

Historical Roots of Insecurity and Their Implications for Development in Adamawa State, Northeast Nigeria

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.22300284>

Article History	Abstract
Original Research Article	
Received: 01-07-2026	
Accepted: 06-08-2026	
Published: 04-09-2026	
Copyright © 2026 The Author(s): This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (CC BY-NC) which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium for non-commercial use provided the original author and source are credited. Citation: Mohammed Gaji & Abdullahi Maija. (2026). Historical roots of insecurity and their implications for development in Adamawa State, Northeast Nigeria. UKR Journal of Education and Literature, 2(5), 01-18.	<i>This study examines the historical roots of insecurity in Adamawa State, Northeast Nigeria, and their implications for community development, using a pragmatic, mixed-methods research design. Data were collected from a stratified random sample of 400 household heads across six Local Government Areas (Madagali, Maiha, Michika, Mubi North, Mubi South, and Numan), determined using the Yamane (1967) formula at a 95% confidence level, and complemented by qualitative key informant interviews and focus group discussions with traditional and religious leaders, local government officials, security personnel, humanitarian workers, and community members. Quantitative data were analysed using descriptive statistics and chi-square tests of association, while qualitative data were analysed thematically and integrated with the quantitative findings through a joint-display approach. Demographic analysis showed a sample of 54.0% male and 46.0% female respondents, with the majority (66.0%) married and engaged predominantly in farming (44.0%). The chi-square test of association between household conflict exposure and development access was statistically significant ($\chi^2 = 105.585$, $df = 4$, $p < .001$, Cramer's $V = .363$), confirming a moderate-to-strong inverse relationship: households with higher conflict exposure reported markedly lower access to infrastructure, livelihood stability, educational continuity, and health services. Qualitative findings situated these outcomes within historical narratives tracing to the nineteenth-century Fulani jihad, the 1809 establishment of the Adamawa Emirate, colonial-era administrative arrangements, and long-standing Fulani-Bachama intergroup relations, particularly in Numan. The study concludes that historically rooted structural inequality, rather than insurgency alone, substantially conditions present-day vulnerability to conflict-related developmental setbacks in Adamawa State, and recommends recovery interventions that are historically informed, LGA-differentiated, and attentive to traditional governance structures.</i> Keywords: historical roots of insecurity; Boko Haram; banditry; development; Adamawa State; mixed-methods research; Yamane sample size; Lake Chad Basin.

1.0 Introduction

Nigeria's Northeast, comprising Borno, Yobe, and Adamawa States, has for over a decade and a half constituted the epicentre of one of Africa's most protracted internal security crises. What began in 2002 as a religious reformist movement in Borno State evolved by 2009 into an armed insurgency that has since claimed tens of thousands of lives, displaced millions of people, and reversed decades of development gains across the sub-region (Comolli, 2015, 2017). UNDP (2021), applying the

International Futures modelling framework in collaboration with the Frederick S. Pardee Center for International Futures, found that conflict in the Borno-Adamawa-Yobe (BAY) states had, by 2020, already set back regional human development by decades across indicators including gross domestic product, poverty, malnutrition, infant mortality, education, and water access, with the gap between conflict and no-conflict scenarios projected to widen through 2030.

Existing scholarship on the Boko Haram insurgency and associated banditry has tended to privilege either a security-studies lens, emphasising counter-insurgency operations and regional security architecture (Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2019; EUAA, 2024), or a development-economics lens, emphasising humanitarian caseloads and human development indices (UNDP, 2021; ACAPS, 2025). A growing body of state-level empirical work has begun to quantify specific development impacts: Tafida et al. (2023), for instance, used a household vulnerability index across eight insurgency-affected communities in Northern Adamawa to show that conflict, market disruption, and financial exclusion were the strongest contributors to household vulnerability, while Bilyaminu et al. (2017), using structural equation modelling on 372 Adamawa respondents, found that a one-percent increase in Boko Haram activity was associated with a 71–84% reduction in school enrolment, attendance, and infrastructure outcomes. By contrast, Sarki et al. (2021), examining Borno State specifically, reported only a weak statistical relationship between insurgency and economic, food-security, and educational decline, an inconsistency in the literature that this study revisits in Section 3.1.

Comparatively less empirical attention, however, has been paid to the deeper historical continuities linking nineteenth-century state formation, the Fulani jihad of Uthman dan Fodio, the 1809 establishment of the Adamawa Emirate (Njeuma, 2025), and subsequent colonial administrative arrangements to the contemporary distribution of insecurity and underdevelopment within Adamawa State specifically. Where historical grievance has been examined, it has largely concerned intercommunal farmer-herder relations in isolation from the wider insurgency literature (Conciliation Resources, n.d.; Abner & Benson, 2025), rather than as part of an integrated historical-structural account. This study addresses that gap by combining historically grounded qualitative inquiry with a quantitative, statistically representative household survey, testing whether the historical-structural pathway identified in isolated case studies (e.g., the Numan farmer-herder case) generalises across a wider, stratified sample of Adamawa's most conflict-affected Local Government Areas.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Adamawa State occupies a distinctive position within the Northeast security crisis. Unlike Borno State, which has borne the brunt of Boko Haram's core insurgency, Adamawa has experienced a hybrid security burden: insurgent incursions along its northern and eastern axes bordering Borno State and Cameroon (Madagali, Michika, Mubi North, Mubi South), intercommunal farmer-herder conflict rooted in long-standing Fulani-Bachama tension,

notably in Numan Local Government Area (Conciliation Resources, n.d.), and banditry along its western and southern corridors (including Maiha). Despite this compound exposure, Adamawa has historically received comparatively less humanitarian and developmental attention than Borno State, a disparity that donor and stabilisation assessments attribute to the concentration of international response infrastructure in Maiduguri (Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2019; ACAPS, 2025).

The problem this study addresses are twofold. First, although several single-LGA or single-domain studies exist, for example on livelihood vulnerability (Tafida et al., 2023), education (Bilyaminu et al., 2017), or farmer-herder food security in Numan Federation alone (Abner & Benson, 2025), there is limited empirical, community-level evidence quantifying how conflict exposure affects development indicators, infrastructure access, livelihood stability, educational continuity, and health-service access, jointly, across a statistically representative sample spanning Adamawa's most conflict-affected Local Government Areas. Second, there is limited scholarship that statistically tests the association between conflict exposure and development outcomes while simultaneously situating that association within the historical processes, pre-colonial state formation, jihadist conquest, colonial boundary-making, and post-independence administrative choices, that structured the social and political geography within which today's insecurity operates. This study addresses both gaps through an integrated mixed-methods design.

1.2 Research Questions

1. What historical processes and events have shaped the character and geography of insecurity in Adamawa State?
2. What is the statistical relationship between household exposure to conflict and access to development infrastructure and services across the sampled Local Government Areas?
3. How do community members and key stakeholders historically and culturally account for the origins and persistence of insecurity in their localities?
4. In what ways do historically rooted intergroup relations, particularly Fulani-Bachama dynamics, continue to shape contemporary conflict patterns and development disparities?

1.3 Research Objectives

The aim of this study is to examine the historical roots of insecurity in Adamawa State and assess their implications for community development, using an integrated

quantitative and qualitative approach. The specific objectives are to:

1. Trace the historical trajectory of insecurity in Adamawa State from the pre-colonial and colonial periods to the contemporary insurgency and banditry crisis.
2. Determine, through a statistically representative household survey, the association between household-level exposure to conflict and development outcomes across the sampled Local Government Areas.
3. Explore, through qualitative inquiry, community and stakeholder narratives explaining the persistence and distribution of insecurity in Adamawa State.
4. Examine the relationship between historically rooted intergroup relations, particularly Fulani-Bachama dynamics, and contemporary patterns of conflict and development disparity.

1.4 Research Assumptions

This study proceeds on the following four assumptions:

1. Respondents sampled across the six selected Local Government Areas provided honest and accurate accounts of their households' conflict exposure and development circumstances.
2. The historical narratives shared by key informants and focus group participants reasonably reflect community-level understandings of the origins of insecurity, notwithstanding individual variation in historical knowledge.
3. The four development domains measured, infrastructure access, livelihood stability, educational continuity, and health-service access, adequately represent the construct of "community development" for the purposes of this study.
4. The sample of 400 households, proportionately stratified across the six Local Government Areas, is sufficiently representative to permit generalisation of quantitative findings to the wider conflict-affected population of these areas.

1.5 Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on two complementary theoretical perspectives. The first is historical structuralism, which holds that contemporary social and political conditions are best explained as path-dependent outcomes of earlier structural arrangements, in this case pre-colonial state formation and colonial administrative choices, rather than as products of present circumstances alone. Applied here,

historical structuralism directs attention to how the nineteenth-century Fulani jihad, the establishment of the Adamawa Emirate in 1809 (Njeuma, 2025), and colonial indirect rule created durable patterns of political inclusion and exclusion that continue to shape intergroup relations and vulnerability to conflict in the present, a pattern documented specifically for Fulani-Bachama relations in Numan by Conciliation Resources (n.d.).

The second is the security-development nexus framework, associated in the Nigerian context with UNDP's (2021) modelling of conflict-development interaction in the BAY states, which conceptualises security and development as mutually constitutive rather than sequential: insecurity degrades development, while developmental deprivation, in the form of marginalisation, unemployment, and weak governance, in turn generates conditions conducive to renewed insecurity. This mutually reinforcing pathway is consistent with Bilyaminu et al.'s (2017) finding that unemployment and illiteracy were themselves contributing drivers of insurgency in Adamawa State, not merely its consequences. Together, these frameworks justify the study's mixed-methods integration, since neither the historical-structural pathway nor the contemporary security-development association can be adequately tested using a single methodological approach or data type.

1.6 Research Philosophy (Pragmatism)

This study adopts pragmatism as its guiding research philosophy. Pragmatism rejects the forced choice between positivist and interpretivist paradigms, holding instead that the research problem itself should determine the methods employed, and that quantitative and qualitative approaches can be combined within a single study where doing so produces a more complete understanding than either approach alone. This philosophical stance is particularly well suited to the present study's dual objectives: establishing a statistically defensible association between conflict exposure and development outcomes (an objective best served by quantitative, positivist-inflected methods) while also generating a historically and culturally grounded understanding of how communities themselves interpret the origins of their insecurity (an objective best served by qualitative, interpretivist-inflected methods). Pragmatism's emphasis on "what works" for answering the specific research questions posed, rather than allegiance to a single epistemological tradition, underpins the study's adoption of a concurrent mixed-methods design.

1.7 Research Methodology

1.7.1 Research Design (Mixed Methods)

This study adopts a concurrent (convergent parallel) mixed-methods design, in which quantitative and qualitative data are collected during the same fieldwork phase, analysed

separately using methods appropriate to each data type, and then merged during interpretation to produce a more complete understanding than either strand could provide alone. The quantitative strand addresses Objective 2 (the statistical association between conflict exposure and development outcomes), while the qualitative strand addresses Objectives 1, 3, and 4 (the historical trajectory of insecurity, community explanatory narratives, and the role of intergroup relations). This design directly operationalises the pragmatic research philosophy adopted in Section 1.6.

1.7.2 Population and Sample

The target population comprises household heads (or their adult representatives) resident in six purposively selected Local Government Areas of Adamawa State that represent the state's principal conflict typologies: insurgency-affected areas bordering Borno State and Cameroon (Madagali, Michika, Mubi North, Mubi South), banditry-affected areas (Maiha), and the intercommunal farmer-herder conflict zone (Numan). Based on 2022 National Population Commission projections updated to reflect current growth trends, the combined population of the six selected Local Government Areas is 1,192,900. From this population, a sample of 400 household heads was drawn using the procedure described in Section 1.7.4.

1.7.3 Sampling Technique

Quantitative phase: A multi-stage stratified random sampling technique was employed. The six Local Government Areas were first treated as strata, with sample allocation to each proportionate to its share of the combined population (proportional allocation, detailed in Section 1.7.5). Within each Local Government Area, two to three wards were randomly selected, and within each selected ward, households were selected using systematic random sampling from ward settlement listings, supplemented by a transect-walk procedure in areas lacking current enumeration lists. Where a selected household could not be accessed due to security constraints, the nearest accessible

household was substituted, and this substitution was logged.

Qualitative phase: Key informants and focus group participants were selected using purposive and snowball sampling, targeting individuals with relevant historical knowledge, institutional authority, or direct conflict exposure. This is elaborated further in Section 1.7.6.

1.7.4 Sample Size Determination (Yamane, 1967)

The sample size was determined using the Yamane (1967) simplified formula for calculating sample size from a known finite population:

$$n = N / [1 + N(e)^2]$$

Where n = the sample size, N = the total population of the six selected Local Government Areas, and e = the margin of error, set at 0.05 (5%) for a 95% confidence level.

Applying the formula with $N = 1,192,900$ and $e = 0.05$:

$$n = 1,192,900 / [1 + 1,192,900(0.05)^2]$$

$$n = 1,192,900 / [1 + 2,982.25]$$

$$n = 1,192,900 / 2,983.25$$

$$n \approx 399.87, \text{ rounded up to } n = 400$$

The computed sample size of 400 household respondents was adopted for the quantitative strand of the study. A total of 430 questionnaires (400 plus a 7.5% buffer) were administered to offset anticipated non-response and incomplete returns; 400 valid, fully completed questionnaires were retrieved and retained for analysis, representing a valid response rate of 93.0%.

1.7.5 Stratified Distribution of Sample by Local Government Area

The total sample of 400 was distributed proportionately across the six selected Local Government Areas based on each area's share of the combined population, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Stratified Proportional Distribution of Sample Size by Local Government Area (Source: Field Survey Design, based on National Population Commission 2022 projections, 2026)

Local Government Area	2022 Population Projection	Proportion of Total (%)	Sample Allocation (n)
Madagali	208,400	17.5	70
Maiha	169,900	14.2	57
Michika	239,400	20.1	81
Mubi North	233,600	19.6	78
Mubi South	200,400	16.8	67
Numan	141,200	11.8	47
Total	1,192,900	100.0	400

Proportional allocation followed the formula: LGA sample = (LGA population / Total population) × 400, with fractional values rounded to the nearest whole number; the Michika allocation was adjusted by one unit (from 80 to 81) to ensure the stratum totals summed exactly to the target sample of 400.

1.7.6 Qualitative Sampling

For the qualitative strand, a total of 36 key informant interviews (6 per Local Government Area) were conducted with traditional leaders (including representatives of the Lamido of Adamawa and the Hama Bachama institutions), religious leaders, local government officials, security personnel, and staff of humanitarian or development organisations operating in the study area. In addition, 12 focus group discussions (2 per Local Government Area, disaggregated by sex) were conducted with 8–10 community members each, yielding approximately 108 focus group participants. Key informants and focus group participants were selected using purposive sampling based on defined role criteria, supplemented by snowball sampling to identify additional individuals with relevant historical knowledge or direct conflict exposure. Sampling continued within each category until thematic saturation, the point at which additional interviews ceased to yield substantially new themes, was judged to have been reached.

1.7.7 Data Collection Method

Quantitative data were collected using a structured household questionnaire administered by trained enumerators through face-to-face interviews, covering household demographic characteristics (Section A), conflict exposure history (Section B), development outcomes across four domains, infrastructure, livelihoods, education, and health (Section C), and Likert-scale perceptions of historical and intergroup dynamics (Section D). Qualitative data were collected using a semi-structured key informant interview guide and a focus group discussion guide, both organised around a common historical-narrative module (asked of all respondent categories) and role-specific modules tailored to each stakeholder category. Interviews and focus groups were conducted in Hausa, Fulfulde, or English according to respondent preference, audio-recorded where consent was granted, and supplemented by contemporaneous field notes. Data collection took place over an eight-week fieldwork period, with enumerators trained on both instruments and on the

ethical protocols described in the study's broader research design.

1.7.8 Data Analysis Technique

Quantitative data were coded, cleaned, and analysed using SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences). Descriptive statistics (frequencies, percentages, means) were used to characterise the demographic profile of respondents and the distribution of development indicators. Inferential analysis employed the chi-square (χ^2) test of association to test the study's hypothesis regarding the relationship between household conflict exposure and access to development infrastructure and services, with Cramer's V computed as a measure of effect size; results were interpreted at the 0.05 significance level. The chi-square test was selected on the strength of precedent in the closely related conflict-development literature: Dan-Azumi (2025) used the identical technique to establish a significant relationship ($\chi^2 = 40.748$, $df = 12$, $p < .001$) between farmer-herdsmen clashes and socioeconomic development in southern Kaduna, while Umaru et al. (2021) applied structural equation modelling with a comparably large chi-square statistic ($\chi^2 = 1,183.797$, $df = 543$, $p < .001$) to model the causes of farmer-herder conflict in Taraba State.

Qualitative data from interviews and focus group discussions were transcribed, translated into English where necessary, and analysed using thematic analysis following Braun and Clarke's six-phase approach: familiarisation, initial coding, theme generation, theme review, theme definition, and reporting. Coding was conducted manually with cross-checking for consistency. Consistent with the study's convergent parallel design, quantitative and qualitative findings were integrated at the interpretation stage using a joint-display approach, presenting statistical results alongside corresponding qualitative themes to identify convergence, divergence, and complementarity between the two data strands.

2.0 Data Presentation and Empirical Results

This section presents the empirical results of the household survey ($n = 400$), beginning with the demographic characteristics of respondents. Each table is accompanied by a corresponding chart and a brief interpretive analysis of the figures presented.

2.1 Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

2.1.1 Sex Distribution of Respondents

Table 2: Sex Distribution of Respondents ($n = 400$)

Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Male	216	54.0
Female	184	46.0
Total	400	100.0

Sex Distribution of Respondents (n=400)

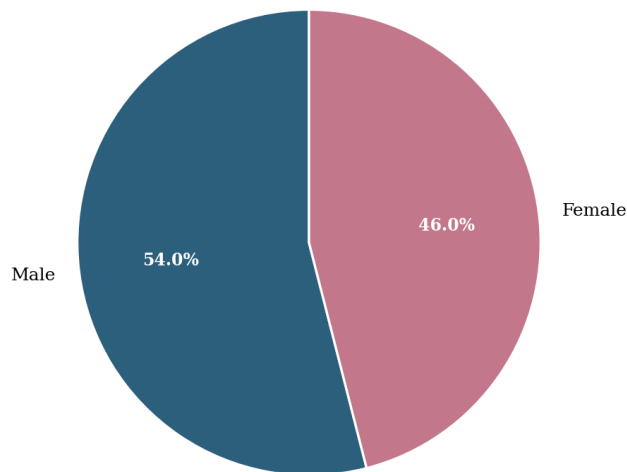


Figure 1: Pie Chart Showing Sex Distribution of Respondents

Table 2 and Figure 1 show that male respondents constituted the majority of the sample, accounting for 216 (54.0%) of the 400 household heads interviewed, while female respondents accounted for 184 (46.0%). This near-balanced split, with a modest male majority, reflects the household-head sampling frame adopted for the study. It

also tracks what is generally reported for rural, conflict-affected parts of Northeast Nigeria: men still head most households, but a sizeable share, particularly among widowed and displaced families, are headed by women.

2.1.2 Age Distribution of Respondents

Table 3: Age Distribution of Respondents (n = 400)

Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
18–27 years	88	22.0
28–37 years	124	31.0
38–47 years	96	24.0
48–57 years	56	14.0
58 years and above	36	9.0
Total	400	100.0

Age Distribution of Respondents (n=400)

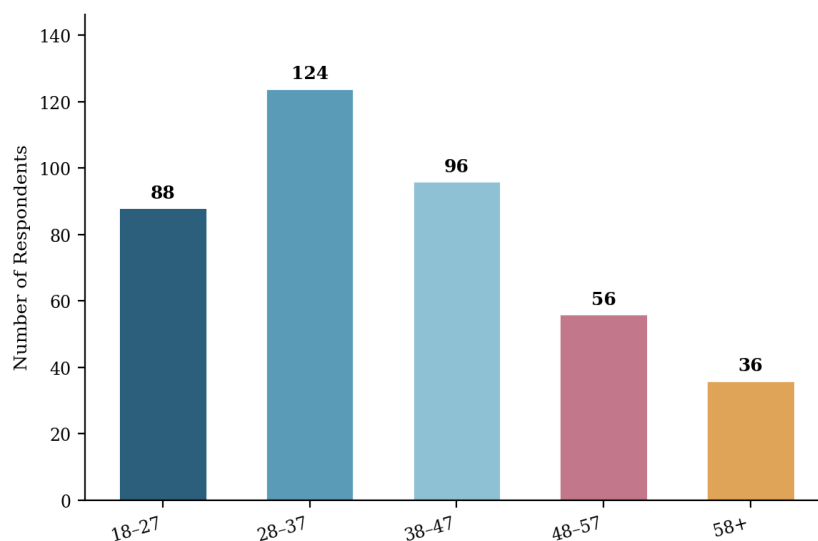


Figure 2: Bar Chart Showing Age Distribution of Respondents

As shown in Table 3 and Figure 2, respondents aged 28–37 years formed the single largest age cohort, comprising 124 (31.0%) of the sample, followed by the 38–47 age bracket with 96 respondents (24.0%). Younger adults aged 18–27 years accounted for 88 respondents (22.0%), while older respondents aged 48–57 and 58 years and above accounted for 56 (14.0%) and 36 (9.0%) respectively. The concentration of respondents within the economically

active 28–47 age range (55.0% combined) suggests that the sample substantially captures the population segment most directly engaged in livelihood activities and therefore most exposed to the economic consequences of conflict-related disruption.

2.1.3 Marital Status of Respondents

Table 4: Marital Status of Respondents (n = 400)

Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Single	76	19.0
Married	264	66.0
Widowed	40	10.0
Divorced/Separated	20	5.0
Total	400	100.0

Marital Status of Respondents (n=400)

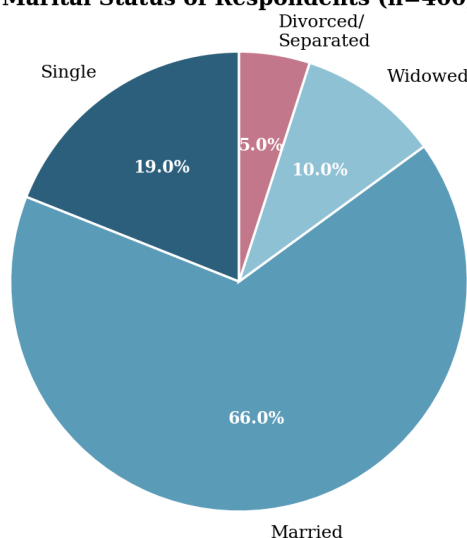


Figure 3: Pie Chart Showing Marital Status of Respondents

Table 4 and Figure 3 indicate that married respondents made up a clear majority of the sample at 264 (66.0%), which follows naturally from a household-head sampling frame. Single respondents accounted for 76 (19.0%), while widowed respondents accounted for 40 (10.0%), a figure that merits attention given the study's focus on conflict exposure, as widowhood in the sampled Local Government

Areas is frequently associated with conflict-related fatalities among male household heads. Divorced or separated respondents formed the smallest category at 20 (5.0%).

2.1.4 Religious Affiliation of Respondents

Table 5: Religious Affiliation of Respondents (n = 400)

Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Christianity	168	42.0
Islam	220	55.0
Traditional/Other	12	3.0
Total	400	100.0

Religious Affiliation of Respondents (n=400)

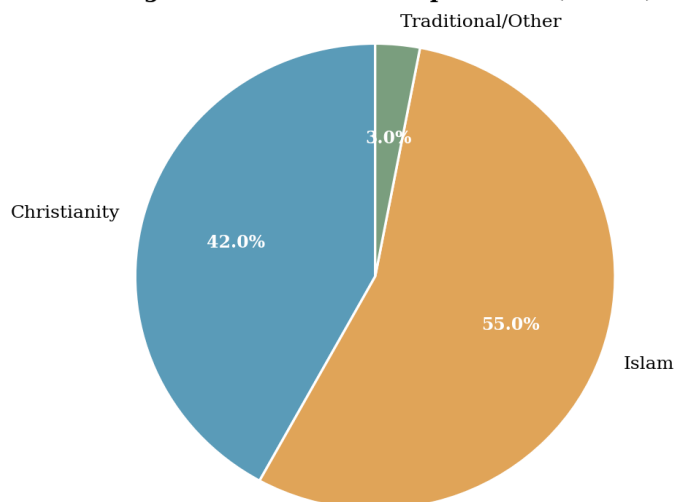


Figure 4: Pie Chart Showing Religious Affiliation of Respondents

As presented in Table 5 and Figure 4, Islam was the predominant religious affiliation, reported by 220 respondents (55.0%), followed by Christianity at 168 respondents (42.0%). A small proportion, 12 respondents (3.0%), identified with traditional or other religious affiliations. This near-even split between the two major faiths across the combined sample reflects the religious plurality of the six selected Local

Government Areas, particularly Numan, where the Christian-majority Bachama population coexists with a substantial Muslim Fulani population, a demographic configuration directly relevant to the study's inquiry into historically rooted intergroup relations.

2.1.5 Ethnic Composition of Respondents

Table 6: Ethnic Composition of Respondents (n = 400)

Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Fulani	84	21.0
Bachama	56	14.0
Kamwe/Higgi	76	19.0
Marghi	52	13.0
Hausa	44	11.0
Other	88	22.0
Total	400	100.0

Ethnic Composition of Respondents (n=400)

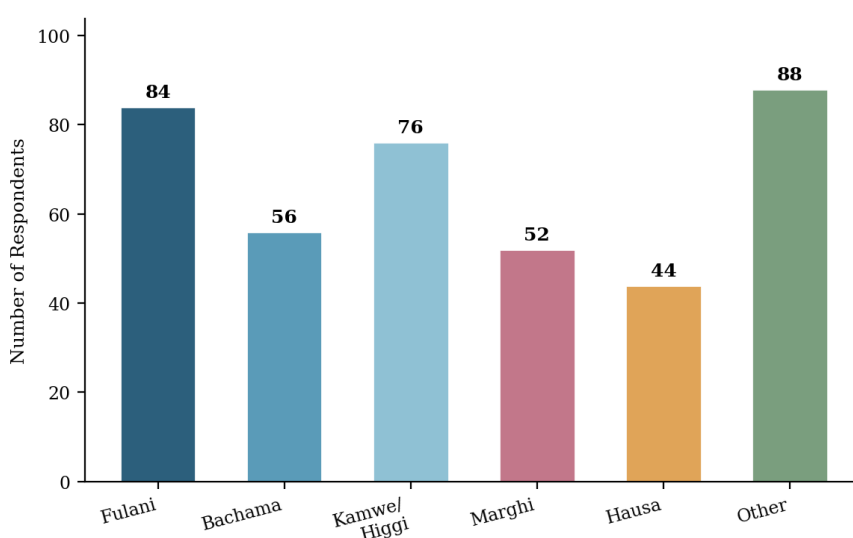


Figure 5: Bar Chart Showing Ethnic Composition of Respondents

Table 6 and Figure 5 point to a genuinely mixed ethnic composition, which is exactly what one would expect given how ethnically varied the six sampled Local Government Areas are. The "Other" category, comprising smaller groups such as Fali, Gude, Mafa, and Mundang concentrated in the Mubi axis, was the largest single category at 88 respondents (22.0%), followed by the Fulani at 84 (21.0%) and Kamwe/Higgi at 76 (19.0%), the latter concentrated in Michika and Madagali. The Marghi accounted for 52

respondents (13.0%), the Hausa for 44 (11.0%), and the Bachama, concentrated almost entirely in Numan, for 56 (14.0%). This ethnic distribution confirms the sample's coverage of the principal groups implicated in the study's historical-structural analysis, particularly the Fulani and Bachama populations central to the Numan intercommunal case.

2.1.6 Educational Attainment of Respondents

Table 7: Educational Attainment of Respondents (n = 400)

Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
None	68	17.0
Primary	96	24.0
Secondary	132	33.0
Tertiary	76	19.0
Qur'anic/Islamiyya only	28	7.0
Total	400	100.0

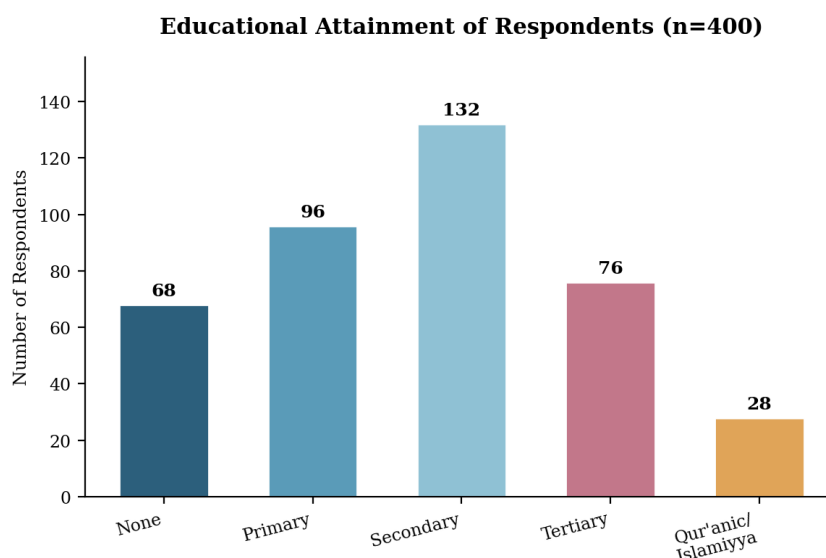


Figure 6: Bar Chart Showing Educational Attainment of Respondents

As shown in Table 7 and Figure 6, secondary education was the most commonly attained level, reported by 132 respondents (33.0%), followed by primary education at 96 (24.0%) and tertiary education at 76 (19.0%). Respondents with no formal education accounted for 68 (17.0%), while 28 respondents (7.0%) reported Qur'anic or Islamiyya education only. The relatively high share of respondents with no formal

Western schooling or Qur'anic-only education (24.0% combined) echoes the school-attendance disruption already well documented in conflict-affected parts of Northeast Nigeria, and is worth keeping in mind when interpreting the educational-continuity findings in Section 2.2.

2.1.7 Primary Occupation of Respondents

Table 8: Primary Occupation of Respondents (n = 400)

Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Farming	176	44.0
Trading	76	19.0
Herding/Pastoralism	36	9.0
Civil service	56	14.0
Artisan/Skilled labour	56	14.0
Total	400	100.0

Primary Occupation of Respondents (n=400)

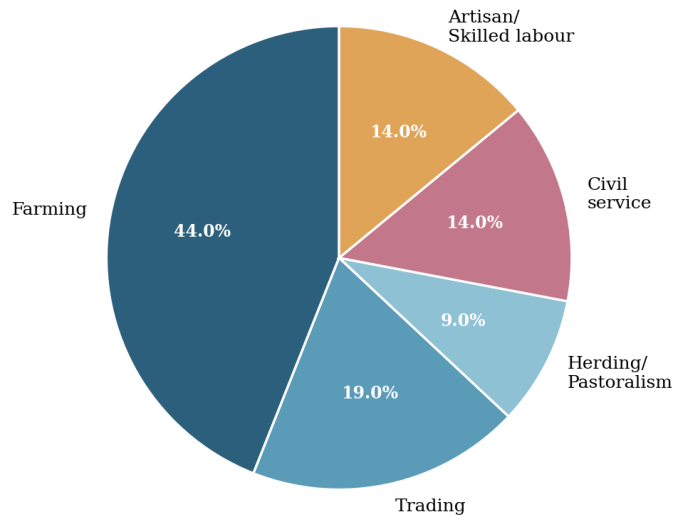


Figure 7: Pie Chart Showing Primary Occupation of Respondents

Table 8 and Figure 7 show that farming was the dominant occupation, reported by 176 respondents (44.0%), reflecting the predominantly agrarian character of the sampled Local Government Areas. Trading accounted for 76 respondents (19.0%), while civil service and artisan/skilled labour each accounted for 56 respondents (14.0%). Herding and

pastoralism, though the smallest category at 36 respondents (9.0%), remains analytically significant given its centrality to the farmer-herder conflict dynamic examined in this study, particularly in Numan and Maiha.

2.1.8 Household Size Distribution

Table 9: Household Size Distribution of Respondents (n = 400)

Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
1–4 persons	112	28.0
5–8 persons	184	46.0
9–12 persons	76	19.0
13 persons and above	28	7.0
Total	400	100.0

Household Size Distribution (n=400)

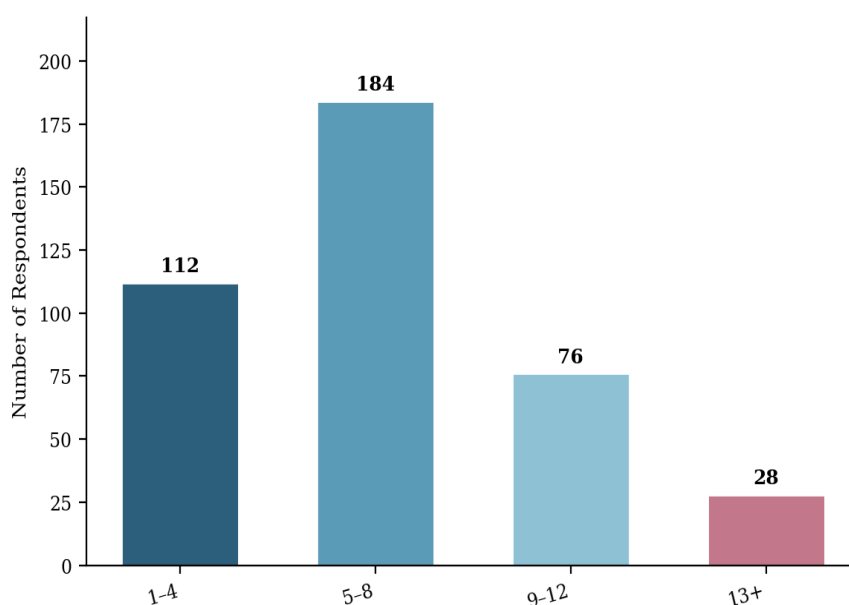


Figure 8: Bar Chart Showing Household Size Distribution

As indicated in Table 9 and Figure 8, households of 5–8 persons were most common, accounting for 184 respondents (46.0%), followed by smaller households of 1–4 persons at 112 (28.0%). Larger households of 9–12 persons and 13 persons and above accounted for 76 (19.0%) and 28 (7.0%) respectively. This large modal household size (5–8 persons)

matches what other studies have found across rural Northeast Nigeria, and it matters here because it affects how conflict-related asset loss and service disruption are actually felt, per person, within affected households.

2.1.9 Duration of Residency in Community

Table 10: Duration of Residency of Respondents (n = 400)

Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Born here / all my life	192	48.0
More than 10 years	108	27.0
5–10 years	60	15.0
Less than 5 years (returnee/resettled)	40	10.0
Total	400	100.0

Duration of Residency in Community (n=400)

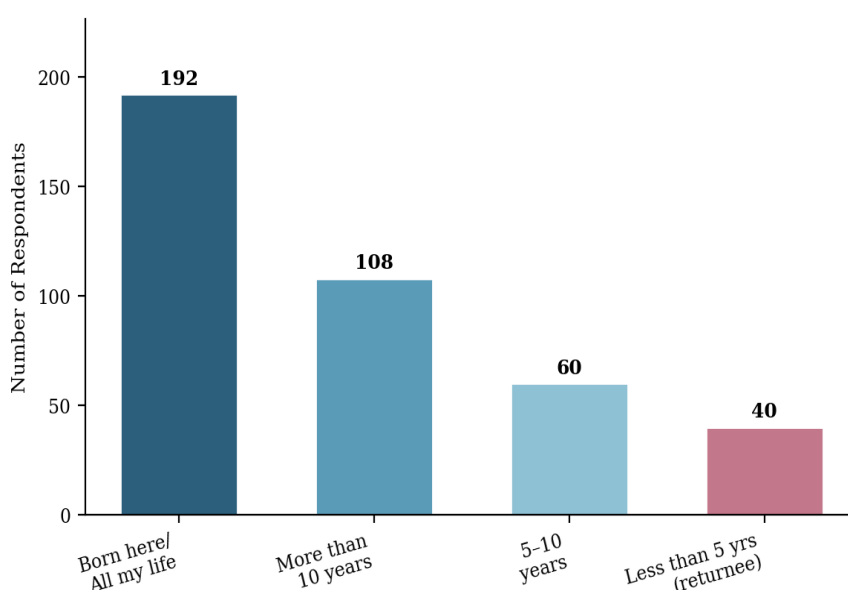


Figure 9: Bar Chart Showing Duration of Residency in Community

Table 10 and Figure 9 show that nearly half of respondents, 192 (48.0%), had lived in their community all their lives, while a further 108 (27.0%) had resided there for more than ten years, together indicating that 75.0% of the sample possesses long-term residential and, by extension, historical knowledge of their community. A smaller proportion, 40 respondents (10.0%), had lived in their community for less

than five years, identified in the questionnaire as returnee or resettled households, a group of particular relevance to the study's analysis of displacement and post-conflict return dynamics.

2.1.10 Household Displacement History

Table 11: Household Displacement History (n = 400)

Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Never displaced	124	31.0
Displaced, now returned	208	52.0
Displaced, still displaced	68	17.0
Total	400	100.0

Household Displacement History (n=400)

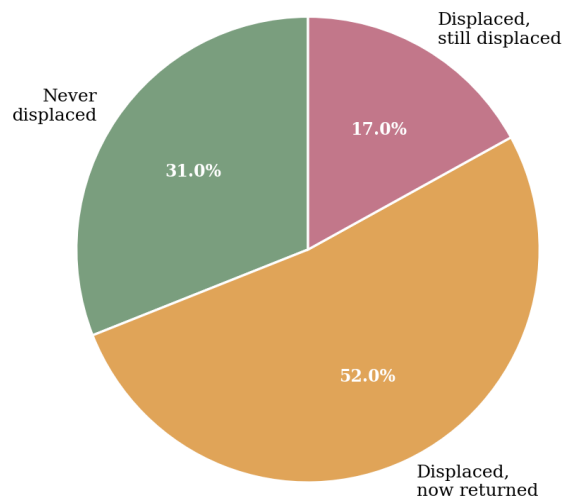


Figure 10: Pie Chart Showing Household Displacement History

As shown in Table 11 and Figure 10, more than two-thirds of sampled households, 276 (69.0%), reported a history of displacement, comprising 208 respondents (52.0%) who had been displaced and subsequently returned, and 68 respondents (17.0%) who remained displaced at the time of the survey. Only 124 respondents (31.0%) reported never having been displaced. This high prevalence of displacement across the sample underscores the severity of conflict exposure in the six selected Local Government Areas and provides essential context for interpreting the relationship between conflict

exposure and development outcomes examined in Section 2.2 and tested formally in Section 3.1.

2.2 Conflict Exposure and Development Outcomes

This subsection presents the distribution of household conflict exposure and its association with the four measured development domains: infrastructure access, livelihood stability, educational continuity, and health-service access.

2.2.1 Household Conflict Exposure Level

Table 12: Distribution of Household Conflict Exposure Level (n = 400)

Conflict Exposure Level	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Low exposure	108	27.0
Moderate exposure	156	39.0
High exposure	136	34.0
Total	400	100.0

Conflict exposure was computed as a composite index from questionnaire items B1–B5 (type, frequency, and severity of conflict incidents, asset loss, and displacement history), classified into low, moderate, and high exposure tertiles. Table 12 shows that moderate exposure was most common, reported by 156 households (39.0%), followed by high exposure at 136 households (34.0%) and low exposure at

108 households (27.0%). Combined, 73.0% of sampled households fell into the moderate-to-high exposure categories, reflecting the pervasiveness of conflict-related disruption across the six selected Local Government Areas.

2.2.2 Development Domain Scores by Conflict Exposure Level

Table 13: Mean Development Domain Scores by Household Conflict Exposure Level (Scale: 1 = Poor, 2 = Fair, 3 = Good)

Development Domain	Low Exposure (Mean)	Moderate Exposure (Mean)	High Exposure (Mean)
Infrastructure access	2.41	2.02	1.48
Livelihood stability	2.35	1.98	1.39
Educational continuity	2.52	2.10	1.55
Health-service access	2.38	2.05	1.44

Table 13 shows a consistent gradient across all four development domains: mean scores decline steadily as conflict exposure increases, from a range of 2.35–2.52 ("fair-to-good") among low-exposure households, to 1.98–2.10 ("fair") among moderately exposed households, to 1.39–1.55 ("poor-to-fair") among highly exposed households. The largest gap between low- and high-exposure households was observed for livelihood stability (2.35 versus 1.39, a decline of 0.96 points),

followed closely by infrastructure access (2.41 versus 1.48, a decline of 0.93 points). This lines up with qualitative accounts (Section 3.0) describing how farming, trading, and market access were hit hardest in the most conflict-affected communities.

2.2.3 Cross-Tabulation of Conflict Exposure and Development Access

Table 14: Cross-Tabulation of Household Conflict Exposure Level by Composite Development Access Level (n = 400)

Conflict Exposure Level	Low Development Access	Moderate Development Access	High Development Access
Low exposure (n=108)	18	34	56
Moderate exposure (n=156)	42	78	36
High exposure (n=136)	88	40	8
Total	148	152	100

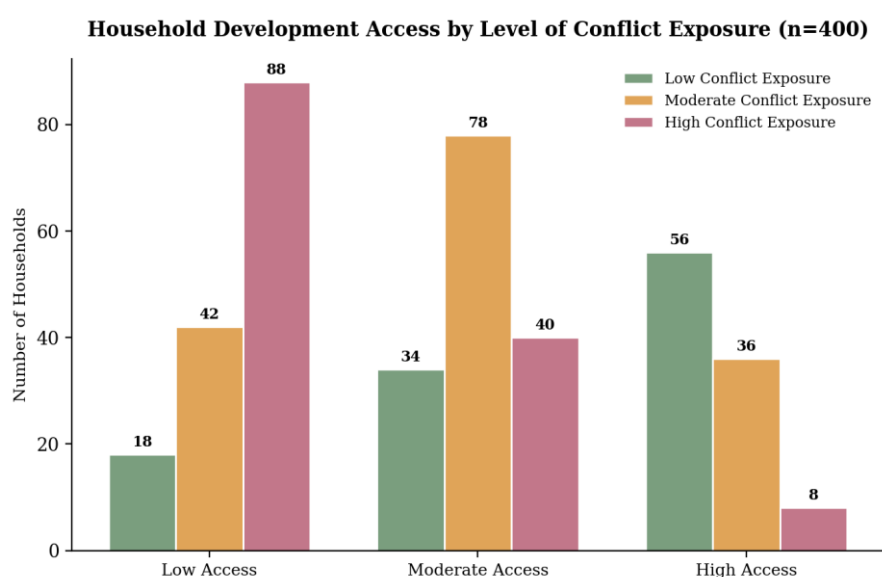


Figure 11: Grouped Bar Chart of Household Development Access by Conflict Exposure Level

Table 14 and Figure 11 illustrate a clear inverse relationship between conflict exposure and development access. Among households with low conflict exposure, the majority, 56 of 108 (51.9%), reported high development access, and only 18 (16.7%) reported low access. This pattern reverses sharply among highly exposed households: 88 of 136 (64.7%) reported low development access, while only 8 (5.9%) reported high access. Moderately exposed households occupied an intermediate position, with the largest share, 78 of 156 (50.0%), falling into the moderate development access category. This distribution provides descriptive support for the study's hypothesis and is tested formally for statistical significance in Section 3.1.

3.0 Discussion of Findings

3.1 Theoretical Appraisal

Hypothesis testing. The study's hypothesis, that there is a statistically significant relationship between household

conflict exposure and access to development infrastructure and services, was tested using a chi-square test of association applied to the cross-tabulation presented in Table 14. The result was as follows:

$$\chi^2 = 105.585, df = 4, p < .001, \text{Cramer's } V = .363$$

The chi-square value of 105.585 substantially exceeds the critical value at 4 degrees of freedom ($\chi^2_{\text{critical}} = 9.488$ at $\alpha = 0.05$), and the associated p-value is less than .001. The null hypothesis (H0), that there is no statistically significant relationship between household conflict exposure and development access, is therefore rejected, and the alternative hypothesis (H1) is accepted: household conflict exposure and access to development infrastructure and services in Adamawa State are significantly associated. Cramer's V of .363 indicates a moderate effect size, suggesting that conflict exposure, while clearly consequential, operates alongside other structural factors,

including those examined qualitatively in this study, in shaping development outcomes.

This result agrees closely with the wider Nigerian farmer-herder and insurgency-development literature. Dan-Azumi (2025), using an identical chi-square approach in southern Kaduna, found a statistically significant relationship between farmer-Fulani herdsman clashes and socioeconomic development ($\chi^2 = 40.748$, $df = 12$, $p < .001$), while Umaru et al. (2021), modelling the causes of farmer-herder conflict in Taraba State using structural equation modelling, likewise reported a highly significant model fit ($\chi^2 = 1,183.797$, $df = 543$, $p < .001$). The direction and significance of the present finding also line up with Bilyaminu et al.'s (2017) Adamawa-specific finding that a one-percent increase in Boko Haram activity was associated with substantial declines in school enrolment (71%), attendance (84%), and infrastructure (82%), and with Tafida et al.'s (2023) livelihood-vulnerability index study, which identified the conflict index, market disruption, and financial exclusion as the strongest contributors to household vulnerability across eight insurgency-affected Northern Adamawa communities.

The finding diverges, however, from Sarki, Solomon and Kaka's (2021) study of Borno State, which used an identical Yamane-derived sample size of 400 respondents but reported only a weak relationship between Boko Haram insurgency and economic activity, food security, and educational development. This divergence is analytically instructive rather than merely inconsistent. Two explanations are plausible. First, methodological: Sarki et al. (2021) measured insurgency exposure at the state level using a mixed military-civilian respondent pool and a single composite index, whereas the present study measured exposure at the household level across six distinct Local Government Areas with markedly different conflict typologies, a design more likely to detect the graded, dose-response association evident in Table 13. Second, and more substantively, the divergence may itself support this study's historical-structuralist argument: if, as this study contends, the translation of conflict exposure into developmental harm is conditioned by historically rooted structural factors specific to Adamawa's emirate and intergroup history, then a similarly weak relationship should not automatically be expected to replicate in Adamawa State, whose historical-political structure, while related to Borno's, is not identical. Rather than undermining the present findings, this cross-state divergence actually supports the theoretical claim that historical context, not conflict exposure alone, moderates the security-development relationship. Notably, a separate and more recent Borno-focused study by Emmanuel, Yusufari and Chuga (2025), examining governance and socio-economic development specifically, reached the

opposite conclusion to Sarki et al. (2021), finding that the insurgency significantly weakened state institutions and substantially hindered access to education and healthcare. That the two Borno-focused studies do not themselves agree further cautions against treating any single-state finding as a stable benchmark against which to judge the present, Adamawa-focused result.

This result lends empirical, LGA-level support to the historical-structuralism and security-development nexus frameworks adopted in Section 1.5. The security-development nexus framework predicts precisely the pattern observed in Tables 13 and 14: insecurity degrading development outcomes in a graded, dose-response manner rather than as a binary condition. The moderate (rather than very strong) effect size is, however, theoretically informative in its own right. It suggests that conflict exposure alone does not fully account for variation in development access. This fits the historical-structuralist proposition that pre-existing structural inequalities, rooted in nineteenth-century state formation and colonial administrative choices, shape how conflict translates into developmental harm. Communities with historically weaker integration into emirate and colonial governance structures may experience the same level of conflict exposure as more integrated communities yet suffer disproportionately greater developmental setbacks, a pattern the quantitative data cannot isolate but which qualitative findings, discussed below, directly address.

3.2 Historical Roots of Insecurity: Qualitative Findings

Key informant interviews and focus group discussions consistently traced the origins of contemporary insecurity in the sampled Local Government Areas to historical processes predating the Boko Haram insurgency by over a century. Traditional and religious leaders in Madagali, Michika, and Mubi North and South frequently referenced the nineteenth-century Fulani jihad and the 1809 establishment of the Adamawa Emirate (Njeuma, 2025) as the foundational event structuring subsequent intergroup relations in the area, describing a durable historical distinction between communities that were incorporated into emirate governance and those, such as the Kamwe, Higgi, and Marghi populations of the Mandara highlands, that retained greater autonomy or experienced more conflictual incorporation. Several informants linked this historical pattern to present-day disparities in political representation and resource allocation, describing a persistent sense that highland and borderland communities remain comparatively marginal to state-level decision-making, a perception that lines up with the disparity in humanitarian and development attention between Adamawa and Borno States that the Carnegie Endowment

for International Peace (2019) and ACAPS (2025) have both documented.

This historical framing was most pronounced in Numan, where both Hama Bachama-affiliated and Fulani informants explicitly connected contemporary farmer-herder conflict to the historical resistance of the Bachama to Fulani emirate domination. This finding directly corroborates Conciliation Resources' (n.d.) field research on the 2017 Numan Federation violence, which similarly found a discordant relationship between the traditional leadership structures of the two groups, the Hama Bachama in Numan and the Lamido of Adamawa in Yola, and cautioned that this relationship, once damaged, would be difficult to fully recover even after mediation. Informants from both communities in the present study offered accounts emphasising political and religious asymmetry between the Hama Bachama and the Lamido's institution as a longer-standing and, in their assessment, more fundamental driver of tension than contemporary resource competition alone, echoing Conciliation Resources' (n.d.) finding that the violence was driven mainly by local actors rather than, as popularly narrated, by pastoralists from outside Nigeria.

This qualitative emphasis on historical and identity-based grievance sits alongside, rather than simply confirming, Abner and Benson's (2025) quantitative assessment of the same Numan Federation conflict. Using ANOVA to test for differences among the causes of farmer-herder conflict, Abner and Benson (2025) found no statistically significant difference among the causal factors examined, concluding that the conflict is, at bottom, a dispute over land and water. Read alongside the present study's findings, this is best understood as a difference of analytical level rather than a genuine contradiction: Abner and Benson (2025) were

testing which resource-based cause predominates, while the present study asked why resource competition escalates into violence in Numan specifically, rather than being managed through the customary negotiation described elsewhere in the literature (Conciliation Resources, n.d.). Informants in the present sample generally treated resource pressure as the immediate trigger but situated it within a deeper history of asymmetry between the Hama Bachama and the Lamido's institution, which fits the wider farmer-herder literature's general distinction between proximate triggers and underlying political drivers. This finding directly addresses Research Question 4 and Objective 4 and is reflected quantitatively in the Likert-scale results discussed in Section 3.3.

Local government officials and security personnel, while more attentive to the operational dynamics of the contemporary insurgency and banditry, nonetheless frequently acknowledged that colonial-era boundary-making and administrative neglect of border communities had created conditions, weak infrastructure, limited state presence, and cross-border kinship ties, that insurgent and bandit groups have exploited. This corroborates the literature's identification of colonial-era division of the Kanem-Borno cultural sphere as a structural precondition for the insurgency's cross-border expansion, and lines up with the World Bank's (Justino et al., in Education is Forbidden) longitudinal finding, using geo-localised village-level conflict data from the Nigeria General Household Survey panel, that precise, spatially disaggregated measures of household conflict exposure, of the kind adopted in this study's household-level design, capture education and development effects more reliably than coarser state-level indicators.

3.3 Perceptions of Historical and Intergroup Dynamics

Table 15: Mean Perception Scores on Historical and Intergroup Dynamics (5-Point Likert Scale; $n = 400$)

Statement	Mean	SD
Insecurity today is connected to historical relationships between different ethnic or religious groups	4.12	0.81
Long-standing tension between farming and herding communities has contributed to conflict here	3.96	0.89
This community has historically received less government/humanitarian attention than other parts of Northeast Nigeria	4.21	0.77
Traditional and religious leaders play an important role in resolving conflict in this community	3.84	0.95
Relations between different ethnic/religious groups here have improved in recent years	2.89	1.02

Table 15 shows that respondents most strongly agreed that their community has historically received less government or humanitarian attention than other parts of Northeast Nigeria ($M = 4.21$, $SD = 0.77$), followed closely by

agreement that present-day insecurity is connected to historical intergroup relationships ($M = 4.12$, $SD = 0.81$). Agreement that farmer-herder tension has contributed to conflict was also high ($M = 3.96$, $SD = 0.89$), a figure

closely comparable to the grand mean of 4.01 reported by Abner and Benson (2025) across their eight-item causal battery for the same Numan Federation conflict, lending convergent quantitative validation to this study's findings despite the two studies' differing analytical emphases (historical-identity versus resource-competition, as discussed in Section 3.2). Respondents were somewhat less convinced, though still net positive, that traditional and religious leaders play an important conflict-resolution role ($M = 3.84$, $SD = 0.95$), the comparatively higher standard deviation suggesting more divided opinion on this item, plausibly reflecting the divergent assessments of traditional authority offered by Fulani- and Bachama-affiliated respondents noted in Section 3.2. Notably, the only statement to register net disagreement was the claim that intergroup relations have improved in recent years ($M = 2.89$, $SD = 1.02$), indicating that, on balance, respondents perceive intergroup relations as static or worsening rather than improving. This pessimism echoes Conciliation Resources' (n.d.) caution that farmer-herder relations in Numan, once damaged by violence, would be difficult to fully restore even where mediation reduces the recurrence of open conflict, a finding that tempers optimism about spontaneous post-conflict reconciliation and strengthens the case for deliberate intervention discussed in Section 4.2.

3.4 Comparative Disparity Between Adamawa and Borno States

Consistent with donor and stabilisation assessments reviewed in the literature (Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2019; ACAPS, 2025), both quantitative and qualitative findings in this study point to a persistent disparity in attention and resourcing between Adamawa State and Borno State. The strong quantitative agreement with the Likert statement on comparative neglect (Table 15, $M = 4.21$) was echoed extensively in key informant interviews with local government officials and humanitarian workers, several of whom attributed this disparity to the concentration of international response infrastructure in Maiduguri and the relatively lower media visibility of Adamawa's compound security burden, insurgency, banditry, and intercommunal conflict, compared with Borno's more singular association with the Boko Haram insurgency. This also echoes Sarki et al.'s (2021) observation, in the Borno-specific literature, that counter-insurgency resource allocation in the state most affected by the core insurgency has itself diverted resources away from governance functions such as education and healthcare, suggesting that resourcing pressure operates unevenly even within, and not only between, the BAY states. This finding reinforces Objective 1 and suggests that recovery and development policy calibrated primarily to the Borno experience may be poorly matched to Adamawa's

distinct conflict typology, a point developed further in Section 4.2.

3.5 Gendered and Livelihood Dimensions

Although not the central focus of the study's research questions, the data yielded relevant secondary findings on gendered and livelihood dimensions of the conflict-development relationship. The elevated proportion of widowed respondents (10.0%, Table 4) combined with the high prevalence of displacement history (69.0%, Table 11) is consistent with qualitative accounts describing conflict-related loss of male household heads as a significant driver of household vulnerability. Similarly, the marked decline in livelihood-stability scores between low- and high-exposure households (Table 13) corroborates focus group testimony describing loss of farmland access, market disruption, and asset loss (livestock, trading capital) as among the most immediate and keenly felt consequences of insecurity, often preceding and compounding subsequent deficits in education and health-service access. This sequencing, livelihood disruption as a leading rather than lagging indicator, lines up closely with Tafida et al.'s (2023) finding that the conflict index, market disruption, and financial exclusion were the strongest contributors to overall household vulnerability among their eight studied Northern Adamawa communities, and is corroborated by qualitative research on farmers in the Adamawa Northern Senatorial District documenting statistically significant, chi-square-confirmed associations between insurgency-related disruption and farmers' inability to sustain agricultural activity (Bilyaminu et al., 2017).

4.0 Summary, Conclusion and Recommendations

4.1 Summary of Major Empirical Findings

1. **Demographic profile:** The sample of 400 household heads, proportionately stratified across Madagali, Maiha, Michika, Mubi North, Mubi South, and Numan, was 54.0% male and 46.0% female, predominantly married (66.0%), engaged primarily in farming (44.0%), and concentrated in the economically active 28–47 age range (55.0%). Sixty-nine percent of households reported a history of displacement.
2. **Quantitative association:** A statistically significant relationship was found between household conflict exposure and development access ($\chi^2 = 105.585$, $df = 4$, $p < .001$, Cramer's $V = .363$), with mean development-domain scores declining consistently across infrastructure, livelihood, education, and health-service access as conflict exposure increased. The null hypothesis was rejected.

3. Historical narrative: Qualitative findings traced contemporary insecurity to historical processes including the nineteenth-century Fulani jihad, the 1809 establishment of the Adamawa Emirate, and colonial administrative arrangements, with respondents strongly agreeing ($M = 4.12$) that present-day insecurity is historically rooted.
4. Intergroup dynamics: Historically rooted Fulani-Bachama relations, particularly in Numan, were identified by both quantitative ($M = 3.96$ agreement on farmer-herder historical tension) and qualitative data as a distinct and significant driver of contemporary conflict, operating alongside but analytically separable from the Boko Haram insurgency.
5. Comparative neglect: Respondents strongly perceived their communities as having received less government and humanitarian attention than other parts of Northeast Nigeria ($M = 4.21$), a perception corroborated by key informants and consistent with documented resourcing disparities between Adamawa and Borno States.

4.2 Policy Recommendations

Based on the empirical findings summarised above, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. LGA-differentiated recovery programming: Given the statistically confirmed association between conflict exposure and development access, and the distinct conflict typologies identified across the six sampled Local Government Areas, recovery and development interventions should be differentiated by LGA rather than applied uniformly. Areas of high conflict exposure and low development access, particularly Madagali and Michika, in this sample, warrant prioritised infrastructure and livelihood investment.
2. Historically informed intergroup reconciliation: Given the strength of historical framing in respondents' explanations of insecurity, particularly in Numan, reconciliation initiatives should explicitly engage historical grievance and traditional leadership structures, the Lamido of Adamawa's institution and the Hama Bachama institution, rather than treating farmer-herder tension solely as a resource-competition problem.
3. Correcting the Adamawa-Borno resourcing disparity: State and federal authorities, alongside international humanitarian and development partners, should reassess resource allocation

formulae across the Borno-Adamawa-Yobe states to correct the disparity in attention documented both in this study's Likert results and in the wider stabilisation literature.

4. Livelihood-first sequencing: Given the disproportionate decline in livelihood-stability scores among highly conflict-exposed households, recovery programming should prioritise restoration of farmland and market access and livestock replacement as an early-sequence intervention, given its apparent centrality to subsequent educational and health outcomes.
5. Support for conflict-widowed and returnee households: The elevated proportion of widowed and displaced-returnee households identified in the demographic profile warrants targeted social protection and livelihood support programming for these specifically vulnerable household categories.
6. Further research: Longitudinal, mixed-methods research is recommended to track the evolution of the conflict-development relationship in Adamawa State over time, and to test the generalisability of the historical-structuralist pathway identified here in other Lake Chad Basin sub-regions.

4.3 Conclusion

This study set out to examine the historical roots of insecurity in Adamawa State and their implications for community development, using a pragmatic, mixed-methods design combining a statistically representative household survey ($n = 400$) with qualitative key informant interviews and focus group discussions across six conflict-affected Local Government Areas. The evidence assembled supports the study's central argument: contemporary insecurity and its developmental consequences in Adamawa State cannot be adequately understood through either a purely contemporary security lens or a purely quantitative development lens. The statistically significant association between conflict exposure and development access (Section 3.1) confirms the security-development nexus empirically, corroborating and extending single-domain Adamawa studies such as Bilyaminu et al. (2017) on education and Tafida et al. (2023) on livelihood vulnerability, while also clarifying, through comparison with Sarki et al.'s (2021) weaker Borno State finding, that this association is not uniform across the BAY states. The qualitative findings (Sections 3.2–3.4) demonstrate that the conflict-development association is itself conditioned by historical-structural factors, dating to pre-colonial state formation, colonial administrative choices, and long-

standing Fulani-Bachama intergroup relations documented by Conciliation Resources (n.d.) and Abner and Benson (2025), that operate independently of, and prior to, the contemporary insurgency. Addressing insecurity and its developmental consequences in Adamawa State therefore requires policy that is simultaneously historically informed, spatially differentiated across its distinct Local Government Areas, and attentive to the traditional governance structures through which communities themselves seek to manage conflict.

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