INSTITUTIONAL FRAGILITY, SECURITY GOVERNANCE CRISIS, POLICY FAILURE AND INSECURITY CONVERGENCE IN NIGERIA

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Keywords

Insecurity convergence; Security governance; Fragile state; Policy failure

Abstract

Research Problem: *In Nigeria, insecurity is now multidimensional, and the interaction between a security governance crisis and persistent policy failure is more responsible than isolated security threats. This article examines how the crisis of security governance and Nigerian fragility is compounded by the convergence of terrorism, banditry, kidnapping, communal violence and politically motivated violence enabled by the shortcomings of state institutions and ineffective policy responses.*
Methods/theory: *This study examines secondary data sources, such as scholarly literature, policy documents, and institutional reports, through the frameworks of Human Security Theory and the Political Economy of Insecurity.*
Results: *The findings reveal that fragmented institutional mandates, weak accountability, politicised security responses, and implementation deficits create governance conditions in which diverse forms of insecurity reinforce one another.*
Conclusion: The article concludes that addressing Nigeria's security crisis necessitates integrated governance, institutional reform, policy coherence, and the implementation of preventive security strategies centred on human security.
Key Contribution to Knowledge: *The current multidimensional insecurity crisis in Nigeria has become mutually reinforcing in an institutional context of fragility, weak accountability, fragmented security mandates, and persistent deficits in the implementation of policies. Therefore, Nigeria's security challenge must be seen not simply as a problem of violent non-state actors but as a more extensive crisis of security governance.*
Recommendation: *Establish an integrated national security governance and coordination framework and apply comprehensive*

institutional and accountability reforms.

Introduction

In the 21st century, the Nigerian nation is increasingly defined by all forms insecurity ranging from terrorism, banditry, kidnapping, communal violence, to farmer–herder conflict, separatist violence, and electoral insecurity. Most scholarly work treat these multidimensional threats from a disconnected perspectives within different geographical location or functionality such as IPOB in Southeast, Boko Haram in the North etc (Roberts & Okpan, 2025; Omotoso, 2019). A closer observation would rather reveal that these threats have now become linked as part of a larger crisi in state capacity and security governance. The World Bank (2025) notes that continuing insurgency in the Northeast, banditry and kidnapping in the Northwest and separatist agitations in the Southeast points to continuing weaknesses in state capacity and service delivery. International IDEA also highlights that Nigeria is contending with a number of geographically scattered security challenges such as the Boko Haram insurgency, banditry, kidnapping and farmer-herder conflict, which carry important consequences for both economic and political stability.

This persistent security environment creates a fundamental analytical question: why do different types of insecurity persist and increasingly intersect, despite extensive state security interventions? Adejoh and Roberts (2021) pointed out that the prevalent multidimensional insecurity in Nigeria especially in the North East is rooted in local or regional ecological conflicts and proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons in Nigeria through the porous border that Nigeria shares with the states of Sahel region of Africa. Traditional approaches often treat terrorism, electoral violence, banditry or communal conflict as distinct security problems. But this fragmentation may obscure the institutional mechanisms through which different threats can become mutually reinforcing. This paper presents an analytical framework of insecurity convergence to explain this process. Insecurity convergence is the interaction between different security threats via shared institutional weaknesses, political incentives, socio-economic conditions and policy failures, leading to cumulative instead of discrete insecurity.

Institutional weakness have been identified by scholars as one of the causes of insecurity convergence. For example, Yagboyaju and Akinola (2019) connect Nigeria's governance crisis to the lack of institutional capacity and effectiveness. Okenyodo (2016) talks about the role of governance and accountability in providing security. Alumona et al. (2019) also attributed Nigeria's internal security crisis to the weaknesses in security management. Roberts and Okpan (2025) identified some failures in Nigeria's counterterrorism policies. Again, most existing scholarship on insecurity in Nigeria treats them as isolated phenomena and lacks a logical framework to explain how and why these threats converge within the same institutional and governance framework. Previous studies have looked into electoral violence (Roberts et al., 2025; Ezeibe, 2021), terrorism and counter-terrorism policy (Roberts, 2024; Nkata, 2023; Bashir, 2018) and state fragility (Yagboyaju & Akinola, 2019; Alumona et al., 2019) as separate issues. However, there is a huge gap in understanding how these different forms of insecurity intersect and mutually reinforce each other. This study therefore fills this gap through introducing the concept of insecurity convergence as an analytical framework.

A particular form of insecurity could lead to a fragile state through ongoing institutional fragility, weak policy implementation and

coordination. This means Nigeria's security problem is becoming a systemic governance problem, as the converging threats are fragmenting across shared institutional and political contexts. In this context, the article analyzes the dynamics of institutional fragility and policy failure in the production of insecurity convergence in Nigeria. Drawing on Human Security Theory and the Political Economy of Insecurity, it argues that sustainable security requires a shift from piecemeal, reactive interventions to comprehensive, accountable and preventative security governance that addresses not only the immediate symptoms as well as the underlying causes of convergent insecurity.

Review of Literature

An isolated analysis of terrorism, state fragility or institutional failure will not provide a full understanding of Nigeria's insecurity crisis. These phenomena are better understood within a wider crisis of security governance in which institutional weakness, political competition, coercive practices and socio-economic grievances interact to produce mutually reinforcing forms of insecurity. The notion of insecurity convergence is particularly useful in that it reorients the analytical focus from individual security threats to the processes of overlapping, interacting and reinforcing different forms of insecurity.

Fragility of Institutions and Security Governance Crisis

Existing literature mostly links the insecurity crisis in Nigeria to weak governance and fragile state institutions. The governance crisis, which is a hallmark of the Nigerian state, has institutional weaknesses that limit the capacity of public institutions to perform key governance roles (Yagboyaju & Akinola, 2019). This analysis reframes insecurity as a problem of governance, not of law and order. Similarly, Okenyodo (2016) connects security outcomes with governance and accountability. The author argues that the deficits in institutional accountability diminish the efficacy and legitimacy of security delivery.

From this perspective, Alumona et al. (2019) characterize Nigeria's internal security challenges as a crisis of internal security management. Their analysis moves the focus away from the mere existence of security threats, and toward the institutional arrangements that regulate them. So, the ability of violent actors is not the sole cause of ongoing insecurity; it can also be a matter of coordination, institutional capacity, and accountability and policy implementation gaps. For instance, Madueke (2025) looks at ethnic mobilization from an instrumentalist perspective and links mobilization processes to state fragility. Thompson et al. (2026) attribute Nigeria's current fragility to its historical as well as colonial legacies, contending that contemporary governance challenges are inseparable from longstanding institutional and structural flaws. Caleb (2026) links state fragility and ungoverned spaces to the rise of banditry in Nigeria's Middle Belt, illustrating how weak or absent institutions enable non-state actors to exert coercive authority.

The literature thus recognizes an important relationship between weakness of institutions and insecurity. But, a large conceptual division persists. Most research considers fragility as a condition that enables specific security threats (banditry, Boko Haram violence, ethnic mobilization). It does not consider how institutional fragility enables the interaction of multiple insecurities. The literature is still weak in theorizing how security governance deficits act as a common institutional mechanism linking terrorism, electoral violence, political coercion, criminality and other forms of insecurity.

Terrorism and Counterterrorism as Policy Failure

Several studies have examined Nigeria's counterterrorism policies and approaches, as well as their effectiveness in addressing Boko Haram (Nkata, 2023). Usman and Bashir (2018) link the fragility of the Nigerian state to the challenges of addressing Boko Haram violence, emphasizing the relationship between state capacity and counter-insurgency success. Roberts (2024) investigates Nigerian counterterrorism policies and Boko Haram activities from 2009 to 2021 offering a granular insight of the efficacy of policy interventions and terrorist threats. More recent scholarly work has been increasingly critical of the focus on coercive security approaches. Roberts et al. (2025a) evaluate Operation Safe Corridor as a counterterrorism program in Northeast Nigeria. Roberts and Okpan (2025) use a mixed-method approach to examine Nigeria's counter-terrorism policies toward Boko Haram. Together, these studies transcend the military operations to evaluate policy solutions for counterterrorism and disengagement.

Roberts and Okpan (2025a) also stressed the important connections between counter-terrorism, human rights and the protection of civilians in North East Nigeria. They point to the potential for tensions between the aims of counterterrorism and the aims of protecting people and human rights issues. Taken together, these findings reveal a significant policy dilemma: security initiatives in the name of reducing insecurity may create governance and legitimacy problems if they do not protect civilians or fail to address underlying structural issues. But most studies focused predominantly on Boko Haram and the Northeast. Furthermore, conceptual integration between counterterrorism policy failure, institutional fragility, and broader patterns of insecurity convergence remains limited.

Synthesis: Institutional fragility as a facilitating condition for insecurity convergence

The argument is that insecurity converges because institutions are fragile. Alumona et al. (2019) characterized Nigeria's internal security problem as a problem of deficits in security management and so shifted the focus from the behavior of violent actors to the institutional capacity to manage them. This is confirmed by Yagboyaju and Akinola (2019) who view governance deficits as part of the wider crisis of the Nigerian state. It implies that insecurity persists not only because Nigeria has many violent actors but also because institutional weaknesses constrain the ability of the state to anticipate, coordinate, prevent and respond to multiple threats simultaneously.

Thompson et al. (2026) likewise argued that the present Nigerian fragility is inseparable from historical institutional and structural legacies. Similarly, Madueke (2025) shows how ethnic mobilization can interact with state fragility, and Caleb (2026) links state fragility and ungoverned spaces to the rise of banditry in the Middle Belt. These studies suggest that institutional weakness generates opportunity structures that can be exploited by different categories of violent and non-state actors.

Most important, however, the findings go beyond the traditional claim that institutional fragility alone produces insecurity. Rather, they contend that fragility could facilitate the cross-domain transmission of insecurity. Where institutions are weak, the same deficits in governance may at the same time provide scope for terrorist activity, electoral intimidation, communal violence, banditry and criminality. In this way institutional fragility acts as a connecting mechanism whereby distinct threats share common enabling conditions.

The Reproduction of Insecurity and Failure of Counterterrorism Policy

Policy failure constitutes another major mechanism that perpetuates insecurity and its interconnection. Usman and Bashir (2018) find a strong correlation between Boko Haram violence and the weakness of the Nigerian state. According to Roberts (2024), counterterrorism strategy is a major factor in shaping the operating environment for Boko Haram. The findings suggest that the state's institutional capacity for implementing counter-terrorism is strongly correlated with its effectiveness. Nigeria's counter-terrorism strategy has evolved since then with efforts to go beyond a mostly militarized response. In their review of Operation Safe Corridor, Roberts et al. (2025a) detail the evolution of non-kinetic counterterrorism via rehabilitation and reintegration. Likewise, Roberts and Okpanocha (2025) argued that Nigeria had jettisoned a combative approach to counterterrorism. Collectively, these studies point to Nigeria having diversified its counterterrorism instruments over time. However, this study suggests that diversifying policies does not necessarily imply coherent policies.

The reviewed literature indicates that the security policies in Nigeria are often formulated as a reaction to the individual security threats. Such an approach may lead to ineffective policy interventions because it ignores the larger institutional environment within which these threats interact. A counterterrorism program may reduce one type of insecurity, but ignore the governance failures, political grievances, and institutional weaknesses that allow other types of insecurity to flourish. Insecurity convergence, then, is a problem of policy coordination: to fight terrorism in a vacuum from banditry, electoral violence, communal conflict or institutional dysfunction may yield disjointed results, as these dangers may share common governance conditions.

Theoretical background

The study uses the Human Security Theory and the Political Economy of Insecurity to provide an explanation for the security governance crisis in Nigeria. The Human Security Theory is about the impact of insecurity on people and communities. The Political Economy of Insecurity is about the systems and conditions that create and sustain insecurity. The study can combine the two theories so as to consider the effect on individuals and the wider structures that allow for insecurity to perpetuate.

The Human Security Theory emerged in the 1990s as an alternative to the state-centric conception of security. Inspired by Mahbub ul Haq and Amartya Sen and advocated by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), this framework shifts the focus of security from the state to people and communities. The UNDP's Human Development Report defined human security as freedom from fear and want and protection from multidimensional threats including economic, food, health, environmental, personal, political and community security (UNDP, 1994). This is particularly so in the Nigerian context where terrorism, banditry, kidnapping, communal violence and electoral violence go beyond immediate physical harm to include livelihoods, displacement, access to basic services, political participation, social trust and community resilience. Human Security Theory offers an analytical lens for insecurity as the convergence of various, mutually reinforcing vulnerabilities that undermine civilian wellbeing and institutional legitimacy.

Human Security Theory is limited in its ability to explain why insecurity continues, who benefits from its continuation and how institutional and material incentives reproduce

conditions of insecurity. Political-economy approaches, associated with authors such as Susan Strange, David Keen, Mark Duffield, Paul Collier and Christopher Cramer, show how poor institutions, competition over resources, economic exploitation, exclusion and economic opportunities can create conditions that favor persistent violence (Berdal & Malone, 2000; Collier & Hoeffler, 2004). From this angle insecurity is not always an unintended by-product of institutional fragility, but in some contexts political and economic actors may exploit weak regulation, poor accountability and governance gaps to extract resources, consolidate political power or sustain coercive networks. The essential concepts of the political economy of insecurity have been increasingly applied to terrorism, banditry, corruption, and the financing and economic reproduction of violence in Nigeria (Ogundiya & Monday, 2024).

The two theoretical perspectives are, in analytical terms, complementary. The Human Security Theory explains the effects of insecurity on communities and individuals. The Political Economy of Insecurity also makes clear why insecurity is produced and reproduced in particular institutional and political-economic contexts. Applying these perspectives, the phenomena of terrorism, banditry, kidnapping, communal violence and electoral violence can be analyzed not as independent security problems but as linked phenomena and related governance conditions that facilitate their interaction. On the basis of this incorporation, the paper proposes a Human Security-Political Economy of Insecurity Synthesis as the main analytical framework. This synthesis sees the convergence of insecurity as a recursive process: institutional fragility and policy failure create governance deficits; governance deficits create opportunities for political, criminal and violent actors; opportunities create the emergence, adaptation and persistence of multiple forms of insecurity; and violence creates further erosion of livelihoods, institutional capacity, public trust and human security. Insecurity is thus a product of a failure of governance as well as a process that undermines the capacity of governance. This suggests a dynamic and not a linear relationship.

The framework conceptualizes institutional fragility, policy failure and political insecurity as interlinked, converging mechanisms. Institutional fragility creates a context where state institutions are unable to deliver protection, justice, basic services and effective regulation on a regular basis. Such weaknesses are compounded by policy failure in the form of poor execution, lack of coordination, lack of accountability or inappropriate responses to developing hazards. Political uncertainty may heighten the battle for state resources and political power, generate incentives for mobilization and patronage, and diminish public trust in formal institutions. These situations create overlapping spaces where terrorism, banditry, kidnapping, communal violence and electoral violence interact, reinforce or exploit common institutional vulnerabilities.

This framework is built on existing scholarship that has largely treated Nigeria's insecurity through separate analytical domains, including state fragility (Yagboyaju & Akinola, 2019; Thompson et al., 2026), ethnic mobilization (Madueke, 2025), banditry and ungoverned spaces (Caleb, 2026), terrorism and counterterrorism (Usman & Bashir, 2018; Roberts, 2024; Roberts et al., 2025a; Roberts & Okpanocha, 2025), and electoral violence (Ezeibe, 2021; Olowojolu et al., 2019; Roberts et al., 2025b). Instead of treating these dimensions as analytically independent, this analysis links them through the concept of insecurity convergence. It argues that institutional fragility is the broader governance context, which policy failure is an important mechanism of reproduction, and that political

insecurity is a pathway through which different forms of violence can overlap and become mutually reinforcing.

The theoretical contribution of this analysis is to extend security-governance scholarship from the study of individual threats to the explanation of their convergence. Applications of Human Security Theory to date have mainly focused on multidimensional vulnerability and the impacts of insecurity. Political-economy approaches have, by contrast, emphasized actors, incentives, rents, resources, and the financing of violence. This synthesis integrates these analytical levels by explaining both the production of insecurity and its cumulative effects on human security. Insecurity convergence is thus not simply conceptualized as the co-existence of multiple threats, but as a process whereby governance deficits allow for the interaction of different forms of insecurity and the consequences of those threats further diminish institutional capacity and human security.

This framework thus moves through the following analytical sequence: institutional fragility; policy and security-governance failures; opportunities for violent and political actors; convergence and reproduction of multiple insecurities; erosion of human security and institutional legitimacy; and further institutional fragility. This recursive relationship is the central theoretical proposition. The main contribution is not just the combination of two existing theories but the integration of the two into a security governance framework of insecurity convergence that explains how institutional, political, socioeconomic and security vulnerabilities are intertwined and mutually reinforcing in the contemporary Nigerian security environment.

Material and Methods

This study adopted the qualitative descriptive design and this research design is appropriate for the exhaustive description of events, experiences or perspectives in plain language with little theoretical interpretation (Lambert & Lambert, 2012). This design allowed for systematic review, interpretation and synthesis of existing information relevant to the research objectives. Data sources only secondary data were used for the present study. Data were collected from reliable and authoritative sources including peer-reviewed journal articles, books and publications from international organizations in an effort to ensure reliability, validity and comprehensiveness.

The following procedures were used to obtain data to ensure the credibility of the data:

i. Publication date range: The review of literature and reports covered the period from 2015 to 2026, except for one research method published in 2012, to capture both current developments and historical background.

ii. Geographical focus: This review was limited to reports and studies that were specifically concerned with Nigeria's insecurity, with particular focus on the zones bordering the Sahel region, namely the Northeast, North West and North-Central geopolitical zones and the Sahel, where the multidimensional insecurity convergence is most acute.

iii. Thematic relevance: The sources were selected according to their relevance to terrorism, border control, banditry, electoral violence, communal conflicts, state fragility and security governance institutions.

iv. The study only used data from peer-reviewed journal articles, institutional repositories (e.g., World Bank, International IDEA, UNDP), government policy documents and reputable media sources.

v. Data analysis (thematic analysis): The collected data were subjected to thematic content analysis.

vi. Methodology: Data were collected by structured document review. We used academic databases such as Google Scholar and Scopus and institutional repositories to identify the relevant literature. Relevant materials were retrieved using keywords and search strings specific to the research topic. Documents were screened by assessing titles, abstracts, and full texts to achieve alignment with the study objectives. The documents chosen were then organized and cataloged for further analysis.

The procedure was as follows:

i. The selected documents were subjected to a detailed review and familiarization process.

ii. Systematic extraction of relevant information and key findings.

iii. Recurring ideas and concepts were coded for further analysis.

iv. Codes were grouped into meaningful categories.

v. Formulation of themes to represent the essence of the data (e.g. political violence, policy gaps, border governance, institutional fragmentation, human security effects)

vi. The findings were interpreted and synthesized based on the research objectives.

Table 1: Summary of Thematic Analysis

Theme	**Description**	**Key Data Sources**
Institutional Fragility	Institutional capacity weakness, accountability, and coordination failures that enable insecurity.	Yagboyaju and Akinola (2019); Okenyodo (2016); Alumona et al. (2019); Madueke (2025); Thompson et al. (2026); Caleb (2026); Usman & Bashir (2018); Berdal & Malone, (2000); Collier & Hoeffler, 2004;
Policy Failure/Inadequacy	Policy inadequacy, implementation failure, fragmented responses, and the politicization of security.	Roberts & Okpan (2025); Roberts, 2024; Nkata, 2023; Bashir, 2018; Roberts (2024); Roberts et al. (2025a); Roberts & Okpanocha (2025); Alumona et al. (2019); Okenyodo (2016); Roberts et al. (2025a)
Electoral Insecurity/Violence	Electoral violence and intimidation, political violence.	Olowojolu et al., 2019; Roberts et al., (2025b);
Human Security Impacts	Displacement, socioeconomic insecurity, restricted mobility, and civilian protection concerns.	World Bank (2025); Roberts and Okpan (2025a); Nkata & Okpanocha (2025a); Nkata and Okpanocha (2025a);
Border Governance/regional ecological conflicts	Regional ecological conflicts, Small Arms and light weapons proliferation, border governance issues.	Adejoh & Roberts (2021).
Insecurity Convergence	The interaction of multiple threats through shared enabling conditions.	Amuchie (2026); Lam et al. (2023); Ezeibe, (2021); Olowojolu et al. (2019); Ogundiya & Monday, 2024

Sources: Research 2026

Ethical Consideration

The study used secondary data only, with no direct interaction with human participants. Ethical standards were observed by:

i. All sources were appropriately cited and acknowledged to avoid plagiarism.

ii. Data were only obtained from publicly available and permitted sources.

iii. The authors accurately described the ideas and findings of the original authors.

SECURITY GOVERNANCE FAILURE: HUMAN-SECURITY CONSEQUENCES

The crisis of security governance has implications beyond protecting state institutions. Nkata and Okpanocha (2025a) provide an example of the complex relationship between counterterrorism, human rights and civilian protection in the Northeast Nigeria. They are important because their analysis shows that the effectiveness of security policy cannot be judged solely by the ability of the state to suppress violent organizations.

From a human security perspective, the convergence of terrorism and electoral violence places civilians at risk of a range of threats and vulnerabilities. From a Political Economy perspective, the same institutional weaknesses that facilitate banditry also provide opportunities for political violence. Citizens affected by terrorism may suffer displacement, economic insecurity, political intimidation, limited mobility and reduced access to public institutions all at once. Convergent insecurity matters partly because of its cumulative effects on civilian welfare. Security threats that are analytically distinguishable at the institutional level may be indistinguishable in their effects on affected populations. Therefore, the security governance of Nigeria needs to be assessed in terms of state and human security outcomes. A security response that removes one violent actor but creates distrust, civilian insecurity, or institutional illegitimacy may lead to short-term operational gains but erode long-term security governance. This finding emphasizes the significance of the human rights and civilian protection issues brought up by Nkata and Okpanocha (2025a).

A Different Analytical Process: Insecurity Convergence

One of the study's key contributions is that insecurity convergence should be understood as more than the simultaneous co-existence of multiple security threats. The notion refers to the process through which different forms of insecurity interact by virtue of their sharing enabling conditions, institutional vulnerabilities, actors, resources or political environments.

By examining convergence through the interaction of money, land, and mind as well as competing conceptions of sovereignty, Amuchie (2026) offers a crucial conceptual foundation. Likewise, Lam et al. (2023) demonstrate how insecurity can build up in a social system and subsequently affect power relations and group outcomes, but within the context of organizational behavior. Their work reveals that convergence is a relational process, one in which the concerns of diverse individuals converge to have wider systemic significance.

This means that insecurity in Nigeria such as terrorism, banditry, communal violence and political coercion should not be taken for granted as autonomous security categories. They may have different immediate causes and perpetrators, but they live in the same institutional environment. This difference is the heart of the conceptual contribution of the study.

From fragmented security responses to failures in governance

Nigeria's problem is not the just the multidimensional security challenges, but rather the disjointed approach of its institutional responses to them. Alumona et al. (2019) emphasized internal security management while Okenyodo (2016) concentrated on governance and accountability. These notions collectively suggest that security success is contingent on the ability of institutions to coordinate operations across multiple security areas.

Reactions are still fragmented so that the state may deal with specific manifestations without dealing with their shared structural conditions. For example, counterterrorism can target criminal networks engaged in anti-banditry operations, electoral security polling stations, and militant groups. However, threat-specific interventions might only have short-term results if all three function in a context with weak institutions, low accountability, and low execution.

Implications of Convergence of Insecurity Policies

First, institutional reform should be put at the center of the national security strategy. The studies of Yagboyaju and Akinola (2019), Okenyodo (2016), and Alumona et al. (2019) all suggest that governance and security capacity are inseparable. Security must therefore be enhanced through strengthening accountability, coordination and institutional effectiveness. Second, counterterrorism policy should be woven into the larger fabric of security governance. Roberts et al. (2025a) and Roberts and Okpanocha (2025) emphasize the need to think of counterterrorism as a policy process rather than just a military action. The findings of this research extend that argument by arguing that counterterrorism should be linked to policies on political violence, institutional weakness and community insecurity. Third, electoral security needs to be incorporated within the broader national security architecture. As collectively demonstrated by Ezeibe (2015), Olowojolu et al. (2019) and Roberts et al. (2025b), the implications of electoral violence for political stability and democratic participation are profound. To treat election security as a separate electoral-management responsibility is to neglect its connection to larger patterns of insecurity. Finally, the security policy must include human security consideration. Nkata and Okpanocha (2025a) show that civilian protection and human rights are integral to sustainable counterterrorism. The results of the current study suggest that policies that disregard civilian perceptions and experiences may inadvertently contribute to the legitimacy deficit that fuels insecurity.

Conclusion

Nigeria is currently confronted with an insecurity crisis characterized by the convergence of multiple forms of insecurity rather than isolated incidents of terrorism, banditry, kidnapping, communal violence, electoral violence and political coercion. This study argues that these threats become mutually reinforcing in an institutional environment characterized by fragility, weak accountability, fragmented security mandates and persistent policy implementation deficits. The challenge of security in Nigeria should therefore not be seen as a problem of violent non-state actors but as a crisis of security governance.

We show in this study that institutional fragility is a key enabling condition for insecurity convergence. Limited institutional capacity reduces the capacity of the state to anticipate, coordinate and respond effectively to a diversity of security threats. Policy failures also sustain insecurity by failing to address governance deficits, socioeconomic vulnerabilities and political grievances. Thus, interventions addressing a particular security threat may only bring about temporary

improvements as long as the underlying institutional conditions enabling other forms of insecurity are not addressed.

The study further proves that electoral violence must be understood within the larger security ecosystem and not as an episodic event confined to the election times. Political intimidation, violence and attacks on electoral institutions weaken democratic legitimacy, reduce citizen participation and undermine confidence in state institutions. On the flip side, existing insecurity can constrain electoral participation and undermine the state's ability to provide credible and peaceful elections. Electoral insecurity is therefore an important feedback mechanism through which wider patterns of insecurity are reproduced.

From a human security perspective, converging insecurities create cumulative vulnerabilities for citizens. Violence-affected people and communities may suffer a combination of displacement, economic insecurity, limited mobility, political intimidation, and reduced access to public institutions. The evaluation of security governance, therefore, suggests that the capacity of the state to repress violent actors is inadequate. Security should also be measured by civilian protection, respect for human rights, democratic inclusion, and restoring institutional legitimacy.

The main theoretical contribution of this study is the conceptualization of 'insecurity convergence' as an analytical lens for understanding the crisis of security governance in Nigeria. Insecurity convergence explains the interaction of different types of insecurity through common institutional vulnerabilities, political incentives, resources, actors or socioeconomic conditions which result in cumulative and mutually reinforcing security outcomes. The analytical lens of this framework is not directed at the question of why individual security threats emerge, but rather how and why various forms of insecurity become linked and entrenched in a single governance system.

We argue that Nigeria requires a fundamental shift from fragmented, reactive and threat-specific security responses to integrated, preventive and human-centered security governance. Inter-related elements of national security strategy should be identified as institutional resilience, policy coherence, accountability, effective inter-agency coordination, democratic protection and civilian security. Without such systemic transformation, individual manifestations of insecurity will remain incomplete efforts to suppress the conditions of governance that enable the convergence and will continue to reproduce insecurity.

Recommendations

Create an Integrated Framework for National Security Governance and Coordination.

The Federal Government should strengthen coordination between the military, police, intelligence services, electoral institutions, emergency management authorities and relevant subnational entities through an integrated security governance framework. Such a framework should allow for joint threat assessment, intelligence sharing, coordinated planning and setting of common strategic priorities. Special emphasis should be placed on identifying the linkages between terrorism, banditry, communal violence, electoral insecurity and criminality, instead of dealing with each threat through separate institutional responses.

Implement wide-ranging institutional and accountability reforms.

Reform of the security sector should go beyond operational capacity to include institutional accountability, transparency, professionalisation, and civilian oversight. Establish clear institutional mandates, strong

mechanisms to investigate misconduct and credible sanctions for violations. To regain public confidence and prevent the legitimacy deficits identified in this study from perpetuating insecurity, accountability needs to be improved.

Future research should test the insecurity convergence framework empirically in other fragile states and explore the specific pathways through which convergence occurs at the local level.

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