



# USING MIXED METHODS TO ADVANCE LEARNING ABOUT SOCIAL COHESION

Lessons from a Peacebuilding Program in  
North Central Nigeria

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# Research and Programming Context: Religion and Intercommunal Conflict in Northern Nigeria

*What are the specific processes by which religious actors, beliefs, identities, and institutions catalyze violent conflict?*

Getting this diagnosis right has important implications for what activities we choose and how we implement them.



# Using Mixed Methods to Understand Social Cohesion Dynamics

Violent Events Data	Mixed-Methods Field Research (15 communities in Kano and Kaduna)		
	Qualitative	Quantitative	
Daily incidents 2011-2020	165 in-depth interviews	Survey of 750 respondents	
<p><i>Armed Conflict Location and Event Data (ACLED)</i> Attacks on civilians</p> <p><i>Nigeria Security Tracker (NST)</i> Type &amp; targets of violence</p> <p><i>Nigeria Watch</i> Causes of violent incidents</p>	<p><i>Key informants</i> Religious leaders Traditional leaders Ward officials Educators Youth representatives Vigilante groups</p> <p><i>Community members</i></p>	<p><i>Gender</i> 61% Male 39% Female</p> <p><i>Religion</i> 54% Muslim 46% Christian</p> <p><i>Age</i> Median: 39 yrs</p>	<p><i>Religiosity</i></p> <p><i>Religious freedom</i></p> <p><i>Social cohesion</i></p> <p><i>Insecurity</i></p> <p><i>Support for violence</i></p> <p><i>Use of violence</i></p> <p><i>Survey</i> <i>Experiment on Religion and Violence</i></p>

# Survey Experiment on Social Cohesion Dynamics

## Control Scenario (No Religious ID)

*Imagine that a local shopkeeper has insulted and threatened some of your friends and told them not to walk or sit near his shop. Now, imagine that your friends are considering responding in the following ways. For each response that I list, rate your support for it from 1 (strongly oppose) to 5 (strongly support).*

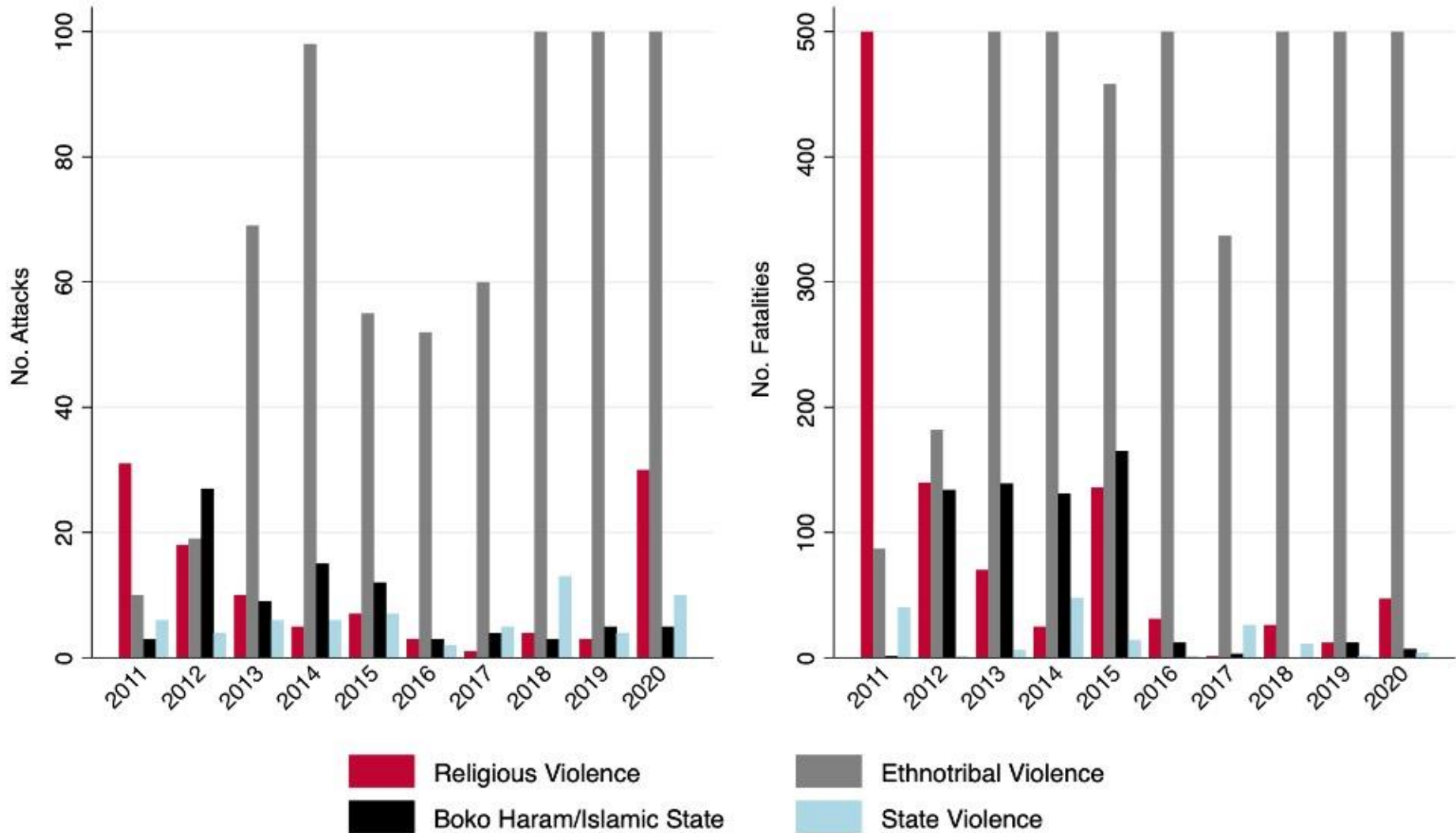
- a. Boycott the shopkeeper's store*
- b. Report the shopkeeper to the authorities and ask that he is fined and ordered to apologize*
- c. Have the shopkeeper arrested and put in jail*
- d. Attack the shopkeeper's store*

## Treatment Scenario (Religious ID)

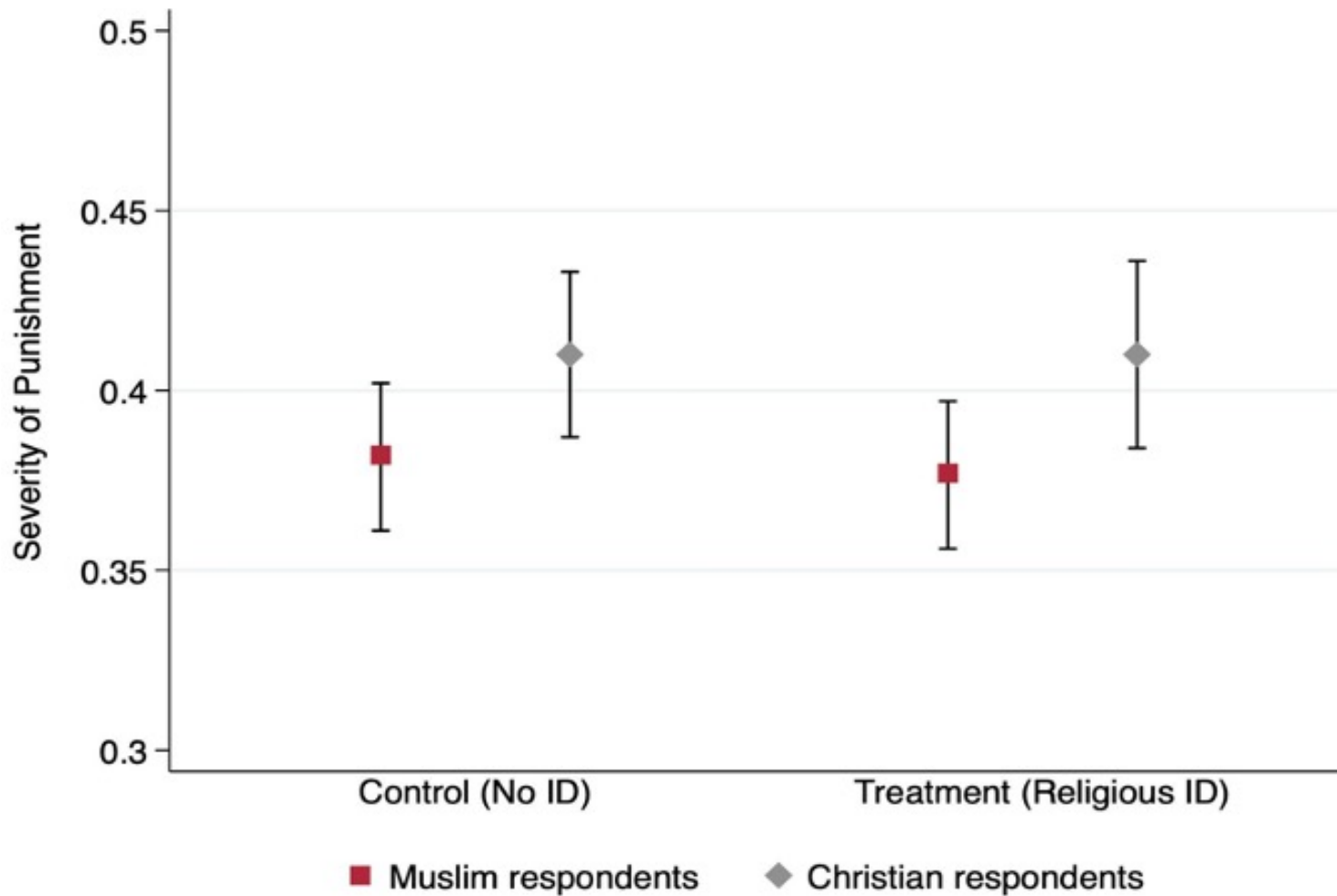
*Imagine that a local **Muslim/Christian** shopkeeper has insulted and threatened some of your friends and told them not to walk or sit near his shop. Now, imagine that your friends are considering responding in the following ways. For each response that I list, rate your support for it from 1 (strongly oppose) to 5 (strongly support).*

- a. Boycott the shopkeeper's store*
- b. Report the shopkeeper to the authorities and ask that he is fined and ordered to apologize*
- c. Have the shopkeeper arrested and put in jail*
- d. Attack the shopkeeper's store*

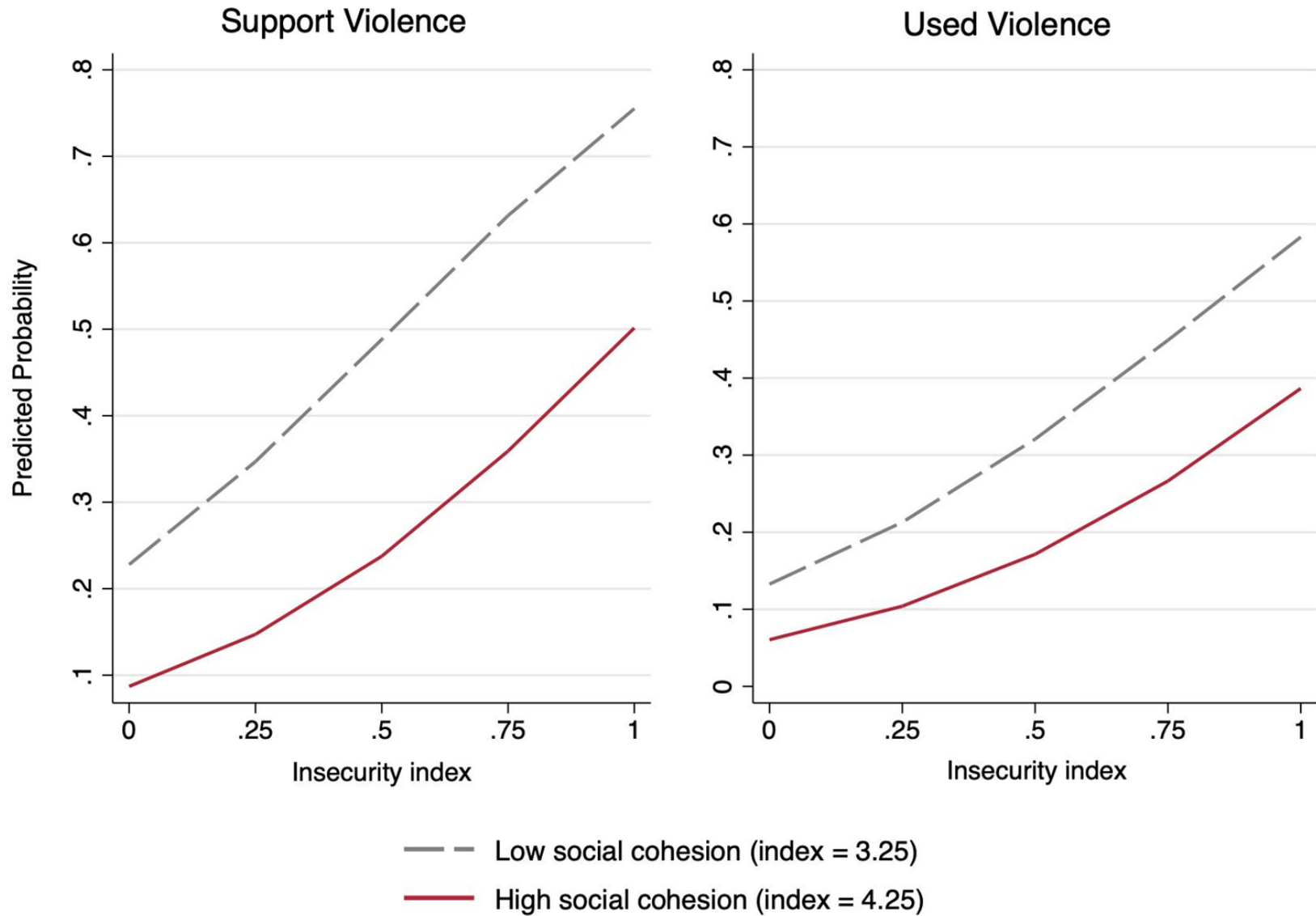
# Nature and Extent of of Inter-Religious Violence



# Identity and Violence



# Social Cohesion, Insecurity, and Violence



# Conclusion: Learning from Mixed-Methods Evidence on Social Cohesion and Conflict

Evidence from this mixed-methods study helped us understand that intercommunal violence in northern Nigeria is not simply a consequence of religious discrimination or persecution.

Rather, it is a continuation of decades-long cycle of inter-group violence that is a result of **governance gaps**, a **lack of inter-group social cohesion**, and the **mobilization of religious identities** by both elites and ordinary individuals

*How the Evidence Shaped our Programming:*

1. Emphasize role of religious identity as a potential catalyst of conflict, rather than an immutable root cause
2. Strengthen horizontal social cohesion by facilitating positive inter-group interactions
3. Strengthen Vertical Social Cohesion to reduce fear and uncertainty

**The strength of these conclusions and adaptations was based on the joint lessons from each of the data sources in this study.**