USING MIXED METHODS TO ADVANCE LEARNING ABOUT SOCIAL COHESION

Lessons from a Peacebuilding Program in North Central Nigeria

Emmanuel Ogbudu
Mercy Corps- Nigeria

December 2022
Research and Programming Context: Religion and Intercommunal Conflict in Northern Nigeria

What are the specific processes by which religious actors, beliefs, identities, and institutions catalyse 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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Violent Events Data</th>
<th>Mixed-Methods Field Research (15 communities in Kano and Kaduna)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Qualitative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daily incidents 2011-2020</td>
<td>165 in-depth interviews</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **Armed Conflict Location and Event Data (ACLED)**  
  Attacks on civilians

- **Nigeria Security Tracker (NST)**  
  Type & targets of violence

- **Nigeria Watch**  
  Causes of violent incidents

- **Key informants**  
  Religious leaders  
  Traditional leaders  
  Ward officials  
  Educators  
  Youth representatives  
  Vigilante groups  
  Community members

- **Gender**  
  61% Male  
  39% Female

- **Religion**  
  54% Muslim  
  46% Christian

- **Age**  
  Median: 39 yrs

- **Religiosity**  
  Religious freedom  
  Social cohesion  
  Insecurity  
  Support for violence  
  Use of violence  
  Survey Experiment on Religion and Violence
## 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 Inter-Religious Violence

- Religious Violence
- Boko Haram/Islamic State
- Ethnotribal Violence
- State Violence
Identity and Violence

Severity of Punishment

Control (No ID)  Treatment (Religious ID)

- Muslim respondents
- Christian respondents
Social Cohesion, Insecurity, and Violence

Support Violence

Predicted Probability

Insecurity index

Low social cohesion (index = 3.25)
High social cohesion (index = 4.25)

Used Violence

Predicted Probability

Insecurity index
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.