



## **Kinetic and Non-Kinetic Approaches to Banditry in Kaduna State: A Comparative Study of Kajuru and Kachia Local Government Areas, 2010 – 2023**

**By**

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### **Abstract**

Despite hosting one of the highest concentrations of military formations in Nigeria, Kaduna State continues to record some of the country's most persistent levels of banditry, raising pressing questions about the effectiveness of existing kinetic and non-kinetic responses. This study examines the application and effectiveness of kinetic and non-kinetic approaches to banditry in Kajuru and Kachia Local Government Areas of Kaduna State between 2010 and 2023, and compares how the two approaches have played out across the two contiguous but historically distinct LGAs. Anchored on Social Conflict Theory, the study adopted a concurrent mixed-methods design, drawing quantitative data from structured questionnaires administered to 400 respondents (366 valid returns) and qualitative data from 20 semi-structured interviews with traditional rulers, security personnel, religious leaders, NGO representatives, and community leaders. Findings show that kinetic measures, though widely deployed and moderately effective in suppressing immediate attacks, are undermined by underfunding, poor inter-agency coordination, and informant infiltration, while non-kinetic measures, though rated more favourably by respondents (54.1 percent describing them as very effective, against 36.1 percent for kinetic measures), remain inconsistently funded and applied. Poverty, unemployment, weak governance, and identity-based grievances emerged as the dominant drivers of banditry, with banditry in Kajuru skewing more ethnically and politically motivated and banditry in Kachia skewing more economically motivated. Over 70 percent of respondents endorsed a hybrid model combining both approaches as the most viable pathway to sustainable peace. The study recommends the formal, coordinated integration of kinetic and non-kinetic strategies through joint LGA-level security committees, sustained funding, trust-building mechanisms between communities and security agencies, and context-sensitive capacity-building for stakeholders in both LGAs.

**Keywords:** banditry; kinetic approach; non-kinetic approach; Kaduna State; Social Conflict Theory; security governance



## 1. Introduction

Security remains foundational to the survival and development of the modern state, encompassing the legislative and operational measures adopted to guarantee peace, stability, and the general well-being of citizens (Shinkaiye, 2004). Traditionally conceived in militaristic terms as the protection of territory from external threat, the concept of security has been complicated in the Nigerian context by the phenomenon of banditry, whose meaning has itself shifted over time: whereas nineteenth-century European “bandits” were often framed as freedom fighters resisting colonial or upper-class domination (Warto, 2011), contemporary Nigerian banditry is more commonly understood as organised cattle rustling and raiding, alongside associated crimes such as kidnapping, armed robbery, and extortion (Egwu, 2015).

Banditry is not unique to Nigeria; comparable patterns of resource-driven violence have featured across West Africa, from cattle and sheep rustling linked to poverty in Niger, to the intersection of banditry with religious extremism in Mali, and competition over grazing resources in Mauritania. What distinguishes the Nigerian case is its scale and persistence: since 2014, and escalating sharply from 2016, armed banditry has devastated large populations across Kaduna, Katsina, Niger, and Zamfara States, prompting a succession of kinetic interventions, including Operation Lafiya Dole, Operation Gama Aiki, and Hadarin Daji, and, more recently, a parallel turn toward non-kinetic measures such as poverty alleviation schemes, skills acquisition programmes, and educational reform (Henselmann & Letho, 2020).

At the state level, Kaduna has experimented with both approaches with mixed results. Under Governor Nasir El-Rufai, the state pursued an explicitly hardline stance, rejecting negotiation or amnesty with bandits and instead implementing telecommunications shutdowns, restrictions



on the sale of petrol in jerry cans, and curbs on motorcycle movement. These measures did little to deter continued attacks and kidnappings in rural areas, particularly in Kajuru and Kachia Local Government Areas, where residents have resorted to independent protective measures, including the formation of vigilante groups, the erection of roadblocks, and, in some cases, direct negotiation with bandits to secure the release of abducted community members. Such community-level responses have exposed residents to further risk, including reprisal attacks and extortion, without addressing the underlying drivers of insecurity, such as ethnic and religious cleavages, land disputes, and governance failures.

### **1.1 Statement of the Problem**

Nigeria's internal security policies have struggled to keep pace with the country's persistent security challenges, prompting the then Chief of Army Staff, Major General Farouk Yahaya, to call for a carrot-and-stick strategy that combines kinetic force with non-kinetic engagement (Ezigbo, 2021). Kaduna State presents a striking paradox in this regard: despite hosting no fewer than thirteen military establishments, including formations within Kajuru and Kachia, the state continues to record some of the highest levels of cattle rustling, kidnapping, banditry, and communal clashes in the country. Kajuru LGA recorded the second-highest number of attacks in the state after Giwa LGA, while Kachia accounted for a significant share of the 66 percent of persons killed in reprisal and communal violence across Kaduna's Southern senatorial district in 2020 (Sunday, Ityokura, Akhaine, & Alabi, 2022).

This contradiction, a heavily militarised state that remains persistently insecure, exposes the limits of a kinetic-first approach. Before 2014, security responses in Kajuru and Kachia relied mainly on the deployment of the Joint Task Force, Special Task Force, and Operation Yaki,



alongside curfews and arms confiscation. These measures proved largely ineffective: security forces were frequently outnumbered and outmanoeuvred by bandits with superior mobility and local intelligence, the interventions failed to address the root causes of banditry, and bandits routinely regrouped once forces withdrew (Adesote & Akande, 2018). Existing literature and policy responses have therefore left three important gaps largely unaddressed: a knowledge gap, in the limited empirical understanding of how kinetic and non-kinetic approaches interact, whether reinforcing, undermining, or operating independently of one another, specifically within Kajuru and Kachia; a policy gap, in the fragmented and largely military-dependent nature of existing interventions; and an empirical gap, in the scarcity of studies that systematically and comparatively assess both approaches across two contiguous but distinct LGAs over an extended period. This study was designed to address these gaps.

## **1.2 Objectives of the Study**

The study was guided by the following objectives:

1. To analyse the causes and nature of banditry in Kajuru and Kachia Local Government Areas of Kaduna State.
2. To examine how kinetic and non-kinetic approaches have been utilised and applied in addressing banditry in the two LGAs.
3. To interrogate the challenges faced in applying kinetic and non-kinetic solutions to banditry in the two LGAs.
4. To proffer strategies for making kinetic and non-kinetic approaches more effective in addressing banditry in Kaduna State.



Beyond its academic contribution to the study of conflict and security governance, the study is of practical relevance to the Kaduna State Government and security agencies by offering an evidence base for alternatives to force alone in resolving insecurity, and to policymakers, non-governmental organisations, and researchers concerned with banditry-affected regions of northern Nigeria.

## **2. Literature Review and Theoretical Framework**

### **2.1 Conceptual Clarification**

The kinetic approach denotes the use of hard power, active military and law-enforcement engagement, including raids, curfews, arms confiscation, and lethal force, to suppress security threats; it is often used interchangeably with the “conventional” approach to national security. The non-kinetic approach, by contrast, comprises initiatives aimed at addressing the structural and psychosocial drivers of violence, including dialogue, humanitarian assistance, poverty alleviation, education, and the provision of sustainable livelihoods intended to de-radicalise or dissuade potential recruits (Ezigbo, 2021). Banditry itself is defined as the practice of raiding and attacking victims, whether premeditated or not, by armed, semi-organised groups seeking loot, ransom, or political leverage (Shalangwa, 2013).

### **2.2 Empirical Review**

A growing body of Nigerian scholarship has examined the comparative merits of kinetic and non-kinetic responses to insecurity, largely in the context of the Boko Haram insurgency in the North-East, with more limited attention to banditry in the North-West and North-Central regions. Adamu and Umar (2021) found that military interventions played a significant role in



curbing violent crime in northern Nigeria, but noted that their effectiveness was constrained by inadequate coordination among security forces and, at times, corruption within security agencies (Okoli & Lenshie, 2018). On the non-kinetic side, Shehu (2019) documented the effectiveness of dialogue and mediation in reducing communal conflict in parts of Nigeria, while Onuoha (2022) argued that an integrated security approach combining military action with grassroots community efforts is essential to addressing rural insecurity. At the state level, studies such as Ekpo and Izge (2023) have re-assessed the persistence of banditry and insecurity in Kaduna State, while journalistic and policy sources (Nigeria Risk Index, 2023; The Cable, 2020) have tracked the state's oscillation between hardline and dialogue-based responses under successive administrations.

Despite this literature, few studies have systematically compared how kinetic and non-kinetic approaches interact within specific, contiguous local government areas over an extended timeframe. Much of the existing work either treats Kaduna's banditry-affected areas as broadly homogeneous or focuses narrowly on one approach in isolation, leaving open the question of how local historical, ethnic, and economic particularities shape the relative success of force-based versus dialogue-based interventions. This is the gap the present study addresses.

### **2.3 Theoretical Framework: Social Conflict Theory**

The study is anchored on Social Conflict Theory, rooted in the work of Karl Marx and Max Weber and further developed by theorists such as Lewis Coser (1956) and Vold (1958). The theory holds that conflict is an inherent and ineradicable feature of social life, arising from competition between groups over scarce resources, power, and status within structures of inequality. Coser argued that conflict is inextricably linked to peace, such that peace itself



represents merely a shift in the form of conflict rather than its absence, while Vold viewed society as built simultaneously on consensus, which explains stability, and on continuous conflict, which explains change.

Applied to this study, Social Conflict Theory frames the causes of banditry in Kajuru and Kachia as a function of competition over scarce land, resources, and economic opportunity between antagonistic groups, herders, farmers, and marginalised youth, within a wider structure of inequality in Kaduna State. The theory also illuminates the limitations of kinetic responses: because force alone does not resolve the structural inequalities that generate conflict, military and law-enforcement interventions tend to suppress banditry only temporarily, without eliminating its root causes. Correspondingly, the theory underscores the relevance of non-kinetic interventions, such as economic empowerment, equitable resource access, and inclusive governance, as necessary complements to kinetic measures, since these address the structural grievances that the theory identifies as the ultimate source of persistent violence. The theory was preferred over alternatives such as Relative Deprivation Theory and Frustration-Aggression Theory because it more directly addresses the structural, group-based dimensions of banditry central to this study, although these alternative perspectives are drawn on selectively in the discussion of findings to illuminate individual-level motivations for joining banditry.

### **3. Methodology**

The study adopted a pragmatist research philosophy and a concurrent (convergent) mixed-methods design, in which quantitative and qualitative data were collected within the same general timeframe, analysed separately, and integrated during interpretation to provide a fuller



understanding of the phenomenon than either approach could achieve alone (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2010).

The study population comprised residents of Kajuru and Kachia LGAs of Kaduna State, with a combined projected population of approximately 535,300 based on the most recent officially disaggregated National Bureau of Statistics (2016) estimates available at the time of the study. Using the Yamane formula at a 5 percent margin of error, a sample size of 400 was derived for the quantitative component. A combination of probability and purposive sampling was used: two wards were randomly selected from each LGA (Kujama and Mararaban Kajuru in Kajuru; Kachia and Ungwan Pa in Kachia), and respondents were proportionately allocated across four stakeholder categories, community members, law enforcement officials, local leaders, and NGO representatives, within each ward. Structured questionnaires incorporating Likert-scale and closed-ended items were administered to the 400 respondents, of whom 366 returned valid, properly completed questionnaires, representing a 91.5 percent response rate.

In addition, 20 key informants, comprising traditional and community leaders (including the Sarki of Kajuru and district heads), security personnel, religious leaders, NGO and humanitarian representatives, and youth and women's group leaders, were purposively selected for semi-structured interviews, independent of the 400 questionnaire respondents. All 20 interviews were successfully conducted, bringing the total number of study participants across both instruments to 386 out of a targeted 420. Quantitative data were analysed using descriptive statistics (frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations) via SPSS, while qualitative data were subjected to thematic analysis involving familiarisation, initial coding, theme identification, and refinement. Because the underlying data reflect respondents'



perceptions and lived experiences rather than independently verified causal facts, the findings reported below are best read as evidence of what stakeholders in Kajuru and Kachia perceive to be true of banditry and of kinetic and non-kinetic interventions, rather than as objectively established causal claims.

#### 4. Results

Of the 400 questionnaires distributed, 366 were successfully retrieved and properly completed, a response rate of 91.5 percent. All 20 purposively selected key informants completed their semi-structured interviews, so the qualitative component was unaffected by the questionnaire shortfall. Table 1 summarises the study's data-collection outturn before the substantive findings, organised around the four research objectives, are presented.

**Table 1: Summary of Data Collection and Response Rate**

| Instrument                 | Target Sample | Achieved Sample | Response Rate |
|----------------------------|---------------|-----------------|---------------|
| Questionnaire              | 400           | 366             | 91.5%         |
| Semi-structured interview  | 20            | 20              | 100%          |
| Total participants engaged | 420           | 386             | 91.9%         |

Source: Field Survey, 2024.

##### 4.1 Causes and Nature of Banditry

The findings identify poverty as the most significant driver of banditry in Kajuru and Kachia, with 86.61 percent of respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing that poverty is a major cause, consistent with the view that economic deprivation pushes individuals toward criminal activity as a means of survival (Aliyu, 2019). Lack of education was similarly implicated, with 80.60

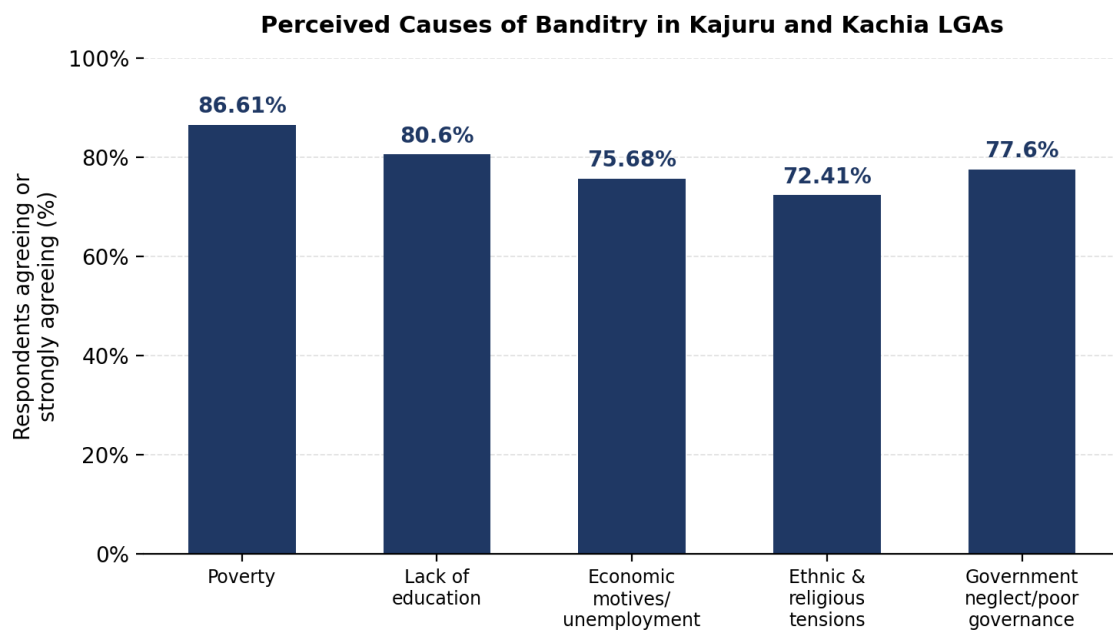


percent of respondents linking educational deprivation to the rise of banditry, while 75.68 percent identified financial incentives and unemployment as key economic drivers. Ethnic and religious tensions were cited by 72.41 percent of respondents as significant contributors, and 77.60 percent pointed to government neglect and poor governance. Table 2 and Figure 1 present these five leading causes together for ease of comparison.

**Table 2: Perceived Causes of Banditry in Kajuru and Kachia LGAs**

| Perceived Cause                      | Respondents Agreeing or Strongly Agreeing (%) |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|
| Poverty                              | 86.61%                                        |
| Government neglect / poor governance | 77.60%                                        |
| Lack of education                    | 80.60%                                        |
| Economic motives / unemployment      | 75.68%                                        |
| Ethnic and religious tensions        | 72.41%                                        |

Source: Field Survey, 2024.



**Figure 1: Perceived Causes of Banditry in Kajuru and Kachia LGAs**

Source: Field Survey, 2024.

As Figure 1 illustrates, poverty stands out as the single most widely endorsed cause, more than six percentage points ahead of the next-ranked factor, government neglect, suggesting that economic deprivation is the structural condition around which the other drivers, weak governance, low education, unemployment, and identity-based tension, tend to cluster in respondents' own accounts of why banditry persists.

Qualitative accounts enriched these figures considerably. A youth leader in Kachia, Mr Bala Ado, described how young men without work or food came to view banditry as a means of survival rather than a deliberate criminal choice, observing that “until these problems of hunger and unemployment are properly dealt with, banditry will keep growing, because desperation drives people to do things they would never have imagined in normal times” (B. Ado, personal



communication, 2024). By contrast, the Mai Ungwa of Kajuru, drawing on his own experience of abduction by bandits, rejected poverty as the primary explanation, attributing the violence instead to revenge and identity-based grievance, and arguing that only a stronger kinetic response, not welfare or empowerment, could end it. A community elder in Kajuru, Malam Haruna, traced the cycle of violence to the state's failure to intervene early in minor farmer-herder disputes, which then escalated into reprisal cycles that “became a circle of hatred that keeps growing because no one is stopping it” (personal communication, 2024). Taken together, these accounts point to a structural pattern consistent with Social Conflict Theory, in which competition over land and resources, poverty, and marginalisation generate group-based grievance, even as individual respondents differ sharply on whether force or development offers the more credible remedy.

Comparatively, while both LGAs share common root causes, poverty, unemployment, and weak governance, the dominant character of banditry differs: in Kajuru, it is more ethnically and politically motivated, rooted in identity-based grievance and historical inter-communal clashes, whereas in Kachia it is more economically driven, centred on cattle rustling, kidnapping for ransom, and youth unemployment. Both LGAs nonetheless share a common trend of weak state presence and eroding trust in security institutions.

#### **4.2 Application and Effectiveness of Kinetic and Non-Kinetic Approaches**

Awareness of both approaches is high among respondents: 73.0 percent are aware of kinetic measures, while 81.4 percent are aware of non-kinetic measures such as humanitarian assistance and community engagement. Perceptions of effectiveness, however, diverge sharply. Only 36.1 percent of respondents rate kinetic approaches as very effective (39.3

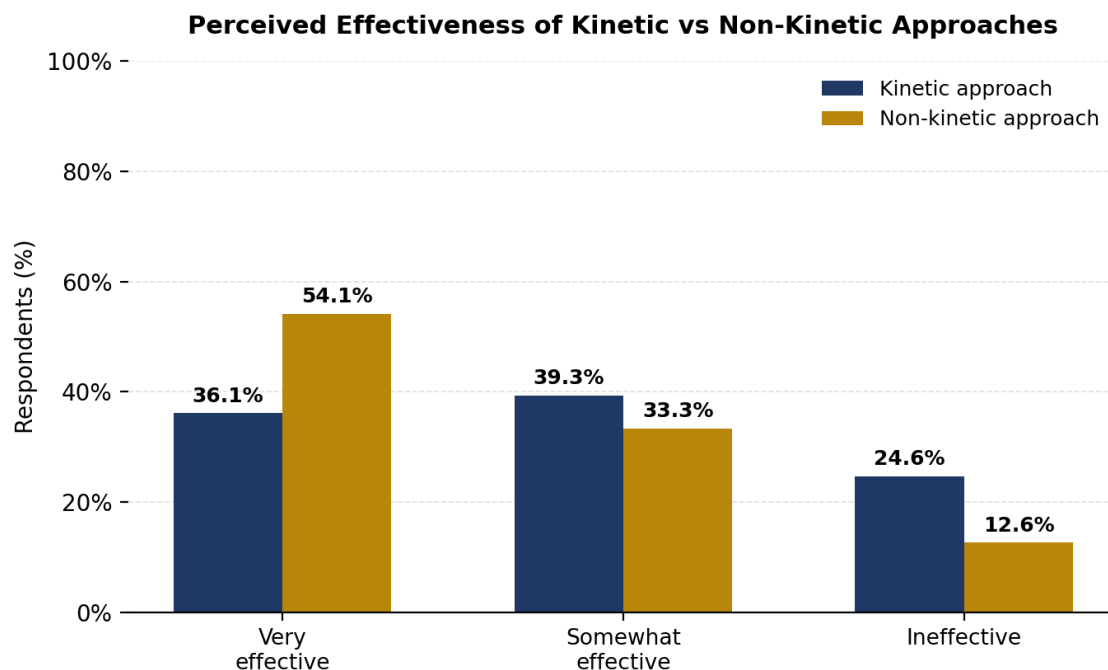


percent somewhat effective, 24.6 percent ineffective), whereas 54.1 percent rate non-kinetic approaches as very effective (33.3 percent somewhat effective, 12.6 percent ineffective). Notably, 64.0 percent of respondents consider integrating both approaches highly necessary, and a further 26.8 percent consider it necessary, an endorsement of a hybrid model shared by over 90 percent of respondents overall. Table 3 and Figure 2 set out the awareness and effectiveness figures side by side.

**Table 3: Awareness and Perceived Effectiveness of Kinetic and Non-Kinetic Approaches**

| Indicator                  | Kinetic Approach (%) | Non-Kinetic Approach (%) |
|----------------------------|----------------------|--------------------------|
| Aware of the approach      | 73.0%                | 81.4%                    |
| Rated “very effective”     | 36.1%                | 54.1%                    |
| Rated “somewhat effective” | 39.3%                | 33.3%                    |
| Rated “ineffective”        | 24.6%                | 12.6%                    |

Source: Field Survey, 2024



**Figure 2: Perceived Effectiveness of Kinetic versus Non-Kinetic Approaches**

Source: Field Survey, 2024.

Figure 2 shows a consistent pattern across all three effectiveness bands: non-kinetic measures outperform kinetic measures at the “very effective” end and are rated “ineffective” roughly half as often, even though kinetic measures remain the more widely applied of the two (see Table 4). This gap between application and perceived effectiveness is one of the study's central findings and is returned to in the Discussion.

This aggregate picture, however, conceals sharply divided stakeholder opinion. Ibrahim Sani, a Kaduna State Vigilance Service supervisor, argued that welfare and empowerment programmes such as N-Power are mismatched to the livelihoods of the Fulani herders most implicated in banditry, and cited the case of Tatato village, where a swift military deployment against roughly fifty attackers permanently deterred further raids, as proof that “a firm kinetic



response works better than endless dialogue” (I. Sani, personal communication, 2024). A Police Officer in Kachia Division offered a more qualified endorsement of kinetic measures, noting that operations are frequently undermined once arrested suspects are released before trial, eroding both officer morale and community confidence. By contrast, Mrs Rahma Yusuf, a Peace Committee member in Kajuru, described how farmer-herder peace meetings produced a genuine, if temporary, reduction in killings, which collapsed once government support and funding were withdrawn: “non-kinetic approaches do work, but they only work when they are continuous, properly funded, and supported by all sides” (R. Yusuf, personal communication, 2024). This fragility, gains that hold only as long as external support persists, recurs across multiple interview accounts and represents one of the study's more consistent findings.

Reliance on kinetic strategy remains strong in practice: 81.15 percent of respondents confirm that military forces have been deployed against banditry, and 71.86 percent acknowledge community policing initiatives. Non-kinetic measures show more mixed uptake, with 56.83 percent confirming dialogue efforts and 63.39 percent confirming NGO involvement, notably the Red Cross, which has distributed cash assistance to over 2,706 victims of banditry in the study area. Overall, 71.58 percent of respondents agree that the combination of both approaches has reduced banditry, even as they call for further optimisation. Table 4 summarises the extent of application of each specific measure.



**Table 4: Documented Application of Kinetic and Non-Kinetic Measures in Kajuru and Kachia**

| Measure Applied                                      | Respondents Confirming (%) |
|------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Military/security force deployment (kinetic)         | 81.15%                     |
| Community policing initiatives (kinetic/hybrid)      | 71.86%                     |
| NGO/humanitarian involvement (non-kinetic)           | 63.39%                     |
| Dialogue with bandits or communities (non-kinetic)   | 56.83%                     |
| Combined approach perceived to have reduced banditry | 71.58%                     |

Source: Field Survey, 2024.

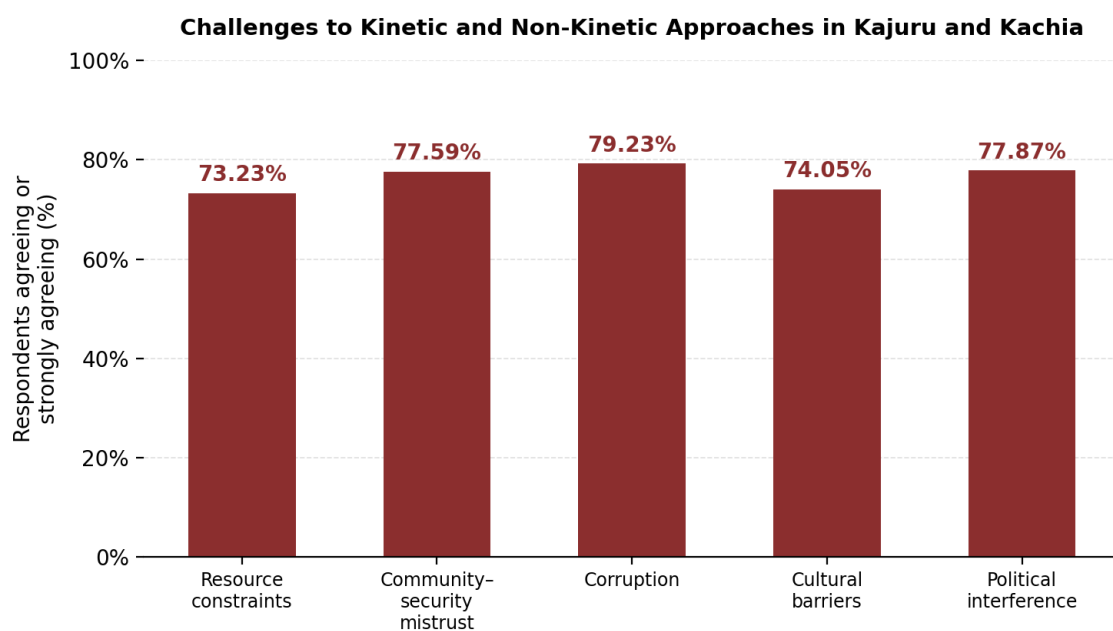
Comparatively, Kajuru has experienced more intensive and frequent kinetic operations, reflecting its history of more frequent attacks, but these efforts are often undermined by poor logistics, weak follow-up, and community distrust. Kachia, by contrast, exhibits comparatively stronger non-kinetic implementation, benefiting from better coordination between security agencies, vigilantes, and community leaders, and a more visible role for NGOs and faith-based organisations such as the Jama'atu Nasril Islam (JNI) in sustaining dialogue and community policing.

#### 4.3 Challenges in Applying Kinetic and Non-Kinetic Solutions

Five interlocking challenges emerged from the data: resource constraints (73.23 percent of respondents), mistrust between communities and security forces (77.59 percent), corruption (79.23 percent), cultural barriers (74.05 percent), and political interference (77.87 percent), illustrated in Figure 3. A senior local government official in Kajuru, Mal. Suleiman Bello, described how security funds released from state or federal sources are eroded by bureaucratic



leakage before reaching operational units, leaving “soldiers trekking long distances because there is no fuel for vehicles, and vigilantes using their own money to buy torchlights, uniforms, and even bullets” (S. Bello, personal communication, 2024). A women's cooperative leader in Kachia linked the erosion of trust directly to informant infiltration within security agencies, recounting an occasion on which a tip about kidnappers' whereabouts reached the kidnappers themselves before nightfall, after which “people prefer to keep quiet, even when they know something important” (personal communication, 2024).



**Figure 3: Challenges to Kinetic and Non-Kinetic Approaches in Kajuru and Kachia**

Source: Field Survey, 2024.

Figure 3 shows that all five challenges cluster within a narrow 6.6-percentage-point band (73.23 percent to 79.23 percent), indicating that respondents do not regard any single obstacle as decisively more severe than the others; rather, resourcing, trust, integrity, cultural fit, and

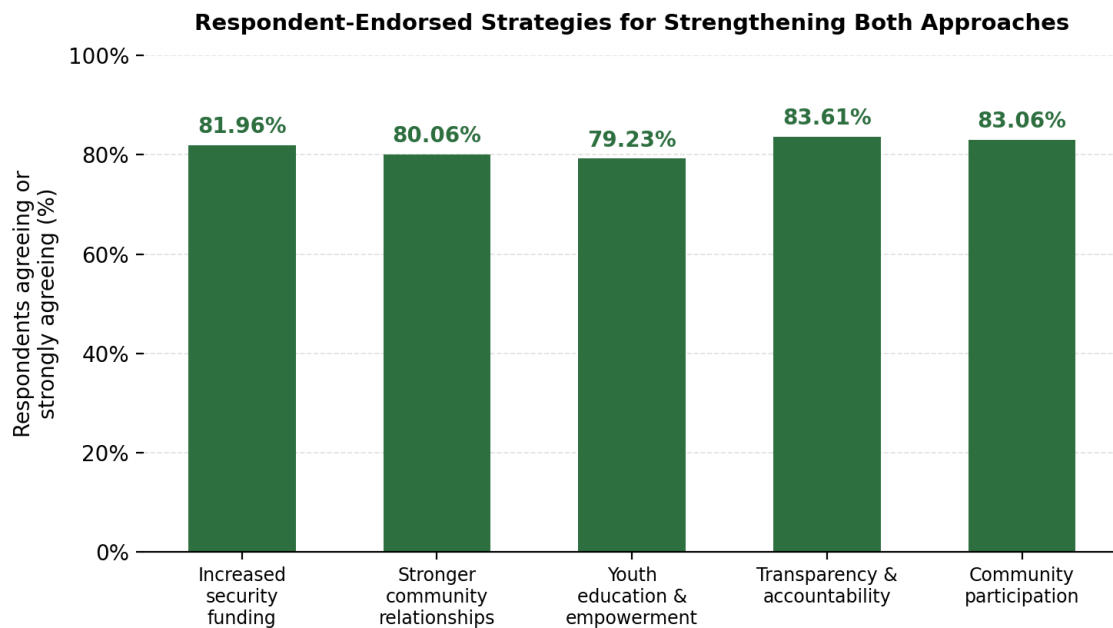


political neutrality appear to function as a mutually reinforcing set of constraints that must be tackled together, corruption being the most widely cited of the five.

Comparatively, both LGAs share underlying weaknesses in funding, coordination, and trust, but the character of the challenge differs: Kajuru's mistrust is deeper and more explicitly tied to ethnic polarisation and past grievance, generating resistance to dialogue-based interventions, whereas Kachia's principal obstacles are more cultural and religious, complicating some non-kinetic approaches even where security coordination is comparatively stronger. In short, Kajuru's difficulties are more relational in character, while Kachia's are more structural.

#### **4.4 Strategies for Enhancing Effectiveness**

Respondents converged strongly around five priority strategies: increased funding for security operations (81.96 percent), stronger community relationships and trust-building (80.06 percent), youth-targeted education and empowerment programmes (79.23 percent), transparency and accountability to curb corruption (83.61 percent), and greater community participation in designing anti-banditry interventions (83.06 percent), as shown in Figure 4. A retired military officer advising Kachia's local security committee captured the consensus succinctly: “development and security must go hand in hand. You cannot separate one from the other” (personal communication, 2024). A vigilante group member in Kajuru similarly called for formal training and legal backing for community defence structures working alongside the military, paired with skills and education programmes to draw youth away from bandit recruitment.



**Figure 4: Respondent-Endorsed Strategies for Strengthening Kinetic and Non-Kinetic Approaches**

Source: Field Survey, 2024.

Notably, the two most strongly endorsed strategies in Figure 4, transparency and accountability (83.61 percent) and community participation (83.06 percent), are governance-oriented rather than resource-oriented, suggesting that respondents view how interventions are run, openly, inclusively, and accountably, as at least as important to their success as how well they are funded.

Here too, comparative nuance is instructive: in Kajuru, respondents emphasised rebuilding trust through justice, reconciliation, and the inclusion of traditional authorities in peace processes, while in Kachia, respondents placed relatively greater weight on youth empowerment, skills acquisition, and education. Both LGAs therefore require a blend of security and social



interventions, but the emphasis and sequencing of that blend should reflect local realities.

## 5. Discussion

Table 5 draws together the comparative threads running through Section 4 into a single synthesis across the study's four objectives, and is discussed alongside the theoretical interpretation that follows.

**Table 5: Comparative Summary of Findings, Kajuru versus Kachia LGAs**

| Dimension                              | Kajuru LGA                                                                                                | Kachia LGA                                                                                        |
|----------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Dominant character of banditry         | More ethnically and politically motivated; identity-based grievance and historical inter-communal clashes | More economically driven; cattle rustling, kidnapping for ransom, youth unemployment              |
| Balance of approaches applied          | Kinetic-heavy: frequent military raids and patrols, but limited follow-up                                 | More balanced: comparatively stronger non-kinetic engagement (dialogue, NGOs, faith-based actors) |
| Principal challenge                    | Deeper mistrust, ethnic polarisation, informant infiltration (more relational)                            | Cultural and religious resistance to some non-kinetic strategies (more structural)                |
| Respondent-preferred strategy emphasis | Justice, reconciliation, inclusion of traditional authorities                                             | Youth empowerment, skills acquisition, education                                                  |



|                           |                                                                                  |                                                                          |
|---------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Implied policy sequencing | Security stabilisation first, then sustained peacebuilding and trust-restoration | Strengthened socio-economic programming and continued community policing |
|---------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|

Source: Compiled by the author from field survey and interview data, 2024.

Read through the lens of Social Conflict Theory, the persistence of banditry in Kajuru and Kachia despite sustained kinetic operations affirms the theory's central claim that force alone cannot resolve conflict rooted in structural inequality and unmet group grievance. The modest but real gains associated with dialogue, community policing, and NGO involvement, particularly where they endured long enough to build trust, illustrate the theory's complementary emphasis on addressing structural grievance as the more durable path to reducing conflict. At the same time, the study's findings are compatible with, and enriched by, several middle-range theories: Social Disorganisation Theory helps explain how weak local institutions and social structures allow structural grievance to escalate into violence; Social Control Theory (Hirschi, 1969) explains how strengthened community bonds, as reflected in community policing initiatives, reinforce norms and order; Resource Mobilisation Theory (McCarthy & Zald, 1977) accounts for why underfunded kinetic and non-kinetic interventions alike struggle to achieve sustained impact; and Social Capital Theory (Putnam, 1993) illuminates why the erosion of trust between communities and security forces, driven substantially by informant infiltration, undermines both approaches simultaneously.

The comparative dimension of the study is, in this sense, its most policy-relevant contribution. It demonstrates that similar underlying drivers of banditry, poverty, unemployment, weak governance, can manifest in markedly different local configurations even within neighbouring



LGAs of the same state. In Kajuru, where identity-based grievance and historical inter-communal clashes dominate, and where kinetic operations have been comparatively more intensive but less sustained, the evidence supports a strategy of initial security stabilisation followed by sustained peacebuilding and trust-restoration. In Kachia, where economic hardship is the more salient driver and non-kinetic engagement has been comparatively stronger and better coordinated, the evidence favours strengthened socio-economic programming and continued investment in community policing. A uniform, one-size-fits-all state policy is therefore unlikely to succeed; interventions should instead be calibrated to the specific historical, ethnic, and economic dynamics of each locality, informed by the perceptions and experiences of the communities most directly affected.

A recurring thread across the qualitative data, evident in the accounts of Mrs Yusuf in Kajuru and Haj. Zainab Yakubu's peacebuilding work more broadly, is the fragility of non-kinetic gains once external funding or government attention lapses. This suggests that the central obstacle to non-kinetic effectiveness in Kajuru and Kachia may be less a matter of design than of institutional continuity: programmes that show promise are rarely sustained long enough to outlast the immediate crisis that prompted them. Similarly, the recurring theme of informant infiltration, raised independently by a vigilante supervisor, a women's cooperative leader, and a youth leader, suggests that the trust deficit undermining both kinetic and non-kinetic approaches is not merely a perception problem but reflects real, unresolved accountability gaps within the security architecture operating in both LGAs.

## 6. Conclusion

This study concludes that neither kinetic nor non-kinetic approaches, applied alone, are



sufficient to resolve the complex, deeply rooted problem of banditry in Kajuru and Kachia Local Government Areas of Kaduna State. Kinetic strategies provide short-term control over violent outbreaks but lack sustainability without concurrent efforts to address the root causes of insecurity; non-kinetic approaches offer more durable peace but cannot succeed in highly volatile settings without the initial stabilisation that only security operations can provide. The synergy between the two, rather than a preference for one over the other, is the critical variable, and it must be strategically coordinated rather than left to develop in an ad hoc, uncoordinated manner, as the evidence suggests is currently the case in both LGAs.

The comparative evidence further indicates that local context, historical grievance in Kajuru, economic hardship in Kachia, meaningfully shapes which blend of interventions is likely to succeed, so that any durable solution must combine technical and security fixes with social healing, political will, and institutional reform. Ultimately, rebuilding trust between communities and security actors emerges as a prerequisite for both the operational effectiveness of kinetic measures and the sustainability of non-kinetic solutions, underscoring that security in Kajuru and Kachia is a function not only of presence but of legitimacy.

## **7. Recommendations**

Arising from the findings, the study recommends the following:

1. Poverty alleviation and youth employment initiatives should be prioritised to address the socio-economic roots of banditry, including targeted skills-acquisition investment tailored to Kajuru's herding-affected communities and Kachia's farming-dependent communities.

2. Government and security agencies should formalise the integration of kinetic and non-



kinetic approaches through coordinated LGA-level joint task forces comprising the military and police, local vigilante groups, traditional and religious leaders, and civil society actors such as the Red Cross and JNl, overseen by a designated LGA security committee that meets regularly to review intelligence and monitor implementation.

3. Existing interventions in both LGAs should be institutionalised and adequately funded, with mechanisms for continuous monitoring, evaluation, and community feedback, to prevent the erosion of gains once initial government support or attention is withdrawn.

4. Trust-building mechanisms, including community forums and town-hall meetings, should be implemented in both LGAs to reduce suspicion between residents and security forces, with particular attention to informant-driven mistrust in Kajuru and to sustaining the comparatively stronger community-security collaboration already present in Kachia.

5. Structured, periodic capacity-building workshops on peacebuilding, conflict resolution, negotiation, and mediation should be conducted for government officials, security personnel, traditional and religious leaders, and community representatives in both LGAs, delivered in partnership with organisations already active in the study area, alongside LGA-level community liaison desks to enable communities to report security concerns without fear of reprisal.

## **8. Contribution to Knowledge**

This study contributes a localised, empirically grounded account of the dynamics of banditry in Kajuru and Kachia LGAs, challenging generalised assumptions that treat banditry-affected regions of Kaduna State as broadly homogeneous. It further offers an empirical basis for policy



discussions that have often treated kinetic and non-kinetic approaches as alternatives rather than complements, by demonstrating that respondents in both locations overwhelmingly favour combining the two rather than relying on either in isolation. The study's disaggregated comparison between Kajuru and Kachia illustrates how similar underlying drivers of banditry can manifest differently across neighbouring LGAs depending on local historical, ethnic, and economic circumstances, a finding that invites more context-sensitive, rather than uniform, policy responses within Kaduna State. Methodologically, the study demonstrates the value of combining quantitative and qualitative approaches to capture both the prevalence and the lived experience of banditry and of kinetic and non-kinetic interventions.

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