

Public Administration and the Management of Insecurity in Zamfara State: A Literature Review

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Abstract

Original Research Article

In Zamfara State, Nigeria, insecurity is still an ongoing issue because of widespread armed banditry, community violence and the social and economic problems that come with them. This study explores at how public administration might help address these problems, mostly using current research on governance, policy interventions and institutional cooperation, complemented by limited firsthand insights. The study points out a number of systemic problems such as a lack of money, corruption and insufficient connections between government institutions and local populations. The study looks at how other conflict affected areas have handled security governance in a way that is sustainable, open and includes everyone. In the end, it provides to the larger discussion about how to improve the public sector in societies that have been touched by violence.

Keywords: Public Administration, Insecurity, Governance, Conflict, Zamfara State.

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INTRODUCTION

Zamfara State, situated in northeastern Nigeria has become one of the country's most dangerous areas in recent years. Armed organisations like as kidnappers and bandits, threaten communities in every part of the state every day. These attacks have killed numerous people and forced others to leave their homes. They have also interrupted farming, schools and trade (Hassan et al., 2023). Amnesty International (2022) says that more than 100,000 people have had to leave Zamfara because it is not safe, making the area a humanitarian hotspot. The situation calls for urgent and effective government action. This kind of issue needs to be managed by public administration. The state can make the people safer and restore their trust by using better policies, better resource allocation and greater cooperation between security and development organisations (Adamu & Ibrahim, 2021). However, Zamfara State, as in many other places where there is strife, inadequate government systems typically make things take longer. It is hard to achieve enduring peace when there is not enough money, the government and population fail to communicate to each other well and there is corruption in public institutions (Ibrahim & Sani, 2020). Young people are particularly vulnerable because of these problems with administration in addition to societal challenges including widespread poverty, lack of

education and significant unemployment. A lot of children are not going to school because they are afraid for their safety. This makes it more likely that they may join criminal gangs (Ogundipe et al., 2022; UNICEF, 2023). It's clear that sending in security forces alone will not be enough to fix the problems in Zamfara State. For peace to last, we need to take a bigger view that involves making public institutions stronger, giving people better access to education and jobs and getting local communities involved.

Statement of the Research Problem

Armed banditry, mass displacement and frequent attacks on rural communities have made Zamfara State a more dangerous place to live. Even though the government has tried several times to fix the problem, it is still going on, which makes people worry about how well public administration can handle the crisis. Weak coordination between institutions, corruption and leaving out local stakeholders have all made security operations less effective. Also, the social and economic factors that lead to violence like poverty, illiteracy and unemployment are still mostly ignored. This study is to find out how challenges in public administration make Zamfara less secure and what can be done to make governance stronger in places where there is a lot of violence.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To examine the role of public administration in managing insecurity in Zamfara State.
2. To identify the administrative challenges affecting effective security governance in the region.
3. To assess the impact of institutional coordination, community participation, and socio-economic conditions on public security efforts.

METHODOLOGY

This study utilises a qualitative approach, mostly using secondary sources but adding few primary data to give it more context. The main part of the study relies on academic papers, official reports, institutional publications and other relevant literature published between 2018 and 2023. These sources give us a better understanding of how public administration and insecurity are connected in Zamfara State. These sources are selected carefully based on how relevant, credible and systematically aligned it was with the study's goals. As an additional component to the study, limited primary insights were gathered through informal local security guards and community elders selected in some high conflict zones in Zamfara State. Their insights gave personal accounts on how the government has failed and how the community has responded to insecurity. This combination of data allowed to explore emerging themes such as weak institutional coordination, policy failure and exclusion of community actors in security management. A thematic analysis was applied to identify and interpret key patterns from the data, enabling a structured understanding of how governance challenges shape the insecurity landscape in Zamfara State. In general, this method strikes a good mix between rich documentary evidence and grounded community-level views which helps to provide a more nuanced look at the topics being examined.

Conceptual Review

Public Administration:

According to Rosenbloom, Kravchuk and Clerkin (2022), public administration is the management and execution of public policy by state institutions for the benefit of all. In the public sector, it includes a lot of different tasks such as planning, organising, staffing, directing and budgeting. Public administration has changed over time from a strict, rule based system to one that is more flexible and involves people in decision-making. Citizens are now at the centre of government. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP, 2023), says that good public administration is based on openness, responsiveness, accountability and citizen involvement. These ideas are the foundation of good government especially in places where insecurity threatens social order. In Zamfara State where armed conflict and poor service delivery have made people lose faith in the government, it is not just vital but necessary to re-establish governance institutions through administrative practices that are open and accountable. Agagu and Olaopa

(2020), say that one of the most important jobs of public administration is to carry out public policy but this is often very hard to do in Nigeria. Policies may look good on paper but they often fail to work out because of delays in the bureaucracy, overlapping mandates and a lack of cooperation amongst institutions. In security management, these shortcomings can be very expensive since they let instability grow while people lose faith in the government. Aliyu and Haruna (2021) add that the poor quality of services in areas like Zamfara that are prone to conflict has made it easier for non-state actors to gain power. When the government cannot provide essential services like education, justice or health care, criminal gangs typically step in to fill the gap which makes the government appear less trustworthy. Thus, good public administration needs to do more than just oversee the government; it also needs to fight to rebuild trust in government at the local level. Eneanya (2021) further says that when there is a lot of instability, public administration cannot function without getting people involved in making policies. People who live in the area typically know about hazards directly and their help is essential for community policing, information collecting and early warning systems. But in many Nigerian states, the public cannot make decisions which makes people feel more disconnected and weakens the institutions that are supposed to safeguard them. In the end, public administration encompasses more than just state power. It is also about how institutions work with society to solve problems, develop trust and keep the peace. To break the cycle of violence and bring back peace in Zamfara State, it is important to increase the administrative capacity, improve cooperation across agencies and make sure that the people are involved in the process.

Insecurity:

People often think of insecurity as being in danger or at risk of being hurt. It includes a lot of different hazards such as physical violence, unstable economies, political turmoil and social disorder. In northern Nigeria especially Zamfara State, insecurity is mostly linked to armed banditry, conflicts between communities, kidnapping and the destruction of people's livelihoods (Aliyu & Haruna, 2021). These threats have effects that go beyond only putting people in risk; they also get in the way of government, education, health care and daily life. Awofeso (2022) says that insecurity grows in places where the government has trouble keeping control or dealing with local problems. When the government is not strong or there are not any armed gangs typically take over, making their own regulations and getting away with it. This is especially true in rural areas of Zamfara where bad roads, a lack of government presence and poverty make it easy for criminal people to thrive.

Insecurity does not only mean being afraid of violence. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP, 2023) says that insecurity can also be structural which means it comes from things like long-term inequality, not having access to social services and pushing some people to the edges of society. In many cases, insecurity is both a cause and an effect of underdevelopment. For example, in

many regions of Zamfara State, children cannot go to school because they are afraid of being kidnapped. This not only hurts education but it also hurts the region's long-term peace and prosperity. Ogundipe et al. (2022) say that when governmental institutions do not deal with the core causes of insecurity, it typically leads to a cycle of violence. If the state does not support them, communities may either try to help themselves or be open to being recruited by non-state actors. These factors make it hard to keep the peace because trying to protect yourself often makes the situation worse instead of better.

Insecurity also hurts people other than those who are directly affected. It lowers people's faith in the government, makes it harder for businesses to invest and makes the state less legitimate. This wider view of insecurity fits with what peace and conflict studies say today, which stress human security. This idea covers protection from violence as well as hunger, disease, poverty and environmental concerns (Hassan et al., 2023). Eneanya (2021) further says that any serious approach to security needs to look at the social and economic factors that make violence appealing or possible. The current issue in Zamfara is due to a lot of people being out of work, not being able to read or write and the breakdown of traditional ways of settling disputes. So, to deal with insecurity we need more than just sending in the military. We need a full plan that includes government, development, justice and reconciliation.

Security Governance:

Security governance is the way a society organises, holds accountable and includes everyone in managing its security. Modern security governance is different from previous state-centered approaches since it involves many different groups such as government agencies, civil society, local communities and sometimes even international organisations, working together to deal with complicated challenges (Abrahamsen & Williams, 2020). This thought shows a change from the belief that only the state is responsible for security to one that values working together and being open about things as ways to achieve sustainable peace.

In regions like Zamfara State where crime is a big problem, security governance means more than just sending in the military. It means using a whole-system approach that includes law enforcement, development planning, dispute resolution and getting people involved in their communities. Akinwale (2021) says that security methods that include everyone are more likely to gain people's trust and stop violence than ones that are forced on them without their consent. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP, 2023) says that good security governance must be based on the principles of human rights, transparency, and non-discrimination and must put people first. In practice, this involves making sure that residents not only have protection but also have a say in the decisions that impact their safety. Unfortunately, in many places of Nigeria, including Zamfara State, the government in charge of security is still unclear, broken up and mostly run by the military with no civilian control (Ogundipe et al., 2022).

Some of the main problems that make security governance in Nigeria weaker are abuse of power, poor communication between security institutions and not including local leaders. Awofeso (2022) says that overlapping duties among security players and political intervention have made things less efficient and made people lose trust in them. People often resort to vigilantes, non-state actors, or traditional authorities for protection when security institutions are not accountable or responsive. This creates alternative power structures that can make the security situation even more complicated.

Hassan et al. (2023) also say that strong security governance frameworks are necessary for rebuilding after a conflict and building peace. People are more likely to work with the police, give information and take part in development projects when they feel protected and involved. But when security operations do not take into account what is going on in the area even good intentions can be turned down or hurt. To improve security governance in Zamfara State, the government needs to get closer to the people, make sure that interventions are community-driven and hold all security actors both state and non-state, accountable. Without these kinds of changes, insecurity may keep growing even after military actions or governmental declarations.

Empirical Review

More empirical research on insecurity in Nigeria have looked at the administrative, socio-economic and governance-related aspects that keep violence going especially in northern areas like Zamfara State. Researchers have looked into how weak public institutions and poor coordination between government agencies have made the security crisis worse even if there have been military interventions and peacebuilding efforts. A field research by Mahmud and Maigari (2021) in Zamfara and Katsina States indicated that bad public services especially in rural areas had left a big gap in governance. Their research shows that a lot of communities think the government does not care about their safety or is not there at all. Armed groups have often taken advantage of this vulnerability by offering security in exchange for loyalty or quiet. These authors say that when public management is poor or corrupt, insecurity tends to grow without anyone stopping it. A study by Hassan et al. (2023) also found that insecurity in Zamfara State is directly linked to widespread poverty, poor literacy rates and a feeling of being left out among rural inhabitants. People who were interviewed in four different local government regions said that even when security forces are there, they do not often work with local leaders or development agencies. The paper ends by saying that it is necessary to act quickly to combine law enforcement with real development and community involvement.

Awofeso (2022), who looked into how well the Nigerian security system worked, said that the Nigeria Police Force, the Civil Defence Corps and the military had big problems working together to stop banditry in rural areas. His research demonstrates that when mandates overlap and politics get in the way, it can lead to people doing the same thing twice, solutions being delayed and lines of

accountability being unclear. In Zamfara State, this lack of coordination has caused a security response that is broken up, expensive and mostly useless.

Aliyu and Haruna (2021) provide more real-world evidence that administrative corruption makes the government's reaction to insecurity weaker. Their investigation which included talking with civil servants and traditional leaders showed that security money are often misused and community policing programmes are not well overseen. This has made people in the area less trusting of government officials. The experts say that better transparency and participatory government are important steps towards rebuilding public trust. Ogundipe et al. (2022) also looked at how rural poverty and the emergence of informal security players are connected in northern Nigeria. The study found that in places like Tsafe and Maru in Zamfara State, local vigilante organisations regularly take over for the police when they fail to perform their job. Some of these groups have made things safer in the short term but others have been linked to human rights violations which makes the security situation even more complicated. The researchers warn that these informal actors could make things worse if there is no official monitoring or legal acknowledgement. Akinwale (2021) adds to the discussion by looking at community-based security programmes in northern Nigeria. His research shows that local methods that include traditional leaders, youth organisations, and women's groups in decision-making lead to more lasting results than military operations that come from the top down. In Zamfara State, though, state authorities either do not provide these kinds of projects enough money or do not pay attention to them which makes them less effective.

There is a common thread that runs through all studies: the insecurity situation in Zamfara is not only about crime; it is also a sign of bigger problems with public administration, governance and service delivery. Security agencies are still an important part of the answer but they cannot be as effective if they do not work with development initiatives, be accountable to the public and get the community involved. Therefore, the empirical evidence clearly supports the idea that making public administration better is necessary to make Zamfara State and other conflict-affected areas safer.

Theoretical Framework

This study employs the Systems Theory, which Ludwig von Bertalanffy first proposed in 1968, to explain how public administration and managing insecurity are related. According to systems theory, society is a complicated web of parts that are all connected like government agencies, security agencies and local communities. For stability to be reached all of these parts must work together. In Zamfara State, instability continues when one or more aspects of the government system like policy implementation, inter-agency coordination or grassroots participation, fail to operate well. Poor coordination and public distrust can happen when public administration is weak or broken apart. This stops the flow of information, resources and services. When this happens, it often gives non-state actors a chance

to take advantage of the system's flaws. The concept shows how important it is for administrative systems and local communities to work together. It backs up the idea that a well-organised, open and responsive government is necessary for bringing peace and stability back to places like Zamfara State that are prone to conflict.

Findings

This study found a number of important tendencies that help explain why insecurity continues to be a problem in Zamfara State. Firstly, research and informal local knowledge showed that the state's public administration has weak institutional coordination and security responses that are not working together. Government agencies generally work in separate areas which makes it take longer to respond and renders operations less effective. Secondly, administrative corruption and a lack of openness continue to erode public trust since resources earmarked for community safety programmes are often mismanaged or do not reach the people they were supposed to help. Thirdly, the social and economic conditions in rural areas such as high levels of poverty, youth unemployment and protracted school closures have made it easy for criminal networks to find people who are easy to exploit. Lastly, the fact that communities are not included in decision-making has made state-led interventions less legitimate and less likely to last. These results show that insecurity in Zamfara is both a security problem and a problem with how the government works.

DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS

Structural governance weaknesses, institutional breakdown and lack of access to basic needs are all major causes of insecurity in Zamfara State. This study shows that the crisis is not only caused by rising violence but also by poor governmental administration. It does this by looking at a lot of research and firsthand accounts. Mahmud and Maigari (2021) say that bad public services in rural areas have left a big gap in governmental authority. Armed organisations have taken advantage of this void to impose their own forms of power. The 2019 massacre in Kaura Namoda is a good example of this. Bandits targeted villages for several days without any promptly security involvement, showing how poorly administrative coordination and community safety worked. After talking to a security official and an elder in Tsafe, it was clear that most security actions in their region are not planned with local groups. People in the community often feel left out and do not know what is going on with the government. Awofeso (2022) said that community mistrust and disengagement are made worse by a lack of proactive and participatory administrative planning. For instance, during the 2020 peace talks started by the Zamfara State Government, it was said that some community leaders were not allowed to take part. This caused the talks to fail because some bandit groups started attacking again a few days later.

A common topic in both the literature and criticism from the community is that Nigeria's security system is broken up. The police, the military and the Civil Defence Corps

all have different jobs that often get in the way of each other. This makes things confusing and slows down replies. In February 2021, more than 300 schoolgirls were kidnapped in Jangebe town. This showed that security services were not working together quickly enough to stop the perpetrators from getting away even though they had been warned early on. Hassan et al. (2023) say that this kind of dysfunction amongst agencies is a big reason why there is still insecurity in places that have been militarised. Corruption in the government renders people trust the governance less and makes it less capable to do its job. Aliyu and Haruna (2021) say that money set aside for local policing and security efforts is often not used properly. A local elder in Tsafe said the same thing, saying that community volunteers who work in local vigilante organisations do not get paid or given any equipment which makes many people give up. This practice was also seen in the unsuccessful community policing programme that started in 2020, when state money was supposedly given out without any meaningful infrastructure or oversight being put in place.

The situation is still becoming worse because of economic and social problems. Many young people in Zamfara regard armed organisations as their only choice because they cannot get to school, find work or get medical care. Ogundipe et al. (2022) say that this vulnerability is especially bad in places like Maru and Shinkafi where poverty levels are among the highest in the state. A government report from 2022 said that more than 500 schools in northern Nigeria had to close because of safety concerns. Zamfara was one of the areas that was hit the worst. It is impossible to emphasise how these kinds of closures will affect young people's involvement in crime and crime rates in the long run.

Another important issue is the community exclusion. Akinwale (2021) says that community-based security approaches have worked better in Borno and Niger States, where local leaders are more active in building peace. But in Zamfara State, traditional and religious leaders are not often involved in state-led security planning. One person who took part in this survey said they were frustrated that "even when we warn the government early, nothing is done until after the attacks." This alienation makes people think that government actions do not line up with what is going on in their area.

In a nutshell the discussion makes it evident that a network of governance failures such as poor coordination, corruption, neglect of social and economic issues and exclusion of local actors, keeps Zamfara State insecure. The Jangebe kidnapping, failed peace agreements and ignored neighbourhood vigilante organisations are all examples from the real world that show a situation that goes beyond violence. To solve this problem, it is necessary to establish a public administration system that is more cohesive and responsible, depends on local realities and is backed by governance procedures that are open, fair and well-funded.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The state administration should focus on improving coordination between security and

administrative departments in order to address the inherent insecurity in Zamfara State. Responses that are not coordinated and responsibilities that overlap have made it hard for security initiatives to work. Regular meetings between agencies and a clear command structure can help communication and responsiveness. Additionally, local government officials must be given the tools they need to play an active role in security governance through proper training, funding and clear mandates that are in line with the requirements of the community.

There is also a strong need to rebuild trust between the government and the people it serves. One way to do this is to have local stakeholders, like traditional leaders, youth groups and civil society organisations, involved in the development, execution and monitoring of security related projects. Not only should programmes like community policing and early warning systems be brought back but they should also be open and involve the community. People are more likely to work together and help develop peace at the grassroots level when they are acknowledged and involved.

Finally, Government in Zamfara State needs to do more than just respond to security threats in the immediate term. It needs to look at the social and economic elements that cause violence. The government should put more money into programmes that would help young people, improve education and develop rural areas. These initiatives provide those who want to avoid violence with other options. Restoring schools in damaged areas, making jobs available and supporting programmes that help people make a living should all be given special priority. If these steps are taken combined with better governance and accountability, they could help the state build a more stable and lasting base for peace and stability.

CONCLUSION

Zamfara State's lack of safety is not solely a security issue; it is a sign of bigger problems with public administration, governance and service delivery. This study, which mostly uses secondary sources and some local insights shows that the crisis has gotten worse because of broken institutions, lack of community involvement and ongoing disregard of social and economic issues. Engagements of Military and peace negotiations have been tried but they do not suffice without better coordination, openness and involvement from the people. To make Zamfara State safer, we need more than just reactive policing. We need to actively work to repair trust, develop institutions and deal with the core causes of violence through government that includes everyone and puts people first. Only then can real and lasting peace be reached.

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