Chapter One

Introduction

1.1 Background to the Study

Cross-border Migration, often referred to as cross migration, is the movement of people from one country to another. This form of migration has been a fundamental aspect of human history, shaping societies, cultures, and economies across the globe. In Africa, cross-border migration has evolved over time, influenced by factors such as economic opportunities, political instability, environmental changes, and social networks. Historically, Africans moved across the continent in search of fertile land, trade opportunities, and better living conditions, with routes such as the trans-Saharan trade facilitating the movement of people and goods between regions. During the colonial era, migration was further shaped by European powers' economic and political interests, often forcing Africans to relocate for work on plantations or in mines, a legacy that continues to influence contemporary migration patterns in Africa.

In recent decades, cross border-migration in Africa has been shaped by a combination of push and pull factors. Push factors, such as poverty, conflict, and environmental degradation drive people to leave their homes in search of better opportunities elsewhere. Pull factors, on the other hand, such as economic prosperity, political stability, and family reunification, attract migrants to destination countries[8]. Meanwhile, West Africa has been a significant region for migration, both within the continent and beyond. The region's porous borders shared cultural ties, and economic disparities have contributed to the movement of people across countries[1]. The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) has

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played a key role in facilitating intra-regional migration by promoting free movement of people and goods among member states[2].

Porous borders in West Africa, often characterized by inadequate border control measures and limited infrastructure, have facilitated the movement of people, goods, and illicit activities across countries[3]. This porousness has made it easier for individuals, including criminals and insurgents, to cross borders of states undetected, exacerbating security challenges in the region. In Nigeria, the porous borders have allowed the influx of illegal arms, drugs, and human trafficking, fuelling insecurity and criminal activities. For instance, some media outlets and the Inspector General of Police (IGP) suggest that most bandits in Nigeria are foreigners[4].

The security challenges in Nigeria have been worsened by both cross-border migration and banditry, which continue to threaten stability across several regions of the country. In some cases, uncontrolled cross-border movement has placed added pressure on resources and infrastructure and has contributed to social tensions within host communities. At the same time, internal migration; driven largely by economic disparities between rural and urban areas, has accelerated population growth in major cities. Many people move from rural regions to urban centres in search of better opportunities, resulting in overcrowding, strain on infrastructure, and increased competition for limited resources. This rapid influx has contributed to social problems such as unemployment, crime, urban poverty, and, in some contexts, heightened insecurity, thereby exacerbating Nigeria's already fragile security landscape[6].

Banditry, which has been on the rise in Nigeria in recent years, is also a significant security

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challenge that compounds the country's problems[13]. Bandits, often armed criminal groups, operate in various parts of the country, particularly in the north-western and north-central regions, where they carry out attacks on communities, kidnap for ransom, and engage in other criminal activities. These activities not only threaten the lives and livelihoods of people in affected areas but also undermine the country's security and stability[14]. Banditry has been a long-standing issue in Nigeria, particularly in the northern regions, with Sokoto and Zamfara states experiencing a significant increase in banditry in recent years. Banditry in Sokoto and Zamfara states has become a pressing issue, with significant implications for the security and stability of the region. Bandits, often operating in organized groups, engage in various criminal activities, including kidnapping, cattle rustling, and armed robbery. These activities has led to the loss of lives, displacement of communities, and economic hardships for residents.

Several children have been orphaned, and a large number of women have become widows overnight, while food insecurity and humanitarian disaster have made life even more difficult for many Nigerians in these states. Around 247,000 individuals were displaced, and their activities led to more than 41,000 refugees. This means that due to the actions of these individuals, a significant number of people were forced to leave their homes and seek refuge elsewhere. The displacement of such a large number of people has serious humanitarian implications and underscores the urgent need for effective measures to address the root causes of displacement and provide support to those affect[15].

In Zamfara alone, more than 8,000 people have lost their lives in the past few months, with an additional 200,000 internally displaced and many others fleeing to neighbouring states[15]. The situation is so dire that the religious leader and Sultan of Sokoto has declared that bandits

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now roam from house to house in the North with AK47s, lamenting that the region has become the most inhospitable place to live in Nigeria[16].

Several factors have contributed to the increase in banditry in Sokoto and Zamfara states. One of the main factors as explained by a scholar, is the proliferation of small arms and light weapons in the region[17]. These weapons are often smuggled into Nigeria from neighbouring countries and have made it easier for bandits to carry out their activities. Another factor is the breakdown of traditional conflict resolution mechanisms. In the past, disputes between communities were resolved through traditional means, but with the breakdown of these mechanisms, disputes are now more likely to escalate into violence[18]. Poverty and unemployment are also contributing factors. Many young people in the region are unemployed and lack economic opportunities, making them more susceptible to joining criminal groups.

Meanwhile, the problem of banditry persists in Sokoto and Zamfara states due to a combination of factors. One of the main reasons is the lack of effective law enforcement[19]. The police in the region are often poorly equipped and lack the resources to effectively combat banditry. There is also a lack of political will to address the problem, with some politicians believed to be complicit in supporting banditry for their own gain. Another reason is the complex nature of the conflict. Banditry in Sokoto and Zamfara states is often intertwined with other issues such as ethnic and religious conflicts, making it difficult to address the root causes of the problem[20]. Political dynamics in Nigeria, particularly the perceived marginalization of certain groups, have also contributed to the rise of banditry in Sokoto and Zamfara states. Some criminal gangs exploit these grievances to gain support and recruit members, further complicating efforts to address the problem.

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The rise of banditry in Sokoto and Zamfara states presents a significant challenge to the security and stability of Nigeria, with implications that extend beyond the affected region. However, understanding the factors contributing to this rise is crucial for developing effective strategies to address the problem and prevent its spread to other parts of the country. This is why this research is important now.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Cross border migration and banditry have become dangerous, intertwined phenomena in Nigeria, particularly in both Sokoto and Zamfara States, posing significant challenges to security and development in the States. The inception of insecurity in Sokoto and Zamfara States can be traced back to the abduction of over 200 schoolgirls from Chibok in Borno State by the Boko Haram terrorist group in 2014[21]. This incident sent shockwaves across Nigeria and highlighted the vulnerability of schools and communities in the face of insurgency. The brazenness of the attack and the inability of security forces to prevent it or secure the release of the girls exposed the fragility of security infrastructures in the country. Moreover, the insecurity has led to the displacement of communities, with thousands of residents fleeing their homes to seek refuge in neighbouring states or becoming internally displaced persons (IDPs) within Nigeria. This has strained the already limited resources of the states and hindered efforts to provide basic services, such as healthcare, education, and infrastructure development. Despite the deployment of security forces to the region, the Nigerian Police Force (NPC) and the Nigerian Army have struggled to contain the activities of bandits. The vast and rugged terrain of Sokoto and Zamfara States, coupled with the lack of adequate equipment and training for security personnel, has hampered efforts to track and

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apprehend bandits[22]. Additionally, the complicity of some security personnel in aiding and abetting criminal activities has further eroded public trust in the security agencies.

Previous studies on cross border migration and banditry in Nigeria have largely focused on the causes and consequences of these phenomena, highlighting the need for a holistic approach to addressing insecurity in the country[23,24,25]. However, there is a gap in the literature regarding the specific impact of banditry on socio- political development in both Sokoto and Zamfara States and the failures of security agencies in curbing bandit operations in the region. The focus is very important, given the fact of mining opportunities in Zamfara State, serving as a pull factor for migrants coming from outside the country [cross border migration] and from other states within the northern part of Nigeria [intra-border migration], and Sokoto State is a conduit for those coming to Zamfara State from outside Nigeria. This study seeks to fill this gap by providing a comprehensive analysis of the connection between cross border migration, banditry, and development in both Sokoto and Zamfara States.

1.3 Aim and Objectives of the Study

The aim of the study is to critically examine the impact of cross border migration on banditry in some selected states in Northwest Nigeria. Specifically, the objective of the study are to:

i. investigate how cross-border movement of migrants influences the prevalence and patterns of banditry in Sokoto and Zamfara States;
ii. assess the combined effect of cross-border and internal migration on the escalation of banditry in Sokoto and Zamfara States between 2014 and 2024.
iii. identify the socio-economic and political push-and-pull factors driving cross-border migration and how these factors intersect with the growth of banditry in Sokoto and

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Zamfara States.

iv. evaluate the effectiveness of government policies and security interventions on cross-border migration and how they shape the dynamics of banditry in Sokoto and Zamfara States from 2014 to 2024.

1.4 Research Questions

1. How does cross-border movement of migrants influence the prevalence and patterns of banditry in Sokoto and Zamfara States?
2. In what ways do cross-border and internal migration jointly contribute to the escalation of banditry in Sokoto and Zamfara States between 2014 and 2024?
3. What socio-economic and political push-and-pull factors drive cross-border migration, and how do these factors intersect with the growth of banditry in Sokoto and Zamfara States?
4. How effective are government policies and security interventions on cross-border migration in shaping the dynamics of banditry in Sokoto and Zamfara States from 2014 to 2024?

1.5 Significance of the Study

The study holds immense significance for various stakeholders, including policymakers, security agencies, academics, and the affected communities. This research sheds light on the complex interplay between cross border migration patterns and the dynamics of banditry in the region, providing valuable insights that can inform effective security and policy responses and interventions. One of the key beneficiaries of this research is the Nigerian government, particularly state and federal authorities responsible for security and migration

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management. By understanding how migration patterns contribute to the prevalence and dynamics of banditry, policymakers can develop targeted strategies to address the root causes of insecurity in these states. This can include efforts to improve border security, address the socio-economic factors driving migration, and enhance community resilience against banditry.

Additionally, this research is significant for academics and other researchers studying conflict dynamics and cross border-migration effects in Africa. It adds to the growing body of literature on the linkages between migration and insecurity, providing a nuanced understanding of the factors shaping conflict in the noted region. Furthermore, the findings of this study can also benefit international organizations and NGOs working on peacebuilding and development initiatives in Nigeria, helping them design more contextually relevant programmes that address the needs of affected communities. Overall, the study on cross border-migration and banditry in Sokoto and Zamfara states is significant now due to the escalating insecurity in the region and the need for evidence-based interventions to address the root causes of conflict and displacement.

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1.6 Scope of the Study

The study is on cross border migration and banditry in Zamfara and Sokoto states in Northwest Nigeria, spanning from 2014 to 2024. It focuses on understanding the relationship between migration patterns and the dynamics of banditry in the region. This timeframe was chosen for several reasons. Firstly, it allows for a comprehensive analysis of trends and patterns over a significant period, capturing changes in cross border migration flows and banditry activities within the ten (10) year period. Secondly, 2014 marks a period

of increased terrorist activities and banditry in the region, making it a pivotal starting point for understanding the evolution of the phenomenon. Lastly, the study's end date of 2024 ensures that the research is current, reflecting recent developments and providing relevant insights for addressing contemporary security challenges.

1.7 Limitation of the Study

Like any empirical research, this study was conducted under certain limitations that should be acknowledged to guide the interpretation and generalisation of its findings. First, the study was carried out in a context characterised by persistent insecurity, particularly in the rural areas of Sokoto and Zamfara States where banditry remains intense. This security situation restricted the researcher's ability to access some highly affected communities, thereby limiting the breadth of firsthand accounts from the most vulnerable populations. Although alternative strategies such as reliance on accessible communities and the use of key informants were adopted, the inability to reach all hotspots may have influenced the comprehensiveness of the data gathered.

Second, the sensitivity of the subject; especially issues involving migration routes, security operations, and the activities of bandit groups, meant that some participants were cautious about disclosing detailed information. Military personnel, traditional rulers, and residents often limited their responses due to fear of victimisation, operational secrecy, or mistrust. This may have resulted in partial disclosure, which could affect the depth of insights obtained.

Third, the study relied heavily on self-reported data from interviews. While efforts were made to verify information through triangulation and comparison of multiple sources, self-

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reported responses are inherently subject to bias, exaggeration, or selective memory, especially in conflict-prone environments where trauma and fear shape people's perceptions.

Fourth, the ten-year timeframe (2014–2024) covered by the study presented analytical challenges, as migration patterns and banditry dynamics evolved rapidly during this period. The shifting nature of alliances among bandit groups, changes in government policies, and fluctuations in cross-border movements meant that some trends were difficult to capture with absolute precision.

Lastly, resource and time constraints limited the sample size to 52 respondents from a targeted population of 60 across six categories. Although the response rate was high and participants were strategically selected to ensure diversity of perspectives, a larger sample could have provided even more robust and representative findings.

Despite these limitations, the measures adopted; such as triangulation of data, engagement with multiple categories of respondents, and context-sensitive field strategies, helped to minimise their impact. The findings therefore remain credible and valuable for understanding the interconnected dynamics of cross-border migration and banditry in Sokoto and Zamfara States.

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1.8 Operational Definitions of Terms

Banditry: Banditry refers to the activities of outlaws or criminals who engage in robbery, plunder, and other illegal acts, often in organized groups. Bandits typically operate outside the law, using violence or intimidation to achieve their goals. Banditry can destabilize

communities, disrupt economic activities, and pose serious security threats, especially in regions with weak governance or law enforcement.

Border: Borders are geographical, political, or artificial lines that demarcate the boundaries between countries, states, or regions. They are established through agreements, treaties, or natural features like rivers or mountain ranges. Borders regulate the movement of people, goods, and services, and they play a crucial role in defining national sovereignty, security, and identity.

Cross Border Migration: The movement of persons refers to the act of individuals travelling or migrating across national or regional boundaries. Cross border activities might include trade, tourism, migration or refugee movement.

Emigration: Act of leaving one's country to another. It is also the relocation or process of people leaving one country to reside in another. It could be for obvious reasons; including increasing one's chances of employment or improving quality of life. Emigration has an economic impact on the countries involved, including the work force and consumer spending.

Immigration: The movement of persons into a new country with the intent to reside in that country. This includes state-stationed. Immigration ("legal immigration") and unlawful immigration ("illegal immigration"). It is also known as the action of coming to live permanently in a foreign country.

Migration: Migration is the movement of people from one place to another, typically to seek better living conditions, opportunities, or escape from conflict or persecution. It can be

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temporary or permanent, voluntary or forced. Migration can occur within a country (internal or intra-state migration) or between countries (international or inter-states' migration). It has significant social, economic, and political implications for both the places of origin and destination.

Security: Security refers to the state of being free from danger, threat, or harm. It encompasses various aspects, including physical, economic, political, and environmental security. Security measures aim to protect individuals, communities, and states from risks and vulnerabilities. This can involve actions to prevent conflicts, maintain public order, ensure economic stability, and safeguard against natural disasters or other hazards.

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Chapter Two

Literature Review

This chapter reviews existing scholarly works, empirical studies, and theoretical contributions related to cross-border migration, internal migration, banditry, and security governance in Nigeria and the wider West African region.

2.1 Conceptual Review

2.1.1 Border

Borders in Africa have a complex history, shaped by a combination of indigenous, colonial, and post-colonial forces or factors. Prior to European colonisation, Africa was divided into numerous ethnic groups and kingdoms, each with its own distinct territories and boundaries. These boundaries were often fluid and based on shared cultural, linguistic, and territorial ties. The introduction of borders in Africa by European colonial powers in the late 19th and early 20th centuries significantly altered the continent's political and territorial landscape[1]. Colonial powers, primarily Britain, France, Belgium, Germany, Portugal, and Italy, partitioned Africa at the Berlin Conference of 1884-1885, drawing arbitrary borders that often disregarded existing ethnic and cultural boundaries.

These artificial borders have had lasting effects on Africa, leading to conflicts over resources, identity, and political power[2]. The legacy of colonial borders is evident in the numerous border disputes and conflicts that continue to plague the continent today. In the contemporary world, borders play a crucial role in defining national identity, regulating immigration and

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trade, and maintaining security. The definition of borders is challenging because they are multifaceted and dynamic. Borders can be physical, political, cultural, or conceptual, each with its own complexities. Moreover, borders are not fixed; they can change over time due to political, social, or environmental factors[3]. Additionally, borders can be contested, with different groups having conflicting claims and interpretations. This ambiguity and fluidity make it difficult to establish a definitive definition of borders, highlighting the complex and evolving nature of human interactions with space and territory. At this point, it is instructive to examine some definitions of the concept of borders.

Postcolonial theorists offer a unique and complex definition of the border that goes beyond traditional geographical and political boundaries. They conceived the concept of border not merely as a physical demarcation but as a dynamic and shifting space where cultural identities and meanings are constantly negotiated and redefined[3]. They stated that the border is a “third space” that emerges in the interstitial zones between fixed categories such as 'us' and 'them', 'self' and 'other'[3]. This third space is a site of hybridity, where different cultural elements blend and create new forms of identity that challenge dominant narratives of belonging and exclusion.

This concept of the border is rich and insightful, as it highlights the complexities of identity formation in a globalised world. Through the emphasis on border as a space of hybridity and negotiation, he underscores the fluidity and contingency of cultural identities, suggesting that they are not fixed but constantly evolving. However, his definition of the border has been critiqued for its abstract and theoretical nature. This point has made some to argue that this account of border makes it difficult to apply in concrete political and social contexts. Critics also point out that his emphasis on hybridity and negotiation overlooks the power dynamics

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that underlie the construction of borders, particularly in the context of colonialism and imperialism[4]. Given the foregoing, this definition may not fit well into the current study because it focuses more on cultural and identity aspects of borders rather than the physical and security-related aspects that are likely more relevant to studies on cross border migration patterns and banditry in the Northwestern part of Nigeria.

Another political theorist offers a distinct perspective on borders, emphasizing their role in shaping political subjects and identities[5]. Unlike traditional understandings that view borders as fixed and territorial, he sees borders as performative, constituting and regulating subjects rather than merely delineating territories. According to him, borders are not just physical barriers but also symbolic and discursive constructs that define who belongs and who does not.

One strength of this definition is its emphasis on the productive nature of borders, highlighting how they actively produce and reinforce identities and hierarchies[5]. This perspective allows for a deeper understanding of the ways in which borders operate beyond physical boundaries, influencing social, cultural, and political interactions. However, one weakness of this definition is its heavy focus on the construction of subjects and identities, which may overlook the material and practical aspects of borders, such as their role in regulating movement and access to resources[5]. It is important to note that this could limit the applicability of her theory to contexts where the physical aspects of borders are more salient, such as in the studies of migration and border security.

In the later definition to the former, this author deduces that both theorists emphasize the dynamic and performative nature of borders, highlighting their role in shaping identities and

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subjectivities. However, the latter focuses more on the cultural and hybrid nature of borders, while the later emphasis is more on their political and regulatory functions. Critically examined, one must note that, while latter the definition offers valuable details into the construction of political subjects, its abstract and theoretical nature may make it challenging to apply in empirical research, particularly in studies that require a more concrete understanding of borders as physical, regulatory, and symbolic entities.

The sociologist perspective of the concept of border presents a distinctive view of borders, emphasizing their significance in the global economy and the emergence of global cities[6]. They argued that borders are not merely physical boundaries but intricate systems of governance that regulate the movement of capital, information, and people worldwide[6]. This angle to the border discourse underscores the interconnected nature of borders, highlighting their formation by global economic dynamics and power structures. An important strength of her definition is its emphasis on the economic and political dimensions of borders, offering a detailed comprehension of their function within globalisation. Through the emphasis on how borders regulate the flow of capital and information, she reveals their dual role in facilitating and constraining economic activities and social interactions.

However, a critique of this definition is its potential oversight of the cultural and symbolic aspects of borders, which also play a significant role in shaping identities and social relations[6]. Moreover, the focus on global cities and the global economy might limit the applicability of her theory to contexts where borders serve diverse and complex roles, such as in studies of migration, security, and cultural exchange. This definition provides an insightful perspective on borders, highlighting their dynamic and multifaceted nature in today's globalised world. While her emphasis on the economic dimensions of borders is valuable, it is

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essential to complement this viewpoint with other theoretical approaches that engage with the cultural, political, and social dimensions of borders to gain a comprehensive understanding of their impact on contemporary societies and polities.

This perspective of geography offers a compelling definition of a border as a vertical plane, a continuous imaginary line that separates two distinct territorial entities, within which different laws, rules, and regulations may apply[7]. This definition highlights several strengths. Firstly, his definition emphasises the conceptual nature of borders as "imaginary lines," challenging the physicality often associated with borders. This conceptualisation aligns with modern understandings of borders as social constructs that can change over time, rather than fixed, physical barriers[7].

Secondly, by describing borders as separating "two distinct territorial entities," it acknowledges that borders are not just lines on a map but represent the boundaries of political, legal, and cultural jurisdictions[7]. This recognition of the multifaceted nature of borders adds depth to his definition. However, this definition could be critiqued for its lack of nuance regarding the complexity of borders. While it acknowledges that different laws, rules, and regulations may apply on either side of a border, he does not delve into the myriad factors that can influence border dynamics, such as historical, economic, and social factors[7]. Additionally, the definition may be seen as overly focused on the state-centric view of borders, emphasizing the separation of territorial entities[7]. This perspective overlooks the ways in which borders can also be sites of connection, interaction, and exchange between different communities and cultures.

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The definition of borders from the angle of history argued that border encompasses the historical, cultural, and social dimensions, portraying it as dynamic spaces where cultures interact and evolve[7]. Borders, in this perspective, are not static lines but fluid zones where people from different backgrounds converge, clash, and blend. This view aligns with contemporary understandings of borders as permeable entities shaped by human movements and cultural exchanges[7]. Furthermore, historian emphasizes borders as sites of cultural exchange and hybridity, highlighting their role in fostering diversity and innovation. They recognise borders as crucial intersections where cultures meet, clash, and blend, leading to the emergence of new cultural forms and identities[7].

However, while this definition sheds light on the cultural significance of borders, it may be critiqued for its broadness and lack of specificity regarding the political, legal, and economic dimensions of borders. For example, it overlooks the complexities of borders, including issues such as border disputes, security concerns, and questions of sovereignty, which are often central to the understanding of borders in a global context.

2.1.1.1 Characteristics of Borders

Borders are not just geographical lines; they are also complex constructs that embody political, economic, social, and cultural meanings. Scholars have explored these characteristics from different perspectives, shedding light on the multifaceted nature of borders. One key characteristic of borders is their role in defining and separating territories[8]. As political boundaries, borders demarcate the extent of sovereign states, delineating where one political entity ends and another begins. It was further explained that borders serve as the

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ultimate territorial expression of political power, highlighting their significance in asserting state authority[8].

Borders also serve as barriers, regulating the movement of people, goods, and ideas across them. This function is particularly evident in the context of immigration control, where borders are used to manage the flow of migrants and prevent unauthorized entry. The role of borders is filters as it determines who is allowed to enter or exit a country, reflecting the state's efforts to manage its population and resources[9]. Moreover, borders are not static entities; they are constantly evolving in response to changing political, economic, and social dynamics. A border is also described as dynamic frontiers that are shaped by historical, cultural, and geopolitical factors[9]. This dynamic nature of borders underscores their fluidity and adaptability to changing circumstances.

Yet another characteristic of borders is their ability to both connect and divide. While borders are often associated with division and conflict, they also serve as meeting points where different cultures, economies, and ideologies intersect. As noted by historian scholars, borders can be viewed as "contact zones" where interactions between different groups take place, leading to the exchange of goods, ideas, and influences[10]. Borders also have symbolic significance, representing notions of identity, belonging, and exclusion. Some argues that borders are not just physical boundaries but also "mental constructs" that shape people's perceptions of themselves and others. Borders can thus be seen as markers of identity, reflecting the cultural, linguistic, and historical ties that bind communities together.

In summary, borders are multifaceted constructs that play a crucial role in shaping our world. They serve as political boundaries, barriers to movement, dynamic frontiers, connectors of

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cultures, and symbols of identity. Given the discussion so far, one could state that understanding the characteristics of borders requires a multidisciplinary approach that considers their political, economic, social, and cultural dimensions. By exploring these characteristics, we can gain a deeper insight into the complex nature of borders and their impact on societies worldwide.

2.1.1.2 A Historical overview of the Patterns of Migration and Cross-border Movements Nigeria

Migration has always been an important element of Nigerian society, marked by various patterns and levels of intensity. Of particular importance is the phenomenon of international migration, which became a substantial trend after the end of colonial rule. Originally, most migrants mostly moved towards the United Kingdom (UK) and the United States of America (USA)[11]. Despite the relatively low number of migrants, individuals who chose to go abroad frequently did so with the intention of pursuing education and then returning to Nigeria to contribute to the nation's efforts in establishing and developing the country. Upon their return after Western exposure, several individuals were appointed to official positions, thus contributing to the development of both the country and the education sector[11]. However, this pattern saw rapid transition in the following years. Several economic, political, and social factors have contributed to the significant increase in international migration from Nigeria, leading to a trend where many Nigerians choose to remain abroad rather than return home.

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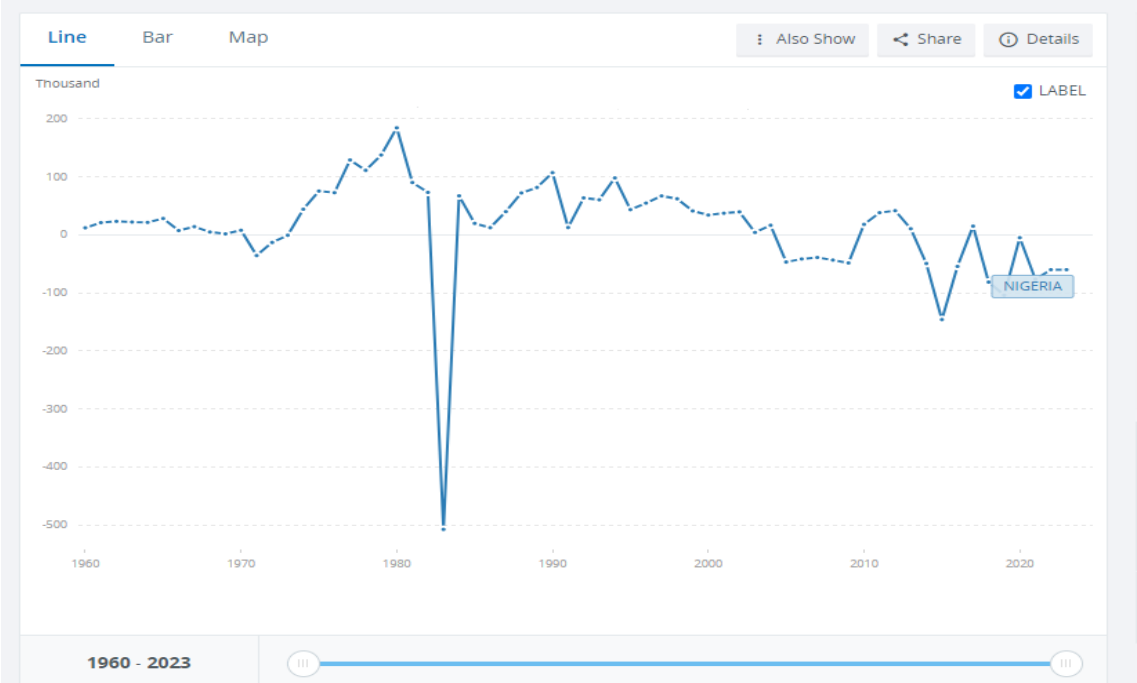


Figure 2.1: World Bank Migration Report in Nigeria

Source:[12]

Nigeria has had substantial internal and external migration trends in recent decades, as reported by the World Bank. In the 1970s, the oil boom led to an influx of foreign migrants, resulting in a net increase in population[12]. However, throughout the 1980s, the combination of economic downturn and political unrest resulted in an increase in the migration of Nigerians from their homeland[12]. Subsequently, Nigeria has seen a persistent negative migration balance, whereby a greater number of individuals have departed from the nation compared to those that have arrived.

Nigeria has been significantly affected by the massive migration, leading to a decline in its labour force, reduced output, and negative consequences for public life and

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development efforts[23]. Researchers have examined the impact of this movement on both Nigeria and the countries where migrants settle. They have identified obstacles, such as a scarcity of labour and decreased productivity in Nigeria, as well as the problems of accommodating a larger population and dealing with related problems such as increasing crime rates in the receiving nations[12].

It indicates that there was a substantial change in foreign migration patterns in Nigeria after the 1980s. In the past, migration mostly consisted of people going overseas to pursue higher education, and many of them would subsequently return to their home countries[12]. Yet, this trend underwent a major shift, which was characterised by a conspicuous surge in the emigration of Nigerians without a definite intention to come back. This change is attributed by scholars to the deterioration of economic circumstances, which were made worse by the implementation of the Structural Adjustment Program (SAP) and the policies of the 1980s[12].

While studies initially indicated that many migrants from Nigeria were heading towards the more industrialised nations of Europe and North America, evidence now shows that some of these migrants have settled within Africa, particularly in West and Central Africa. The significant increase in international migration has raised concerns among receiving countries about the negative impacts of continuous inflows of migrants. Consequently, these countries have begun to tighten their immigration policies in an attempt to discourage mass migration[12]. However, instead of discouraging immigration, these policies have led to a diversification of the countries where migrants are settling.

As a result of these regulations, nations that receive migrants have the ability to choose migrants with greater precision. The diversification of migration destinations for Nigerian

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migrants has resulted in a shift in the routes and patterns of international migration[12]. They now choose to go to countries that were not often considered as destinations before, with the exception of industrialized nations. The newly added locations include Eastern and Southern Europe, the Gulf Countries, North Africa, and Southeast Asia.

2.1.1.3 Internal Migration and Cross-border Movement in Northwest Nigeria

Migration and cross-border movements have been integral to the history of Northwest Nigeria, shaping its demographics, culture, and economy. This region, comprising states like Kano, Katsina, Sokoto, and Zamfara, has experienced diverse migration patterns over the centuries, influenced by factors such as trade, conquest, and environmental conditions[13].

The Pre-Colonial Era

Before the advent of colonial rule, Northwest Nigeria thrived as a hub of trade and cultural exchange, due to its strategic location along trans-Saharan trade routes. This era witnessed a significant influx of people, goods, and ideas, as traders, scholars, and adventurers from neighbouring regions and beyond sought opportunities in the flourishing cities of Kano, Katsina, Sokoto, and others[13]. Historians over the years have highlighted the vibrant nature of this period, where trade routes connected Northwest Nigeria to North Africa, the Middle East, and even Europe[13]. This facilitated the exchange of goods such as gold, ivory, salt, and textiles, enriching the region both economically and culturally.

Moreover, the region's cities became canters of learning and scholarship, attracting Islamic scholars and students from across Africa and beyond. This intellectual exchange contributed to the development of a rich cultural and intellectual heritage in Northwest Nigeria[33]. This

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era of pre-colonial Northwest Nigeria was characterised by its openness to migration and exchange, which played a crucial role in shaping the region's demographics, culture, and economy.

Colonial and Post-independence Era

The colonial period brought significant changes to migration patterns in Northern Nigeria, as European powers imposed new administrative boundaries and economic structures[14]. An author highlights how colonial policies disrupted traditional migration routes and forced many communities to adapt to new socio-economic conditions. One major impact of colonialism was the imposition of new borders and boundaries, which divided ethnic groups and disrupted longstanding migration patterns[14]. This led to the creation of new territories and administrative units, often without regard for the existing social and cultural dynamics of the region. As a result, many communities found themselves separated from traditional trade routes and economic centres, leading to a decline in mobility and economic opportunities.

Colonial and post-colonial economic policies also played a role in shaping migration patterns in Northwest Nigeria. The introduction of cash crops and the development of export-oriented industries led to changes in land use and labour practices, which in turn influenced migration patterns[15]. Many communities were forced to adapt to new economic structures, often leading to increased migration to urban centres or other regions in search of work. Notably, the colonial period marked a significant shift in migration patterns in Northern Nigeria, as communities were forced to adapt to new socio-economic and political realities imposed by colonial powers.

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Post-independence Challenges and Current Trends and Challenges

After gaining independence, Northwest Nigeria faced challenges related to governance, economic development, and security, leading to further migration within and across borders[16]. Peace scholars highlight how factors such as rural-urban migration, communal conflicts, and environmental degradation have contributed to ongoing migration trends in the region. In recent decades, Northwest Nigeria has experienced a notable increase in internal displacement and cross-border movements, largely driven by factors such as insurgency, banditry, and climate change. These challenges have had profound effects on the region, exacerbating existing socio-economic disparities and giving rise to new patterns of migration, including refugee flows to neighbouring countries[16]. Insurgency, particularly by groups like Boko Haram, has destabilised the region, leading to widespread violence and displacement of communities. The resulting insecurity has forced many people to flee their homes in search of safety, leading to internal displacement within Nigeria and, in some cases, prompting individuals to seek refuge in neighbouring countries[16].

Banditry has also emerged as a significant driver of migration in Northwest Nigeria. Armed groups frequently engage in kidnapping, robbery, and other criminal activities, causing fear and insecurity among the local population. This has led to increased migration as people seek to escape the violence and seek better opportunities elsewhere[17]. Climate change is another factor contributing to migration in the region. Changing weather patterns, including droughts and floods, have negatively impacted agricultural productivity, leading to food insecurity and displacement of rural communities[40]. Many people have been forced to migrate to urban

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areas or other regions in search of livelihoods. All these challenges have created complex migration patterns in Northwest Nigeria, highlighting the need for comprehensive strategies to address the root causes of displacement and ensure the protection and well-being of affected populations.

2.1.1.4 Border Security Measures and Illegal Migration in Northwest Nigeria

Border security measures play a crucial role in preventing illegal migration, especially in regions like Northwest Nigeria, which face significant challenges due to porous borders and complex geopolitical dynamics[18]. Despite efforts to enhance border security, illegal migration remains a persistent issue in the region. Border security measures in Northwest Nigeria include physical barriers, such as fences and walls, as well as technological solutions like surveillance cameras and drones most of which are not present or used by the Nigeria customs. In Nigeria, border patrols and checkpoints are mostly used to monitor and control movement across borders. These measures aim to deter illegal migration and enhance security.

However, the effectiveness of these measures is often limited by several factors. One key issue is the vast and porous nature of Nigeria's borders, which span over 4,000 kilometres and are difficult to monitor effectively[18]. The lack of infrastructure and resources, such as adequate border patrol personnel and equipment, further hinders efforts to secure the borders. Reports and studies on border security in Nigeria highlight these challenges. The porous borders in Northwest Nigeria are a major factor contributing to the influx of illegal migrants, including economic migrants and refugees fleeing conflict and instability in neighbouring countries[19]. Scholars have also pointed out the limitations of traditional border security measures in

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addressing the root causes of illegal migration. For example, it has been argued that border security alone is insufficient to curb illegal migration, given that it fails to address the underlying economic, social, and political factors that drive people to migrate[19]. Furthermore, moral issues, such as corruption and collusion among border security officials, often undermine efforts to enhance border security. A study has shown that corruption at border crossings in Nigeria is a significant problem, with officials accepting bribes in exchange for allowing illegal migrants to cross. The effectiveness of border security measures in Northwest Nigeria is hampered by several factors, necessitating a holistic critique of their impact. While these measures, including physical barriers, surveillance technology, and border patrols, may have some deterrent effect on illegal migration and enhance security to an extent, they often fall short due to the vast and porous nature of Nigeria's borders[20]. The lack of resources, both in terms of infrastructure and personnel, further undermines the effectiveness of these measures. Insufficient funding and investment in border security limit the government's ability to monitor and control movement across borders effectively.

Additionally, corruption among border security officials, who may collude with smugglers and traffickers, compromises the integrity of border security efforts. Therefore, one could state that addressing the effectiveness of border security in Nigeria requires a comprehensive approach[20]. This includes addressing the root causes of illegal migration, such as poverty and lack of economic opportunities, enhancing cooperation with neighbouring countries to strengthen border security, and improving governance and accountability to tackle corruption within border security agencies. Without addressing these underlying issues, border security measures alone are unlikely to be effective in preventing illegal migration in Northwest Nigeria.

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2.1.2 Banditry

It must be noted that academics have persistently contested the definition of banditry, its nature, and its effects on humanity. The initial generation of discussions predominantly centred on concept of social banditry. Their emphasis was on delineating the character and capacity of bandits to confront the state and its institutions. Nonetheless, there appeared to be differing levels of conceptualizations that posed even greater obstacles than addressing the prior issues[21]. Conceptualizing banditry within the context of this study will undoubtedly establish a more effective framework for comprehending its repercussions for analytical reasons. This section examines the phenomenon of banditry, concentrating primarily on the experiences of the North-western Nigerian states of Zamfara and Sokoto. Existing scholarly literature suggests that the phenomenon of banditry has been extensively examined over time. Scholars have engaged in many discussions concerning the activities of bandits. Bandits have been designated several names contingent upon the situation in which they are situated. Initially, bandits were seen as primitive rebels and were subsequently classified as bandits due to alterations in social class dynamics[22]. Thus, bandits were recognised as individuals belonging to a specific social class that operated in opposition to another conflicting class, particularly the elites[22]. Hobsbawm was the first to employ the term “social banditry” to characterise the actions of bandits. This was inspired by Robin Hood's actions of banditry, when he seized wealth from the affluent and redistributed it to the populace[22]. Consequently, social banditry garnered sympathy and romanticization from recipients who profited from the bandits' activities. Nevertheless, although historians have classified instances of banditry as mythological and nearly hypothetical recent research contests the romanticization of bandits in various world literatures[22].

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Conversely, contemporary bandits in Africa, particularly in South Africa and the Horn of Africa exhibit distinct behaviours compared to social bandits. They are factions whose principals have centred on the evident pursuit of resources and power[23]. Comparable to that are bandits functioning in northern Nigeria. Bandits in northern Nigeria originate from eco-violence materialism and criminality[23]. Their actions demonstrate desperation and a pursuit of riches and power. Nevertheless, researchers have evaluated banditry within the context of Nigeria. The identification of the bandits and the rationale for their designation as terrorists in 2021 have also been analysed.

Nonetheless, based on numerous academics' contextualization, it appeared that the conflict between farmers and herders, together with other political and economic factors, received greater attention. Consequently, various views were advanced in addressing enquiries regarding banditry in Nigeria's most impacted areas—northwest and north-central[24]. The literature search reveals several efforts by researchers to comprehend the concepts of bandits and banditry in northern Nigeria. Numerous themes have emerged from their portrayals of banditry, including conflicts between farmers and herdsmen, Fulani militancy, Fulani terrorism, a more dynamic concept of "crime lords", and the phenomenon of "motorbike bandits"[24].

Nonetheless, with a theoretical focus on eco-violence, each concept embodies unique contextual realities arising from the complex experiences influenced by the interconnectedness of social and politico-economic factors. Commentators framed banditry as a conflict between agriculturalists and pastoralists, particularly emphasizing the longstanding animosity between these two socio-economic groups[25]. In a more thorough analysis, the aforementioned concept criticized the neglect of the conflict's lethal

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characteristics. It contended that it transcends the conventional farmers-herdsmen conflict and, hence, cannot be solely defined by socio-economic conditions. Findings illustrating the deployment of significant modern military weaponry has led experts to propose an alternate viewpoint, characterizing banditry as “Fulani Militancy” rather than a “farmers-herdsmen conflict.” Nevertheless, they were the pioneers in contemplating this dimension[26].

Furthermore, banditry in this context is classified as a land use dispute, whilst SBM Intelligence perceives it as a "herder-settler" contention. In a related development, banditry was characterized as an act perpetrated by crime lords, emerging from its unique socio-criminal dialectics and has evolved beyond the farmers-herdsmen conflict and Fulani militancy to encompass increasingly organised crime in the region[27]. The Africa Centre for Strategic Studies research indicates that the bandits exhibited audacity, organization, and sophistication in their illicit operations[27]. They intimidate the residents, communities, and farms into compliance by violence and murder. Although they primarily pursue personal gain, bandits garnered public sympathy by exploiting political grievances, particularly those of pastoralists[27]. The literature lacks a consensus on the definition of banditry. Banditry also denotes the occurrence of armed robbery or related violent offences, including kidnapping, livestock rustling, and raids on villages and markets. It entails the application of force, or the threat thereof, to coerce an individual or a group for the purposes of robbery, sexual assault, or homicide.

Banditry denotes acts of robbery and violence in regions where the rule of law has deteriorated[28]. Banditry similarly denotes the incidence or prevalence of armed robbery or violent crime. It entails the application of force or the threat thereof to coerce an individual with the intention to rob or kill[28]. A bandit himself can be defined as a thief armed with a

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weapon, particularly one affiliated with a group that assaults individuals traversing rural areas. The term 'armed' is associated with banditry due to the utilisation of various advanced weaponry by bandits, such as AK-47 rifles, pistols, General Purpose Machine Guns (GPMG), machetes, sticks, local pistols, dane guns, double- or single-barrel guns, and knives[28].

Banditry constitutes an offence against individuals. This kind of crime is prevalent and contributes to violence in modern cultures[29]. The notion of banditry has evolved across many temporal, spatial, and contextual dimensions. A 19th-century bandit in Europe and the Americas was a freedom fighter whose objective was to liberate the oppressed from the upper class or colonisers. Moreover, bandits like as Chucho el Roto, Herachio Bernel, and Santanon were frequently lauded as heroes of Mexican freedom. Consequently, Mexicans hold strong sentiments and affection for persons labelled as "social workers" or bandits; although, the State frequently perceives them as nuisances and outlaws that must be eliminated[29]. Crimes against individuals, such as murder, rape, and robbery, have escalated in magnitude and brutality in Nigeria since 1999. This is evidenced by the widespread occurrence of armed robbery in the country, reflecting the broader experience across Africa. In this regard:

> *Car snatching robbery of homes and offices, way-laying of travellers (high-way robbery) are common forms of armed robbery in African countries. Their incidence has been rising since the African crises started in the 1980s*[29].

Consequently, in certain pre-industrial communities, peasants perceive bandits not as outlaws, hoodlums, or miscreants, but rather as avengers and "breadwinners." In traditional

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African contexts, a bandit is fundamentally different from those in the Americas and Europe, as the former is primarily engaged in armed robbery and other criminal activities[30]. The predominant characteristic of banditry in Africa has been the infliction of injury, homicide, and indiscriminate property destruction, hence establishing a clear correlation with cattle rustling[31]. Given that most herdsmen employ various measures to avert the rustling of their livestock, bandits resort to the use of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALWs) to facilitate the effective theft of animals. Consequently, the exertion of force during livestock theft is regarded as banditry and a dynamic criminal working pattern.

The actions of bandits directly impact the seven states of north-western Nigeria—Jigawa, Kaduna, Kano, Katsina, Kebbi, Sokoto, and Zamfara—and are rapidly extending to states in the north-central region, especially Niger State. Research suggests a growing connection between bandits and terrorists in northwest Nigeria, characterised by recruitment strategies and shared logistics and armament[32]. The region's geographical advantages facilitate attacks, while both groups exploit the political economy of 'kidnap for ransom' to finance their criminal activities[32]. Estimates indicate that the number of bandits is over 30,000, distributed among numerous gangs varying in size from 10 to over 1,000 combatants[33].

Thus, this study defines banditry as the employment of various weapons, along with the actual or threatened use of violence by individuals or criminal organisations, to execute criminal acts such as murder, kidnapping, rape, extortion, armed robbery, theft, village incursions, market assaults, maiming, and associated violence motivated by economic, political, or socio-cultural factors, typically in regions where opportunities for such activities are prevalent and governmental deterrence is limited or non-existent. In this context, banditry is characterised as organised crime perpetrated by gangs that intimidate, evict, murder, and

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vandalise property while engaging in further criminal activities, so threatening the region's peace and tranquilly[34]. It involves the application of violence or weaponry (or any instrument of force, coercion, or aggression), encompassing terrorism to dispossess individuals of their material belongings[34]. They imposed taxes on the populace and designated "de facto sovereigns" to advance their agenda. By their nature, bandits seemed desperate in their conflicts with other factions inside the state and, consequently, the territory[34]. Moreover, bandits operate in distinct factions that lack cohesion and established hierarchies. These gangs mostly share opportunities for theft, intergroup rivalry, and territorial conflicts. These organised criminals' function in rural regions, with their strongholds situated deep within forests, providing optimal concealment[35].

Consequently, it is posited that bandits constitute a collection of economically motivated, non-ideological organised criminal entities or gangs engaged in extensive cattle theft, sexual violence, extortion, kidnapping for ransom, armed robbery, looting, and assaults on road users in Nigeria's North-West region[36]. Furthermore, they function through a loose, opportunistic, adaptive, and flexible network in reaction to evolving security conditions; members are selected based on their operational expertise and knowledge. Nonetheless, there exists a kinship based on ethnicity, language, and culture among the bandit groups, and this shared affinity underpins their interactions with each other and with broader communities[36]. Therefore, every person engaged in the aforementioned banditry activities is classified as a bandit.

2.1.2.1 A Historical Overview and the Evolution of Banditry in the Northwestern part Nigeria

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The emergence of armed bandits in north-west Nigeria is often traced back to the precolonial period. The region served as a significant centre for precolonial international trade and migration, with Kano and Katsina strategically located along the trans-Saharan trade routes, facilitating commerce and tourism, and connecting to Sokoto in the West, Borno and others in the East, and the Benin Empire in the South[36]. Armed bandits occupied these routes, posing significant dangers to caravan trade, tourism, political stability, and the territorial integrity of precolonial nations and communities in the region. In Zamfara, for instance, Hilltops such as Kwotarkwashi and Chafe were common targets for criminals, who perpetrated their deleterious activities, frequently resulting in significant security problems[37]. The insufficient capacity of the impacted African nations and cultures to manage their territory and control their trade routes is primarily responsible for armed banditry throughout this period. This pattern persisted into the early colonial period. As summarized, the historical account of armed banditry as far back as 1930s in northern Nigeria as follows:

In those days, wayfarers and merchants travelling along our local economic roads usually faced the threats and dangers of ambush from nondescript bandits. Armed bandits and criminals were known to be targeting goods ferried on the back of donkeys, camels and ox carts. Those bandits on our trade routes would forcefully take those goods and disappear into the bush. That is just one dimension of the problem then. In other instances, the bandits would sometimes raid farming communities and villages with the intent of willful killing and wanton destruction of property. During such raids, the bandits would destroy virtually everything in their path, including valuables, farm produce, etc. This subculture has been in existence even before the coming of colonialists to the territories of northern Nigeria [37]

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Figure 2.2: The map of North-West in Nigeria

Source:[38]

The Northwest is the largest of Nigeria's six geopolitical zones. With a geographical area of 216,065 square kilometres, it accounts for approximately 25.75 percent of Nigeria's total land area and is comparable in size to the United Kingdom[39]. Nigeria has a border with Niger Republic through Kebbi (Birnin Kebbi), Sokoto (Illela, Tangaza, Isa, Gudu, Sabon LGAs), Zamfara (Shinkafi Border and Zurmi), Jigawa (Gumel), and Katsina State (Magama in Jibia, Dankama in Kaita, Kongolom in Maiadua, Babban Mutum in Baure LGAs). Kaduna and Niger States do not have direct borders with Niger Republic, except via the forest. The Niger

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Republic is connected to Nigeria's northwest via the borders of Gaya, Dosso, Tahoua, and Maradi[39].

Notwithstanding the aforementioned, the colonial regime bolstered the capabilities of the precolonial governments in northern Nigeria and effectively curtailed the operations of armed bandits. The new order included an Atlantic-focused commerce and socioeconomic system, a Westphalian state structure, and associated policing and defence initiatives[40]. These factors, among others, pushed armed bandits into obscurity and mitigated their threats during the late colonial and early post-colonial periods in Nigeria. Political violence, ethnic tensions, societal militarisation, insufficient policy focus on human development and climate change, and the state's weak institutional capacity in governance and security have heightened the prospects and incentives for armed resistance and criminal violence in post-colonial Nigeria[40]. Amidst this, armed bandit organizations proliferate throughout the country, accompanied by a boom in armed robbery and ethno-communal conflicts since the 1980s. In Northern Nigeria, particularly in the northwest, this phenomenon further evolved to encompass cattle rustling, which gained prominence in the 2000s. Nonetheless, 2011 can be seen as a pivotal year in the modern resurgence of armed banditry in north-west Nigeria, marked by the rise of armed factions led by the Fulanis Kundu and Buharin Daji. Despite the absence of youth in the group, they designated it as Kungiyar gayu, the association of young men[40]. The organisation is publicly recognised as “Kungiyar Barayin Shanu”.

Throughout 2012, instances of livestock rustling emerged throughout the state, revealing their underlying aim. This cultural organization aims to liberate the Fulani from hierarchical oppression imposed by security forces, politicians, and traditional leaders[41]. The state's grazing pastures were being encroached upon and seized while herders migrated to adjacent

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states. Before the 2011 recruitment process, membership was restricted to the Fulani. A variety of instruments, including cash pledges, cattle, sexual favours, leisure activities, and intimidation, were employed to attract Fulanis[41]. A number of ranchers allied with the gang to evade persecution by its members upon realizing the gang was engaging in cattle rustling. Allegations suggest that certain influential Fulani families in Zamfara, Sokoto, and Katsina states have provided financial and moral support to the gangs due to apprehension of severe repercussions. Public infrastructure, including railroads, rail lines, and military facilities and academies, was predominantly attacked by armed bandits in North-west Nigeria. Furthermore, the crisis has become prominent in Zamfara and Sokoto due to the finding of gold in those regions[42]. Nonetheless, confrontations between farmers and herders further exacerbated the crisis in the region.

Studies indicate that banditry in the Northwest borderlands, adjacent to the Niger Republic, encompasses a range of interconnected activities, including kidnapping for ransom, cattle rustling, armed robbery on highways, homicides, confiscation of smuggled goods such as foreign rice, raids on villages and markets, mutilation, and sexual assault of women and minors[43]. Research has revealed several viewpoints regarding the offenders of banditry in the border regions. One viewpoint posits that the conflict is instigated by Fulani herdsmen and farmers due to their confrontations over limited resources, including water, arable land, and grazing areas[43]. Nevertheless, none of the groups assume accountability. It is important to know that numerous armed bandits are of Fulani descent, as are many of their victims[43]. In June 2020, the previous Local Government Chairman of Sabon Birni challenged Punch News, asserting that the Fulani were the instigators of the banditry. The national organisation of the Fulani, known as the Miyeti Allah Cattle Breeders Association of Nigeria

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(MACBAN), has consistently refuted allegations that the Fulani are accountable for the banditry occurring in the region[44]. The group's chairman asserts that the Fulani are primarily victims of cattle rustling. The chairman asserted that approximately 30 percent of their cattle have been lost due to various issues in the country[44].

Another viewpoint posits that banditry in the region is executed by multiple criminal syndicates that exploit the precarious security conditions to commit crimes for personal, economic, or political gain[44]. Individuals engaged in organized crime, such as armed banditry, resort to it as a desperate strategy for economic accumulation and socio-economic empowerment. Banditry is not a novel phenomenon at the northwestern border with the Niger Republic. Its origin can be traced to 1901, when robbers murdered 210 individuals and appropriated 12,000 camels transporting grains from Hausalands to the Tahoua region[44]. These districts were previously governed by the British and French administrations during the colonial era. During the 1940s, bandits and rustlers were present in towns such as Danbaraina, Gidan Zomo, and Bangui.

In 1948, a Tuareg, named Arab, established a village called Gidan Arab, a town renowned for harbouring criminals. In May 1951, British and French officials, including local chiefs, conducted an operation against bandits, apprehending 10 individuals and recovering 130 heads of stolen cattle; nevertheless, Arab and some gang leaders evaded capture and retreated to Gundumi woodland[44]. In 1953, British and French authorities initiated a collaborative border patrol, deploying approximately 529 horses for the operation, led by Sergeant Mamman Katsina and his assistant, Sarkin Rafin Madawa. This effort considerably diminished banditry, albeit it did not eradicate it entirely.

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Following the independence of Nigeria and Niger Republic, banditry continued to manifest intermittently in the border regions, albeit with less intensity than observed in the last decade. During that period, bandits were recognised by their names and locations within local communities, including police stations[45]. For instance, when animals were pilfered in Bada-Gishiri, Gidan Iddar, Kwonni, or Sarnawa, they could be readily located and retrieved in the villages of Danburema and Gudun-Gudun within Gada Local Government in Sokoto State. Those that remained unaccounted for could be traced to distant markets such as Kasuwar Daji, Talata Mafara, or Shinkafi, where they were being butchered by local slaughterers[45]. The recent surge in banditry in the northwest region since 2010 results from a transition from livestock rustling to more sophisticated criminal enterprises[45].

Factors contributing to this transformation include the escalation of cattle prices in both national and regional markets; the influx of Small Arms and Light Weapons; the displacement of certain nomadic herdsmen from traditional pastoralism due to conflicts, diseases, and drought in the Sahel; the participation of opportunistic criminals and militants in cattle theft; the emergence of local and trans-local networks and markets for the trade of stolen cattle; the involvement of transnational syndicates in criminal enterprises; and the proliferation of criminal franchises, opportunism, and impunity within the country, alongside the increasing ineffectiveness of security measures to prevent such activities[46].

Origins and Motivators of Armed Banditry

There are numerous factors that can explain the emergence of armed banditry in North-west Nigeria. These can be broadly considered in three forms: background causes or existing conditions (poverty, ungoverned spaces, fragile security and Weak border management), the

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immediate causes or triggers (climate change, resource competition, informal security, jungle justice, ethno-communal factors, religious intolerance, resource curse, criminality, and drug abuse), and crisis enablers (state complicity, foreign powers, traditional rulers, weapon suppliers, food suppliers, informants, and bandits' negotiators). These have fueled the recent trend of armed banditry, which remains the most prevalent threat to Nigeria's national security.

Background Causes of Armed Banditry in North-West Nigeria

Nigeria is a consequence of colonial state construction, characterised by boundaries delineated with minimal regard for precolonial political structures, sociocultural connections, and economic interactions, rendering the interests of the populace largely secondary[47]. The inadequacy and dysfunction of the post-colonial state, encompassing all tiers of government from federal to local, in fulfilling the welfare and security needs of the populace have incited both popular and unpopular, peaceful and violent mobilisation and resistance against the system, alongside criminal violence, evidenced in banditry, terrorism, insurgency, militancy, and piracy throughout Nigeria.

Endemic Poverty, Poor Governance, and Unemployment

Nigeria possesses a variety of natural resources; however, nagetive governance and misappropriation of public funds have resulted in significant portions remaining unregulated and overlooked, particularly in borderland regions, which are notably marked by elevated levels of poverty, illiteracy, and deficient infrastructure[47]. Despite its economic potential, the Northwest has the highest poverty rate in Nigeria[48]. The adverse living conditions render rural communities, particularly farmers and herders, susceptible to engaging in armed

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banditry and other criminal activities. In 2019, the poverty rate in the northwest exceeded 40.1 percent of the national average. The rates were as follows: Sokoto 87.7 percent, Jigawa 87 percent, Katsina 53 percent, Kaduna 43 percent, and Zamfara 74 percent. The literacy rate in the region was at 29.7 percent[48]. The presence of millions of impoverished individuals, lack of educational opportunities, inadequate basic amenities, adverse climatic conditions, and precarious livelihoods renders banditry an appealing option for the idle and famished population.

The northwest and various other regions of Nigeria are marked by pervasive poverty, reflecting the difficult state of human wellbeing. The United Nations Development Programme's study on the Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) highlights that five of the ten states in Nigeria with endemic poverty are located in the north-west, emphasising issues related to poverty, unemployment, education, standard of life, and healthcare. The northwest exhibits the highest poverty intensity at 45.0%, succeeded by the northeast at 44.0%, which has been ravaged by the Boko Haram insurgency[48]. The north-central region ranked third with 41.0%. The lowest concentration is found in the southern regions of Nigeria, comprising the southwest (38.0%), southeast (38.0%), and south-south (39.0%) geopolitical zones. Poverty and armed banditry are inherently interconnected[48]. Thus, the elevated poverty levels in the northern region facilitate the proliferation of armed banditry in the impacted areas. The inadequate human welfare in the region constitutes a significant cause of irritation and hostility. Individuals engaged in banditry and other forms of armed resistance or criminal violence in the region may have adopted this lifestyle as a survival strategy in response to adverse living conditions.

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2.1.3 Ungoverned Spaces and Fragile Security

The illegal actions of armed bandits in the Northwest are facilitated by several ungoverned areas that nurture these criminal organisations. Zamfara, Kaduna, Katsina, and Kebbi are prominent epicentres of armed banditry in the north-west region. Approximately 35 of the 92 Local Government Areas (LGAs) in the north-west have been recorded as affected[48]. Following years of warfare and advantageous land ownership legislation for farmers over herders, herders resorted to violent criminal activities. Camps have since been established in Rugu Forest, Zamfara State, primarily consisting of Fulanis and Hausas. The Dajin Rugu forest spans three states: Zamfara, Katsina, and Kaduna[49]. The Falgore Forest in Kano State, designated as a game reserve in the 1960s, spans three local government areas: Doguwa, Sumaila, and Tundun Wada. The Kuduru, Kamuku, Kuyambana, Sububu, and Burwaye forests are among the most perilous areas of armed banditry in the region. While Kaduna contains a significant chunk of Kamuku Forest, it also extends into Niger, Zamfara, Kebbi, and Katsina states.

These unregulated enclaves transformed into concealed zones for assaulting adjacent villages and travellers in Kaduna, Katsina, Sokoto, Kebbi, and Niger states. In 2019, Zamfara State was estimated to host around 10,000 bandits over 40 encampments[49]. The inadequacy of institutional capacity within federal and state governments regarding forest management, coupled with the diminishing influence of local government authorities in local governance, provides armed bandits with opportunities to exploit these ungoverned areas for their development and criminal endeavours[49]. Moreover, armed bandits have capitalised on the

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inefficient and declining security situation throughout Nigeria to advance their objectives. The recent aspect contributing to this issue is the inadequate security framework, particularly the claims of police extortion, prompting individuals to resort to armed banditry instead of pursuing justice.

Armed banditry in North-West Nigeria: Immediate Causes of Multidimensional Crisis

Armed banditry is a multidimensional crisis that is triggered by several factors in North-West Nigeria. Both internal and external factors elicited the immediate causes of armed banditry. These include climate-induced migration and resource competition, informal security and jungle justice, ethno-communal and religious factors, resource-curse, criminal, pastoral, and terror-crime nexus.

2.1.4 Climate-induced migration and resource Competition

Climate-induced migration, relocation, and resource competition are significant catalysts of armed banditry in northwest Nigeria. The competition for natural resources, including land, water, and pastures, between nomadic cattle herders and farmers, exacerbated by climate change, is a key catalyst of armed banditry. The land-use conflict between Hausa farmers and Fulani pastoralists, which generated significant discord between the two ethnic groups in the northwest, was also a contributing factor[50]. The growing population has led to resource competition and inadequate land dispute settlement, resulting in heightened conflict in the northwest. These factors, among others, have instigated a succession of farmer-herder clashes in the region.

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The primary factors included the Zamfara State government's choices to deforest large areas and convert cattle grazing reserves within the Kuyanbana forest and the Gidan Jaja regions of Maru and Zurmi LGAs for agricultural purposes[50]. As a result of the program, numerous Fulani hamlets were compelled to relocate between the Dansadau and Maradun axes to the Zurmi region of the state. In these regions, the Fulani cattle herders were formerly subjected to hatred and extortion by corrupt district leaders, farmers, and law enforcement, amidst a feeble legal system. This occurred much prior to the implementation of the eviction program for pastoralists. The conditions led to the formation and radicalisation of a fragmented group of destitute, poor, and frustrated Fulani individuals. Initially, banditry commenced as the theft of cattle and the devastation of agricultural lands, but it has since evolved into a more active and profitable enterprise[50]. This circumstance led to the emergence of some of the first recognised armed factions among the Fulanis, referred to as Kundu and Buharin Daji. Others include Kungiyar Gayu, commonly referred to as "Kungiyar Barayin Shanu".

2.1.4.1 Informal Security and Jungle Justice Dimension

Informal security measures and jungle justice significantly contribute to the emergence of armed banditry in northwest Nigeria. Following herder-farmer clashes and criminal assaults in the northwest, Hausa farming communities began to organise themselves into vigilante groups referred to as "*Yan sa kai*" (volunteer guards)[50]. This is regarded as an informal security framework that has addressed the deficiency in state security. The instruments employed to address insecurity include locally manufactured firearms, machetes, clubs, and conventional weaponry. Moreover, numerous vigilante organisations focus on pastoralist communities of Fulani heritage, alleging their involvement in criminal activities. These informal security organisations have led to extrajudicial killings, torture, arbitrary detentions,

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and the confiscation of livestock, ultimately exacerbating the issue rather than resolving it[51]. Moreover, the Fulani encampments are typically obliterated, compelling the pastoralists to seek refuge in the woodlands. This policy has intensified the discord between the Hausa farmers and the Fulani pastoralists. Fulani pastoralists have established militias to oppose the informal security measures of Hausa farmers. From 2011 to 2014, the emergence of armed organisations was depicted as a means of self-defence and ethnic solidarity, but certain Fulani pastoralists were motivated by economic factors, hence intensifying the violence.

2.1.4.2 Communal and Religious Dimension

Ethno-communal and religious factors are significant contributors to the emergence of armed banditry in north-west Nigeria. Nigerians often define their identities through primal affiliations, including communal, ethnic, and religious links, rather than through a state-centric national identity. Almost half of Nigerians (48.2%) associated with ethnic origins, whereas 21% identified with religious affiliations[51]. Since 1999, ethno-communal conflicts have intensified, manifesting as intercommunity, indigene-settler, and herder-farmer disputes in north-western and other regions of Nigeria[51]. An illustrative instance is the prolonged fighting between the largely Christian ethnic minority tribes of southern Kaduna and the predominantly Muslim Hausa-Fulani. It is estimated that between 10,000 and 20,000 individuals have perished as a result of the violence. These and other conflicts have engendered profound animosity, which is occasionally expressed through the establishment and mobilisation of armed factions, including communal, ethnic, or religious militias, as well as criminal or social bandits, to exact retribution. These conflicts have devastated extensive infrastructure and private property, displaced many individuals and depriving them of their livelihoods, compelling them to resort to armed resistance or criminal violence for survival[51].

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2.1.4.3 The Resource-Curse Dimension

Armed banditry has been exacerbated by the proliferation of armed criminal groups, including instances of banditry. It has been asserted that 80% of mineral resource exploration, particularly gold mining, is conducted unlawfully[51]. The proliferation of illicit gold mining and the participation of foreign firms signify inadequate governance, structural and institutional deterioration, and unregulated areas within the region. Twenty Certain illicit miners possess political connections and overseas networks, facilitating the transportation of natural resources through Niger and Togo, ultimately exporting them to destinations such as Dubai, China, and beyond.

Impoverished youngsters are being enlisted and organised for the illicit activity of artisanal mining[52]. In this instance, non-state armed groups are financed by affluent entrepreneurs engaged in illicit gold mining to safeguard their interests against impacted communities, other commercial entities, competing political factions, and state security forces. Amidst this, armed bandits and gangs have arisen, frequently targeting locations and personnel of competing informal gold miners, antagonistic or uncooperative communities, security installations, and policymakers opposed to the status quo along with their followers. This exposes the governance issues in the country and exacerbates security tensions in the region.

The vast forests along the Nigeria-Niger Republic border serve as concealment, operational bases, and training grounds for bandits, complicating the efforts of security agencies to

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identify and neutralise them[53]. The Birnin Gwari and Dansadau forests, the densest in the region, span portions of Katsina, Zamfara, Sokoto, Kebbi, Niger, and Kaduna states, connecting northwest border villages with those in Niger. The bandits utilise many forests, including Falgore, Kunduma, Kamuku, Kamara, Kuyanbana, and Subudu[53].

The link between terrorism and crime is a significant catalyst for armed banditry in northwest Nigeria. There is increasing conjecture that the armed bandits are connected to the Islamist Boko Haram insurgents. Despite the insurgent fight being focused in the north-east, Boko Haram and its affiliates, including Al Qaeda and the Islamic State, have sustained a considerable presence and executed numerous strikes in the north-west[54]. Based on shared operational area, many factions of Boko Haram militants are thought to engage in both competition and collaboration with distinct groups of armed robbers. Counterinsurgency troops are considered to have effectively diminished Boko Haram, compelling some of its adherents to adopt less ideological pursuits, including banditry and other forms of criminal violence. Armed bandits are mostly driven by economic incentives, but jihadists are typically motivated by political philosophy. Thus, the economic inclination inherent in armed banditry may be less ideologically motivated than the violence perpetrated by rebels[54]. The financial benefits of armed banditry can also facilitate a difficult insurgency campaign.

The situation in North West Nigeria has been facilitated by various visible (combatants) and invisible (noncombatants) actors. As indicated in the preceding section, Fulani and other ethnic militias, pastoralists and farmers, vigilantes and various communal armed factions, armed migrants and settlers driven by climate or conflict, Boko Haram and associated terrorists and insurgents, as well as political thugs and illegal gold miners along with their security personnel, are significant and prominent participants in armed banditry in North

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West Nigeria[54]. Nevertheless, other additional entities are implicated in armed banditry, serving as covert influences behind the situation.

2.1.4.4 Traditional Rulers, Weapon Suppliers, Informants, and Bandits' Negotiators, Illicit Drugs

Some peace scholars suggests that bandits may have been receiving assistance from certain traditional rulers who purportedly supply intelligence or offer protection in return for monetary compensation[55]. In April 2019, the Nigerian military apprehended two traditional rulers in Zamfara State for conspiring with bandits to undermine government efforts against them. In July 2019, Bello Mutawale, the Executive Governor of Zamfara State, suspended four traditional rulers, about 33 District Heads, and countless Village Heads suspected of facilitating the bandits implicated in the ongoing wave of banditry that commenced in June 2011[55].

Another perspective encompasses the collusion of traditional rulers and citizens. Several renowned traditional rulers were ousted due to their participation in armed banditry, with some local leaders frequently serving as key informants for the bandits.

The case involves two notable individuals from Zamfara and Kaduna who endeavoured to illicitly transport firearms into the north-west by leveraging their ties in the Sahel region via Nigeria's permeable borders. Alongside these notable Nigerians, numerous intermediaries and suppliers participated in the arms trafficking to forests occupied by armed bandits. Furthermore, it was revealed that arms suppliers got greater financial compensation than combatants in the field[55]. Furthermore, the significance of informants cannot be disregarded.

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Numerous cases occurred where informants, masquerading as community members, were apprehended for providing essential information to armed robbers.

The significance of negotiators in armed banditry is paramount. Intermediaries for criminals have been instrumental in numerous ransom kidnapping incidents. Two notable Islamic figures are recognised as intermediaries facilitating communication between the relatives of the abducted individuals and the kidnappers[56]. They are essential in negotiating the ransom demanded by the families of abducted victims and serve as intermediaries between the bandits and the victims' families. This has constituted a normal operating practice inside Nigeria's illicit economy of armed banditry. Moreover, the recent apprehension of a negotiator for the bandits, charged with the unlawful possession of incriminating materials including military uniforms and a significant quantity of foreign currency, illustrates the presence of a criminal economy centred on kidnapping frequently executed by armed bandits[56]. Certain individuals have amassed significant wealth due to such illicit activities.

The utilisation of hard drugs, particularly among the adolescent demographic, is one of the most overlooked factors. The connection between substance misuse and criminal behaviour has emerged as an additional aspect of security concern. The consumption of illicit substances among the youth demographic has been posited as a catalyst for armed banditry in Nigeria. Common narcotics utilised by armed bandits comprise tramadol, codeine, injectable substances, marijuana, Boska, hydro-caffeine, and Pentazocine[56]. Consequently, the consumption of illicit substances facilitates criminal involvement in relation to armed banditry inside the region.

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The accessibility of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) significantly empowers bandits to perpetrate violence against their victims and confront government security forces during confrontations. The collapse of President Ghaddafi's rule in Libya in 2011 facilitated the influx of weaponry from the Maghreb and Sahel into West African nations, extending to Northwest Nigeria via the permeable borders between Nigeria and Niger Republic[57]. The porous border between Nigeria and Niger Republic renders gun trafficking highly profitable, inexpensive, and accessible for criminal elements. In response to the murder of 70 individuals in Zaroundaraye, located on the border between Niger Republic and Mali, President Buhari remarked that 'The plundering of Libyan armouries following Gaddafi's downfall has equipped terrorists and other criminals with perilous weapons, thereby presenting security threats to nations such as Cameroon, Chad, Niger Republic, and Nigeria.

2.1.4.5 Porosity of the Borders

The porosity of Nigeria's northern borders, particularly those shared with the Niger Republic, remains one of the most critical factors enabling cross-border migration and the proliferation of banditry in the Northwest. Several structural, political, and socio-cultural factors contribute to the weak border control that characterizes this region. One major cause of border porosity is the inadequate security infrastructure. Border posts are sparsely located, poorly staffed, and often lack modern surveillance technology. Vast stretches of land remain unmonitored, making it easy for armed groups, smugglers, and undocumented migrants to move across borders undetected. In many cases, the terrain is difficult to navigate and patrol, further limiting the capacity of security agencies to enforce strict border management[58].

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The political dimension also plays a significant role. Historically, northern border communities have maintained long-standing ties with neighbouring Nigerien and Chadian populations. During the colonial era, artificial boundaries were drawn by European powers without considering existing social or cultural linkages. This has created regions where communities on both sides of the border see the boundary as a political construct rather than a barrier. As a result, local political actors often resist strict border enforcement because it threatens long-established trade, kinship networks, and local economies. Additionally, weak political will, corruption among border officials, and inconsistent policy implementation further undermine efforts to safeguard the borders[59].

Religion and ethnicity add another layer of complexity. Many communities across the Nigeria–Niger border share the same ethnic identities, such as the Hausa, Fulani, and Kanuri groups, creating an environment where cross-border movement is seen as natural and culturally legitimate. These shared identities make it easier for individuals; including criminal elements, to blend into local populations without suspicion. Religion, predominantly Islam in these border communities, also fosters a sense of solidarity and communal belonging across national boundaries. This complicates the task of identifying outsiders or monitoring cross-border activities, as cultural and religious homogeneity reduces distinct markers of nationality that security agencies might otherwise rely on[60].

Specific porous border routes in the northwest include Sabon Gari, Dan Hauru, Alele, Mkada, and Maidabar, among others. These locations function as entry and exit points for smuggled firearms, narcotics, food items, and for the movement of bandits seeking safe havens across the border after attacks in Nigeria. The inability to effectively secure these

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routes has significantly contributed to the persistence and escalation of banditry in Sokoto, Zamfara, and neighbouring states[60].

2.1.4.6 Climate Change

Climate change and deforestation, driven by the southward expansion of the Saharan Desert, are significant contributors to water scarcity for arable agriculture in the borderlands[58]. Niger Republic is characterised as a 'desert, predominantly hot, arid, dusty, and tropical in the extreme south' (The World Fact Book 2020). 50 to 75 percent of the territory in northern Nigeria, encompassing Katsina, Kano, Kebbi, Zamfara, and Sokoto, is undergoing desertification[58]. The limited availability of water supplies and grazing pasture among ethnic nomadic herders and agricultural communities has consistently led to conflicts between farmers and herders[59]. The International Crisis Group indicates that the security crisis in the region stems from protracted competition for land and water resources between primarily Fulani herders and Hausa farmers, both of whom have historically organised armed factions, labelled by authorities as "bandits" and "vigilantes," respectively. The failure of Nigeria and Niger Republic to address the impacts of climate change in the border regions, with population growth, water shortages, and limited grazing and agricultural land, has perpetuated competitiveness and incited conflict between herders and farmers[59].

2.1.4.7 Security Implications of Armed Banditry in North-West Nigeria

Fatalities and Humanitarian Impacts

Armed banditry has adversely affected both human and national security in North-West Nigeria and the country as a whole. It is notably accountable for documenting mortality and

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the erosion of human freedom. Bandit assaults in the north-west have led to several civilian fatalities, particularly in rural regions, where incidents are predominantly underreported by the government, media, and security authorities[60]. Reports indicate that armed bandits were responsible for the deaths of 8,300 individuals from January 2013 to March 2022, with casualties comprising seven in Jigawa, 1,917 in Kaduna, 1,416 in Katsina, 202 in Kebbi, 644 in Sokoto, and 4,114 in Zamfara[61]. Another version indicates that around 3,600 individuals were abducted, 8,000 were murdered, and 200,000 were displaced as a result of the crisis in Zamfara alone[61]. Furthermore, the region encountered more than 1,000 abductions for ransom in 2021[61]. These factors, among others, illustrate the dangers that armed banditry poses to lives and human liberty in the impacted region. The violence has precipitated a humanitarian disaster, resulting in the displacement of numerous individuals owing to armed banditry.

A collaborative assessment by the UN High Commissioner for Refugees and the National Commission for Refugees, Migrants, and Internally Displaced Persons reported that 210,354 individuals from 171 villages had been displaced in the north-west[62]. Zamfara recorded 144,996, Sokoto reported 35,941, and Katsina had 29,417.49 The National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) claimed that 105,463 individuals were relocated in Sokoto State alone[63]. As of March 2020, the conflict is projected to have displaced over 210,000 individuals in north-west Nigeria and resulted in 35,000 refugees crossing into regions such as Maradi in Niger Republic. Furthermore, the livelihoods of many have been compromised, leading to increasing apprehension regarding the dynamics between displaced individuals and host communities amid their escalating competition for limited resources, including water, land, and food[63]. The insufficient resources allocated for displaced individuals have

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resulted in deplorable living circumstances in Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) camps, marked by inadequate sanitation and health services, food shortages, and insufficient shelter.

Economic and Educational Impacts

The repercussions of armed banditry on Nigeria's economy are catastrophic. insecurity incurred a cost of 8% of Nigeria's GDP ($132.59 billion) in 2021.53, 54 Furthermore, data from Nigeria's National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) indicate that 26.95% of Nigeria's GDP has been impacted by the disruption of agricultural activity[64]. Also, data indicated that in the first half of 2020, there was a 56.5% decline in local raw materials compared to the 64% reported in the first half of 2019, reflecting a 7.5% reduction over the period[64]. This is due to the perilous corporate climate tainted by insecurity. The rising cost of living due to inflation has adversely impacted poverty alleviation and the standard of living for millions of Nigerians, since an increasing number of individuals are losing their sources of income. Farming and animal husbandry are the predominant economic activity in north-west Nigeria[64]. Cattle rustling, the destruction of farmlands and rural communities, along with the death and kidnapping of farmers, pastoralists, and agricultural traders, have exacerbated human poverty and inequality in the region.

Armed banditry has exacerbated food insecurity in North-West and beyond. Due to numerous assaults on agricultural villages, accompanied by kidnappings for ransom and the murder of farmers, many individuals have vacated their farmlands in search of safety. For example, after armed bandits warned farmers to refrain from accessing their crops, around 26 farmers who disregarded this command were slaughtered in Batsari LGA of Katsina State[65]. Furthermore, numerous farmers have been abducted for ransom. The area has also

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experienced farmers paying levies to armed bandits as a prerequisite for accessing their agricultural areas. In Shiroro LGA, armed bandits extorted $1,100 from farmers as a prerequisite to accessing their crops. It has been asserted that over 5,884 farmlands including more than 58,330 hectares have been forsaken in Katsina by farmers due to the insecurity afflicting the north-west[65].

Similarly, pastoralists have experienced numerous incidents of cattle rustling in the area. From June 2017 to January 2018, around 1,000 Fulani herders and their families were killed, and two million livestock were stolen throughout Nigeria, with the north-west being a significant hotspot[65]. These and other factors have adversely impacted agricultural activities of farming communities and pastoralists, undermining their food production capabilities and resulting in a scarcity of affordable, marketable, accessible, and acceptable food in the region and nationwide. Armed banditry adversely impacts education, evidenced by numerous assaults on schools, students, and educators. Data from the NST database indicate that at least seven bandit assaults targeted educational institutions in the northwestern states of Katsina, Kaduna, and Zamfara, resulting in the abduction of 519 students and staff between 2019 and 2021[65]. Nonetheless, there are evidence that the documentation of cases and victims is not comprehensive.

In December 2020, around 300 pupils were abducted by armed bandits at the Government Boys Science Secondary School in Kankara, Katsina State[66]. Subsequently, armed assailants attacked and abducted 317 female students at Government Girls Secondary School Jangebe in Zamfara State, as well as 39 students at Federal College of Forestry Mechanisation, and 29 students together with three non-teaching staff members at Greenfield University in Kaduna State[66]. Since December 2020, reports indicate that armed bandits have assaulted educational

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institutions and abducted over 700 individuals for ransom. Schools have been shuttered at various times due to the threat of armed bandits in seven states, including Sokoto, Katsina, Kaduna, Niger, and Zamfara[67]. Armed banditry has significantly hindered intergenerational human capacity development by diminishing school enrolment and escalating the number of out-of-school children in the northwest[67]. Evidence indicates that northwest Nigeria has 3.49 million out-of-school children, the largest number in the nation[68]. These youngsters may become a new cohort of recruits for criminal and insurgent groups, so perpetuating membership and combatants, which will prolong the crisis and sustain insecurity.

Illicit Gold Mining

Illicit gold mining in Zamfara State has significantly exacerbated cross border migration, banditry and instability in the Northwest. Bandits employed firearms to commandeer gold mining locations, confiscate mining apparatus, and extort funds from local miners. Their nefarious operations are financed by the earnings from gold. On 8th November 2016, around 45 illicit gold miners were killed by more than 50 bandits in the Bindim Community in the Maru Local Government Area in Zamfara State[69]. In June 2019, the Zamfara State Government decisively banned all mining operations in the State to mitigate banditry activities.

Informants

Studies suggest that banditry in the northwest is being exacerbated by informants, persons who supply sensitive information to bandits in return for financial compensation or other advantages. For the bandits, acquiring information regarding the movements of individuals, their locations, and financial status is crucial, since it enables them to accurately track and

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assault or abduct their victims. On January 9, 2021, the Emir of Maru in Zamfara State stated that "Most of the informants reside within our communities and are recognized by the populace"[70]. They operate unimpeded throughout communities, engaging in nefarious acts[70]. In January 2021, informants Saidu Haruna and Musa Ibrahim were apprehended in Katsina State and charged with criminal conspiracy at the Magistrate Court for facilitating a banditry attack on Dantankari village in Dandume Local Government Area, which resulted in the deaths of two individuals[70]. In Sabon Gida village, forces apprehended Ya'u Tukur, a suspected bandit, in Dan Ali village.

Gendered-Differentiated Effects

The crisis possesses a gender dimension, resulting in adverse effects for women and children. A significant number of men and boys have been murdered or abducted for ransom, while numerous individuals have been deprived of their means of subsistence[71]. As of the first quarter of 2019, it was stated that 11,000 men were slain in Zamfara State by armed bandits[71]. Numerous women are now widows following the murders of their husbands, who were the primary providers for their families. This pattern suggests a scenario in a traditional cultural zone where women are predominantly less educated and relegated to full-time housewives with restricted socioeconomic empowerment. Nevertheless, armed bandits have also perpetrated sexual abuse against women and girls. There is an increasing documentation of rape occurring during bandit ambushes or sieges of rural settlements, as well as the abduction of young women and girls for the purposes of sexual slavery or forced marriage[71]. More concerning, the majority of women who were raped and impregnated by their captors

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endure trauma with minimal solace, as their communities frequently ostracize them. This has created conditions for a generation of youngsters lacking adequate care, perhaps leading to feelings of deprivation, dissatisfaction, complaints, and a desire for retribution. The impact of the crisis on children must not be overlooked. In Zamfara, 44,000 children have been orphaned due to banditry[71]. These trends will exacerbate the plight of homeless children and street beggars in numerous cities within the area and beyond.

2.1.5 National Security

Ultimately, armed banditry in the North-West has exacerbated Nigeria's precarious national security. Bandit assaults on government organizations, military installations, police stations, public officials and their families, as well as numerous people in the region, have been a significant problem for state authorities[72]. The crisis has compelled individuals to migrate southward, resulting in an influx of Fulani herders that has exacerbated resource-related conflicts between the immigrants and the indigenous groups in the north-central and from the south-west to the south-east. This situation has intensified the difficulties of Nigeria's national security and overextended the military and other security services. In 2018/2019, Nigeria allocated one-third of its military capacity for counterinsurgency and counterterrorism efforts in the northeast, while additionally deploying approximately 6% to combat armed banditry in the northwest and north-central regions[72]. The insufficiency of resources, personnel, responses, and the efficacy of security forces against armed bandits in the north-west, along with the resultant impact in the north-central and southern regions of Nigeria, has fostered the emergence of jungle justice, mob violence, and both armed and unarmed radical groups, as well as the formation of regional security organisations and consequent political fragmentation.

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Consequently, proponents of the Oduduwa Republic surfaced, while the governments of South-Western States established Amotekun in reaction to the inflow of pastoralists from the north and the resulting crises in the region. Their colleagues in the southeast similarly established Ebube-Agbu as a regional security organization for the same purpose[72]. These have exacerbated ethno-regional and other types of disputes and criminal violence that jeopardize Nigeria's internal security. There was an accusation that armed bandits in Katsina were plotting to conduct a presidential raid in 2021. This development has the potential to engender significant political instability inside the nation. Furthermore, the increasing incidence of bandit assaults against military targets, including soldiers, bases, and other assets, undermines Nigeria's defence and power projection capabilities[72]. The conflict has exacerbated Nigeria's negative international reputation as a regional powerhouse, characterized by significant security challenges and an unwelcoming environment for tourists and foreign direct investment (FDI).

2.1.5.1 The Broader Humanitarian Fallout of Banditry

Mass abductions and violent assaults on citizens in susceptible communities by bandits are precipitating a humanitarian disaster. In September 2021, bandits imposed a ransom of twenty million naira (about US$50,000) on five villages to prevent their assaults. Government shortcomings render rural areas vulnerable to these bandits. From January to June 2020, a minimum of 1,126 villagers were fatalities due to these actions[73]. In early January 2022, bandits killed at least 200 villagers in Zamfara state, marking one of the region's most severe massacres[73]. These attacks jeopardise food security in rural regions, while the inability to hold perpetrators accountable exacerbates a sense of impunity.

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Recent patterns indicate a changing landscape of violence, with assaults predominantly occurring in villages and peri-urban regions of large towns and cities in Sokoto State. In under one week, more than 40 individuals were abducted in December 2021 in Wurno, a minor local government jurisdiction inside the state. An eyewitness observes that 'the brutal assault on villages is increasingly overwhelming for the vulnerable inhabitants and spreading uncontrollably. On 6 December 2021, 23 individuals perished after bandits opened fire on a bus transporting passengers from Sokoto to Kaduna during an assault in Gidan Bawa village, located in the Isa local government region of Sokoto State[74].

2.1.5.2 Banditry's Impacts on Women and Children

Despite the magnitude of violent assaults by bandits, the considerable repercussions on women and children have not garnered adequate attention in legislative responses. This occurs despite increasing assaults frequently aimed at vulnerable women and children, jeopardising the latter's right to education. Over 61 children remain in captivity months after a mass abduction for ransom involving more than 780 students in 2021, while other schools have been closed permanently[74]. The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) estimates that at least one million children may refrain from attending school due to the prospect of violence, following the targeting of students in 2021[75]. This pattern signifies grave implications for Nigeria, a nation afflicted by pervasive poverty in the northwest and known to have the greatest number of out-of-school children in sub-Saharan Africa.

In the midst of these assaults, women and girls endure the greatest impact of banditry in the region. Sexual violence has surged, with women being subjected to rape, abduction, or

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objectification by families compelled to trade their daughters for safety. At least 30 women and girls were raped indiscriminately across five communities in the Shiroro Local Government Area of Niger State[75]. A comparable action occurred in the Tsafe Local Government Area of Zamfara State due to communities' refusal to remit a N3 million fee (about US$5,000)[75]. Furthermore, the humanitarian impact of banditry affects the livelihoods of women, as markets and farms are frequently plundered. Victims underscore the impact of rape and starvation amid escalating insecurity and the urgent necessity for food, protection, housing, and clothing. Access to water has increasingly become challenging in overcrowded camps for displaced individuals.

In the ongoing events, bandits are also recruiting women for their illicit activities. In November 2021, the Nigeria Police Force apprehended a lady for providing 991 rounds of live AK-47 ammunition and narcotics to bandits in Zamfara[75]. This solitary arrest indicates the replication of operational techniques that Boko Haram has long refined in the northeast. The suffering of women and children can only be alleviated through concerted interagency efforts. The initial step is to re-examine and revitalise the Safe School Initiative (SSI) initiative, launched in 2014 by the federal government in partnership with the United Nations, aimed at reconstructing, rehabilitating, and reinstating normalcy in secure educational environments.

2.1.6 Migration

Movement is an inherent tendency of all living organisms, and humans have historically migrated from one location to another in pursuit of essential survival resources from their inception or evolution. This journey might be for short or large distances, intended for

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temporary, semi-temporary, or permanent residency. Consequently, migration is a natural event, and it is contextually appropriate to seek life's demands or enhancements. However, it is essential to evaluate this movement against current reality to determine its advantages or disadvantages.

Population migrations have emerged as a significant aspect of African history. The act of migration between locations or cultures is regarded as a catalyst for innovation, technical advancement, and progress. International migration has persistently shaped and reshaped cultures and states throughout history[76]. Nonetheless, while its significance may be acknowledged by some, numerous entities, including governments, are apprehensive about immigration when it lacks clear definition. International migration in contemporary times has introduced significant security challenges that persistently influence international relations and inform foreign policy legislation, as well as diplomatic and security concerns. Migration is also characterizes as the movement of individuals over significant distances and on a large scale with the intent of relinquishing previous residences. It is also described as a permanent or semi-permanent alteration of abode[76]. No limitations are imposed on the distance of the relocation or the voluntary or involuntary nature of the action, nor is there a differentiation between external and interior migration. The issue with the previous definition is the forsaking of residences for a permanent alternative.

Migration, as stated in Nigeria's National Policy on Migration is an inherent aspect of human nature; thus, it is not unnatural for individuals to relocate. It has consistently been an aspect of human activity and a historical force that has influenced the world[77]. Migration refers to the relocation of an individual or group from one geographical area to another across an administrative or political boundary, with the intention of establishing residence

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either permanently or temporarily in a location distinct from their origin[77]. Migration is defined as the relocation of individuals from one geographic location to another, typically for the intent of establishing permanent or semi-permanent residency, often across political borders[78].

Migration denotes the relocation of individuals from one region of a country (or from one country) to another region within the same country (or to a different country) with the intent of establishing a new domicile[78]. Migration is generally defined as the transfer of individuals beyond a recognised political boundary to establish permanent or semi-permanent residence, despite varying interpretations from different perspectives. The duration of residence varies; nonetheless, the majority of specialists concur that a six-month stay in a new region suffices to classify an individual as a migrant. Internal migration refers to a change of residency within a single country, whereas international migration pertains to a change of residence between two distinct countries.

This migration is primarily driven by economic prospects or criminal motives (such as trafficking and smuggling). For the purposes of this article, we define it as the movement of individuals over varying distances, involving the crossing of national borders for either brief or extended durations, though typically short-term and frequent, aimed at exploiting economic opportunities or committing economic, political, or social crimes[78].This description is incomplete without referencing the differentiation of migration, which asserts that most countries experience multiple forms of immigration simultaneously, including labour migration, refugees, and permanent settlement[78].

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Migratory chains that commence with a specific sort of movement frequently transition to alternative forms, notwithstanding governmental attempts to halt or regulate the movement. Cross-border migration between Nigeria and its neighbouring countries may commence with one intention and conclude with another. The disparity in economic conditions and amenities is particularly pronounced between Nigeria and its neighbours[79]. The increasing politicisation of migration, influenced by domestic politics, bilateral and regional partnerships, and national security strategies, is increasingly shaped by international migration. Currently, security considerations are influencing the foreign policy trajectories of numerous nations globally[80]. Globalisation has exacerbated migration difficulties related to security, rendering state security a pivotal influence in determining the diplomatic and foreign policy trajectories of countries in the sub-region. In light of the aforementioned issues, the theoretical exposition will be articulated. Africa is characterised as the continent with the highest mobile population globally[80].

A significant migration in human history occurred in sub-Saharan Africa, involving the Bantu people who departed from the region now comprising Nigeria and Cameroon, establishing colonies across the southern half of the continent[81]. Migration is increasingly influenced by economic, political, and social transformations. Migration in the West African sub-region may be mostly elucidated from an economic perspective, although other variables also contribute, the economic aspect remains predominant. The neo-classical theory associates migration with the transition from low to high-income regions, or more particularly, with variations in the business cycle. The methodologies are referred to as push-pull theories[81].

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The "push factors" encompass insufficient economic opportunity and political repression, while the "pull factors" consist of labour demand, favourable economic prospects, and political liberty. The migratory trend in West Africa has typically adhered to this pattern. The simple presence of economic differences among different regions should suffice to induce migration flows[82]. This type of mobility has been characteristic of Africa as a whole; migration is directed towards economically vibrant and successful regions from those with poor economies. Nevertheless, on the global stage, certain factions among nations may diminish barriers to migration. In relation to Nigeria and its francophone bordering states, which perceive Nigeria as a metropolitan entity from many viewpoints, the advancement of technology significantly contributes to the reduction of intervening hurdles[82]. Communication has been more accessible, and transit has gotten less expensive in relation to average income.

Even in the absence of alterations in the balance of factors at the origin and destination, technological advancements alone should lead to an increase in migration volume. The United Nations defines an international migrant as an individual who alters their country of habitual residence. International migration encompasses several forms of travel, including individuals departing their country of origin for economic motives, reuniting with family members overseas, or seeking sanctuary. An internal migrant encompasses an internally displaced individual, a trader who has moved their business within the country, a civil servant who has been reassigned, or a Nigerian university graduate assigned by the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) to serve in a different location or state[82].

Migration is a complicated, multidimensional process driven by various causes, resulting in significant effects on both individuals and their locations of origin and destination. This

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section delineates essential statistics and trends, together with migrant attributes, without evaluating the impact of each trend and process on the origin or destination country. A primary source of migration data in Nigeria is the census, with the latest conducted in 1991 and 2006. The census generally enquires about place of birth and prior residence, from which lifetime migration is calculated. This migration data has notable limitations, primarily that it excludes migrants who relocated between their birthplace and current residence, as well as those who returned prior to the subsequent census, and those who migrated before their most recent residence.

The variables found as contributing to this movement are roughly categorized into Push, Pull, and more recently, Network/Globalisation components[83]. Migration refers to the relocation of individuals from one location to another, either permanently (resulting in settlement) or temporarily (wherein they return home after a designated duration). It has been a characteristic of geography since ancient times. In antiquity, individuals migrated in pursuit of superior agricultural land, more fertile hunting territories, enhanced fishing resources, flourishing trade opportunities, and as refugees from aggressive military forces[83].

Historically, Africans have traversed several regions as cattle herders, traders, invaders, or refugees. There has also been significant migration in the West African sub-region due to economic, social, and political issues[83]. This phenomenon has existed since prior to the independence of African nations and before the concept of international boundaries gained prominent in 1884, which led to the partition of Africa at the Berlin Conference. The division imposed by colonial authorities restricted the free movement of individuals and products across borders, instituting different restrictions that mandated specific procedures for the admission of non-citizens. Nonetheless, notwithstanding the enforcement of control

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measures, irregular migrants continue to traverse international borders predominantly via unauthorised routes and entry points.

Immigrants existed prior to and during the colonial era, and restrictions were not enforced. The overlap of African empires can be attributed to the extended family system. The belligerent pursuit of colonization and the demand for trading partners precipitated the race for Africa[83]. Currently, there is substantial evidence of irregular migration in Africa, particularly from West Africa to North Africa (primarily Libya), in the Horn of Africa, and towards South Africa. Cross-country migrations within the Economic Community of Western African States (ECOWAS) are expected to be considerably more substantial than extra-regional migrations, accounting for over 80 percent of total migrant flows from the region's countries[83].

In 2009, annually between 17,000 and 20,000 male irregular migrants from East Africa and the Horn of Africa were smuggled into South Africa, predominantly consisting of Somali and Ethiopian citizens[84]. Recently, a notable increase in irregular migration has been observed globally, particularly from developing to developed nations. The majority of migrants both within and outside Africa are undocumented migrants. Nonetheless, occurrences in Nigeria seem to be rising recently.

2.1.6.1 Irregular Migration

The definition of irregular migration has been extensively debated. Terminology such as unlawful, undocumented, non-documented, and unauthorised migration may possess varying implications in national policy discussions. Consequently, owing to its connotation with criminality, the phrase “illegal migration” has to be eschewed, as the majority of irregular

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migrants are not offenders[84]. In most countries, residing in a nation without the necessary documentation constitutes an administrative violation rather than a criminal crime. The UN employs the terms 'irregular' or 'undocumented' migration, although the European Commission historically preferred 'illegal migration,' but has recently adopted the phrase 'irregular migration' as well. However, the phrases "illegal," "irregular," "undocumented," and "unauthorized" are utilised interchangeably in this discourse. Irregular migration refers to the movement of individuals across national boundaries in contravention of the immigration regulations of the host nation. It also denotes the movement of individuals lacking authorization to enter the respective country or borders[84].

Irregular migration is characterized as the movement of individuals to a new residence or transit location that occurs outside the regulatory frameworks of the sending, transit, and receiving countries[85]. The statement elaborated that a migrant in an irregular situation may be categorised under one or more of the following conditions: entering the country unlawfully, such as with counterfeit documents or without utilising an official border crossing; residing unlawfully, for example, in contravention of the stipulations of an entry visa or residence permit; or being employed unlawfully, such as possessing the right to reside but lacking authorisation for paid employment within the country.

An irregular immigrant is an individual or group that crosses Nigeria's borders without proper papers and resides within the country. They are the individual or collective entities that contravene the immigration statutes of the host nation, with the aim to reside therein. Irregular immigrants are sometimes known as unauthorised or undocumented immigrants. Irregular immigrants are individuals residing in a location without authorisation, and of whom the authorities possess no documentation[85]. It also encompasses individuals who

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lawfully enter a country for tourism, education, or health reasons but do not return. This indicates that, despite their initial lawful entry, they are now classified as irregular immigrants due to exceeding the permitted duration of stay. Similarly, immigrants possessing expired documents or those who entered with fraudulent ones are classified as undocumented.

The proliferation of criminal activities in the northwestern states originates from illegal migrants who predominantly traverse numerous porous or illicit borders adjacent to Sokoto, Kebbi, Katsina, and Jigawa States[86]. Irregular migrants are the principal catalysts of ethnic and internal strife, as well as other associated violent crimes that jeopardise internal security, democracy, and the efficacy of governance, not only in North West but throughout Nigeria. Irregular migration is a significant contributor to several forms of crime, including armed robbery, kidnapping, farmer-herder conflicts, community violence, insurgent attacks, and numerous other offences.

Irregular migration in Nigeria is multifaceted and has been increasing recently. This phenomenon will persist as a significant, inexorable element of global existence until the various push and pull elements related to migration, including social and economic inequalities, are eradicated[86]. Irregular migration undoubtedly has severe adverse effects on Nigeria and its citizens, necessitating urgent mitigation and potential prevention measures. The significance of this threat cannot be disregarded, and the time for Nigeria to respond is significantly overdue.

2.1.6.2 Causes of Irregular Migration

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The factors contributing to irregular migration vary among individuals and communities. Sociologists have extensively examined migration phenomena using the "push-pull" framework. The term "push factor" denotes conditions at one's place of origin that compel migration, such as starvation, drought, low agricultural production, and unemployment. Conversely, "pull factor" pertains to favourable conditions in a foreign location that entice migrants. The causes encompass the following:

Poverty: Although economic models examine relative wealth and income between origin and destination nations, they do not inherently suggest that irregular immigrants are consistently destitute by the standards of their home country. The impoverished classes in emerging nations may lack the requisite finances to migrate illegally, as well as the ties to acquaintances or relatives already residing in the destination country. Nigeria ranks as the sixth largest producer of petroleum globally, the eighth largest exporter, and possesses the tenth greatest proved reserves[87]. Despite the nation's substantial oil resources, a significant portion of Nigerians, specifically 71% of the population, resides in abject poverty[87].

Overpopulation: Population increase that surpasses the carrying capacity of an area leads to overpopulation. Surges in human population can lead to issues such as pollution, water scarcity, and poverty. Virginia Abernethy asserts that immigration serves as a "relief valve" for overpopulation, preventing a population from confronting the repercussions of its excess and transferring this overcrowding to another region or country. Nigeria's population growth rate is 2.61%, with one in every five Africans being Nigerian, contributing 2.64% to the global population[87]. Given the aforementioned indices, one may assert that Nigeria is overpopulated and is likely nearing a state of overpopulation, which may contribute to both legal and illegal migration.

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Family Reunification: Certain undocumented immigrants endeavour to reside with their relatives, including spouses or other family members. Family reunification visas can be requested by legal residents or naturalised citizens to lawfully bring their family members into a destination state; however, these visas may be restricted in quantity and subject to annual restrictions.

Wars and Asylum: Illegal immigration may be driven by the need to flee civil war, repression, genocide, and political or religious persecution in the nation of origin, such as the Rohingya in Myanmar, the 1994 Rwandan genocide, and the insurgency in Nigeria, among others. Additional factors encompass unemployment, insufficient educational possibilities, absence of social safety nets, inadequate governance, corruption, and a deficiency in social justice, equity, and fairness, among others. The youth unemployment rate in Nigeria is 52.7%, potentially serving as a significant push factor for illegal migration among this vulnerable demographic[87].

2.1.6.3 Effects of Irregular Migration on Nigeria's Security

Irregular migrations significantly impact Nigeria's security, especially in the North West region. Consequently, for the purposes of this discourse, the issues associated with irregular migration can be categorised into the hazards encountered by irregular migrants and the challenges experienced by host or receiving communities. These repercussions might be categorised as social, economic, political, and security challenges.

2.1.6.4 Security Challenge

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Since gaining independence in 1960, Nigeria's internal security has been jeopardised by transnational criminal activities, including arms trafficking, human trafficking, drug trafficking, banditry, vehicle theft, smuggling, unregulated migration, illegal logging, petroleum bunkering, and the transhumance practices of pastoralists who traverse national borders without regard for regulations. Additional issues include terrorism, insurgency, hostage-taking of expatriates, abuse of expatriate quotas, violations of immigration regulations, document fraud, and financial crimes[88].

The North-Western region of Nigeria is internationally recognised for a rising crime rate potentially exacerbated by illegal immigrants. Unauthorised or undocumented migrants present security challenges to the northern states of Nigeria, mostly due to permeable borders[88]. Security threats deter investors from engaging in a nation-state, as such conditions are perceived as unsafe for business, particularly in the context of terrorism threats. The majority of illegal or undocumented immigrants in Nigeria are from neighbouring West African states and are often not the preferred immigrants due to their low or non-existent skill levels, which do not enhance Nigeria's output to its fullest potential[88].

Terrorism has emerged as a global phenomenon, with illegal immigrants perceived as primary facilitators and participants in terrorist acts. It is believed that among the undocumented migrants, there may be extremists who could infiltrate the country and execute terrorist acts[88]. The exporting of Islamic extremism into Nigeria exacerbates the insecurity challenges, particularly in northern Nigeria. Nationals predominantly from Sahel and Western Sahara countries have been associated with religious insurrections in Nigeria. Imported religious ideals and attitudes have periodically contested the secular character of the Nigerian state[88]. Undocumented migrants predominantly participate in illicit activities

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due to their status; hence, when numerous offences are committed, the offenders are often untraceable. In areas with a higher concentration of undocumented immigrants, the crime rate escalates, including offences such as armed robbery, theft, kidnapping, and banditry, among others.

In Nigeria, the belief that illegal immigration exacerbate religious disputes has gained traction, particularly among officials. In the 1980s, they garnered considerable public attention due to the Matatsine religious disturbances in Kano, Maiduguri, and Kaduna[88]. Undocumented immigration significantly contributed to the Maitatsine religious riots in Kano, which resulted in numerous fatalities. The catastrophe resulted in significant destruction of both public and private properties in the area. During a lecture titled "Challenges of Modern Migration Management: The Role of Nigeria Immigration Service" at the National Defence College (NDC) Nigeria for course 26 participants. The Comptroller General of the Nigeria Immigration Service, affirmed that irregular migration poses a threat to national security[88]. It was opined that nations receiving illegal migrants would encounter criminality and a threat to their societal norms. The CG elucidated that the surge of irregular migrants to Libya stemmed from the absence of central authority, wherein warlords use migrants as a substitute for oil transactions[88]. The ongoing instances of unlawful crossings of individuals at the frontiers, some of whom are believed to be Fulani ranchers migrating from adjacent countries, particularly Chad, can be attributed to the porous nature of the nation's borders. The accessibility at the border facilitates the illicit proliferation of small arms and light weapons, thereby enabling Fulani herdsmen, particularly those from countries such as Chad and Niger, to acquire firearms at a low cost[89].

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Other researchers endorse the perspective that the porous characteristics of the border have resulted in an undesirable influx of migrants from adjacent countries, and the amalgamation of both illegal migrants and the spread of weaponry has exacerbated the security challenges in Nigeria. The proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons constitutes a significant security challenge presently confronting Nigeria, Africa, and the global community. The illicit movement and trafficking of small arms and light weapons (SALW) have emerged as a catalyst for insecurity in Kano State, resulting in criminal activities such as communal conflict, political instability, kidnapping, and armed robbery, all of which have significantly exacerbated the level of insecurity in the region[89].

2.1.6.5 Social Effects

The arrival of unauthorised or undocumented migrants into a nation-state presents security risks to that nation-state[90]. Deportees are likely to pose significant social and environmental risks not only to themselves but also to the Nigerian population in the receiving states[90]. The majority of undocumented immigrants are either unemployed or lack employability, resulting in a lack of financial resources; thus, they do not possess adequate housing. In Kano State, the majority of undocumented immigrants reside beneath bridges, flyovers, or in unfinished structures, while some have constructed makeshift shelters in recreational areas. They reside in unsanitary, impoverished conditions in a contaminated environment. The inadequate living facility lacking essential facilities can disseminate infections to others[90].

The security consequences are that such individuals may become public charges and can be easily recruited by insurgents or other criminals. A significant number of migrants from Niger Republic, Mali, and Chad have resorted to begging throughout the nation due to a lack

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of employable skills[90]. Additionally, due to their inability to obtain adequate housing, a significant percentage of illegal or undocumented migrants stay in slums and makeshift residential areas. The surge of unauthorised immigrants in Nigeria can exert additional pressure on the social amenities supplied by the nation-state to its people. The nation-state, still afflicted by inadequate economic planning, may perceive it as a burden and perhaps undermine governmental efforts[90].

A swift influx of immigrants frequently results in an identity crisis among indigenous populations and jeopardises the cultural survival of these societies by introducing atypical behaviours that may infiltrate and dilute their rich cultural heritage. They further stated that illegal immigrants contribute to environmental deterioration by competing for space with indigenous populations, hence imposing unnecessary strain on social facilities. The significant number of unidentified individuals in the community frequently generates unwarranted hostility within that community.

2.1.6.6 Economic Effects

Illegal migrants exert both beneficial and detrimental economic effects on the sending and receiving countries. Illegal immigrants decrease unemployment in their country of origin while elevating the rate in the host nation. While it is accurate that illegal immigrants occupy positions that citizens decline, it is also the case that these migrants usurp employment that rightfully belong to citizens. The unmanageable surge of illegal or undocumented migration can lead to destabilisation inside a nation-state[91]. The inflow of illegal migrants precipitates unemployment in the host state and contributes to elevated inflation rates for essential commodities. Their clandestine status results in undocumented statistics, rendering it

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impossible to accurately budget for their needs. Consequently, this may lead to shortages of vital food items or inflationary pressures, as undocumented migrants are unable to transfer funds legally through commercial banks. Instead, they engage in smuggling and currency trafficking, while some resort to the black market for the exchange of various national currencies as commodities. Illegal immigrants exacerbate the state economy by amplifying the financial load on the government.

Illegal immigrants frequently augment the demands placed on the government of the host town or nation, hence exacerbating the financial strain on critical sectors such as education and health[91]. They asserted that immigrants occupy positions that would otherwise be filled by local individuals; in some contexts, this might lead to competition and conflict due to the deprivation of native inhabitants and a scarcity of work options. Furthermore, illegal migration contributes to population growth, resulting in a significant rise in the host country's population and adversely affecting its economic and social development.

2.1.6.7 Political Effects

In Northern Nigeria, unethical political parties frequently recruit illegal aliens to vote, exploiting the porous borders with Niger and Chad. Undocumented immigrants are frequently exploited by unscrupulous politicians as instruments to perpetrate crimes, hence posing concerns to national security. 40 Beninois possessed Nigeria's Permanent Voter's Card (PVC) during the 2015 General Elections[91]. This raises a concern regarding how these Beninese entered the nation-state without detection. Undocumented immigrants may unlawfully register on the voting rolls, so asserting citizenship and establishing a voting bloc for political parties. Unemployed illegal immigrants may be exploited by certain politicians

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to incite political violence, as observed in various regions of northern Nigeria, particularly Kano State, during the recently ended 2019 general election. Elections and electoral activities in Nigeria may be compromised by Nigerian citizens and nationals from adjacent countries, due to the proximity of borders and inadequate administration. Non-Nigerians can and do exploit the extensive and intricate boundaries, marriage connections, and other business incentives to visit Nigeria, register, and participate in elections. Some of these aliens may assert dual citizenship, although this may not reflect the true situation. Unprincipled politicians may recruit and exploit such individuals to subvert legitimate elections in the country[91]. Authentic Nigerians could also participate in voting malpractices or disrupt elections and seamlessly migrate to any nearby countries.

The surge of undocumented migrants from neighbouring Western African countries into Nigeria complicates relations between nation-states due to opposing interests. The receiving state seeks to expel illegal unskilled migrants, who negatively impact the nation, while the sending states prefer their extended stay in the receiving states, as these migrants represent a burden to their country of origin[91]. Nigerian illegal and undocumented migrants to developed countries impact bilateral ties. The majority of Nigerians can attest to the unwelcome and unfriendly scrutiny imposed by foreign migration agencies and security officers[91]. The incarceration and expulsion of Nigerians in several developed nations for various reasons, including but not limited to immigration violations such as fraud, inadequate travel documentation, or overstaying, adversely impact Nigeria's reputation. Nigerians engaged in illegal or unauthorized migration face numerous inhumane treatments at embassies and high commissions when attempting to depart the country for their intended destinations. Overall, national security is jeopardised due to various migratory difficulties. Security is

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fundamentally the concern of a sovereign state to safeguard its sovereignty, territorial integrity, citizens, and their values.

2.1.6.8 Migration Trends between Nigeria and Her Neighbours

Nigeria is a big brother to other West African countries especially the francophone countries in terms of numerical strength, variety and socio-cultural power. West Africa has seen a variety of migrations caused by population pressure, poverty, poor economic performances and chronic wars[92]. Therefore, it is vital to establish migratory trends between Nigeria and her neighbours in an accurate historical perspective. The pre-colonial migration in West Africa was mostly in pursuit of security, fresh land secure for settlement and fertile for agricultural.

Colonial rule affected the purpose and composition of migration by introducing and enforcing various mixtures of political and economic institutions, imposing tax regimes and setting territorial limits. As a result of these developments, there were large-scale population movements, giving rise to the male-dominated, seasonal and cross-border migration which ultimately became institutionalised[91]. The colonial period incited extensive labour migration necessary for plantations, mines, and public administration, surpassing local availability.

A suite of economic policies, encompassing mandatory conscription, legislation on contract and forced labour, and agreements to obtain inexpensive labour, incited covert internal and transnational migration of unskilled adult males needed for infrastructural projects, particularly transport networks in the northern regions and plantation agriculture in coastal nations. Consequently, the current migratory patterns in West Africa are influenced by socio-economic, political, and historical-cultural variables that have directed development and

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economic activity, significantly impacting international migration[92]. Migration between Nigeria and its neighbouring countries encompasses temporary undocumented labourers, male and female traders, agricultural labourers, cross-border employees, professionals, and refugees. They are fundamentally intra-regional, short-term, and predominantly male-dominated, reflecting the intertwined economies of adjacent nations. The emigration configuration is significantly varied. West Africa includes nations characterised by both immigration and emigration activities. Certain countries function as transit routes for migrants. The primary traditional nations of immigration are Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana[92].

In the early 1970s, Nigeria emerged as a significant destination for migration, propelled by work opportunities in many areas due to oil wealth. The principal labour-exporting nations have historically included and continue to include Burkina Faso, Mali, Guinea Conakry, Cape Verde, and Togo. The Diaspora in Cape Verde surpasses the local population, rendering the situation distinctive[92]. Senegal has functioned as both a labour-exporting and labour-receiving nation. All of these have seen changes in recent years. Ghana and subsequently Nigeria became labor-exporting nations when economic conditions declined in Ghana during the late 1960s and in Nigeria during the mid-1980s. Ghana is presently witnessing return migration of its citizens due to the government's progressive economic policies and political stability.

The declining socio-economic conditions and escalating poverty in the late sixties and early seventies stimulated diverse migration patterns[92]. Macro-economic adjustment measures and a significant rise in labour market entrants have exacerbated a job crisis, resulting in persistent emigration pressure. A considerable volume of brain circulation occurs among

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Ghana, Gambia, and Nigeria; Togo and Côte d'Ivoire; Burkina Faso and Senegal, as well as Côte d'Ivoire, nations with a common colonial heritage[92].

At present, under the ECOWAS Protocol on Free Movement of Persons, Rights of Residence and Establishment, numerous countries in the sub-region have implemented or maintained various laws that effectively limit 'foreigners,' including ECOWAS nationals, from engaging in specific economic activities; the expulsion of aliens also undermines the fundamental purpose of establishing the Community. As long as the economy of recipient nations supported clandestine labour migrants, there was minimal indication of strain. As economic conditions deteriorated and national unemployment increased, immigrants became targets for reprisals via expulsion[92]. It is important to note that illegal immigrants are being deported from nearly all West African nations both prior to and subsequent to the establishment of ECOWAS.

International migration was not a subject of public policy or debate in Nigeria until the 1980s, and even then, the authorities did not regard it as a significant public policy concern. The mindset shifted when cross-border crimes became infamous and affected nearly every facet of human activity—economic, social, and political. Notwithstanding this shift in viewpoint, migration remains a fundamental component of the employment market and a source of sustenance. As in several regions of Africa and elsewhere, a primary motive for migration is the pursuit of employment opportunities. The desire to seek employment and enhance material prosperity has been the primary motivation for individuals from countries bordering Nigeria to migrate into Nigeria. Nigeria is bordered to the east by Cameroon, to the west by Benin Republic, to the south by the Atlantic Ocean, to the northeast by Chad, and to the northwest by Niger Republic[92].

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The inhabitants of these nations predominantly have African ancestry, with Nigeria being the biggest population. Agriculture remains the cornerstone of the economies of these nations, despite Nigeria and Cameroon having identified alternative sources of foreign cash, including petroleum, gold, bauxite, and other mineral resources. Nigeria continues to be predominantly the most industrialised nation[93]. All Nigerian neighbours, save for Cameroon, are members of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). Migration has been a dynamic characteristic of the region, as it is throughout the West African sub-region, with most ethnic groups in each country having established settlements in many countries within the area. The artificial boundaries established by colonial powers facilitated cross-border population mobility within the region. In comparison to other regions of Black Africa, such as Cameroon, West Africa occupies a distinctly unique position[93]. This region had minimal European colonisation through permanent residence, establishing it as a quintessential country of Black inhabitants.

International migration between Nigeria and its neighbouring countries is facilitated by several variables, primarily the short distance and porous borders, along with the absence of significant language hurdles and little intervening obstacles[93]. These seemingly less restrictive reasons attract migrants to Nigeria. The severe weather conditions in the Sahara, resulting in drought in Niger, Chad, and northern Cameroon, let Nigeria become the optimal destination for migration. Cross-border migration between Nigeria and its neighbours, initially devoid of state intervention, has increasingly necessitated state policy due to the adverse effects of modern mobility on national security and the imperative to protect the state from external threats and rising criminality along international borders.

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2.1.6.9 Security, Public Policy and International Migration between Nigeria and Her Neighbours

The September 11, 2001 incident has heightened awareness and significance regarding the security implications of international migration. A phenomenon frequently overlooked by certain nations has emerged as a public policy issue[93]. The movement between Nigeria and its neighbouring countries is perceived as an economic phenomenon, predominantly advantageous for migrants, particularly those traversing from the north to escape the ravages of drought and advancing desertification. International migration has altered the dynamics, resulting in severe repercussions for the security and diplomatic relations between Nigeria and its neighbours, compelling Nigeria to adopt unpopular policy positions in response to security threats. Nigeria's foreign policy towards its immediate neighbours is governed by principles of good neighbourliness and friendliness, founded in the sovereign equality of all African governments[93]. Notwithstanding these agreements, the escalation of cross-border crimes has compelled Nigeria to enhance its security infrastructure along the borders with Chad, presenting significant migration and security challenges.

2.1.6.10 Nigeria and Niger Border

The borders between Nigeria and Niger seem to be the least contentious among Nigeria's borders. The borders extend for nearly 150 kilometres, across a densely populated region of both countries: southern Niger Republic and northern Nigeria, with historically significant towns such as Katsina, Kano, and Sokoto[94]. The two nations are interconnected culturally and linguistically. The Hausa language is widely spoken by the citizens of both countries on

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either side of the border. Notwithstanding the robust connections, there have been no significant border confrontations or negative accounts of smugglers and traffickers. The cause may stem from the robust trade ties between the two nations. The trade in cattle is conducted freely over the borders from Niger to Nigeria[94].

However, the issue of desertification, which appears to be significant in the Niger Republic, may be responsible for the substantial influx of immigrants from Niger into Nigerian cities. They migrate from the northernmost regions of Nigeria to the southern areas, resulting in a significant presence of Nigeriens in places such as Lagos, Ibadan, Benin City, Enugu, and Port Harcourt, among others[94]. They are employed in low-skilled positions, domestic gardening, and security services. Despite the observed tranquilly at the borders, and due to the experience of Nigerian security operatives along the Chadian borders, the Niger borders are similarly fortified and closely monitored to prevent infiltration by Muslim fundamentalists who may exploit the porous borders to illegally enter Nigeria and incite unrest.

2.1.6.11 Nigeria and Chad Republic: **A Highly Problematic and Confrontational Border Relation**

Nigeria and Chad share a 75-kilometre border, all of which is on Lake Chad. The border is permeable and unstable but owing to her African policy of collaboration, funded roughly one million dollars in the establishment of a massive agricultural project called the Chad Basin establishment Authority (CBDA) in the basin on the Nigeria side[94]. The influx of migrants reached an alarming level when in 1983, armies from Chad overran many Nigerian islands on the lake. They were repelled by combined forces of the 3rd Division of the Nigerian

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Army, the 23rd Armorial headquartered in Maiduguri and detachment of the army in Baye and Doro on the bank of the Lake[94].

The Chadians were forced to evacuate before it might turn into war between the two countries. The issue was addressed following a temporary closure of the borders; it however showed the economic fragility of Chad and its dependence on transit facilities in Nigeria. One lesson for Nigeria as remarked by a scholar is the propensity for international migration to interact with other factors to foment violent conflict in three ways: by providing resources that fuel internal conflicts; by facilitating networks of organised crime and by serving as conduits for international terrorism[94]. Nigeria expressed significant concern on developments in Chad, particularly the volume of arms trafficked across borders and the extensive arsenal possessed by the Chadian army, predominantly consisting of either confiscated Libyan weapons or arms provided by France, the United States, and Israel. The scenario resulted in the militarisation of the border and the construction of an all-weather road by the federal government from Baye to Doro, enabling the swift transit of troops[94]. Migration across borders persists, as it has historically, with Kanuri and Shuwa Arab families separated between the two nations.

2.1.6.12 Nigeria and Benin Republic

Nigeria and the Benin Republic exhibit significant linguistic and racial similarities, which elucidates the fluidity of cross-border migration. The Yoruba, Egun, and other Ajo-speaking populations in the south, the Beriba (Borgwa) in the central region, and the Fulani and Hausa in the north occupy the boundary between the two nations. Historically, southern and central Benin was a portion of the ancient Oyo Empire[95]. Nigeria's cultural affinity and policy of

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good neighbourliness influenced its engagement in collaborative commercial, industrial, and agricultural initiatives with Benin peers. The cement factory in Onigbolo (Queme province) and the sugar factory in Save (Zou province) are both situated in the Republic of Benin[95]. The two enterprises have subsequently been privatised.

Notwithstanding the spirit of entrepreneurial and promising camaraderie, the borders connecting the two nations are fraught with challenges due to the actions of internationally notorious criminals involved in the smuggling and trafficking of a wide array of illicit goods, including human trafficking, ammunition, firearms, narcotics, manufactured products, agricultural commodities, prostitution, child labour, religious extremism, terrorist acts, and insurgency. In 1985, under the Buhari/Idiagbon administration, the borders were closed multiple times[95]. Their reopening did not occur until Babangida's emergence on August 27, 1985. The decision to reopen the borders alleviated a significant source of conflict; yet, the politics surrounding border surveillance and monitoring emerged as a prominent public policy issue. International migration and security have increasingly obscured the distinction between illegal/irregular and lawful migration[95].

The intensified and detrimental actions of smugglers on the economy, security, and state sovereignty have rendered it challenging for policymakers to adequately distinguish between policies that violate human rights and those that really tackle illegal migration. In 1996, after the death of nine Ogonis, including Ken Saro Wiwa, for the unlawful murder of four notable Ogoni chiefs by General Sanni Abacha's dictatorship, the borders between the two countries were closed[95]. Numerous Ogonis fled to seek political asylum in the Benin Republic; however, the Beninese authorities denied their requests. The precarious political climate and security instability prompted both nations to close their borders.

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The land borders were reopened on April 18, 1996, following bilateral discussions between Beninois President Mathieu Kerekou and General Sanni Abacha. In 2003, cross-border crime surged alarmingly between the two nations, involving an international criminal network. The gang's leader, a Beninois national, was so infamous that his operations destabilised Nigeria's customs and security forces[95]. On August 9, 2003, President Olusegun Obasanjo ordered the closing of the borders at least twice. On the second occasion, the President mandated the closure of the border, which endured for six days. The reopening occurred solely after President Mathieu Kerekou mandated the extradition of the infamous criminal gang leader Hamani Tijani to Nigerian authorities to confront criminal charges prior to the reopening of the borders[95]. Numerous experts and policymakers have remarked on the impact of transnational crime between the two nations, exacerbated by globalisation.

Nigeria's economy is rapidly transforming into a receptacle for Asian commodities, since Benin Republic functions mostly as a transit nation, with nearly all shipments being illicitly imported into Nigeria. An examination of our borders will reveal the extensive smuggling of textile materials, rice, vegetable oil, canned tomatoes, automobiles, and other goods on a daily basis. The remarks reflect the perspectives of the majority of Nigerians about the Nigerian/Benin borders. The President asserts that a significant portion of trade between Nigeria and the Benin Republic, as well as other francophone nations adjacent to Nigeria, remains unrecorded due to the prevalence of smuggling, an illicit activity that severely undermines the vitality of the Nigerian economy and poses a security threat to the country[96].

2.1.6.13 Nigeria and Cameroun: War over Bakassi Averted

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Cameroun was a former German colony that was partitioned between France and Britain as a mandate area following the First World War; after the Second World War, the eastern section was assigned to France and the western section to Britain. The British regarded Cameroun as managed inside the Borno and Adamawa provinces (now States) of northern Nigeria[96]. In 1961/62, following a plebiscite conducted by the UN, Southern Cameroons opted to join the Republic of Cameroon, while the northern region integrated with Nigeria. Cross-border migration has occurred with few complications for security personnel, fostering amicable relations between the two nations. Relations deteriorated as cross-border migration was usurped by criminals and armed bandits[96].

Border skirmishes resulting in numerous Nigerian fatalities were frequently documented. The frequent occurrence of such conflicts, resulting in severe repercussions for Nigerians and Nigerian security personnel, was consistently recorded as the dispute over the Bakassi Peninsula between Nigeria and the Republic of Cameroon intensified. Since the International Court of Justice (ICJ) ruling that transferred the peninsula to the Republic of Cameroon, international migration has escalated, as numerous Bakassi nationals, discontented with the judgement and wishing to remain Nigerians, are being repatriated for resettlement in Cross River State. The borders between the two countries are subject to stringent security monitoring to combat all sorts of trafficking and smuggling. This step is required due to reports along Nigeria's coastline boundaries. Frequent raids by pirates and armed smugglers in boats have occurred in the Niger Delta along the coast. The security forces have been augmented by the navy, army, police, and customs for collaborative border surveillance and protection[96].

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2.1.6.14 Migration and Security Challenges in Nigeria

Migration refers to the permanent relocation of individuals or groups from one location to another, which has led to the emergence of security concerns throughout Africa, particularly in Nigeria[97]. Migration has transformed the notion and implementation of security, as well as the regulations governing human relationships. The threats or perceived threats have compelled nations, states, individuals, and governments to devise laws and tactics to restrict and manage the movement of people across their borders[97]. Notwithstanding its significant advancements, the issues of migration have become integral to human existence and a survival issue for numerous countries, including Nigeria, particularly in the context of globalisation.

The significant rise in migration and violent confrontations between herders and farmers in several regions of Nigeria has engendered a novel array of security risks. These include armed banditry, abduction for ransom, arms trafficking, human trafficking, cattle rustling, illicit mining of solid minerals, smuggling, terrorism, cross-border crimes, illegal migration, pronounced socio-economic disparities, and issues related to refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs), among others[97]. Since their eastward migration from the Futa Jallon highlands of Senegal in the 16th century, the Fulanis have been consistently on the "wings of the season," relocating their livestock in pursuit of appropriate grazing and watering locations[97]. This practice has become strongly entrenched in their culture, rendering it challenging for them to be persuaded to achieve permanent resettlement in a single location. Climate change has significantly modified travel patterns[97]. As migration has risen, so too have security issues and violent confrontations over grazing areas between host groups and migrants.

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Transhumant pastoralists are viewed as aggressive and intentionally armed to confront unsuspecting crop farmers, who claim that their crops are purposefully damaged by livestock. The herders view themselves as victims of political marginalisation, devoid of representation within the Nigerian state system[97]. The marginalisation of nomadic Fulani herders from the policy-making process and their absence of representation are so pronounced that the Miyetti Allah Cattle Breeders Association (MACBA), an urban-based Fulani advocacy group, is the sole recognised civic organisation that engages in policy advocacy on their behalf.

Numerous researchers have proposed varied perspectives on the notion of security. Human security denotes the safeguarding against concealed and detrimental disturbances in daily activities, whether at home, in the workplace, or within communities[97]. Security refers to the condition of being safeguarded against peril, which may also encompass protection against persistent hazards such as starvation, disease, and oppression. Human security also refers to the safeguarding of essential elements of human existence to promote individual freedoms and fulfilment[97]. Human security includes the absence of want, damage, and fear, as well as the liberty to undertake suitable actions without obstruction. It represents the guarantee of future welfare and security from danger. Security encompasses the ability to pursue valued political and social aspirations. Security is inherently socio-political; without security, political stability is unattainable, leading to societal disorder. Thus, there lays a correlation between security and survival[98]. That means, security is considered an essential prerequisite for human survival. Consequently, security is equivalent to liberation from peril, anxiety, and uncertainty, among other factors[98]. Security is a fundamental term intrinsically linked to the mitigation of dangers to the existence of individuals or groups. Consequently, for him, security is synonymous with liberation from current and impending peril, injury, or anxiety;

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yet, security may not denote the absence of hazards but rather the capacity to address these risks with suitable competence and proficiency.

Security pertains to the existence of peace, safety, happiness, and the safeguarding of people and physical resources, or the lack of crises[98]. Security can also be conceptualised as the established protocols aimed at safeguarding individuals and property from hostile entities[98]. A condition is established that fosters an environment in which individuals inside the state can engage in their routine activities without fear for their lives or property. Consequently, security comprises all measures aimed at protecting both human and material resources within the state from all sorts of aggression or violent behaviour. Conducting a critical assessment of Nigeria's security challenges, security in Nigeria is akin to an individual installing iron bars on their windows, which ultimately hinders their escape during a fire outbreak. Their sole prerequisite for sustaining peace and ensuring security is the enforcement of law and order.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

Various theories, including Situational Action Theory, Routine Activity Theory, and Rational Choice Theory, have been proposed by researchers to elucidate the occurrence of security challenges in Nigeria. While these theories offer insights into the phenomenon, they fall short of accounting for its persistence despite efforts to mitigate the issue. This has led the current study to utilise the Frustration Aggression Theory as an appropriate analytical framework due to its capacity to address the deficiencies in existing approaches for combating banditry in Nigeria. The theory was proposed by Dollard, Doob, Miller, Mowrer, and Sears.

2.2.1 Frustration-Aggression Theory

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This research is based on Frustration–Aggression Theory. It was proposed by Dollard, Doob, Miller, Mowrer, and Sears. The claim is that aggressive action invariably necessitates the presence of frustration, and conversely, that frustration invariably results in some manifestation of aggression[99]. This theory is particularly significant since, in contrast to its everyday usage, frustration is defined not as a subjective sensation but as a hindrance to the execution of a prompted goal-response.

The primary premise of the paradigm posits that "aggression invariably results from frustration," and "the manifestation of aggressive behaviour necessitates the presence of frustration, while conversely, the presence of frustration invariably precipitates some form of aggression." Frustration is defined as “an obstruction to the timely execution of a prompted goal response within the behavioural sequence.” Aggressiveness is a potential outcome of frustration[99]. In addition to violence, frustration can influence the formation or escalation of prejudice and depression. Early publications on the frustration–aggression theory posited that the prospect of punishment for aggressive behaviour (e.g., via social norms) constitutes a frustration that may subsequently heighten the propensity for aggressive actions or reactions in subsequent interactions. Alongside environmental factors, internal processes, such as the attribution of frustration, are seen significant for comprehending the frustration–aggression link concerning Banditry. The extent to which frustrations are viewed as arbitrary is a factor that influences the likelihood and intensity of prospective aggressive responses[99]. Research has substantiated the notion that attribution and the perception of arbitrariness are significant in relation to frustration and violence[99].

Within the behaviourist paradigm that prevailed during the initial phase of study on the origins and consequences of frustration, frustration was characterised as a catalyst for

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extinction, specifically an occurrence leading to the cessation of reinforcement that had previously sustained a behaviour. This often leads to individuals displaying a dramatic and transient escalation in the frequency of a behaviour, known as an extinction burst, especially at the onset of the extinction procedure. Nonetheless, it may also result in the emergence of innovative response behaviours (e.g., through a trial-and-error approach). Amsel subsequently recast this process from a cognitivist perspective, positing that dissatisfaction arises when an expected reward is diminished, postponed, or entirely withdrawn[99].

Dissatisfaction is characterised as the withdrawal of an expected reinforcer[100]. There are two criteria for an event to be deemed frustrating, which are;

(1) the goal must hold significance or relevance for the individual, and

(2) the individual must perceive the attainment of the goal as a probable outcome[100].

For a goal to elicit negative affect upon its obstruction, it must hold personal significance. Frustrations can be defined as occurrences that diminish the perception of self-efficacy[100]. Proximity to the goal at which frustration occurs will influence resultant aggression. This indicates that the nearer somebody is to accomplishing a goal, the more pronounced the impact of dissatisfaction will be on their aggressive tendencies[100]. This concept is referred to as the "goal gradient principle".

The extent to which frustration impedes the achievement of the desired objective is essential. The correlation between goal desirability and frustration is not inherently one-dimensional. Encountering disappointments when pursuing a goal might enhance its allure, thus amplifying the response to subsequent frustrations[101]. The conditions for events to be

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classified as frustrating are well delineated; nevertheless, the types, or more precisely, the origins of frustrations are highly varied. Moreover, the causal sequence leading to frustration might be enigmatic, obscuring the identification of its true origin.

A significant source of irritation that led to its thorough examination in social psychology is rivalry among various parties. Competitive encounters are at least partially frustrating as the participants obstruct one another's efforts to attain the contested objective and jeopardise each other with complete loss. This primarily pertains to zero-sum games, where the success of one participant necessitates the detriment of another, but it can also arise from various parties with divergent objectives contending for shared or finite resources[101]. Nonetheless, the contestants are not the exclusive source of difficulties. Like formidable adversaries, inept or self-serving collaborators can also induce dissatisfaction, as their harmful actions may hinder people from achieving personal accomplishment or obstruct groups from accomplishing a shared objective when effective cooperation is crucial.

Although originating in psychology, frustration–aggression theory has been applied to analyse individual and small group conduct, as well as to formulate macro-level theories that elucidate societal violence. In the book Why Men Rebel, the author contends that, at both individual and societal levels, persistent and extended experiences of dissatisfaction can precipitate an eruption of hostility and violence[101]. At the societal level, such frustrations may manifest as significant economic recessions, limited access to resources, or systemic and/or institutional discrimination against specific groups. This phenomenon is termed as systemic frustration. Macro-level applications of frustration–aggression theory to societies can also be comprehended through an evolutionary perspective. Events or situations that

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obstruct fundamental biological objectives, such as survival or reproduction, would be the most aversive and hence yield the most profound and extensive repercussions.

Frustration–aggression theory has been utilised in explanatory models at the meso-level, bridging individual behaviour and society processes[101]. The majority of this research has been conducted within the domain of organisational psychology that examines frustration and aggression in the workplace, frequently referencing "organisational frustration", which can be regarded as the meso-level counterpart to the systemic frustration. Despite ongoing modifications and clarifications of its theoretical parameters, the frustration–aggression theory has effectively elucidated a diverse array of behaviours in individuals, groups, and systems.

The persistent conflicts between pastoralists and sedentary farmers nationwide are mostly fuelled by frustrations and efforts to safeguard economic assets such as land, livestock, and agricultural produce. Herders faced pressure to supply pastures and water for their livestock due to the implications of climate change, while crop producers urgently required land for enhanced agricultural output. The subsequent cattle rustling, physical assaults, and encroachments on farms generated discontent between the two groups, culminating in violent confrontations, while the evident ineffectiveness of the state in addressing the issue became self-help a prevalent recourse. Frustration aggressiveness elucidates the underlying causes of the prevailing security issues in Zamfara State, as individuals striving to exceed their socioeconomic limitations reject their constraints, ultimately resorting to violence as a final measure to achieve their aspirations. Frustration-aggression theory examines the ongoing conflict between farmers and herders, specifically the Hausa and Fulani migrants, regarding agricultural and grazing territories.

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The Fulani migrants experience irritation and anger due to their perceived marginalisation and exclusion from government, as well as the appropriation of their grazing areas[102]. The applicability of the frustration-aggression theory to this study indicates that political actors engage in violence to attain their objectives and exert power, driven by sentiments of frustration that culminate in aggressiveness, particularly when the desired outcome appears unattainable. This theory elucidates the psychological conduct of individuals who employ violence to fulfil self-serving interests.

Aggression may arise from exposure to a profoundly frustrating situation that elicits feelings of helplessness. Individuals, confronted with a disparity between their beliefs and desires amidst the expanding wealth gap in Nigeria, particularly in Zamfara State, endeavour to mitigate this divide by manipulating information or modifying perceptions. Whenever a disagreement arises between the preferred value and the actual value, it is stated. This circumstance tends to engender hatred, worry, fear, and the impulse to harm or eradicate the source. This is precisely what is occurring in Zamfara State at present. Discrepancies may arise in economic, social, cultural, political, and religious domains, since these issues constitute the micro level of analysis, which can be considered the structural background circumstances functioning at the individual or societal level[102]. Consequently, the frustration-aggression theory elucidates the security challenges prevalent in various regions of Zamfara State. The theory posits that the insecurity in Zamfara State arises from the fear of defeat demonstrated by both the Hausa community (farmers) and the migrant Fulani herders, which incites frustration and subsequently leads to the transfer of aggression through the utilisation of human mercenaries to enact violence. This theory as impactful and insightful as it may be with regards to this work may be deficient for the reasons that …not all frustration leads to

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aggression. Again, people cope with frustration differently depending on personality and social norms. This theory does not account for this variation especially as it pertains cross border migration in Sokoto and Zamfara States, thus the need for SITUATIONAL ACTION THEORY.

The frustration–aggression theory is highly significant to this research because it provides a strong psychological and sociological foundation for understanding the escalation of violence and banditry within Sokoto and Zamfara States. The theory explains why individuals and groups resort to aggression when their goals; economic survival, territorial control, access to resources, social inclusion, or political participation, are blocked or obstructed[100].

In the context of Northwestern Nigeria, frustrations stemming from poverty, marginalisation, dwindling grazing land, unemployment, cattle rustling, climate-induced displacement, and perceived government neglect create fertile ground for aggressive behavioural responses. Herders, migrants, and rural communities facing acute resource scarcity experience structural frustration which, in turn, fuels retaliatory attacks, banditry, recruitment into armed groups, and cycles of revenge.

This theory is therefore significant because it helps to:

- Explain the psychological motivations underlying banditry, violent herder–farmer clashes, and armed resistance.
- Connect socioeconomic deprivation and political exclusion with rising insecurity.
- Demonstrate how unaddressed frustrations; economic, political, environmental, or cultural, translate into aggression and organised violence.

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- Provide a framework for analysing why security responses that do not reduce structural frustrations often fail to curb banditry.

For this study, the frustration–aggression framework is crucial in justifying the correlation between cross-border migration, environmental pressures, state weakness, and the escalation of banditry. It positions banditry not merely as criminality, but as an outcome of accumulated and unresolved frustrations across ethnic, political, and economic lines.

International Dimension of the Theory in This Study

The international dimension is central because the frustrations driving aggression in Northwestern Nigeria do not originate solely within national boundaries. Sokoto and Zamfara States lie within a dynamic transnational zone that connects Nigeria to Niger, Mali, Chad, and Burkina Faso, countries experiencing similar pressures[103].

The international dimension manifests in three core ways:

1. **Cross-Border Migration as a Source of Frustration:** Communities in Sokoto and Zamfara receive a continuous influx of migrants; Fulani pastoralists, displaced herders, traders, refugees, and sometimes armed groups, from Niger and other Sahel states. These movements increase pressure on scarce land, water, and grazing routes, heightening frustration among locals and migrant populations. Competition for dwindling resources generates resentment and aggression, consistent with the theory.

2. **Transnational Criminal and Terror Networks:** Weak border governance across West Africa enables the movement of arms, contraband, and fighters. Bandit groups and extremist elements exploit porous borders to regroup, recruit, and replenish

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supplies from neighbouring countries. This external flow of weapons and actors escalates local frustrations by creating an environment of insecurity and fear. Locals interpret this as both an external invasion and a failure of the state, creating deeper psychological frustration that manifests in aggression and retaliatory violence.

3. **Spillover of Regional Conflicts and Environmental Crises:** The Sahel region suffers from climate change, desertification, prolonged droughts, and violent extremist insurgencies. These crises push pastoralists across borders into Nigeria in search of safer grazing conditions. The sudden influx intensifies resource-based conflict, particularly in Zamfara and Sokoto, where farmlands and grazing routes are limited. These transnational pressures amplify systemic frustrations and trigger aggressive responses among both host communities and migrants.

Overall Relevance of the International Dimension

By illustrating how frustrations are shaped not only by domestic factors but also by cross-border dynamics, the frustration–aggression theory becomes an invaluable tool for analysing banditry in Northwest Nigeria. The theory justifies why international migration, environmental shocks, and transnational networks significantly influence:

- The scale and intensity of banditry
- Community resentments and retaliatory aggression
- The security challenges that Nigeria faces at its northern borders

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Thus, the international dimension strengthens the argument that banditry in Sokoto and Zamfara cannot be understood in isolation, but must be examined within the broader geopolitical environment of the West African Sahel.

2.2.2 Situational Action Theory

Situational Action Theory (SAT) is a criminological framework established by Per-Olof Wikström[104]. The theory seeks to elucidate the factors that drive individuals to engage in actions such as crime by integrating ecological, criminological, sociological, and behavioural disciplines. Crime constitutes an act that contravenes legal statutes, arising from the interaction between an individual's exposure to criminogenic environments and their inclination towards criminal behaviour; specifically, the duration spent in unsupervised or inadequately regulated areas, coupled with the individual's self-control, influences the incidence of crime. Situational Action Theory asserts that criminal behaviour is driven by an individual's moral framework and the contextual circumstances. Individuals are accountable for their behaviours; nevertheless, the determinants of their actions are situational. Consequently, a criminal conduct results from a decision made after evaluating several possible situations and stimuli inherent to a certain context. Consequently, crime occurs when it is regarded as a viable and appropriate option in the current context, and/or when an individual neglects to exercise moral control[105].

The situational stance proposed by SAT is based on four primary components: the individual (psychological composition, experiences, etc.), the environment (the surroundings to which one is exposed), the situation (decisions arising from interaction with the environment), and behaviour (the individual's actions). Situational Action Theory elucidates that the causes

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prompting criminal behaviour are uniform across individuals, irrespective of their age and stage in their criminal careers[106]. The hypothesis posits that individuals' inclination to engage in criminal behaviour differs, paralleling the variability of circumstances. The environment in which an individual exists influences the likelihood of criminal behaviour. An individual experiencing multidimensional poverty in a guardian-less setting, yet possessing certain escape alternatives and resources, is predisposed to engage in criminal activity. Crime incidence is the interplay between an individual's tendency for criminal behaviour and the criminogenic incentives present in the environment. An individual with a low inclination towards criminal behaviour, owing to robust moral integrity and/or the presence of governmental oversight, would exhibit diminished susceptibility to criminogenic stimuli, whereas an individual with a high inclination towards criminal behaviour is less likely to withstand criminal inducements.

Situational Action Theory proposes the following key basic assumptions:

i. individuals are fundamentally governed by rules. They articulate their aspirations and react to conflict within the framework of regulated decisions;

ii. social order is founded on collective norms of behaviour. Human behaviour patterns are founded on rule-based routines.

iii. individuals are the origin of their activities. Individuals perceive, select, and implement their activities;

iv. the causes of action are context-dependent. An individual's specific perception of action possibilities, the decision-making process, and the execution of the action

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are influenced and directed by pertinent input from the interaction between the person and the environment.

v. crimes constitute moral activities. Crimes are activities that violate legal standards for appropriate conduct in specific situations[106].

Situational Action Theory (SAT) elucidates several criminal activities, from stealing to terrorism. SAT elucidates the key issues of vulnerability, exposure, and emergence in the context of radicalisation and terrorism. To cultivate criminal propensity, an individual must be immersed in morally permissive environments conducive to crime; such an environment must be consistently accessible, and the individual must be receptive to its influences[107]. SAT elucidates the interplay of the individual, environment, context, and behaviour concerning banditry in Nigeria. The individual, particularly one with a low predisposition for crime, is incentivised by the circumstances to perceive criminal activity as a viable alternative to achieve the desired objective. The individual, being a product of their society, is inclined to adhere to societal norms.

Proponents of this theory opined that, crime arises from the interplay between an individual and their environment[103].

Consequently, in a society marked by criminogenic influences, the individual becomes susceptible to criminality. The circumstances and environment therefore drive an individual's behaviour. The psychological impact of multidimensional poverty, exclusion, unemployment, marginalisation, inequality, and displacement, combined with conditions such as inadequate governance, illegal mining, the proliferation of small arms, and an inadequately equipped security apparatus, fosters a detrimental environment that promotes

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harmful actions, such as banditry. The rise in banditry in Nigeria is due to the interactions among individuals affected by unfavourable socioeconomic situations in the environment. The environment is marked by persistent social discontent. Adverse decisions stem from engagement with the environment, culminating in criminal behaviour.

Situational Action Theory (SAT) is highly significant to this study because it provides a multidimensional framework that explains how personal characteristics, environmental conditions, and situational stimuli combine to produce criminal behaviour such as banditry. Unlike theories that focus solely on individual motivations or socioeconomic structures, SAT integrates moral psychology, environmental criminology, and social ecology to explain why certain individuals in crime-prone environments choose criminal action while others do not.

In the context of Sokoto and Zamfara States, SAT helps clarify why banditry persists in communities marked by:

- Weak institutional control
- Proliferation of weapon
- Porous and poorly governed borders
- Widespread multidimensional poverty
- Unsupervised or unregulated open spaces
- Collapsed traditional conflict-resolution systems

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These conditions create criminogenic environments where individuals; especially youths, displaced migrants, unemployed herders, and marginalised groups, perceive crime as a viable, available, or even necessary option. SAT therefore enables this study to explain how environmental deterioration, absence of guardianship, and weakened moral regulation converge with personal predispositions to produce banditry.

Key contributions of SAT to this research include:

- **It links migration-related pressures to crime decisions:** Cross-border migrants exposed to unfamiliar, insecure, or unregulated environments may find themselves in situations where survival needs push them toward criminal choices.

- **It explains the role of impoverished and conflict-ridden border communities:** Communities with limited state presence and minimal economic opportunities become breeding grounds for situational triggers that encourage banditry.

- **It supports the argument that crime is not only structural but situational:** Banditry emerges not from poverty alone, but from the interaction between individuals and environments where criminal options appear morally permissible, convenient, or unchallenged.

Because this research focuses on cross-border migration, environmental pressures, and banditry, SAT offers a strong theoretical foundation for explaining the dynamic, moment-by-moment decision-making processes that push individuals into violent criminal networks in Northwestern Nigeria.

International Dimension of Situational Action Theory in This Study

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The international dimension is essential because the environments that shape criminal behaviour in Sokoto and Zamfara States are not exclusively Nigerian, they are shaped by regional, cross-border, and transnational factors, especially in the Sahel.

SAT becomes particularly relevant when these external factors alter the criminogenic landscape. The theory highlights how shifts in the broader regional environment produce new situational cues that increase the likelihood of crime.

1. Cross-Border Migration Creates New Criminogenic Environments

The border between Nigeria and Niger is highly porous, allowing:

- Seasonal and permanent migration of herders
- Movement of displaced populations
- Infiltration of criminal elements
- Diffusion of weapons and illicit goods

Migrants, often arriving from conflict-affected regions such as Niger, Mali, Burkina Faso, and Chad, enter Nigerian communities with different cultural norms, survival pressures, and exposure to violence. SAT explains how these newcomers interact with unfamiliar environments and may adopt criminal choices when:

- There is limited state surveillance
- Local economic opportunities are scarce

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- Criminal networks are visibly operating
- Weapons are accessible
- Institutions regulating moral behaviour are weak

The interaction between migrant populations and poorly regulated border communities creates highly criminogenic settings that intensify the likelihood of banditry.

2. Spillover of Sahelian Conflicts and Extremist Ideologies

Conflicts in the broader Sahel region, Tuareg rebellions, jihadist insurgencies, and militia activities, have reshaped moral norms and behavioural expectations among young men. Exposure to violence normalises aggressive behaviour.

SAT explains that when individuals enter environments that do not condemn violence or provide strong moral regulation, aggressive or criminal paths become situationally "acceptable."

This is evident in:

- The spread of extremist groups across West Africa
- Cross-border recruitment by bandit and terrorist networks

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- Circulation of militant ideologies through migrant chains
- These international dynamics directly influence decision-making processes within Northwestern Nigeria.

3. Transnational Arms Trafficking and Criminal Markets

The Sahel is one of the largest unregulated arms corridors in the world. Weapons from Libya, Mali, and Niger flow into Nigeria through poorly controlled border points in Sokoto and Zamfara.

SAT emphasises that criminal choices increase when criminogenic opportunities are readily available. The presence of cheap, accessible firearms:

- Lowers the threshold for aggression
- Increases the feasibility of criminal operations
- Strengthens the organisational capacity of bandit groups

Thus, international arms flow amplifies the criminogenic environment in which individuals make decisions.

4. Environmental and Climate-Induced Migration

Desertification and drought across the Sahel have pushed many Fulani pastoralists southward into Nigeria. This creates resource competition with local farmers, generating tension and situational conflicts.

SAT explains how these pressures alter the environment in ways that:

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- Increase exposure to conflict
- Reduce state supervision in frontier zones
- Produce morally permissive attitudes towards violence for survival

The environmental push-factors in Niger, Chad, and Mali therefore have direct situational consequences on banditry in Zamfara and Sokoto[106,107].

2.2.3 Conspiracy Theory

Conspiracy Theory provides a framework for understanding how hidden networks, perceived external agendas, and covert political or economic interests shape public interpretation of insecurity, cross-border migration, and organised violence. The theory posits that events are often seen not as random occurrences, but as the outcome of deliberate and coordinated actions by powerful actors, whether foreign governments, local elites, insurgent groups, or transnational criminal networks. In the context of northern Nigeria, conspiracy theory has become a lens through which communities attempt to interpret the complex interplay of migration, porous borders, political interests, and the escalation of banditry[108].

The significance of conspiracy theory in this study lies in its ability to explain how perceptions, whether accurate or exaggerated, can fuel suspicion, distrust, and conflict. In an environment characterised by weak institutions, low literacy levels, historical marginalisation, and recurring insecurity, conspiracy narratives spread easily and can influence public behaviour, community responses, and even state policy. These narratives often attribute banditry to external control, elite sponsorship, or cross-border manipulation. Thus, the theory is relevant because it illuminates the psychological and sociopolitical

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processes that shape how communities and stakeholders interpret migration flows and criminality. It also highlights how misinformation and mistrust can worsen insecurity and impede effective policy intervention[109].

The international dimension is particularly critical because Sokoto and Zamfara share borders with Niger Republic, a region marked by fluid population movement, shared ethnic identities, and weak border surveillance. Conspiracy theories in northern Nigeria frequently point to foreign actors; such as rebel groups, jihadist organisations, arms traffickers, and political factions in neighbouring states, as sponsors or facilitators of banditry. The cross-border influx of migrants, herders, arms, and criminal gangs is often interpreted as a deliberate operation orchestrated by external interests to destabilise Nigeria or seize control of resources[110].

Similarly, transnational criminal networks operating across West Africa; especially in the Sahel, are believed to exploit porous borders to transport weapons, smuggle contraband, and coordinate attacks. Communities in Sokoto and Zamfara sometimes perceive this as evidence of foreign plots or covert alliances between local bandits and international terror groups such as ISWAP or Al-Qaeda-linked networks. These international perceptions, whether grounded in fact or constructed through suspicion, influence local security responses and deepen anxiety about cross-border migration.

Within these states, conspiracy theory helps explain why cross-border migration is often seen not merely as a demographic movement, but as a politically charged and security-sensitive phenomenon. Migrants entering Nigeria from Niger, Mali, or Burkina Faso, many of whom share cultural and religious ties with local communities, are sometimes suspected of being

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infiltrators, mercenaries, or collaborators with criminal gangs. This perception fuels fear and worsens ethnic profiling, community clashes, and retaliatory attacks[111].

Furthermore, political elites and security institutions are sometimes accused of deliberately enabling banditry; either to weaken opponents, profit from illicit trade, or control mineral-rich territories such as gold mining sites in Zamfara. These narratives, whether verified or not, shape public interpretation of why banditry persists despite multiple military operations. Thus, conspiracy theory is integral to this study because it captures the intersection of political interests, public perception, and international influences in shaping the dynamics of cross-border migration and banditry[110,111]. By framing insecurity as the outcome of hidden agendas and external manipulation, the theory provides a socio-psychological explanation for why communities respond the way they do, and why government interventions sometimes fail to build trust or achieve lasting peace.

2.3 Review of Empirical Studies

The first empirical study reviewed in this research is titled "Terrorism: The Boko Haram Phenomenon in Nigeria". The study provides a comprehensive examination of the extensive impact of Boko Haram's insurgency on Nigeria and the wider West African sub-region. Using a descriptive research design, the author employs both qualitative and quantitative methods, selecting the study population purposively to ensure that the perspectives of groups directly affected by terrorist activities were adequately represented. The researcher notes that Boko Haram's attacks, particularly following the 2011 bombing of the United Nations building in Abuja, drew widespread national and international attention. Since then, the

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group has continued to carry out devastating assaults that have resulted in mass casualties, massive displacement, and destruction across northern Nigeria[112].

While the study acknowledges that several scholars and officials attribute the rise of Boko Haram to poverty, unemployment, injustice, and human rights violations, it also highlights a far deeper political dimension. The findings reveal that the insurgency is closely linked to longstanding policy failures, political negligence, and weak governance in northern Nigeria. Successive governments were unable or unwilling to implement effective counter-extremism strategies or address the structural inequalities that shaped the region. Such failures created fertile ground for extremist ideologies to take root and gain acceptance among marginalized populations.

The study further draws attention to the controversial issue of political sponsorship and elite complicity. Although difficult to prove conclusively, various empirical accounts suggest that certain political actors at different times may have covertly provided support to Boko Haram for electoral or strategic purposes. This alleged support, whether financial, logistical, or protective, contributed to the group's resilience and ability to operate despite intensified counter-terrorism efforts. Additionally, the research points out that the regional geopolitical landscape has played a significant role in the persistence of Boko Haram, particularly in relation to Nigeria's porous borders. Political instability and weak security structures in neighbouring countries such as Niger, Chad, and Cameroon have inadvertently provided safe havens that allow the movement of fighters, weapons, and supplies across borders.

The researcher also emphasizes that ideological radicalization fed on the political vacuum created by corruption, lack of trust in state institutions, and poor leadership. In many remote

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and underserved communities, the state's absence allowed Boko Haram to impose its authority, spread its ideology, and recruit members with relative ease. These conditions collectively underscore the argument that Boko Haram is not merely a product of socio-economic deprivation but is deeply embedded in Nigeria's political landscape. Hence, the study concludes that understanding the insurgency requires a thorough consideration of governance failures, elite interests, regional geopolitics, and inconsistent security policies. This political dimension is essential for comprehending the broader environment that enables insecurity, cross-border migration, and banditry to persist in northern Nigeria[112].

Another scholarly work reviewed to strengthen this research is titled "Conflict and Development in Nigeria: Counterinsurgency and Counterterrorism Strategies towards the Niger Delta and Boko Haram Conflicts." The researcher adopted a descriptive research design and relied primarily on qualitative methods, drawing extensively from secondary data due to the abundance of existing literature on the subject. The study argues that the reestablishment of democratic governance in 1999, after decades of military rule, ushered in a new phase of violent conflicts and socio-political tensions in Nigeria. This period witnessed the rise of both the Niger Delta militancy and the Boko Haram insurgency, whose activities have had profound national and global implications, thereby attracting widespread international and domestic counter-insurgency efforts[113].

The study notes that Nigeria's counter-terrorism response has been heavily militarised, yet these efforts have been largely ineffective due to deep-rooted political and governance failures. The researcher highlights that while poverty, alienation, and underdevelopment are important drivers of conflict, the political dimension is equally central. The Boko Haram conflict, in particular, is shown to be shaped by longstanding political marginalisation in the

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Northeast, weak state presence, and corruption within security agencies. The study further suggests that political actors at both state and federal levels have often used insecurity to advance their strategic interests, whether through manipulating narratives of terrorism, influencing resource allocation, or securing political dominance in the region. This politicisation of conflict responses has created gaps that insurgent groups exploit to sustain their operations.

A critical point raised in the study is the tension between development and security policies. Although development-based interventions are increasingly promoted as solutions to violent extremism, the research notes that these interventions are often heavily influenced by political agendas. International development partners, local elites, and government institutions frequently deploy development programs not solely to address insecurity, but also to maintain influence, consolidate power, or access funds. The researcher argues that the commodification of development; where interventions become tools for political bargaining, undermines their effectiveness, creates opportunities for corruption, and deepens public distrust in government institutions.

The study also emphasises that Nigeria's counter-insurgency strategies lack coherence because they are shaped by competing political interests rather than a unified national vision. This is evident in the fragmented coordination between the federal government, state governments in the Northeast, and international partners. The diminished vertical interaction between Nigeria and its foreign development partners, as highlighted in the study, reflects a broader political disconnect that weakens collaborative efforts. Furthermore, the research points out that both internal and external interventions, whether military or developmental, often fall prey to securitisation and elite capture. This undermines the intended focus on

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human security, which the study argues should be central to resolving conflicts in the Niger Delta and the Northeast.

Overall, the empirical study concludes that although development and security are deeply interconnected, Nigeria's responses to the Boko Haram insurgency and Niger Delta militancy continue to be shaped by political considerations, patronage networks, and systemic corruption. These political dynamics limit the effectiveness of counter-insurgency strategies and impede sustainable development, thereby perpetuating the cycles of violence that characterise the country's conflict landscape.

Another relevant scholarly work reviewed for this study is titled “Managing Religious Conflicts in Nigeria: The Inter-Religious Mediation Peace Strategy.” The study adopted an exploratory research design supported by a qualitative methodology, relying extensively on secondary data to analyse the dynamics of religious conflict in Nigeria. The researcher emphasises that Nigeria; home to over 150 million people, hosts two dominant religious groups, Christians and Muslims, whose interactions are further complicated by more than 250 ethnic nationalities. This intricate religious–ethnic landscape is often exploited by political actors, resulting in tensions that extend beyond purely spiritual differences. Over the past decades, several religious flashpoints have erupted into violence, including the 2006 riots following the Danish cartoon controversy, the 2000 anti-Sharia crisis in Kaduna, multiple clashes in Bauchi in 2001 and 2004, the 2002 Miss World pageant conflict, and most notably, the 2009 Boko Haram uprising that devastated communities across northern Nigeria[114].

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The study highlights that many of these conflicts did not occur in isolation but were frequently shaped by underlying political grievances, governance failures, and the strategic manipulation of religion by elites seeking power. In particular, the emergence of Boko Haram reveals how extremist groups often gain traction amid political marginalisation, weak institutions, and allegations of covert sponsorship by political figures pursuing influence or destabilisation. Competing narratives within the political class regarding security funding, electoral advantages, and control of northern constituencies created an environment in which the Boko Haram insurgency could escalate. The movement's violent ideology was therefore reinforced not only by religious extremism but also by political calculations, patronage networks, and the struggle for dominance within northern Nigeria's political landscape.

Given these complexities, the Nigerian Federal Government and several non-governmental organisations have developed various peacebuilding frameworks aimed at reducing the recurrence of religious and politically-motivated conflicts. The study emphasized on the importance of inter-religious mediation groups as vital mechanisms for fostering dialogue, defusing tensions, and establishing sustainable peace across deeply divided communities. It specifically examined past religious crises and assessed the effectiveness of local inter-faith mediation bodies in implementing peace strategies. The research further explored the elements required for an effective inter-religious mediation model, the factors influencing its capacity to prevent or manage conflict, and the most viable approaches for strengthening its role within Nigeria's broader socio-political context[114].

Another empirical study reviewed in the course of this research is titled "Realizing the Effective Enforcement of Civil and Political Rights in Africa: An Analysis of the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights." The study employed a descriptive research design

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and relied extensively on secondary data throughout the research process. The researcher highlighted that despite Nigeria's growing significance as a global economic and political actor, security challenges remain a pressing concern. In particular, the Middle Belt region of the country experiences recurrent intercommunal and religious violence, where the predominantly Muslim North intersects with the largely Christian South. The study aimed to identify the trends and underlying factors that contribute to the escalation of violence in certain pluralistic communities while remaining comparatively subdued in others[115].

The analysis revealed a strong political dimension to these conflicts. Specifically, Local Government Areas (LGAs) with established power-sharing arrangements among competing political groups were more prone to rapid escalation of disputes into violence, compared to areas dominated by a single political party. This suggests that political competition and fragmented governance structures can exacerbate tensions, particularly where religious and ethnic divisions are pronounced. The researcher further drew parallels between Nigeria's experience and similar dynamics in Europe, where religious tensions were inflamed by the arrival of Muslim migrants. The study concluded that political arrangements, governance structures, and the capacity of local authorities to manage diversity play a critical role in either mitigating or exacerbating intercommunal violence. It also underscored the importance of understanding the complex interplay between political power, religion, and social cohesion in developing effective security and human rights policies[115].

Another study reviewed in the course of this study is titled "Kazakhstan in Africa: An Economic Diplomacy within Distant Neighbourhood Foreign Policy". The research paper asserts that from the 15th century, the African continent has garnered global attention. During the Atlantic slave trade and colonial era, European nations exploited the resources

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and labour of African territory. African individuals from various tribes were forced to leave their homelands for involuntary labour, predominantly in the Americas. Furthermore, the regions of Africa were partitioned by European powers during the era of colonialism, which was officially commenced at the Berlin Conference of 1884-1885. In addition to their prior interests in Africa during the rise of independence movements in the mid-1950s, other non-European nations, including the United States, the Soviet Union, India, China, and Brazil, have interacted with Africa for political and ideological purposes. Africa has been recognised as a crucial region for the establishment of a sphere of influence and the promotion of national interests by many states. Ideologically, the Soviet Union and the United States sought to provide assistance to African nations to secure enduring protection against each other during the Cold War. In light of the economic advantages, Africa has attracted the interest of many other countries[116].

Kazakhstan has indicated its intention to forge diplomatic connections with African countries under the 2050 Strategy, introduced in 2012. Kazakhstan has been undertaking an economic engagement with Africa, supported by both the Kazakh government and private firms. The research contends that the application of economic diplomacy in Kazakhstan's foreign policy towards distant neighbours is illustrated by its engagement with Africa via the 2050 Strategy. This study sought to illustrate the economic aspect of Kazakhstan's relationship with Africa, particularly through economic cooperation, investment, and commerce. The theoretical framework of economic diplomacy serves as the foundation for the study.

In conclusion, the paper posits that Kazakhstan's economic diplomacy towards Africa is of considerable significance in four principal dimensions. Initially, the African nations understood the 2050 Plan and responded appropriately. The aforementioned measures

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encompassed the granting of observer status to Kazakhstan in the African Union in 2013, an increase in official visits from African nations to Kazakhstan by 2012, positive expressions from African ambassadors in Kazakhstan regarding the enhancement of commercial relations, and the provision of targeted assistance for Kazakhstan's bid for non-permanent membership in the United Nations Security Council. Kazakhstan's participation in China's New Belt and Road Initiative signifies a strategic advancement in economic diplomacy in Africa. China is expected to benefit from Kazakhstan's economic diplomacy with African nations about its investments in Africa, as it has sought to integrate its neighbouring countries into the Belt and Road Initiative. Kazakhstan's evident interest in Africa emphasized on the favourable relationship between economic diplomacy and its engagement in global politics and economics. Currently, Kazakhstan is investigating prospective investment prospects in Africa. If successful results are attained, Africa may function as a conduit for Kazakhstan to enhance its international presence. Finally, it is significant because Kazakhstan is the only Central Asian nation that has formulated a clear and distinct foreign policy concerning Africa[116].

The socio-economic impacts of banditry on migration patterns in Northern Nigeria[117]. The researcher opined that banditry has disrupted the established migration trends in Northern Nigeria, forcing people to leave rural areas and relocate to urban centres for safety. Studies show that communities in banditry-prone regions have seen a mass exodus of residents who, fearing for their lives, abandon their homes, farms, and sources of livelihood. There has been a substantial increase in the migration of people from rural to urban areas in Northern Nigeria over the past decade, driven by threats to personal security and the destruction of economic assets. This rural-urban migration places a strain on urban infrastructure and resources,

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resulting in overcrowding and increased demand for housing, healthcare, and employment in host communities.

The displacement caused by banditry has significant socioeconomic implications for both the migrants and the communities that host them. Many people displaced by banditry are forced to abandon their farmland and other sources of income, leading to a loss of productivity and increased poverty levels in rural areas. The research also found that agricultural production in affected regions declined drastically as many farmers abandoned their lands to escape violence. This agricultural downturn has exacerbated food insecurity, not only within the affected communities but also in Northern Nigeria as a whole, where agriculture is a primary economic activity. Migrants arriving in urban areas often struggle to secure sustainable employment, contributing to higher unemployment rates. Furthermore, displaced individuals face difficulties integrating into new communities, leading to increased economic marginalization and, at times, involvement in informal or even illicit activities as a means of survival. This marginalization can deepen poverty among the migrant population and, in some cases, create new sources of social tension in urban areas[117].

The socioeconomic effects of banditry-driven migration extend beyond immediate economic challenges. Migrants relocating to new areas often face social alienation, which can limit their access to essential resources and support networks. The researcher argued that internally displaced persons (IDPs) who migrate due to banditry-induced insecurity experience discrimination and find it difficult to access local services, such as healthcare and education. This social strain hinders their ability to rebuild their lives and achieve stability. In addition, banditry-driven migration patterns have brought security challenges to host communities. The influx of people from conflict-ridden areas can inadvertently strain local security

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systems, as urban areas often lack the resources to handle rapid population growth due to forced migration. Local governments may struggle to maintain order and prevent crime within these communities, potentially worsening the security situation[118].

In summary, the researcher concludes that socioeconomic impacts of banditry on migration patterns in Northern Nigeria are profound, affecting the economy, security, and social cohesion in both rural and urban communities. Forced migration due to banditry disrupts traditional livelihoods, aggravates poverty, and strains urban resources, creating challenges that affect the entire region. Addressing these impacts requires comprehensive policies that prioritize economic development, security reforms, and support for displaced persons to promote resilience in the face of ongoing banditry-related challenges.

Effects of Banditry on Rural-Urban Migration in Northwest Nigeria [119]. The researcher argued that banditry has transformed traditional migration patterns in Northwest Nigeria, primarily by accelerating rural-urban migration as residents of affected areas abandon their homes and livelihoods for the relative safety of urban centres. In the research, study shows that migration from rural areas to urban cities in Northwestern states has risen sharply since 2015, as the intensity of banditry worsened. Many of those displaced have limited or no resources, leading to a swelling population of internally displaced persons (IDPs) in urban areas, especially in major cities like Gusau, Kaduna, and Kano. This forced migration not only disrupts family structures and rural economies but also places pressure on urban infrastructure and services, resulting in overcrowded IDP camps and informal settlements.

Also, the migration prompted by banditry has considerable economic consequences for both rural and urban communities. In rural areas, agricultural activities have suffered, as people

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are unable to tend to their farms out of fear of attack. The research found that agricultural productivity in affected areas has declined by nearly 40% over the past decade, leading to heightened food insecurity and reduced income for farmers who rely on seasonal crop and livestock farming. The decline in agricultural output also has broader economic impacts, as agriculture forms a significant portion of Northwest Nigeria's economy[120].

In urban areas, the influx of migrants places pressure on limited economic resources, leading to increased competition for jobs, particularly in the informal sector. Displaced rural residents often face challenges securing employment due to differences in skills and lack of experience with urban economic activities. This influx contributes to rising unemployment rates and has, in some cases, led to an increase in informal or low-paying jobs, as migrants strive to sustain themselves. Economic marginalization among migrants exacerbates poverty, creating conditions that can fuel social tension and increase the risk of criminal activities.

The social and security impacts of banditry-driven migration are also notable. Many migrants from rural areas face difficulties integrating into urban communities due to cultural differences, lack of support networks, and, at times, discrimination. According to a survey conducted by the researcher, , migrants reported feelings of isolation and frustration at being unable to access services such as healthcare, education, and housing[111]. The rapid and unplanned population growth in urban centers has also strained existing infrastructure, resulting in overcrowded housing, limited healthcare facilities, and stretched educational resources.

Moreover, the influx of displaced persons has raised security concerns in host communities. Although many migrants seek refuge from violence, the movement of people from conflict-

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prone areas has sometimes been associated with the spread of crime and insecurity in urban areas, as local security forces struggle to manage the increased demand for law enforcement. The inability of urban areas to absorb this migration effectively can lead to the formation of informal settlements, where crime and social unrest are more likely.

In summary, the study concludes that banditry has had a profound effect on rural-urban migration patterns in Northwest Nigeria, with far-reaching socioeconomic and security consequences. Rural-urban migration prompted by banditry has disrupted agricultural productivity, strained urban resources, increased poverty among migrants, and heightened security challenges in urban centers. Addressing these issues requires a comprehensive approach involving enhanced security, economic support for rural communities, and improved urban planning to manage the impacts of forced migration more effectively.

"Gendered Dimensions of Migration and Banditry in Nigeria". The researcher opined that men and women have distinct reasons for migrating in response to banditry. Studies indicate that men, often the primary protectors and breadwinners, may choose to leave rural areas to seek economic opportunities in cities after their livelihoods are destroyed by violence. The research shows that rural men frequently migrate to urban centers to secure informal work, hoping to support their families from afar. Conversely, women are more likely to migrate due to heightened risks of gender-based violence (GBV), including kidnapping and assault. A survey conducted by the researcher indicates that a high percentage of women cited physical safety and concerns for their children as primary motivators for migration, given their vulnerability to abduction and exploitation by bandits[121].

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Also, economic impacts of displacement due to banditry differ sharply along gender lines. Men's roles as primary income earners are disrupted, especially when agricultural work becomes too dangerous. This leads to reduced economic productivity in rural areas and forces men into low-paying urban jobs. For women, displacement often exacerbates pre-existing economic marginali ation. Displaced women in urban centres face difficulties finding work due to limited skills, social stigma, and the need to care for children. In the research, study shows that displaced women are disproportionately represented in low-wage and informal sectors, such as street vending or domestic work, which lack stability and benefits.

The social and psychological impacts of migration and banditry are also gendered. For men, displacement often brings a loss of social status and identity, as they are unable to fulfil traditional roles as providers and protectors. This loss of identity can lead to depression and frustration, which, according to the researcher, sometimes contributes to increased substance abuse among displaced men in urban areas. Women, on the other hand, frequently bear the psychological burden of trauma related to gender-based violence and the challenges of single-handedly caring for children during and after displacement. The responsibility for family cohesion often falls on women, who must navigate unfamiliar urban environments while ensuring their families' survival.

Gender considerations also influence access to support and resources in displacement settings. Men may have more mobility and access to certain economic opportunities in urban areas, though they may struggle with lack of community support. In contrast, women are often restricted in their movement due to cultural norms, reducing their ability to access economic resources and relief services independently. As the researcher puts it, displaced

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women frequently rely on humanitarian aid more heavily than men and face challenges accessing healthcare and education services for their children due to gender-specific barriers.

The research concludes that gendered dimensions of migration and banditry in Nigeria underscore the need for a nuanced approach to displacement and relief efforts. Men and women experience unique economic, social, and psychological challenges, shaped by their gender roles and vulnerabilities. Addressing these needs requires policies that provide economic opportunities for both men and women, gender-sensitive trauma support, and targeted access to healthcare and education for displaced families. By acknowledging these differences, Nigeria can better support affected communities and foster resilience in the face of persistent banditry and migration pressures[121].

"The Role of Government Policies in Addressing Banditry-Induced Migration in Nigeria". The researcher elucidates that banditry-induced migration has become a pressing issue in Nigeria, especially in its northern regions where armed groups frequently terrorise communities. The impacts of these violent activities range from loss of lives and properties to widespread displacement, as people are forced to flee their homes in search of safety. This review critically assesses the effectiveness of government policies in addressing this form of migration, examining both policy implementations and their social and economic impacts on the affected populations[122].

The researcher explained that government policies addressing banditry-induced migration in Nigeria can be divided into three main areas: security enforcement, economic development initiatives, and social welfare support. Empirical studies reveal mixed outcomes of these

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approaches, suggesting that while some policies have made meaningful contributions, others remain limited by structural challenges, funding gaps, and inadequate coordination.

Security Enforcement Policies: Security-driven policies primarily focus on increasing the military and police presence in affected areas. Programs like Operation Puff Adder, launched by the Nigerian Police Force in 2019, aim to strengthen security and restore stability in regions affected by banditry. Studies show that while these operations temporarily deter bandits, their impact is limited due to insufficient resources, inadequate personnel, and logistical issues[115]. These security measures often displace the banditry problem to neighbouring regions, thus leading to a cyclical pattern of displacement and migration rather than providing a long-term solution.

Economic Development Initiatives: Banditry in Nigeria is often fuelled by poverty, unemployment, and lack of economic opportunities, especially in rural areas. Recognizing these factors, the government has initiated several programs aimed at addressing the root causes of banditry. Initiatives such as the National Social Investment Program (NSIP) aim to provide financial support and job opportunities to vulnerable populations. Empirical studies indicate that while these programs have improved income security for some individuals, their reach is limited by administrative inefficiencies and inadequate funding[112]. Moreover, the impact of these economic programs on reducing migration remains under-researched, with scholars arguing that sustainable development initiatives are essential to creating long-term stability and reducing displacement.

Social Welfare Support and Rehabilitation Programmes: Policies designed to support displaced persons and assist in their resettlement are another critical component of

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government efforts. The National Commission for Refugees, Migrants, and Internally Displaced Persons (NCFRMI) has been instrumental in providing shelter, food, and healthcare to internally displaced persons (IDPs). In the research, studies emphasize the importance of these interventions, noting that they reduce the vulnerabilities of displaced populations. However, challenges in coordination, insufficient funding, and resource scarcity often hamper the effective implementation of these welfare programs. Additionally, the lack of psychosocial support for trauma-affected individuals further complicates reintegration efforts.

Evaluation and Limitations: While the Nigerian government has implemented various policies to address banditry-induced migration, evidence suggests that the effectiveness of these efforts remains constrained by systemic issues. Findings in the research shows that, weak policy implementation and poor inter-agency coordination continue to undermine policy effectiveness, resulting in cyclical displacement rather than sustainable solutions. The lack of community involvement in policy formulation also limits the relevance and acceptance of government interventions at the grassroots level.

The study therefore concludes that the government's approach to addressing banditry-induced migration in Nigeria highlights both the strengths and limitations of current policies. While security operations, economic initiatives, and welfare programs have shown potential, their impact is diluted by issues of resource allocation, coordination, and community engagement. Future policy frameworks need to integrate multi-sectoral approaches that address the economic, security, and social dimensions of the banditry crisis to create sustainable solutions[122].

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"Comparative Analysis of Banditry and Migration in Northwest vs. Northeast Nigeria"[123]. The researcher explained that banditry and migration are significant and interlinked issues impacting both the northwest and northeast regions of Nigeria, though they manifest differently due to regional, social, and economic dynamics. In northwest Nigeria, banditry primarily involves armed groups who engage in cattle rustling, kidnapping, and armed robbery. These groups often emerge from local conflicts over land, resources, and livestock, fuelled by poverty and inadequate governance. Zamfara, Katsina, and Sokoto states are particularly affected, with bandits exploiting the region's porous borders and dense forests as bases for operations. Empirical studies, such as that banditry in this region often has an economic dimension, as bandits seek financial gains from ransom payments and resource extortion.

In contrast, the northeast experiences a more ideologically driven form of violence, largely influenced by the activities of Boko Haram and its offshoot, the Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP). These groups have a religious and political agenda, seeking to establish a strict interpretation of Islamic law. Their activities have led to extensive violence, especially in Borno, Adamawa, and Yobe states. While economic motivations play a role, studies show that the primary drivers in the northeast are ideological and rooted in grievances against the state[116]. This distinction has implications for the nature and scale of migration from each region.

The migration induced by banditry in both regions follows different patterns. In the northwest, banditry causes sporadic displacement, with communities often fleeing temporarily and returning once the immediate threat subsides. However, when attacks intensify, such as in Zamfara, migration becomes more permanent, as families move to urban

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areas or neighboring states for safety. The northwest has seen a steady rise in internal displacement, with about 1.5 million internally displaced persons (IDPs) by 2022[123].

The northeast, however, faces a protracted displacement crisis. Migration from this region is often prolonged, as communities have little prospect of returning to areas occupied by Boko Haram or ISWAP forces. This region has generated the highest number of IDPs in Nigeria, with over two million people displaced by 2022, according to the International Organization for Migration[113]. The high level of militarization and instability further discourages return migration, pushing some to seek refuge in neighbouring countries like Chad, Niger, and Cameroon.

The study explained that government responses to banditry and migration vary between the regions. In the northwest, policies focus on military operations, such as Operation Hadarin Daji, combined with peace dialogues to negotiate with bandits. Although some temporary stability has been achieved, these efforts face challenges due to limited resources and accusations of corruption[113]. Community responses are also more active in the northwest, with local vigilante groups attempting to protect villages, though these groups sometimes exacerbate violence through retaliation. In contrast, the government response in the northeast has primarily been militaristic, with ongoing joint operations between Nigerian forces and international allies. Programs like Operation Lafiya Dole have aimed to combat insurgents, though their success has been mixed due to the group's mobility and cross-border operations. Unlike the northwest, community participation is lower, as many communities have been depopulated or destroyed by prolonged conflict[116].

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In conclusion, the researcher concludes that the comparative analysis of banditry and migration in Nigeria's northwest and northeast reveals that, while both regions suffer from violent displacement, the drivers, patterns, and responses differ significantly. The economically motivated banditry in the northwest results in intermittent migration, while the ideologically driven conflict in the northeast causes prolonged, large-scale displacement[123].

"Human Security and Displacement: The Impact of Banditry on Local Communities in Northern Nigeria"[124]. The researcher expatiates that in recent years, northern Nigeria has experienced a surge in banditry, a criminal phenomenon characterized by violent attacks, kidnappings, and property theft. This banditry crisis has severely impacted human security, posing grave threats to lives, livelihoods, and overall social stability in affected areas. Human security, as a concept, emphasizes the protection of individuals rather than solely focusing on state sovereignty and traditional security paradigms.

Empirical studies from the aforementioned topic highlight that banditry-driven displacement has become a prominent issue in northern Nigeria, especially in states like Zamfara, Katsina, Kaduna, and Sokoto. According to a 2021 report by the International Organization for Migration (IOM), violent attacks by bandits have led to large-scale displacement, forcing thousands to abandon their homes, farms, and communities. Displacement often exacerbates vulnerabilities, as families are forced into overcrowded and under-resourced camps with limited access to basic needs such as shelter, clean water, healthcare, and education. Consequently, the health, safety, and well-being of displaced individuals are severely compromised, further undermining human security in these regions.

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One of the significant impacts of banditry-induced displacement is the breakdown of local economies. Many communities in northern Nigeria rely heavily on agriculture, animal husbandry, and small-scale trading. Bandit attacks on rural farming communities lead to reduced agricultural productivity as displaced farmers can no longer cultivate their lands. The researcher found that frequent bandit raids and forced migration have contributed to severe food insecurity in the region, as agricultural production declines and local markets struggle to operate under constant threat. The loss of livelihoods and disruptions in food supply have triggered rising poverty levels, leaving communities economically marginalized and further deepening social inequalities.

The psychological toll of banditry on northern Nigerian communities cannot be overstated. Constant fear of attacks has created a pervasive sense of insecurity, leading to widespread trauma and mental distress among affected populations. Empirical research similarly shows that prolonged exposure to violence and displacement often results in post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), anxiety, and depression. These psychological effects are particularly pronounced among women and children, who are often targeted in bandit attacks or left vulnerable in the absence of male family members. Such emotional and psychological strain further hampers the resilience of local communities and contributes to the erosion of social cohesion.

The challenges posed by banditry also highlight the limitations of government responses. While Nigerian security forces have conducted operations to curb banditry, weak state capacity, corruption, and logistical constraints have hindered sustained success. Also, analysis of anti-banditry operations indicates that military interventions often fail to address root causes, such as poverty, unemployment, and social exclusion, which create an enabling

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environment for banditry. In this sense, the state's inability to adequately protect its citizens highlights the pressing need for policies that address both immediate security threats and underlying socio-economic issues. The study concludes that, banditry in northern Nigeria has far-reaching implications for human security, affecting not only the physical safety of individuals but also their livelihoods, mental well-being, and social stability. Addressing the impact of banditry requires a comprehensive approach that combines security measures with long-term development policies aimed at tackling poverty, improving education, and fostering community resilience[124].

"Youth Unemployment and the Rise of Banditry in Northwest Nigeria". The researcher explained that the rise of banditry in northwest Nigeria is a growing security challenge, exacerbated by high youth unemployment rates[125]. The northwest region has witnessed increasing violence, kidnappings, and armed bandit attacks, with youth unemployment identified as a critical factor fuelling these issues. As for the researcher, several studies underscore the relationship between youth unemployment and insecurity. The researcher argue that the lack of employment opportunities for young people in northwest Nigeria is a significant driver of banditry. Their study reveals that the region has a youth unemployment rate exceeding 30%, which leaves thousands of young people in conditions of economic marginalisation[115]. Without viable income sources or pathways to a stable future, many unemployed youths view banditry as an alternative, albeit illegal, means of survival. This situation is aggravated by limited access to quality education and skills training, which further restricts young people's economic opportunities.

The socio-economic challenges facing youth in northwest Nigeria are compounded by structural issues, particularly the inadequate government response to unemployment and

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poverty. The researcher highlights how government efforts to address unemployment in this region are often either underfunded or poorly implemented, leading to minimal impact on the local job market. For instance, the National Directorate of Employment (NDE), which aims to provide vocational training for youth, faces budget constraints and limited reach in rural areas. As a result, many young people remain unemployed and vulnerable to recruitment by bandit groups who offer short-term financial rewards for involvement in criminal activities.

Additionally, socio-cultural factors play a role in the appeal of banditry. Rural areas in northwest Nigeria have a long history of communal conflicts, particularly related to resource scarcity, which has deepened the division between communities. This tension is further exploited by bandit groups, who often promise protection or vengeance for grievances, thereby attracting youth who are disillusioned by socio-political inequalities and a lack of justice for local conflicts. Such grievances are easily transformed into a recruitment tool for bandits, who provide an avenue for disenfranchised youths to express their frustrations through violence.

The security implications of youth unemployment are severe, impacting the broader stability and development of northwest Nigeria. Research indicates that youth-led bandit activities disrupt agricultural productivity, restrict economic mobility, and hinder foreign investment, thereby reinforcing a vicious cycle of poverty and insecurity[118]. As agricultural workers are targeted in bandit attacks, rural communities face heightened food insecurity, creating broader societal instability.

The study explained that, addressing youth unemployment and curbing banditry requires a multifaceted approach. The study advocate for a combination of job creation programs,

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vocational training initiatives, and community-based conflict resolution mechanisms to mitigate the impact of youth unemployment. Specifically, empowering local economies through agricultural investment, expanding educational opportunities, and improving the efficiency of government job initiatives could significantly reduce the appeal of banditry among unemployed youth. In summary, empirical research establishes a clear link between youth unemployment and banditry in northwest Nigeria[125].

"Environmental Factors Influencing Migration and Banditry in Northern Nigeria"[126]. In the study, the researcher expatiated those findings indicates that climate change plays a significant role in driving migration and banditry in Northern Nigeria. The region experiences high temperatures, erratic rainfall, and severe droughts, which reduce agricultural productivity and water availability. Desertification, driven largely by overgrazing, unsustainable agricultural practices, and increasing temperatures, has expanded, pushing pastoralist communities to migrate southward in search of arable land and water. This movement disrupts established patterns of land use, frequently leading to clashes with farming communities, which sometimes evolve into violent banditry when resources become particularly strained.

Studies demonstrate that the environmental stress associated with desertification exacerbates competition for scarce resources, which fosters conflict and increases banditry as a form of survival or economic adaptation[126]. As pastoralists face growing pressure to relocate, their traditional migratory routes often overlap with communities facing similar environmental challenges, heightening the risk of violent confrontations that can escalate into organised banditry.

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Deforestation is another environmental factor that influences both migration and banditry in Northern Nigeria[126]. Owing to high population growth and the need for agricultural expansion, deforestation has increased substantially in recent years, leading to a depletion of forest resources. This degradation reduces the natural resources available to local communities and pastoralists, pushing them to migrate to regions where they can access basic resources. The study finds that this forced migration, driven by environmental degradation, has increased the frequency and intensity of confrontations between migratory herders and sedentary farming communities.

This situation often fosters a cycle of violence, as local communities resist the influx of new populations that threaten their already scarce resources. In response, some displaced groups resort to banditry as a means of asserting access to resources or economic survival. The Study also highlight that banditry has become an adaptive response among some groups, not only as an economic activity but also as a way of controlling or reclaiming resource access in highly competitive environments.

Water scarcity, worsened by prolonged droughts and seasonal variability, has led to livelihood displacement in Northern Nigeria, particularly among communities that rely heavily on agriculture and livestock. As water bodies shrink and arable land diminishes, many rural dwellers are forced to migrate to urban areas or regions with better resource availability. The research also demonstrate that the migration of these populations contributes to the emergence of informal settlements, where individuals often struggle to find employment, increasing the appeal of banditry as an alternative source of income. The absence of adequate social services and law enforcement in these areas further facilitates the growth of banditry networks. The researcher showed that areas with severe water scarcity

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often experience higher rates of banditry, as groups exploit the lack of governmental presence to control access to scarce resources, and, in some cases, establish lucrative racketeering operations around water and land resources.

2.4 Conceptual Framework

Stating the topic of this research study; cross border migration and banditry in some selected states in Northwest Nigeria (2012-2022). The topic reveals the existence of the independent and the dependent variables as;

Dependent Variable: Banditry

Independent Variable: Migration

Other variables found in the discourse are as follows:

i. Socioeconomic conditions

ii. Geopolitical factors

iii. Demographic factors

iv. Policy intervention

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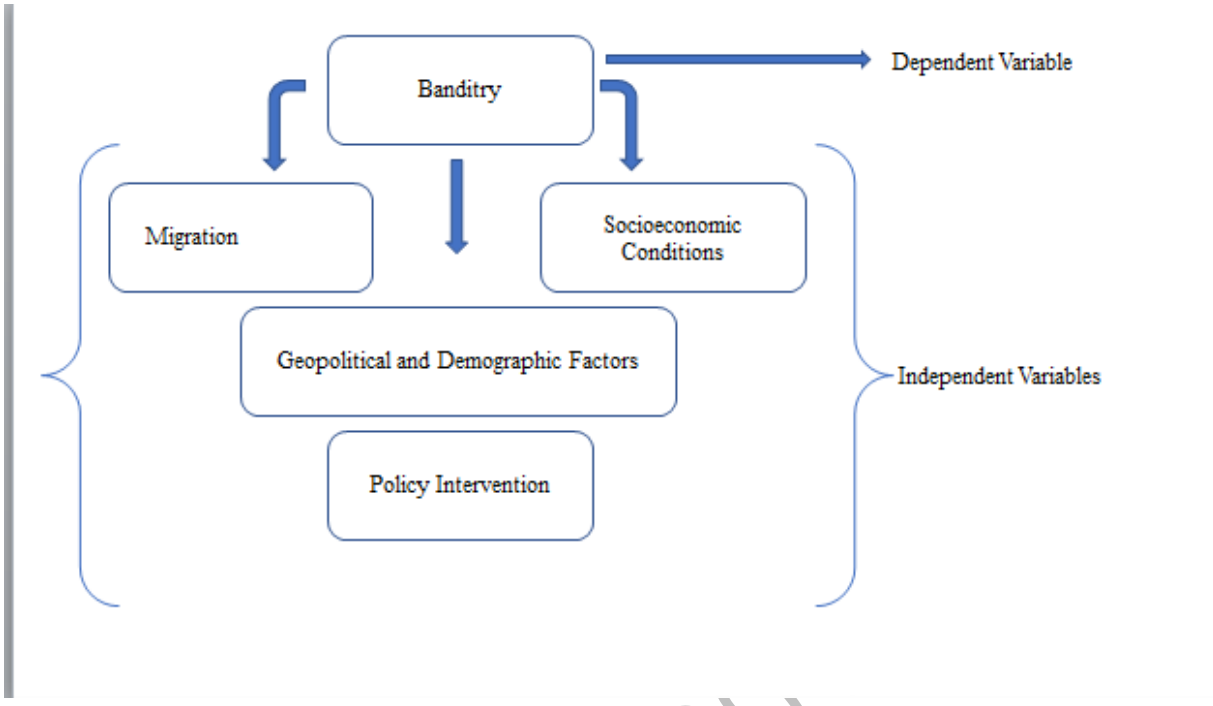


Fig 2.2: Organogram Depicting Conceptual Framework

Source: Researcher's Compilation 2024

2.5 Summary of Gap in Literature Reviewed

Although, prior studies have explored cross-border migration and insecurity in Nigeria, few have specifically examined how cross-border movement directly influences the patterns and prevalence of banditry in Sokoto and Zamfara States, the epicentre of the crisis. Most existing research discusses migration and banditry separately, failing to establish a clear empirical or conceptual link between the two phenomena. This creates a gap directly relevant to this study, which seeks to understand how cross-border migrant inflows shape the nature, spread, and operational patterns of banditry in the Northwest.

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Secondly, the literature provides limited analysis on the combined effects of cross-border migration and internal migration on insecurity. While some studies treat internal displacement and cross-border migration as distinct issues, they rarely examine how these migratory streams interact simultaneously to worsen bandit activities; especially in communities experiencing demographic pressure, resource competition, and social tension. This omission aligns directly with this study, which focuses on the joint contribution of internal and cross-border migration to the escalation of banditry between 2014 and 2024.

Thirdly, although several studies highlight socio-economic, political, and environmental drivers of migration, there is inadequate attention to how these push-and-pull factors intersect with, reinforce, or accelerate the growth of banditry in Sokoto and Zamfara. For example, drivers such as poverty, climate change, farmer–herder tensions, weak border governance, and political instability in neighbouring countries are often discussed, but their combined effects on bandit recruitment, territorial expansion, and criminal mobility remain underexplored. This gap aligns with this study, which seeks to examine how migration drivers shape insecurity in the region.

Furthermore, the literature provides insufficient evaluation of government policies, security interventions, and border management strategies aimed at regulating cross-border movement and reducing banditry. While military operations and security task forces are frequently discussed, there is limited evidence on how effective these interventions have been in disrupting transnational criminal networks, controlling border inflows, or mitigating migration-induced insecurity in Sokoto and Zamfara. This gap is central to this study which examines the effectiveness of government responses between 2014 and 2024.

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Finally, across much of the reviewed literature, there is minimal gender-disaggregated analysis of migration-related insecurity and banditry. Women and children; who constitute a large proportion of both cross-border migrants and internally displaced persons, experience distinct vulnerabilities, exploitation, and recruitment pressure from bandit groups. Yet, these gendered dimensions are scarcely addressed. While this gap does not correspond to a single research question, it highlights an important conceptual and policy omission that limits the development of inclusive, evidence-based responses.

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Chapter Three

Methodology

3.1 Research Design

This study adopted an exploratory research design, which is appropriate for investigating complex, multidimensional issues such as cross-border migration and banditry in Northwest Nigeria. Exploratory designs are particularly useful when examining phenomena that are insufficiently understood or inadequately documented in existing literature, as they enable the researcher to uncover patterns, meanings, and relationships that may not be immediately apparent[1].

3.2 Population of the Study

The population of this study is drawn from key stakeholder groups in Sokoto and Zamfara States who possess firsthand knowledge of the dynamics of cross-border migration and banditry. These states; Sokoto with an estimated population of 6.3 million and Zamfara with approximately 5.8 million, were selected due to their porous borders, high levels of migration flows, and persistent banditry activities.

A total of 60 participants were targeted for the study. These respondents were drawn from diverse institutional, community, and non-governmental groups to ensure objectivity, representativeness, and the inclusion of multiple perspectives. The population comprises the following categories:

1. School-Level Personnel (Principals and Heads of Schools)

    - Selected from public and private schools across both states.

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- These participants provided insights into how migration and insecurity affect educational institutions, student mobility, school attendance, and community stability.

2. Military and Security Personnel

   - Drawn from officers actively posted within the affected zones.

   - They offered professional perspectives on border control challenges, patterns of bandit attacks, and the security implications of internal and cross-border migration.

3. Traditional Rulers and Village Heads

   - Including district heads, ward heads, and community chiefs.

   - They provided grassroots perspectives on migration flows, settlement patterns, communal clashes, and local responses to banditry.

4. Local Community Residents

   - Including both indigenes and non-indigenes residing in rural and semi-urban centres.

   - Many of these residents; particularly farmers, traders, pastoralists, and artisans, were themselves migrants or descendants of migrants from neighbouring countries, making their experiences vital to the study.

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5. Religious Leaders (Islamic and Christian)

    - Including CAN Chairmen of Sokoto and Zamfara States (or Local Government-level leaders), as well as key Islamic clerics.

    - These figures provided moral, cultural, and doctrinal perspectives on migration trends, interfaith relations, and the role of religious networks in cross-border movement.

6. Non-Governmental Personnel (NGOs, CSOs, Community-Based Organisations)

    - Representatives of organisations involved in humanitarian assistance, community development, and conflict mediation.

    - Their inclusion ensures a more objective and balanced interpretation of migration-related insecurity, outside state-controlled narratives.

The choice of this population is supported by the critical roles these groups play in understanding migration and banditry. School heads, community members, and traditional rulers offer insights from everyday experiences and local interactions. Security personnel and religious leaders provide institutional and moral viewpoints essential to understanding the broader socio-political context. NGOs add neutrality and professional assessments. Additionally, a significant number of school personnel, residents, and community actors interviewed were migrants from neighbouring countries, reflecting the high permeability of borders in both states. Sokoto attracts migrants particularly during religious events; such as Sallah, where many cross international boundaries to pay homage to the Sultan, the symbolic head of the Caliphate.

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In contrast, Zamfara attracts migrants due to its abundant mineral deposits, especially gold, alongside copper, iron ore, limestone, and other solid minerals. These economic opportunities draw people from across Nigeria and neighbouring countries, creating migration flows that often intersect with bandit activities. Thus, the selected study population represents a diverse and strategic group of individuals whose experiences and insights provide a comprehensive understanding of the intersection between cross-border migration and banditry in Sokoto and Zamfara States.

3.3 Sample and Sampling Techniques

Sample and sampling techniques play a crucial role in research. In this study, purposive sampling will is employed. This sampling technique is suitable as it allows the selection of respondents based on specific characteristics related to migration and banditry, ensuring that those with relevant experiences and insights are included. Moreso, purposive sampling is ideal for this study as it focuses on a specific population of interest, ensuring that the sample is representative of the target population in both Sokoto and Zamfara State. Other sampling techniques, such as random sampling, may not yield the desired results as they may not capture the experiences and specificities of migration and banditry issues in the selected states.

3.4 Description of Research Instrument

The instrument of data collection for this study will be interview. The interview guide allows for a structured approach to gather information from key stakeholders such as school-level personnel, military personnel, traditional rulers/village heads, and local community residents. This method is suitable because it allows the researcher to directly engage with these groups

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to obtain detailed insights into the complex issues of migration and banditry in both Sokoto and Zamfara state. Other research instruments such as surveys or secondary data may not provide the depth of information or detailed perspectives that interviews can offer, especially in understanding the local context and community dynamics related to these issues.

3.5 Validity of the Research Instrument

The validity of the research instruments in the study on migration and banditry in Sokoto and Zamfara states appears promising. The use of an interview guide tailored for specific groups—school-level personnel, military personnel, and traditional rulers/village heads—suggests a thoughtful approach to data collection. These groups are likely to possess valuable insights and information into the dynamics of migration and banditry in the Northwest region of Nigeria. However, to ensure validity, the interview guide was drafted/created from the research questions and objectives. Also, significant efforts were made to ensure that question of any ambiguities or biases was erased. Additionally, the researchers also corroborate the findings from the instruments with secondary sources (victim's interview on Newspapers) to enhance the credibility and robustness of their findings.

3.6 Reliability of the Research Instrument

The reliability of the research instruments in the study on migration and banditry in Sokoto and Zamfara states hinges on several factors. Firstly, the consistency in administering the interview guide across the different groups, ensuring that each respondent is asked the same set of questions in a standardized manner, is crucial for reliability. Secondly, the researchers also aim to minimize any potential bias in the data collection process, such as interviewer bias or respondent bias. Lastly, the researchers ensure that all the interview questions were

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drafted from the research questions and objectives of the study. Hence these interview questions were given to experts in migration and security issues. The researcher's supervisor also make significant input in the drafting of the interview questions.

3.7 Method of Data Collection

The data used for carrying out this study were obtained from two major sources. These sources are the primary and secondary sources.

3.7.1 Primary Sources of Data

The primary sources of data collection for the study on migration and banditry in Sokoto and Zamfara states included interviews with school-level personnel (principals and heads of schools), military and other security personnel, traditional rulers and village heads, religious leaders, non-governmental actors, and local community residents. These interviews aim to gather firsthand accounts and insights into the dynamics of migration and banditry in the region.

3.7.2 Secondary Sources of Data

Secondary data on the study were obtained from both published and unpublished materials such as textbooks, journal articles, conference proceedings, government documents, institution materials, internet materials, and research work.

3.8 Method of Data Analysis

The method of data analysis for the study is content analysis and thematic analysis. This approach involves identifying, analysing, and reporting patterns or themes within the

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qualitative data gathered from the interview sessions. This method allows for a systematic and in-depth exploration of the data, enabling researchers to draw meaningful conclusions and insights from the study. Also for ethical reasons and to respect\ security the privacy of all respondents their actual names will not be mentioned in the data analysing.

3.9 Ethical Approval

The main reason for ethical consideration in research study is to ensure the integrity of research. Four major areas are essential for ethical considerations in research: participant injury, informed consent, privacy violation, and deceit. The researcher exercised caution during the interview process to prevent any potential bodily or emotional injury to the subjects. Questions likely to elicit negative memories and induce emotional pain were deliberately omitted during the research process. Enquire whether you have experienced the loss of any family members during the crisis.

Secondly, the necessity to obtain informed consent from the respondents. This entails informing the participants of the research's objective. The researcher acquired verbal agreement from subjects to partake in the study. The participants in this study were aware that their involvement was voluntary and not coerced, as the researcher and field assistants provided comprehensive information regarding the research's purpose and objectives prior to the interview sessions. Thirdly, the matter of respecting the respondents' privacy. Participants were guaranteed that the information provided during the research would be treated with the highest level of secrecy, and their responses would be reported anonymously.

Ultimately, the facet of the deception. The researcher and the field assistants offered no deceptive assurances to the respondents, nor did they present themselves as government

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agents. The researcher facilitated an appropriate introduction and conveyed the goal of the exercise as part of a PhD research study.

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Endnotes

1. E. Knott, A. H. Rao, K. Summers, & C. Teeger, *Interviews in the social sciences*. Nature Reviews Methods Primers, 2(1), 73, 2022

2. H. Taherdoost, *Data collection methods and tools for research; a step-by-step guide to choose data collection technique for academic and business research projects.* **International Journal of Academic Research in Management** (IJARM), 10(1), 2021, 10-38.

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Chapter Four

Results and Discussion of Findings

The analysis of the study was based on interviews conducted with a total of 60 participants, drawn from three main groups: school-level personnel (principals and heads of schools) in Sokoto and Zamfara States, military personnel, and traditional rulers or village heads along with local community residents. The study focused on collecting primary data to explore the dynamics of migration and banditry in the region. Sokoto State, with an estimated population of 6.3 million, and Zamfara State, with approximately 5.8 million people, served as the geographical scope of the research. Through structured interviews, participants provided firsthand insights into how these issues have impacted their communities, institutions, and security systems.

4.1 Response Rate

Out of the 60 targeted participants for the study on migration and banditry in Sokoto and Zamfara States, only 52 individuals were available and accessible for interviews. This represented an actual response rate of 86.7%. The shortfall of 8 participants (13.3%) was due to factors such as security concerns in certain locations, unavailability of some military personnel due to duty assignments, and scheduling conflicts with some school heads and traditional leaders. These challenges limited the researchers' ability to reach all originally intended respondents but did not significantly compromise the representativeness of the data collected.

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The participants who were successfully interviewed included school-level personnel (principals and heads of schools), military personnel, traditional rulers or village heads, and local community residents. Their insights offered a rich understanding of how migration and banditry have shaped social, educational, and security dynamics within their communities. The interviews were particularly valuable in shedding light on local experiences and coping mechanisms employed in the face of persistent insecurity, especially in rural areas. Despite the reduced sample size, the range of perspectives captured across the two states allowed for a comprehensive analysis of the subject matter. Table 4.1 shows the response rate of the participants:

Table 4.1: Response Rate

Category	Targeted Participants	Actual Responses	Response Rate (%)
School-Level Personnel	12	10	83.3%
Military/Security Personnel	10	9	90.0%
Traditional Rulers/Village Heads	8	7	87.5%
Local Community Residents	12	11	91.7%
Religious Leaders (Islamic & Christian)	8	7	87.5%
NGO/CSO/Community-Based Organisations	10	8	80.0%
Total	**60**	**52**	**86.7%**

Source: Field Result, 2025

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The distribution shows that although there was a slight shortfall between the targeted and actual number of respondents in each category, the overall response rate of 86.7% demonstrates strong participation across all six stakeholder groups. This high level of engagement reflects the relevance and urgency of the research topic among community actors, institutional leaders, security agencies, religious authorities, and civil society organisations.

The inclusion of diverse respondent groups enriched the data, ensuring that the study captures institutional, security, grassroots, religious, and non-governmental perspectives on cross-border migration and banditry. Notably, local residents, religious leaders, and security personnel recorded some of the highest response rates, indicating their deep interest and continuous exposure to the direct impacts of migration-related insecurity.

The high participation also demonstrates that fieldwork in conflict-affected regions remains feasible when researchers employ culturally appropriate engagement strategies, leverage trusted community networks, and adhere strictly to ethical and safety protocols.

4.2 Presentation of Data

4.2.1 Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

This section provides a detailed overview of the demographic characteristics of the 52 respondents who participated in the study on migration and banditry in Sokoto and Zamfara States, Nigeria. The participants were drawn from different local government areas within the two states and represented diverse backgrounds, including school-level personnel (principals

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and head teachers), military officers, traditional rulers/village heads, and local community members.

To provide a more nuanced understanding, the demographic data are presented separately for Sokoto and Zamfara States. This separation allows for a comparative analysis of how different social, educational, and occupational categories perceive and experience the issues of migration and banditry in their respective communities.

The demographic variables considered in this study included gender, age, educational qualification, marital status, employment status, and location. These variables were selected because they influence individuals' roles in society, their exposure to insecurity, and their coping strategies. For instance, younger participants may be more vulnerable to migration pressures, while elders and community leaders often possess institutional memory and local insights into the causes and history of insecurity. Similarly, gender affects access to information and decision-making power within communities. Presenting the data by state also helps to highlight regional similarities and differences in these characteristics, providing a clearer context for interpreting the study's findings.

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Table 4.2: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents in Sokoto State (N = 27)

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	19	70.4%
	Female	8	29.6%
Age	18–30 years	5	18.5%
	31–50 years	13	48.1%
	Above 50 years	9	33.3%
Educational Qualification	No Formal Education	5	18.5%
	Primary School Certificate	4	14.8%
	Secondary School Certificate	8	29.6%
	Tertiary Education	10	37.1%
Marital Status	Married	20	74.1%
	Single	5	18.5%
	Widowed/Divorced	2	7.4%
Employment Status	Employed (formal/informal)	15	55.6%
	Unemployed	6	22.2%
	Retired	6	22.2%

Source: Field Result, 2025

As shown in Table 4.2, the majority of respondents in Sokoto State were male (70.4%), reflecting the prevailing social structures in Northern Nigeria where males typically dominate formal leadership, military, and administrative roles. Female respondents accounted for 29.6% of the sample, consistent with cultural norms that limit women's participation in public and community decision-making, particularly in rural areas. Despite their smaller

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numbers, female participants provided critical insights into how banditry and displacement disproportionately affect women and children.

The age distribution indicates that most respondents (48.1%) were between 31 and 50 years old, while 33.3% were above 50. This shows that the study captured the perspectives of individuals who are actively involved in community leadership, public service, and family responsibilities, groups directly affected by the socio-economic consequences of migration and insecurity. Younger respondents (18.5%) added valuable viewpoints from the youth, who are often most vulnerable to displacement or recruitment by armed groups.

Educationally, the respondents were fairly well distributed. Over 66% had at least secondary education, including 37.1% with tertiary-level qualifications. These participants were primarily school personnel, military officers, and urban community leaders. Conversely, 18.5% of respondents had no formal education, mostly traditional leaders and older rural residents. This mix of educational backgrounds allowed the study to capture both literate and non-literate perspectives on migration and banditry.

Regarding marital and employment status, 74.1% of respondents were married, suggesting that family units in Sokoto are particularly susceptible to the disruptions caused by migration and bandit attacks. In terms of employment, 55.6% were actively employed, either formally (e.g., teachers or military officers) or informally, while retired individuals (22.2%) and the unemployed (22.2%) contributed perspectives rooted in long-term lived experience. These insights were especially useful for understanding historical trends in migration and insecurity.

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Overall, the Sokoto State demographic profile indicates a sample that is predominantly male, middle-aged, moderately educated, and married, with a mix of employment statuses. This diversity provides a well-rounded understanding of the local experiences and perceptions of migration and banditry, ensuring that the findings reflect both contemporary and historical community realities.

Table 4.3: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents in Zamfara State (N = 25)

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	17	68.0%
	Female	8	32.0%
Age	18–30 years	5	20.0%
	31–50 years	11	44.0%
	Above 50 years	9	36.0%
Educational Qualification	No Formal Education	5	20.0%
	Primary School Certificate	4	16.0%
	Secondary School Certificate	8	32.0%
	Tertiary Education	8	32.0%
Marital Status	Married	18	72.0%
	Single	5	20.0%
	Widowed/Divorced	2	8.0%
Employment Status	Employed (formal/informal)	15	60.0%
	Unemployed	6	24.0%
	Retired	4	16.0%

Source: Field Result, 2025

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As shown in Table 4.3, the majority of respondents in Zamfara State were male (68.0%), reflecting similar gender dynamics to Sokoto, where men predominantly occupy leadership, security, and administrative positions. Female respondents accounted for 32.0%, highlighting the cultural and social limitations on women's participation in public affairs, especially in rural areas. Nevertheless, the perspectives provided by women in the study offered important insights into how migration and banditry disproportionately affect women and children.

The age distribution reveals that most respondents (44.0%) were between 31 and 50 years old, while 36.0% were above 50, indicating that the study captured experienced community members actively involved in leadership, family management, and public service. The younger age group (20.0%) contributed valuable viewpoints on the vulnerabilities and challenges faced by youth in contexts of displacement and insecurity.

Educationally, 64.0% of respondents had at least secondary education, including 32.0% with tertiary qualifications. These were mainly school personnel, military officers, and urban community leaders. Meanwhile, 20.0% had no formal education, primarily traditional leaders and older rural residents. The combination of educational backgrounds allowed the study to incorporate both literate and non-literate perspectives on the effects of migration and banditry in their communities.

In terms of marital and employment status, 72.0% of respondents were married, suggesting that family units are particularly affected by migration pressures and bandit attacks. Employment-wise, 60.0% were actively employed in formal or informal roles, while 24.0% were unemployed and 16.0% retired. These diverse employment statuses enabled the study to

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capture both contemporary experiences of insecurity and historical perspectives on long-term patterns of migration and banditry.

Overall, the demographic profile of respondents in Zamfara State shows a sample that is predominantly male, middle-aged, moderately educated, and largely married, with varied employment statuses. This diversity ensures that the study reflects a wide range of experiences and perceptions regarding migration and banditry, supporting robust and contextually grounded findings.

Cross-border migration has suddenly become a problem in Sokoto and Zamfara States because, although migration has always occurred, recent factors have transformed it into a security threat:

1. Link to Banditry and Criminal Networks: Migrants traveling through poorly monitored borders and remote areas have created opportunities for bandits to exploit these movements for kidnapping, robbery, and other criminal activities.

2. Economic Pull Factors: Zamfara's mining opportunities attract both cross-border and intra-national migrants, increasing population movement and interactions with bandits.

3. Transit Routes: Sokoto serves as a conduit for migrants entering Zamfara, concentrating human flows along routes vulnerable to bandit attacks.

4. Weak Security Infrastructure: Limited capacity, inadequate training, and occasional complicity within security agencies have made it difficult to monitor migration and prevent banditry effectively.

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5. Changing Context of Migration: While migration existed before, the combination of insurgency, banditry, resource-driven migration, and porous borders has turned routine movement into a significant security challenge.

In short, it is the interaction of migration with banditry, economic opportunities, and inadequate security that has made cross-border migration a sudden problem.

4.2.2 Analysis of Research Questions

The specific research questions to analysed are as follows:

i. How does cross-border movement of migrants influence the prevalence and patterns of banditry in Sokoto and Zamfara States?

ii. In what ways do cross-border and internal migration jointly contribute to the escalation of banditry in Sokoto and Zamfara States between 2014 and 2024?

iii. What socio-economic and political push-and-pull factors drive cross-border migration, and how do these factors intersect with the growth of banditry in Sokoto and Zamfara States?

iv. How effective are government policies and security interventions on cross-border migration in shaping the dynamics of banditry in Sokoto and Zamfara States from 2014 to 2024?

Research Question One

This section detailed interview analysis structured around the interview question: *Investigate the impact of the influx of migrants from neighbouring countries on the prevalence and*

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dynamics of banditry in Sokoto and Zamfara States within the 2014 and 2024. This includes personalised responses from four participants across six identified themes.

Interview Participants:

1. **Mr. B** – School Principal, Sokoto State, Male, Age 49
2. **Lt. I.B**– Military Officer, Zamfara State, Male, Age 36
3. **Mr A** – Traditional Ruler, Zamfara State, Male, Age 61
4. **Mrs. H** – Community Resident, Sokoto State, Female, Age 42

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Table 4.4: Thematic Breakdown of Interview Question and Sub-Themes

Interview Question	Themes	Sub-Themes
Investigate the impact of the influx of migrants from neighbouring countries on the prevalence and dynamics of banditry in Sokoto and Zamfara States within the 2014 and 2024.	1. Security Pressure and Military Limitations	- Overstretched forces - Hidden identities of migrants - Cross-border escape routes
	2. Social and Demographic Tensions	- Land/resource disputes - Population pressure - Ethnic and cultural friction
	3. Disruption of Education and Youth Involvement	- School abandonment - Recruitment of migrant youth into gangs
	4. Erosion of Traditional Authority	- Decline in respect for rulers - Resistance to communal conflict resolution
	5. Informal and Criminal Economies	- Cattle rustling - Black-market trading - Arms smuggling
	6. Cross-border Movements and International Complicity	- Unmonitored routes - Lack of migrant documentation - Weak border control

Source: Field Result, 2025

Theme 1: Increased Security Pressure and Military Limitations

Lt. I.B (Military Officer, Zamfara, Age 36) stated, *"We started noticing unusual movement of people around the borders from 2014. Many of them came through the forests, some even armed. By 2018, our troops were overwhelmed, especially in Zurmi and Shinkafi. We couldn't differentiate between peaceful migrants and hostile elements."*

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This response underscores how the porous nature of Nigeria's northern borders intensified military challenges. Bandits allegedly disguised themselves as migrants, complicating military operations. According to Lt. L.B, the situation worsened after 2016, with border communities serving as hideouts for armed groups.

In comparison, **Mr. B (School Principal, Sokoto, Age 49)** noted, *"Our schools began to suffer frequent interruptions from 2017. The security personnel were barely enough to patrol even the school premises, not to talk of large forested areas."* This highlights how increased security focus on migration zones deprived social infrastructure like schools of protection.

Theme 2: Demographic and Social Changes in Host Communities

Mrs. H (Community Resident, Sokoto, Age 42) shared:

> *"We saw more unfamiliar faces settling in our village after 2015. Some were polite, but others kept to themselves. Over time, fights started over farmland and water, especially with young migrant men. These led to many conflicts."*

Her account illustrates the demographic pressure caused by migration, leading to tension over resources. The friction stemmed from sudden population surges in already resource-strained communities.

Mr A (Traditional Ruler, Zamfara, Age 61) added: *We had to call meetings several times to resolve land disputes. By 2020, things escalated when cattle were stolen and the youth suspected the new settlers."* This convergence of migration, land competition, and criminal activity sowed seeds of communal distrust and retaliatory violence.

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Theme 3: Disruption of Education and Youth Involvement in Banditry

Mr. B explained:

> *"When schoolboys get kidnapped or when they see their friends making money through joining gangs in the bush, they lose interest in education. The influx of young migrants with no schooling increased the peer pressure."*

His testimony shows how migrant influx correlated with educational disruption. Many migrant youths lacked schooling and, due to unemployment, were lured into banditry. The migration-banditry link thus intensified youth vulnerability.

In contrast, **Mrs. H** said, *"I kept my children from school for months when gunmen attacked nearby. Most of the young men involved were not from our village. The fear pushed many families to stop sending their children to school."* Both responses emphasise the migration-induced insecurity and its cascading effects on education and community development.

Theme 4: Traditional Institutions and Erosion of Authority

Mr A remarked:

> *"In the past, I could settle disputes within days. But these new people don't respect our customs. Many times, they ignore our summons or act in defiance. It's hard to keep peace when strangers challenge authority."*

This theme explores how the influx of migrants disrupted traditional governance structures. As migrants often lacked cultural and social integration, it undermined the role of traditional rulers in conflict resolution.

Lt. I.B supported this view, stating, *"We always advise community leaders to report suspicious activities, but many times, they are afraid. Their power has been weakened."* The

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weakening of traditional institutions due to unfamiliar migrants who do not abide by local norms deepens governance challenges.

Theme 5: Economic Implications and Rise of Informal Economies

Mrs. H noted:

> *"After 2016, new people came with skills—some could farm, others made crafts—but many engaged in selling petrol illegally or rustling cattle. Some formed cartels. This changed our market dynamics."*

Her observation points to how migration introduced both positive and negative shifts in the rural economy. While some migrants contributed economically, others participated in informal or criminal economies, exacerbating insecurity.

Mr. B added, *"Some students confessed that their brothers joined gangs because it paid better than any job they could find. The gangs operated between Zamfara and Niger Republic, smuggling goods and arms."* This dynamic showcases how economic desperation, facilitated by migration, fueled the growth of bandit networks.

Theme 6: Cross-Border Movements and International Complicity

Lt. I.H highlighted:

> *"Our biggest problem is that these people don't stop at Nigeria. They move freely from Niger to Zamfara and then to Sokoto. We arrest some today, tomorrow they're back through another route."*

This theme focuses on how cross-border permeability aided banditry. Migrants, some of whom became bandits, used international escape routes to evade Nigerian security forces.

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Alhaji Bature confirmed, *"We reported the presence of foreigners to the immigration office, but they say there is little they can do without documents. Most of them don't carry any papers, and they come in groups."* The lack of migration documentation and border enforcement mechanisms significantly contributed to banditry's growth across both states.

Findings and Comparative Analysis

Across the six themes, all participants indicated that the influx of migrants from neighbouring countries between 2014 and 2024 significantly influenced the rise and evolution of banditry in Sokoto and Zamfara States. Participants noted that migration led to demographic shifts, strained resources, weakened traditional structures, and enabled cross-border criminality. However, perspectives differed in scope and focus. While Lt. I.B emphasised the military's operational challenges and border dynamics, Mrs. H focused more on community experiences and economic impacts. Mr. B, as an educator, highlighted how migration affected youth behaviour and school operations. Mr A, on the other hand, revealed the political and cultural consequences on traditional governance. Despite their different roles, all participants agreed on the urgent need for improved border security, community engagement, and policy frameworks that distinguish between peaceful migrants and violent elements. They also advocated for reinvesting in schools, empowering traditional institutions, and fostering regional collaboration to curb transnational threats.

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Research Question Two

This section explores the perspectives of ten participants, including school-level personnel, military officers, traditional rulers, and local community members from Sokoto and Zamfara States. Through in-depth interviews, eight key themes emerged regarding the link between internal migration and the intensification of banditry over a ten-year period. The narratives provided are presented using first-person accounts, while the analysis is written in third person to highlight commonalities, distinctions, and implications of the findings.

Table 4.5: Internal migration in exacerbating banditry in Sokoto and Zamfara States in Northwest Nigeria between 2014 and 2024

Theme	Sub-themes
1. Population Pressure	Scarcity of farmland, overcrowding, competition for jobs
2. Community Disintegration	Breakdown of trust, increased suspicion, ethnic/religious divides
3. Recruitment by Bandit Gangs	Exploitation of displaced youth, promises of income and protection
4. Insecurity Transfer	Migration from conflict zones spreads violence to safer areas
5. Surveillance and Intelligence Gaps	Lack of identity tracking, porous borders within states
6. Socioeconomic Deprivation	Joblessness, loss of property, unmet humanitarian needs
7. Urban to Rural Spillover	Bandits following IDPs into rural settlements
8. Lack of Government Response	Weak reintegration policies, poor relief support, minimal presence in host areas

Source: Field Result, 2025

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Theme 1: Population Pressure and Competition for Resources

Mr A, a 63-year-old village head from Zurmi, Zamfara, remarked, "*The arrival of many displaced people from other parts of Zamfara and Katsina increased pressure on our farms and grazing areas. Young men who could not find work turned to banditry*." His observation was echoed by Mrs. H, a school principal in Isa, Sokoto State, who noted that local schools were overwhelmed with the influx, creating tension and overpopulation in rural facilities. This theme illustrates how migration led to resource scarcity, making crime a survival strategy for some.

Theme 2: Identity Conflicts and Ethnic Tensions

Captain I.b, a 38-year-old military officer based in Shinkafi, revealed, "*Many of the migrants belonged to different ethnic groups, and their arrival caused suspicion among local Hausa and Fulani communities. This mistrust escalated into violent reprisals and eventually banditry*." Local youth who felt marginalised often joined gangs for protection or revenge. Ethnic cleavages were thus deepened by the mass movement of people within state borders.

Theme 3: Weak Surveillance and Security Lapses

According to Mr. B, a 50-year-old community leader in Rabah, Sokoto, "*We noticed strange faces settling in the outskirts, and no one was tracking them. Some were genuinely displaced, but others were criminals hiding among them*." The migration process exposed systemic weaknesses in internal monitoring, allowing criminals to infiltrate communities undetected. Participants agreed that this security vacuum facilitated the formation of bandit enclaves.

Theme 4: Loss of Livelihood and Displacement Trauma

A lady (29-year-old) internally displaced woman from Maru, Zamfara, shared: "*I lost*

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everything during the attacks. My husband could not find any work in the new village, and some men like him began stealing to survive." Internal displacement due to violence created a cycle of trauma, poverty, and eventual resort to criminal behaviour among the affected populations. Migration served not only as a response to insecurity but also as a trigger for further instability.

Theme 5: Recruitment Networks and Bandit Gangs

A school headmaster, from Bakura, Zamfara, aged 55, stated: "*We started hearing that some young boys from migrant families were being recruited by armed gangs. These gangs exploited their hardship*." The study revealed how migration zones became fertile grounds for recruiting new members into bandit groups. The migrants' vulnerability and desire for belonging or income made them easy targets.

Theme 6: Breakdown of Community Cohesion

A local farmer in Gwadabawa, Sokoto, 42-year-old , lamented, "Before 2014, we lived as one people. But after many others moved in, communal trust broke. We started locking our doors during the day." Internal migration strained previously tight-knit rural communities. Social bonds frayed, and suspicion replaced trust, leading to isolation, which in turn created safe spaces for criminal activities.

Theme 7: Urban-Rural Displacement Spillover

Military respondent Lieutenant from Gusau observed, "*When people left cities like Gusau and Kaura Namoda due to rising crime, they brought the same insecurity to rural areas, often unknowingly. Some were followed by bandits*." This theme highlighted how urban

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insecurity spurred internal migration that transplanted violence to previously stable rural settlements, spreading the geography of banditry.

Theme 8: Role of Informal Settlements

A social worker in Sokoto North, described, "*Migrants often lived in makeshift camps with no official oversight. Bandits used these areas to blend in and plan attacks*." These informal settlements became incubators for bandit operations due to poor regulation, lack of security presence, and easy anonymity. Participants across both states mentioned how such locations acted as planning bases for raids.

Consequently, despite varying roles and locations, all ten participants acknowledged a strong link between internal migration and the rise in banditry. Military personnel focused on surveillance issues, while school leaders and traditional rulers highlighted community breakdown and resource competition. Displaced individuals themselves emphasised trauma and survival. This convergence of perspectives paints a comprehensive picture of how internal movement within Nigeria deepened insecurity. While both Sokoto and Zamfara experienced similar patterns, the severity varied. Zamfara, due to its vast forests and weak local governance, witnessed more entrenched bandit camps. Sokoto respondents reported growing fear and militarisation but retained more trust in traditional authority structures. Thus, the dynamics of migration-banditry linkage differed slightly across the two states.

These findings underscore the urgent need for internal migration management policies that include community integration programmes, housing and livelihood support, and the involvement of traditional institutions. Without these, internally displaced populations will remain vulnerable to exploitation by criminal elements, worsening regional instability.

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Participants across all categories emphasised the need to rebuild communal relationships. Strengthening traditional leadership roles, expanding school capacity, and fostering inclusive dialogue could help mend fractured social relations. Trust-building is essential in disrupting the bandit recruitment cycle. From a security perspective, enhancing surveillance, deploying trained community intelligence officers, and introducing biometric registration in IDP settlements can improve control over migration-linked insecurity. A balance between humanitarian support and security vetting is critical.

In summary, the study shows a consistent pattern: internal migration, while a consequence of insecurity, also fuels the expansion of banditry in Sokoto and Zamfara. The narratives from military officers, school administrators, traditional leaders, and residents collectively reveal how dislocation, poverty, weak surveillance, and erosion of communal bonds have contributed to the worsening crisis. Addressing internal migration with empathy and strategy is key to reversing the banditry epidemic in Northwest Nigeria.

Research Question Three

The third research objective of this study aims to identify and examine the socio-economic factors that drive migration patterns and involvement in banditry activities in Sokoto and Zamfara States between 2014 and 2024. This objective is crucial for understanding the root causes behind the migration-banditry nexus, particularly how socio-economic hardship, lack of opportunity, and poor governance might serve as push factors leading to both displacement and engagement in criminal activities. By drawing on in-depth interviews with diverse stakeholders, including school-level personnel, military officials, traditional leaders,

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and local residents, this section unpacks how social and economic inequalities fuel cross border migration and banditry within the region (See Table 4.6).

Table 4.6: Socio-economic factors that drive cross border migration patterns and involvement in banditry activities in Sokoto and Zamfara States

Theme	Sub-Themes	Key Description
1. Poverty and Economic Deprivation	Unemployment, food insecurity	Lack of income and livelihood opportunities fuel migration and make youth vulnerable to banditry.
2. Educational Disadvantage	School dropouts, disrupted education	Inaccessibility to education due to insecurity or migration increases bandit involvement.
3. Land and Resource Conflict	Grazing land competition, herder-farmer clashes	Migration related to environmental stress creates conflicts that morph into banditry.
4. Family and Social Disintegration	Family separation, youth neglect	Displacement breaks social ties, increasing the chances of criminal involvement.
5. Government and Security Weakness	Poor response, inadequate policing	Weak governance enables unchecked migration and offers space for bandit groups to operate.
6. Influence of Peer Networks	Group pressure, normalisation of crime	Migrant youth are influenced by peers already involved in banditry.
7. Breakdown of Traditional Authority	Erosion of local governance and customs	Traditional structures no longer effectively regulate or support migration.
8. Gendered Dimensions of Migration	Vulnerability of women and girls	Women face added vulnerabilities during migration, including forced recruitment or exploitation.

Source: Field Result, 2025

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Theme 1: Poverty and Lack of Economic Opportunities

A 48-year-old village head from Tsafe LGA, Zamfara, stated, "*Most of our young men leave the village not because they want to, but because there is nothing here. No jobs, no farming support, and no industries. Some return after months and get involved with bandits*." Similarly, a 35-year-old secondary school teacher in Gwadabawa, Sokoto, mentioned, "*Even in schools, I see students dropping out because their parents migrate due to poverty. Some of these children end up in the wrong company*."

The issue of poverty was echoed by nearly all respondents, highlighting it as a critical driver of both internal and cross-border migration. Participants linked extreme deprivation to increased vulnerability among youth, many of whom fall prey to bandit recruitment networks as a survival mechanism. This aligns with empirical literature asserting that economic hardship fosters criminal behaviours in fragile regions.

Theme 2: Educational Disadvantage and School Dropouts

A Captain , 41, a military officer stationed in Gusau, noted, "*The lack of education in rural areas, especially among internally displaced people, creates a vacuum. Bandits fill that space with false promises and fast money*." a 40-year-old school principal in Illela, Sokoto, added, "*When schools are shut due to insecurity or families migrate internally for safety, the disruption in education leaves the children idle and exposed*."

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This theme captured the cyclical relationship between education and insecurity. Internal migration disrupts schooling, while lack of education leads to further marginalisation and susceptibility to banditry. Respondents emphasised the role of functional educational systems in deterring youth involvement in criminal networks.

Theme 3: Land Disputes and Resource Competition

A 63-year-old traditional ruler from Anka, Zamfara, observed, "*When herders migrate due to drought or conflict elsewhere, they clash with farmers here over grazing lands. These disputes often escalate into violence, creating fertile ground for banditr*y." Similarly, a 29yrs local farmer from Rabah, Sokoto, said, "*Some of these migrants take our land forcefully, and when we resist, they join bandits to terrorise us*."

Participants identified land and water scarcity, exacerbated by climate-induced migration, as a key source of conflict that morphs into banditry. Internal migrants seeking arable land or pastures inadvertently provoke tensions that violent groups exploit. This theme also touches on broader environmental stressors driving mobility.

Theme 4: Breakdown of Traditional Governance Structures

A 58yrs village elder in Maru, Zamfara, reflected, "*Before, traditional leaders controlled migration and conflict. But now, people come and go without respect or checks. This disorganisation allows criminals to operate freely*." Likewise, a 32-year-old civil servant in Sokoto South, commented, "*Even our community heads have lost control over who enters or leaves. It is chaotic*."

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The erosion of traditional authority systems has weakened communal resilience to migration-related insecurity. Participants noted that the influx of unregulated internal migrants, often settling in informal communities, has made it harder to monitor or control criminal infiltration. The weakening of these governance structures fuels lawlessness.

Theme 5: Unemployment Among Youth

A 25-year-old former student turned okada rider in Bukkuyum, Zamfara, shared, "*I could not get a job after NYSC, and many of my friends migrated to other towns looking for work. Some ended up working with bandits just to make ends meet.*" a 30-year-old NGO worker in Tambuwal, Sokoto, said, "*When displaced youth settle in towns, the lack of jobs makes them desperate. They become tools in the hands of criminals*."

Unemployment was one of the most recurring socio-economic themes. Young migrants, particularly internally displaced persons (IDPs), often arrive in urban centres with limited skills and few opportunities. This vulnerability positions them as prime recruits for bandit gangs, especially those offering financial incentives.

Theme 6: Family Disintegration and Social Dislocation

A, 38-year-old widow in Kaura Namoda, lamented, "*My husband was killed in a bandit attack. I fled to another village with my children, but we have been scattered ever since. One of my sons disappeared and later I heard he joined a group*." Similarly, a youth leader in Isa LGA, Sokoto, aged 33, said, "*Displaced families often lose touch with each other. Some children grow up alone and angry, easy targets for recruitment*."

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Participants highlighted the emotional and structural breakdowns caused by migration, especially forced displacement. This dislocation severs community ties, reducing the protective social fabric that normally deters criminal involvement. Broken families often lead to unmonitored youth and radicalisation.

Theme 7: Government Inaction and Poor Security Presence

A Lt,(37yrs) an army officer in Shinkafi, Zamfara, expressed, "*We do not have enough manpower to cover the influx of displaced persons. Some areas are abandoned, and bandits take over. Internal migrants settle near forest zones, which are hard to secure*." In contrast, a 43yr, health worker in Tureta, Sokoto, shared, "*We report suspicious migrants to authorities, but no action is taken. It's like we are on our own*."

The vacuum created by weak government intervention in managing internal migration and insecurity has emboldened bandit groups. Participants criticised the lack of coherent migration policy, inadequate policing, and the absence of humanitarian services in IDP settlements. The state's failure to act timely perpetuates the problem.

Theme 8: Peer Pressure and Group Influence

A 19yr ex-migrant youth from Gusau, said, "*When I moved to a new town, I met boys who had weapons and money. They invited me to join. At first, I refused, but later I agreed because I had nothing*." a 27yr teacher in Sokoto North, reported, "*Many girls in my school told me their brothers or cousins joined gangs after migrating internally. They see others doing it and follow*."

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This theme reflects the psychological and sociological dimension of migration-induced banditry. Respondents indicated that internal migrants, especially youth, face intense peer influence in resettlement areas where banditry is normalised. The absence of counter-narratives and mentorship contributes to the spiral.

By implications, the findings from these interviews underscore the deep interconnection between socio-economic vulnerabilities and the rise in banditry amidst both forced and voluntary internal migration. Every respondent, regardless of location or role, cited economic deprivation as a foundational issue. Unemployment, poverty, and loss of livelihood push individuals into high-risk mobility and subsequently into the orbit of criminal networks. Another strong finding was the institutional breakdown — both traditional and governmental. The inability to track internal migration, monitor IDP settlements, and enforce security in remote zones has allowed banditry to thrive. The erosion of community oversight and authority further fuels this trend. Participants called for stronger synergy between local leaders, government agencies, and NGOs to mitigate this threat.

Importantly, the voices of victims and those on the frontlines, such as school personnel and military officers, revealed that displaced persons are not only at risk but are also often scapegoated. There is a need for balanced policy responses that provide socio-economic support while enforcing legal checks. Migration should be managed, not criminalised. In conclusion, internal migration in Sokoto and Zamfara is both a symptom and a driver of the banditry crisis. The socio-economic context — especially among youth — offers a fertile recruitment base for criminal elements. Unless structural factors such as poverty, land scarcity, and weak governance are addressed, the cycle will continue. Targeted interventions

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that include education, employment creation, and community-based security strategies are essential.

Research Question Four

The fourth research objective seeks to evaluate the effectiveness of government policies and interventions on migration and security in shaping the dynamics of banditry in Sokoto and Zamfara States between 2014 and 2024. Given the intensifying security challenges in Northwest Nigeria, particularly those driven by both internal and cross-border migration, it becomes imperative to assess the practical outcomes of governmental responses. These responses include resettlement programmes, military operations, border control initiatives, amnesty schemes, and socio-economic empowerment efforts. By gathering insights from those closest to the situation—school-level personnel, military officers, traditional rulers, and community residents—this objective examines how these policies have influenced the local context of migration-related banditry, their perceived successes and failures, and the implications for sustainable peace and development in the region.

The responses reflect on both the successes and failures of these policies in curbing migration-related insecurity and the spread of banditry in the region. Each theme is examined through personal accounts and analytical commentary to highlight the commonalities and divergences in perspectives among participants. Table 4.6 evaluates government policies and interventions on migration and security in relation to banditry (2014–2024)

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Table 4.7: Evaluation of Government Policies and Interventions on Migration and Security in Relation to Banditry (2014–2024)

Research Question	Themes	Subthemes
Evaluate the effectiveness of government policies and interventions on migration and security in influencing the dynamics of banditry in Sokoto and Zamfara States from 2014 to 2024	1. Policy Awareness	Public knowledge of migration/security policies, Community engagement
	2. Implementation Gaps	Weak enforcement, lack of local input
	3. Military and Security Efforts	Increased deployment, limitations in rural areas
	4. Border Control Challenges	Porous borders, cross-border movement
	5. Socio-Economic Interventions	Poverty alleviation programmes, youth empowerment failures
	6. Local Government Involvement	Traditional rulers' role, grassroots monitoring
	7. Collaboration with Neighbours	Regional cooperation, joint security efforts
	8. Trust in Government	Public perception, accountability and transparency issues

Source: Field Result, 2025

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Theme 1: Border Security and Surveillance

"*I believe that one of the biggest problems is our porous borders*," said, a traditional ruler from Zurmi, Zamfara State (aged 61). "The government talks about surveillance, but we hardly see any strong border control mechanisms. Migrants still come in unchecked." Similarly, a military officer in Sokoto (aged 39), stated, "*We have tried to implement drone surveillance and ground patrols, but the lack of resources and corruption at the borders makes it ineffective*." Both respondents highlighted that while border security is a central component of migration control, the government's policy implementation has been weak and poorly monitored.

Theme 2: Disarmament and Demobilisation Campaigns

Mrs. H, a school principal in Rabah, Sokoto State (aged 47), noted, "*There was a time they announced a disarmament campaign, but I do not think it worked. People handed over outdated weapons while keeping dangerous ones hidden*." On the same issue, a local resident of Tsafe, Zamfara (aged 34), said, "*Some of these so-called repentant bandits went back into crime. The government did not follow up with reintegration support.*" Both participants suggest that disarmament policies lacked proper structure, transparency, and enforcement, which ultimately reduced their impact.

Theme 3: Military Intervention and Counterinsurgency Operations

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A 42-year-old military officer stationed in Gusau, recounted, "*Our operations have some success, but we are overstretched. The bandits regroup in unguarded territories. We need better coordination with intelligence units.*" On the civilian side, a resident of Isa in Sokoto State (aged 55), lamented, "*There are times we do not know who the real soldiers are. Some wear uniforms and act like they are protecting us, but they are part of the criminal network*." The contrast in these accounts underscores both logistical and trust issues in government-led military responses.

Theme 4: Community Policing and Local Vigilantes

A 50-year-old village head in Maradun, Zamfara, said, "*The government trained some vigilantes, but they are poorly equipped and sometimes become biased or even brutal*." Supporting this, a 29-year-old teacher in Illela, Sokoto State, commented, "*I fear some vigilantes because they act like bandits. Without proper training and oversight, they may worsen the insecurity*." Community-based security solutions were seen as a double-edged sword—potentially helpful but frequently mishandled.

Theme 5: Economic Empowerment and Youth Employment Programmes

"*There was a programme for youth skills acquisition, but we only heard about it on the radio*," said a 33-year-old unemployed graduate in Kaura Namoda. "It never reached us." Meanwhile, a 45-year-old principal in Gwadabawa, Sokoto, observed, "*If more young people were employed or in school, many would not join bandits. We need real investment in human capital*." These reflections emphasise that while policies exist on paper, the failure to implement them effectively perpetuates vulnerability among youths.

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Theme 6: Repatriation and Refugee Management Policies

A Captain added, "*There are no coordinated efforts between states and the federal government when it comes to repatriation. Some migrants live here illegally for years*." Similarly, another respondent noted, "*We have villages full of foreign migrants, yet there is no official documentation. This complicates security profiling*." This theme points to a gap in migration governance that undermines the state's capacity to manage and monitor population flows.

Theme 7: Education and Public Awareness Campaigns

"*We need more than just security; we need to educate our people*," said a respondent. "Many still do not understand the implications of harbouring criminals or illegal migrants." Another respondent agreed, adding, "*There are few awareness programmes in schools or communities. The government should engage religious and traditional leaders more*." The participants stressed the importance of combining security with enlightenment and behavioural change campaigns.

Theme 8: Policy Consistency and Political Will

A military officer argued, "*Policies change with every administration. One governor starts a programme and the next abandons it*." This inconsistency, according to Mrs. H, "*makes people stop believing in the government. They see it as seasonal talk with no real follow-up.*" This theme speaks to the need for sustained, bipartisan commitment to security and migration reform.

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Specifically, the analysis reveals that while numerous policies and interventions have been initiated to manage migration and curb banditry in Sokoto and Zamfara, their effectiveness remains limited due to inconsistent implementation, lack of coordination, and weak oversight mechanisms. The perceptions of local actors—from military to traditional authorities—highlight a consensus that current strategies are inadequate and frequently disconnected from ground realities. Trust deficits and the absence of grassroots involvement further complicate the policy landscape.

Furthermore, the overlap between ineffective economic empowerment programmes and escalating youth vulnerability points to the urgency of integrating socio-economic planning with security strategies. Community policing and disarmament programmes, although promising in theory, have underperformed in practice due to poor training, politicisation, and inadequate resourcing. Education and awareness efforts were also notably underutilised.

Overall, the findings suggest that policy gaps, fragmented implementation, and insufficient community engagement are central barriers to effective migration and security governance in these states. The responses underscore the importance of a holistic, coordinated, and context-sensitive approach to tackling banditry and migration-linked insecurity. This research takes the position that without strong institutional reforms, genuine community participation, and a depoliticised approach to security and migration management, existing interventions will continue to yield limited impact. For long-term success, policies must be made people-cantered, transparent, and accountable, especially in volatile regions like Sokoto and Zamfara.

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4.3 Discussion of Findings

Findings from this study revealed that the influx of undocumented migrants from neighbouring countries; especially Niger, Chad, and Mali, has profoundly influenced the evolution and escalation of banditry in Sokoto and Zamfara States. Military informants and community leaders unanimously observed that porous borders, weak surveillance infrastructure, and the absence of biometric entry systems have made it easy for foreign actors to enter Nigeria under the guise of displaced persons or traders. This finding supports scholars, who established that unregulated cross-border movement in the Sahel corridor promotes the proliferation of small arms and transnational violent networks[1,2].

Similarly, some scholars linked Nigeria's border fragility to the mobility of armed groups across the Nigerien and Chadian borders[3,4]. These dynamics have converted the Northwest into a convergence point for local and foreign bandits. Respondents in this study further highlighted that these migrants often blend with local populations, making it difficult for overstretched security agencies to differentiate between peaceful entrants and criminal infiltrators. This is consistent with a scholar, who found that demographic fluidity and weak border administration in Northwestern Nigeria exacerbate identity tensions and communal insecurity[5].

The study also uncovered that the influx of foreign-speaking migrants altered the cultural and linguistic fabric of many host communities, breeding mistrust and suspicion. These transformations have contributed to the breakdown of social cohesion, land disputes, and competition for resources. A study similarly asserted that unregulated migration across West Africa produces xenophobic reactions and inter-communal conflicts[6]. Additionally, some

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scholars observed that foreign infiltration in Zamfara aggravated attacks on educational institutions, leading to school closures and increased youth recruitment by bandit networks[7].

The study further revealed that internal migration, particularly among internally displaced persons (IDPs), has intensified the spread and complexity of banditry within Sokoto and Zamfara States. Respondents reported that internal displacement due to climate change, rural poverty, and armed attacks has produced massive population movements into already fragile host communities. These findings align with a study, who observed that rural–rural migration in Northern Nigeria exacerbates livelihood competition and conflict in host areas[8].

Participants in this study; especially traditional rulers and educators, described how the arrival of displaced families increased social tension and stretched community resources. This observation corroborates scholar findings, who showed that forced migration within Nigeria reconfigures rural demography and weakens informal security systems[9]. The weakening of social cohesion was also emphasized by a scholar, who demonstrated that migration-induced fragmentation undermines community trust and facilitates criminal recruitment[10]. Displaced youths, lacking education or employment, were particularly susceptible to manipulation by armed bandit leaders. This finding parallels some scholars, who linked youth displacement with radicalisation and violent mobilisation in the Northwest[11]. Moreover, the present study found evidence of an "insecurity transfer effect," whereby displaced individuals brought conflict dynamics into new settlements or were followed by armed actors. This is consistent with the UNODC regional report showing that internal displacement in the Sahel blurs the lines between victims and perpetrators.

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The study's findings emphasized that socio-economic deprivation remains the principal factor linking migration with banditry in Sokoto and Zamfara States. Poverty, unemployment, limited access to education, and the collapse of traditional livelihoods were cited as the most pervasive catalysts. Respondents explained that pervasive rural poverty pushes youths to migrate in search of work, but many ultimately join informal or criminal economies. This is consistent with some scholars, who established that economic marginalisation and youth idleness are key predictors of participation in armed banditry in Northern Nigeria[12,13].

The findings also revealed that persistent insecurity has disrupted formal education, forcing families to withdraw children from schools. As a result, an unskilled and economically idle generation has emerged, highly vulnerable to recruitment by bandits. UNICEF similarly documented that educational deprivation in conflict-prone regions correlates strongly with youth involvement in violent activity. Traditional rulers interviewed during the study lamented the erosion of communal authority and mediation mechanisms due to displacement and weak state presence. This aligns with a scholar, who argued that the decline of traditional governance and community dispute-resolution systems creates a governance vacuum that criminal groups readily exploit. The study also found that the collapse of agrarian livelihoods caused by climate variability and herder–farmer conflicts has deepened cyclical migration[13]. Some researchers corroborated this, reporting that climate-induced migration and the decline of agro-pastoralism have intensified inter-communal conflicts and expanded the recruitment base for banditry[14].

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Findings from the field revealed significant gaps in the awareness, communication, and implementation of government policies aimed at addressing migration and insecurity. While some security officials were familiar with national strategies such as Operation Hadarin Daji, Operation Harbin Kunama, and the National Migration Policy (2015), community leaders and local residents expressed minimal understanding of these policies. This discrepancy highlights weak policy dissemination and limited community participation. Similar observations were made by some scholars, who criticised the exclusionary, top-down approach of Nigeria's security policymaking[15].

Participants in this study consistently cited implementation failures due to corruption, inadequate logistics, inter-agency rivalry, and political interference. Some scholars also found that poor institutional coordination and elite capture undermine Nigeria's counter-banditry strategies[16]. Moreover, respondents expressed strong distrust in government intentions, arguing that many empowerment or resettlement programs were either mismanaged or politicised. This aligns with a scholar, who demonstrated that citizen mistrust severely limits cooperation with security agencies[17].

Traditional rulers further lamented their exclusion from policy discussions despite their extensive local knowledge. Some researchers similarly observed that excluding traditional institutions and civil society actors reduces the legitimacy and sustainability of security interventions[18,19]. Additionally, the continued porosity of Nigeria's northern borders despite military deployments confirms scholars' assertion that Nigeria's border control regime remains largely reactive and under-resourced[20,21].

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Taken together, the findings reveal that most policy interventions have been technocratic and episodic, lacking sustained local ownership or transparency. Consistent with some authors, the study concludes that durable solutions require integrated border governance, participatory migration management, and community-based security systems anchored in trust and accountability[22,23].

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Chapter Five

Conclusion

5.1 Summary of Findings

The study revealed that the influx of migrants from neighbouring countries such as Niger, Chad, and Cameroon significantly contributed to the prevalence and complexity of banditry in Sokoto and Zamfara States between 2014 and 2024. Participants, particularly traditional rulers and military personnel, confirmed that these foreign migrants often entered Nigeria through porous borders without documentation and engaged in or supported banditry activities. Their presence not only altered the demographic composition of local communities but also facilitated the smuggling of arms and cross-border collaboration with local bandits. This influx undermined existing social structures, increased communal suspicion, and contributed to a surge in transnational criminal activities.

Internal migration, particularly the movement of displaced persons from rural to urban and semi-urban areas within the states, was also found to have escalated the banditry crisis. Respondents across all groups noted that large numbers of internally displaced persons (IDPs), especially from conflict-prone and environmentally degraded areas, flooded towns and villages in search of safety and livelihood. These migrations strained already fragile resources in host communities and created fertile ground for recruitment into bandit groups. Vulnerable youths, frustrated by unemployment and lack of social support, were especially susceptible. This internal displacement also fueled tension among ethnic groups, sometimes leading to cycles of reprisal and further insecurity.

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The study further identified a range of socio-economic factors that drove both migration and involvement in banditry. Key among them were poverty, unemployment, lack of access to education, environmental degradation, and weak agricultural support. School leaders and local residents frequently mentioned the collapse of farming and livestock rearing as a critical trigger. Many young men, unable to find stable income through legal means, resorted to joining or collaborating with bandit groups for financial gain or protection. Additionally, land disputes, limited government presence in rural communities, and deteriorating infrastructure intensified frustration and drove migration and violent resistance.

In terms of policy response, the research found that government interventions had limited success in curbing migration-related insecurity. Programmes such as Operation Harbin Kunama, community policing initiatives, and youth empowerment schemes were reported as poorly coordinated, underfunded, or unsustained. Military and traditional authority respondents criticised the lack of synergy between security forces and local stakeholders, as well as the absence of follow-up on policy execution. Moreover, widespread mistrust in government intentions, allegations of corruption, and the politicisation of security responses further eroded public confidence. Community members expressed frustration that despite numerous interventions, their communities remained unsafe, underdeveloped, and neglected.

In summary, the findings establish a strong link between cross-border and internal migration and the intensification of banditry in Sokoto and Zamfara States. Socio-economic hardship remains a central factor in migration and criminal behavior, with young people particularly vulnerable. Government responses, though present, are plagued by inefficiencies and lack of community involvement. Therefore, any meaningful solution must take a holistic approach

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that integrates border control, local economic development, community-led security mechanisms, and transparent policy implementation. The voices of those most affected—residents, traditional leaders, and frontline personnel—must be central in designing and executing these interventions.

5.2 Conclusion

The study critically examined the impact of migration and banditry in Sokoto and Zamfara States, revealing a complex interplay between cross-border movements, internal displacement, socio-economic conditions, and weak policy implementation. It became evident that the influx of undocumented migrants from neighbouring countries, including Niger, Chad, and Cameroon, significantly fueled the escalation of banditry in these regions. These migrants often came with pre-existing criminal networks, weapons, and survival tactics that blended with local bandit groups. This external dimension of insecurity not only compounded the threat faced by rural communities but also exposed the inefficiency of Nigeria's border management and immigration systems. The porous nature of the borders allowed bandits and arms to flow freely, undermining national security efforts.

Internal migration; particularly displacement due to violence, poverty, and environmental degradation, further exacerbated the problem. As internally displaced persons moved in search of safety and livelihood, they strained resources in host communities and often found themselves in socio-economically vulnerable positions. The absence of support structures made these populations easy targets for recruitment into bandit groups. Many respondents noted that young, unemployed migrants were particularly susceptible due to frustration, lack of direction, and exposure to constant violence. The state's failure to adequately address the

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root causes of internal displacement—such as poor agricultural support, neglect of rural infrastructure, and insufficient job creation—left many communities exposed and defenceless.

Furthermore, socio-economic factors such as poverty, unemployment, illiteracy, and loss of livelihoods were strongly linked to both migration and involvement in banditry. In communities where economic activity was low and state presence minimal, citizens often viewed banditry as either a survival strategy or a form of resistance. This highlights the urgent need for targeted economic reforms and interventions in the affected regions. It also emphasises the importance of education, youth empowerment, and conflict-sensitive development programmes. Security efforts alone are insufficient without addressing the economic despair that pushes people into migration and crime.

In conclusion, while both internal and cross-border migration significantly contributed to the banditry crisis in Sokoto and Zamfara States, the core drivers remain structural and socio-economic. Therefore, a multi-dimensional approach is necessary—one that strengthens border control, enhances community policing, invests in rural development, and empowers vulnerable populations. Government policies must be inclusive, transparent, and responsive to the realities on the ground. Any long-term solution to banditry in Northwest Nigeria must prioritise human security, not just military action. The study strongly recommends a coordinated national and regional strategy that aligns migration management with socio-economic resilience and participatory governance.

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5.3 Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, it is imperative to develop and implement a multi-sectoral policy framework that addresses both migration and banditry as interconnected challenges. One of the most urgent policy recommendations is the strengthening of border management and surveillance mechanisms to control the influx of undocumented migrants from neighbouring countries. The Nigeria Immigration Service (NIS), in collaboration with the Nigerian Customs Service (NCS), the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC), and the Nigerian Army, should be equipped with advanced surveillance technology, adequate personnel, and funding to monitor and secure porous borders in Sokoto and Zamfara States. The implementation should involve deploying modern border checkpoints, biometric registration systems, and intelligence-sharing with neighbouring countries to detect and prevent illegal entry and arms smuggling.

At the domestic level, the Federal Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs, Disaster Management and Social Development, in partnership with state governments of Sokoto and Zamfara, should prioritise the integration of internally displaced persons (IDPs) and rural migrants into development planning. This includes establishing livelihood support programmes, expanding educational access, and creating community-based employment schemes. Local government councils, traditional leaders, and civil society organisations should be involved in identifying vulnerable individuals and coordinating sustainable economic reintegration plans. This will reduce the susceptibility of migrant populations to recruitment by bandit groups and help rebuild social cohesion in conflict-prone communities.

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Additionally, policies aimed at addressing the socio-economic drivers of migration and banditry must be fast-tracked. The National Directorate of Employment (NDE), Small and Medium Enterprises Development Agency of Nigeria (SMEDAN), and relevant state-level entrepreneurship agencies should initiate targeted youth empowerment programmes that provide skills acquisition, seed funding, and mentorship in agriculture, vocational trades, and ICT. These programmes must be tailored to the realities of rural communities in Northwest Nigeria, where poverty, unemployment, and lack of opportunity are deeply rooted. Special interventions should be extended to young men in displaced and host communities, who are statistically more vulnerable to being lured into banditry.

Finally, there is a need for an inclusive security sector reform that promotes community policing and intelligence-led operations. The Nigeria Police Force, through its Community Policing initiative, should establish grassroots security committees in collaboration with traditional rulers, religious leaders, youth groups, and vigilante networks. The Ministry of Interior should oversee the training, funding, and operational coordination of these units to ensure professionalism and accountability. By empowering communities to actively participate in their own security, the government can bridge the trust gap between security agencies and civilians, improve intelligence gathering, and strengthen local resilience against banditry and migration-induced violence.

5.4 Contributions to Knowledge

This study significantly contributes to the existing body of knowledge by providing a comprehensive and context-specific analysis of how both cross-border and internal migration influence the dynamics of banditry in Sokoto and Zamfara States between 2014 and 2024. It

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uniquely integrates socio-economic factors, migration patterns, and security challenges, highlighting the complex interplay between migration and banditry that previous research has often treated separately. Furthermore, by incorporating diverse perspectives from school leaders, military personnel, traditional rulers, and community residents, the study offers nuanced insights into local realities, enriching theoretical frameworks on migration-driven insecurity and informing more targeted policy interventions tailored to the Northwest Nigerian context.

5.5 Suggestions of Further Studies

For future studies, it is recommended to expand the research to include other states affected by migration and banditry to provide a broader understanding of the issue at a national or regional level. Incorporating quantitative methods alongside qualitative approaches could strengthen the findings by providing statistical evidence to complement personal accounts. Further research could also explore the long-term effects of migration-related banditry on community development, education, and economic stability, as well as evaluate new or evolving government policies in real time to better understand their impact.

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Appendix I

Participant ID	Gender	Age Range	Role	Location
1	Male	45-54	School Principal	Sokoto
2	Female	35-44	School Head	Zamfara
3	Male	40-49	Military Personnel	Sokoto
4	Male	50-59	Military Personnel	Zamfara
5	Male	55-64	Traditional Ruler	Sokoto
6	Female	45-54	Village Head	Zamfara
7	Male	30-39	Local Community Resident	Sokoto
8	Female	25-34	Local Community Resident	Zamfara
9	Male	40-49	School Principal	Sokoto
10	Female	35-44	Military Personnel	Zamfara
11	Male	25-34	Local Community Resident	Sokoto
12	Female	35-44	Village Head	Zamfara
13	Male	50-59	Traditional Ruler	Sokoto
14	Female	40-49	School Head	Zamfara
15	Male	45-54	Military Personnel	Sokoto
16	Female	30-39	Local Community Resident	Zamfara
17	Male	55-64	Traditional Ruler	Sokoto
18	Female	25-34	School Principal	Zamfara
19	Male	35-44	Military Personnel	Sokoto
20	Female	40-49	Village Head	Zamfara
21	Male	45-54	School Head	Sokoto
22	Female	35-44	Military Personnel	Zamfara
23	Male	40-49	Traditional Ruler	Sokoto
24	Female	30-39	Local Community Resident	Zamfara
25	Male	50-59	School Principal	Sokoto
26	Female	45-54	Village Head	Zamfara
27	Male	25-34	Local Community Resident	Sokoto
28	Female	35-44	School Head	Zamfara

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29	Male	40-49	Military Personnel	Sokoto
30	Female	50-59	Village Head	Zamfara
31	Male	35-44	Traditional Ruler	Sokoto
32	Female	25-34	Local Community Resident	Zamfara
33	Male	45-54	School Principal	Sokoto
34	Female	40-49	Military Personnel	Zamfara
35	Male	30-39	Local Community Resident	Sokoto
36	Female	35-44	Village Head	Zamfara
37	Male	50-59	Traditional Ruler	Sokoto
38	Female	45-54	School Head	Zamfara
39	Male	25-34	Military Personnel	Sokoto
40	Female	30-39	Local Community Resident	Zamfara
41	Male	35-44	Village Head	Sokoto
42	Female	40-49	School Principal	Zamfara
43	Male	45-54	Traditional Ruler	Sokoto
44	Female	35-44	Military Personnel	Zamfara
45	Male	30-39	Local Community Resident	Sokoto
46	Female	25-34	School Head	Zamfara
47	Male	50-59	Military Personnel	Sokoto
48	Female	40-49	Village Head	Zamfara
49	Male	35-44	Traditional Ruler	Sokoto
50	Female	30-39	Local Community Resident	Zamfara
51	Male	45-54	School Principal	Sokoto
52	Female	35-44	Military Personnel	Zamfara

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Appendix II

Interview Guide for Respondents at the School Level

1. How would you describe the current state of banditry in Sokoto and Zamfara states?
2. In your opinion, what factors have contributed to the increase or decrease in banditry over the past decade?
3. Can you share your experiences as a student returning from a neighboring country to attend school in Sokoto or Zamfara states?
4. Can you describe any noticeable changes in your school community as a result of the influx of migrants into Sokoto and Zamfara states?
5. In your opinion, how has internal migration impacted the prevalence of banditry in Sokoto and Zamfara states over the past decade?
6. From your perspective, what are the key socio-economic factors driving both migration patterns and involvement in banditry activities in Sokoto and Zamfara states?
7. How do you think government policies and interventions on migration and security have influenced the dynamics of banditry in Sokoto and Zamfara states from 2014 to 2024?
8. As an educator, have you observed any specific challenges faced by indigenous and migrant students or those affected by banditry in accessing education in Sokoto and Zamfara states?
9. How do you think the influx of migrants has impacted the resources and infrastructure of schools in Sokoto and Zamfara states?

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10. In your experience, what role do schools play in addressing the challenges posed by internal migration and banditry in Sokoto and Zamfara states?
11. Have you noticed any changes in student behavior or attitudes towards education due to the influence of migration and banditry in Sokoto and Zamfara states?
12. How do you think the educational system can better support students affected by migration and banditry in Sokoto and Zamfara states?
13. In your opinion, what are the most effective strategies for preventing the escalation of banditry in schools in Sokoto and Zamfara states?
14. Have you seen any positive initiatives or programs aimed at addressing the impact of migration and banditry on education in Sokoto and Zamfara states?
15. From your perspective, what additional support do schools need to effectively manage the challenges posed by migration and banditry in Sokoto and Zamfara states?
16. What are your thoughts on the role of education in addressing the root causes of migration and banditry in Sokoto and Zamfara states?
17. In your experience, how have students and teachers adapted to the changing security situation caused by migration and banditry in Sokoto and Zamfara states?

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Appendix III

Interview Guide for the Military Personnel

1. Can you describe your role and experience in dealing with security challenges, particularly regarding migration and banditry in Sokoto and Zamfara states?
2. From your perspective, how has the influx of migrants into Sokoto and Zamfara states impacted the prevalence and dynamics of banditry over the past decade?
3. In your opinion, how has internal migration contributed to the escalation of banditry in Sokoto and Zamfara states between 2014 and 2024?
4. What are the key socio-economic factors that drive both migration patterns and involvement in banditry activities in Sokoto and Zamfara states during the specified period?
5. How do you perceive the effectiveness of government policies and interventions on migration and security in influencing the dynamics of banditry in Sokoto and Zamfara states from 2014 to 2024?
6. Based on your experience, what are the main challenges faced by the military in addressing the link between migration and banditry in these states?
7. Can you discuss any successful strategies or initiatives that have been implemented to mitigate the impact of migration on banditry in Sokoto and Zamfara states?

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8. How do you assess the coordination and cooperation between different security agencies and stakeholders in managing the migration and banditry issues in these states?
9. Have you noticed any trends or changes in the patterns of migration and banditry in Sokoto and Zamfara states over the past decade?
10. How do you think the military can better collaborate with local communities to address the root causes of migration and banditry in these states?
11. In your view, what role can technology play in enhancing the military's efforts to combat banditry and manage migration in Sokoto and Zamfara states?
12. Looking ahead, what are your recommendations for improving the security situation in Sokoto and Zamfara states, considering the complexities of migration and banditry?

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Appendix IV

Interview Guide for Community Residents

1. Can you describe any changes you have observed in the population demographics of Sokoto and Zamfara states over the past decade?
2. Have you noticed any impact of the influx of migrants into your community on the prevalence of banditry or other security issues?
3. How do you think internal migration has contributed to the escalation of banditry in Sokoto and Zamfara states between 2014 and 2024?
4. What are some of the main reasons people migrate to Sokoto and Zamfara states, and do you think these reasons are related to the increase in banditry?
5. In your opinion, what socio-economic factors drive people to migrate to or within Sokoto and Zamfara states, and how do these factors influence involvement in banditry activities?
6. How have government policies and interventions on migration and security affected your community's experience with banditry?
7. Have there been any notable changes in government policies or interventions related to migration and security in Sokoto and Zamfara states in recent years?
8. Do you think these government policies and interventions have been effective in addressing the challenges posed by migration and banditry?
9. How do you perceive the relationship between migration patterns and banditry activities in your community?
10. Are there any community-led initiatives or interventions aimed at addressing the challenges posed by migration and banditry?

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11. What do you think are the key priorities for addressing the issues of migration and banditry in Sokoto and Zamfara states?
12. In your opinion, what role can community members play in addressing the challenges posed by migration and banditry?

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Biodata

A. Personal Data

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Place of Birth:	Sokoto
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B. Educational Background With Dates:

- PhD International Relations – Lead City University, Ibadan (In View).
- Master International Relations – Lead City University, Ibadan (2021-2023).
- Master Sacred Theology, Dominican Institute, Ibadan (2019-2021).
- BSc Sacred Theology, Good Shepherd Major Seminary, Kaduna (2004-2008).
- BSc Philosophy Urbanian University, Rome (2000-2004).
- Diploma National Teacher's Institute, Kaduna (2012-2013).
- Bonus Pastor Seminary Osina, JSS (1991-1993).
- St. Mary's Seminary Umuowa, SS (1994-1997).
- Custos Ecclesia Seminary Uzii (1998-1999).
- Amaodum Primary School, Omuwa (1984-1990).

C. Work Experience With Dates:

- Associate Pastor, Holy Family Cathedral, Sokoto (2008-2010).

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- Associate Pastor, St. Dominic Catholic Church, Birni Kebbi (2010-2012).
- Pastor St. Mary's Catholic church, Argungu Kebbi State (2012-2018).
- Chaplain NYSC/Catholic Youth Organization of Nigeria (2010-2018).
- Chaplain Catholic Youth Organization of Nigeria, Kaduna Province (2014-2018).

D. Awards and Fellowships: N/A

E. Membership of Academic/Professional Bodies:

- Member, Institute of Security and Strategic Studies.

F. Major Conferences Attended With Dates:

i. First Annual Conference, Faculty of Social Science Ajayi Crowther University, Oyo, Oyo State, 5th -8th June, 2022.

ii. 3rd International Conference of FM&SS Lead City University, Ibadan, Oyo State 9th -11th June, 2024.

iii. Aid to the Church in Need of International (ACN) and Centre for Child Protection (CCP) Rome, On Abuse of Power: Clerical Sexual Abuse of Minors 11th -15th November, 2019, Dominican University, Ibadan, Oyo State.

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ii. **Professor Anselm Jimoh**,
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Signature **Date**

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The University Compliance Certification

This is to certify that this Thesis, written by **Cyriacus Nnadozie ONWUHARAONYE** with matriculation number **LCU/PG/000302,** in the Department of Politics and International Relations, Faculty of Management and Social Sciences, Lead City University, Ibadan, Oyo State, is in full compliance with the approved University format and style.

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Signature **Date**