The State, Non-State Actors, and Populations: Security Responses to Insurgent Attacks in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Jemima Ackah-Arthur

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Declaration

I certify that the thesis I have presented for examination for the MPhil/PhD degree of the London School of Economics and Political Science is solely my own work other than where I have clearly indicated that it is the work of others (in which case the extent of any work carried out jointly by me and any other person is clearly identified in it).

I declare that my thesis consists of 64,791 words.

Abstract

This thesis focuses on the variation in militarised responses to insurgent activity. I explore sub-national variation in security sector responses to Boko Haram attacks in north-eastern Nigeria between the period 2010 - 2016. I build upon theories of state-society relations, governance in areas of limited statehood, and insurgent rule to advance a theory of security sector interventions. I argue that social relationships, particularly in weak or conflict affected contexts, or within complex security constellations, facilitate information sharing with the government in ways that determine security sector responses to violence. Using expert interviews and a mapping of attacks in the three most affected north-eastern states, namely, Borno, Yobe and Adamawa, I posit that two sets of relationships: namely, those between vigilante groups and state governors, and those between insurgent groups and local communities – impact military responsiveness through the government's ability to generate information about violence unfolding within state borders. I demonstrate how the social embeddedness of insurgent groups within communities – and its repercussions for information-generation by the government – shape the trajectory of responses. I further elaborate how collaborative relationships between state governors and vigilante groups similarly determine the government's ability to generate sufficient information about insurgent activity. These information-generating mechanisms determine whether militaries are deployed in response to insurgent attacks. I contribute to a burgeoning body of literature on state-society relations in conflict and the social foundations of war to provide evidence of the societal underpinnings of the state, even in its deployment of military capacity, its responses to insurgency, and its perpetration of violence.

Dedication

For Peter Seli Ackah-Arthur.

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List of Abbreviations

APC	All Progressives Congress
ANPP	All Nigeria People's Party
CJTF	Civilian Joint Task Force
JTF	Joint Task Force
LGA	Local Government Area
MNJTF	Multi-National Joint Task Force
PDP	People's Democratic Party
PGMs	Pro-Government Militias
ACLED	Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project
MEND	Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta
TRADOC	Training and Doctrine Command

Chapter 1 - Government Security Responses

Introduction

On May 21, 2014, in the border town of Gamboru, Borno State, Nigeria, suspected Boko Haram insurgents launched attack on Chukungduoa village, stole foodstuff, set homes on fire, shot sporadically at residents, and ran over them with their vehicles. Police failed to confirm the attack which left only three dwellings undamaged in the area and led to 29 deaths as well as several injuries (Kwaru 2014). No state security forces responded. With no protection from the insurgents, some residents fled to nearby Cameroon to find refuge and gain medical attention as they called for help from the government.

A few days later, on May 25, 2014, in neighboring Adamawa State, Boko Haram insurgents launched two separate attacks in Madagali local government area including the village of Gubla. The insurgents shot sporadically at people in a church and nearby buildings, killing 21 people (Idris et al. 2014). The military arrived in force to fight against several Boko Haram insurgents in Gubla. They recovered their weapons, killed one insurgent, and arrested two others. The remaining insurgents ran into the bush as the military worked to secure the area.

Why did the security response to the attack in Adamawa differ so profoundly from the security response to the attack in Borno? The government displayed its military might to the local inhabitants that faced the attacks in Adamawa but did not make the same show of protection for the local inhabitants in Borno, even though the attacks were of a similar nature in each state.

This discrepancy in government responses to insurgent activity in Nigeria is one among many. The above two examples are in fact illustrative of a broader trend. Government security responses are ad hoc and inconsistent; they vary spatially and temporally within and across areas facing violence. Indeed, as with the examples above, the scale or gravity of terror incidents, or the numbers of civilian casualties, cannot easily explain the government's responsiveness to insurgent activities. Instead, government action toward

its security sector responsiveness remains unpredictable and episodic, provoking the question: when and under what conditions do governments deploy their security apparatus to mobilize against insurgency?

Elsewhere, other sub-Saharan African governments facing violence have, like Nigeria, exhibited similarly unpredictable variation in their responses to insurgent or "terrorist" activity. In Kenya, for example, attacks in the northeast in areas such as Mandera, have often provoked the slow deployment of state security responses as compared to, say, attacks along the coast or within or close to the capital. In Burkina Faso, ex-president Kabore at times called for dialogue with insurgent groups operating across the country, while at other times approved government funding for local vigilantes to work with the military to combat widespread insurgent violence within affected areas (Reuters 2020). It is evident from any brief survey of security sector responses to insurgent activity, that governments adopt varying approaches to addressing violence within their borders and employ divergent strategies even when threats are seemingly comparable.

These instances of government action and inaction drives the focus of this dissertation. I explore subnational variation in government security responses to insurgent activity, using the case of Boko Haram in Nigeria as a lens through which to study this question. How should we understand divergent government responses to the violence perpetrated by insurgent organizations? Why do African governments respond with purpose to some attacks, leaving others ignored, and what can divergent government responses tell us about the broader landscape of security policy in sub-Saharan Africa?

Through my analysis of military responsiveness to insurgent activity in three Boko Haram affected states in Northeastern Nigeria, I argue that, in contexts where the state lacks a monopoly on violence, the social embeddedness of the state vis-à-vis insurgent groups shapes the nature and character of a government's security response. Importantly, I emphasize the central role that social relationships between a) government actors and vigilante groups; and b) insurgent actors and local communities; play in dictating

military responses to insurgent activities. I highlight the mechanism of information-sharing within these relationships, which I find to be a necessary condition for security sector responsiveness.

More specifically, my research reveals that these social relationships manifest in two core formulations. First, I demonstrate that where government actors (military personnel or, more commonly, state governors) have ties to vigilante groups within a particular area, these interpersonal relationships facilitate the types of information sharing about the local terrain – and the attack itself – that make militarized responses both more possible and more likely. Local vigilante groups with ties to state actors can ensure that state governors and the military personnel under their command have access to the necessary information both about attacks as they unfold and in their immediate aftermath, permitting knowledge as a precondition of responsiveness. Even more importantly, however, these relationships offer channels of information transmission about the feasibility – and specificities – of accessing a particular area, without which, the military's encroachment into a site of violence would be untenable and unwise. Therefore, where relationships between local vigilantes or hunters' associations and government actors are close, the state security sector is positioned very differently to respond to attacks than where these relationships are severed, inexistant, or more distant. Moreover, communities are more likely to benefit from government intervention when such cooperation is present.

Secondly, I show that where insurgent groups have stronger social ties with local communities, then the government's access to information about an area or site under attack is similarly more limited. Where insurgents have embedded themselves socially within a community using force or not, this has often required the severing of existing ties between state actors and community inhabitants. The effects in such communities are similar: state actors are unable to access necessary information about an attack, or about the feasibility of access, to respond. As such, where cooperation between state actors and vigilantes is absent, *and* where insurgents are deeply embedded or share interpersonal ties with the population, the government will be unresponsive to insurgent activity. On the other hand, where state actors and local vigilantes collaborate, and where insurgents maintain weak interpersonal links with the individuals and

communities they are embedded within, the corresponding social fabric facilitates information-sharing that permits military responses. These particular social relationships lead to robust, prompt, and interventionist[1] government responses in the aftermath of an attack. In making this argument, this dissertation contributes to a rich body of literature on the social fabric of conflict and insurgency (Krause 2018; 2020).

While this dissertation seeks to explain security sector responses to insurgent activity, it is also, however, of utmost importance to acknowledge the adverse effects of militarized security responses for communities facing violence. The central goal of this dissertation is to better understand and explain variation; it does not assume that more interventionist security responses necessarily bring security to local populations. Indeed, prompt, and robust security responses from the government, including the deployment of police or military personnel, can engender exacerbated harms and possibilities of violence, since governments sometimes inflict retribution, punishment, and violence towards civilians, rather than the insurgents responsible for attacks. As insurgents often live amidst civilians, militarized security crackdowns result in a variety of adverse outcomes including torture, extrajudicial killings and mass arrests (Human Rights Watch 2014; Amnesty International 2014; Atta-Asamoah 2015) that are often as detrimental to local populations as the attacks to which the government responds. In Kenya's capital, after Al-Shabab insurgents carried out some bombings in the cities of Nairobi and Mombasa, the deployment of over 5000 state police personnel led to mass arrests and the detention of more than 2000 residents of Eastleigh (Atta-Asamoah 2015). The security agents who were deployed to dislodge hidden insurgent networks instead arbitrarily scrutinized inhabitants. Importantly, many civilians critique heavy-handed government tactics to control insurgency because despite the military rhetoric of 'liberation,' militarized security responses typically foment fear and uncertainty. This dissertation, therefore, seeks to explore the underlying dynamics driving disparate responses, and the state-society relationships that underpin them.

[1] I use both terms interchangeably.

Security and Insecurity in Sub-Saharan Africa

In this dissertation, I investigate the conditions under which governments deploy security responses against non-state actors within volatile security environments. I focus on government action in countries which are not neatly characterized by Westphalian models of statehood, and which are seen to lack regulatory and military capacity to manage violence. Such fragile security environments are often recipients of aid directed towards bolstering state capacity and restoring the state's monopoly on violence from powerful western states. I explore the phenomenon of what I term robust or interventionist security responses versus weak or absent government security responses to understand government behaviour toward security provision. I explore the nature of government responses in such states with a view to understanding the conditions under which governments are most responsive toward a crisis, the scale of response that the government is most likely to employ, and the effects of militarized responses on enhancing security and curbing violence. I further examine *which* populations may seek and receive security responses from governments during crisis, and to whom the government is most responsive.

Particularly, I investigate government action among neo-patrimonial states in sub-Saharan Africa where states often have little distinction between government and society (Chabal and Daloz 1999). I argue that social relationships between communities and government actors dictates when governments are most likely to deploy rapid security sector interventions in response to insurgent activities. These dynamics are particularly visible in volatile security environments where the state exhibits weakness in exercising authority within its own borders. Within such contexts, governance is often a product of social relations that thrive on personal connections, loyalties, and allegiances. Individuals obtain favour with government actors depending on several factors including shared ethnicity, religious affiliations, and partisanship, and not necessarily through meritorious efforts. These various relationships between the citizens and state actors determine the distribution of state resources. It is, therefore, common for governments with weaker capacity to divert greater resources towards areas and populations with whom they have certain ethnic, religious, political, and social affiliations to maintain favour (Kramon and Posner 2016; Ejdemyr, Kramon, and

Robinson 2018; Soumahoro 2015; De Luca et al. 2018; Green 2010) particularly during electoral periods. The state may neglect its overarching responsibilities but may suddenly undertake activities to enhance living conditions and livelihoods of certain constituencies particularly during election periods, to attract more votes from certain areas or demographics. For instance, the government may pay more attention to developmental projects, or provide fuel subsidies or reduced taxes for farmers to attract votes from people from certain occupations. Even where the ruling party fails to acquire sufficient electoral support, governments might allocate resources to rival areas to attract support and gain higher votes (Chirisa, Bandauko, and Mutsindikwa 2015; Fumey and Egwaikhide 2019). The fact that responsiveness towards citizens is relayed on a transactional basis suggests that governments show concern only when citizens and supporters might act on their behalf, particularly through electoral ballot.

All governments, but particularly weak capacity governments, are, therefore, selective in the performance of their duties towards its citizens, often prioritizing the needs of those citizens whose support can help maintain their power. Thus, in the provision of resources, governments may be attentive to the few citizens who support them, neglecting those citizens who are at the periphery of government affairs or who have nothing to offer in return. Some of these inhabitants live in remote locations, or in areas with limited government presence. State actors are, therefore, often perceived to lack commitment to inclusive state development, while exhibiting deep commitments to their core supporters (Arriola 2009; Green 2010; Isbell 2017).

This character of the state permeates across various aspects of citizen's livelihoods. Across a diverse array of political contexts, local populations have frequently assumed responsibility for their own governance and public goods provision (Ero 2000; Anderson 2002a; Lund 2006; Nunzio 2014; Hoffmann and Verweijen 2018; Hoffmann, Vlassenroot, and Büscher 2018). Such activities range from pooling common resources for clean water, childcare and education, alongside a range of other services (Risse 2011; Krasner and Risse 2014). In the arena of security provision, citizens have often been responsible for their own security, either by forming or supporting non-state security groups such as vigilantes or self defense

militias to watch over their communities (Hoffmann and Verweijen 2018). This often results in the competition for authority between the government and non-state actors who exercise control within such contexts (Lund 2006). These actors may build influence within the communities based on factors such as their political or religious ideas and ideological beliefs (Gutiérrez-Sanín and Wood 2014). Hence, the government tends to discriminate among the population by serving those within the network of state actors to maintain its power.

Working within a state-in-society tradition (Migdal 1988; 2001), I explore how the dynamic relationships between local inhabitants and the state in sub-Saharan Africa impacts security provision during crisis. I examine how the relationships between governments and communities can shape responses to insurgent activities across and within the state. I investigate the responsiveness of government toward its people during periods of heightened violence with a focus on communication between national and subnational leaders, the state security agents who physically assure security, and the local inhabitants who may practice de facto self-governance and are the primary targets and victims of insurgent attacks. I extend this focus to the relationships between insurgents and local inhabitants since the former also provide governance in some contexts. Further, since rivalries between various insurgent groups as well as factions within them persist, and because the boundaries between insurgent and civilian are often blurred, insurgents and their supporters frequently derive from the communities in which violence erupts.

My argument derives from this complex governance constellation, wherein subnational leaders often end up supporting vigilantes with material provisions in the areas in which they are based. These may include vehicles in exchange for information about the local areas and insurgent activities that will enable them to monitor violence and facilitate partnerships with the military to enhance security responses. Government and security sector actors might also establish and maintain personal links and relationships within local communities, which will also serve to enhance the presence of the government and affirm its disparate and fragmented control. When attacks occur, residents in affected areas can alert vigilantes or

other security sector contacts, who may deploy directly to counter insurgents, or transmit information to the military hierarchy for personnel to release the necessary resources and equipment to fight insurgents.

Conversely, responses are often absent and inconsistent, where local non-state security groups have no social connections to sub-national leaders and the military, as well as in contexts where insurgents have *socially* (as opposed to only physically) embedded within communities. These configurations lead to diminished local resources, access, and information available to the government. In such circumstances, where local non-state security groups lack ties to government, or where insurgents are deeply socially embedded, information sharing with the government during or prior to insurgent attacks is inhibited, either because vigilante groups have weak, non-existent, or severed ties with state actors, or because insurgent organizations are so deeply embedded that government information sharing becomes impossible. Populations facing violence either lack connections to the government altogether, or refrain from reporting incidents to contacts within the security sector or other state actors whom they know personally, to avoid potential recriminations from the insurgents. The result is that attacks perpetrated under such conditions may not attract government attention or responsiveness.

In short, where the government is embedded within a community either directly through sustained social and interpersonal relationships with the population, or through connections with vigilante groups, then the security sector exhibits greater capacity to respond to adverse events. However, where these relations are fractured or non-existent, or where they have been severed because of insurgents deeply embedded in the community, then the government has restricted access to information and is unable to intervene or respond.

The Security Sector in Historical Perspective

In pre-colonial Africa, more informal relationships existed between warriors and the state, as the state often rewarded military service (Houngnikpo 2016). However, during colonialism, the nature of recruitment, government interest, and decision-making gradually undermined the relations between the

state and the state security agents, and further destroyed the relationships between these security agents and the populations. Personnel were made liable to their superiors and not to legal institutions and, therefore, developed various patrimonial commitments. In many countries, military personnel were rotated to work at different and unfamiliar locations to minimize societal influences. Such tactics provoked fear towards them among local populations, especially among those populations from which military personnel were recruited because military forces were so frequently employed to assert colonial authority (Ngoma 2006). These patterns resulted in relations of fear and mistrust which have endured into the post-independence era, when the army in many sub-Saharan African countries became a tool of suppression against local resistance (Welch 1986), or as a tool of political consolidation by new leaders who wanted to assert control or dominance.[2]

In most countries, the police comprise one of the primary institutions tasked to preserve the state's ability to use force within its borders and protect itself from internal aggressors. The police constitute one of the most visible manifestation of the state's monopoly on violence (see, e.g. Hinton and Newburn 2009; Takabvirwa 2018). They depict the authority of government within national borders and serve as instruments to build the coercive capacity of the state to control its populations. Through their actions, which are often discretionary and coercive, the state disseminates its power and authority (Khalili and Schwedler 2010). As such, their operations serve to shape relations between government and the people (Eck, Conrad, and Crabtree 2021). Particularly within weaker states, police can utilize their influence and status in society to gain certain privileges from the population such as extortion and bribes (Andvig and Fjeldstad 2008). In addition to shaping state capacity, police predation and violence can simultaneously undermine the political and socio-economic development of the state and lead to violence and abuse toward populations. In conflict environments, the predatory actions of state security agents are even more prevalent

[2] The African state compared to states in Europe was established through ''negotiation'' with colonial officials and without major violence or civil confrontations with the colonial powers (Welch 1967). Thus, new leaders needed to consolidate power over various groups and societies. The control of the military and their devotion provided some sort of legitimate and formal support to rulers after independence.

(see, e.g. Lake 2022). Thus, the institution of the police can serve to both strengthen, as well as undermine the people's trust and confidence in the government.

While police are typically focused on maintaining internal security, the military's mandate is to protect the state from external aggressors. Most governments, especially in democratic systems prescribe policy for the military's organization, define the scope of military activities, and supervise officers under the executive branch of the state (Kohn 1997). They typically take decisions including troop numbers, recruitment, and acquisition of arms, and when to start and terminate wars, while the chief executive controls the military organization to ensure their subordination to civilian rulers. Governments in most non-democratic systems often supervise the military based on the type of leadership in power. For instance, single rulers may disintegrate the military forces into several major forces and paramilitary components, and these forces may be accountable to the autocrat (Escribà-Folch, Böhmelt, and Pilster 2019) while officers under military leadership (see, e.g. Brooks 2006) will be accountable to military structures and organization.

The military is intended to operate independent of societal beliefs and attitudes to administer their functions. Nonetheless, civil-military tensions arise from the performance of the responsibilities of the state including the provision of services and goods to different populations (Huntington 1981). Especially within developing countries, military forces may perform other roles including protecting a regime, building the state and promoting economic growth (Croissant 2018). For example, the military may provide protection to government through performing actions that repress dissonance within state territory and inhibit political competition (Houngnikpo 2016). During conflicts when states are unable to perform their usual functions, the military can take actions including offering protection, food, and livelihood to populations, in order to build legitimacy or fill gaps in state capacity (e.g. Murphy 2003)). Military personnel are rarely involved in addressing domestic terror threats unless in the context of active conflict. The government may involve the military when police personnel cannot control recurrent terror incidents or other violent incursions within a state's borders (Sen 1991, 58). In such contexts, the military may offer support with regular duties

including patrol and response. Governments might restrict military involvement to the use of minimal coercion or assistance to state police to maintain law and order. This serves to preserve the appearance of compliance with civil rights, and control "ill-defined" military authority that can potentially undermine such rights.

Despite tensions between counterterror measures and civil rights, some governments may completely militarize responses when a state experiences regular terror attacks (Wilkinson 2006). Thus, governments may justify militarized responses due to the degree of harm that terror groups cause, and due to the existential threat posed by the nature of terrorism (Cohan 2002, 107). This means that, on occasion, the military and associated units such as counterterrorism agencies (Byman 2011), take charge of internal security. They employ equipment and arms to combat insurgents; enforce stringent rules such as curfews; identify suspects and conduct investigations that can lead to arrest and punishment.

When terror attacks happen in contexts where special measures are introduced, military units should theoretically coordinate with other state security agencies. The infantry or ground troops who are trained to confront combatants typically deploy to affected areas while other agencies or surveillance teams share information with troops on the ground. This enables the military to prepare and plan their responses so that they are proportionate and complementary to existing capacities. In reality, this cooperation often fails, because security agents have divergent institutional practices and understanding about combat, support, and control of operations (Winton 1996). Military personnel frequently plan operations using traditional strategies of combat that give them full autonomy and control over resources and operations (Rosen 1991).

It is important to note, therefore, that although the military can shore up state power, it can also significantly undermine and disrupt state functions. Mistrust can easily develop between military personnel and other branches of government, and between the military and civilian populations affected by violence. In short, governments in conflict or violence-affected states face a dilemma in regulating the military

especially when their security agents have poorly outlined roles. This coordination failure can profoundly shape responses to insurgency.

The involvement of the military in domestic conflict often leads to repercussions for civilians, particularly when military personnel are responsible for committing violence against the population, incidentally or in pursuit of their military objectives (Azam and Hoeffler 2002; Musambachime 1993; Schwartz and Straus 2018; Neill 2013). Practices of pillage, sexual violence, or looting by poorly professionalized troops, or the widespread detention or abuse of civilian "targets" deemed to be associated with the insurgency often engenders fear on the part of civilians, further undermining trust in the state and, in some circumstances, feeding back into support for insurgent organizations who offer alternative avenues of representation.

Existing Explanations

In my examination of the nature, frequency, and scale of insurgent attacks in Nigeria, I show that the scale and magnitude of insurgent activities, as well as explanations including state capacity, international pressure, domestic policy-making processes, or the individual psychology and emotions of leaders can only go so far in fully explaining government responses. Instead, I show that varying relationships between local populations, insurgent groups, and security agents are stronger predictors of military responses.

Some scholars expect that variation in government responsiveness can be understood as a function of the nature of the threat posed. With limited knowledge available to state actors about the monetary assets, possessions, membership, and local support base of insurgent organizations (Overgaard 1994, 453), the government might base responses on the resultant fatalities from attacks as well as the sum and size of incidents (Omelicheva 2007, 375). The state's administrative, regulatory and military capabilities can also affect its propensity to respond robustly to terror activity within national borders (e.g.: Blankenship 2018). These capabilities include gathering and handling information about insurgents as well as projecting

traditional military strength (Hendrix and Young 2014a). Where the state can monitor terror groups, the government often employs suppression, as this permits the adoption of pre-emptive rather than reactive counterterrorism strategies (Blankenship 2018). Where it can identify the groups and target their members, the government may further employ more violent responses (Carter 2016, 162–63) as the groups carefully make choices when launching attacks with the aim to protect themselves and attract less consequential state action. While the degree of state capabilities influences government's engagement in brutality, control or resource redistribution (Hendrix 2010), a state's physical competencies in the form of financial resources and numbers of state security personnel also affect policy options available to government (Omelicheva 2007) to fight insurgents. A state lacking these competencies may be highly exposed to terror incidents from internal and external terror groups and cannot prevent insurgency because of its ineffective oversight of populations or inability to identify hidden terror networks.

Nevertheless, the Nigerian government's action against insurgent attacks in Adamawa and Borno presents a challenge to perspectives that suggest the character of terror attacks and magnitude of violent activities may determine government responses. The examples above illustrate that the scope and magnitude of the attacks, which were similar across the two attacks, could not predict how the government chose to respond. The government ignored the violence recorded in Borno and responded with force to the violence in Adamawa. Indeed, the several deaths recorded in Borno failed to elicit state action, but the comparatively fewer deaths recorded in Adamawa attracted a militarized government response. Moreover, the expectation that state capacity and availability of resources is the sole determinant of episodic accountability is misleading. Indeed, in Nigeria, military and fiscal capacity rarely correlates with state responses. The within case variations bring this disjuncture into greater relief. With one of the strongest militaries in Africa, Nigeria has vacillated between a robust and heavy-handed response to some attacks, and flagrant disregard for others.[3] Even with the establishment of citizen vigilante groups and joint

[3] Some Nigerian state officials including lawmakers in the north admit that it is possible to handle Boko Haram if government shows seriousness by "putting more resources and more commitment" (Igwe 2020) towards addressing

operations with foreign militaries to enhance control over the insurgency in areas seemingly out of state reach, it is certainly not the case that the Nigerian government responds[4] whenever Boko Haram launches attacks in the northeast.

Other scholars have highlighted the importance of international pressure[5] in shaping state responses to political violence (Krain 2012; Hendrix and Wong 2013; Murdie and Peksen 2014). For example, Krain (2012) notes that changes in policymaking may result from instrumental actions of international groups of advocates including reporting and condemning activities linked to wrongdoers in periods of political violence. This literature would anticipate that the more international attention an incident receives, the more robust the government may be to respond. This will be particularly true for aid-dependent states with close ties to external donors and governments. In such aid-dependent states, international pressure from foreign governments may further dictate state action. These states often have significant colonial ties to governments mainly in Europe and receive their support. They are normally perceived to have limited capability to control terror activity and thus receive other foreign assistance to maintain security. Due to perceptions of state weakness, powerful western countries and their affiliates typically provide assistance to terror-affected state through actions such as enhancing the professional competences of security agents, as well as government actors (eg;, Ingels 2011). To illustrate, in 2011, Britain gave assistance to Libya towards strengthening state institutions during the conflict to enable this state to confront escalating violence while United States trained and empowered security personnel in Mali in 2012 to boost the physical and material capacity of security agents.

insecurity. The Senate Committee Chairman of the Army, for example, has blamed the government to be "playing the ostrich" toward addressing Boko Haram. Boko Haram appears not to threaten the state hence important measures such as recruitment of new police and army personnel are low though infrastructure such as training camps already exist.

[4]Deployment of police and military originates from the state capital, Abuja, and the president wields sole power to give orders for military deployment into various areas (quoted in Lewis 2010).

[5] International pressure here suggests actions from individuals, advocacy groups, local organizations and state officials that have impact beyond state boundaries and spread to more than one state. They may include speeches, reports, street protests and press statements in direct response to a violent incident in an area.

However, international attention also cannot explain patterns of government responses in Nigeria's response to the Boko Haram crisis. The infamous 'Bring Back our Girls' campaign launched in 2014 in response to the kidnapping of over 270 schoolgirls from Borno state was met with ambivalence from the government. Despite various local protests inside the country and beyond, as well as attention and support from abroad (Collins 2014), there was no immediate government action to find the abducted schoolgirls, causing many observers to doubt the government's commitment to addressing the security crisis in the northeast. The Nigerian government only after several years worked to return and normalize living for at least 100 schoolgirls through negotiations with Boko Haram (Searcey and Ferguson 2018). Some of the schoolgirls remain missing while others have fled on their own from Boko Haram, suggesting that factors beyond international attention dictate government responses. More broadly, international pressure from foreign governments is a weak predictor of security policy in conflict-affected aid-dependent states. Western countries frequently cooperate to further their own national security interests and address their own regional political agendas (S. Metz 2004; Rees 2007; Kaunert 2009; Ploch 2010). In the absence of direct influence on affected governments to act to reduce terror activities, donor countries may impose various political and economic sanctions to coerce those countries facing violence to comply with western standards.

Much of the literature on government responses to terrorism has been directed towards western states. In countries such as Britain, Germany, United States and France, the organizational characteristics of government and the allocation of functions between several governmental divisions and ranks, impacts policies against terrorism (Hellmuth 2016). These policies are produced from the consequences of the procedure that involves decision-making on "reforms." The extent of cohesion among governmental agencies influence organizational decisions and actions while government agents in some western countries may also rely upon their sentiments and feelings in coordinating bureaucratic responses (McConaghy 2017). The government behaviours that develop from coordination, competition, preferences, and individualized choices, as well as irrational decision-making within organizations of state bureaucracy, may

further influence policy outcomes. Therefore, it is plausible that some state responses may vary due to individual choices that some state actors make especially state security officials.

Nigeria

The Boko Haram crisis in Northeastern Nigeria underpins my investigation of the causes, consequences, and character of government security responses to insurgent activity. Nigeria is among the most influential countries on the continent with the largest sub-Saharan economy (Central Intelligence Agency, n.d.), a far-reaching territory, and a large population. Historical divisions and regional hostilities in the country have persisted since the colonial era when the British governed the North and South separately. European administrators engaged in direct rule in many southern areas, justified using the language of disjointed populations and no formal authority, while native administrations exercised control in the north where pre-existing political networks permitted the outsourcing of governance (Nugent 2012).

Boko Haram, an insurgent group, emerged in the north of the country with the aim to establish an Islamic state and exercise government authority using sharia law. The Nigerian government has been unsuccessful in defeating this group, despite its strong military capabilities.

I present evidence in this dissertation drawn from the period 2010 to 2016. This period provides a useful entry point for answering questions about variation in security sector responses to insurgent activity because in 2010, a new president from the south had replaced the national ruler from the north who died in office the previous year. In the same period, Boko Haram resurfaced with a different leader and began to launch more severe attacks. In 2015, federal elections led to a change in political power, and gubernatorial elections further resulted in the control of the three states under the new government. In 2016, Boko Haram split into two factions. Thus, this period allows a review of government responses over time at periods when Boko Haram increased violent activities, and when a turnover of political power in the country offered a critical juncture in Nigerian politics.

I analyse insurgent attacks that occurred within and across the three northeastern states in Nigeria that have experienced the most severe violence from the activities of Boko Haram namely, Borno, Adamawa and Yobe. I draw on an analysis of within-country variation in responses within and across these states, for which I mapped attacks for which data was available, and traced government responses to each. I supplemented this analysis with semi-structured interviews conducted remotely and in person with 62 experts to understand and elucidate the pattern of responses. These experts comprised academics, security experts, military personnel, police, vigilantes, law enforcement officers, civil society organization employees, non-governmental organization workers, religious and traditional leaders, women's group leaders, journalists, and humanitarian workers. My research and fieldwork took place between July 2020 and January 2023.

A Theory of Government Security Responses

Within several contexts, and especially in conflict-affected regions, nonstate actors play important governance roles and command power and legitimacy where they operate (Lund 2006). These non-state actors include vigilantes, pro-government militias (Carey and Mitchell 2017), rebel groups (Arjona 2016) and warlords (Marten 2013). They perform a wide array of governance functions, including supplying food and healthcare in areas of limited government presence (Arjona, Kasfir, and Mampilly 2015; Huang and Sullivan 2021). Such actors may use their positions of influence to enforce their own authority, thus further diminishing government control (Branch 2009; Hughes and Tripodi 2009). In some contexts, their activities may hinder the ability of the state to control violence as they wield arms in pursuit of their own objectives, to support or oppose the maintenance of order and security (Meagher 2012; Anderson 2002a). Elsewhere, though, they might substitute or complement the state (Risse 2011). Alignment and cooperation between state and nonstate actors can, therefore, be crucial where the state is otherwise weak (Otto, Scharpf, and Gohdes 2020; Staniland 2012b; Day and Reno 2014; Seymour 2014).

I argue that the society in which non-state actors and state actors are embedded, as well as the relations between state actors and local populations, shapes government responses. I make this argument by connecting three important literatures: first, the literature on state-society relations; second, the literature on governance in areas of limited statehood; and third, the literature on insurgent rule.

I construct a theory of robust government responses drawing on my research in three sites in northeastern Nigeria. In doing so, I center an analysis of two sets of dynamic relationships. I first emphasize the connections between state actors and vigilante groups embedded within local communities (Chapter Five). I then highlight the connections between local populations and insurgent groups (Chapter Six).

In the first set of relationships, I scrutinize the connections between vigilante groups and two sets of state actors: state governors and military personnel. I demonstrate that where non-state actors – particularly vigilante groups – have affiliations with subnational leaders, namely state governors, government responses to insurgent activity are robust and more prompt. This is because local non-state security groups have better knowledge of the terrain, people, local conditions, and language than state actors. The nature of their relationships and ensuing collaboration with subnational leaders allows governors to monitor terror incidents and facilitates a military response through information and resource sharing. Through information and resource sharing with the military, the ties between state governors and vigilante groups create the conditions for more effective coordination. Where vigilante groups, on the other hand, are present but have no relationship with governor, or where they are absent altogether, the military is often unable to receive information or respond to insurgent attacks on the population. This often leads to inconsistent state action or absent government security responses.

The second set of relationships foreground the connections between insurgents and the people facing violence. I draw on the insurgent governance literature (eg.: Arjona 2016) to demonstrate that governments are less responsive to insurgent activities where insurgent groups have stronger interpersonal ties with the communities in question. This is because in environments where insurgent groups are more

embedded, the social connections between state actors and local communities have often necessarily already been severed, thereby shaping, and informing the government's ability to access the information and terrain that would be necessary to respond to attacks. In such settings, insurgent groups obtain support such as accommodation, fuel, clothing, or information from the population. If the population simultaneously provide support or information to the government or military, they may face recriminations from the insurgents who live amidst them. Thus, the military struggles to intervene in contexts where insurgents are socially embedded. Conversely, where insurgents have weaker social ties with the communities in which they are embedded, and thus elicit fewer loyalties from the population, state actors have more opportunities to gain access and information about attacks from their local contacts, through enduring social relationships between state actors. This provides the conditions for more robust government security responses when attacks occur.

In short, my investigation of state responses to insurgent attacks in weak states shows that information-sharing between complex sets of interdependent actors, including insurgents, local populations, and state security agents, strongly shapes the military's ability to access information about certain areas. It is this information-sharing, and the access that results, that drives government responsiveness to violence.

Organization of the Dissertation

This dissertation is organized in eight chapters. Chapter Two delves into my theory of robust government responses. I explore the literatures on state-society relations, state capacity and governance in areas of limited statehood, and insurgent organizations, to understand how state-society relations impact security provision during crisis. I build an argument centering the role of local knowledge, social relationships, and state-building from the bottom up to explain military responses.

Chapter Three presents some background on the case of Nigeria. I summarize the politics of security provision in the northeast, providing a brief overview of how the government has addressed past

crises. This serves as a background to understand government action and inaction toward violence and situates the response to the Boko Haram crisis.

Chapter Four outlines the methods I use to address the research question. I document my methodological approach by drawing on secondary data to map areas facing insurgent attacks as well as government responses, using expert interviews and in-country fieldwork to supplement this analysis.

Chapter Five introduces the relationships between state actors (specifically state governors, and the military) and non-state actors (vigilantes and hunters' associations) and demonstrates how these relationships shape government responses. I focus on the dynamic relationships between state governors in Borno, Adamawa and Yobe, vigilante groups, and the military. Specifically, I show that where subnational leaders and local non-state security groups cooperate, the government is more responsive to insurgent attacks whereas the government pays less attention to attacks where there is no such cooperation between these sets of actors. This is because, through such cooperation, the military can access information and resources concerning attacks which can facilitate a prompt response. I demonstrate, however, that a turnover in government – such as the replacement of a state governor – destroys this cooperation, often resulting in irregular security responses. This happens because new subnational leaders often have limited knowledge of the security landscape and need to form new relationships with vigilante groups to build knowledge of the areas under their authority.

Chapter Six uses theories of insurgent governance to explain the relationships between insurgents and local inhabitants. I situate these governance systems in the context of northeastern Nigeria and show how the relationships between Boko Haram members and the local inhabitants living within areas facing violence in Borno, Yobe, and Adamawa, profoundly shaped the nature of government action against insurgents. Like Chapter Five, I focus on the crucial role of information-sharing in determining military intervention in the aftermath of an attack. Shared residence in a particular community, familial ties, or similar socio-political and religious beliefs undergird relationships between insurgent actors and civilians,

facilitating information flows. Where these ties are stronger because the insurgents are deeply lodged within the communities, or because the insurgents apply force toward the people and exercise territorial control, the population is usually unwilling and unable to share information about terror attacks with state actors. This inhibits the government's ability to obtain knowledge about attacks that will enable responses. These dynamics lead to inconsistent state action, or absent government responses in these areas.

Chapter Seven documents the repercussions of security responses for local populations. I demonstrate that while the government may favour the deployment of the military to address insurgent attacks, the state's pursuit of militarized security responses can exacerbate insecurity for communities within areas facing violence. When the military victimizes local populations, civilians begin to fear the government, and provide for their own security. Thus, militarized responses have often led to diminished trust and confidence in the government and can foment the people's desire for non-state security organizations.

Chapter Eight concludes the dissertation. Within complex security environments, where governments have limited capacity or reach within their territorial borders, or where governments do not hold a monopoly on violence, social relationships hold even more resonance for security provision and other aspects of governance than they do in more stable political contexts. I demonstrate that through the creation and preservation of social ties, the government can obtain information about the local context and better plan social policy. These dynamics travel beyond the realm of security and can extend to areas such as housing and education projects. Such an understanding can prove relevant for socio-economic development as it emphasizes state-building from the grassroots, through information sharing that happens within existing social relationships.

Conclusion

While many studies have investigated the mechanisms through which governments provide security within their territorial borders, this work considers the determinants of government responsiveness

toward citizens facing insurgent attacks and uses social relationships at the community level to explain variation in these responses. I pay attention to the central role that information plays in shaping the government's willingness and capacity to act. I explore the ways in which the relations between government, subnational leaders, security agents, and non-state actors shape access to information.

I document the government's action during periods of violence, demonstrating the challenges and outcomes of local demands for security, and expectations for defence. This area of research has received little scholarly attention in African politics literature. I shed much-needed light on these trends and advance understanding of the politics of security policy across Africa.

My work, however, also pays attention to the ways in which security responses can sometimes disproportionately punish the populations that government claims to protect (Andrews Atta-Asamoah 2015b) through activities including military crackdowns within the same areas facing attacks. I suggest that in heavily securitized contexts, harsh military responses can undermine the management of violence. The responses can particularly affect vulnerable populations living in contexts where the government, and state actors including state security agents seldom offer accountability to the local people for their actions and inactions. Punitive militarized responses undermine confidence in the government and further alienate populations from the agencies and institutions governing them.

Chapter 2 – Building the Theory of Government Responses

Introduction

Government responses to violence vary and can be unpredictable within and across states. While some governments respond promptly to attacks within their territories, other insurgent activities pass without notice.

In this chapter, I investigate the conditions under which governments pay attention to some insurgent attacks while neglecting others. I situate my discussion within the context of patrimonial states, developing a theory of government security responses that shows when a state response is more likely. I consult scholarly works on state-society relations, governance in areas of limited statehood, and insurgent rule. I highlight where gaps in existing accounts persist and explain how each of these different bodies of scholarship contribute to my overarching argument by foregrounding mechanisms of information-sharing through social embeddedness. In doing so, I demonstrate how the state is made from the bottom up and remains contingent on the people and communities that comprise it (Migdal 2001).

Throughout the dissertation, I use the terms (local) populations, or the (local) people to refer to civilians – that is, individuals formally unaffiliated with armed groups or governments – living within state territory. As always, boundaries between civilians, state actors, and members of insurgent groups are often blurred in practice. Civilians may have informal ties to both government stakeholders and armed groups, and members of the latter groups are typically ordinary civilians prior to recruitment. Moreover, there are myriad functions performed for both the state and other armed actors that are demilitarized, but nonetheless signal affiliation. These comprise roles as members of the civil service, and other arms of state bureaucracy, alongside the relatives of combatants, or those performing administrative, bureaucratic, or other support roles (Parkinson 2022).

In many works, the terms militias, civil defence groups, civil defence forces or militias or vigilantes often represent groups comprising non-state actors who assume duties similar to those of the state, such as protecting local populations and areas from danger as well as information sharing and cooperation with state actors to address security challenges (Jentzsch, Kalyvas, and Schubiger 2015; Estancona et al. 2019; Aliyev 2020). Such groups often operate independently but *can* be state-established or connected with the state security forces, especially to combat insurgent groups or other government adversaries in periods of conflict.

My work focuses on vigilantes and hunters' associations whose main duties profess to be the provision of security within local communities (Schuberth 2015). I refer to these groups as local vigilantes or vigilante groups and put both together due to their relationships and associations with the government and their engagement in formal security operations. They may intermittently become officially recognized partners of state security agents in the pursuit of counterinsurgency objectives. Within many areas, local vigilantes emerge within certain cultural, political, and social contexts to protect communities, defend societal rules, and conduct to promote the welfare of the population. They remain independent organizations who rely on local voluntary contributions to be able to assure safety. Governments provide continuous support to only the few state-established vigilante groups. Both vigilantes and hunters' associations comprise populations living within areas affected by violence, as their members often begin as ordinary civilians. Unlike insurgent organizations, these groups rarely exercise control over territory, or perform other governance-related duties although they do "substitute" for the state in certain areas of security provision.

The chapter proceeds as follows. I first discuss state-society relations and then move on to examine literatures on governance in areas of limited statehood as well as insurgent rule.

The State

The Nigerian case demonstrates that extant works have failed to investigate variation in government security responses in states which do not follow the Westphalia model of statehood, states that are perceived to lack bureaucratic and military capacity to control terror activities, and those that are often recipients of aid from powerful western states. Nonetheless, the theories of state and society relations, governance in areas of limited statehood (the cooperation between state actors and non-state actors), and insurgent governance in volatile security environments can shed light on the circumstances under which governments choose to respond to some terror attacks and neglect others. Specifically, I argue that the social relationships between subnational leaders, the military and local non-state actors, and between insurgents and the population, drive the government's access to information about violence and the local areas which determines responses.

I build my theory of government responses in this section. I begin with a discussion of state-society relations [in general, and then] within contexts where the state fails to perform its responsibilities, showing strategies that governments in such spaces employ to foster support among contingents of the population. I extend this discussion to the relationship between state and non-state actors to demonstrate how the government enhances its competences to perform its duties through collaboration with local non-state actors. I then turn to the relations between insurgents and people to show how this impacts the ability of the government to assert authority within local areas. I argue that information sharing about insurgent attacks through distinct sets of social relationships is crucial for responses, as the dynamics of these relations within the state shape the competences of the government to address violence.

Relationships between State and Society

A state exerts its authority to govern its populations in various forms. These may include the exclusive use of force (Risse 2011; 2012; Jackson and Rosberg 1982; Chabal and Daloz 1999), oversight of a particular jurisdiction (Jackson and Rosberg 1982), and the possession of economic strengths (Krasner

1976). The acceptance of the state to perform duties on behalf of populations living within its national borders often emerges from trust in its institutions and systems (Braithwaite and Levi 1998). However, the authority of the state is always socially constructed. The state is only made by the people who comprise it, and its interactions with them grant it legitimacy to operate (Migdal 2001; 1988).

Especially within areas where it lacks the monopoly on violence within its territorial borders, the state maintains authority through patronage and clientelism. Its leaders often choose supporters and native districts to create approval bases and affirm control over the state (Tangri 1999; Arriola 2009). They consolidate their authority through distribution of various state resources and provision of many profits to these supporters (Soumahoro 2015; Kramon and Posner 2016; Ejdemyr, Kramon, and Robinson 2018; De Luca et al. 2018; Green 2010).

In such contexts, state actors often view the people or groups with whom they share local connections as counterparts but may consider those who do not depend upon opportunities from the government for their operations as opponents of the state. To protect their rule, these actors often employ actions of suppression and brutality such as incarceration or torture toward rival groups to stem their activities (Migdal 1988, 223–28) although they may protect their counterparts by ensuring that they handle routine operations without facing harassment especially from state security agents (Chabal and Daloz 1999, 80). This contributes to violence and disorder as these activities of the state actors are often unrestrained.

Conversely, the population often develop their own relations with the state in response to such shortcomings in governance (Fahmy 2012; Rothchild and Chazan 2019). The people may create affiliation with the government or detach themselves from its processes and procedures (Rothchild and Chazan 2019). Those individuals or groups that associate with the government might view it as the major allocator of assets and thus undertake activities including seeking job placements within its institutions. Meanwhile, those that disconnect from the state because it is perceived to be unstable with no fixed resources, may rely upon alternate avenues to meet their needs such as black markets or other forms of ad hoc self-governance

where trade often occurs without formal regulation. Others may mobilize into social organizations such as student groups or local vigilantes (Nunzio 2014) to serve both their interests and that of the communities where they operate. To illustrate, vigilantes united to confront danger may eliminate criminals within various communities (eg.: Heald 1986) while those with an ethnic focus may undertake actions within the broader society to promote the desires of a particular ethnic group (eg.: Guichaoua 2007) including representation at the community level. By so doing, these non-state groups acquire local authority and legitimacy (Higazi 2008).

Nonetheless, this literature does not explain how the connections between the government and the people impact its ability to confront violence, and how the interactions between the members of society determine such capability. I address these issues in the next two sections. I first discuss state and non-state actor collaboration, and then explain insurgent-community relations to show how both sets of relationships determine government responses to violence.

Governance in Contexts with Limited Statehood

A variety of different non-state groups within society profoundly shape governance especially in contexts where the government lacks competences to carry out basic programs and policies, and state functions remain vague and ill-defined. This is often the case in volatile, conflict-prone regions where such groups often exert even greater de facto influence over politics. In such settings, two models of governance often emerge – the non-state actors may cooperate with the central government to deliver state services on the government's behalf, or they may carry out independent operations in competition with the functions of state actors and institutions (Staniland 2012b; Henn 2022; Baldwin 2016; Lund 2006). For instance, customary authorities who exercise independent rule over communities within the state, can become partners with the government to ensure that state actors perform expected duties toward the people (Baldwin 2016). Similarly, armed groups can manage a particular locality while coordinating with the government to

accomplish joint aims, or they may work with state actors to organize shared benefits without autonomous control of an area (Staniland 2012b). In this dissertation, I am primarily concerned with the operations of non-state armed groups, rather than other civil society organizations. Nonetheless, the lines between violent and non-violent actors are often blurred. Therefore, the work of civil society associations, customary authorities, religious organizations, and other non-state groups are relevant to the broader discussion.

In the first model of governance, various non-state groups – armed and unarmed – may carry out activities that supplement the work of the government (Henn 2022; Williams 2010; Baldwin 2016; Bagayoko, Hutchful, and Luckham 2016). This means that they may work under its direction and instruction as expanded branches (Crawford 2013, 141) to promote its authority locally. They may perform specific duties on its behalf to widen its reach into areas that are typically inaccessible. Such duties may be officially mandated to allow the incorporation of these groups into the administration of the state or may be informally ascribed to them (Henn 2022). Whether performing formal or unofficial duties, the groups gain rewards from the government such as income and access to state resources.

The formation of these local relations between state actors and the non-state groups to support government activities often occurs through common socio-political affiliations such as ethnicity, partisanship, and religion, although other loyalties may also be purchased. These relations are frequently maintained through practices of patronage (Green 2010; Day and Reno 2014; Lapegna and Auyero 2012; Kitschelt and Wilkinson 2007) and clientelism (Van de Walle 2003; 2007). The state actors often select and separate the population (Isaksson and Bigsten 2017) as part of a "conscious political strategy" that can create more opportunities for the advancement of society (Anciano 2018, 608). Through the mediation of the non-state actors who can project the demands of the people, state actors can gain knowledge about the populations (Chandra 2007) and meet them. This is crucial in such contexts where communities often do not regard the government as the sole embodiment of authority due to the activities of different actors, and can choose whom to show loyalty thereby widening their influence (Hilgers 2012). In short, the government

has more avenues to perform its responsibilities where these local connections are present but may not be able to meet the people's expectations where it lacks these connections.

As an example, through connections between traditional authorities and politicians, the government can distribute state resources to local communities. The incumbents can obtain knowledge from these rulers about the kinds of community projects that will enhance local livelihoods, and apply such information toward the distribution of government benefits (Williams 2010) such as academic facilities and water resources. This often happens where rulers reside in the same communities under their control and seek better socio-economic opportunities for the population (Baldwin 2016). Nevertheless, in those communities without such mediators or where such mediators are unavailable because of death, for instance, such state benefits may be redirected elsewhere or may not reach the people as the government is not integrated into the local context and cannot monitor their needs.

When security issues arise, the government can work with traditional authorities to promote peace as many of these leaders have historically been previously involved in the maintenance of social order. Where the local leadership is centralized, such actors can better coordinate with state actors (Wig 2016). State actors can benefit from the local knowledge, respect, and embeddedness that these leaders possess. Within countries like Sierra Leone, local chiefs have been integrated into the legislature allowing them representation in government to facilitate the peacebuilding process (Osei 2021). This can lead to stability within communities as traditional rule and state administrative systems become combined, enabling cooperation between state actors and these local actors (Sklar 1999). It can further cause a reduction in armed activities as these local leaders become recognized actors that support the work of the government in areas such as local representation (Mustasilta 2019).

Yet, these local leaders are often inactive participants in government affairs even when integrated into the state system. For instance, while sub-national governments tend to prescribe processes for handling chieftaincy matters, central administrations often fail to establish rules that determine the roles of chiefs (Ehrhardt, Alao, and Umar 2024). In short, the incorporation of traditional institutions may enhance the

capabilities of the state to re-establish order according to local needs while limiting the influence of local rulers.

Where traditional authorities remain diverse and concentrated, the state may struggle to solidify its rule (Englebert 2000) because such local leaders may operate on their own (Baldwin and Raffler 2019). These actors can leverage certain resources including access to prompt information, social networks as well as localized knowledge (Baldwin 2016) to manage the affairs of the people. They can assure safety within communities through the performance of duties including oversight and coordination of local non-state security groups. Moreover, they may adjudicate civil cases using customs, local norms and practices in the resolution of disagreements between the people (Zartman 2000). They may focus on the restoration of togetherness and unity among the population (Osaghae 2006; Graeber, Sahlins, and Sahlins 2017), other than punishment for offenders. Such methods demonstrate more awareness of the local ways of life which many state security agents and other state actors lack. Hence the work of traditional leaders enhances their legitimacy and authority particularly within conflict settings because these leaders usually represent local customs and are connected to the communities through their presence.

Similar to its relations with traditional authorities, the government develops connections with civil society associations to facilitate the implementation of state projects and programs locally (Njoku 2017; Romaniuk and Njoku 2021; Lind and Howell 2010). For instance, to implement measures against terror activity, the government may partner with those associations concerned with security or groups targeting vulnerable populations such as youths. In some countries, we have observed governments supporting independent local associations mainly with funding for them to offer services to the people including victims of terror attacks, such as deradicalization programs and counselling. In Saudi Arabia, the collaboration between the state agency responsible for religious affairs and a local non-governmental organization permits Islamic teachers to engage in dialogue with persons using online social media platforms who may have radical ideas, with the aim to shift such understanding (Boucek 2008; Casptak

2015). Such partnerships enable communication and resource sharing that can enhance planning for security and its related issues.

However, these relationships are not always collaborative or harmonious. Where such coordination fails, the government might supress these local actors in their operations with actions including exemption from policy discussions about security (Njoku 2017; Lind and Howell 2010). This can happen when some civil society associations criticise state policy – for instance, when human rights associations and religious groups take issue with the state for targeting certain individuals or communities because of their perceived propensity towards violence. In Kenya, the state's tax collection agency intimidated human rights groups when they campaigned against proposed counterterrorism legislation that focused on granting wider authority to security agents to punish suspects mainly followers of Islam (Lind and Howell 2010). While this action of the government prevents non-state actors from advocating changes to state policy, the government may be unable to plan acceptable programs because of the lack of local input and knowledge. In brief, where weak governments do not maintain relations with local actors, they may not be able to effectively operate.

I next turn to the second model of governance by non-state groups. In this model, such groups accomplish duties in place of the government, and often in direct competition or challenge to it (Börzel and Risse 2010; Boege, Brown, and Clements 2009; Risse 2011; 2012). In this scenario, a variety of different non-state actors, who do not form part of the formal state apparatus, carry out independent duties to manage societal affairs where the government is absent, unable, or otherwise reluctant to meet public demands (Börzel, Risse, and Draude 2018). Due to the limited work of state actors in such environments, these local actors may run alternative systems that compete with the institutions of government.

For example, religious groups including churches may provide services such as healthcare (Bwimana 2017) and schools (Benyah 2021) to serve communities. Such groups become involved in the provision of services and goods due to the inaccessibility and unavailability of state resources within communities. In general, populations usually turn to such actors to ensure their sustenance and welfare

because these local actors may be more present than formal state institutions, are more socially embedded, or form part of their own social and political networks (Boege, Brown, and Clements 2009). These groups can thus maintain order without the involvement of the government or reliance upon its support such as financial assistance because the people often provide them with such benefits[6] (Henn 2022). This sustains relations between the population and these actors that exclude the government. This exclusion of the state from local affairs, however, means that the government in turn alienates such local actors in governance matters despite their level of influence within communities[7]. Within many post-conflict states, this has persisted since colonial times, when the Europeans relegated traditional systems of governance to informal institutions and made their own systems central to the management of the people[8] (Ehrhardt, Alao, and Umar 2024). It creates further dissociation between the state and the people due to lack of centrality of such local actors in the administration of the state.

In these areas where conflict more frequently occurs, among such local actors, armed groups might maintain oversight (Risse 2012). This enables them to project certain aims such as the construction of a state, and access to resources (Berti 2018). These groups often use their positions and power to manipulate the population (eg.: Branch 2009) to enforce their own rules leading to diminished government control within certain areas (eg.: Hughes and Tripodi 2009). For instance, in the Kivu provinces in the Democratic Republic of Congo, more than 130 local militias carry arms, sometimes providing security or self-defence for the communities in which they embed, in response to the state's failure to provide protection (Hoffmann and Verweijen 2018). This enables them to both conduct armed activities and prevent their occurrence within the local communities. Hence, their independent and fluid activities often challenge the state's monopoly on violence as they also use force in pursuit of their objectives, in support of, and in opposition

[6] Although external organizations, for instance, multinational businesses operating in such areas may also be influential because they possess independent material resources or wealth that helps them to manage their responsibilities toward the people.

[7] Some scholars argue that this alienation of local institutions may be as a result of the nature of state governance structures (eg: Mustasilta 2019).

[8] Yet, these days, some sub-national governments have begun to establish rules for controlling local chiefs, their operations, and relations with the central government.

to the maintenance of order and security (Meagher 2012; Colona and Jaffe 2016). In short, non-state actors often form relations with the people to maintain control, like the government. Sometimes, non-state armed groups will directly confront government or state security forces, comprising a more direct threat to the state's right to govern.

When armed activities rise in such weak state contexts, non-state actors do not always emerge in competition with the central government. Some groups, especially militias or civilian defense groups may emerge where local communities experience random acts of violence from state actors[9] and cannot benefit from any safeguards from insurgents (Kalyvas 2006). The activities of state security agents, including conducting shelling attacks, can facilitate the mobilization of communities that work to reduce insurgent violence (Lyall 2009). As the conflict develops, those populations that typically have immediate and communal experiences of such attacks and targeting tend to form groups to combat insurgents (Schubiger 2013). Put differently, in such contexts, non-state actors may emerge in response to the (in)actions, of the government especially where the state demonstrates its unwillingness or lack of capability to offer protection and defence to its people (Alozieuwa 2021).

Indeed, in some cases, central governments may rely heavily upon these armed non-state groups to fight a common rival and restore order (eg: Staniland 2012). To illustrate, state actors can organize co-ethnic militias in local communities facing war to fight insurgents in support of the government (Abbs, Clayton, and Thomson 2020). This is crucial in the maintenance of government control over particular areas of the state and resources especially where insurgents often gain fair advantage as the presence and activities of the militias become an instrument through which the government can draw attention and local support away from the insurgent group (Estancona et al. 2019).

The non-state actors typically have relevant skills to enable the promotion of security. This includes knowledge of certain areas of the state, local languages, the people and socio-cultural environment which

[9] Although this may also trigger more support for insurgent groups and attract new members to promote their activities (Wood 2003).

can support the activities of the government to reduce violence (Hassan and Pieri 2018). The central administration usually selects the groups based on such abilities and competences (Jakobi and Wolf 2013) with a preference for those with more influence such as established presence in the local areas in which violent incidents occur. For instance, to curtail banditry in local communities, the government may work with warlords who are resident within the affected areas to safeguard the population facing armed assault (Marten 2013). Similarly, to fight insurgent groups, state actors may cooperate with community-based groups (Ashindorbe, Afatakpa, and Owonikoko 2021) who often co-exist with members of the armed group and have more knowledge about their activities.

A large body of literature on PGMs has emerged in this context mainly demonstrating their engagement in various security sector activities (Carey and Mitchell 2017). These groups fall along a continuum, both in their connections to the state, and their embeddedness in communities. Several of these groups are connected to the communities through ethnicity, religion, ideological beliefs, or political ideas while others maintain links to the central government because of professionalized services they offer, or experiences and background in the state security sector. The state may maintain both formal and informal relations with these groups because they may be established or contracted during crisis to enhance security within affected areas. It might prefer to establish rules that define and limit the operations of these local actors. These may include the determination of when and how force may be applied toward civilians in affected communities.

The actions of the groups may not necessarily align with government interests despite their apparent cooperation. Where they compete with insurgents to attract new members in the local areas, for instance, the groups may refrain from using force towards the people whom they may view as members of their own communities (Stanton 2015). Thus, state actors sometimes seek to control these groups because without regulation, they can emerge as competitors to the state's security infrastructure and constitute a threat to the government or other populations. Such groups may remain longer, solidify their rule, and further pursue other military, economic, social, or commercial interests within areas where the government lacks authority or influence (International Crisis Group 2017). As an example, local militias who should primarily protect

suburban neighbourhoods, may rather intimidate and harass persons who do not support the patrons of such non-state actors especially during electoral periods (Anderson 2002a). In other cases, militias may directly challenge the state's rule, policy, or monopoly on violence.

In cases of community-based PGMs (Carey and Mitchell 2017; Abbs, Clayton, and Thomson 2020; Ahram 2016; Raleigh and Kishi 2020; Boisvert 2015; Koren 2017), the government may establish new groups or grant recognition to existing groups or other non-state actors. This facilitates their access to state privileges including weaponry and training from the state security agents (Carey and Mitchell 2017, 130–31). In turn, the groups can operate as unofficial partners of the government or as a state sanctioned local security organization with various responsibilities in support of the activities of the state security agents. These include identification of insurgents, gathering domestic intelligence, combat support and translation of local dialects (Ashindorbe, Afatakpa, and Owonikoko 2021). Thus, these non-state security groups represent the government in the affected areas as they become its local providers of security. We can therefore conceptualize PGMs along two axes. On the one hand, they vary in terms of whether they exist as independent or autonomous entities, embedded in existing communities, and motivated by their own interests, objectives, and agendas, or whether they are contracted or act for profit, to serve the interests of government. On the other axis, their relationships with government may vary in their degree of formalization. Whereas private military contractors may serve government interests from their inception, their relationships with government may nonetheless occupy different degrees of formality (Marten 2019). The vigilante groups I discuss, on the other hand, are deeply embedded in communities, and, for the most part, their ties with local government are mostly informal.

This state representation is possible because such groups often have ties to the people within their local communities. Both the groups and the people may be co-ethnics, followers of the same religion or believers of a particular ideology (Carey and Mitchell 2017). These social identifiers facilitate their formation and existence in society. Where they particularly share ethnic ties with members of the community, this can be beneficial for the latter, as the groups are more likely to offer protection from insurgents (Stanton 2015). They may, for instance, work to protect ethnic and religious leadership as well

as establishments in society that may be targeted. This is true because such common identity enables these groups to organize their aims and coordinate with the government to destroy a mutual adversary within or outside national borders. Thus, their operations can serve to augment the government's task of assuring the safety of all residents within affected communities. Where preferences and desires of the groups and the government vary, the activities of these local actors may instead endanger state power and authority (Carey and Mitchell 2017, 138).

In the communities where the groups have ideological connections with the people, both of these actors often sympathize with the same political party or have similar ideas about patriotism towards the state (Carey and Mitchell 2017, 139). This sense of bonding with the state or a party can be instrumental for mobilizing electoral support at the community level especially for incumbents as they can rely upon the groups to facilitate their connections among the people to maintain power. Through their establishment as a separate armed unit within the party, the groups can work to promote the government's aims across communities. In this case, the purpose of these local actors may not necessarily be to provide security to the citizens although rival parties who also establish such units may employ the groups to perform security functions such as acting as bodyguards for influential persons.[10] Nonetheless, the work of these 'party militias' (Graham and Hagan 2021) typically creates more violence as they engage in activities to support the government. These include acts of violence toward voters particularly members of the opposition and their supporters, and contest with other militia working for opponents. Further, where the government fails to meet their needs such as limiting or withdrawing rewards or monetary payments for their support in mobilizing voters or maintaining the ruling party's influence locally (Bob-Milliar 2012), such groups may turn to violence to ensure their aims.

[10] Due to the ruling party's control, state security agents often neglect the needs for protection of rival parties especially during electoral periods. This breeds issues of mistrust and lack of confidence in their ability to assure the safety of all including opponents (Graham and Hagan 2021).

Nonetheless, not all pro-government militia have ties to the community.[11] Some may be serving as state security agents in positions such as police officers or soldiers or may have previously been employed with the state security agencies (Carey and Mitchell 2017). They often perform duties on behalf of the state which are not connected to their main jobs. Other PGMs including independent security firms may also provide security services to support the central government. These actors, known as private military contractors, typically operate like the military, and usually serve the agendas of government stakeholders rather than acting to advance their own independent political interests. They augment the numbers of security personnel available to the state and may be involved in counterinsurgency operations outside national borders (Singer 2007; Rothe and Ross 2010; van Meegdenburg 2019; Swed and Crosbie 2017). Whether professionalized or contracted, these nonstate actors often conduct activities that are not well-known among the people, enabling certain acts of violence that may promote danger within the communities. When the government faces internal contestation or external threats, the outsourcing of such acts of violence typically serves as a means for it to avoid accountability and to maintain its reputation because of the destruction of communities, lives and property (Raleigh and Kishi 2020). In short, the government leverages upon the aims and organization of local actors and collaborates with them to disseminate its power locally.

Sometimes, due to certain changes within the political and social context of their work, PGMs may lose their connection to the central administration. They may not always have partnership with the main government because of instances such as the end of tenure of officeholders, or the expulsion of political elites from office (Otto, Scharpf, and Gohdes 2020). Moreover, they may no longer be pro-state when their activities are outlawed, or when they are disarmed or formally joined to the national security apparatus, or when the boundaries of the state undergoes shifts (Carey, Mitchell, and Lowe 2013). The groups, therefore, can be both independent groups and state security partners at different periods of violence.

[11] I do not focus on this type of militia due to the attention on community-based groups that provide security and their cooperation with the government during crisis.

This vast and burgeoning literature on PGMs, however, has tended to overlook other levels of government where such collaborations may occur, and has not typically focused on how, and the conditions under which these collaborations can shape state intervention and responses to violence. In federal states, for example, each governmental unit has different responsibilities over security provision; state governments may oversee violence within their jurisdiction while the central government often supervises the military and police with the provision of financial assistance to subnational units. Therefore, I suggest that because of their unique responsibilities towards addressing problems of security, both subnational leaders and actors within the central government, may be involved to different degrees with non-state armed groups. The connections between these different state and non-state actors at the subnational level have direct implications for state capacity and security sector intervention in cases of insurgency or unrest.

Finally, it is important to note that ethnic, religious, or political ties between non-state armed groups and the local communities do not always shape the connections between them to facilitate the performance of government tasks. Some non-state actors including hunters' associations and vigilantes often mobilize to enable such tasks due to common experiences of harms from both state security agents and insurgents. These vigilante groups tend to apply their informal skills such as the use of guns and localized knowledge to demonstrate their disassociation from insurgents and support for the government when the state fails to address violence toward the people from both state and non-state actors. Thus, I suggest that local experiences with violence can shape the formation of vigilante groups that work for the government and are already involved in security provision. Their centralization or lack thereof determines the extent of collaboration with state actors and government intervention during periods of conflict. These community based armed actors thus have relevance for both the government and the people because they always provide security.

I now turn to the insurgent governance literature in the section below to show how relations between insurgents and the population shape the ability of the government to control armed activities.

Insurgent Rule

During conflict in weak states, insurgents rise to oppose the authority of the central government (Arjona, Kasfir, and Mampilly 2015; Wassara 2010) with different aims including to seize control over state territory and rule over the population. They may divide their authority with the government in some local areas, or compete with it for control over communities, or maintain influence over certain aspects of societal affairs and conduct to promote their objectives (Staniland 2012a).

Both insurgents and the population are usually members of the same communities that establish and maintain separate social relationships within a particular area. The local relations between both are different from the relations between the state and the population because both sets of actors constitute the society that exists within the state, and which the state seeks to command.

When violence develops, insurgent groups might establish societal agreements with the people to guide routine affairs within communities. They may serve the people or permit civilians to manage their own affairs with few obligations toward the armed group or create stable interactions with the people (Arjona 2016). The agreements typically depend upon the nature of social ties and networks between both the insurgents and the people and can vary from one location to another. For instance, in Columbia, from 1990 to 2014, in border areas such as Samaniego where insurgents shared personal connections with the populations living in mountainous areas, mutual agreements led to guarantees such as the protection of inhabitants from other armed actors (Idler, Belén Garrido, and Mouly 2015). Nonetheless, in other border areas such as Las Mercedes where insurgents lacked communal networks and leaders who could represent the demands of the local populations were also absent, the people were unable to gain certain privileges including the choice to participate or not in activities related to the insurgency. Thus, formal, and informal agreements between armed actors and civilians shape insurgent governance.

Insurgents may institute mechanisms of rule in a local context based on their understanding and knowledge of the operations of other insurgent organizations in external environments facing instability

(Mampilly 2015). Their political organization especially their access to material resources such as sources of income often determines how they manage these populations (Weinstein 2006). Further, their working beliefs, managerial assets and the extent of territory they manage, shapes the system of governance that they adopt and construct for communities (Arjona 2009; Kalyvas 2015).

In some contexts, insurgents fail to engage in cooperative relationships with civilian populations, often because they do not rely on civilian assistance to achieve their goals (Weinstein 2007). When armed actors do not rely on support from local populations because they already have high material endowments or receive assistance from external actors such as foreign governments, groups or diasporas (Salehyan, Siroky, and Wood 2014), they might engage in extortion, abduction of notable individuals for payments of ransom to make profit, or other forms of violence against civilians. On the other hand, where insurgents are not materially endowed, or have secessionist or state-building aims, they may be compelled to perform state-like responsibilities toward the populations such as tax collection or the provision of public goods and services (e.g. Huang 2016). Insurgents who acquire more resources as the conflict evolves might engage in forms of material redistribution in order to project influence (Biberman and Turnbull 2018). During the Troubles in Northern Ireland, some Loyalist associations offered goods delivery services to the people living within the areas affiliated to them while the Irish Republican Army offered transport services within communities that supported them. Both groups often ignored the needs of the population in the areas where they received least approval. Thus, insurgents may perform discriminatory actions[12] toward the population that often alienate local people who do not assist them to further their desires such as attracting new advocates for the group (Stewart 2018). Civilians who have positive views toward state actors and government policy, for instance, can be main targets for future attacks (Hirose, Imai, and Lyall 2017).

Non-state actors may form stronger ties with the government and supplement its authority in some sense, or they may maintain closer relations with the people and offer alternate leadership potential. I summarize these relations and the types of governance that they produce in Table 1 below:

[12] Some insurgents kill or ex-communicate persons living within their local environments who do not provide them with such support.

Table 1: Types of non-state actor rule due to their social relations with the government and people

	Supplementary rule	*Alternate rule*
Armed non-state actors	Socio-political ties with government (Vigilante groups / PGMs / warlords)	Relational ties with the people (Insurgent groups)
Unarmed non-state actors	Socio-political ties with government (Civil society associations)	Relational ties with population (Traditional leaders / religious organizations)

In addition to material redistribution and the provision of public good and services, insurgents may also leverage ideological resources and rhetoric to garner local support. A coherent ideological agenda might form the basis for which they can organize, mobilize and engender buy ins in the absence of material endowments (Juergensmeyer 2003). Ideological commitments may also shape decisions about where and how to engage in fighting to pursue their objectives (Hegghammer 2013). Such a platform can provide incentives for their leaders to foster cooperation within their units as well as with local partners (Gutiérrez-Sanín and Wood 2014; Keister and Slantchev 2014). Ideological commitments can be built through local institutions such as educational facilities which young people attend (Wood 2009; Mampilly 2012). Therefore, common understandings may be established between armed actors and civilians, which can lead to the expansion of insurgent influence. The armed group, may, for instance, advocate on behalf of local demands or promise more equitable access to resources or political favor in the case of an insurgent victory. Such activities can shape individual interactions with the group in local communities, as they can be venues

to forge connections that create the conditions for civilians to exercise responsibilities on its behalf, simply by assuming its identity and believing in its principles (Checkel 2017). The connection to the group often leads to dissociation from state actors because such members of the society may denounce the activities of government in favour of the insurgents.

These armed actors might also rely on pre-existing interpersonal or social connections between both. Rather than acting instrumentally, pre-existing ties may lead to insurgents' commitments to promoting local interests (e.g. Wood 2003), providing food, sustenance, shelter, fuel and water (Barter 2012). These relationships can travel both ways. In addition to insurgents providing resources to local populations, existing social ties can lead local communities to provide support to insurgents (Sluka 2019). It may also include indirect material and symbolic actions that include offering information about the activities of state actors to insurgents and using symbols such as flags to depict their approval and validation.[13]

Such local assistance can be significant for insurgent operations especially when these armed actors possess limited military competences to fight the government. Where they have weaponry, they can more readily confront the state (Kasfir 2015) on their own, but where they have inadequate material capabilities, they tend to depend more on the local people for their protection from the state. Therefore, insurgents that have fewer material assets often build trust with the population to enable them to appeal to them for assistance, and to compensate for their limited assets (Weinstein 2006). The existence of such cooperative relationships with communities – which can derive from material, social, or ideological support, can augment the capabilities of these armed actors to confront the state. It prevents insurgents from targeting communities in their activities (Stewart and Liou 2017) especially in contexts of dominant social, political or ethnic cleavages.[14]

[13] It should be noted that civilians might also protest the domination of armed groups (Arjona 2015b; van Baalen 2021; Gowrinathan and Mampilly 2019), or submit to domination (Arjona 2009). Insurgents can modify their behaviors and exact and punishments on the population when local communities or their leaders engage in resistance (Gowrinathan and Mampilly 2019).

[14] Insurgents also compete among themselves for this same support. Due to fractures within the main insurgent group, and fights among the smaller groups (eg.: Cunningham, Bakke, and Seymour 2012), they can harm the local

These complex insurgent-community relationships not only explain dynamics of mobilization and support but can also explain patterns of violence. To display their military capabilities, insurgents often employ force towards civilians or during incursions into new territories (Furlan 2020). They may engage in retributive violence when they experience deaths of their members or in the face of counterinsurgency operations (Hultman 2007). In other words, insurgents direct violence towards civilians or government targets to advance their objectives vis-à-vis the state (Wood 2010; 2014) in the areas that they seek to control.

My Argument in Brief

Building on the existing literature, and developed inductively through my research in Yobe, Borno and Adamawa states in Northeastern Nigeria, this dissertation constructs an argument in two parts. I argue that information-sharing about violence across the state within two sets of social relationships determine government responses to violence: namely, the relations between vigilante groups and state governors, and the relations between insurgent groups and local communities. I discuss each set of relationships in turn to show how each shapes responses to violence. I begin with the relations between the non-state security groups and subnational leaders, then turn to insurgent-community relations, showing that when vigilante groups have ties to state governors or the state security services, information-sharing permits more robust responses to attacks, and that when insurgent groups are socially embedded in communities, information-sharing is obstructed, thereby inhibiting security sector responses.

Government-vigilante relations

I propose that in weak state contexts, governments build connections within local communities; the relationships forged through these connections facilitate information-sharing that enhances their ability to

populations despite similar affiliations such as co-ethnicity with the people to ascertain each group's authority and aims such as self-government. However, this may not always be the case as insurgents may be more restrained in how they apply force toward the population when they are in competition with the government for support from the same population (Kalyvas 2006).

respond to insurgent violence. Specifically, the sub-national leader or state governor who oversees a particular jurisdiction with rising armed activities identifies the groups that operate because of communal experiences of violence from both state and non-state actors and whose operations supplement security provision from the government. The leader negotiates with such groups to strengthen access for the military and other state actors into the areas that are far reaching, enabling the extension of government operations into the affected communities. Through this negotiation which involves sharing of information and knowledge about armed actors and their activities as well as the affected areas and the people, the state actors build local connections. To maintain these connections, the subnational leader, and the military each grant some advantages to the groups; material benefits such as monetary payments, and training for combat respectively. The groups then form a central organization to streamline information and communication about violence to the military who can intervene during attacks, and to the subnational leader who relies upon such resources to monitor the crisis. This transaction between the state actors and non-state actors promotes the integration of the government into the affected areas to enable action against insurgent violence.

Second, it is the integration of the government into the local communities through such partnerships with the groups that permits it to build more capability to counter violence. Where the government is embedded, information and resources that are shared between state actors and the groups enhance its competences to monitor armed activities such as the location of suspects, areas, and populations under attack. It can, thus, intervene or respond when terror incidents occur. On the other hand, where there are absent relations between the subnational leader, military, and local non-state security groups, such local resources remain unavailable to the government. This happens when the subnational leader with existing ties to the groups completes a fixed term of office, or a new leader who typically has limited knowledge of the security landscape takes over the subnational administration. In such instances, its connections are few and its operations are not well integrated into the local context to allow information, communication and resource sharing that can be relevant for managing insecurity. Therefore, where the government has no

connections to vigilante groups, it typically fails to regulate or respond violent activities as it has no presence within the communities through which to extract information about attacks. Unless subnational leaders form or re-establish relations with the non-state security groups to boost local opportunities for the government, it continues to lack information when terror attacks happen. This means that, state intervention during insurgent attacks may occur within areas where groups with both shared experiences of violence with the people and links to government operate whereas such intervention may be absent in those areas where groups have such connections to the people but no links to state actors.

Insurgent-community relations

I suggest that where insurgents obtain the people's trust, the government faces difficulty in accessing information about local communities. This is because civilian loyalties either lie with insurgents or their ability to evade the influence of the latter is curtailed. I term relations that develop between insurgents and the people because of forceful and violent occupation of communities as "involuntary cooperation." I refer to the relations that emerge from the social embeddedness of these armed groups within the communities as "wilful cooperation" but refer to relations that develop from a lack territorial control and weak ties to the communities as "diffuse cooperation."

Where insurgents deploy violence in controlling the population or where the people wilfully cooperate with the non-state armed actors, the relationships between the population and state actors are either practically or ideologically severed. This closes the government and security sector's access to information and knowledge that enable state actors to learn about the armed group and their activities. The government thus fails to penetrate areas where insurgents have established influence in ways that are deeply socially embedded. In such contexts, its ability to intervene in the aftermath of insurgent violence remains poor because of limited resources, communication, and information about such incidents.

Where insurgents, nonetheless, commit random acts of violence and are loosely present in an area, the government often has more opportunities of access to local resources and information about attacks to facilitate responses. The government can thus intervene during attacks to reduce harms to the people.

I thus argue that the social embeddedness of insurgents inhibits interactions between communities and the government leading to absent state interventions during attacks. Under involuntary cooperation, the government often fails to build connections within communities because the people have fear of reprisal attacks from the armed group whereas under willful cooperation, due to shared loyalties between the insurgents and the population, the government cannot maintain its influence within the communities. This results in similar outcomes vis-à-vis absent security responses because avenues of information sharing and communication between communities and the government are closed. Yet, under diffuse cooperation, the government can penetrate the communities through the availability of greater channels of communication and information-sharing between the people and state actors. This leads to interventionist responses to violence and enhances the management of violence.

Conclusion

My theory of robust government security responses emphasizes social relationships in environments that are seemingly weak, and which do not exercise a monopoly over the use of violence. I bring three previously disjointed literatures namely, theories of state-society relations, governance in areas of limited statehood, and literature on insurgent rule, into dialogue with one another.

I argue that different social relationships determine the capability of the state to perform its responsibilities. One set of relationships pertains to the government and the people, and the other set focuses on insurgents and the population. These relationships are significant because they facilitate planning and decision-making concerning government and security sector interventions in response to insurgent violence. These actions and inactions impact which areas are prioritized in security deployments. Whereas greater access to local resources, communication and information means that the government will have greater ability to respond to an incident, the barrier to sufficient information leads to low responsiveness.

In the chapters that follow, I demonstrate how the social embeddedness of insurgent organizations – and the repercussions these social relationships have for information-generation by the government –

shape the trajectory of security sector responses to attacks by Boko Haram in northeastern Nigeria. I further elaborate how collaborative and complementary relationships between state governors and non-state armed groups – in this case, vigilante groups – similarly determines the government's ability to generate sufficient information about insurgent activity to launch a security sector response.

In short, the government gains more control during crisis when subnational leaders, the military and non-state security groups have collaborative relations, because such relations ensure access to local resources – and importantly to critical information – that improves its competences and abilities to regulate or respond to violence. However, the absence of these resources due to no connections between government actors and these independent non-state organizations prevents the government from addressing security issues.

Together, these two sets of relationships: namely, between vigilante groups and local governors, and between insurgent groups and local communities – impact the government's ability to generate information about violence and insurgency unfolding within its borders. Through these two sets of interlocking dynamics, it is evident that the micro-social relationships between state and non-state actors strongly shapes government security responses in northeastern Nigeria and beyond.

Chapter 3 - Nigeria

Introduction

This chapter provides some background of the Nigerian case, with a focus on security governance in the decades since independence. It first offers a brief history of Nigeria's (in)security landscape, documenting threats to the state's monopoly on violence. It moves on to detail how the government has typically responded to major incidents of violence across the country, demonstrating the military's involvement in various internal security crisis. I then turn my attention to the Boko Haram insurgency to demonstrate that state intervention through militarized responses has not always led to a heightened sense of security for ordinary people and their communities. Finally, I end this chapter with a discussion of civil-military relations in this country, documenting the governance, oversight, coordination, and administration of the country's security sector.

Politics and Security in Nigeria

Nigeria is a federal state that is divided into 36 states and the Federal Capital Territory. At independence in 1960, it instituted a system of federalism, and had three main territorial divisions based on the settlements of the major ethnic groups – the east with majority Igbos, the west with majority Yorubas and the north with majority Hausa-Fulani. Several minority ethnic groups are also integrated into different regions across the country. Two main religions divide the populations – many follow Islam in the North, while others in the southern areas adhere to Christian beliefs.

The ethnic and religious divisions also map onto political divisions. Political parties often emerge from ethnic groups that inhabit certain regions or areas across the state (Nnabuihe, Aghemalo, and Okebugwu 2014). In the period after independence, the Yorubas formed the Action Group, the Igbos led the National Council of Nigerian Citizens (NCNC), the Hausa-Fulanis created the Northern People's Congress (NPC) while minor ethnic groups formed smaller parties to represent the needs of their respective

populations. While dominant parties can comprise members of major ethnic groups, coalition parties usually emerge to secure the required majority votes for state office (Nwankwo 2005). To illustrate, the NPC and NCNC merged to control government when none of the three parties gained majority votes in the first elections at the end of the colonial rule (Metz 1992). These practices remain as parties merge to form a bigger opposition during electoral periods.

The distinct constituencies in Nigeria have and continue to hold various preferences towards governance arrangements, which has historically caused the development of hostilities between them and shaped the socio-political development of the new state. Importantly, the east, north, and south have been engaged in struggles for political power, resources, and influence throughout the country. The eastern populations contest for self-government, those in the north want dominance in government while those in the south fight for control over oil wealth. These struggles have been playing out since the post-independence era, and in response, the government has often engaged the activities of the military to control the people.

For instance, in January 1966, many lower-ranking military officers from the Igbo ethnic group, ousted the government and murdered important northern leaders (Ilo 2020). They installed their own leaders from their ethnic group to lead various public offices. This created tensions among the populations living in the north and led to protests across this region. In June, other military officers mainly Hausa-Fulani retaliated and overthrew the government in fear of domination from the Igbos. They then installed their own northern leader, General Yakubu Gowon as the new military head (American Historical Association, n.d.). This led to the targeting of the people with roots from southern areas but with residence in the north including the Igbos, and they began to face harms and deaths (Nwaubani 2020). More than 30,000 people died while others fled and the then military governor of the eastern region, Colonel Emeka Odumegwu Ojukwu, who was a native Igbo, called for the return of these populations to their ancestral homes in the region (Asadu 2020).

General Gowon held talks with Colonel Ojukwu to discuss the grievances of the easterners and restoration of peace within the country. In May 1967, after the negotiations, General Gowon divided Nigeria into 12 states. The eastern region with significant oil resources that brought in revenue for the country was divided into three different states namely Rivers state, Southeastern state, and East Central state (Vanguard 2010). This displeased Colonel Ojukwu. He blamed the federal government for the murder and marginalization of Igbos living in the north, and made the decision to separate the eastern region from the rest of the country under the new name Biafra (Mbah 2020).[15]

Nonetheless, the federal government resisted the establishment of the new country (Giovetti 2021). In July, General Gowon deployed soldiers to Biafra to address the crisis as negotiations with Colonel Ojukwu to stop the creation of the new state proved futile. The federal soldiers laid siege on Biafra, and bombarded the area while the navy created a blockade to limit the transfer of arms, food and medicine to the people, resulting in at least 3000 deaths each day in the area (Hurst 2009).

The deployment of soldiers served to halt the operations of the Biafran government, which had begun to use its local army in the region to conduct activities to maintain its authority. For instance, in August 1967, they gained control of some areas in the mid-west including Benin city, and west including Ore, a town near Lagos, the then capital of Nigeria (Elusoji 2020). They bombed Lagos and killed some residents.[16] The federal soldiers then launched operations to retake Ore to stop the Biafran army from gaining access and control over the national capital. The war began as this contest ensued between both militaries for territorial control over the region and surrounding areas.

Several countries in Africa began to acknowledge the new state of Biafra (Backhouse et al., n.d.) in 1968 including Tanzania, Gabon and Ivory Coast. Colonel Ojokwu's government started to conduct its own affairs through activities such as establishing its own currency (Elusoji 2020). Other governments

[15] This comprises nine states in present day Nigeria – Enugu, Ebonyi, Abia, Bayelsa, Rivers, Imo, Cross River, Akwa Ibom and Anambra.
[16] The exact figures are unknown.

initiated diplomatic discussions between the federal government and the Biafran government to end the crisis. Countries like Uganda and Ethiopia allowed meetings in their territories, but the negotiations failed.

On the other hand, other European governments such as Belgium began to place restrictions on weapons and arms supplies to Nigeria in recognition of the harms to the populations. Some of these foreign governments began to channel support to the Biafrans. France reportedly provided arms and transported food through Gabon to the new nation (Baum 1968). Armed with weapons, the Biafrans often launched indiscriminate attacks against the populations especially any persons whom they claimed did not provide them with support. They targeted and killed many foreign workers in the country. For instance, in Okpai near Port Harcourt, in May 1969, some Biafran militants conducted raids in an oil production site and claimed that many foreign workers were providing information about their movement to the Nigerian soldiers. They shot sporadically at these workers causing 11 deaths. A Jordanian and ten Italians died while 18 persons including a Lebanese, three West Germans, and 14 other Italians were abducted (Time 1969). The abductees were later released when foreign governments including Portugal sought for their pardon from execution, and the concerned governments mainly Italy made payments of ransom (Warren 1979). These instances of violence led to decreased empathy for the Biafrans globally and the governments reduced material support to them.

Meanwhile, the federal soldiers continued their tasks, including restricting humanitarian support to the people in Biafra to force their leaders to surrender to the demands of the Nigerian government. In 1969, the soldiers shot down an aircraft that the Red Cross used to supply relief items to the Biafrans, and the federal government prohibited the activities of this organization and other foreign humanitarian organizations (Joel 2006). The populations witnessed famine and death while the state's oil resources began to deplete causing economic hardship. The war continued, and the federal soldiers focused on regaining more territory for Nigeria including Umuahia, the capital of Biafra. In January 1970, with greater military capacity, they took hold of the remaining territories namely Uli and Owerri- the new Biafran capital, leading

to defeat that prompted the Biafran leaders to sign agreements with the Nigerian government to end the war (Stremlau 2015).[17] The Nigerian government through its military power, quelled the violence in the east.

Other contestations between the populations and the state began to rise shortly after the government's adoption of constitutional rule in 1979. This was partly attributed to the new civilian leadership's adoption of a secular state with religious freedoms several years after the Biafran war. Some members of religious organizations with varied beliefs and membership bases, as well as several influential persons mostly in the north who felt that the sharia was their only source of rule (Hickey 1984), resisted the secular administration of the country as this threatened their values and practices in Islam. The establishment of secularism, therefore, provoked myriad contestations and uprisings, that would periodically bubble to the surface.

In 1980, for example, in Kano city, Kano state, a group named the Yan Tatsine emerged under the leadership of Mohammed Marwa who was an Islamic scholar from Cameroon. Marwa attracted the admiration of the local people and acknowledgment from state rulers in Kano. He was popularly called Maitsatsine meaning "the one who curses" (Adegun 2021) because he used his teachings to condemn others including orthodox Islamic scholars. These teachings included preference for living without the show of affluence (Dash 1982) such as having property in the form of homes, and unconventional beliefs such as the opposition to western culture, technology, and education. Maitsatsine sought to project these views, presenting himself as a prophet in opposition to Prophet Muhammed.

The Yan Tatsine were often youths, and migrants from underprivileged socio-economic backgrounds who revered Maitsatsine and acknowledged his teachings. Both Maitsatsine and his followers shared the same residence in Yan Awaki and carried out their activities mostly preaching. The Yan Tatsine disregarded the authority of government, and challenged local authorities including the police forces

[17] Many Igbos maintain their desires for secession at present, and emergent groups including the Indigenous People of Biafra have continued to contest with successive governments in Nigeria for self-government.

because Marwa permitted his devotees to use force against their opposers including the state security agents (Ojo 1985). They exercised authority in the area and made their own rules including dictating movement for other residents. The residents resisted their authority, and this led to violent confrontation[18] between them and the group. It caused further problems including the displacement of some residents.

The Kano state government under Governor Mohammed Abubakar Rimi, began to pay attention to the confrontations, and used more peaceful strategies to manage the disturbances such as informal meal invitations to Maitsatsine (Isichei 1987, 195). The crisis developed, nonetheless, because the Yan Tatsine remained in the city and continued their operations. The state government then began to deploy the police to conduct arrests of their members including the leader. This, however, often did not lead to punishment as the group disregarded court proceedings and continued with their activities.

As they continued their work, the group began to gain influence across the north in other states including Sokoto. They attracted the support of many local people including other Muslims who thought that Maitsatsine better represented their needs. In Borno state, they continued to preach and maintain influence in many local areas such as Bulum-Kuttu, Maiduguri. However, their activities disturbed residents as their preaching was seen to be offensive. The residents began to make reports to the police, and local leaders but these security agents continuously failed to act (Borno State of Nigeria 1982). This permitted the group to further expand their authority to other areas.

In the areas where the police fought against the groups, there were several confrontations between them and the Yan Tsatsine. Many supporters came to fight for them while their clashes with the state security agents heightened (Rewaju 2014). They were often armed with crude weapons such as cutlasses and machetes, and due to their large numbers, were able to resist the police whenever the state government deployed these state security agents to halt their operations. For instance, in Jos, Plateau state, in September

[18] Other accounts say that the violence in the area started with the death of Marwa's son, who was involved with several gangs. Maitsatsine sought revenge and his followers helped him through fighting the police, and this began the disorder.

1980, when police were deployed to address the group's activities, close to 300 Yan Tsatsine fought and defeated the security agents.

Governor Rimi warned the group through a letter that detailed their expulsion from Kano. He gave Maitsatsine two weeks to demolish the buildings he had illegally constructed in various areas in the city and accused the Yan Tatsine of possessing prohibited arms (Albert 2013). Maitsatsine disobeyed this order, and instead mobilized the Yan Tatsine from various parts of the country to provide him with protection from the state. They then began to conduct more violent activities to assert their influence, including launching attacks upon other religious groups mainly mainstream Islamic followers and destroyed property. For example, in December 1980, the group targeted worshippers outside the grand mosque in Kano city. The police were released to control the violence, but the Yan Tatsine boycotted their work (Sani 2011). The group went on to launch other attacks against churches, and security posts. The violence hence escalated, and the state government called for help from the federal government.

The then President Shehu Shagari's government intervened and deployed the army (Abegunrin 2003) with the support of the air force to curb the disturbances in the city. The military activities lasted for more than a week. The soldiers targeted and killed some of the Yan Tatsine including Maitsatsine (Adamu 2010). The police mounted roadblocks throughout the city and stopped vehicles to identify the members. They worked with local vigilantes to identify suspects because the vigilantes were familiar with the areas and people (Last 2012). This led to fear among the populations as it resulted in the detention and summary executions of many members as well as the deportation of those members who were from foreign countries.[19] On the other hand, other orthodox Muslims in the city also identified and murdered people who were thought to be part of the Yan Tatsine. Some members managed to flee into remote areas. In the end, the fighting led to more than 4000 deaths including police officers and military personnel while over 8700 people sustained injuries (Sani 2011).

[19] This led to popular belief that foreigners that lived illegally in Nigeria started the conflict though the government refuted such claims.

Despite such heavy-handed military action, Yan Tatsine's activities continued in the north and confrontations persisted between the police and the group whose preaching was still ill-received within the areas they operated. In Borno, in October 1982, the confrontations led to more than 132 deaths[20] in Bulum-Kuttu. The police conducted arrests of suspects, mounted checkpoints and victimized the populations to prevent attacks on the main traditional leader of the state, some security posts, and worship centres (Borno State of Nigeria 1982). In Adamawa, between February and March 1984, the confrontations led to more than 700 deaths[21] and the displacement of close to 6000 people in Jimeta when Yan Tatsine escaped from prison and began to wage violence on surrounding infrastructure (AP 1984). A year later, in Gombe, in April 1985, more than 100 people died from related clashes (Imam 2004). The violence led to the catastrophic destruction of property and the loss of several lives, as well as the emergence of other Islamic groups who also opposed the state. The central government responded to these successive uprisings using the military, resulting in practices of deploying state violence toward northern populations.

Beginning in 1990, several populations living within various southern states began to feel neglect by the government. This is largely because though these states with dominant oil resources supported the economy through its production and exports, its people observed very little benefits from the revenues - the resources were not translated into corresponding economic prosperity or development (Hanson 2007). People from the south begun to mobilize into numerous groups advocating for political influence. These groups were typically based on ethnicity. These groups had aims including the demand for the protection of their deteriorated environment due to the production work of oil companies, and the creation of jobs for several youths. The groups sought greater government attention to the distribution of wealth to these states and engaged in a range of actions, from peaceful protests to violent or direct action.

General Abacha's military government often responded to these demands with force, leading to summary executions of certain members of the diffuse and independent groups. For example, the leader

[20] Other reports say up to 500 people may have died.
[21] Some reports say 1000 people may have died.

and eight members of the Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People faced military execution in 1995 (Pyagbara 2006) for their opposition to Shell's operations in Rivers state. Meanwhile, the oil companies sought security services from the military to enhance their operations especially in the remote areas such as guarding and recovering production equipment, and provided soldiers with support including vehicles to carry out such duties (Pilkington 2009). In the execution of these duties, some local people were also killed because the military often planned operations including raids in the villages. These happenings sparked greater disturbances especially within the Niger Delta region,[22] and other groups emerged mostly from minority ethnic groups with similar demands such as the Ijaw National Congress which the members of the Ijaw ethnic group formed (Afinotan and Ojakorotu 2009).

In 2000, the federal government under President Olusegun Obasanjo deployed various state security agents, including the police, military, and navy to maintain order in Niger Delta. These different arms of the state's security architecture sometimes worked collectively to address violence. To illustrate, the government deployed some police units to the Delta to address vandalism along the oil pipelines (Ajodo-Adebanjoko 2017), while the intelligence services, navy and military coordinated to protect the sea and land areas. This often led to the arrest and detention of suspected offenders or key members of the community. As a softer measure, the president created the Niger Delta Development Commission to ensure increased economic development in the region and provide lasting resolution to the crisis. These different strategies, however, failed to meet the demands of the groups, who continued to contest with the state.

In 2003, officeholders in the region began to employ these groups as their advocates to promote their political ambitions. They often gave the groups rewards especially when they sabotaged the activities of their rivals through harassment of supporters (Bekoe 2005). This made the groups more aggressive as they began to wield influence and use force toward one another and toward residents in the region to exert their authority. It permitted the rise of other local fighters in Niger Delta who were unaffiliated with any of

[22] This consists of the following states: Rivers, Bayelsa, Edo, Delta, Ondo, Cross River, Akwa Ibom, Abia and Imo

the warring groups and who also wanted to use force to maintain control over the oil resources. This led to heightening violence in the region.

Splinter groups thus continued to express their demands through violent actions, including the abductions of employees of oil firms and the destruction of structures that supported oil production (Duffield 2010) to promote their aims. For example, in 2006, the MEND, a diffuse group of local fighters in Delta state mostly youths, commenced violent attacks on oil infrastructure and employees of foreign oil production companies within many areas to project their aims including the demand for the military to leave the Niger Delta region (Hanson 2007). The attacks often led to abductions of employees, who were sometimes taken as hostages, to prompt negotiations with the oil companies and the government.

Obasanjo's administration negotiated with representatives of MEND and made several promises including tailored developmental projects and plans to restore law and order in the region. Despite these negotiations, the government frequently disregarded MEND's demands. The state security agents – particularly, the military – maintained a strong presence in the region, much to the dissatisfaction of local populations. Security agents often responded to any threat of action using force, which frequently led to the killing of MEND's members, acquaintances, and other members of the community. In August 2006, a joint team of soldiers and navy forces targeted and killed 16 members who were involved in negotiations for the discharge of an abducted Shell employee (Okonta, n.d.). This motivated MEND to commit further violence. In May 2007, the group captured 8 foreigners when they hijacked a ship in Delta state. They released the abductees the next day. That same month, they captured an oil tanker near Sangana in Bayelsa state and abducted five foreigners and a Nigerian who worked for an oil firm. They released these persons without harm after a period of 19 days (Okafor 2011). In subsequent years, the group became more violent again. In September 2008, they attacked Chevron, another oil firm, and Shell in Delta state. In the attack on Shell premises, they murdered one person, injured four and destroyed property (Adams 2008). They stole and damaged oil resources with cheap sale of oil products. As these activities led to a significant reduction in

Nigeria's capability to produce oil (Mwakideu 2020), the government renewed its intervention into the unfolding crisis in its southern states.

Under the new administration of President Musa Yar'Adua, the military began operations in the sea, airspace and land areas in Niger Delta in 2009 to put an end to the instability (Rice 2009). Police conducted arrests of suspects, and many were jailed. Three months later, the government began an amnesty program which permitted the members of the various groups including those members who were facing criminal charges, to be exempted from prosecution if they gave up their arms. More than 26,800 individuals returned their weapons and arms through this amnesty program, in exchange for offers including employment, training, and allowances, as well as career advice and re-integration into society (Canada: Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada 2011). Some heads of many warring parties took advantage of this offer, and their integration into government and society brought some of the violence in the region under control.[23]

Boko Haram

"Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'awati wal-Jihad" or "People Committed to the Prophet's Teachings for Propagation and Jihad" (Solomon 2015) is an insurgent group which aims to establish an Islamic state and exercise government authority using sharia in Nigeria. It has strong disapproval of Western culture such as education and employment by the Nigerian government (Matfess 2017), and advocates the use of violence in the disassociation from and renunciation of such values in favour of the reestablishment of Islamic traditions in society (Bello 2017). Such disagreement with this culture led to its labelling within local communities as "Boko Haram"[24] – symbolic for "western education is prohibited" (Adesoji 2011).

[23] Although several groups persist with similar aims and continue to demand for fairer share of the revenues from the oil resources in the region.
[24] The people of Bauchi first gave this name to the group.

Based on a narrow and strict understanding of the Quran, the group rejects man-made rules and sources of authority such as the Nigerian government as divine rule and Islamic laws should be paramount in the control of society. It adheres to the view that through fighting or jihad,[25] followers of Islam may be able to live according to the sharia as people's freedom and the liberty of Muslim communities remain possible under such laws (Bello 2017). To promote such aims, it often employs political (Onuoha 2014), social and cultural narratives (Kassim 2015) such as the corrupt undertakings of state officials to gain local approval.

In 2002,[26] in Maiduguri, the capital of Borno state, this group emerged with Mohammed Yusuf as its leader. Yusuf's teachings projected rigid adherence to the Quran, and mainly opposed the secular government, western education, and modern science (Murtada 2013) because these were in contradiction to Islam. He often criticized the Nigerian government and blamed politicians for major problems among northern populations including joblessness and illiteracy. He thus advocated the replacement of the government and promoted jihad to enable Muslims to live according to Islamic principles which would promote their lives, order, justice and fairness within the society (Aguwa 2017). Through these actions, he attracted attention in Maiduguri mostly from idle youths (Boyle 2009) who felt that the government was not meeting their needs including demands for employment.

Within the state, Yusuf was well-known among officeholders. He and his devotees helped political aspirants including Ali Modu Sheriff, the All-Nigeria People's Party gubernatorial candidate, to win elections, with a view to further the aims of the group including the establishment of sharia in Borno. For instance, when Sheriff became governor, a prominent member of this group became a public figure who managed religious matters in the state government (Olojo 2013). Islamic laws were, however, not implemented in the state, and this group became divided over the need to travel elsewhere to achieve their

[25] However, since its inception, the group has been divided over which forms of jihad to conduct – local or international - in the furtherance of its aims (see Kassim 2018).
[26] There is contention over the exact date of group's formation.

desires. Some members departed from Yusuf and settled in neighbouring Yobe state where they established an independent neighbourhood governed under rigid Islamic rules (Azumah 2015). They became known as the Nigerian Taliban (Walker 2012).

In Yobe, the Taliban's activities often led to violent interactions with law enforcement agents and the then President Obasanjo's administration confronted them by releasing state security forces particularly the military. This mainly resulted in the death their members. For example, at the end of 2003, in Kanama town, Yobe state, military deployment to a village mosque led to the death of more than 60 members of the group who had argued with inhabitants over the right to fish in the water sources within the community (Walker 2012, 3). Due to such resistance from the state security agents and the local communities in Yobe, some Taliban members returned to Maiduguri, and reunited with Yusuf. The locals named the new group "Yusufiyya" or followers of Yusuf (Azumah 2015).

In Borno, due to his extremist views, Yusuf often faced opposition. Some religious leaders prohibited him from teaching at worship centres while the media blocked his participation in events. He, therefore, resorted to preaching outside his home where he continued to chastise the government and oppose western culture. He received voluntary financial contributions from both affluent persons and underprivileged families (Ujah et al. 2009) who welcomed his opinions. He and his devotees often inhabited places that were isolated from the wider community. Across the north, in states including Sokoto, the recordings of these teachings began to circulate, and Yusuf gained the approval of many populations in those areas. Thus, his support based widened.

The state security agents monitored the activities of Yusufiyya and apprehended some suspects including businessmen. They paid little attention to the group because they were involved in many social activities. These social activities were manifestations of the establishment of an independent state beginning in Maiduguri that Yusuf and his assistant, Abubakar Shekau, planned. These leaders began to create the state by building an army, legislature, business sector, and Islamic courts that expanded into neighbouring states such as Chad with their own territorial leaders who served Yusuf (Obodo 2014). Yusuf left Borno to

pursue education in the Middle East to avoid further scrutiny from the state security agents. He returned a year later, and his group continued with their operations. Due to interpersonal connections between officeholders in Borno and some Yusufiyya who were from affluent families, the state government ignored their activities to prevent provocation from members of the group (Boyle 2009). Yusuf, therefore, maintained his support among the people. The group then spread their activities into other states including Bauchi and Niger, and the federal government continued to pay less attention to them.

In 2007, Governor Sheriff stood for re-election in Borno, and retained his seat through support from Yusuf's group. The following year, residents in Maiduguri began to face several attacks from armed men who engaged in activities including robbery, kidnapping, and harassment in many areas of the city (T-Classic Communications 2008). They called for help from the state government to reduce fear and enhance security. Governor Sheriff sought federal assistance to restore order, and the then President Yar'Adua, deployed a combined team of police, air force and military to many local government areas to safeguard the people. In this city, the police, and military often patrolled important locations that had government buildings, major roads, and high commercial activity, with assistance from the air force when needed. These state security agents mainly enforced the law including new rules for riders of motorcycles to use helmets. Nevertheless, Yusuf's devotees often resisted them and refused to obey the regulations.

In July 2009, in Maiduguri, an altercation transpired between some devotees who were riding motorcycles without helmets and a combined team of military and police patrolling the area. The police shot indiscriminately at the group, and 17 members lost their lives (Sani 2011). Yusuf preached vengeance of these deaths and called for his members across the north to rise against the state security agents in defence of their religion and the installation of an Islamic state. His supporters listened and fought against the security agents mostly police in several northern states including Bauchi (House of Representatives 2011). The violence spread to other states such as Yobe and Kano as these supporters attacked several security posts and murdered personnel who confronted their contemptuous acts against state actors, and individuals such as religious leaders that condemned operations of the group.

State police often responded to these attacks while the local government administrations such as Bauchi government, conducted arrests and detained the insurgents to maintain law and order. To contain the widespread violence, President Yar'Adua deployed increased numbers of police and military to the affected states. This led to more than 300 deaths of mostly members of the group (BBC 2009), as the state security agents released hostages, arrested terror suspects and searched private homes.

In Borno, the military and police sought after Yusuf for causing the disorder. The military pursued his supporters and killed several of them (Zeenews 2009) while Yusuf sought refuge in his father-in-law's home. The soldiers located him in that residence and gave him to the police who murdered him.

The Nigerian government had defeated the group as deployment of the military caused its destruction and the death of Yusuf and other members (Agbiboa 2014). However, Yusuf's death sparked outrage among his devotees, and this commenced the insurgency and the formation of Boko Haram.

In 2010, Boko Haram resurfaced with a new leader, Abubakar Shekau, Yusuf's deputy, whom state officials claimed had been killed earlier (Akinyelure 2016). Shekau disclosed the establishment of an Islamic jurisdiction in the northeast and prohibited Muslims from partaking in any socio-political activities that were seen to be Western including attending government schools. In the local communities, those who did not follow such rules and maintained western practices began to face punishment such as persecution.

The group continued to spread its teachings which included Allah's consent to the wrongdoings and actions of the discontented members of society (Aguwa 2017). Its leaders permitted activities including breaking into financial institutions, committing murder, and sexual violence towards women which were seen to be essential elements of the "religious" war (Ibrahim 2010)[27] against the government to ensure the dominance of Islam in the administration of the state (Tracy 2014). Thus, Boko Haram projected its own understanding of the Quran and Islamic principles (Durie 2014) which appealed to new members such as

[27] These acts are commonly associated with jihad and are often permitted during this period.

local thieves who readily accepted its aims and disregarded other Islamic teachings that promote tolerance, kindness, and benevolence towards others.

The spread of its beliefs was crucial for the group to demonstrate its potential to offer a desirable alternative government. Nonetheless, projecting such beliefs did not always pave way for the armed group to gain local influence within several northeastern communities. In Yobe, Boko Haram mainly engaged in random acts such as forced recruitment of youths from cities such as Potiskum as many people initially rejected them. When the insurgents began to target communities in other northern states including Gombe and Bauchi, they further could not leverage such ideological and religious beliefs to maintain relations with the people. Within such states, several factors including the presence of majority non-Kanuri ethnic groups, the teachings of Islamic leaders, support from community leaders and traditional rulers toward the people prevented the spread of insurgent operations across communities (Olojo 2020). Boko Haram thus could not cultivate a militant lifestyle among the people especially new members (Pieri and Zenn 2018) because the population's trust, support and devotion (Agbiboa 2020; MacEachern 2018; Pieri 2019) toward the group was largely absent. The insurgents hence focused more on launching attacks and spreading violence, rather than turning attention toward its ideas to penetrate such communities.

They launched more severe attacks and began to spread their operations towards the central parts of the country such as Abuja and Koji state, as well as southern areas like Ogun state. In these areas, Boko Haram's ideology remained extremely unpopular although significant numbers of the population follow Islam and other community members adhere to the teachings of other faiths mainly Christianity. In short, Boko Haram used several strategies to enhance its aims, but did not instrumentalize its beliefs in all the areas that the group operated because social dynamics often dictated its ability to maintain influence.

The new president Goodluck Jonathan setup a coordination between state security agencies such as the Immigration Service and the National Security and Civil Defence Corps (Njoku 2017) to confront

the escalating violence. The Nigerian government introduced legal measures in response[28] (Ibrahim 2010). For example, in May 2013, military forces were deployed through the imposition of a state of emergency in the northeastern states including Yobe, Adawarma and Borno (Hemba 2013). The central government further mandated the implementation of local curfews to guard the routines of residents in these areas.

Despite the deployment of security personnel to some troubled areas, not all Boko Haram attacks attracted government responses. For instance, in January 2014, when Boko Haram attacked people in the village of Alau Ngawo Fate in Jere LGA, they caused 18 deaths (Vanguard 2014). There was no response to this incident. Police and military in the area confirmed that the insurgents had bombed people's homes and shops but said they did not have further details about the incident including the number of deaths.

Local vigilante groups emerged in affected areas to safeguard residents from Boko Haram attacks in the absence of the police force and military in locations including Gamburo, Borno state (Simpson 2014). Meanwhile, state officials blamed inadequate military equipment, resources and logistical tools for the lack of response to the security situation (Nossiter 2014a) when, for example, the central government failed to disclose state efforts to assist victims of the Chibok girls abduction in 2014.

On occasion, neighbouring governments also assisted the Nigerian government in the response to Boko Haram. The governments close to Lake Chad including Cameroon had experienced the in-flux of foreigners, arms and attacks as the Boko Haram crisis and other security issues in the region increased (Albert 2017). The Boko Haram crisis became a major security threat to more than one state thus Niger, Chad, Cameroon and Nigeria came together to form the Multi-National Joint Task Force (MNJTF)[29] in October 2014 (Assanvo, Abatan, and Sawadogo 2016), and Sawadogo 2016). With the mandate to combat

[28] In the most affected states especially Borno, not all Local Government Areas received the legal measures of protection. Not all such areas were under curfew, for example, or the state of emergency.

[29] The MNJTF has been formed many times with different duties and member states at several periods. In 1998, the MNJTF was formed among Nigeria, Chad, and Niger to address general matters of security across national borders within the Lake Chad area. As at 2012, the MNJTF duties focused mainly on controlling terrorism and combatting Boko Haram (Albert 2017, 123–25). In 2017, Benin joined the MNJTF with a contribution of 150 military forces within Lake Chad area to address Boko Haram activities (Punch 2017)

Boko Haram and other terror groups, protect terrorism-affected populations, restore and maintain government control among other duties, the MNJTF began operations, however, at the end of January 2015 when the African Union endorsed the release of MNJTF personnel (Assanvo, Abatan, and Sawadogo 2016, 2). The states that experienced Boko Haram attacks such as Niger and Chad commenced security operations against Boko Haram in north-eastern Nigeria. These governments chased Boko Haram out of some localities such as Malumfatori as Chadian military action led to the release of Boko Haram hostages and dispersed Boko Haram.

Under Muhammadu Buhari's presidency, the Nigerian government made modifications to the security forces such as replacement of superiors in the military and arrest and detention of officials like the National Security Adviser suspected of forging expenses towards acquiring military weapons and tools (Amnesty International 2016). While Boko Haram split into two insurgent groups (Busari 2016), Buhari's government pursued hard-core military activities with the help of neighbouring states to re-establish state authority in Boko Haram controlled areas. For instance, in 2016, the government controlled many northeastern areas like Kawuri (BBC 2015b) and destroyed various Boko Haram bases in the Sambisa Forest (Reuters in Abuja 2016). Some of these intense government actions were miscalculated and led to widespread disruption and in some cases the destruction of civilian lives. For example, coordination between the Nigerian military and the air force led to the bombing of an organized civilian settlement and killed at least 50 people[30] as security personnel assumed Boko Haram presence at that location (Sieff 2017).

The Nigerian government has largely been unsuccessful in countering the Boko Haram insurgency, although its military recorded several successes elsewhere in the continent. It has been involved in facilitating and brokering peace in several war-torn countries throughout the late twentieth century, as well as sending peacekeeping troops to address security problems in neighboring states. This foreign involvement indicates that the military's capacity and resources are not the primary obstacle to overcoming

[30] Adverse consequences of security operations for civilian populations (both premeditated and unintended) are discussed in a separate chapter (Chapter 7).

domestic insecurity. It is also evident from the above history that other security agencies, including the police, local vigilantes, and foreign military personnel, are involved in combat against Boko Haram. Despite the participation and involvement of myriad different stakeholders, Boko Haram attacks continue to elicit inconsistent responses from the government. This contradicts the expectation that heightened fatalities from insurgent attacks dictate government responses (eg.: Overgaard 1994).

The Structure and Organization of the Nigerian Military

The Nigerian military is part of the armed forces which the President of the country supervises. It has the constitutional responsibility of suppressing rebellion and protecting the land territory. During elections, it may be deployed to ensure safety within the states. The organization and administration of this security agency has transformed since the post-independence era.

When the Nigerians took charge of the nation's armed forces from the British, the military grew larger as more educated people especially from the south (Igbos) were enlisted to work alongside the existing force who were typically from smaller ethnic groups and unschooled (Stafford 1984). The new government controlled these state security agents and often favoured the more educated personnel because of their competences thus ignoring the experiences of the unschooled ones. One result of this was that the soldiers from minor ethnic groups remained in lower ranks while those from major ethnic groups assumed higher positions at younger ages. This created important challenges such as deepened animosity between personnel as their ethnic backgrounds became a condition to gain opportunities of appointment, deployment and recruitment (Omeni 2022). Such hostilities and ethnic biases have persisted and underpinned organizational practices within the military.

Since the first coup, successive governments have expanded the structure of the military mostly to address emergent security threats within the country. Under military rulers,[31] the government established

[31] The military controlled Nigeria from 1966 to 1999 with a brief handover to civilians between 1979 and 1983.

the Chief of Army Staff as the head of the military forces to report directly to the national leader. It created new formations mostly made up of ground troops to fight the Biafran war. Three divisions across various regions were set up to manage security operations, each with a leader – 1st Division in the northwest: 2nd Division in the southwest, and 3rd Division in the northeast respectively. The military officials later formed the 82nd Division in 1975 to oversee the southeast and south-south regions. The military was thus regionalized in its operations.

Throughout the period of non-democratic rule, the military government lacked international support and financial assistance. It gradually reduced its responsibilities toward other state security agencies including the police whose departments such as the secret service were exterminated and whose duties were reduced to mostly offer protection to public figures (Siollun 2021). This further expanded the military's authority amongst all the state security agents[32] as the officers diverted more funding towards the acquisition of resources mainly sophisticated machinery and equipment for battle. Hence, compared to other countries in western and central Africa, the Nigerian military became the most equipped to fight wars and undertake external interventions in other states before the 1990s (H. C. Metz 1992). It spearheaded interventions in other West African countries including Liberia and Sierra Leone to restore order and reinstate the government and its institutions with higher troop contributions (Mahmud 2022). These interventions usually were successful as, for instance, in Liberia, where over eighty percent of the peacekeepers came from Nigeria, the implementation of a ceasefire agreement ended the civil war in 2003.

Despite these significant achievements, the military's strength grew weaker because its officials largely ignored training of troops under their command and failed to maintain or replace outdated weaponry. This resulted in their inability to contain local conflicts and the misuse of available machinery such as Alpha fighter jets and surface-to-air missiles to fight land battles (Howe 2001, 41). It particularly enabled abuses upon civilians during operations, as the work of the soldiers were not monitored. The military thus

[32] This has not changed, as the military continues to compete with these security agencies for more resources and influence during periods of crisis.

developed tense relations with the populations because they engaged in more violent activities such as extrajudicial killings, torture and forced detention while on the field. These issues of neglect of both troops and equipment have prevailed as obstacles in the performance and work of personnel and continue to define the relations between the military and the government in Nigeria. They have created further problems such as the refusal of western governments to support personnel with weapons amidst security challenges because of the fear that these ammunitions can be used to cause more harms toward the population (Premium Times 2014b).

When civilians briefly controlled government, they created a chain of command in the military that placed the President in charge of their affairs. The President appointed all the leaders of the state security agencies (Defence Headquarters, n.d.). In 1980, the Chief of Army Staff began working under the Chief of Defence Staff – another position that was created for the topmost official of the armed forces who is also a military officer. The latter works under the defence minister, who reports to the President, the Commander-in-chief. This structure has remained since 1999 when the federal government gained command of this security agency and began to nationalize its operations (Aboluwoye 2019).

The structure of the military is currently as follows. The Nigerian Army Council within the Ministry of Defence governs personnel and all matters concerning their operations. The military is divided into 10 departments – administration, policy and plans, special services and programs, training and operations, civil-military affairs, welfare limited / guarantee, army-public relations, transformation and innovation centre, army logistics and cyber warfare command. Each department has its own executive head and may have smaller bureaus to support its operations.

To handle day-to-day tasks, the military has a total of 20 corps and services. The corps mainly involved in warfare are the Corps of Artillery that provide fire support and weaponry to various military units; Armoured Corps which offer logistical and technical assistance including vehicles and ammunitions; and The Infantry Corps Centre that consists of ground troops working to secure the land territory (Nigerian

Army, n.d.-a). Many corps perform roles of support to the troops. As an example, the Intelligence Corps gathers information about threats within the local environment and from foreign sources while the Nigerian Army Finance Corps administers the finances of the military by receiving, disbursing and managing funds allocated to its activities and personnel such as allowances and salaries (Nigerian Army Finance Corps, n.d.). No other government institution handles military finances or audits them because of its political sensitivity. Other units provide services to the military. For instance, the Electrical and Mechanical Engineers inspect and repair equipment, Islamic Affairs and Chaplain Services provide religious counsel and support to soldiers and their families; while Army Public Relations produces publications, explains and interprets policies, and manages public information during conflict. The duties of the corps often change at different periods of war and peacetime. To illustrate, Corp of Military Police during peacetime carry out operations such as crime prevention and detection, but during conflict, they may perform other functions such as guarding supply routes and managing refugees.

The military maintains a hierarchy of command for operations with different heads controlling each unit. From the top to bottom, these are the headquarters; divisions; brigades; regiments or battalions; companies; platoons and sections. The headquarters organize activities within the divisions. A division consists of at least two brigades, and support teams for combat and combat related duties with whom it may collaborate. The brigade consists of several units, three battalions and other support teams. The battalion is the main unit for combat and support that can operate independently.

Personnel in these different units administer their duties within the formation that controls a specific administrative area. Currently, there are 10 formations – 1st Division, 2nd Division, 3rd Division, 6th Division, 7th Division, 8th Division, 81st Division, 82nd Division, Guards Brigade and TRADOC (Nigerian Army, n.d.-c). The duties of TRADOC include training personnel, coordinating other formations during operations, and testing weaponry and equipment. The Guards Brigade provide services such as guarding the President, the presidential accommodation, and visitors to it, as well as security provision during ceremonies.

On the other hand, the divisions have separate duties. The 1st Division, 2nd Division, 3rd Division, and 82nd Division each maintain their regional oversight. Some divisions specially protect areas with significant economic and natural resources. The 81st Division was established in 2002, and operates in the states of Lagos and Ogun - the financial and economic hubs while the 6th Division was established in 2016 and operates in four states in the Niger Delta region – Akwa Ibom, Enugu, Bayelsa, and Delta - to guard gas and oil infrastructure and assets (Abayomi 2016). In terms of manpower, the 1st Division, 2nd Division, 3rd Division, and 81st Division comprise ground troops equipped with armoured vehicles working alongside associated units that can engage in battle and assist with combat related duties. Only the 82nd Division is made up of combined personnel with associated units for combat, and its related functions (Nigerian Army, n.d.-b).

Other divisions handle issues of insecurity in certain areas of the country. The 7th Division made up of infantry soldiers was formed in 2013 in Maiduguri, Borno, (Premium Times 2016) to combat terror activities, insurgency, and armed banditry in the northeast in the states of Yobe, Adamawa, and Borno[33]. The 8th Division was established in Sokoto state in 2017 to reduce violence from cattle rustling, banditry, and abductions in north-western states such as Zamfara and Sokoto (Umar 2022).

Like in the past, civilian leaders usually make appointments within the military leadership that demonstrate co-ethnic and regional affiliation. For instance, a President elected from the south normally chooses military heads from that region while a leader elected from the north often appoints leaders with northern backgrounds. Due to these interpersonal relations, appointed officials usually overlook official procedure and report directly to the President (Shehu 2019). The appointments are made with the approval of the National Assembly for a term of two years (Iroegbu and Obi 2017). They can be terminated or renewed provided that the appointee has not reached the age of retirement. In case of sudden termination, this decision can be contested in the courts especially when it is implemented without legislative approval.

[33] These days, the military and other agencies including the Air Force have established a Theatre Command like the JTF to oversee counterinsurgency operations in the northeast especially in Borno.

Further, the President commonly reshuffles or removes the military officials to promote a balance in ethnic representation (Andrews and Iroegbu 2014). Especially when a new political party assumes power, or when violence across the country is protracted, such changes can be made.

Despite these strategies, civilian control over military affairs remains weak. Military officials continue to misappropriate funds which have been allocated toward addressing the different security challenges across the state (Kazeem 2015). Many incumbents fail to prosecute appointed officials during their term of office. New leaders usually prosecute such offenders from previous administrations in a show of power and revenge while maintaining their own appointed officials for longer periods in office. Thus, military officials and their activities remain unaccountable to the public.

Conclusion

In Nigeria, distinct social relations exist between the diverse populations, and between the government and the people. The military maintains more influence as different governments have not been able to manage personnel or control their activities to ensure effective operations. Thus, I interrogate responses to violence in such a context with competing local demands and numerous social affinities between state actors, state security agents, and the people to understand how security is maintained.

Chapter 4 - Methods

Introduction

This chapter explains how I use qualitative approaches to examine variation in militarized responses to violence. First, I briefly describe the case of Nigeria. I then explain my data collection process; I show how I build a map to create a visual representation of insurgent attacks to analyze corresponding government security responses. I discuss my approach to analyzing alternative explanations, and then document my interviewee selection process and fieldwork. Finally, I explain how I triangulate data from my interviews, and draw on secondary sources to address the research question at hand.

The Case of Nigeria

I approach the research question by using a case study of variation in military responses to Boko Haram attacks in Northern Nigeria (Gerring 2004). This allows me to carry out an in-depth investigation into the Nigerian case and identify conclusions about government action during periods of violence that can potentially extend to other cases. At the subnational level, Nigeria exhibits across-case and within-case variation in the government responses to Boko Haram attacks. I focus on the three states in the northeast facing the most pronounced insurgent attacks, namely Borno, Yobe and Adamawa. These states have important differences and similarities to enable fruitful comparison. While all the states have larger numbers of Muslims, and fewer Christian populations, different ethnic groups occupy majority status in each of these states. I leverage the logic of a most different systems design to help elucidate the patterns that are common across and within the three states.

I focus on the period 2010 to 2016. In 2010, the re-emergence of Boko Haram under a new leader led to heightened crisis, discussed further in Chapter Three. In 2016, the group was, however, divided into two separate factions with new leaders who controlled different areas in the north and outside the country. This period of analysis, therefore, allows for an examination of government responses over time at a period

when the insurgent group operated as a cohesive single unit. It allows me to analyze spatial and temporal variation by highlighting insurgent attack areas and corresponding government action.

Data collection

In seeking to understand how and why government security responses to insurgent violence varies so dramatically from incident to incident, the initial phase of my research began with the identification of major attacks and a mapping of these incidents.

First, I compiled a comprehensive database of attacks in Nigeria using data from ACLED (Raleigh et al. 2010). ACLED draws upon media reports of armed activities, protests, and political violence globally as they happen. It provides details including casualty figures, areas under attack, perpetrators of violence, and type of violent activity. These details also include notes which describe a terror incident and the deployment of state security agents to the areas of attack. In my dataset, I selected all Boko Haram attacks against civilians including attacks on security agents that led to civilian fatalities. I excluded attacks that generated less than five fatalities because the government was unlikely to respond to attacks that resulted in few fatalities given that violent incidents are common and recurrent across the state. Further, I verified incidents using Nigerian news reports, international media coverage, documentaries, and official reports to remove attacks by other armed groups or attacks with no association to Boko Haram which fell outside the scope of my analysis. I excluded incidents in the areas that are geographically unidentifiable due to missing names or lack of documentation as the government was less likely to obtain information about them, and, therefore, less likely to respond. I removed attacks solely against government establishments and security agents because of my focus on civilian fatalities. Where news reports and other sources included information on the deployment of security agents to areas of attack, I recorded this in the dataset.

Second, I consulted government documents, books, articles, video uploads, documentaries, public reports, press releases and parliamentary documents for information on government responses to each

incident. From these sources, I identified various entities involved in formal security sector responses.[34] The main actors include military personnel, police, and intelligence services who are part of the government. These stakeholders and agencies are sometimes supported by air-force, who normally operate in major cities, towns, or in villages and their environs with security posts. Their duties often include construction of roadblocks, barricading affected areas, air strikes, inspection of affected locations, investigations, shooting and arrest of insurgents. They may help to reconstruct the affected communities by performing other duties such as accompanying returning residents to their original places of abode, building schools and roads. Further, government security agencies may be supported by the deployment of foreign military who normally operate in border towns and remote areas. These personnel are present largely because of joint security negotiations with external governments. They are part of security operations to recover areas under insurgent control.

Additionally, and as will be discussed further in the subsequent chapters, government militias, vigilante groups, and self-defence organizations are also frequently engaged in government collaboration. These comprise diffuse vigilantes and hunters' associations that are usually under the control of the traditional rulers. They are existent groups already engaged in security provision in local areas. They wield crude weapons such as machetes and usually operate in cities, villages, and towns. They may independently respond to insurgent attacks. Sometimes, the state governments can mobilize these groups or form a new set to support security operations. Such state sanctioned groups[35] are known as the CJTF. They mostly work with the military to fight insurgents and operate in several affected areas including remote villages and towns which are often not easily accessible to state actors. They have responsibilities such as the identification of terror suspects or insurgent hideouts and may provide combat support to personnel during

[34] It is possible for local populations including unorganized groups with no affiliations to government or to armed groups to respond to insurgent attacks on their own. However, these groups are excluded for the purposes of this project.

[35] I also exclude responses from non-sanctioned local security groups because these groups are not affiliated with the government.

security operations. They may be stationed in insurgent target areas like marketplaces equipped with weapons such as guns and ready to fight insurgents, with military on standby, for example.

Based on the functions of these security agents during attacks, I present a typology of government security responses which I construct in the three categories – interventionist government security responses, partial government security responses and absent government security responses. I use these designations to describe the government's action and intervention when an attack occurred.

Interventionist Government Security Response:

This is when security agents informed of an attack, arrive and encounter insurgents. It involves any action that directly affects insurgents, results in reprisals against suspected insurgents, or leads to rescue of civilian lives. For example, on 10 January 2016, Boko Haram suspects launched a raid in Madagali, Adamawa, burnt 10 homes killing seven persons and injuring two. The police confirmed the attack and destruction caused while the soldiers arrived at the location, and pursued the attackers into the bush (ENCA 2016). Such responses most typically – although not always – occur in state capitals, major cities, and towns with the presence of security agents or in areas which are known to be prone to criminal activity.

Partial Government Security Response:

This is when security agents informed of an attack, arrive without encountering insurgents. It involves any action that does not directly affect insurgents or lead to the rescue of civilian lives. It may involve a delayed response that includes the retrieval of dead bodies after an attack or only conducting arrests after the fact. For example, on 2 July 2012, when Boko Haram reportedly attacked a construction site close to the Islamic Centre in Maiduguri and slit the throats of the workers causing 9 fatalities (Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor 2012), the Joint Task Force "rushed" to the location only to collect corpses to the hospital. They made efforts to find the perpetrators but did not conduct arrests of suspects (Marama 2012b).

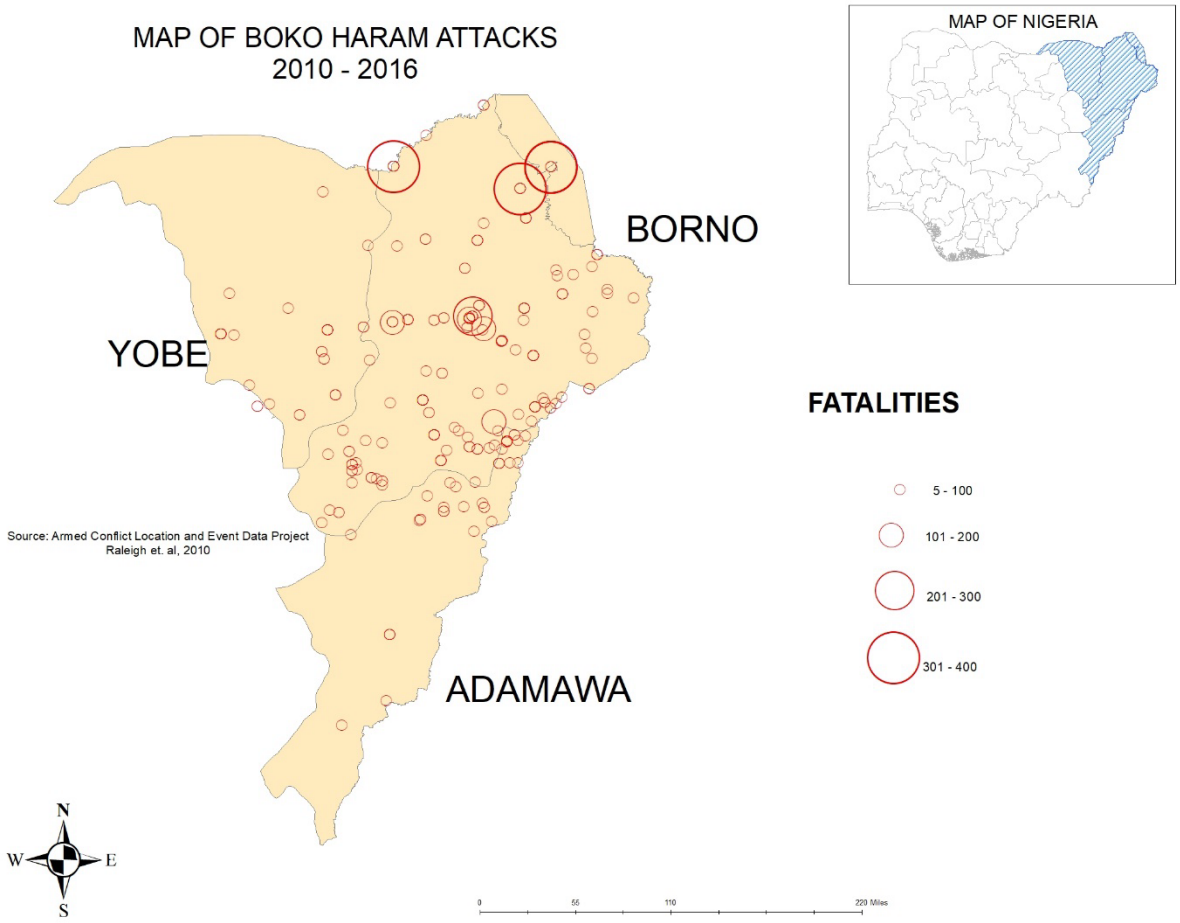
Absent Government Security Response:

This means no security agents were present in an area during an attack, and the security sector did not act even when present. It may also capture contexts wherein security agents fled an attack location. For example, on 5 May 2014, Boko Haram entered a marketplace in Gamboru, Borno, and shot into crowds for more than five hours. They slid the throats of the people and set fire into the shops that led to at least 100 deaths. There was no immediate response from the military or police present in the area, and the soldiers who arrived later also remained at the barracks. State officials and parliamentarians confirmed the attack two days afterwards when the number of deaths had risen to more than 300 (Nossiter 2014b).

Third, I created a map of the insurgent attacks to evaluate various competing explanations. At this mapping stage of the research, I used ArcGIS - a software for the creation, organization, and analysis of spatial data - to construct a meaningful visual representation of the attacks. I verified geographical coordinates of each attack area using the University of Minnesota's Polar Geospatial Center's Coordinate Converter to find decimal degrees of latitudes and longitudes and placed the coordinates of each area next to the incident. I repeated this information for areas that faced several attacks or appeared more than once in the data. This mapping exercise was a time-consuming undertaking since several locations of attacks especially the villages which bear local names are not well documented. Thus it was hard to identify them for the purposes of verification of incidents, and reconstruction of security sector responses. Nonetheless, the map permitted me to evaluate whether proximity to urban centers, or to military or police headquarters, could explain the variation observed.

I identified 371 attacks as shown in Figure 1 below that resulted in at least 5 fatalities across the three states. Of these, 277 attacks occurred in Borno, 39 attacks occurred in Yobe, and 55 attacks happened in Adamawa.

Figure 1: Boko Haram attacks from 2010 to 2016 and resultant fatalities.



Across all three states, 65 attacks were reported to state security personnel. Out of this number, there were 24 interventionist responses, 27 partial responses, and 14 absent responses. These 65 reported incidents are the focus of my analysis, since militaries cannot respond to incidents that were unknown to them at the time. Therefore, while there were 371 attacks in total identified in my data, my research suggested that only 65 incidents caught the attention of the Nigerian security services. While it is possible that other dynamics affected the remaining 306 incidents, my research focused on tracing the striking variation in responses to incidents for which the military had clear and immediate knowledge of.

In Borno, 20 attacks attracted an interventionist response; 13 attacks attracted a partial response; and 11 attacks garnered no response at all. In Yobe, 1 attack provoked an interventionist response; 3 attacks attracted a partial response, and 2 attacks provoked no response. In Adamawa - 3 attacks provoked an interventionist response; 11 attacks attracted a partial response, and 1 attack received no response. Within these states, there was spatial and temporal variation in government action against Boko Haram. For example, within three LGAs in Borno, namely, Maiduguri, Konduga and Chibok, there were both partial and absent responses to insurgent attacks in the city of Maiduguri, community of Konduga, and Chibok town, respectively. Similarly, in Adamawa, there were interventionist, partial, and absent responses to attacks in Madagali town within Madagali LGA.

Analyzing the visual representation of the map alongside the information on responses in my dataset, I identified two key features of government responses. First, there is significant geographical variation in whether the government responded with the complete force of its military and police service, laying to rest the notion that African governments lack the capacity for robust security responses. Second, the scale of an insurgent attack, nor its proximity to a military base nor an urban center, does not determine the nature of response.

During this final period of desk-based research, I scrutinized a variety of alternative explanations to control for other potential factors shaping government responses. These included geographical location, electoral incentives, and intergovernmental cooperation. I found that these, however, do not hold explanatory power in the Nigerian case. I take each of them in turn and explain with examples from the three states.

Assessing Alternative Explanations: State Capacity

Some scholars argue that the state's military and regulatory capabilities (Hendrix and Young 2014b; Blankenship 2018) can shape responses to violence. While this is certainly true in many contexts,

proximity to an attack does not prove persuasive in the case of the Nigerian government's response Boko Haram. We might expect that those attacks that take place proximate to military bases should provoke robust security responses, whereas those further afield would receive absent responses. I could not verify several locations of military bases in north-eastern Nigeria as multiple requests to the military for such information failed. I was, nonetheless, able to leverage ample qualitative evidence to demonstrate that proximity to military bases was not a determining factor in security sector responses. I provide two examples below that illustrate the many discrepancies that my research reveals.

From 3 - 7 January 2015, Boko Haram insurgents attacked Baga, a border town in Borno, and surrounding areas, shot sporadically at residents, and killed about 150 people.[36] There is a military base inside the town, which is home to different personnel including soldiers from neighboring countries such as Chad and Niger, that occupied and worked together with the Nigerian military to fight Boko Haram. Yet, despite the visibility of the attack, there was no immediate response to the violence, and the insurgents captured the town. Its residents denied the report from the federal government that the state had deployed the Nigerian Air Force to the town to launch air strikes against the insurgents. No soldiers were visible in the area when the incident occurred (BBC 2015a). Thus, the location of the military base within the town was insufficient to prompt a response. The specificities of this incident suggest that other factors were at play.

On the other hand, on 29 June 2014, Boko Haram insurgents launched attacks on at least three worship centers in Kwada village, Borno, causing more than thirty deaths (Agencies 2014). As the attacks happened, vigilante groups at that location, with back up from both the military and police. There was no military base located close to the village, and state police said poor networks prevented their ability to contact the nearest police post in Chibok, a town six miles away from Kwada, to respond. The military, nonetheless, arrived hours later and responded in force with gun fire against the militants even though no

[36] Conflicting reports say more than 2,000 people died.

personnel were present at the location when it occurred, and the nearby police were not dispatched. The lack of military presence at or proximity to the location did not deter the response. I used a combination of qualitative interviews, media coverage, and other secondary sources to reconstruct the military's responses to incidents of Boko Haram violence resulting in five or more casualties and found that geographical location and proximity could not explain the variation observed.

Assessing Alternative Explanations: Electoral Incentives

Other scholars suggest that governments often make careful calculations that weigh electoral benefits and other political payoffs (De Mesquita 2007) against costs of intervention and the provision of security alongside other public goods (S. Wilkinson 2004; Nellis, Weaver, and Rosenzweig 2016). The risk of terror attacks can impact the number of electoral votes for parties (Getmansky and Zeitzoff 2014), therefore, based on partisan interests (Lonardo 2019; Nanes 2017) and electoral schedules (Aksoy 2018), national executives deploy security responses selectively. When there is party competition including contestation between two majority parties (S. Wilkinson 2004), governments deploy responses to groups and populations likely to generate electoral support.[37] Alternatively, governments may neglect or deploy punitive responses in areas offering few electoral gains. In Western Europe, electoral incentives drove incumbent governments to harmonize repression in their responses to minority groups' mobilization and protest (Bleich, Caeiro, and Luehrman 2010). This leads to the expectation that attacks occurring in areas where incumbents normally win majority votes will attract more robust military responses, whereas those attacks in areas where incumbents do not win majority votes would not.

While I began the project anticipating that electoral politics would most convincingly account for variation in government responsiveness, my examination of electoral maps alongside locations of insurgent violence, accompanied by interviews interogating this explanation, did not generate support for such patterns in my data. Of note, within the period of study the federal government under the PDP was more

[37] This is often the case for the distribution of state resources (Franck and Rainer 2012; Kramon and Posner 2016).

responsive to attacks within areas that the ruling party often attracted fewer votes, for example, in Borno, and categorically did not pay more attention to areas where it consistently won majority votes.

Assessing Alternative Explanations: Intergovernmental Coordination

Other scholars point to the ways in which internal coordination within governments shapes state action toward violence. This literature demonstrates that especially within federal systems, alignment between the main government and subnational units based on partisanship (Slough, Urpelainen, and Yang 2017; Bracco et al. 2015), ideology (Kleider, Röth, and Garritzmann 2018), and proximate political agenda and ideas (Curto-Grau, Solé-Ollé, and Sorribas-Navarro 2011) can play a crucial intermediary role that dictates the extent of assistance that the central administration grants toward subnational jurisdictions (Hallerberg and Stolfi 2008). This includes greater information sharing and resource flows for aligned governors to manage security e.g. Argentina (González and Cáceres 2019), and exemption of those politically or ideologically non-aligned as well as reduced benefits to them (Trejo and Ley 2016) to ensure smooth policy implementation and favorable outcomes for governments especially during or prior to elections (De Figueiredo and Tiller 1996; Migueis 2013).

At the outset of the project, I was compelled by this explanation. I expected the release of greater resources to state governors aligned with the federal government, and reduced assistance from the federal government to non-aligned governors. I expected such dynamics to heavily facilitate the deployment of troops to particular sites in the aftermath of an attack. However, I found that this does not hold, as the federal government under PDP deployed more military personnel to subregions in Borno and Yobe, whose governors were misaligned with the central administration between 2010 and 2015. In fact, these governors received greater federal support due to rising violence within their jurisdictions. When Adamawa state was aligned to the central administration from 2010 to 2013, due to personal differences between the president and governor, the central government paid less attention to attacks within the state and did not increase military support. Also, when all states were aligned to the central government in 2015 due to a political

turnover at the national level, this did not lead to more attention and resources toward the insurgency. This suggests other factors were at play.

Interviews

I supplemented my mapping and secondary analysis with semi-structured interviews, sometimes in multiple sittings, with 62 experts in the northeastern Nigerian security landscape. These interviewees comprised six counterterrorism experts, four military officers, two police, three civil defence force employees, and four vigilantes. They also included four women's group leaders, thirteen humanitarian workers, four workers of non-governmental organizations, two state relief agency employees and seven journalists. I also spoke with a spiritual leader, a traditional leader, seven academics, one politician, and three federal government officials.

Owing to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic such as the travel ban to Nigeria, I conducted many of these interviews remotely between July 2020 and November 2020, and between May 2022 and September 2022. In January 2023, when I visited Borno state, I conducted several additional in-person interviews at the offices and homes of my interlocutors. I undertook full ethics review for these interviews at the London School of Economics and Political Science before starting fieldwork.[38]

Given the political sensitivity of the research, I faced a few barriers to interviewee access especially for interviews with security agents and political elites. Many lower ranking officers of the military told me that they needed official permission from their superiors to speak with me while the superiors also paid no attention to my written requests for interviews at their offices. In Borno, I was also told that the Theatre Command in Maiduguri, which controlled counterinsurgency operations in the state was undergoing some administrative changes thus there was limited availability of officers to interact with researchers. In Yobe and Adamawa, military officers warned that there was not much to reveal about their operations against

[38] The Research Ethics Committee approved this project under reference number 000948.

Boko Haram and redirected me to the Theatre Command in Borno because of active counterinsurgency operations in Maiduguri and its environs. They explained that information about responses was more readily available in Borno as many soldiers who had previously worked in Yobe and Adamawa had been redeployed to fight the insurgents in that state. They told me that I would receive more understanding about my topic if I consulted soldiers who had more experience living and working in the northeast given the period under study.

Similarly, most politicians in the study sites had other official engagements which included weekly travels to Abuja, and thus were unable to meet with me personally. When I offered to schedule interviews with them through other means of communication such as zoom, or WhatsApp, many of them declined saying that the discussion about my research required a face-to-face meeting in their offices. This resulted in re-scheduling, several cancellations, and no-shows at the interview appointments.

Given these circumstances, I was unable to access other sources of information about security operations and terror incidents such as records of communication between different military units and internal memos circulated among parliamentarians and state security officials. However, through a variety of personal connections and recommendations, I was able to identify the individuals best positioned to provide depth and clarity on each respective incident.

I purposively selected these individuals due to their close knowledge of the insurgency. Each of my interviewees was resident in the northeast except nine interlocutors who lived in other parts of the country or outside Nigeria. Of the interviewees who were resident elsewhere in the country, five were living in Ibadan, Abuja, Kaduna, Kano, and Lagos respectively, but, with comprehensive knowledge and experience in the northeast, while four interviewees were resident outside Nigeria: two in the United Kingdom, one in the United States and one in South Africa. Each interviewee possessed an intimate understanding of distinct insurgent activities and government actions due to their proximity to the events, as well as their work with affected populations or government agencies. Each of them possessed detailed

knowledge of attacks within several affected areas and was able to contextualize, verify, and expound my information on security responses. Each interview lasted more than 90 minutes, with many lasting closer to three hours. Some involved repeat conversations over two or more meetings.

My west African background meant that I was better positioned than I might otherwise have been to build rapport with these individuals remotely, and could interpret subtext, local cues, body language, and meta data more readily, even over zoom. This proved particularly useful in my remote interviews, where I found myself easily able to build rapport and intuit how forthcoming an interviewee was likely to be with me, and which approach I needed to adopt. I adjusted my demeanor in response to cues from my interviewees. My experience navigating west African government and security sector spaces, provided me with a socio-cultural base that allowed me to establish confidence and trust among many proposed interlocutors such that I was able to gain access to other interlocutors as contacts were willing to share information with me.

I made initial contact with my interlocutors mostly via mobile phone calls and texts on the WhatsApp social media platform. I asked questions about the best medium of communication for the interviews which was mostly Zoom or via Skype. Though no one objected to being recorded, some interlocutors mainly the security officials were concerned about anonymity and confidentiality. I explained to these interlocutors that I would not share their personal details with anyone such as their names or work addresses, that I would encrypt the recordings, files, and folders with a password on my laptop, and that I would not save this information on any storage devices including OneDrive. This was acceptable to them, and I faced no other issues scheduling interviews.

Other interlocutors such as the humanitarian workers and civil society employees were curious about the motivations for this research given its focus on the government. This emerged as an important question that I repeatedly answered in all my interviews. I noted that my work experiences and academic interests sought to better understand the provision of security in volatile security contexts including Nigeria

and reiterated that I was particularly interested in understanding the government's role – alongside the challenges it faced – in this domain.

My interlocutors frequently expressed emotions such as anger, hurt and disappointment toward the government for the minimal attention paid to the crisis, particularly when they shared personal stories of their encounters with insurgents and the state security agents during and after attacks. I typically remained silent, giving them space to express these emotions for several minutes. Where appropriate, I engaged in follow up conversation, but if they remained visibly distressed, I would ask if they needed to be excused or not. Most often, the conversations were not disrupted after such moments, and we were mostly able to continue with the discussion.

While I did not share my arguments and hypotheses explicitly with my interviewees, preferring to leave space for them to relay what they experienced, I did sometimes posit various arguments made by others. This was a productive strategy, since it created openings for many interlocutors to openly disagree with the views I put forward. For instance, some academics, executives of non-governmental organizations and leaders of women's groups quickly dismissed the idea that security was provided to the populations depending on their partisan affiliation to state actors when I posited this hypothesis. Most of them adopted a normative position here, stating that security was a basic human right, and thus, government could not compromise on its provision to the local communities based on partisanship. I shared that this was a proposition that I was investigating, and thus needed their recollections of the specificities of incidents to further understand its applicability to the Nigerian case and how it worked in practice. Some of them then took the opportunity to educate me on security in each of the states, the development of the insurgency, Boko Haram's inception, and current situation. This enabled me to build a rich and detailed picture of each affected state, including their historical backgrounds, culture, local traditions, and people, alongside the details of specific incidents.

Nonetheless, not all my interlocutors were able to discuss certain details about the affected people or government due to the nature of their work and responsibilities toward the local communities. Many state security agents could not share information about how they coordinated among themselves to address

attacks or how they received information about the insurgents. I resolved this challenge by seeking input from other sources, including vigilantes, journalists, and civil society employees who worked with these state actors in the local communities, and who were often able to explain such duties more precisely. Some of them shared that they provide information to the military and police about the movement and activities of the insurgents while others stated that they work together with community leaders to inform the state actors about which locations they can visit, when, and how long they can stay to avoid insurgent attacks. Put simply, these non-state actors enabled access to information that was otherwise unavailable to me.

For many of my interlocutors, we held repeated conversations about my research, and eventually I was no longer seen as a foreigner investigating the interactions between them, insurgents, and different governments. My contacts willingly kept me informed about happenings on the ground especially during the pandemic when I was not physically present to witness the day-to-day activities of the ordinary people living in the areas under examination, and their interactions with both state and non-state actors. These contacts shared reports of insurgent activities, celebrations, and events within the affected communities such as religious holidays, and military operations within specific areas to help me to appreciate developments in those security environments. This pattern of continued interaction between us helped me to secure other contacts during the second period of remote fieldwork, and further facilitated my arrival and interviews in Maiduguri, Borno's capital, when I visited the northeast.

Data Triangulation

Through the steps described above, I was able to triangulate data available through multiple sources into a chronological reconstruction of information about incidents of insurgent violence during the period of study. I used information from my spatial mapping to select multiple cases for in-depth and in-country field research. For purposes of comparison, I identified incidents in each category of responsiveness based

on similar fatality levels. I then combined this information with notes about the attacks that were available in my dataset as well as data from my interviewees.

This process revealed some issues with the data such as competing claims of the occurrences of attacks, resultant government action, and number of casualties. Such information typically differed between government agencies, media companies and non-governmental organizations. While state officials usually confirmed incidents of attacks, they often reported fewer number of deaths or failed to ascertain the number of casualties. On the other hand, the local and international media gave different reports about such events including actual deaths and activities of the government in the aftermath of an attack. My interlocutors explained that this happens because many news and media companies, for fear of further harms to their employees, often discouraged regular and repeated visits of journalists and other reporters to such troubled locations to carry out their duties. The news reports were thus lacking updates or follow-ups. These interlocutors proposed instead that such information from active organizations such as the United Nations Department for Safety and Security whose operations centred upon information gathering and dissemination about safety within the local communities was more credible.

To reconcile such issues, I, therefore, asked my interviewees what they know about specific incidents and locations during repeated conversations. I saw that those who lived in affected communities or who had direct experiences of attacks or who were present when the insurgents entered the locations often disagreed with media reports or official news of an incident. Where such interviewees gave me new information such as when the military attended the attack location and performed actions such as barricading the affected buildings, I compared this with the information about the response already in my dataset and updated it. Thus, I made changes to the data where necessary.

This helped me to build more knowledge about the context in which the incidents occurred such as details about the background of an attack, local communities, and affected population, security environment as well as the operations and availability of state actors, non-state actors, and security agents. With these

insights, I used process tracing (Collier 2011; Bennett and Checkel 2015) to evaluate the chain of events leading to the response outcome in each state. I present this analysis in depth in Chapters Five (on government-vigilante relationships) and Six (on insurgent-society relationships) respectively.

Conclusion

Boko Haram attacks result in varied levels of fatalities and elicit inconsistent responses from the Nigerian government. The distribution of state security resources, and deployment of security personnel to affected areas is irregular even when the number of fatalities increase. In the next sections, I use the approaches documented herein to present a theory of government security responses to insurgent violence in Northern Nigeria and beyond.

Chapter 5 - Subnational Actors and Non-State Security Groups

Introduction

In some countries, typically those that have weaker capacity to exercise governance duties, the security landscape remains fragmented and permits non-state actors (Carey and Mitchell 2017; Meagher 2012) to assume the de facto role of state authorities in various areas (Lund 2006). These non-state actors often undertake state responsibilities including security provision (Agbiboa 2020) through cooperation with the central government. Therefore, their relations with the government can be crucial in the management of violence (Staniland 2012b; Otto, Scharpf, and Gohdes 2020; Seymour 2014; Lyall 2010).

In this chapter, I assess the relationships between state actors and non-state actors to explain the divergence in government security responses to insurgency. I focus on the collaboration between local non-state security groups specifically vigilantes and hunters' associations, and sub-national leaders mainly state governors. I investigate the impact of these relationships on government responses. I explore these relationships as one out of two contributing factors that shape responses. In another chapter, I emphasize the relationships between insurgents and the local populations facing violence as another significant factor that also dictates responses.

I investigate government security responses across Borno, Adamawa and Yobe in northeastern Nigeria. Using interview data, I scrutinize the events that led to the responses, and provide examples from these case studies to demonstrate that the relationship between state governors and local vigilantes within and across affected areas in these states impacted the responses.

I build upon literature on governance in areas of limited statehood (specifically state and non-state actor cooperation) to advance my theory of robust government security responses. I show that within the areas facing insurgent attacks, when state governors lose cooperation with vigilante groups, or lack cooperation with local vigilantes, lax military action against insurgents follows. This is because of the lack

of credible information about attacks, and restricted operational support and monetary assistance from state governors that would otherwise be channeled to the non-state security groups to support the military's response. On the contrary, within the affected areas, when state governors develop partnerships with these local non-state actors, robust and prompt security responses from the military are more likely due to logistical cooperation and information sharing. These groups are already engaged in security provision within the areas in which they operate and can share local knowledge with the military including information about terror incidents as they unfold. They do not *replace* military responses and in more remote or inaccessible terrain, they can be deployed directly.

These dynamics are most visible when incumbent governors lose power, as newly elected governors must re-establish or build their own relationships with vigilante groups and, in the interim, often have limited knowledge of the security landscape. Hence, the dynamic interactions between sub-national leaders and the local non-state security groups contribute to the divergence in the government responses to insurgency. These relationships explain the nature of responses alongside the relationship between insurgents and the local populations.

The chapter is organized as follows. I begin with a brief recap of my arguments on state and non-state actor cooperation. After recalling my theoretical priors, I move on to examine how these assumptions emerge in the cases of Borno, Yobe and Adamawa respectively.

Security Governance in Weak States

In this section, I briefly return to the assumptions outlined in Chapter Two to elucidate the logic of cooperation between governments and non-state armed groups (Otto, Scharpf, and Gohdes 2020; Carey and Mitchell 2016; 2017; Staniland 2012a) and evaluate its resonance at the subnational level. I show that the collaboration between state governors and non-state security groups accounts for responses to violence and its regulation in Yobe, Adamawa and Borno state respectively.

I build upon the logic of cooperation between central governments and non-state armed groups elucidated in Chapter Two to propose that subnational rulers and local non-state security groups can build partnerships that impact security sector intervention in the context of insurgent attacks. I argue that local rulers form relations with preferred local vigilantes by making these groups official partners at the subnational level and sponsoring their activities mainly through logistical and monetary assistance to help the former to monitor the crisis. Local actors then become vigilante groups who exchange information about insurgent activities, terror suspects and contextual details of the people and terrain in affected areas with the government, as well as becoming gatekeepers providing access to state actors in areas where the government is otherwise weak. This formal partnership attracts advantages including military training as well as resources for the groups. The vigilante groups can work with personnel as separate civilian groups or formal groups. They can provide relevant access to the local areas and serve as credible sources of information to the security agents as incidents occur.

Armed with rudimentary weapons like guns, they can also serve as back up for the military. They can secure or safeguard significant spots within affected areas during attacks; the military can then be smoothly deployed to engage insurgents in combat, sometimes with support from the groups. The groups, therefore, augment the state's capacity to respond, as the military can obtain local access and information from them that can drive robust security responses toward violence. In brief, a partnership permits intergovernmental collaboration with local non-state security groups to monitor and manage violence. Nonetheless, ruptured ties between the sub-national leaders and the vigilante groups as well as non-existent ties between both often creates problems in coordinating access to the local areas, and information about attacks with the military and other state actors. Inconsistent information and a lack of local ties undermine any military capacity to respond and hinders the ability of sub-national leaders to monitor insurgent activity. Put differently, limited, or absent collaboration between governors and non-state security groups leads to lax security responses often due to lack of credible sources of information about attacks and access to the local context. These local relationships reveal the crucial role that information and resource sharing between

state actors and nonstate groups play. In other words, cooperation – or lack thereof – between sub-national leaders, state security agents and nonstate security groups, can shape the nature and extent of the state's military responses to insurgency. Thus, I argue that in weak state contexts with myriad non-state security groups operating across the country, when sub-national leaders have limited or non-existent relationships with local vigilantes exhibiting de facto control and authority in a region, formal state responses to violence will be disrupted or absent.

Subnational collaborations with Non-state Security Groups

The following sections present my examination of the government security responses to insurgent attacks in Borno, Yobe and Adamawa. I discuss the interactions between state actors – governors and the military – and non-state security groups. I provide evidence of the dynamics of these relationships as they play out in responses to Boko Haram attacks across the three states.

Alignment between Governor and Vigilante Groups in Borno

In 2010, when the insurgency began in Borno, many police officers and some soldiers who had been previously deployed during the clashes, remained in some cities including Maiduguri, the state capital, to ensure safety of the people. The ruling PDP administration provided funding to the state government, and the governor, who belonged to the ANPP, Ali Modu Sheriff, now known as Senator Ali Modu Sheriff (SAMS), received security votes to curb insurgent attacks.[39] Nevertheless, the sub-national leader was unable to regulate the violence due to his personal ties to the thugs who had become Boko Haram insurgents. An interviewee explained this relationship:

"These youths helped him to defeat his opponents to gain a second term in office...They were not known as Boko Haram then... So, you see, there was kind of support. SAMS could not separate himself from these boys, since he knows them. He had interacted with them. They have helped him in some way, and he has helped them in some way...

[39] Security votes comprise unaudited and separate money allocated monthly from the federal government to the heads of the different governmental levels to address security challenges (Dada 2015).

You cannot slap the hand that has helped you. So, it's like a fly on your eyes, you have to be careful not to hit the fly on your eyes otherwise you will end up breaking your eyes."[40]

Boko Haram expanded their attacks, and mainly fought against the police. The state administration could not affirm control over the increasing incidents of terror, and Governor Sheriff blamed the police for their inability to protect the people. He began to support the military who were present in the state, in the form of the supply of vehicles to personnel to address violence including patrolling communities (Ibrahim 2010).

However, this failed to improve the security situation. Governor Sheriff thus called for more military support from the federal government while other state officials in Borno, appealed for the implementation of emergency measures in the state (Lazarus 2011). The governor completed his term office soon after, and another politician from the ANPP, Kashim Shettima, became the new subnational leader in 2011.

The Shettima administration continued to face challenges in managing the crisis that the previous administration could not curtail. The authority of the Borno state government to manage security was eroded, and the federal government took action to maintain control. It responded to the request for emergency measures and placed Borno under a state of emergency with the deployment of more military (Onuah and Cocks 2011). Borno received 4000 soldiers (Amnesty International 2015, 21–22) and President Jonathan established the JTF - a coordination between state security agencies including the police, Immigration Service, and army (Njoku 2017) to fight the insurgents.

Despite their partisan and political differences, the state administration and central government continued to cooperate to manage security as explained below:

"From the Nigerian point of view, politics works from the state to the federal government, and also from the federal government to the state, vice versa. Now, the response of the Goodluck Jonathan government at that time was to aid the response that the Borno state government was using."[41]

[40] Interview with journalist, 27 July 2020, Borno.
[41] Interview with counterterrorism expert, 23 September 2022, United Kingdom.

This collaboration was important to allow the PDP[42] to win favour with constituents across the north who normally voted for the rival parties. The federal government intervened in the crisis to demonstrate to the electorates that incumbents cared for their security.

Nonetheless, Boko Haram increasingly targeted the JTF, and this inhibited security operations as the military were unfamiliar with many areas in the north and could not identify the insurgents or distinguish among the populations. They are deployed from all over the country (BBC 2013b), and often lack the language skills and local knowledge to engage in effective intelligence gathering. Therefore, their operations often led to intimidation, harassment, and indiscriminate attacks upon the people. The people reported such incidents to the traditional leaders in their community, who also informed state representatives (Sahara Reporters 2011).

Governor Shettima often criticized the military in recognition of these harms to the people. He, for instance, suggested that personnel needed some training on how to engage with the civilians to minimize harms to the people (BBC 2011). This authenticated some observations among human rights groups who had accused the military of illegal and random murders in the state (Smith and Mark 2011). The governor sought better protection of the people in the state. He could not control personnel, however, as he was not in charge of the state security agents as described in the below:

"The people suffered dehumanisation. They suffered human rights abuses and a lot of extrajudicial killings in Maiduguri capital. This is a known fact to everybody because the Boko Haram doesn't have any face. So, the military just see your face, if you look like somebody they hate, they either kill you, or will take you to detention centre. So, and nobody has the right to do anything to them, including the governor at that time."[43]

The disagreements between the governor and the military undermined cooperation and monitoring of the violence. An interviewee explained this challenge:

"Military used to scare governor. One time, he was in the convoy, and they fired all their shots. They scared him, frightened him, when he was going to Gwoza [town], to show him that he could not do without the military's

[42] Throughout my analysis, Borno recorded the most robust security responses despite a consistent lack of strong electoral competition or PDP support.
[43] Interview with executive of non-governmental organization, 28 May 2022, Borno.

protection. Several times he used to quarrel with military. So, whenever something is happening, the military will not swing into action."[44]

Thus, the soldiers continued to target civilians in many areas, committing murders, and pursuing arrests and unlawful detention. For instance, in 2012, when the military conducted routine operations in various localities that had faced attacks, they reportedly set residences on fire and killed suspected insurgents or inhabitants without clear connections to Boko Haram (Human Rights Watch 2013).

The people were facing both insurgent attacks and abuses from the military and thus continued to complain to the state representatives. The traditional leaders repeatedly requested exit of the military from the state, but President Jonathan undermined these local challenges that the people encountered with personnel. He took no action to meet these requests and defended the work of the military, stating that the traditional leaders would be held accountable for any deaths if the security agents left Borno (Daily Post 2013). His actions, therefore, cast doubt on his commitment to the security of the northern people especially because he was a southerner.

One interviewee relayed of President Jonathan:

"I'm not saying that Jonathan did not pay attention to the crisis in the north. What I'm trying to let you know is that his body language showed such."

The insurgency worsened, and in 2013, the president extended the emergency measures in Borno with the deployment of more soldiers to fight the insurgents (BBC 2013a). Boko Haram increased their attacks upon the JTF, leading to deepened suspicion and mistrust between the security agents and the populations as they were unable to distinguish between the insurgents and the local populations. This resulted in deteriorated relations[45] between them and the affected people.

Many youths begun to mobilize to fight Boko Haram and demonstrate to the military that they opposed insurgent violence. Starting in Maiduguri, the state capital, they begun to carry crude weapons

[44] Interview with journalist, 19 July 2022, Borno.
[45] I address this in another chapter (Chapter 7) that focuses on the adverse effects of militarized responses on civilians.

including cutlasses to independently confront the insurgents during encounters. They gained approval from some traditional rulers and began to identify the insurgents and receive information about their activities. An interviewee said the following about how the group operated:

"The Shehu (traditional ruler) of Borno gave us 1 million naira, and then we went to the communities. We now took Bible and Quran, and we now asked the community people, to put their hand on one and swear that they are not Boko Haram."[46]

Governor Shettima acknowledged this work of the youths and began to support them to monitor violence in the state. He recruited some of them to report information to the state government, because, unlike the state security agents, the youths had intimate knowledge of the society and could differentiate between strangers and members of the community. With training and a monthly sum received from the governor (Nossiter 2013), these youths could work as vigilante groups to provide some form of protection for the communities and restore civil authority.

The JTF began to work with the youths as their local actions signaled the willingness of the populations to cooperate with the government to end the crisis (Al-Amin 2013). While the state government continued to fund these youths, the federal government granted them official recognition as they partnered with the security agents. They became known as the CJTF (Agbiboa 2020) and operated as a separate vigilante group to support the fight against Boko Haram during routine operations in Borno from that year onwards.

The CJTF has important duties including identification of insurgents and provision of local intelligence to the state security forces (Nossiter 2013). Its members initially used rudimentary tools such as knives and sticks to face the insurgents, but as Boko Haram began to use advanced weapons, the military trained a segment of the group to use guns (Agbiboa 2020, 364). The CJTF has about 30,000 members located in several areas across the state, who receive training and remuneration from the government (Agbiboa 2018a).

[46] Interview with CJTF, 19 February 2023, Borno.

The establishment of the CJTF was unique to Borno in that it involved the new creation of vigilantes for the explicit purpose of fighting Boko Haram. While other local vigilantes rose to fight insurgents, the CJTF grew to encompass some vigilantes who joined the combat without gubernatorial support, and many remain volunteers who fight against Boko Haram without receiving any remuneration from the state administration. The governor did not financially support those who worked as volunteers as they were not recognized partners of the subnational administration. Such groups were often excluded from security operations unlike the CJTF as demonstrated here:

"Shettima said that he wants to rehabilitate these people [youths]. He recruited 1800. The civilian JTF started differentiating themselves from the volunteers. They are under the payroll and the volunteers are not under the payroll, but governor used to behave like he wants to rehabilitate all of them. Some of the volunteers, according to the police, some of them haven't worked."[47]

Thus, without the help from the governor, the vigilante groups could not co-operate with the state security agents. When the joint security operations ended and the military re-established sole charge of the crisis, personnel maintained informal partnerships with the CJTF.

The cooperation between the state government and the CJTF often led to more robust responses to attacks in areas where the vigilante group was present. This non-state group paved the way for military support, while also acting independently. For instance, in Konduga town, Konduga LGA, Borno, on 11 August 2013, CJTF members partnered with the military to respond to an insurgent attack on worshippers in a mosque that led to more than 44 deaths and several injuries (BBC 2013c). The local actors provided information to the military about the attack, offering intelligence about implicated insurgents that permitted the military to secure the area. They also counted corpses and managed community relations. This was made possible because, unlike the military or the state governor, the CJTF were embedded within Konduga, with strong personal links to local populations, and a permanent presence within the community. The group had access to information and local resources otherwise unavailable to state actors.

[47] Interview with CJTF, 2 September 2022, Borno.

Nevertheless, in parts of the state where the CJTF was not present, and the governor had no connections to local vigilantes, military interventions were almost always absent. In Gajiram village, Nganzai LGA, a new military division had replaced an old unit, and soldiers were not familiar with the people and local area. On 31 August 2013, Boko Haram carried out an attack on civilians that led to around 17 deaths and several injuries (Radio Biafra 2013). As the military had few local connections in Gajiram, and the CJTF was absent, no actors could communicate the attack to relevant security personnel or coordinate with existing local non-state security groups. Civilians responded independently to the attack as residents fought against Boko Haram. However, as these residents were ill-trained, ill-equipped, and lacked any connections with the governor, they were unable to drive any military assistance, leading to a total absence of government response.

The partnership between the governor and the vigilante groups helped to improve cooperation between the state administration and the military. For instance, on 2 December 2013, after Boko Haram attacked many areas in Maiduguri including the airport,[48] the state government announced a 24-hour curfew in the city (Vanguard 2013d) to help the military to conduct arrests, find suspects, and obtain information about the insurgents in the affected communities. Boko Haram continued to launch severe attacks across the state, and the military remained responsive to the attacks in the areas where the vigilante groups operated but paid less attention to attacks in other areas where local vigilantes were present due to their disconnection from the governor.

In 2015, Governor Shettima retained his seat as subnational leader of Borno, [49] and continued to grant support to the vigilantes to enhance the authority of the state government. Areas in which CJTF was present consistently witnessed at least some response from the state security agents, even if these responses were unsatisfactory. However, areas where the governor had no connections to this vigilante group or where local vigilantes operated, continued to experience Boko Haram attacks without any government

[48] State officials claimed that the airport had not been attacked although it had been shut down for a period.
[49] Although he served under the APC – a party formed through the merger between the ANPP and other known parties across the north.

intervention. For instance, Boko Haram insurgents launched separate attacks on the villages of Baanu, Karnuwa, and Hambagda in Gwoza, Borno over a four-day period at the end of August 2015, killing about 80 inhabitants and injuring several others (Staff with AFP 2015). There were no recorded responses to any of these attacks and residents fled to nearby villages. Governor Shettima acknowledged the attacks, but officials from his administration and the military claimed they were "out of town" when the incidents happened hence the lack of response. The military was not located within the affected areas. While the CTJF had been established in Gwoza town two years earlier, they had minimal presence within these affected remote areas, and the local vigilantes in the surrounding areas were unconnected to Shettima or the military, to enable them to alert personnel for support. Thus, restricted information and limited access to local resources impeded the government response.

Alignment between Governor and Vigilante groups in Yobe

In Yobe, I demonstrate patterns of responses to insurgent attacks akin to responses in Borno. I observe robust responses from the military during partnerships between the state governor and the vigilante groups and observe absent responses where the state governor has no collaboration with the groups.

Unlike Governor Sheriff, Governor Gaidam, serving under the ANPP, had his own political advocates who had helped him win elections and were not involved in the crisis or directly allied with Boko Haram insurgents. He was concerned about maintaining security in the state and often made contributions to the work of the state security agents mostly the police through the provision of vehicles (Daily Trust 2009). When the insurgency spread into Yobe, the governor continued to support personnel to enhance the authority of the state government in the affected communities (Abubakar 2010).

Boko Haram began to launch attacks mainly targeting state security agents, just like in Borno. To address the escalating violence, the federal government deployed the JTF to the state (Vanguard 2011). The state received 2000 soldiers (Amnesty International 2015, 21–22) to fight Boko Haram. The JTF

commenced operations and the governor sought to coordinate with the federal government to manage the attacks. He extended support from his administration especially to the military as described below:

> "At state level, the governor is the chief of security at state level. And the governor supported the military in terms of logistics, to the level of donating vehicles, Hilux vehicles, to the military during the operations in Yobe, and some other logistical support. But the more visible one is the vehicles that the state government has supported, and financially also the state government has also supported the military. So, there was that cordial relationship between them."[50]

The state government cooperated with the military to implement security measures including the imposition of restrictions to movement in different areas of Yobe (The Nigerian Voice 2012). For example, movement in the city of Potiskum was allowed from morning till evening but in Damaturu, movement was permitted from mid-morning to late afternoon. State officials often kept the public informed about insurgent attacks and happenings within the affected areas.

Nonetheless, the Governor and his administration did not always have access to information about attacks and could not verify incidents to support state action and military operations. For instance, on 21 June 2012, the state administration disputed news about the occurrence of insurgent attacks in Damaturu, the state capital, upon some religious groups, worship centres, and academic institutions (Marama 2012a) which spread widely via phone messages. Meanwhile, that day, insurgents bombed police and military units, and later went into different parts of the city shooting sporadically at the people and destroying these buildings. The JTF in the area who were under attack responded to the incidents as the information circulated among the traditional leaders and the people. They rescued people as Boko Haram operated from night time to the afternoon of the next day leading to the deaths of some security agents, and more than 30 civilians (The Nigerian Voice 2012). Two days after the incident, the Governor visited the affected areas. He acknowledged the misinformation about the attacks from his administration and promised to reconstruct the buildings that were destroyed (Marama 2012a).

[50] Interview with executive of non-governmental organization, 6 September 2020, Yobe.

Boko Haram increased attacks in the state, and in 2013, the Jonathan administration extended the security measures allowing the military to gain control over the crisis, and the deployment of more soldiers to fight the insurgents (BBC 2013a). The federal government also built three Almajiri schools (Wike 2013) in the state as part of an educational policy to promote deradicalization among youths in the north. This was important as Boko Haram often targeted academic institutions in the state to recruit new members mostly young males.

An interviewee interpreted President Jonathan's efforts:

> "So, Jonathan wanted to press radicalization from the root cause of it - the vulnerability of the children that are there without going to school. They only give them Islamic school and after the Islamic School, they allow them to go into the society without looking at their integration into society. So, the Almajari schools teach the children the modern western education and that was what Jonathan did."[51]

The governor continued to seek and receive the support of the federal government to restore daily living for affected residents. For example, Gaidam requested for federal support in granting overseas researchers national permits for academic work after Boko Haram had killed several instructors in Yobe, and President Jonathan allowed the recruitment of foreign teachers from the Philippines and India into the country (Fatunde 2013).

The Governor thus maintained cooperation with the military, and with the federal government. For instance, when Boko Haram attacked several secondary schools across the state at different periods in 2013, Gaidam ordered the closure of these academic institutions for a period of three months to assist the security agents and relevant community members in planning and strategizing for the safety of the pupils (Sahara Reporters 2013a). Sometimes, he disapproved of the actions of the military. To illustrate, Governor Gaidam condemned the military's suspension of phone communication networks for two months in many parts of the state (Reuters Staff 2013), and said that that such disruptions prevented local communities from contacting the soldiers and receiving assistance during insurgent attacks (AFP 2013).

[51] Interview with police officer, 15 September 2020, Lagos.

According to interviewees in this state, there were relatively fewer abuses of the civilian population compared to the other states, and many populations were more willing to provide information about the insurgents to the military.[52] However, few insurgent attacks provoked government responses, even in the areas where the military operated. This is because the governor lacked partnerships with vigilante groups leading to a similar dearth of formal state responses. For instance, in September 2013, when Boko Haram attacked a college in Buni Yadi town, killing approximately 50 students, the military with the help of the state police only recovered the dead bodies (Associated Press 2013), providing a partial response to the attack. The insurgents were able to flee the area before the state security agents arrived. The military claimed that they did not receive reports of the attack when it happened, and thus could not act immediately. They also did not station personnel at the school's premises as promised, as they had few local connections and no familiarity with the people and the area.

An interviewee explained the challenge in this context:

"Most of the military that were drafted here were actually from Port Harcourt, Enugu, Abia, Anambra, virtually parts of Abuja and others. It was recently that they began to bring that of Bauchi and others. So then, most of them weren't familiar with the terrain. They didn't know the environment. So, they didn't know who and who has been attacked, and it became difficult to identify the enemy. And as such, there was no way they could progress without them making use of somebody who is in the community. Someone who knows the in and out of the community."[53]

Both the challenges in communicating attacks to personnel, and the military's lack of local knowledge, led to consistently delayed or absent responses in Yobe. The security agents often paid less attention to incidents and could not verify reports of insurgent activity as described in the below:

"Boko Haram can sometimes serve warnings ahead of time that they will attack a place but will not show up until several days later."[54]

This raised concerns at the state level, and the governor became frustrated with the poor performance of the military whom he gave increased support compared to the federal government such as

[52] The interviewees noted that this has not changed in Yobe. The relations between the populations and the security forces are more cordial than in other states.
[53] Interview with federal government official, 29 August 2020, Yobe.
[54] Interview with journalist, 29 August 2020, Borno.

payments of allowances (Sahara Reporters 2013b). The crisis worsened, and the military continued to show lax action toward insurgent attacks as there was no avenue through which to streamline or coordinate information about attacks. This prompted Governor Gaidam to establish the CJTF in the state. He mobilized his own vigilante group from the existing local vigilante organizations beginning in Damaturu.

An interviewee explained this evolving composition in Yobe state:

> "Now the vigilante that work together with the military are not pure vigilante. They were drawn from different groups of vigilantes. We have hunters' group and the vigilante group. Then, the state now formed the state vigilante group, like Damaturu, we have head of the vigilante in Damaturu. So, it is an informal structure, but every community has their own vigilante, and then they have the state structure that are working with the military."[55]

Other interviewees in this state told me that the CJTF also expanded to include other volunteers. The groups receive allowances from the state government although such payments are not fixed.

Where the governor was able to collaborate and establish relationships with vigilante groups, the military began to work with the groups thereby ramping up the formal state response to attacks.[56] For instance, on 4 February 2014, in Bara village, Fika LGA, when suspected Boko Haram members lay in wait, they killed 18 merchants and stole money (Premium Times 2014a). Surprisingly, military and police ran a search in the areas to find the suspects while aligned vigilantes at the location and external areas remained on standby to identify and apprehend the attackers. Though skeptical about the insurgent attack, the security agents shared information about the incident among themselves leading to the partial response.[57]

Nonetheless, in the city of Potiskum, in Potiskum LGA, when Boko Haram attacked a school in November 2014, killing 46 students (BBC 2014b) and injuring 79 others, the security agents had no such connections with local vigilantes who were scattered across the area. No vigilante groups were present at the location during the attack, and news of the incident circulated within the area. Local leaders informed

[55] Interview with executive of non-governmental organization, 30 August 2020, Yobe.
[56] My interviewees confirmed that areas where the aligned vigilantes were lodged witnessed considerably fewer attacks than areas with non-aligned vigilantes.
[57] The police claimed the attackers were bandits and not Boko Haram.

the security agents, and the military and police arrived hours after the incident, to conduct investigations. This stirred up agitation among the people living in the area and they stoned the soldiers for neglecting them and allowing the deaths. It resulted in an absent response and severe delay in state action because the security agents were prevented from working, and there was no coordination between the vigilantes and the military at all.

The governor maintained his seat after the 2015 elections.[58] My interviewees told me that through the assistance of the groups toward the military, the security agents had recovered many areas from insurgent control. As security improved across Yobe, the governor maintained his support only toward the CJTF within the areas that remained prone to insurgent activity, including Gulani, and the group stopped operations in the communities where violence was minimal.

Alignment between Governor and Vigilante groups in Adamawa

In Adamawa, I demonstrate that despite the partisan turnover at the gubernatorial level in 2013 and 2015, we observe similar patterns of responses in areas with and without aligned vigilante groups.

When the crisis began, Governor Nyako, a PDP politician, had his own supporters who were not involved in the insurgency or directly connected with Boko Haram. This provided him with greater incentives to manage the widespread insurgent violence from Borno into Adamawa. Boko Haram began to launch severe attacks against the local people and security agents in this state in 2012. As many populations began to face severe harms, President Jonathan, in 2013, deployed soldiers to Adamawa as part of emergency measures to reduce violence (Botelho 2013). Being a former soldier, he initially welcomed the presence of the soldiers and supported their welfare. For instance, while the state administration cooperated with the military to impose restrictions on movement in several parts of the state, the governor implemented

[58] He also served under the APC government.

new policies including a program to enhance the skills of females living in the military accommodations (Omonobi 2013).

The governor often paid visits to the areas facing violence and received reports about attacks and the conduct of the military from the heads of the communities. The people often reported good conduct of personnel, and Governor Nyako commended the military for the absence of violations of human rights in the affected areas including the border towns and villages where they were mostly deployed to fight the insurgents (TransformationWatch 2013).

Boko Haram continued its operations across the state with more attacks upon the security agents. Like in Borno, the military began to harass and intimidate the people to find the insurgents. They paid less attention to incidents due to suspicion and mistrust toward the populations whom they failed to distinguish.

The governor began to dispraise the military for their inability to defend the populations from attacks although military officials claimed the crisis was under control. To illustrate, in February 2014, during a visit to the town of Shuwa, Madagali LGA, where an insurgent attack led to more than thirty deaths and no military action despite the presence of the soldiers in the area at the time of the attack (Abdulaziz 2014), the governor said personnel should be held accountable for neglecting the people.

The military did not appreciate such criticisms, and some personnel occasionally intimidated him with gunshots and ambush when he spoke against their work in public meetings (Abdulaziz and Faul 2014). Thus, both faced challenges in their cooperation and their relations became tense as the violence continued to rise.

Meanwhile, the governor harbored personal and political grievances toward the PDP administration (Vanguard 2013c), that affected the management of the crisis. He claimed the federal government was enabling the violence to create ethno-religious divisions across the north, and among people living in northern areas (Aribisala 2014). He said federal officials were complicit in insurgent activities as the

military ignored terror incidents even when Boko Haram attacked sub-national leaders as well as other state security agents such as the Air Force in the presence of soldiers (Sahara Reporters 2014).

These actions of the governor culminated in his impeachment in July 2014 and the federal government continued to pay less attention to the terror incidents in the state although both the state administration and federal administration belonged to the same party.

The PDP appointed its members to rule in the state. Ahmadu Umaru Fintiri acted as governor for a four-month period from mid-July 2014 (Tukur 2014), and Bala James Ngilari, Nyako's former deputy, became governor from October 2014 until elections in 2015 through a court order (Usaini 2014). According to my interviewees, there were more cordial relationships between the administrations of all these governors and the federal government.

Under Ngilari's administration, the crisis in Adamawa exacerbated, as Boko Haram began to seize territory especially in the border areas. It was thus evident that President Jonathan and the central administration could not control the military or gain leverage over the widespread crisis in the state. One interviewee relayed of this national leader:

"He was indecisive in action… He did not have the command to take an action compared to Obasanjo [former president]...He was surrendered by northerners. He was from a minority area, afraid of opposition and impeachment so tried to please his advisors."[59]

In October 2014, the insurgents challenged state security agents and succeeded in capturing Mubi, one of the major towns in the state (BBC 2014a). The military remained few and inaccessible, and various groups of hunters, and vigilantes already existent in different parts of the state began to clash with Boko Haram, prior to any support from the state government and governor.[60]

Due to limited ties and connections with the state governor or military personnel, formal state responses to Boko Haram attacks in this period were usually non-existent and random. Nevertheless, as the

[59] Interview with military commander, 1 October 2020, Kaduna.
[60] For instance, in November 2014, groups of hunters and vigilantes fought insurgents with some military assistance to recover some Boko Haram controlled areas in Mubi (BBC 2014c).

governor began to form ties with local vigilante groups, I observe state responses ramping up. To illustrate, in November 2014, affiliated vigilante groups assisted the military in retaking territory in Adamawa. At this point, Governor Ngilari's government began to pay closer attention to the actions of various vigilantes working under the two separate groups of hunters' associations and local vigilantes, and granted them the official recognition to join operations against Boko Haram (Fulani 2014). The governor and other concerned politicians in the state began to sponsor these non-state security groups to enhance security throughout Adamawa.

One interviewee explained this action from the state officials:

"You know, military became defeated and there was nothing they could do … just like I told you, the state does not control any military, neither do they control the police. So, the ones that they can control although not legally is the non-state security groups and some of them [state politicians] did not want their investments to just be destroyed because they are very sure if Boko Haram is to overrun Yola [the state capital] today, the investments of Atiku [former vice president] would definitely be touched."[61]

This demonstrates that without cooperation between the governor and non-state security groups, Adamawa faced considerable barriers to any formal state security governance.

The governor provided the affiliated vigilante groups with logistical support including vehicles to enhance their work and combat alongside the military (Ross 2014). This was often channeled through the heads of the groups to the members as demonstrated below:

"The support was just for the leadership. You need to understand the kind of support that they [Yobe state officials] give. Not that they say, okay, they spread into one village and say okay we are giving you things. They just provided it to the leadership, and they believed that it will trickle down, you know, to their followers."[62]

In turn, the groups which included more than 10,000 hunters offered civilian support to the military, provided up-to-date information on ongoing insurgent activities, and organizing, and operated as formally sanctioned vigilante and hunters' organizations who provided self-defense and protection to various communities facing insurgent attacks. They were not mandated to conduct arrests or detention of suspects, and these responsibilities remained the work of the state security agents (Enietan-Matthews 2014).

[61] Interview with academic, 1 November 2020, Adamawa.
[62] Interview with academic, 12 November 2020, Adamawa.

The creation of the groups served as a means through which the state government could enhance its support toward the activities of the military and monitor incidents as demonstrated below:

"The military has specific support that they need from the state government. The state government provides accommodation, provide land for them to stay on, and provide vehicles. They give information to the military if the military does not have access to that information. And to do that, that was the reason why the state government came up with the CJTF because the Civilian Joint Task Force is made up of people from the community. Some of them are former Boko Haram and repented Boko Haram. And they say, okay, we can no longer do this, and they join the CJTF. They know the people involved, so they give military information."[63]

The relationship between the governor and the non-state security groups contributed to more consistent state responses in the context of the Boko Haram insurgency. Though the PDP consistently gained control of the state during elections, incumbents were less responsive toward incidents within affected areas as the federal government paid attention to the heightened levels of attacks elsewhere.

In 2015, Adamawa state administration also saw a change in power when President Buhari assumed office as Mohammed Umaru Jibrilla won the gubernatorial elections for the APC. My interviewees told me that there were no visible issues between the governor and the president, who were both northerners, unlike the Nyako administration.

The insurgency was still at heightened levels in the state and Buhari's military background including relations with his security heads, who were all northerners like himself, impacted the regulation of violence as illustrated below:

"So, 2015, he [Buhari] relocated a number of the senior army officers to the northeast, the theatre of war, so that they can directly engage with the Boko Harams. And of course, many of them indeed went there. But, after some time, everything just came back to the way it was before. The Generals are back in Abuja now. I mean, those ones who relocated to Maiduguri, that time, Borno state, they are back in Abuja now. But that is not even the problem. The problem is that the same corruption that Jonathan administration was blamed for is also very present in Buhari administration. The military is corrupt [emphasis in original] as it was then."[64]

Governor Jibrilla was particularly concerned with maintaining state authority within the affected areas and thus continued to support the vigilante groups, even though many areas of the state were not under the purview of these groups. In March 2016, when in-fighting arose between two major hunters'

[63] Interview with humanitarian worker, 18 August 2020, Adamawa.
[64] Interview with journalist, 25 July 2020, Abuja.

associations, the state government together with traditional authorities mediated on behalf of the leader of one of the groups to ensure his release from police custody (Daily Trust 2016).

However, in areas of the state where Jibrilla's connections with vigilantes were limited, government responses were usually absent. On 16 June 2016, an insurgent attack in Kuda-Kuya village, Yola, led to 24 deaths and many injuries (Garba 2016). No government or military response followed. Boko Haram insurgents destroyed homes, stole food, and shot randomly at residents attending a funeral. The vigilantes operating in the village did not have adequate tools and skill to confront the insurgents and lacked any connections to Jibrilla or to military personnel to facilitate support from the state. Amidst the military curfew imposed in the area, news about the attack was delayed and no communication from the military was forthcoming.

Yet, where Jibrilla continued to extend support to vigilante groups, we continue to observe more robust military action. On 9 December 2016, the governor and the military worked together with aligned vigilantes in Madagali to restore calm after Boko Haram suicide bombers detonated explosives in a market in Madagali town. The attack killed 45 people (Yusuf 2016). The vigilantes conducted security checks at various exit and entry points at the location and were able to command the support of the military on standby. During the attack, the vigilante group, together with aid workers, transported corpses and wounded persons to surrounding medical facilities while the military barricaded the location. Their presence and receipt of military support enabled a partial state response to the attack, and some efforts to protect traders and shoppers.

In many areas, the intensity of violence and incidents of terror began to reduce, as these security agents collaborated with the vigilante groups to fight Boko Haram. An interviewee described the changing context:

"What we have been having is a kind of hit and run attacks or a situation where they [Boko Haram] will go and deposit bomb or use what we call suicide bombing. That is what we have been having. Boko Haram is not really controlling any major territory now in Adamawa. So, what they just do now is to carry out a kind of an attack and then move

back. And majorly the kind of attack they come and do is to probably come and steal food item and take it into the bush where they're needed."[65]

Nevertheless, support from Jibrilla toward the groups waned, and the governor and vigilantes were no longer connected in many areas of the state as the violence diminished. This often led to absent and ad-hoc responses even in areas that had strong relations with affiliated vigilantes under the previous regime, and many vigilante groups struggled to cooperate with the state government. For example, at the end of 2016, one of the leaders of an aligned vigilante group in Madagali complained that his members lacked the "necessary logistic and moral support" from the state government as they coped with fewer resources, and this assistance was not "forthcoming as before"(Yusuf 2016). Moreover, several months later, the vigilante group in Yola had no vehicles of their own and relied on voluntary contributions without any financial assistance from the state government, despite a formal budgetary allocation for security (Muhumuza 2019).

This led the vigilantes to return to their traditional role of security provision and non-cooperation with the state government. Thus, the change in power led to minimized support for the groups, and an ensuing decline in military responsiveness across many parts of Adamawa.

Conclusion

My analysis demonstrates that the relationships between governors, the President, and military do not dictate government action toward violence. Instead, I argue that the dynamics of relationships between vigilante groups and state governors shape military responsiveness. Where state governments were able to nurture relationships with local non-state security groups, this facilitated communication, coordination and information sharing with the military. The relationships served to strengthen intra-governmental responses to attacks. However, where these relationships were non-existent or had broken down, formal security responses were absent. The relationships typically failed when incumbents lost political power or severed ties with vigilantes, or when political turnovers fractured such ties, which then needed to be rebuilt. Thus,

[65] Interview with humanitarian worker, 23 July 2020, Adamawa.

where sub-national leaders and local non-state security groups maintain relations in fragile security contexts, the government is more able to regulate security.

Chapter 6 - Insurgents and Communities

Introduction

Volatile security environments are often home to both insurgents and the local populations they live among. In these environments, insurgents may assert their authority according to their own established systems of rule. There is now a vast literature on how insurgent groups assume responsibilities that normally belong to the state (Lund 2006), and the ways their interactions with local communities mirror that of governments elsewhere (Arjona 2009; Mampilly 2015; Kubota 2020; Gowrinathan and Mampilly 2019). Strategies of insurgent governance can dramatically shape the dynamics and experiences of conflict. The relationships between state and non-state actors in such settings are complex (Risse 2011) and, therefore, crucial for advancing our understanding of governance and security within areas facing violence.

This chapter evaluates the relationships between insurgents and local populations living under armed violence elucidated in Chapter Two. I posit that when insurgents enter a community through forceful and violent occupation, *or* when they are politically and socially embedded in violence-affected communities, then state security interventions are far less likely following attacks. Social embeddedness derives primarily from armed group investment in forging ideological affinities and social ties with civilian populations living in territories under their control. My argument is twofold. First, where Boko Haram is more deeply socially embedded in a particular community, ties between civilian populations and state actors are correspondingly and necessarily strained. Second, where ties between state actors and civilians are strained, the government's ability to access information about an attack – which makes security interventions possible – remains limited.

In this chapter I show that governments are systematically less responsive to terror attacks in the areas where insurgents have either closer or more violent relationships with local populations. These areas may include villages, cities, and towns, in which both insurgents and the people live. Where communities

have close or violent relationships with insurgents, they are either less willing, or less able, to share information with state actors, thus obstructing possibilities of robust government security responses.

I highlight the importance of information sharing between the military and communities facing violence in creating the conditions for government to respond. Where relationships between insurgents and local populations are weaker, on the other hand, for instance, where insurgents have entered a community by force but use more diffuse and coercive, rather than violent, tactics vis-à-vis the population, then the government typically exhibits greater military responsiveness in its interventions. I thus argue that cooperation – and indeed, the *form* of embeddedness – between insurgents and the population impacts government security responses through channels for information sharing and support.

Put differently, I show that where wilful cooperation occurs, government responses are less likely because insurgents gain loyalties within the communities that limit channels of communication between the people and state actors to enable military incursions during attacks. Where cooperation is involuntary and forceful, state intervention during attacks is less likely because insurgents occupy an area using force that restricts access and communication between state actors and the people. Where cooperation is involuntary but diffuse, however, responses are more likely because insurgents lack local influence thus creating wider avenues of knowledge sharing, communication and interaction between the communities and state actors that can facilitate government action during attacks.

These relationships provide further evidence of the dynamic interactions between insurgents and the people, which contribute to the empirical variation observed in government responses to insurgency. These relationships, alongside the relationship between vigilante groups, the military, and governors, combine to explain government action and inaction towards violence.

I begin with an overview of the literature on insurgent rule with a focus on their community relationships. I present my theory and follow this with a discussion of how wilful, involuntary, and diffuse

cooperation between Boko Haram and populations in Borno, Adamawa and Yobe leads to a particular response outcome. I then conclude this chapter.

Insurgent Authority in Local Communities

I begin by recalling the key scholarly works on insurgent governance (Arjona 2016; Weinstein 2006; Staniland 2012a) discussed in Chapter Two to advance the second component of my argument: that the relationship between insurgents and local populations impact government security responses. I argue that cooperation – wilful and involuntary - between insurgents and the local populations living within areas facing terror attacks restricts the military's access to local information about violence. Both circumstances often result in lower government attention, involvement and intervention following an attack.

The lines between insurgents and civilians are often difficult to identify. Insurgents frequently live among and form part of the populations that states govern. They develop various types of relations with the government, and populations that facilitates order within communities. In the contest for power, insurgents and the government may have 'active', 'passive' or 'non-existent' collaboration (Staniland 2012a). In the first type of interactions, insurgents rule a given area and work together with state actors to achieve combined objectives, or they may work with state actors towards shared advantages with no autonomous control (Staniland 2012b, 248–49). In the second type, insurgents groups may manage specific activities, resources, and sectors of the state, or exercise influence that overlaps with that of state actors (Staniland 2012b, 250–51). On the other hand, in the third type, insurgents may govern territorially bounded regions within a country's borders, and clash with governments in quests for territorial expansion (Staniland 2012b, 252). I focus on this third type of relationship and investigate contexts where insurgents do not collaborate with the government in any form. In the Boko Haram case, insurgents typically seize areas previously under government authority, establishing formal governance over those areas. They may impose taxes on communities for cultivating farms or undertaking other revenue-generating activities. They may impose

new rules and regulations in territories under their control, for example, by prescribing dress code, and punish those who do not comply.

On the other hand, separate interactions between insurgents and the people under their control lead to various forms of rule, namely 'rebelocracy', 'aliocracy' and 'disorder' (Arjona 2016). Under rebelocracy, insurgents seek to regulate the people's affairs to generate their cooperation in the areas where the armed group operates through activities including the establishment of systems of law enforcement, and the arbitration of disputes. Aliocracy emerges where insurgents encounter defiance from the people, and, therefore, establish basic rules or provide specific assistance to the communities such as security provision in exchange for tributes including taxes to ensure their operations. Where there is disorder, due to the rise of rival groups, or indiscipline among the insurgents, for instance, the patterns of interactions between the armed group and the people remain unestablished leading to unrestrained violence toward the people to assert insurgent authority. In north-eastern Nigeria, I focus on both systems of rebelocracy and disorder which are most pronounced in the relations between Boko Haram and the populations in the three states.

Two main factors shape the forms of cooperation that insurgents adopt – availability of material resources and relational ties to the people. When groups have access to material assets, they can purchase the loyalty and cooperation of civilians living under their control by distributing goods and other payments but where the groups lack such assets, they must rely on other sources of loyalty and cooperation, known as 'social endowments' (Weinstein 2006). I term the establishment of genuine loyalties within communities under their authority wilful cooperation. Wilful cooperation may be pursued strategically, or may emerge as a result of pre-existing social ties, including shared residence in a community, familial ties, membership in social or religious organizations, or personal interactions (Idler, Belén Garrido, and Mouly 2015).

I show that where insurgents install themselves in a community through social ties, they develop strong loyalties among the people, and the military's access to local information about attacks is restricted. In such contexts, preexisting connections with the government that might otherwise facilitate information

sharing are severed. Insurgents may maximize existing social ties, such as familial relationships or ethnic loyalties. Where insurgents lack such preexisting forms of influence, they may instead seek to purchase such loyalties through services or funds to the community to attract their support. Such strategies strengthen ties between armed actors and civilians, as insurgents work to consolidate territorial control. The development of these loyalties serves to inhibit interaction and communication between the people and state actors leading to lower government knowledge of armed activities.

I categorize insurgent efforts of establishing cooperation through coercion in two forms - involuntary cooperation and diffuse cooperation. Under involuntary cooperation, members of the insurgent group occupy a community by force and exert control as they face resistance from the communities. They impose their own rules upon the people and launch attacks upon them to deter their association with state actors. For instance, insurgents can kill people within the community who inform the military about the whereabouts of the members of the armed group to signal their presence and authority in a particular area. This leads to severed ties and communication between the population and those affiliated with government due to the fear of recurrent violence from the insurgents.

However, where this application of force toward the people is episodic, random, or opportunistic, the cooperation between the insurgents and the people is more diffuse as these armed actors are not typically closely embedded within the communities. Where insurgents are more loosely installed in an area, without establishing strong ties, and perform arbitrary actions such as going into farmlands and attacking agricultural workers in a particular area for food supplies, they maintain weak relations with the people. They may perform acts of violence to gain benefits towards their welfare and operations, but rarely focus on territorial control. This results in more open channels of communication and interaction between the people and state actors because the insurgents lack influence or dominance. This creates greater opportunities for the military to obtain access to local resources and information about attacks in that area leading to increased government attention to violence. In such settings, as the government is often able to

form ties with other vigilante groups or stakeholders who may coexist with insurgents, robust responses are more likely.

I build upon existing scholarship on the dynamic relationship between insurgents and local populations to suggest that such relationships play a crucial role in shaping state security responses during conflict. I present the relationships between insurgents and communities, and their implications for channels of communication with state actors, and resultant state responses to attacks, in the table below.

Table 2: Insurgent-community relationships and resultant government security responses

Cooperation type	*Insurgent-community relationships*	*Entry points for state actors*	*Security sector responsiveness*
Wilful cooperation	Strong, because of social ties, ideological synergies, or new / evolving loyalties	Few entry points for state actors, because of community loyalties to insurgents	No openings for security sector responsiveness
Involuntary cooperation (forceful)	Weak, due to violence and force deployed against the community	Few entry points for state actors due to fear of reprisal from insurgents	No openings for security sector responsiveness
Involuntary cooperation (diffuse)	Weak, due to coercion and violence against the community	Entry points for state actors because insurgents are not embedded in the local communities, who retain open channels of communication and dialogue with government partners	Openings for security sector responses

Relations between Insurgents and the People

In the sections that follow, I provide evidence of these three distinct relationships between insurgents and the people, and their implications for military capacity and access. I document the dynamics of these relationships focusing on three types of communities – communities where the insurgents are socially embedded, communities where insurgents engage in violent occupation; and communities where armed actors operate more diffusely. I use illustrative examples from Borno, Yobe and Adamawa to demonstrate these relationships and their implications for military responses.

I first show how wilful cooperation due to common familial or social networks between Boko Haram and the people ensures closed channels of communication between local communities and government actors, thereby limiting information sharing with the military and creating the conditions for no state intervention during attacks. I then document how involuntary cooperation between insurgents and the populations due to forceful and violent occupation similarly prevents the transmission of information from the local people to the military, and results in a comparable lack of responses. Finally, I document contexts of weak or diffuse cooperation between insurgents and the population, show how weak efforts at coercion without military force leaves open existing channels of communication between local communities and government actors, thereby facilitating communication about attacks leading to robust military responses.

Wilful Cooperation

In this section, I document how insurgents leverage upon social ties to maintain command and how they invest in installing themselves in local communities, purchasing loyalties through providing social services and economic support to gain social capital. I demonstrate how, when insurgents employ these tactics, they typically develop stronger ties with local populations, forging shared values, beliefs, and ideological commitments. I demonstrate how investment in 'social endowments' serves to close channels

of communication with state actors, thereby restricting information sharing with the military and, resultingly, inhibiting government responses to insurgent attacks. I first discuss Borno and provide examples to show how social ties to insurgents and Boko Haram's purchased loyalties within communities impacted responses. I then turn to Yobe, to also show how loyalties between insurgents and community members led to restricted interaction and communication between state actors and the people that could otherwise enable responses.

In Borno, after state security agents in 2009 dislodged and killed Yusuf and his devotees in Maiduguri, the state capital, any Boko Haram devotees remaining in the city housed themselves within local communities and the surrounding areas. Living amidst their allies and familial relations, Boko Haram members maintained strong personal connections as: "they were their own people." [66] Other devotees moved elsewhere.[67]

In 2010, on the anniversary of the clashes, President Goodluck Jonathan's administration deployed the police, and military to Borno due to anticipated insurgent violence from the devotees, who had recently gained a new leader, Abubakar Shekau (Jacinto 2012). To preserve their influence, Boko Haram appealed to the people in Maiduguri, and its environs to refrain from providing any information especially to the police that will help personnel to locate and arrest their members (Global Security, n.d.). Nonetheless, some people within the communities especially Islamic teachers who shared contrary religious beliefs assisted the security agents with information that led to the apprehension and detention of the insurgents. Boko Haram identified and killed such persons because they were not in support of their objectives (CSW 2011). The group continued to attack security agents and destroyed many security posts leading to escalating violence.

[66] Interview with journalist, 20 January 2023, Borno.
[67] According to some interviewees, these devotees went to settle in the communities within the Lake Chad Basin area.

To maintain security, in 2011, President Jonathan announced a state of emergency and the closure of land borders with neighbouring states including Cameroon (Onuah and Cocks 2011). The President deployed the Joint Task Force to ensure safety in Borno as well as prevent the spread of insurgent activities outside Nigerian territory. These security agents were usually unfamiliar with the areas, the people, or the local context, and sought information about the insurgents and their activities from the local people. Nevertheless, across the city and the surrounding areas, many people were unwilling to share information with personnel due to close ties with the insurgents. This can be demonstrated in the below quote from a law enforcement officer:

"The leaders in Borno, did not report information because their children were part of insurgents. The sons of the emirs were part."[68]

These personal loyalties to Boko Haram, often restricted the military's access to information about attacks. This was particularly true in the areas where the government had limited contacts and could not verify such reports. Thus, the security sector overwhelmingly ignored attacks, failing to respond even when military and police were geographically proximate to them. For instance, in December 2012, Boko Haram launched several attacks against religious groups in Borno. In one attack in the village of Kupwal in Chibok, they killed 10 people, cutting their throats in their homes (Morning Star News 2012). There was no government response. In another attack on a worship centre in Maiduguri, the insurgents shot and killed 6 people (CNN 2012). The state police were in the city with patrol vehicles, and personnel had earlier received warning about the attack from the state governor and police commissioner, but they did not respond when the incident happened. The government paid little attention to this attack, and security responses were entirely absent.

Due to heightened violence, in 2013, the Jonathan administration extended the state of emergency in Borno to allow the military to take charge of the insurgency (Vanguard 2013a). The President deployed increased numbers of soldiers to the state. Boko Haram began to target and kill state actors. The military

[68] Interview with civil defence officer, 20 January 2023, Borno.

sought to find the insurgents and stop the violence. Nevertheless, within many communities in the city and the surrounding areas, the local people remained unwilling to hand Boko Haram over to the security agents. An interviewee described this situation:

"When Nigerian military follow [Boko Haram] to arrest them, some [people] will give [Boko Haram] their apartment. They will give them shelter so that nobody knows they are hiding Boko Haram in their houses."

Some families further encouraged insurgents, as noted here:

"The boys will go and attack soldiers and run back home. Mothers will hide guns under the bed. They see sons coming into the home with their guns and money, and they are happy. They say the sons have brought money, so they support them."[69]

Due to deep familial and social ties between Boko Haram combatants and civilian populations, security agents who were usually new within the communities, faced considerable challenges in identifying Boko Haram members, as noted in the following quote:

"People don't give them [military] information. So, when you don't provide the military with the information, the military will not have the technical knowledge of the terrain or know the insurgents because they are visitors. They are not born here."[70]

Another interviewee in Borno emphasised that the soldiers did not belong to the same communities as the people in this statement:

"The military lacked proper intelligence to tell them exactly where to go and how to go owing to the fact that most of the people deployed are not citizens from the state. So, they found it difficult to get prompt intelligence report."[71]

The military were thus often exposed to more danger due to lack of local connections as noted here:

"a lot of them [military] were being killed because they could not get locals, human resources in the communities to tell them about a particular location and the boys [Boko Haram] and their plans."[72]

[69] Interview with women's group leader, 21 January 2023, Borno.
[70] Interview with counterterrorism expert, 28 July 2020, Borno.
[71] Interview with journalist, 2 August 2020, Borno.
[72] Interview with humanitarian worker, 15 August 2020, Borno.

In response, the security agents began to harass local communities for information. Security personnel detained and killed many youths as well as male adults within affected areas (Amnesty International 2015), whom they suspected and accused of committing terror acts. Such negative experiences undermined public support for the military and cemented approval towards the insurgents among the people. One interviewee illustrated this with an example:

"Many homes, many families would never ever support or help military to win the war. An elderly woman…probably in her early 60s told me that she wanted to join the Boko Haram members because her son was arrested when he went to pray in the mosque in the morning. The soldiers came to the mosque that day…separated all the young men from the elderly men, and…took all the young men away. That was 2013, and since then, she has never seen her son again."[73]

Meanwhile, Boko Haram began to focus on extending operations to the peripheral areas in Borno as they had cemented support in the capital city. They began to occupy remote areas especially the border communities to disseminate their religious and political ideas because the populations in these areas were not within their social circles. They instrumentalized Yusuf's teachings that mainly projected rigid adherence to the Koran (Murtada 2013), and further criticized politicians for major problems among northern populations including joblessness and illiteracy, to promote their aims of building a state governed through Islamic rules. They learned from the support they had most in Maiduguri. In efforts to build relationships with local communities and obtain support for their mission, some Boko Haram units prioritized establishing loyalties in some towns and villages they occupied. They did so by providing services and resources to local populations to demonstrate that they cared for their needs and were able to support them. An interviewee described these actions toward the people:

"When Boko Haram came, they provided them with water, they provided them with food, they provided them with some even small businesses, capitals. They provided capital to them to start some small businesses. They showed them that the federal government is not doing anything to support them."[74]

Another interviewee in Gwoza, a border town in Borno, added:

[73] Interview with journalist, 25 July 2020, Abuja.
[74] Interview with counterterrorism expert, 15 August 2020, Borno.

"The [insurgents] came with high voltage, fighting for their rights, giving them money."[75]

Facing the threat of a popular backlash against them, the insurgents gave the people assurances of material provisions to foster their loyalty and made certain demands from them to promote their aims. In the border areas, Boko Haram asked the people for shelter, food supply, and information in exchange for security, water, and other economic benefits. They asked the people to be their "eye and ear for what is going on in the town."[76] An interviewee explained how these actions enabled Boko Haram to gain the people's sympathy in the following statement:

"People that have been abandoned, displaced, marginalised, how do you expect their lives to be at that border communities? They don't have hospital, they don't have access to school, they don't have electricity. They are not enjoying anything from the Nigerian government."[77]

The actions of the insurgents mostly appealed to marginalized groups and communities who felt that the government was not meeting their needs. These transactional relationships with Boko Haram facilitated mutual collaboration and dependence. Many of them subsequently joined or supported the insurgency, as explained below:

"You know, even the Christians they joined the Boko Haram. A lot, a lot. Because they have been marginalised in the state. They have that feeling, they have that anger and frustration that we have been marginalized in the state. And when they join Boko Haram, they will tell you that you are our brothers, and they don't know the religion [Islam]."[78]

Boko Haram units were thus better able to impose their own rules upon the people to develop the Islamic state that they desired. The approval of the insurgents extended within other areas with limited government presence. A journalist described these areas in the below quote:

"When you talk about Damasak, Monguno, Rann, you know, those are the areas that had significant number of Boko Haram supporters. And also, when you talk about Benisheik, Benisheik is at the outskirts...So, there are significant number of Boko Haram in those communities. Biu is also part of it."[79]

[75] Interview with executive of non-governmental organization, 25 August 2020, Borno.
[76] Interview with local vigilante, 02 September 2022, Borno.
[77] Interview with journalist, 10 November 2020, Borno.
[78] Interview with executive of non-governmental organization, 5 August 2020, Borno.
[79] Interview with journalist, 28 July 2020, Borno.

Once Boko Haram established local ties in the remote areas, military's access to information about the insurgents and their activities was severely impeded. This enabled the insurgents to expand their activities through gaining people's loyalty and confidence, and transposing people's affinities to the government onto them as shown in the below example from an interviewee who is a native of Bama, a remote town:

"Some of our neighbours were talking about the new thing [Boko Haram ideas] that was spreading. A neighbour of ours, he used to jump over the wall and come into our house. He started following them [Boko Haram]. He was wearing the clothing. He stopped going to school because he said they were giving him money. He told us to also join because the Jonathan government will not help us. He was getting money. Good money. He stopped coming into our house because my father was a civil servant. I never saw him again."[80]

The people thus began to dissociate from the government in such areas. The result was a closing down of channels of communication for the government in many towns and villages occupied by Boko Haram. Even where state-affiliated actors had previously been able to draw on contacts in the north for access and information, these channels became increasingly unavailable as people's loyalties transferred to Boko Haram. One interviewee shared a personal experience to illustrate this point using the example of Monguno, a remote community:

"On our way to Monguno, one time, we just went because three women who used to give us information were no longer saying anything. They just disappeared. Like thin air. Boko Haram laid ambush on us, so our convoy was attacked. No one in the village told us anything that these criminals were waiting for us to attack us."[81]

A federal official emphasized this lack of access to information in the following statement:

"Nobody goes to those [remote] areas. The military does not go there. Everyone relies on intelligence, if the people do not give it, how will they [military] go there?"[82]

Owing to growing support in such remote areas, Boko Haram began to attack any residents that they knew were not associated with them or who favoured the government. Their supporters kept them informed about happenings in the communities, and thus, the insurgents could identify those who opposed

[80] Interview with humanitarian worker, 8 September 2022, Borno.
[81] Interview with military officer, 23 January 2023, Borno.
[82] Interview with federal government security official, 20 September 2020, Ibadan.

them. This led to restricted access to information about the insurgents and the government often did not provide responses during attacks. For instance, in September 2013, in Benisheik, insurgents came into the town and launched two separate attacks in two weeks with no military intervention to both incidents. In the first attack, insurgents killed more than ten people, mostly vigilantes who gave reports to the military, and in the second attack, they spared visitors to the town, and killed more than 85[83] natives who wanted to abandon their homes (BBC 2013d). State officials, police, and military in Benisheik received news of the second attack the next day (Le Monde Afrique 2013). The government's limited social connections in the area conditioned the lack of response.

I now turn to Yobe to demonstrate how wilful cooperation developed and impacted responses. In this state, the insurgents worked hard to build influence within the local communities, as, unlike in Borno, they had limited existing social and personal networks with the people. They relied upon their ideology to establish connections with the people. They "were preaching and preaching."[84] They told the people about the need to implement sharia to guarantee their prosperity, and alleviate the grievances that northerners faced because of the neglect of the government. They drew attention to the lack of support from the government to the population as described here:

"Boko Haram was telling people that government is not providing their basic needs. Government is not doing what they're supposed to do. Government doesn't provide the basic things. They have unemployment, issue of poverty. Government is not providing social amenities."[85]

This enabled them to penetrate the local environments, as some members of the local communities were convinced that they could "abandon government and form a new state under sharia."[86] Boko Haram began to construct hideouts within some areas in the state such as Potiskum and Geidam. They were able

[83] Other unofficial reports from the media stated that more than 160 people died in this attack.
[84] Interview with security expert, 24 August 2022, Borno.
[85] Interview with executive of non-governmental organization, 25 August 2020. Borno
[86] Interview with government official, 19 August 2020, Yobe.

to establish some presence within the local communities and gained assistance from their sympathizers such as information about state actors as demonstrated below:

"Some of the people saw the insurgents as one of their own: their brothers, their sisters, their Muslim brothers. And so, they kind of connived with the Boko Haram members against the military men and the police. So, it was very easy for them [Boko Haram] to kill many soldiers because the people easily give information about how to find the movement of the soldiers and where they can be easily found and all that. So, they collaborated with the Boko Haram."[87]

While Boko Haram gained widened support, the military maintained fewer connections with the local people and could not verify incidents. The state actors often faced limited access to information about violence in the local communities where the insurgents strengthened their connections to the people. An interviewee explained:

"Even police won't have any information to give you. They will say nothing, no criminality is in the town because they don't know."[88]

Especially within the areas that shared proximity with Borno, the links between the people and the state actors were severely fractured leading to reduced communication about violence. Sharing a personal experience in two border towns - Gujba and Geidam, an interviewee stated:

"The farmers and herders give me information. They hide their phones, climb trees, and call me. If something serious happens, they'll call me. Anywhere there is network, I'll receive call. I tell them I am for them. I am here to defend the land. That's why they cooperated with me. But they died. The villagers told Boko Haram and they came to kill them. They killed one man in Geidam, the other three people were shot in Gujba."[89]

Thus, many areas including some cities became increasingly inaccessible to state actors because the people were less willing to tell the government about insurgent activities or hand Boko Haram over to the state actors. The state security agents were often unable to locate the insurgents or differentiate them from the people. A police officer in Potiskum, shared the following experience to illustrate this point:

"Potiskum [sighs]. Very tough area for operations. You only confirm those ones [Boko Haram] who have identified themselves physically at the war front. You cannot know those ones that have come and blended themselves within the communities. Also, when you go in [during attack] and they start this bombarding and destabilization, they now

[87] Interview with journalist, 30 August 2020, Yobe.
[88] Interview with military commander, 21 January 2023, Borno.
[89] Interview with sergeant, 21 January 2023, Borno.

run down to their communities. When they are in the community, they mix up themselves. So, it is very hard for you to identify them."[90]

Where Boko Haram sustained relations with the people, the state actors found it increasingly difficult to learn about armed activities, and the government ignored terror attacks. Because state actors had so little information, any possible interventions from the state were absent or severely impeded or delayed. To illustrate, on July 6, 2013, Boko Haram entered Mamudo, a community located about 5km from the city of Potiskum and attacked a secondary school. The insurgents bombed a dormitory and shot indiscriminately at the workers and the pupils. This resulted in the deaths of more than 40 workers and pupils[91] with many others injured. However, there was no immediate response. The news of the attack spread verbally as the people rushed to the medical centres and health professionals for treatment of the wounded persons. Some people who had other personal contacts within the military reached out to them, and the security agents arrived several hours later when the insurgents had departed. The military supervised the counting of corpses, and began to conduct a search for missing pupils as well as workers of the school (Vanguard 2013b). The lack of any viable communication between state actors and the affected community created conditions for a partial response, and the intervention was severely delayed.

Even when President Jonathan extended the state of emergency (Sahara Reporters 2013b) in Yobe and sent more soldiers to the state towards the end of 2013, the government failed to intervene during attacks in the areas where Boko Haram undertook more intensive efforts to establish loyalties within the population. The military faced challenges in the performance of their duties in such local communities which included the apprehension of terror suspects as well as persons in possession of illegal arms (Botelho 2013) because of inhibited access to information within such local communities. Thus, absent responses were commonplace.

[90] Interview with police officer, 4 September 2020, Lagos.
[91] Some reports say that 46 people died.

As an example, in February 2014, Boko Haram attacked the Federal Government College in Buni Yadi, Gujba LGA, shot indiscriminately at the pupils, burnt the accommodation buildings, and killed male pupils who tried to run away (Hemba 2013). The insurgents caused about 60 deaths. Though personnel were stationed around the location, and another military checkpoint had been mounted within 8 km (Voice of America 2014), there was no response. The military claimed that phone lines remained faulty, and no one could reach them personally. State officials also reported that personnel near the school had been moved to a different area days before the attack. The fewer ties between the military and the people created challenges in communication that led to a lack of response.

In sum, where Boko Haram were more socially embedded, the military could not maintain their access to the communities. The result was that government security agencies failed to confront insurgent activities where communication between the people and state actors was strained.

Involuntary Cooperation

This section shows how insurgents forcefully occupy communities and obtain local assistance for their operations. I show how Boko Haram employs violence to maintain their authority, instilling fear among the population that hinders communication with state actors and leads to lack of government assistance and intervention during attacks. I focus on the border communities in Adamawa to demonstrate that where Boko Haram forcefully occupied communities because of initial resistance from the people, the military faced profound challenges in obtaining information about attacks or organizing access to the areas facing violence. The result was delayed or entirely absent responses to terror attacks.

When the insurgents targeted Adamawa, they sought to promote ties with the local people and further their operations of governing Nigeria under Islamic laws. They shared their political beliefs that emphasized the people's problems and the government's weaknesses to attract attention, just like in Borno. An interview explained this:

"The easy way of saying it was the normal way of preaching - telling the people that the government has failed to deliver the mandate, so democracy has failed."[92]

Another interviewee noted:

"Let me tell you, these criminals will repeat saying that politicians have studied western education. They [politicians] make promises to the young people and when it's time to fulfil these promises everybody disappears. They still do not take care of you who are the youth of tomorrow. You [the youths] are the people that don't have employment."[93]

The insurgents hammered upon perceived weaknesses of state actors to draw attention to the need for an alternative government and rulers as demonstrated below:

"They [Boko Haram] will say to them – "you see, anybody who does government job is haram because you know, they are corrupt. The police is government. They are corrupt. And the governor. They are corrupt."[94]

Despite these efforts to gain local approval, the insurgents who were mostly from the Kanuri ethnic group faced rejection particularly in the areas where they had socio-cultural differences with the population. An interviewee explained this with the example of Yola, the capital city:

"Boko Haram were not in Yola town, because it is cosmopolitan. Yola, you know, has more Fulani tribe, and the Fulani tribe they don't join Boko Haram."[95]

The insurgents paid more attention to the populations in remote communities near Borno and Cameroon because of similar cultures, and "targeted where the tribes were minority."[96] They leveraged socio-cultural ties to tell the people in such areas about their aims. One interviewee described this context using the border towns of Gwoza in Borno, and Madagali in Adamawa:

"It's not like the towns are very far from each other. Gwoza is like 20 minutes from Madagali. So, what is happening in one side is happening in the other side. Boko Haram was preaching to people in both places, comparing them. Same narrative that they are poor because of government."[97]

[92] Interview with academic, 1 September 2020, Ibadan.
[93] Interview with counterterrorism expert, 7 August 2020, United Kingdom.
[94] Interview with executive of non-governmental organization, 22 May 2022, Borno.
[95] Interview with humanitarian worker, 15 September 2020, Adamawa.
[96] Interview with counterterrorism expert, 25 August 2020, Borno.
[97] Interview with counterterrorism expert, 19 January 2023, Borno.

Nonetheless, Boko Haram faced rejection from some of the border populations because they already had interpersonal and communal connections with state actors. Thus, the people were initially not open to insurgent demands or rules. Facing resistance from such communities, the insurgents resorted to the use of force to elicit the cooperation of the people, especially information sharing about military activities. They guaranteed protection from attacks to those who were able to help them as explained here:

"You can be spared from an attack because you know Boko Haram, or your family could be spared because you provide information about military when they [Boko Haram] attack. Or maybe Boko Haram threatened you that if you don't keep giving us information, we are going to kill your family. You have no choice but to start looking for a way to give them information."[98]

Such violence was frequent causing the people to accept insurgent demands. It led to differentiation between the community members and those who failed to assist Boko Haram were killed. A journalist described this situation in Michika:

"When you support them [Boko Haram], you are safe. When you don't support them, then you become a target. At that time, you're not going to be attacked. Nobody's going to attack you because, yeah, you have a link with them. And yeah, you are ready to give them information about whatever is happening, maybe where the military is and what the military is trying to do and things like that."[99]

The insurgents thus made more progress in establishing control. They eventually gained "a lot of sympathizers. People that were ready to join them. People that were ready to hide them if there are issues."[100] They gained supporters even among different religious groups as illustrated in the below:

"Even Michika is Christian based community. Madagali is also Christian based community, many Christians joined Boko Haram, and they are all from those communities."[101]

Once the people acquiesced to insurgent authority, Boko Haram began to occupy the communities. This led to more violence in the remote areas as community members out of fear did not condemn the

[98] Interview with journalist, 14 May 2022, Abuja.
[99] Interview with journalist, 5 July 2022, Abuja.
[100] Interview with humanitarian worker, 18 September 2020, Adamawa.
[101] Interview with academic, 27 September 2020, Adamawa.

actions of the insurgents even when they randomly killed other members of the community. A journalist explained this situation in the below:

"When they [Boko Haram] were killing Christians, the Muslims didn't tell anyone. They didn't say that yes, whatever is happening is destroying everyone, it is not just the other religion."[102]

Meanwhile, this fear of assault and recurrent insurgent attacks upon the people began to undermine communication between the populations and state actors who were not always present in such communities. Several people were unwilling or unable to provide information to state actors that could trigger attacks from the insurgents. An academic explained the context of Mubi, a border town:

"The military did not know what Boko Haram was doing but Boko Haram informants were giving them [insurgents] information as to the number of military personnel present in that area. So, by that, it was normally very easy for them [insurgents] to target the soldiers and the people."[103]

Other community members gradually withdrew from the security agents to avoid harms. A humanitarian worker in Michika, a border community, shared a personal experience to illustrate this point:

"There were no police. There were only a few military officers present. So, the elderly in the community, and some of our volunteers from the community, have a connection with these security people. As a result, they are always aware of the possibility of attacks occurring. But they kept hiding and stopped making the calls to tell them about Boko Haram."[104]

Many people started to engage in activities that supported the insurgents to show their dissociation from the government as demonstrated here:

"Everywhere, what Boko Haram did was that they deployed their people who were using wheelbarrow to sell products. You will think that they are just sellers. But you'll never know that they are, and under their wheelbarrows that what they used to sell are ammunitions and guns. Many people were working for Boko Haram. You cannot do anything for government, and nothing for military. Nothing."[105]

Hence, the government's privileges of access to the communities were undermined resulting in lower government attention to violence. Many reports of terror incidents were unverifiable as the military had limited sources of information. To illustrate, in November 2013, in Michika, when Boko Haram lay in wait by the road, and attacked some residents who were returning from a marriage ceremony, the security

[102] Interview with journalist, 10 November 2020, Borno.
[103] Interview with academic, 17 November 2020, Adamawa.
[104] Interview with humanitarian worker, 14 May 2022, Abuja.
[105] Interview with religious leader, 16 October 2022, Kaduna.

agents in the area and its environs could not confirm the incident as it happened (Marama 2013). The insurgents murdered at least 30 persons, and no military or police responded to the attack because of limited connections within the communities who could share details about the incident. State intervention during attacks remained absent because the military continued to face problems of verification and access even when present in some affected areas. To illustrate, towards the end of 2014, Boko Haram launched separate attacks within several border areas including Mubi (Premium Times 2014c), Madagali and Michika. In the attack in Mubi, some residents told journalists that while they were fleeing to nearby areas, they saw the soldiers in the area driving elsewhere (Premium Times 2014c). The state provided absent responses to the violence in these areas, as Boko Haram was more influential in these towns.

In short, the military struggled with security operations in the areas where insurgents forcefully controlled the people, leading to the neglect of attacks. The government could not meet the demands for security when Boko Haram expanded control in the local communities through force because of restricted avenues of reporting and knowledge sharing between state actors and the people.

Diffuse Cooperation

This section shows that where insurgents' relationships and embeddedness is diffuse, avenues of communication between the people and state actors remain open, thereby enabling robust responses. I demonstrate that where Boko Haram insurgents employed force but had no established presence in the communities, pre-existing relationships between community members and government actors meant that state actors were able to learn about armed activities and, therefore, respond to terror attacks. I provide examples from Yobe to demonstrate diffuse cooperation.

In Yobe, Boko Haram was often unable to attract or purchase loyalties especially within areas where they had divergent cultural and social identities with the people. In such parts of the state, many people had their own beliefs and did not acknowledge insurgent authority in the local areas or presence in

the community. Describing the context of the town of Jakusko, the native land of Yusuf, who was Boko Haram's previous leader, one interviewee noted:

"In fact, Boko Haram had no [prior] relation with the people. The people of Jakusko are well educated in terms of western education. They have significant numbers of Christians. The terrain of Jakusko is also a factor. Jakusko borders with Bauchi and Jigawa state. The movement of the sect in and out of Jakusko will be a very difficult task for the Boko Haram. It is not directly linked to Sambisa and the Lake Chad."[106]

In such areas, members of the community had pre-existing ties to state actors that led to resistance toward the insurgents and their activities. They were not persuaded about Boko Haram's motives and began to share reports about the whereabouts and activities of the insurgents within their social networks and with their personal contacts who were often able to communicate with the military. This mostly led to the arrests and deaths of some insurgents.

An interviewee illustrated this situation:

"Information, once a Boko Haram member came into a house, before you know, nobody will know where information is coming from. Most at times it's from the parents, you know, to someone they have contact with. Before you know, military will be there, secure the whole place and arrest him and take him away."[107]

This cooperation between the people and the military often resulted in prompt government attention to insurgent activities, as personnel had established local connections within the communities, who could report incidents of violence to them. Another interviewee provided the following example of a local community in the state capital to describe this:

"In Termua LGA, Damaturu, the community people will sight the movement of the insurgents approaching the local government area. People from the community, they will make call. They have their link. They will call that "we've seen, we've seen those people [Boko Haram] coming towards this location." And that information will go straight from one person to another, from one community to another up to the level of the military. And the only thing you will see in preparedness for the attack is you see military moving, their trucks moving from this location to that location. They will just go and stop and wait for them [Boko Haram] to come."[108]

Therefore, the government responses to terror attacks were often robust in such areas even before attacks occurred because the insurgents had no influence and faced challenges in attracting local assistance.

[106] Interview with humanitarian worker, 30 August 2020, Yobe.
[107] Interview with counterterrorism expert, 24 August 2022, Yobe.
[108] Interview with executive of non-governmental organization, 06 September 2020, Yobe.

As an example, in December 2011, in Damaturu, the local people informed the military about an insurgent hideout in the city where Boko Haram reportedly kept some weapons. The insurgents murdered at least 40 local people (Reuters 2011) for alerting the government about their activities in the area. The military arrived at the area and killed at least 50 insurgents. They safeguarded the location, and the government responded to the violence due to the local ties between personnel and the people.

Some of my interviewees explained that the insurgents often found it difficult to remain within these areas where they had fewer connections, as the local people kept providing information about them to state actors and were not in support of the construction of an Islamic state. My analysis revealed that in such areas, state interventions during attacks remained feasible as the people and the state actors remained in contact and were able to share information. The soldiers were often alert and knew where, and how to find the insurgents. For instance, in mid-year 2013, the military reported that they had dislodged several insurgents from their hideouts in some cities including Damaturu (vanguard 2013) with the information from the people, who reported Boko Haram's activities in the suburbs of these areas. Moreover, in Damaturu, personnel said that they were made aware of a major attack in June, where the insurgents killed seven students in a boarding school. They were able to respond by killing two Boko Haram members (The New Humanitarian 2013b) as the people told them about the incident. The open channels of information sharing between the people and the military thus facilitated more responsiveness from the government.

In short, where Boko Haram maintained poor ties to the communities, the government was more able to address problems of insecurity because of widened channels of access, communication and information sharing between the people and state actors.

Conclusion

The three cases of Borno, Adamawa, and Yobe show that relationships, and degrees of coercion and embeddedness between the insurgents and the people, can shape responses to violence. Boko Haram's

strong influence in the local communities where they had pre-existing ties and in communities where they forcefully occupied inhibited responses served to close avenues of information-sharing between state actors and members of the community. Without access to information about insurgents and their activities, the government had little capacity to intervene during, or prior to an attack. Nevertheless, where ties between insurgents and the people remained diffuse, state actors could maintain relationships and avenues of communication with inhabitants, and could therefore receive and verify reports of attacks, leading to opportunities to respond to attacks in affected communities. It is evident that more collaborative relations between the military and the people enabled different types of responses to incidents due to shared information, whereas more collaborative or more violent relations between the insurgents and the people led to state neglect in response to attacks, as state actors in such settings possessed limited knowledge about armed activities.

Chapter 7 - Adverse Effects of Militarized Responses on Civilians

Introduction

This chapter highlights the impact of militarized responses upon civilians during conflict. Rather than assuming that more interventionist, or robust security responses serve the interests of security for civilians, I build from findings elucidated in earlier chapters and show how militarized security responses can exacerbate harm and insecurity for certain populations. I briefly discuss two types of repercussions – those resulting from recriminations targeted at civilians when military forces engage in contest with government, and those that emerge from recriminations targeted at unarmed populations when the military fights against an insurgent group. I focus on the latter and show how communities face danger from opportunistic violence that poorly disciplined troops commit. I then show how this develops in the Nigerian context. I document the experiences of civilians facing violence especially from the military, and from Boko Haram. Using illustrative examples, I demonstrate how local experiences in Borno, Yobe and Adamawa shape people's attitudes and perceptions toward the government.

I find that civilians living in areas facing insurgent attacks frequently experience deep mistrust and lack of confidence in the government, often as a direct result of militarized security responses that are ostensibly deployed in the name of their protection. Many communities form security groups to ensure their safety in response to violence from both insurgents and state security agents. Unlike the state security agents who usually lack ties to the communities, such groups that emerge are embedded in the society and should better promote safety of the people because of their presence, localized knowledge, and skills in security provision. Yet, sometimes, their work leads to more danger because when the government has ties to local militias, the latter can facilitate arrests, torture, and information-gathering in ways that prove detrimental to certain communities. Thus, I argue that militarized responses can lead to persistent and varied harms from both state and non-state actors that often further alienate local communities and populations from the state, particularly in areas where the government exercises limited authority and control.

Securitization and Militarism

Scholars have noted that security operations within volatile conflict environments often fail to ensure the protection of all civilians (Enloe 2019; 2010; 2007) during periods of violence. In Israel and Palestine, the militarized actions of the Israeli government frequently result in the deterioration of security for Palestinian populations living in Israel and in Palestine in the name of state protection. These populations in both territories have experienced the loss of landed property, incarceration, and physical assault (Shalhoub-Kevorkian and Shalhūb-Kīfūrkiyān 2009). In former Yugoslavia, security operations led to abuses of women, displacement, loss of family as well as economic livelihoods (Nikolić-Ristanović 2000). American military activities in Iraq further led to problems for Iraqis including inadequate housing, trauma, and missing persons while Americans endured the deaths and injuries of their relatives involved in combat in that country (Enloe 2010). While these examples of territorial expansion demonstrate the impact of military combat on civilians, in the name of state-based security, it is also the case that increased military presence in domestic conflicts has similar effects. In Democratic Republic of Congo, military activities have led to the perpetration of various sexual harms toward women (Kelly et al. 2021). Such activities have similarly exposed men to more violence (Carpenter 2016; 2014; Sivakumaran 2010) because of targeted attacks on males thought to be affiliated with armed groups. In short, in most contexts, militarized responses generate greater insecurity for civilians across the board, but particularly for those living on the margins, even when such efforts are ostensibly deployed in the name of security.

Military forces and other state actors have often been directly responsible for these harms (Cohen, Green, and Wood 2013; Manekin 2013; Moncrief 2017). Such harms toward civilians may develop in two contexts - where the military opposes the government, and where the military contests with armed non-state actors. In contexts where soldiers are in direct conflict with the state, they work to promote the sole interest of the military organization such as fighting the government for control over territory. Especially in the

areas where communities have significant economic resources, military units may launch attacks upon the people to maintain their access to these resources and deter the civilian leaders from exercising control in such territories (Christensen, Nguyen, and Sexton 2019). This serves to promote the local authority of the security agents, as various military units act to pursue common aims. I do not investigate these contexts because the Nigerian military are not at war with the civilian government.

Nonetheless, I focus on conflict environments where the military confronts an armed group to ensure government control. In such contexts, personnel should conduct operations to support the maintenance of security within affected communities, but the soldiers typically use force in their operations leading to more violence. For instance, soldiers may conduct harms within communities to destroy the ties between insurgents and the populations and gain local support for government (Schwartz and Straus 2018). This often occurs within areas where the people show devotion to insurgents and provide them with resources and assistance such as recruits or fighters to support armed operations. The military may consider social identifiers such as co-ethnicity as a means to select and murder these populations who are affiliated to the insurgents, using such attacks on them to undermine the strengths of the armed group (Fjelde and Hultman 2014). In other words, during conflict, populations may face insecurity because the government fails to protect them. In such contexts, troops may not be restrained especially where they lack command within their units. This creates incentives for them to harm civilians to gain individual advantages. For instance, during external interventions, soldiers whose superiors fail to monitor their conduct within the units may commit more acts of sexual violence (Moncrief 2017). Moreover, where they serve for longer periods, and become accustomed to the social environment, their sensitivity toward communal rules of conduct including norms of protection often declines, creating incentives for them to use force toward the people to satisfy their own intended objectives (Manekin 2013). Thus, indiscipline among troops and their continued presence in a conflict setting can lead to harms toward the populations.

I situate these harms toward civilians in the sub-Saharan African context where state security agents and other security officials often receive no punishment for wrongdoing, and where the work of the military

is left largely unaccountable to civilian governments. In Nigeria, the budget of the military, for instance, remains unaudited. The military leaders and other state security officials often have wider authority to carry out their duties because state authorities do not regulate their operations. This includes limited oversight over the purchase of weapons and ammunitions (Abiodun 2020). Military officials typically escape accountability especially when in office because of the lack of established state procedures to control them. These conditions often result in poor discipline among troops who often spend longer periods in one location without rotation, and who may not receive any welfare benefits despite the availability of funding.

In the following sections, I demonstrate how violence and insecurity for civilians was exacerbated across the three states, mainly because of undefined duties of soldiers and other state security agents whose presence increased as the insurgency evolved. This chapter thus shows how efforts by the state to (re)establish security fell short of doing so, and instead often worsened the lived realities of civilians in the northeast.

Civilian Experiences in Nigeria

In this section, I first show how the deployment of the military in the northeast initially created trust toward the government in the affected communities. I then move on to show how, because of the harsh conduct of the troops, civilians lost confidence in the state to ensure protection within communities. I demonstrate how the actions of civilians to support the military led to harms toward themselves. I then discuss the formation of the CJTF as the outcome of the violence that civilians face from armed state and non-state actors. Nevertheless, I show that the presence and operations of this group also contributes to increased danger for communities as it creates conditions for a more hostile security environment where civilians encounter more harms.

From 2011, when the military arrived in Borno and Yobe (Onuah and Cocks 2011), the soldiers performed tasks including mounting checkpoints and roadblocks, conducting stops and searches of the people, and patrolling local communities. These roles were a duplication of the work of other state security

agents, particularly the police, who did not necessarily request the support of the military to execute their functions. An interviewee explained this:

"Who told you that the police was overwhelmed? Was it not the president who deployed the military to the state? Governor did not want to deal with the matter, so he called the President. So, he called, and military came. President was the one who said they should come and work!"[109]

The military performed such different roles alongside fighting Boko Haram to restore order as civil authority in many areas had collapsed due to the heightened insurgent attacks that placed severe limitations upon the operations of many state actors. In the local communities, their work sometimes provided great relief to the people as described here:

"Well, as at then when the military initially came into the society, they became a kind of a saviour, because they stood in between the Boko Haram and the community members who are aggrieved and who actually had been subjected to kind of hardship by the Boko Haram."[110]

Due to the lack of understanding of the military's operations (Dietrich 2015), and the overlapping responsibilities of the state security agents, the people began to turn to the military for assistance in civic matters because "their presence became so much in the society"[111] and "they were everywhere. They even overshadowed what the police does."[112]

The military thus began to undertake civic duties to meet the needs of the people including adjudicating and settling informal disputes. One interviewee explained this:

"So, the coming of the military became a kind of a recipe to redeem the difficulty the society, I mean, the community passed through. So, people now begin to go to them to report in terms of trying to say - I have a grudge with my neighbour, I have this."[113]

The performance of these various tasks helped to ensure the presence of government in affected communities. Nevertheless, personnel determined punishment for offenders whenever they received requests for assistance from the people resulting in harms toward the civilians.

[109] Interview with police official, 19 January 2023, Borno.
[110] Interview with journalist, 7 August 2020, Borno.
[111] Interview with federal government official, 29 August 2020, Yobe.
[112] Interview with journalist, 10 November 2020, Borno.
[113] Interview with journalist, 23 July 2022, Borno.

An interviewee shared the following experience in Borno to illustrate this:

"I could recall an incident in Gongi (village), where a woman reported her husband to the military for not catering for the family. And at the tail end, the man was beaten, and the man died which is just a civil case because he was beaten. And immediately after coming back home, he had internal injuries and the man died."[114]

This led to waning trust in the government as the military continued to perform wider functions which began to interfere with the daily activities of the civilians. An interviewee gave the following example in Maiduguri, Borno to illustrate the problem with movement:

"You know, they [military] mounted checkpoints in different parts of the state. You can spend like seven hours, seven hours, seven hours joining queue before they check you. Some people even slept on the road waiting for them to check them into Maiduguri, especially at one place called Auno. A gate to Maiduguri, whenever you reach that place, you have to spend like seven hours waiting for them to clear you."[115]

Due to insurgent attacks upon the state security agents, in the local communities, the military began to find and detain terror suspects. Personnel applied their own knowledge about Boko Haram such as illiteracy among the insurgents as well as ethnic features of the Kanuri people who mostly joined the group, in their identification. These suspects were often kept in unknown detention centres without undergoing proper court proceedings (Human Rights Watch 2012).

One interviewee described the military's process of identification:

"Nobody is spared of being not Boko Haram unless you speak English. If you speak English, you will be spared. But as long as you don't understand English, you are tagged as Boko Haram."[116]

Another interviewee noted:

"What they [military] mostly do is, you know the Kanuri people have like tribal marks. As far as they see the tribal marks, they will say – "you are Boko Haram also". So, this was a proper way to identify an insurgent for them."[117]

The military continued to make random arrests of suspects, raided homes and worship centres, and controlled access to buildings and movement within the areas facing attacks (Channels Television 2012).

[114] Interview with federal government official, 18 October 2020, Yobe.
[115] Interview with civil society employee, 25 August 2020, Borno.
[116] Interview with federal government official, 19 August 2020, Yobe.
[117] Interview with journalist, 20 July 2022, Borno.

They specifically targeted certain members of the community whom they perceived to be more involved with Boko Haram and insurgent activities. as described below:

"More often than not, they [military] go after the youth. So, those are the first targets when they come to a community."[118]

Another interviewee noted:

"If they [military] are able to identify that a particular person is a Boko Haram, they also go for their family, the wife."[119]

This contributed to a sense of heightened fear towards the state – and specifically towards the military – on the part of civilians living in the northeast. They came to see that the military was not, in fact, there to defend them, but instead to harm and intimidate them. These abuses resulted in various harms toward the people that were not isolated to reprisal attacks.

In Maiduguri, an interviewee explained this:

"During that time, if you have to take somebody to hospital, you have to be very careful if the hospital is not close to your house. You have to be sure that you are not going to meet with the military. Even if you are sick, you have to stay at home, that's how so many pregnant women died at home. That's how so many students missed their exams."[120]

The military was also implicated in mass rapes, indiscriminate killings, mass deaths, sexual assault and forced disappearances. One more interviewee in Maiduguri described this:

"If the military didn't kill you, they would just carry you and go and put you in their barracks. So, there were thousands of people in the detention facility. There is not enough air for them, so the people were being suffocated. Sometimes there are all these barriers, so many diseases that used to kill them. Almost every day, almost every day, you will see the ambulance, carrying corpses and taking it to the hospital. So, at a point even the mortuary was saturated. There were no longer stairs to accommodate any dead person. So even if they bring dead people, they will just lay them down on the floor."[121]

Also, in Damaturu, Yobe, an interviewee observed the following:

"The military beat and harassed road users. They molested and detained a lot of people. A lot died in custody."[122]

[118] Interview with humanitarian worker, 24 July 2022, Borno.
[119] Interview with journalist, 1 August 2020, Abuja.
[120] Interview with journalist, 23 July 2022, Borno.
[121] Interview with journalist, 6 August 2022, Borno.
[122] Interview with humanitarian worker, 19 July 2022, Borno.

Another interviewee in Dikwa, Borno, shared the following example:

"The cases of gang rape that were recorded were actually carried out by the soldiers according to the account of the victims."[123]

The military further harmed civilians who tried to help their relatives or persons within their social network who were in custody. An interviewee in Damaturu, Yobe, illustrated this:

"The women were sexually abused in their desperation to secure the release of their husbands. The military told the women that if they allowed them to have sex with them, they'll fast-track their [husbands] release."[124]

When the state security agents became targets of Boko Haram, the military sometimes retaliated through mass murder in the local communities as described here:

"When a military was killed by a Boko Haram member and he run into the community, the soldiers go into that community and kill everybody."[125]

Facing such severe harms, many local leaders initially began to seek help from the government. Traditional leaders in Borno mobilized and called for the federal government to remove the military from the state to allow the local people to return to their normal routines. Despite this request, the military remained because Governor Shettima feared the escalation of insurgent attacks upon their exit from the affected areas (Channels Television 2012). The state security agents continued to harm the people while Boko Haram launched more severe attacks.

In 2013, to address the persistent violence toward the civilians, these local leaders further petitioned President Jonathan to reduce the presence of the military in the northeast if personnel could not be entirely removed. These leaders also requested for pardon for Boko Haram but the President paid no attention to both requests (Ateboh 2013) because he wanted these leaders - who exercised authority in the local communities from which Boko Haram emerged - to publicly condemn insurgent activities (Daily Post

[123] Interview with women's group leader, 15 September 2020, Borno.
[124] Interview with non-governmental organization worker, 20 August 2020, Yobe.
[125] Interview with journalist, 17 January 2023, Borno.

2013). This could potentially end the violence because the insurgents were more familiar with their local heads and would be more willing to pay attention to their demands.

The President rather deployed increased numbers of soldiers to Borno and Yobe as well as Adamawa (Vanguard 2013a), as Boko Haram activities had not subsided. The military, whom the people demanded to leave, then became the overseers of the crisis. As the number of state security agents increased across the three states, Boko Haram also launched more severe attacks upon personnel. The security agents became more concerned for their own safety and lives as demonstrated here:

"Do you know how many numbers of lives of security men that were lost? So civilian will only look at himself but will not bother about the number of the security men that have been killed."[126]

The state security agents remained frustrated with the activities of Boko Haram as the insurgents continued to fight them and attack the people in the local communities. They resorted to more violence toward the civilians because of intensified suspicion, and mistrust.

An interviewee in Michika, Adamawa, illustrated this:

"Sometimes they [military] will come to the market, they'll dismantle the place, they will just set some places ablaze. All over. Anywhere. Anywhere they are suspecting there are Boko Haram members, they will not come professionally to do their searching, they'll just come and harass everybody. Before you know, gunshots everywhere."[127]

In Yola, Adamawa, another interviewee described an encounter with the military:

"You seeing a military man is like seeing a monster because he doesn't know who you are, you know, he takes everybody as Boko Haram. So, if you're coming, walking towards him, he is challenging you asking you questions from afar - who are you, where are you coming from, what do you want? You know, all that harassment."[128]

One other interviewee explained how the military continued to apply force in Borno:

"I told you, military killed several people, innocent people just because they are accusing them of supporting Boko Haram. They killed several of them, and sometimes from far distance because of a bomb blast, whenever they are suspecting you with something, they don't know whether it is a bomb. Before you know, they will shoot you down."[129]

[126] Interview with police officer, 15 September 2020, Lagos.
[127] Interview with humanitarian worker, 27 August 2020, Adamawa.
[128] Interview with academic, 12 November 2020, Adamawa.
[129] Interview with journalist, 5 August 2020, Borno.

Some soldiers targeted civilians because of their own personal desires as described in the below:

"You will hear the soldiers screaming: we will kill all of them! And some, even some who are from other tribes, like the Igbos, you know, we had the Biafra war, you'll hear them saying that - they [populations] will pay. They will pay for what they did to us in Biafra. So that means somebody, somebody is taking revenge."[130]

These random actions of the state security agents led to the destruction of families. A journalist shared the below personal experience in Maiduguri to illustrate this:

"I'll give you an example of a man whom his wife was in labour, and he was to go to the hospital during coffee time. So, while he was going, he was asked to stop by the military. So, when he came out from the car and lifted his hands up, the military man just shot him in the head. And once he fell and died instantly, the woman who was in labour also died in the car, and the baby was still there. It was a crazy experience for me."[131]

Relations between the state security agents and the people were so tense that the military even targeted those civilians who sought to offer them assistance. In other words, some civilians were harmed precisely *because* they were able to assist the military, as noted here:

"Many wives were invited for interrogations, and they were detained. If you are able to identify that okay, your husband is a Boko Haram, the belief is that you are probably still having some kind of interaction with the person, or you are sharing correspondence with him. So, they will invite you for interview and in the course of doing that, they detain them and many of them get raped."[132]

One other interviewee in Yobe described this ordeal with the military:

"And whenever you have an important information that time that maybe you heard Boko Haram have done one thing, when you go there to leak the information to the police or the military, they will arrest you. They will say, you too, you are part of them."[133]

Thus, even for those community members who sought to cooperate with the government against Boko Haram, these efforts were rarely, if ever rewarded. While insurgent attacks escalated, the people continued to experience violence from the military. The relations between the local communities, and the state security agents severely deteriorated especially in the areas where many soldiers had stayed for a number of years. One interviewee noted in this example from Borno:

[130] Interview with executive of non-governmental organization, 2 August 2020, Borno.
[131] Interview with journalist, 7 August 2020, Borno.
[132] Interview with journalist, 1 August 2020, Abuja.
[133] Interview with executive of non-governmental organization, 25 August 2020, Yobe.

"With this level of killings, the military were throwing parties in Maiduguri for themselves. They were celebrating themselves all the time. Even if 100 people would be killed, if they had a party, they would never suspend the party. They would still celebrate the party. So, you can see the kind of feelings they have for the people too."[134]

The civilians no longer felt protected, and, therefore, took up arms and crude weapons in their own defence. They wanted to show the military that they opposed Boko Haram and further protect their own communities from insurgent attacks. They thus formed the CJTF in all three states.

An interviewee in Borno explained the actions of the civilians:

"CJTF is a child born out of necessity. When we talk of necessity, it is not working because of willingness, but because people were fed up. People then were being killed as a result of the military that was so overwhelmed with what was happening."[135]

Another interviewee in Yobe also stated:

"Whenever there's an attack, the Boko Haram run into the communities and the military find it so difficult to understand, and out of those frustrations, then they try to apply with attributive punishment to both the victim as well as the innocent one. And that is when we used tools against these monsters [insurgents], fighting and identifying Boko Haram."[136]

The military initially did not accept the work of the CJTF. Some of them complained that these civilians were not "trained and would not know how to perform soldier duties during war."[137] My interviewees noted that the CJTF was accepted in the areas where they were formed because they knew the people in the various communities.

Yet, through their operations, these vigilante groups also began to commit harms toward the people (Agbiboa 2021) although some report that their actions were less violent compared to insurgent attacks. For instance, in November 2013, the CJTF reportedly murdered eight Boko Haram suspects in the border village of Tumbun Gini, in the northern part of Borno. Local reports revealed that these suspects were local herders

[134] Interview with journalist, 20 January 2023, Borno.
[135] Interview with non-governmental organization executive, 28 May 2022, Borno.
[136] Interview with vigilante, 2 September 2022, Yobe.
[137] Interview with military commander, 1 October 2020, Kaduna.

and not insurgents (The New Humanitarian 2013a). Thus, the vigilante groups were often involved in other atrocities comparable to the abuses from the military.

They harmed the people because some of the community members who faced arrests would "go and tell Boko Haram about CJTF"[138] resulting in insurgent attacks upon the group.

One interviewee in Borno further explained the CJTF's use of force toward the people:

> "At that time, we were full of anger, we did not know, and we had no choice, so we were, you know (throws fist). We will hear of one attack, and 50 people [CJTF] will jump and go to the place. We will slap and beat the people. We had no organization. No preparation. Now military is in charge. They are like our father. We don't move until military tells us. We also have education, and we go for training and things like that. So, we have stopped that. No beating."[139]

From 2015, when President Buhari became the commander-in-chief of the Nigerian armed forces, the federal government instituted mechanisms to enable the military to manage relations with the civilians and to make the soldiers more accountable for their offences. This led to the creation of the Human Rights Desk in 2016 to handle investigations about the reports of violations of human rights from the conduct of personnel, and enhance the ability of the military to ensure the protection of these rights (United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner 2016). This, however, has not seen much progress. The Human Rights Desk after operating for nearly six years has only addressed over 500 reports of soldier misconduct during counterinsurgency operations across the north (ThisNigeria 2022).

It is evident that the deployment of the military failed to curtail insecurity in Borno, Yobe and Adamawa. Given that many communities felt abandoned by the government, the insecurity civilians felt at the hands of the Nigerian military was a crucial factor in the creation of the CJTF. It was clear that civilians had to rely on their own mechanisms for protection at the hands of state violence toward communities. Yet the birth of the CJTF did not provide the security and self-protection that many communities sought. First,

[138] Interview with CJTF, 21 January 2023, Borno.
[139] Interview with CJTF, 19 January 2023, Borno.

the CJTF was unevenly distributed, and served its own political agendas rather than always working for the protection of the people. Second, the CJTF itself was implicated in direct violence towards civilians. While among my interviewees, this group maintained a better reputation than the military, it was still clear that these non-state actors also participated in harassment, torture, and predation vis-à-vis civilian populations. Finally, the creation of the CJTF led the military to engage in further recriminations against civilians, to re-establish its monopoly on violence.

Conclusion

In north-eastern Nigeria, the people continue to face harms from insurgents, state security agents and vigilante groups. When the conflict began, they experienced violence from state security agents because of poorly defined roles among troops and their continued presence in the communities facing insurgent attacks. These affected populations began to engage more with the government during the initial deployment of the military, but when military personnel were implicated in violence against them, they began to dissociate from the state, establishing their own means of providing security in local areas. Yet, when local vigilantes mobilized to promote safety within communities, unarmed civilians began to face other harms because of their perceived support for insurgents. The non-state security groups, like the state security agents, became more concerned about their own security and carried out violent acts toward communities to maintain their authority in the affected areas. They lacked discipline which permitted them to use opportunistic violence in the performance of their duties. Thus, where there are state and community partnerships to address threats, security can be worsened for populations that should be protected from danger. Militarized responses can create and exacerbate varied forms of violence from non-state actors and from the state which can further undermine the relations between the government and the affected communities.

Chapter 8 - Conclusion and Recommendations

Introduction

This chapter concludes the dissertation. I begin with a brief review of the argument I have developed in the Nigerian case, and then explore how it might extend to other contexts. I then discuss the contributions and implications of my theory. I follow this with some policy recommendations that may be relevant for stakeholders in the provision of security and other social services. I end this chapter with some recommendations for future research.

Argument and Generalizability of Theory of Government Responses

I have argued that within volatile security constellations that are prone to conflict, where the government often fails to maintain oversight over its territory and people, social relationships – and the attendant information-sharing and forms of cooperation and governance that those relationships make possible – profoundly shape the government's ability to regulate or respond to violence.

I show that two sets of relationships contribute to variation in government responses: relationships between state and non-state actors, and relationships between insurgents and the people. I demonstrate through my examination of the Nigerian case that these two factors are crucial in understanding how such governments that exhibit weaker capacity address security threats, and why they may or may not show commitment toward maintaining security in local areas. I show that other factors mainly state and military capacity, international pressure from governments and transnational groups, policymaking, scope and magnitude of terror attacks, intergovernmental coordination, and electoral incentives, hold little sway for explaining variation in responses in contexts where the state has no monopoly over the use of force.

Within complex and violent security constellations, I argue that, when violence heightens, the state relies on the populations at large, to augment its strengths in offering security. State actors - mainly

governors and military - form relations with non-state armed groups that have communal experiences of violence from insurgents and state security agents and are already performing functions like the government. They provide these groups with important resources including training and finances to establish the presence of the state in far reaching areas. These non-state actors, namely vigilante groups, are the components of society that provide the local access, information, and resources that the government needs to confront insurgent activities. Therefore, in the areas where state actors create such local connections or maintain them, the state projects its power because it can conveniently make use of the insights, experiences, and skills of these groups to offer protection to the affected people and communities. However, in the areas where the government does not benefit from these relevant resources because of the absence of such local connections, it turns its attention elsewhere during attacks and fails to provide security within communities.

In this same environment where insurgents seek power, they build separate interactions with the people based on pre-existent connections such as familial ties, producing loyalties between them that reduce the opportunities for state actors to obtain reports and communication about the armed group to be able to curtail or respond to violence. Nonetheless, in the communities where the insurgents fail to actively pursue such loyalties, for instance, by not granting benefits to the people such as protection from attacks, the people often elect to assist state actors with the necessary inputs and knowledge to counter armed violence. Hence, where insurgents are embedded within local communities, and where insurgents rule by force, the government is less capable of responding to armed activities due to unavailable resources and assistance from the people. Where the insurgents lack influence, channels of communication, access, and information become more available to state actors, enabling them to act to exhibit security responses.

I suggest that these distinct social relations hold greater explanatory power in determining how the government regulates armed activities in contexts where the state faces homegrown security threats but lacks command over the use of force. I predict that since the government in these contexts lacks the necessary institutions to organize its activities, it relies on assistance from members of the community to

engage in a variety of governance activities. This makes the state's reliance on social connections with the people central to government action. The state and non-state actors as well as the people involved in such relations all contribute skills, insights, first-hand information, and experiences towards the deployment and management of security to make up for the government's shortcomings in performing these tasks. Therefore, these relations are necessary conditions that shape state intervention and response in such environments. They facilitate the government's entry and integration into communities and shape its operations during periods of violence.

Contributions and Implications

My work demonstrates that the establishment and sustenance of community level relationships are central to governance in areas of weak state capacity and beyond. The execution of basic government tasks in contexts where the state has limited reach involves information and knowledge sharing as well as communication between the government, local communities, non-state actors, and security agents that share diverse social relationships. This dissertation, therefore, adds to our understanding of the current nature of security policy within developing states, specifically sub-Saharan African countries. While much of the focus of research on security policy, particularly counterterrorism, has been on developed countries (e.g: Hellmuth 2016; Meier 2020; 2022), and the military activities of such countries within external environments experiencing violence (Perliger 2012; Hazelton 2017; Hazelton 2021), the policies of developing states have not received important attention. My analysis of events in Borno, Adamawa and Yobe, thus sheds light on how governments in such states manage security threats within their own borders based on interpersonal connections and common affinities.

Importantly, I show that social relations create conditions that enable the government to regulate the lives of the populations as information about local demands for security disseminates to relevant state actors. Yet, through the violent actions of security agents, the government demonstrates a lack of appreciation for local perceptions and expectations of what it means to be protected from harm. The

people's dissatisfaction with the inability of the government to meet these expectations, and disappointment in the actions of state security agents often leads to diminished confidence and trust in the government to perform its responsibilities. As a result, they undertake local initiatives to provide for their own security in response to the inappropriate actions of state actors and violence from insurgents by organizing vigilante groups and other forms of self-governance. They commit efforts to assist state actors with relevant knowledge and insights that will guarantee their own safety and that of their communities. These different interactive processes between state actors and the population, therefore, constitute and shape the processes of the development of the state. Hence, this study emphasizes the nature of the relations between the society and the state in Africa (Rothchild and Chazan 2019; Chabal and Daloz 1999) in recent times.

I highlight the significant roles of non-state armed actors especially vigilante groups in my analysis to show that these groups supplement the operations of government when they collaborate with sub-national leaders or administrations. I demonstrate that their work with state actors at the sub-state level enables the government to manage local demands for security by acknowledging which populations need protection, how frequently they need defense, and why they are more vulnerable to insurgent attacks than others because of the mechanism of information sharing and communication. The collaboration between these actors and subnational leaders enables the government to determine how and where to distribute its competences in security, to maintain state authority. Put differently, when serving as PGMs, the affiliations that these groups maintain with the government due to their knowledge, skills, and shared experiences of violence, can be instrumental in driving state intervention in affected areas during emergencies. However, as community-based armed actors, their organization impacts the government's ability to perform security functions, particularly during conflict because, to operate, governments often rely on the information, resources, and capacity that community-embeddedness permits. Hence these armed groups, which have not received much scholarly attention, perform important functions vis-à-vis both state and society as they operate to fill a security vacuum. Though their actions can enhance the capacities of states, it can also exacerbate state-based insecurity for civilians. I diverge from existing scholarship on the cooperation

between the central government and armed non-state actors by emphasizing the localized nature of these relationships both at the community level, and vis-à-vis state government rather than main government (Staniland 2017; 2012a; Seymour 2014; Staniland 2012a; Otto, Scharpf, and Gohdes 2020). I contribute to the literature on PGMs by emphasizing the different dimensions along which "pro-government" organizations vary; whereas groups may differ in both their autonomy from government, and their formality, I situate vigilante and hunter associations in Northeastern Nigeria as independent and community-embedded, with primarily informal relationships with local state actors. In this way, I contribute to literature on the formation of civilian organizations during conflict (Kalyvas 2006; Schubiger 2021; 2013; Lyall 2009) and expand existing work on armed actors (Ahram 2016; Abbs, Clayton, and Thomson 2020; Boisvert 2015; Koren 2017; Raleigh and Kishi 2020; Steinert, Steinert, and Carey 2019; Carey and Mitchell 2016; Agbiboa 2020; Anderson 2002b; Peic 2014).

I also contribute to the literature on rebel governance (Mampilly 2015; 2012; Kalyvas 2015; Heger and Jung 2017; Lidow 2010; Stewart and Liou 2017; Huang 2016a; Arjona 2015a) by showing that the loyalties between insurgents and communities have implications for the execution of state responsibilities where the armed group serve as alternate rulers. Particularly, strong interpersonal connections between the armed group and the population restricts government intervention during such periods of crises. Therefore, populations under insurgent control may be continuously exposed to danger because they are often separated from the rest of the society. This leads to neglect from the government that creates more distant relations between such people and the state because of their association with the insurgents.

My analysis demonstrates that indeed, the state remains selective in performing its duty of security provision just as it distributes benefits unequally in such contexts. In controlling violence, it favours those populations and areas where state actors have access while ignoring communities which are impenetrable. Without social and interpersonal links with these actors, many communities are exempted from receiving attention from the state's security sector.

Policy Recommendations

It has now become a common practice for African governments facing conflicts to create vigilante groups and employ the services of local volunteers to work alongside the military and other security agents in fighting armed actors within state territory. Therefore, all involved parties, and especially governments themselves, need to develop better understandings of the roles of such actors, to protect civilians and better understand local demands for protection and defense. I outline a few recommendations to advance civilian protection in complex security constellations.

The Nigerian case reveals that civil authority and military power cannot effectively be exercised simultaneously during crisis in weak states. Civilian authorities and the military often contest for control over crisis. Thus, governments within fragile contexts need to develop and strengthen plans for addressing security crisis where military involvement is crucial, that will outline the various responsibilities of stakeholders, namely, sub-national leaders, and state security agents. This includes establishing clear procedures for handling the affairs of the people in a particular jurisdiction during the imposition of a state of emergency, for instance. It also necessitates the development of a clear structure of rule during periods of violence to allow for the maintenance of order. This will ensure accountability of state actors in the execution of their duties especially and strengthen intergovernmental collaboration during crisis.

My analysis demonstrates the current centrality of non-state security groups such as vigilante groups in the fight against insurgents. Where these groups work for the state, the governments that handle their operations need to better control their activities and clearly define their responsibilities given that they boost the capability of the state to regulate terror incidents. This is crucial because official management of such groups will provide them with guidance during peacetime as well as during routine work within local communities. This will ensure more control over their activities, including their commitment to providing support for the state, and accountability for their actions during their period of service. It will particularly enable the continuity of their operations in case of changes to their relationships with the sub-national

leaders and administrations in the event of political turnovers, death, or the removal of their aligned partners in government.

Put differently, when informal security actors such as vigilante groups de facto partner with the government to address security threats, there is a need for greater accountability, transparency, and oversight of the work of these actors. It may be important for both central and sub-national administrations to manage them, as well as have clear responsibilities toward them to ensure their discipline and command. This may require the strengthening of formal support toward a range of community organizations – besides armed actors – to strengthen ties with communities affected by violence, enhance information flows between communities, local government, and the center, and to distribute responsibilities more effectively and transparently. Strengthened ties with non-militarized community groups and organizations can permit greater transparency in channelling financial resources and oversight towards local communities. Given the extent of reports of opportunistic and targeted violence, it is imperative that any actors carrying out armed operations on behalf of the government undergo regular training and have clear channels of accountability and oversight to guard against transgressions.

Given that these groups which belong to local communities wield some local influence and that they also commit actions that adversely impact the security of civilians, it is crucial for the sub-national administrations that collaborate with them to maintain oversight over their affairs where such collaborations are maintained. Such formal oversight duties may include establishing local offices for their operations, determining their recruitment, salaries, and welfare, and formalizing their roles with the view to curtailing illicit violence. The execution of such duties may require support from local leaders such as traditional rulers and heads of communities where applicable because civilians who form such groups often belong to communities with influential local heads. These local leaders typically understand highly localized security environments and have significant and strong relationships with the populations. These leaders are also part of the populations facing harms and can articulate the local concerns for security to the relevant leaders in government. Their knowledge and experiences in the security environment can be informative and timely

for state actors to monitor violence and make decisions across affected regions. They can thus be authorized to perform functions including the assessment and recommendations of vigilantes from the various communities for defined periods of service in the state security sector. This means that relevant local leaders must also be officially recognized in the management of security to strengthen government control in the areas that are seemingly out of reach of the state. This will improve the administration of the non-state groups within the security sector where these groups cooperate with state actors to curb violence. Importantly, while the outsourcing of illicit violence to non-state actors should be curtailed by central authorities, the government and military require alternative mechanisms for gathering information from local communities affected by Boko Haram violence.

Put simply, the creation of better avenues for accountability and participation of communities in government can be advantageous for the state because these local actors will serve as both formal representatives of government, and the custodians of the society. Their work will, therefore, project the visibility of the state among the local populations, in a way that portrays the government's familiarity with their routines, to enable the prediction of violence and prompt attention to it.

Nevertheless, the above policy actions should not be limited to security provision. Indeed, the increased securitization and militarization of Northern Nigeria does not seem to promise much in the way of protection for ordinary people. Rather than formalizing relationships with vigilante groups, therefore, the government would be better served by demilitarizing the northeast, and instead formalizing relationships with other, non-armed, community organizations, to facilitate information flows and meet the communities' needs. Given that the reach of government remains an issue in many weak states, state actors should focus on establishing more ties to local actors to improve the execution of other state responsibilities. This should be regulated with clear processes of accountability for both state and non-state actors to avoid undercutting the state. In the delivery of social services such as housing and education, sub-state administrations can build recognized partnerships with relevant actors such as education providers, or influential figures such as customary leaders in remote areas. This more localized, integrated and

community-facing approach to governance will expose state actors to local ideas, advice, and knowledge that the government needs to address developmental needs and establish influence. It will allow the government to anticipate and plan toward addressing common problems in communities such as inadequate health facilities, academic institutions, and housing because of communication between state actors and the local partners. When state actors are more aware of such issues, they can channel resources such as financial support towards the implementation of social projects. Such opportunities may, in turn, undercut the turn to violence and the appeal of armed group recruitment.

These partnerships should be recognized within government institutions to allow for continuity in the projection of local demands and the deployment of resources towards managing them. They should be monitored through systemized processes to allow for accountability, and innovation. For instance, a clear chain of command can be created from the community leader to the national representative of an area who would then report to officers within the main government to manage specific policy objectives. This can potentially bridge the wide socio-economic gaps that exist between urban populations and rural people because the government can extend its operations across many parts of the state. It will serve as a mechanism to draw marginalized populations into the affairs of the state because they will have representation in government as well as access to its benefits. This will enhance the integration of government into communities with such populations as they will be able to engage more with its actors and their operations.

On the other hand, international actors such as intergovernmental organizations and foreign states need to pay more attention to these developments within countries facing insurgency to be able to create tailored programs of support to both state actors and the population. The myriad actors involved in security provision all have different tasks and elicit diverse needs. For instance, while the government may need financial and military resources to confront insurgents, both vigilante groups and security agents may require training and education to enhance their awareness about human rights or improve their literacy and

ability to communicate between themselves. International actors can thus strengthen the different types of support that they give towards promoting peace.

Future Research

This work sought to document and explain observed variation in government security responses in states that do not follow the Eurocentric or Westphalian model of governance. I focus on government action and inaction towards violence in these states. I interrogate government and military activities to illustrate how the state manages its responsibilities of security provision toward the population where it demonstrates weak capacity. I do not comment on the effectiveness of militarized responses to insurgency but demonstrate the significance of the factors that shape divergent responses. My analysis covers social relationships – through mechanisms of communication and information-sharing – as a more relevant factor, leaving room for further examination of the success or failure of responses.

Although I discuss repercussions of militarized responses upon civilians, my focus on the government draws attention away from the people facing insurgent attacks. I do not investigate or address the subjective security landscape for civilians facing violence which inarguably is a crucial aspect of security policy. I suggest that based on my findings that the cooperation between state and non-state actors has relevance for security governance, future work should pay more attention to how people facing violence react to security collaborations. Other works can also give more attention to how civilians facing armed attacks interpret state intervention, and military activities against insurgents. Such an endeavor could perhaps address questions of effectiveness of responses in local communities.

Militarized responses should not be equated with greater security for civilian populations. Indeed, militarized responses are rarely associated with effective or security-enhancing governance (Enloe 2007). Such responses in any context can have adverse repercussions for civilians (Abu-Lughod 2002), and the lack of formal accountability or oversight of vigilante groups permits even more widespread human rights violations. In Nigeria, both military and vigilante groups frequently contributed to worsened crisis through

their actions, that lead to abuses against civilian populations, including torture and extrajudicial killings. The arbitrary actions of the security agents often reproduce fear, mistrust and suspicion between the people and state actors. Hence, militarized responses to violence can create even greater insecurity for the people facing violence. It should not, therefore, be concluded that more prompt and militarized action from state security agents constitutes an appropriate response to the Boko Haram crisis or insurgency. The dissertation instead emphasizes the need to understand complex social relationships, between state and society, and between insurgent actors and the communities in which they are embedded. It is only in understanding how these various relationships unfold to shape and close entry points for the state, that we can understand variation in the military's response to the Boko Haram crisis.

Indeed, a close analysis of these complex and interdependent social relationships within the realm of security sector responsiveness suggests several repercussions for other aspects of governance. It is likely that, in other sectors, the government's access to populations ostensibly under its authority is severely curtailed by a lack of access to local information or support which, in turn, impedes its capacity to perform its functions and duties. It is these dynamics that likely contribute to dissatisfaction with the government and foster the appeal of armed violence and insurgency in the first place. My analysis demonstrates that, just as governments affect the lives of individuals and communities, they are also deeply constituted by the individuals and communities ostensibly under their authority.

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