



Source: Ojo et al. (2023): Forces of Terror

**4. Land Use and Resource Conflict**

Land-use issues and disputes over resources have become more intense due to population growth, climate change, and environmental degradation. The semi-arid regions in northern Nigeria experience dwindling resources due to desertification, which impacts agricultural productivity and leads to food insecurity. Farmers and pastoralists compete for land, leading to frequent confrontations that have now escalated into banditry. Scholars have noted that environmental degradation exacerbates resource scarcity, increasing the likelihood of conflicts (Adamu & Rasheed, 2023).

**5. Weak Governance and Corruption**

The weakness of state institutions, combined with corruption and ineffective law enforcement, has allowed banditry to proliferate. Weak policing in rural and border areas means bandits operate with

relative impunity, and corruption undermines efforts to secure these regions. Corruption in the allocation of resources also contributes to social inequality, leading to feelings of marginalization and fueling discontent. This perception of neglect often fuels grievances that push vulnerable individuals towards banditry as an outlet for social protest (Okeke & Yakubu, 2023).

**6. Arms Proliferation**

Another driving factor of banditry in northwestern Nigeria worthy of mentioning is the issue of arms proliferation. There has been an incremental influx of small arms and light weapons (SALWs) into Nigeria from the Sahel since the fall of Ghadaffi’s regime in Libya (Gaye, 2018). These arms and weapons end up in the hands of non-state actors like terrorists, militants and bandits, who use them to terrorise individuals and communities. In September 2018, military troops in joint operations with personnel of

the Department of State Service (DSS) arrested two suspected illicit arms dealers along Funtua-Gusau road with 1,479 rounds of 7.62mm (special) ammunition, on their way to deliver the weapons to armed bandits (Adeniyi 2018). Incidents such as this have been prevalent in the various states of northwestern Nigeria where banditry has become the order of the day (Okoli & Ugwu, 2019).

## 7. Inadequate Equipment or Resources

There is no gain saying the fact that weak security system complements the alarming rate of banditry in the northwest region of Nigeria. This could have possibly been caused by the inadequate equipment for the security arm of government, both in weaponry and training (Achumba, Ighomereho, & Akpor-Rabaro, 2013). This is in addition to poor attitudinal and

behavioural disposition of security personnel. In many cases, security personnel assigned to deal with given security situations lack the expertise and equipment to handle the situations in a way to prevent them from occurring. Even when these exist, some personnel get influenced by ethnic, religious or communal sentiment and are easily prejudiced by their personal interest to serve their people, rather than the nation (Achumba et al., 2013). Thus, instead of being national watch dogs and defending national interest and values, and protecting people from being harmed by criminals, they soon become saboteurs of government efforts, by supporting and fuelling insecurity through either leaking vital security information or conniving with criminals to acquire weapons or to escape the long arm of the law (Offem & Ichoku, 2015).

**Table 1: Summary of Key Statistics of Banditry Incidents in Nigeria from (1990-2024), Capturing the Frequency, Casualties, Locations, and Types of Attacks:**

Year	Number of Attacks	Deaths/Casualties	Affected States	Nature of Attacks	Source(s)
1990-2000	Limited records	Hundreds	Kaduna, Katsina	Cattle rustling, armed robbery	Center for Democracy and Development, WANEP
2001-2010	Rising incidents	Thousands	Zamfara, Kaduna, Sokoto	Cattle rustling, land conflicts	International Crisis Group, WANEP
2011	200+	500+ deaths	Zamfara	Attacks on villages, cattle theft	CDD, Human Rights Watch <a href="#">CDD</a>
2014	300+	1,000+	Katsina, Kaduna, Sokoto	Mass kidnappings, cattle rustling	WANEP, CDD
2018	400+	2,000+	Zamfara, Katsina, Sokoto	Kidnapping for ransom, village attacks	Nigerian Security Tracker (NST), WANEP
2019	500+	3,000+ deaths	Zamfara, Katsina, Kaduna	School kidnappings, village raids, cattle rustling	NST, WANEP, CDD <a href="#">CDD</a>
2020	600+	5,000+ displaced	Katsina, Zamfara, Sokoto	Kidnapping, village ambushes, land conflicts	NST, CDD

2021	800+	2,000 deaths	Kaduna, Niger, Kebbi	School kidnappings, attacks on civilians	CDD, International Crisis Group <a href="#">CDD</a>
2022	900+	1,500 deaths	Kaduna, Katsina, Sokoto	Mass kidnappings, communal attacks	CDD, WANEP <a href="#">CDD</a>
2023	1,000+	1,800 deaths	Kaduna, Zamfara, Niger	Kidnapping for ransom, mass village attacks	CDD, WANEP, Human Rights Watch
2024	Projected increase	Ongoing	Kaduna, Niger, Sokoto	Kidnappings, attacks on farmers, forced displacement	Nigerian Security Tracker, Human Rights Watch <a href="#">CDD</a>

**Source:** Author's compilation (2024)

### Summary and Key Observations

- Growth Over Time:** Banditry incidents escalated from isolated events in the 1990s to widespread, organized attacks by the 2010s, particularly in northwestern Nigeria.
- Affected States:** Core affected states include Zamfara, Kaduna, Katsina, and Sokoto, with recent attacks expanding into Niger and Kebbi.
- Nature of Attacks:** Initially limited to cattle rustling and isolated robberies, attacks have evolved into mass kidnappings, school abductions, and violent ambushes on rural communities, especially in remote areas.
- Casualties and Displacement:** Thousands have died due to these attacks, with estimates of displaced persons in the hundreds of thousands. Humanitarian impacts continue to grow.

This table provides a framework based on available data and published reports from the Center for Democracy and Development (CDD), West Africa Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP), Nigerian Security Tracker (NST), International Crisis Group, and Human Rights Watch. For ongoing updates, resources like CDD and NST provide detailed analyses and annual breakdowns of banditry incidents across Nigeria

### CHALLENGES OF ADDRESSING BANDITRY IN NIGERIA

The prevalence of banditry in Nigeria, especially in the northern and central regions, has raised significant security and governance concerns. Despite efforts to curb the crisis, numerous challenges continue to hinder effective responses, including issues related to governance, law enforcement, socioeconomic factors, and the geographical and logistical difficulties of certain regions:

- Weak Governance and Institutional Failures:** One of the primary challenges in addressing banditry is weak governance, characterized by a lack of accountability, corruption, and inadequate public resources. Nigerian governance structures, particularly in rural regions, often lack the capacity and resources to maintain security and address socioeconomic grievances. A report by the International Crisis Group (ICG, 2023) highlights that ineffective governance and deep-rooted corruption within law enforcement agencies hinder timely intervention and justice. Additionally, mismanagement of resources intended for security purposes often diverts funds away from operational needs, leading to poorly equipped security forces. Transparency International (2023) ranks Nigeria 150th out of 180 countries

in terms of perceived corruption. In a survey by the Centre for Democracy and Development (2022), 60% of respondents in affected regions cited mistrust in local government authorities due to corruption.

- ii. ***Inadequate Security Infrastructure and Personnel:*** The Nigerian security sector, despite recent reforms, still faces significant resource constraints. Shortages in personnel, equipment, and technology make it challenging for law enforcement to effectively monitor and respond to incidents of banditry. For instance, states with high incidences of banditry often lack the needed police presence, and in some cases, there is only one police officer for every 500-700 citizens (National Bureau of Statistics, 2023). This lack of personnel leads to delayed responses and allows bandits to operate with relative impunity in remote areas. According to report, Nigeria has approximately 370,000 police officers for a population of over 200 million, falling below the UN-recommended ratio of one police officer per 450 people. SBM Intelligence (2023) reports that up to 80% of bandit attacks in rural areas receive delayed or no police response due to lack of accessibility and limited resources.
- iii. ***Socioeconomic Disparities and Poverty:*** High levels of poverty and socioeconomic disparities in northern and central Nigeria exacerbate security challenges, as they provide a breeding ground for banditry. Poverty not only fuels participation in bandit activities but also makes local populations susceptible to bandits' influence through intimidation or, in some cases, bribery. Many bandit groups exploit the grievances of marginalized communities, who feel neglected by the government (Akinwande & Umar, 2022). The National Bureau of Statistics (2022) reported that Zamfara, a state with a high incidence of banditry, has a poverty rate of around 73%. Besides, youth unemployment, particularly in regions affected by banditry, is estimated to be above 40%, creating a pool of individuals vulnerable to recruitment by criminal groups.
- iv. ***Challenges in Intelligence Gathering and Data Sharing:*** Effective intelligence gathering is a crucial component of anti-banditry operations, but Nigeria's security forces often lack the necessary coordination and technology. Fragmented information systems and poor inter-agency collaboration hamper intelligence sharing, which is essential to prevent and respond to bandit attacks. Additionally, low technological adoption, including limited use of surveillance drones and satellite imaging, further complicates monitoring efforts in remote, forested areas (Idris, 2023). Idris (2023) discusses how weak intelligence frameworks and limited data sharing contribute to inadequate responses, while reports by the Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED, 2023) indicate that a lack of actionable intelligence in certain regions has led to repeated incidents of banditry without effective intervention.
- v. ***Geographical Challenges and Difficult Terrain:*** Bandits often operate in rural and forested areas, which provide natural cover and hinder security operations. Regions such as the Rugu and Kamuku forests serve as strongholds for bandit groups, complicating military and law enforcement access. The rough terrain not only makes it difficult for ground forces to operate but also limits the effectiveness of aerial surveillance. According to the Nigerian Military, up to 40% of rural and forested areas in Zamfara, Katsina, and Niger states are beyond their immediate surveillance capabilities. Security personnel face logistical limitations in accessing remote villages quickly, often taking hours to days to respond to incidents in these regions (International Crisis Group, 2023).
- vi. ***Weak Community and Government Relationships:*** There is often a significant distrust between local communities and government authorities, partly due to prolonged neglect and unmet needs. Community members are sometimes reluctant to cooperate with law enforcement agencies out of fear of retaliation from bandits or due to a lack of confidence in the authorities' ability to protect them. Furthermore, in some cases, local leaders have been co-opted by bandit groups, compromising the government's ability to establish an effective grassroots network for intelligence gathering (Okeke & Musa, 2022). A study by Okeke and

Musa (2022) found that over 70% of respondents in high-banditry areas expressed a lack of trust in law enforcement. Another report by the Centre for Democracy and Development (2023) emphasized the role of community engagement in security but noted challenges in implementation due to mistrust.

## **STRATEGIES FOR NATIONAL SECURITY AND COMBATING BANDITRY IN NIGERIA**

To effectively combat banditry, Nigeria requires multi-dimensional strategies that address both the root causes and operational aspects of banditry. The following analysis provides an overview of the key strategies:

### **1) Strengthening Military and Law Enforcement Capacity**

Strengthening military and law enforcement presence in affected regions is a foundational strategy in combating banditry. This includes increasing personnel, improving training, and equipping security forces with modern tools and technology. Law enforcement agencies must also receive training in counter-terrorism and anti-banditry tactics, particularly in handling hostages, operating in difficult terrains, and coordinating rapid response operations. According to Nigeria's Ministry of Defense (2023), there has been a 15% increase in military deployment to Zamfara, Katsina, and Kaduna states in response to rising banditry. The National Bureau of Statistics (2023) reports a shortage of approximately 120,000 personnel to meet the national security needs.

### **2) Improved Intelligence and Surveillance Systems**

Robust intelligence-gathering and surveillance are crucial to pre-empt and thwart bandit attacks. Strategies include adopting advanced surveillance technologies like drones, satellites, and intelligence-sharing platforms that facilitate collaboration across security agencies. Additionally, community-based intelligence can improve early-warning systems, as local residents often have valuable information on bandit movements and operations. The National

Intelligence Agency (2023) recorded a 25% increase in intelligence-led arrests of bandits in the first half of the year, credited to the implementation of drones in surveillance efforts. Nigeria's Police Force reports that the successful thwarting of 30 bandit attacks was due to community-provided intelligence from local vigilante groups (Nigerian Police Report, 2023).

### **3) Economic and Social Development Initiatives**

Many individuals join bandit groups due to poverty, lack of employment, and limited educational opportunities, especially in rural regions. Addressing these socio-economic grievances through employment generation, poverty alleviation programs, and infrastructure development is key to reducing the allure of banditry. Social development initiatives, such as vocational training, can provide youths with viable alternatives to criminal activities. According to a study by Bello and Aremu (2022), socio-economic programs targeting poverty and unemployment are crucial in bandit-prone regions. They argue that a comprehensive approach, combining immediate security measures with long-term development plans, could drastically reduce the factors that drive individuals to banditry.

### **4) Enhancing Community Policing and Local Vigilante Groups**

Community policing and local vigilante groups play a vital role in anti-banditry efforts. These groups are often more familiar with local terrains and community members, allowing them to gather intelligence and act as first responders in emergencies. By formalizing, training, and adequately equipping these groups, the government can enhance their effectiveness while reducing risks associated with vigilante justice. In a survey conducted by the Nigerian Security Network (2023), 67% of residents in bandit-affected areas reported feeling safer when local vigilante groups were present. The National Security Council (2023) indicates that over 40% of bandit arrests in rural regions involved assistance from local vigilante units. Research by Okeke and Musa (2023) shows that community policing has led to positive outcomes in reducing banditry-related incidents in some northern states. Their study

highlights that local vigilantes, with training and support, serve as a bridge between rural communities and law enforcement, aiding in both preventive and responsive measures.

#### 5) Enhancing Legal and Judicial Frameworks

Ensuring that arrested bandits face swift prosecution is essential to reducing recidivism and deterring future crimes. Currently, weak legal frameworks and delays in the judicial process undermine efforts to combat banditry. Strengthening legal processes, including implementing fast-track courts for banditry-related cases and ensuring witness protection, can boost public trust and demonstrate a commitment to justice. Data from Nigeria's Ministry of Justice (2023) shows that only about 30% of apprehended bandits are successfully prosecuted, while the majority are often released due to lack of evidence or lengthy judicial delays. The Nigerian Bar Association (2022) reports that the average duration for prosecuting banditry cases is over three years, which reduces the deterrent effect of legal action. A study by Abubakar and Musa (2023) highlights the need for legislative reforms that would streamline the prosecution of banditry cases. They argue that inadequate legal frameworks and judicial delays contribute to the persistence of banditry, as offenders often evade justice due to technicalities or lack of resources.

#### 6) Strengthening Regional Cooperation and Border Security

Bandits often exploit Nigeria's porous borders to move freely between countries in the Sahel region, making regional cooperation critical for combating banditry. Strengthening cross-border security agreements, coordinating intelligence with neighboring countries (such as Niger, Chad, and Cameroon), and reinforcing border security are essential steps. Additionally, joint patrols and information-sharing mechanisms can help monitor and control cross-border movements of bandit groups. The Nigerian Immigration Service (2023) reports that up to 40% of bandits are suspected of crossing into Nigeria from neighboring countries, facilitated by the country's porous borders. A recent partnership

between Nigeria and Niger led to the arrest of 15 bandit leaders in a cross-border operation (ECOWAS Security Update, 2023). Recent studies emphasize that regional collaboration is crucial for addressing security threats that transcend borders. Okafor and Yusuf (2023) point out that the ECOWAS framework for security cooperation could be strengthened to tackle banditry and other cross-border crimes more effectively.

### CONCLUSION

The issue of banditry in Nigeria is deeply rooted in socioeconomic challenges, including poverty, unemployment, weak governance, and limited access to education and healthcare in rural areas. These socioeconomic factors create fertile ground for criminal networks to flourish, attracting vulnerable youth and individuals seeking financial stability. The spread of banditry poses serious risks to national security, economic development, and the social fabric of affected communities. Addressing this issue requires a comprehensive, multi-sectoral approach that not only strengthens security measures but also targets the socioeconomic conditions that drive individuals into banditry. To effectively combat banditry, Nigeria must adopt policies that balance short-term security responses with long-term socioeconomic strategies. By addressing the root causes and enhancing security frameworks, the government can work towards creating a safer and more prosperous environment, particularly in the northern and central regions most affected by banditry. Furthermore, strengthening regional cooperation, community engagement, and justice systems can play crucial roles in addressing this complex issue sustainably.

### POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

In the light of the importance of this review, the following recommendation are proffered:

1. **Comprehensive Rural Development Programs:** The government should prioritize infrastructure development, agricultural investment, and job creation programs in rural communities to reduce poverty and unemployment, which are

significant drivers of banditry. Moreso, implementing vocational training programs and micro-credit facilities for youths in high-risk areas can provide alternative livelihoods and reduce the allure of criminal activities.

2. **Enhanced Intelligence and Surveillance:** Investment in advanced surveillance technologies, such as drones and satellite imaging, alongside traditional intelligence methods, is essential to monitor and respond to bandit activities more efficiently. Establishing intelligence-sharing networks among security agencies and incorporating community-based intelligence can provide early warnings and improve response times.
3. **Strengthening Law Enforcement and Military Presence:** Increase recruitment and training for police and military personnel, focusing on counter-terrorism, crisis response, and rural policing skills. Additional resources should be allocated to deploy well-equipped personnel to bandit-prone areas. Equip law enforcement agencies with modern technology and resources necessary for operations in difficult terrains, including armored vehicles and communication tools.
4. **Community Policing and Local Vigilante Support:** Formalizing, training, and supporting local vigilante groups can help bridge the gap between rural communities and security agencies. By involving communities directly, local knowledge can be leveraged to improve intelligence-gathering and local security. Community policing initiatives should include mechanisms for accountability to ensure respect for human rights and prevent potential abuses.
5. **Judicial and Legal Reforms:** Establishing fast-track courts for banditry and related offenses can help ensure that apprehended bandits face timely justice, which serves as both a deterrent and a means to restore public trust. Develop a witness protection program to encourage victims and community members to come forward with information without fear of reprisal from bandit groups.
6. **Strengthening Regional and Cross-Border Cooperation:** Since bandits often operate across borders, Nigeria should work closely with neighboring countries like Niger, Chad, and Cameroon to enhance border security, share intelligence, and conduct joint operations where necessary. Strengthening ECOWAS and Sahel-based security partnerships can improve monitoring and response to cross-border movements of bandit groups.
7. **Public Awareness and Rehabilitation Programs:** National awareness campaigns on the consequences of banditry and available alternatives can help dissuade potential recruits, especially youth. Rehabilitation and reintegration programs for individuals who renounce banditry can provide a path back into society, reducing the cycle of violence and crime.
8. **Long-Term Educational Investments:** Expanding educational access in rural regions and investing in skills acquisition programs for out-of-school youths can address a core root cause of banditry. This will involve building schools, providing educational resources, and offering scholarships to underserved communities. Introducing civic and moral education to foster a sense of citizenship and respect for the rule of law can also help reduce susceptibility to criminal influences.

## REFERENCES

- Abdullahi, A. (2019). Rural banditry, regional security, and integration in West Africa. *Journal of Social and Political Sciences*, 2(3), 644-654
- Abubakar, M., Ibrahim, U., & Bello, T. (2023). Governance and Security Challenges in Nigeria: The Role of Corruption in Banditry. *African Journal of Criminology and Justice Studies*, 16(2), 134–150. doi:10.31920/2056-5658/2023/v16n2a7
- Abubakar, S., & Musa, Y. (2023). Legal Frameworks and Challenges in Combatting Banditry in Nigeria. *African Journal of Criminal Justice*, 11(3), 145-161.
- Abubakar, T., & Suleiman, Y. (2021). The Role of Social Infrastructure in Crime Prevention: A Study of Banditry in Nigeria. *Nigerian Journal of Sociology*, 15(3), 150-164.
- Achumba, I. C., Ighomereho, O. S. & Akpor-Rabaro, M. O. M. (2013). Security challenges in Nigeria and the implications for business activities and sustainable development. *Journal of Economics and Sustainable Development*, 4(2), 2222-2855.
- ACLED (Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project). (2023). Nigeria: Rising Banditry and Violence in the Northwest and Northcentral Regions. ACLED Reports. Retrieved from <https://acleddata.com>
- Adamu, A., & Emmanuel, P. I. (2022). Banditry and Insecurity in Northern Nigeria: Examining the Root Causes. *African Security Review*, 31(1), 21–35. doi:10.1080/10246029.2022.2052037
- Adamu, T., & Rasheed, U. (2023). Environmental Scarcity and Conflict: The Case of Banditry in Northern Nigeria. *African Security Review*, 32(1), 45-59.
- Adegoke, S. G. (2019). Insurgency, armed banditry and corruption in Nigeria: The bane of socio-economic underdevelopment. *International Journal of Advanced Academic Studies*, 2(1), 17-26.
- Adeniyi, O. (2018). Beyond the banditry in Zamfara. Retrieved from: <https://www.thisdaylive.com/index.php/2018/04/05/beyond-the-banditry-in-zamfara>
- Ahmed, B., & Isah, K. (2022). The Impact of Social Disorganization on Banditry in Northern Nigeria. *Journal of African Security Studies*, 14(2), 215-230.
- Akinwande, O., & Umar, S. (2022). Socioeconomic Inequality and the Rise of Banditry in Northern Nigeria. *African Journal of Security Studies*, 30(2), 91-108.
- Ali, M., & Ibrahim, Z. (2023). Counter-Terrorism Strategies and Their Effectiveness in Northern Nigeria. *Journal of African Security*, 14(2), 98-115.
- Amnesty International. (2023). "Nigeria 2023: Security Forces and Banditry in the Northwest." Amnesty International Reports. Retrieved from <https://amnesty.org>
- Bello, A., & Aremu, K. (2022). Socio-Economic Drivers of Banditry in Rural Nigeria: Solutions and Challenges. *Journal of Developmental Economics*, 19(4), 123-141.
- Bello, M., & Yusuf, N. (2022). Education, Social Mobility, and Crime in Nigeria's North: An Analysis of Socioeconomic Impacts. *Journal of African Development*, 28(3), 233-247.
- Berkowitz, L. (1989). Frustration-aggression hypothesis: Examination and reformulation. *Psychological Bulletin*, 106(1), 59-73.
- Buhari, A., & Adeyemi, K. (2023). Economic Impact of Banditry on Rural Communities in Northern Nigeria. *Journal of Economic Development and Social Research*, 15(2), 119–133.
- Centre for Democracy and Development (2022). *Perceptions of Local Authorities in Banditry-Prone Areas in Nigeria*. Centre for Democracy and Development Report.
- Dollard J, Miller, N. E, Doob, L. W., Mowrer, O. H., & Sears, R. R. (1939). *Frustration and*

- aggression*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press
- Egwu, S. (2016). The political economy of rural banditry in contemporary Nigeria. In Kuna, M.J and Ibrahim, J (eds.). *Rural banditry and conflicts in northern Nigeria*, Abuja: Centre for Democracy and Development.
- Epron, S. (2019). Emerging security threats: Factors and implications for Nigeria's socio-economic development 2015-2019. *Journal of Economics and Development Studies*, 7(2), 141-149
- Eze, J. (2021). The Role of Socioeconomic Factors in the Rise of Banditry in Nigeria. *African Journal of Criminology*, 12(1), 101-116.
- Fererabend, I. K. & Feirabend, R. L. (1972). Systematic conditions of political aggression: An application of frustration-aggression theory. In Fairaben and Ted, R.C. (eds) *Anger violence and politics: Theories and research*. Prentice Hall Inc, Englewood. Cliff, New Jersey.
- Gaya, M., & Aliyu, H. (2023). Advancements in Surveillance and Intelligence to Combat Banditry in Nigeria. *Nigerian Journal of Security Studies*, 22(1), 87-104.
- Ibrahim, S. (2022). Youth Unemployment and Security Challenges in Nigeria: A Case Study of Banditry. *International Journal of Social Sciences*, 16(4), 120-134.
- Idris, B. (2023). Intelligence and Data Sharing Deficiencies in Nigeria's Fight Against Banditry. *Journal of African Security*, 14(3), 101-118.
- International Crisis Group (2023). *Combatting Banditry in Northern Nigeria: Strategic Approaches*. International Crisis Group Report.
- International Crisis Group (2023). *Confronting Banditry in Northern Nigeria: Challenges and Opportunities*. International Crisis Group Report.
- International Crisis Group (ICG). (2022). *Rising Violence and Insecurity in Nigeria*. International Crisis Group.
- International Crisis Group. (2022). *Ending Nigeria's Herder-Farmer Crisis: The Role of Climate Change*. Crisis Group Africa Briefing. Retrieved from <https://crisisgroup.org>
- Maureen, O. M. & Blessing, N. O. (2018). Insurgency and its implication on Nigeria economic growth. *International Journal of Development and Sustainability*, 7(2), 492-501
- Merton, R. K. (1938). Social Structure and Anomie. *American Sociological Review*, 3(5), 672-682.
- Miller, N. E. (1941). The frustration-aggression hypothesis. *Psychological Review*, 48, 337-342.
- National Bureau of Statistics (2022). *Nigeria Poverty and Inequality Report*. National Bureau of Statistics.
- National Bureau of Statistics (NBS). (2023). *Unemployment and Underemployment Report (Q4 2023)*. National Bureau of Statistics, Nigeria. Retrieved from <https://nigerianstat.gov.ng>
- National Bureau of Statistics. (2020). *Nigeria Poverty and Inequality Survey 2020 Report*. National Bureau of Statistics.
- National Intelligence Agency (2023). *Impact of Intelligence-Led Arrests in Combating Banditry*. National Intelligence Agency Report.
- Offem, O. O. & Ichoku, F. U. (2015). Security challenges and its implication for education business activities in Nigeria. Ebonyi State College of Education, Ikwo. *Journal of Educational Research (EBSCOIJER)*, 3(1), 78-89.
- Ojo, J.S., Oyewole, S., & Aina, F. (2023) Forces of Terror: Armed Banditry and Insecurity in North-west Nigeria. *Democracy and Security*, 19(4),319-346, DOI: [10.1080/17419166.2023.2164924](https://doi.org/10.1080/17419166.2023.2164924)
- Okafor, E., & Yusuf, M. (2023). Cross-Border Security and Banditry in West Africa: A Case Study of ECOWAS Cooperation. *West African Security Journal*, 17(2), 75-89.

- Okeke, J., & Musa, L. (2023). Role of Community Policing in Addressing Banditry in Nigeria. *Journal of Public Policy and Security*, 18(2), 34-56.
- Okeke, J., & Yakubu, H. (2023). Governance and Banditry in Nigeria: Corruption and Institutional Failures. *Journal of Public Policy*, 21(2), 87-103.
- Okeke, T., & Musa, L. (2022). Community and State Relations in the Fight Against Banditry in Nigeria. *Journal of Public Policy and Security*, 19(1), 67-84.
- Okoli, A. C. & Okpaleke, F. N. (2014). Banditry and crisis of public safety in Nigeria: Issues in national security strategies. *European Scientific Journal*, 10(4), 350–62.
- Okoli, A. C. & Ugwu, A. C. (2019). Of marauders and brigands: Scoping the threat of rural banditry in Nigeria's north west. *Brazilian Journal of African Studies*, 4(8), 201-222.
- Okoli, A. C., & Igwe, H. I. (2020). The political economy of banditry in Northern Nigeria: Implications for national security. *Journal of Contemporary African Studies*, 38(3), 375–391.  
doi:10.1080/02589001.2020.1807406
- Okoli, A. C., & Ugwu, C. (2021). Socioeconomic Drivers of Insecurity: Banditry in Northern Nigeria. *African Journal of Security Studies*, 19(1), 78-94.
- Okolie, C., & Eke, B. (2022). Nigeria's Security Sector Challenges and Reform Needs. *African Journal of Governance*,
- SBM Intelligence (2023). *Banditry and Insecurity in Nigeria: An Overview*. SBM Intelligence Report.
- Shalangwa, M. W. (2013). *The nature and consequences of armed banditry in border communities of Adamawa State, Nigeria*. M.Sc. thesis submitted to the School of Post-Graduate Studies, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, Nigeria.
- Shaw, C. R., & McKay, H. D. (1942). *Juvenile Delinquency and Urban Areas*. University of Chicago Press.
- Transparency International (2023). *Corruption Perceptions Index*. Transparency International.
- Uche, J. C. & Iwuamadi, C. K. (2018). Nigeria: Rural banditry and community resilience in the Nimbo community. *Conflict Studies Quarterly*, 24, 71-82.
- UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). (2023). Nigeria: Addressing Food Insecurity in Conflict-Affected Areas. FAO Reports. Retrieved from <https://fao.org>
- Usman, M., & Sadiq, M. (2020). Understanding the Socioeconomic Drivers of Banditry in Nigeria.
- World Bank. (2021). Nigeria Development Update: Resilience through Reforms. World Bank Report. Washington, D.C.: World Bank. Retrieved from <https://worldbank.org>
- World Bank. (2023). World Development Indicators: Nigeria's Economic and Social Landscape. World Bank Publications.