

BANDITRY AND AGRICULTURAL LIVELIHOODS IN KATSINA STATE: AN EMPIRICAL ASSESSMENT OF JIBIA LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA, 2016–2024

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Abstract

This study investigates the socioeconomic ramifications of rural banditry on agricultural productivity in Jibia Local Government Area (LGA) of Katsina State, Nigeria from 2016 to 2024. While existing scholarship predominantly emphasizes the humanitarian and physical security dimensions of the Northwest crisis, the micro-level political economy of food production systems remains under-researched. Grounded in Daniel Bell's Queer Ladder Theory (QLT), this article examines how armed criminality functions as an alternative mechanism for socioeconomic accumulation in an environment characterized by ungoverned borderlands and institutional fragility. Adopting a qualitative case study design, primary empirical data were generated through fourteen key informant and in-depth interviews with village heads, displaced farming household heads, agricultural extension officers, and local vigilante commanders across seven wards in Jibia LGA. The findings demonstrate that armed groups have transitioned from opportunistic cattle rustling to systematic predatory extraction, enforcing farm-access levies, burning crop silos, and disrupting the Jibia Irrigation Scheme. This systematic predation has induced widespread farm abandonment, escalated rural food insecurity, and disrupted trans-border grain trade between Katsina and the Maradi Region of Niger Republic. The study concludes that sustainable agricultural revival in frontline LGAs necessitates moving beyond reactive kinetic military deployments toward intelligence-led border interdiction, anti-extortion protection corridors, and community-embedded peacebuilding architectures.

Keywords: Rural Banditry, Agricultural Productivity, Food Security, Queer Ladder Theory, Katsina State

Introduction

Across the rural landscapes of Northwest Nigeria, armed banditry has evolved from localized farmer-herder friction into a decentralized, violent criminal enterprise (Okoli & Ugwu, 2019; Rufa'i, 2021). Over the past decade, the Northwestern states predominantly Zamfara, Katsina, Sokoto, Kaduna, and Kebbi have witnessed extensive attacks targeting rural agrarian communities, resulting in tens of

thousands of fatalities and large-scale internal displacement (Selim, 2020). What began as sporadic cattle rustling rooted in longstanding farmer-herder tension has, since the mid-2010s, metastasized into an organized shadow economy in which armed groups tax, extort, and exert territorial control over entire farming settlements (Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime, 2023; Moñino, 2026).

In Political Science and Conflict Studies, security is conceptualized not merely as the absence of armed combat, but as human security: the protection of vital freedoms, livelihoods, and the basic socioeconomic reproduction of households (Nwanegbo & Odigbo, 2013). When non-state armed groups exercise coercive authority over rural spaces, state sovereignty is fractured, and the everyday business of farming including planting, harvesting, herding, and trading becomes hostage to the calculations of armed actors. In Katsina State, an agrarian economy operating under the slogan "Farming is Our Pride", the proliferation of armed groups operating from contiguous forest belts has severely compromised the rural economy, with recent state-focused assessments confirming banditry as a leading driver of declining agricultural output and rural income loss (Ojetola et al., 2023; Suleiman, 2026).

Jibia Local Government Area occupies a critical strategic position within this crisis. Bordering the Maradi Region of the Republic of Niger and hosting the Jibia Dam and Federal Irrigation Scheme, the LGA has historically served as a hub for both rain-fed and all-year-round dry-season farming, and as a gateway for cross-border grain trade. However, since 2016, Jibia has evolved into a frontline theatre of armed violence, a trajectory that intensified through 2024 as bandit factions consolidated territorial control over farming settlements along the border corridor. Although national discourse often attributes this violence to historical pastoralist-farmer tensions, the contemporary reality reflects organized predatory extortion (Egwu, 2016; Rufa'i, 2021).

A growing body of scholarship has begun to document the agricultural and economic toll of banditry across the Northwest from its effects on grain yields and household income (Emmanuel et al., 2023), to the

erosion of livelihoods among rural women traders (Ojetola et al., 2023), livestock-dependent households (Iliya & Achoja, 2024), and small enterprises (Junaidu & Abuabdin, 2024). Yet much of this literature is either state-wide in scope, survey-based, or focused on a single commodity or livelihood group, leaving the micro-level political economy of food production in specific frontline, infrastructure-dependent LGAs such as Jibia comparatively under-researched. In particular, little is known about how banditry interacts with formal agricultural infrastructure such as irrigation schemes, dams, and cross-border grain markets to reorganize the rural economy along predatory lines.

This study addresses that gap. It interrogates how the transformation of banditry in Jibia LGA directly subverts agricultural production, undermines dry-season farming, and destabilizes rural livelihoods between 2016 and 2024. Specifically, it examines the mechanisms through which armed groups extract rents from agrarian communities, the extent to which the Jibia Irrigation Scheme has been compromised, the effect of livestock and draft-animal losses on cultivable land area, and the disruption of cross-border grain trade with the Maradi Region of Niger Republic.

The study is significant both academically and for policy. Academically, it extends Daniel Bell's Queer Ladder Theory beyond its conventional urban-criminological application to a rural, border-adjacent agrarian economy, offering a political-economy lens on banditry that moves beyond the ethnic and humanitarian framings that dominate existing accounts. For policymakers, the findings offer empirically grounded guidance for security and agricultural interventions that address the underlying mechanisms rather than only the symptoms of rural predation. The remainder of the paper proceeds as

follows: it first presents the research questions guiding the inquiry, then reviews relevant literature and the theoretical framework, before detailing the qualitative case-study methodology, presenting the empirical findings, discussing their implications, and concluding with policy recommendations.

Research Questions

Guided by the problem articulated above, this study is anchored on one broad research question: How has the evolution of armed banditry in Jibia Local Government Area reconfigured agricultural production and rural livelihoods between 2016 and 2024? This broad question is disaggregated into the following specific research questions, each of which corresponds directly to a theme developed in the Discussion of Findings:

1. How has predatory extortion particularly farm-access levies (*Kudin Shiga Gonaki*) transformed the pattern of banditry from opportunistic cattle rustling to systematic, land-based extraction, and what has been its effect on farmland cultivation and abandonment in Jibia LGA?
2. In what ways has armed banditry compromised the operational integrity of the Jibia Dam and Federal Irrigation Scheme, and how has this affected off-season, dry-season farming?
3. How has the loss of draft animals (cattle and oxen) to armed raiding affected household productive capacity and the extent of cultivated land among farming families in Jibia LGA?
4. How do bandit-imposed checkpoints and choke-point taxation along border trade routes affect rural grain markets and cross-border agricultural trade

between Katsina State and the Maradi Region of Niger Republic?

5. What are the broader implications of these predatory dynamics for rural food security, and what policy measures can support agricultural revival in frontline LGAs such as Jibia?

Literature Review

The Concept of Banditry and Rural Banditry

Banditry is derived from "bandit", an unlawful armed group that terrorises people and confiscates property, typically using small and light weapons (conceptual synthesis of Egwu, 2016; Uche & Iwuamadi, 2018; Okoli & Okpaleke, 2014). Rural banditry specifically denotes outlawed rural groups engaged in village raids, kidnapping, and cattle rustling for what Kwaja (2013) describes as the primitive accumulation of wealth, often operating with the assistance of local collaborators (Abdullahi, 2019). In this study, banditry is defined, following Okoli and Ugwu (2019), as the totality of armed robbery and allied violent crimes such as kidnapping, cattle rustling, village and highway raids carried out through force or the threat of force to rob, rape, kidnap, or kill.

Drivers of Banditry in Northwest Nigeria

Banditry has flourished in the Northwest's scarcely governed hinterlands, forestlands, and borderlands, encompassing dispersed rural settlements separated by rangelands and farmlands vulnerable to violent contestation, and forest reserves such as Kamuku, Kiyanbana, and Fagore that are grossly under-policed (Gaye, 2018; Olaniyan & Yahaya, 2016). Cattle rustling and rural banditry are also closely tied to the long-running conflict between Fulani herders and crop farmers, itself embedded

in wider questions of identity politics, land access, and the political marginalisation herders describe experiencing within the Nigerian state system.

Bandits' Modus Operandi

Bandits typically attack rural communities at night, in large, motorcycle-mounted groups, using AK-47 rifles, general-purpose machine guns, shotguns, Dane guns, and machetes, with the advantage of mobility and terrain knowledge that gives them a consistent upper hand over responding security forces (Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime, 2023; United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research [UNIDIR], 2024). Their operational routes run through a chain of forests spanning Zamfara and Katsina States from the Sububu forest in Maradun LGA through Dandabi, Dumburum, Shamushalle, and several other forests to Danmusa forest in Katsina State, illustrating the cross-border, ungoverned-space character of the threat.

Effects on the Northwest Region

Attacks across Zamfara, Katsina, Sokoto, Kaduna, Niger, and Kebbi States killed more than 1,100 people in 2018, over 2,200 in 2019, and more than 1,600 between January and June 2020 (Council on Foreign Relations, 2020). By September 2019, over 160,000 people had been internally displaced and more than 41,000 had become refugees; by 2020 these figures stood at over 247,000 IDPs and roughly 60,000 refugees (Selim, 2020). Large-scale farming and animal husbandry are the region's main economic activities (Council on Foreign Relations, 2020), and targeted attacks on farmers, including the killing of about 26 farmers who defied bandit warnings to stay off their land in Batsari LGA have made cultivation and harvest impossible in many communities (Orjinmo, 2020). About 70% of the region's roughly 309,000 IDPs faced insufficient food, with global acute

malnutrition among children reaching 18%, 31%, and 30% in Katsina, Sokoto, and Zamfara States respectively (World Food Programme, 2019).

Government Responses

Successive interventions such as the Police's Task Force on Cattle Rustling and Associated Crime (from 2014), joint state-military patrols in Niger State ("Operation *Sharan Daji*") and Katsina State, and Kaduna State's technology-driven "El-Rufai Model" of microchipping livestock and embedding security agents among herders (Jimoh, 2015) have yielded partial and short-lived results. Katsina State also pursued a negotiated amnesty with bandit leaders around 2016–2019, in which bandits were to surrender weapons in exchange for reintegration support (Oluwole, 2024). More recently, state governments across the Northwest have piloted agro-ranger security corridors and community-watch integration schemes, although independent assessments note that these interventions have yet to be systematically evaluated against measurable agricultural or livelihood outcomes (Mu'awiyya & Askandar, 2026).

Contemporary Evidence on Banditry, Agriculture, and Food Security in Katsina State (2022–2026)

Recent scholarship has moved beyond broad security narratives to quantify banditry's agricultural toll at the state and household levels. Emmanuel et al. (2023) found that banditry-induced farmland destruction, livestock loss, and displacement in Katsina State's most affected LGAs including Batsari, Safana, Faskari, and Jibia have driven measurable declines in food output and rising local food prices, with key informants and focus group participants reporting widespread fear-induced farmland abandonment and constrained market access. In a related structural analysis spanning Kaduna, Katsina, and Zamfara States, a statistically

significant negative relationship was established between the incidence and dispersion of bandit attacks and both agricultural productivity and food supply.

At the household level, Adeola and Bright (2026) analysed food security status among farming households in Kurfi LGA, another Katsina border community, and found insecurity-related shocks to be significant determinants of household food insecurity alongside conventional socioeconomic variables, while Suleiman (2026) traced the origins of armed banditry in Katsina State's Zamfara-bordering LGAs including Jibia, Batsari, Safana, Danmusa, Kankara, and Faskari to around 2010, confirming a decade-long trajectory of escalating rural predation. Livelihood-specific studies reinforce this pattern: Ojetola et al. (2023) documented sharp reductions in the income-generating activities of rural women traders attributable to banditry, while Iliya and Achoja (2024) showed that cattle rustling, theft, kidnapping, and tax imposition significantly eroded the livelihood such as assets income, savings, and herd size of cattle-herding households across the state.

Beyond agriculture narrowly defined, banditry's economic reach has extended to small and medium enterprises (Junaidu & Abuabdin, 2024) and to the broader displacement of rural populations. Okorn (2026) traced the remaking of rural livelihoods among displaced populations across Zamfara, Katsina, Kaduna, Niger, and Sokoto States between 2018 and 2025, arguing that protracted displacement has produced durable shifts away from agrarian livelihoods toward precarious urban and peri-urban informal work. Similarly, Abdulsalam and Audu (2024), working from a human security perspective, linked the proliferation of illicit arms in Katsina State directly to the erosion of rural development outcomes and household livelihoods.

A parallel, more policy-oriented literature has begun to characterize the informal-taxation dimension of banditry that this study foregrounds. UNIDIR (2024) documented how bandit groups in the Northwest have diversified beyond cattle rustling into structured revenue streams, including farm-access levies and protection rackets, while the National Institute for Legislative and Democratic Studies (2025) has flagged bandit-imposed levies on farmers as a distinct and growing threat to Nigeria's food security requiring legislative intervention. Writing on the broader political economy of the crisis, Moñino (2026) argues that bandit factions in the Northwest have constructed an alternative system of territorial governance and taxation that fills the vacuum left by state absence — a dynamic that closely parallels the farm-access levy (*Kudin Shiga Gonaki*) regime documented in this study's findings.

Taken together, this body of scholarship confirms that banditry's agricultural and economic toll in Katsina State is substantial, multidimensional, and increasingly well documented at the aggregate or single-livelihood level. However, existing studies are predominantly quantitative and survey-based, drawing on cross-sectional household or enterprise samples across entire states or multiple LGAs (e.g., Emmanuel et al., 2023; Iliya & Achoja, 2024; Junaidu & Abuabdin, 2024), or are concerned with a single sector — livestock, women's trade, or displacement — in isolation. Comparatively little qualitative, place-based attention has been paid to how banditry interacts with formal agricultural infrastructure, such as irrigation schemes, dams, and cross-border grain corridors, to restructure the rural political economy of a single frontline LGA. By combining key informant and in-depth interview data from Jibia LGA with an explicit focus on infrastructure weaponization, draft-power depletion, and

cross-border choke-point taxation, this study extends the emerging literature on banditry's rent-extractive logic to a case that captures the compounding effect of security, infrastructural, and market disruptions within one agrarian border community.

Theoretical Framework

This study is situated within the Queer Ladder Theory (QLT) of organized crime, pioneered by sociologist Daniel Bell (1953) and expanded by contemporary criminologists (Mallory, 2007; Lyman, 2007). Bell conceived organized crime as an instrumental mechanism — a "queer ladder" of social mobility — utilized by marginalized or socioeconomically disadvantaged actors to amass wealth and power in contexts where structural avenues for legitimate economic progress are closed.

Applied to the political economy of violence in Northern Nigeria (Okoli & Orinya, 2013), QLT posits that armed crime flourishes where three institutional deficits converge:

Low Deterrence and Weak State Capacity: The physical absence of state authority in ungoverned hinterlands reduces the operational risk of violent crime.

Economic Exclusion and Deprivation: High rates of rural poverty, illiteracy, and cattle losses incentivize youth to adopt criminality as an enterprise.

High Illicit Return on Investment: The lucrative returns of ransom kidnapping, cattle rustling, and rural protection rackets far exceed those of conventional subsistence livelihoods.

In Jibia LGA, banditry exemplifies the queer ladder mechanism. Impoverished and uneducated rural youth, alongside pastoralists who have lost their herds to

rustling or desertification, discover that small arms yield immediate socioeconomic leverage. Arms offer access to illicit wealth, enabling actors to climb from peripheral pastoralists to powerful armed gang commanders (*Kachallas*) who command territorial influence, collect informal taxes, and dictate economic life across farming settlements.

Methodology

This study utilized a qualitative case-study design to generate fine-grained empirical insight into the lived experiences of agrarian communities in Jibia LGA. Jibia was purposively selected due to its dual status as a major agricultural center (hosting the Jibia Irrigation Scheme) and its position as a high-risk security corridor along the Nigerian-Nigerien border.

The study engaged 14 purposively selected key informants across seven conflict-affected wards in Jibia LGA (including Jibia West, Gangarawa, Mazanya, Yangaiya, and Bugaje); 5 village heads (*Dagatai*) and traditional ward administrators, 4 displaced commercial/smallholder farmers, 2 officials of the Sokoto Rima River Basin Development Authority (SRRBDA) at the Jibia Dam and 3 local security stakeholders (comprising commanders from the Katsina State Community Watch Corps [CWC] and local vigilante groups).

Primary data were collected via semi-structured, in-depth qualitative interviews conducted between October 2023 and February 2024, using both Hausa and English. The interviews captured data on farm abandonment, security levies, input loss, and market access disruption. Secondary data were sourced from academic journals, humanitarian agency briefs, and policy documents. Field data were transcribed, translated, and subjected

to thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Empirical Findings

Predatory Protection Rackets and Farmland Abandonment

Field data reveal that banditry in Jibia Local Government Area (LGA) has transformed from sporadic livestock raiding into systematic extortion centered on crop cultivation. Armed criminal syndicates routinely demand access levies (*Kudin Shiga Gonaki*) as a mandatory precondition for agricultural activities across both planting and harvest cycles.

A traditional administrator in an affected border ward explained the mechanics of this rent extraction:

"A few years ago, the bandits came solely to steal our animals. Today, they have divided the farmlands into zones. Before my people can clear their land for planting, our village committee must raise between ₦500,000 and ₦2,000,000 to send into the bush to the Kachalla. If you do not pay, any farmer caught working is either shot dead or taken away for ransom." (Key Informant Interview, Jibia, November 2023).

For agrarian households lacking capital reserves, these recurrent levies make farming financially untenable. Widespread land abandonment has occurred across outlying settlements in Yangaiya, Mazanya, Bugaje, and Shimfida, leaving substantial arable tracts uncultivated throughout consecutive farming seasons.

Weaponization of Agricultural Infrastructure: The Jibia Irrigation Scheme

The Jibia Dam and Federal Irrigation Project administered under the Sokoto Rima River Basin Development Authority (SRRBDA) to provide year-round vegetable, grain, and tomato output has been functionally compromised. Armed gangs exploit the dense vegetation along secondary canals as ambushes and operational staging grounds.

An SRRBDA field officer stated:

"The canal networks stretch deep into peripheral farming belts that have become high-risk corridors. Bandit cells intercept technical teams attempting to clear silt or repair siphons. Farmers renting plots along the outer gravity-fed channels have abandoned them because standing maize and vegetable canopies provide concealment for kidnappers. An infrastructure asset intended to insulate the area from drought has been turned into a security liability." (Key Informant Interview, Jibia, December 2023).

The incapacitation of the irrigation project eliminates off-season dry farming, depriving households of the counter-seasonal harvest that typically sustains them through the lean dry months.

Asset Depletion and the Decimation of Draft Power

The systematic raiding of livestock has dismantled household productive capacity. In traditional Hausa farming systems, cattle and oxen supply essential animal traction for ridge preparation and harrowing.

A displaced smallholder farmer residing in Jibia town noted:

"In 2022, bandits raided our hamlet at night and took all six of my bulls. Without work-bulls, you are forced to clear hectares using only hand hoes. Manual labor limits cultivation to a tiny fraction of your land. I went from harvesting over seventy bags of grain to less than eight. Eventually, when the armed attacks persisted, we abandoned the village completely." (In-Depth Interview, Jibia, January 2024).

Stripped of animal assets, farming households experience an immediate reduction in cultivable land area, precipitating localized food shortages.

Choke-Point Taxation and Rural Market Contraction

Jibia's geographical position as a border crossing to Maradi in the Republic of Niger makes it a primary transit point for agricultural commodities. Armed groups

set up sporadic checkpoints along rural feeder routes, notably the Batsari–Jibia, Danmusa–Jibia, and Gangarawa arteries to intercept farm transport trucks. Transporters and grain merchants face either hostage taking or ad-hoc transit fees. As a consequence, weekly rural grain assemblies (such as the Magama border market) operate under acute volume constraints, lowering farmgate prices for producers while driving up consumer prices in urban centers.

Discussion of Findings

The empirical findings from Jibia LGA demonstrate that rural insecurity in Northwest Nigeria has evolved beyond environmental resource competition or unorganized banditry. The data reveal a transition toward an institutionalized, predatory shadow economy. This transition follows a coherent causal pathway, moving from structural governance failures at the border, through the mobilization of illicit armed capacity, to the entrenchment of violence as an alternative economic ladder, and finally to systemic extraction from agrarian communities. Figure 1 summarizes this pathway.

From Resource Competition to Predatory Shadow Economy

Causal pathway of rural insecurity in Jibia LGA, Northwest Nigeria

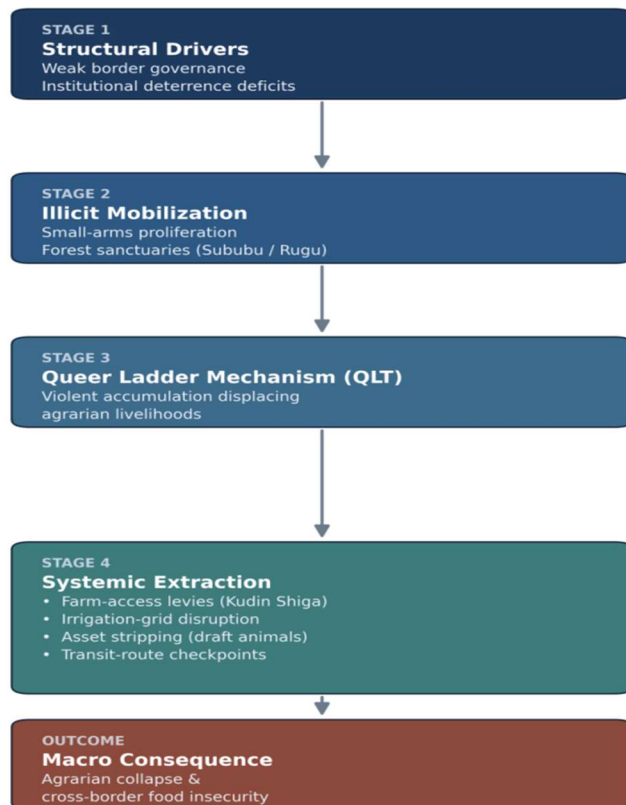


Figure 1. Causal pathway from structural drivers to agrarian collapse and cross-border food insecurity in Jibia LGA.

Source: Researcher's Compilation, 2024.

Interpretation of the Pathway

Weak border governance and institutional deterrence deficits create the permissive environment in which illicit actors can organize. This structural vacuum enables the proliferation of small arms and the use of forest sanctuaries such as Sububu and Rugu as staging grounds for armed groups. Once armed capacity is established, violence increasingly displaces agrarian labor as the dominant route to economic advancement in which coercive accumulation substitutes for legitimate livelihoods. This shift normalizes

extraction as an economic strategy rather than an episodic disruption.

The resulting systemic extraction operates through multiple, mutually reinforcing channels: farm-access levies (*Kudin Shiga*), deliberate disruption of irrigation infrastructure, stripping of productive assets such as draft animals, and the imposition of checkpoints along transit routes. Together, these mechanisms function as a parallel system of governance and taxation imposed on rural communities. The macro consequence is a self-reinforcing cycle of agrarian collapse and cross-border food insecurity, as productive capacity, mobility, and market

access all deteriorate in tandem. This confirms that the crisis in Jibia LGA is not a transient security problem but the visible expression of an entrenched, institutionalized shadow economy — a pattern consistent with the wider Northwest political economy documented by UNIDIR (2024) and Moñino (2026).

Interpreted through Daniel Bell's Queer Ladder Theory (QLT), these dynamics illustrate the functional logic of organized crime in fragile borderlands. In rural Katsina, where youth face systemic educational deficits, unemployment, and drought-induced pastoral crises, the gun becomes an instrument for upward socioeconomic mobility. Criminal syndicates do not just loot; they construct a parallel governing authority that extracts structural rents from the agrarian economy. The collection of seasonal farm levies (*Kudin Shiga Gonaki*) mirrors sovereign taxation, imposed where the Nigerian state lacks deterrent capacity in remote hinterlands. Banditry functions as a self-sustaining enterprise where illicit capital is reinvested into heavier armaments, motorcycles, and communication devices to safeguard territorial enclaves.

These findings challenge conventional literature that frames rural violence in Northwest Nigeria predominantly as an ethno-ecological clash between Fulani pastoralists and Hausa crop farmers. While historical frictions over cattle corridors and encroached grazing reserves catalyzed initial hostilities, the contemporary reality in Jibia reflects organized criminal extortion. Both crop farmers and ordinary pastoralists are targeted by armed syndicates seeking cash extraction, ransom payments, and asset liquidation — a reading that aligns with recent household-level evidence from Kurfi and other Katsina border LGAs (Adeola & Bright, 2026; Iliya & Achoja, 2024).

Furthermore, the paralysis of the Jibia Dam scheme highlights how rural criminality dismantles state-funded development assets. Despite substantial federal investments in irrigation, public capital cannot function without basic territorial control. Insecurity acts as an economic multiplier: stripping draft power reduces aggregate acreage, transit interdiction severs cross-border supply chains with Niger Republic, and protection levies siphon off agrarian working capital.

The micro-level evidence confirms that armed banditry is directly driving de-agrarianization across frontline LGAs. When smallholders are forced off their fields, the outcome is chronic food insecurity, persistent poverty, and an expanding pool of displaced, vulnerable youth susceptible to recruitment into the very criminal networks destabilizing the state — a self-reinforcing cycle also identified among displaced populations more broadly across the Northwest (Okorn, 2026).

Conclusion

In answer to the research questions guiding this inquiry, rural banditry in Jibia Local Government Area is no longer an amorphous clash over natural resources; it has evolved into a structured system of predatory extortion that systematically undermines agricultural production. Grounded in Daniel Bell's Queer Ladder Theory, this study demonstrates that armed crime serves as a lucrative channel for illicit capital accumulation by disenfranchised rural actors operating across under-policed borders. By enforcing access taxes, crippling the Jibia Irrigation Scheme, stripping farming communities of productive draft animals, and disrupting rural grain corridors, armed groups have precipitated an acute crisis of food production and rural livelihood collapse.

Policy Recommendations

1. **Establish Agro-Ranger Security Corridors:** The Federal Government and the Katsina State Government must deploy dedicated, mobile, and well-equipped security teams (such as specialized units of the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps [NSCDC] Agro-Rangers paired with the Katsina State Community Watch Corps) to safeguard critical farm clusters and the Jibia Irrigation Scheme canals during planting and harvest peaks.
2. **Intelligence-Led Interdiction of Illicit Tax Networks:** Security agencies (Police and Department of State Services) must dismantle the local financial networks that collect and transmit bandit protection taxes. Prosecuting local informants (*Yan Likori*) and logistics suppliers in rural markets is critical to dismantling the criminal economy.
3. **Targeted Agricultural Restitution Programs:** The Federal Ministry of Agriculture and international development agencies should roll out targeted livelihood rehabilitation packages for displaced farmers in frontline LGAs. This should include subsidized mechanical tilling services, drought-resistant early-maturing seed inputs, and restocking initiatives to offset the loss of animal draft power.
4. **Coordinated Bilateral Border Patrols:** Given Jibia's border location, Nigeria and Niger Republic must institutionalize joint border security patrols to deny non-state armed actors safe haven in trans-border forest reserves.

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