

Maiduguri: City report

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Abstract

Maiduguri, the largest city in northeast Nigeria and the capital of Borno State, faces multifaceted challenges stemming from endemic poverty, governance gaps and the lasting impact of the Boko Haram insurgency that started in 2009. This report, employing the African Cities Research Consortium's conceptual framework, delves into the political settlement, city systems and development domains that shape Maiduguri's urban development. The research draws from secondary and primary data (including structured and semi-structured interviews with 5,110 residents, 193 in-depth key informant interviews, and 37 group interviews with 186 participants). The report explains how the political landscape is marked by power concentration in the state governor, and intersects with issues of "godfatherism" and limited influence for some demographic groups. After analysing the systems by which various actors and agencies attempt to sustain and improve urban life, the study focuses on three key developmental domains: youth and capability development, safety and security, and land and connectivity. Youth and capability development highlights challenges such as access to education, unemployment and exclusion, despite the resilience of optimism among young people. Safety and security explores the persistence of crime levels and the emergence of locally organised self-defence efforts, despite interventions following the Boko Haram insurgency. The land and connectivity domain analyses the impact of road and drainage connectivity on land valuations, emphasising the politicised nature of government investments. Overall, the report contributes an in-depth understanding of Maiduguri's complexities, offering insights into the political economy and prospects for suggested reforms. While acknowledging limitations, it suggests areas for further research and optimisation of the conceptual framework at the city level.

Keywords: Political settlement, governance, city, reform, security, post-conflict, youth, land

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Acronyms

ACRC	African Cities Research Consortium
AU	African Union
ANPP	All Nigeria People's Party
APC	All Progressives Congress
BOACSDHR	Borno State Agency for Coordination of Sustainable Development and Humanitarian Response
BOGIS	Borno State Geographic Information Service
BOYES	Borno Youth Empowerment Scheme
CSOs	Civil society organisations
CJTF	Civilian Joint Task Force
CBOs	Community-based organisations
CLB	Contingently loyal bloc
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
FGDs	Focus group discussions
GIS	Geographic Information System
GRA	Government Reservation Area
INEC	Independent National Electoral Commission
INGOs	International nongovernmental organisations
KIIs	Key informant interviews
LGAs	Local Government Areas
MMC	Maiduguri Metropolitan Council
NDLEA	National Drugs Law Enforcement Agency
NEMA	National Emergency Management Agency
NLC	National Labour Congress
NYCN	National Youth Council of Nigeria
NYP	National Youth Parliament
NECSOB	Network of Civil Organisations in Borno
NNPP	New Nigerian Political Party

NGO	Nongovernmental organisation
OB	Opposition bloc
OPEC	Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries
PERL	Partnership to Engage, Reform and Learn
PDP	People's Democratic Party
SFTAS	States Fiscal Transparency, Accountability and Sustainability
SEMA	State Emergency Management Agency
UNDP	UN Development Programme
DFID	UK Department for International Development
USAID	US Agency for International Development
WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organization

1. Introduction

Maiduguri is the largest city in northeast Nigeria and the capital of Borno State, which suffers from endemic poverty, as well as capacity and legitimacy gaps in terms of its governance. Since 2009, the state has been severely affected by the Boko Haram insurgency; the resulting insecurity has led to economic stagnation in Maiduguri (Thurston, 2018). The city has borne the largest burden of support for those displaced by the conflict. The population influx has exacerbated vulnerabilities that existed in the city before the security and displacement crisis, including the weak capacity of local governments, poor service provision and high levels of youth unemployment (Mercy Corps, 2018). As the population of Maiduguri has grown, many poor households have been forced to take housing in flood-prone areas along drainage ditches as a result of increased rent prices in other parts of the city (Card et al., 2022).

Figure 1: Map showing the geographic location of Maiduguri



Since 2013, when the All Progressives Congress (APC) assumed power in Borno State, following the merger of Nigeria's three largest opposition parties, and subsequently became the ruling national party in 2015, the power dynamics in Maiduguri have experienced a notable shift. With the large Maiduguri electorate contributing to APC winning the 2015, 2019 and 2023 presidential elections, APC has dominated the power balance in the city, and Maiduguri has become increasingly central to national politics. Despite the statutory role of the state legislative arm – the Borno State House of Assembly – in checkmating

the executive authority, power is primarily vested in the state governor, who serves as the statutory political leader. The governor wields significant control over state affairs, including budget allocations, official appointments and approval of development projects across all local government areas (LGAs) within Maiduguri.¹ The political economy of the city is dominated by a system of “godfatherism”, party loyalty and patronage, and the electorate has relatively limited influence in decisionmaking. This is particularly true for women, people with disabilities, youth, migrants and non-Kanuri and non-Muslim citizens, who are perceived as weaker and less influential groups. It is difficult for ordinary residents to access political leaders.² Hence, residents in Maiduguri

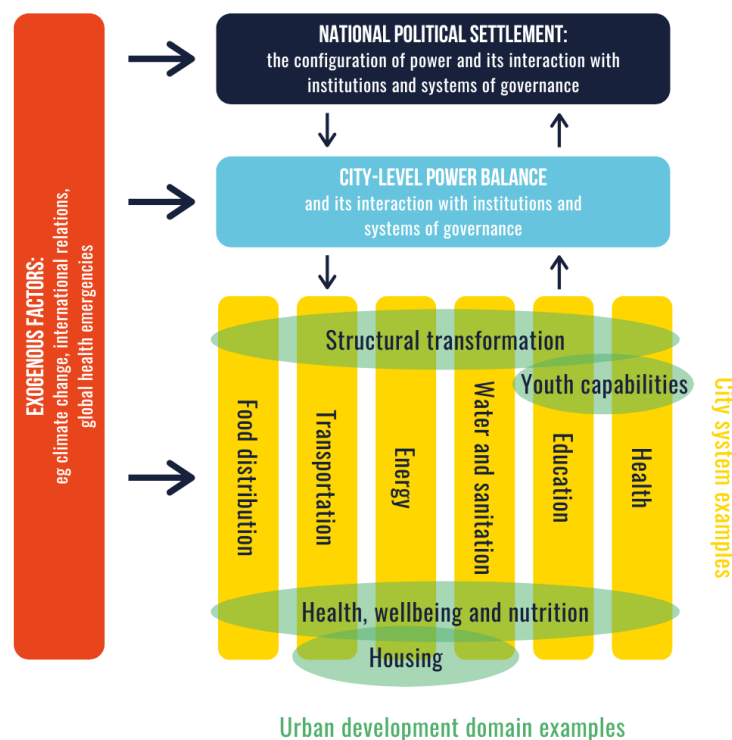
¹ Multiple interviews with cross-sections of Maiduguri residents, June-July 2022.

² Multiple interviews with cross-sections of community leaders and residents of Maiduguri, June-July 2022.

take advantage of the media (when it is not an election period) to voice their concerns, primarily via call-in radio programmes and social media postings.

To make sense of development in Maiduguri (and consider prospects for reform), this report draws on the African Cities Research Consortium’s (ACRC) holistic framework for analysing urban development in Africa, which has three integrated components – **politics, systems** and **development domains** (Kelsall et al., 2021). The politics component uses “political settlements” theory to model how power is configured at the national and city levels, and then analyses how these configurations of power shape (and are shaped by) urban development processes in the given city. The systems component analyses the functioning of the key systems (composed of physical infrastructure and people organised in various ways) that sustain and/or improve urban life in the city. The domains component looks at some of the distinct fields of discourse, policy and practice that have formed around complex, intersystemic development challenges in the city and analyses how the actors (political, bureaucratic, professional, and popular) engaged in these fields collaborate and/or compete for authority (Kelsall et al., 2021: 33). Figure 2 gives an indication of how these three components come together, and each component is explained in more detail in the main sections of this report.

Figure 2: ACRC’s conceptual framework



Source: Kelsall et al. (2021)

The report focuses in particular on three developmental domains in Maiduguri: youth and capability development, safety and security, and land and connectivity. The youth and capability development domain section examines the many challenges young

people face, including lack of access to high-quality education, unemployment, drug abuse and exclusion from formal decisionmaking processes. It explains how, notwithstanding these challenges, most young people remain optimistic about graduating from school and gaining decent employment. The safety and security domain section examines why, despite many safety and security interventions over the past decade in response to the Boko Haram insurgency, the city has experienced a rise in crime levels and a proliferation of crime enclaves, forcing residents in low-income areas to resort to locally mobilised self-defence. The land and connectivity domain section examines land valuations and transactions. It shows how road and drainage connectivity is the most important determinant of land and property values in Maiduguri (except at the peak of the insurgency, when security was the key determinant); government investment in roads has a particularly significant impact on valuations, and is a heavily politicised process. With respect to land transactions, it shows how the prevalence of informal transactions (often involving customary titles) – which appear to be the only recourse for low-income residents – leads to many land conflicts and contributes to the emergence of informal settlements in flood-prone areas.

The report employed a dual approach to data collection, drawing from both secondary and primary sources. Literature reviews extensively covered academic and grey literature, encompassing legislative and policy documents, nongovernmental organisation (NGO) and civil society reports, working papers, institutional websites, newspaper articles and relevant documents from international and multilateral organisations and development agencies. This comprehensive review served to map and compile crucial information on existing policies, programmes and interventions.

Primary data collection occurred through individual and group interviews held between June and August 2022. A total of 193 in-depth individual key informant interviews (KIIs), lasting 45 to 60 minutes, along with 37 focus group discussions (FGDs) involving 186 participants and lasting roughly one hour each, were undertaken in English, Hausa and Kanuri. Multiple interviews with the same interlocutors were conducted for clarification purposes. Participants, purposively sampled to represent diverse policy and experiential perspectives, included government officials, development partners, traditional rulers, religious leaders, youth leaders, representatives of community-based organisations (CBOs), NGOs, international nongovernmental organisations (INGOs), and academics. Chain referral sampling (snowball method) was utilised to facilitate access and address potential trust issues, especially in (post-)conflict-affected settings like Maiduguri, where residents may be reluctant to discuss sensitive topics.

In addition to in-depth key informant interviews, the report draws from structured and semi-structured interviews lasting from 15 minutes to over an hour. These interviews involved 5,110 respondents aged 15 years and above, selected through stratified random sampling across Maiduguri. The data gathered from these interviews were quantitatively analyzed to identify the systems most and least affecting their daily lives. Local researchers conducted the field research, leveraging their lived experience in the city and proficiency in local languages (Hausa and Kanuri) to ensure culturally

responsive research practices. Verbal consent was obtained from all participants before interview, with audio recording limited to those who explicitly consented. The primary data underwent analysis using a combination of structural, process and causation coding (Saldaña, 2013), extracting narrative patterns and causal mechanisms on significant research themes for the report.

The report is structured and sourced as follows. Using findings from political settlement research, it opens by locating Maiduguri within Nigeria’s national political settlement and governance structure, before providing an overview of the power balance in the city, including everyday politics and a commentary on the inclusion of city residents in decisionmaking. This is followed by a summary of key city systems – transportation, waste management, water, education, health, food and agriculture, law and order, and finance – including the role of politics in these, and the impacts of system failures on selected urban domains. Discussions of these developmental domains represent the core of the report; they cover, for each domain, the main actors and ideas, the domain’s importance to the political settlement in the city, key challenges associated with it, and existing or potential reforms to address these challenges.

The report concludes with an overarching analysis of the political economy of the city and the prospects for the suggested reforms in the context of interacting national, city- and domain-level power and politics, which is based on the ‘priority complex problem’ reports developed by the domain researchers. Observing limitations in the application of the political settlement framework to the research in Maiduguri, the final section highlights areas that would benefit from additional research and provides suggestions to maximise the utility of the conceptual framework when applied at the city level.

2. Locating Maiduguri within the national political settlement and governance structure

To understand urban development and the prospects for developmental reform in Maiduguri, we need to understand who wields power and how they use it. City-level power dynamics do not exist in a vacuum; they are typically influenced by what we call a country’s “political settlement”. A political settlement is a common understanding among a society’s most powerful groups about the basic rules (or institutions) of the political and economic game. These rules create opportunities or benefits for “insider” groups, often to the exclusion of “outsiders”. Political settlements can be analysed in a variety of ways, but we focus on two main dimensions: *power configuration* and *social foundation* (Kelsall et al., 2021).

The power configuration describes the relative strength of groups loyal to the leader (collectively referred to as the “leader’s bloc”) vis-a-vis groups that oppose the leader or are only contingently loyal. Crudely, where the leader’s loyal supporters or “bloc” is strong, we say that power is “concentrated”. Where, by contrast, the leader’s bloc is weak, we say that power is “dispersed”. Power concentration, interacting with other variables, shapes the ability of the government to make and implement decisive, consistent, urban development policy.

The social foundation describes the breadth and depth of groups that are “insiders” in the settlement.³ Where a relatively large proportion of the population are insiders, we describe the settlement as “broad”. Where, conversely, only a relatively small proportion of the population are “insiders”, we describe the settlement as “narrow”. The social foundation, interacting with other variables, will shape the degree to which governing elites are committed to “inclusive” urban development policy.⁴

Nigeria’s current political settlement can be characterised as broad-dispersed. Much political analysis to date has had a focus on the national rather than the subnational scale. In this section, we analyse how this political settlement has historically shaped urban development in Maiduguri, and shapes the city’s prospects for reform.

2.1. Nigeria’s political settlement and the role of Maiduguri within it

Twenty-three years after transitioning to civilian-electoral rule in 1999, Nigeria is still wrestling with the legacy of a protracted period of military government (Nwankpa, 2022). Characterised by authoritarianism, power centralisation and the suppression of political dissent, Nigeria’s military regimes weakened democratic institutions, undermined the rule of law, and exploited ethnic and regional divisions for control, resulting in widespread human rights abuses (Siollun, 2013). In the post-military era, power struggles among ethnic and regional groups and persistent issues of weak institutions have shaped Nigeria’s political culture, favouring strong central leadership and limiting power devolution to the regions. Despite some progress post-transition, the legacy of weak institutions, human rights violations and ethnic and regional tensions continues to affect governance and the effectiveness of public administration (Nwankpa, 2022; Campbell and Page, 2018).

Furthermore, Nigeria’s political landscape is deeply influenced by the enduring struggle for access to and distribution of the country’s oil wealth. Members of the political elite, consisting of politicians and government officials, international and domestic oil corporations, the Nigerian military and security forces, and diverse ethnic and regional groups, all vie for a more significant portion of the oil wealth. This intense competition contributes to corrupt practices within government, bureaucracy and other institutions (Lewis, 2007; Falola, 2021).

Despite the shift from military-dominated governance to civilian rule in Nigeria, the fundamental dynamics of power contestation and distribution have seen limited change (Nwankpa, 2022). Specifically, aspects such as violence during elections, the

3 To be an “insider”, a group has to satisfy two criteria: 1) it is potentially powerful enough, acting alone or with others, to make significant trouble for the leadership and/or significantly affect struggles between political blocs; and 2) the leadership chooses to manage this potential threat predominantly by “co-opting” the group, and thereby incorporating it into the settlement, by channelling benefits of some description to it. Groups that either lack the power to affect struggles in this way, or that are predominantly repressed by the leadership, are “outsiders” to the settlement (Kelsall et al., 2021).

4 For further details, see Working Paper 1. Politics, systems and domains: A conceptual framework for the African Cities Research Consortium (african-cities.org).

pervasiveness of corruption and the expansion of organised criminal activities continue to shape the political landscape in ways that deviate from democratic norms (LeVan, 2019). At the core of power in Nigeria and of its (violent) contestation are the relationships between key national elites and their international counterparts, which play out in a web of interests primarily centred on the appropriation and distribution of oil rents (Usman, 2022). The political elite seeks to wield influence over policies governing oil extraction, production and revenue allocation to secure personal and regional advantages. Concurrently, international and domestic oil corporations, major global powers and multinational companies engage in negotiations with the political elite. These discussions often revolve around favourable oil policies and the distribution of wealth, occasionally prioritising economic and geopolitical interests at the expense of local communities (Falola, 2021; Usman, 2022). Key powerbrokers include: first and foremost, political elites, such as senior government and civil service officials, political (party) leaders and “godfathers” (see text box below); and second, retired military officers, influential businesspeople, Nigerian and international oil industry bosses and community chiefs. Business associations, trade unions, medical associations, the transport sector, private media and CSOs are also powerful, thanks to their links with international bodies such as the African Union, European Union, the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), UN leaders and ministers across the globe, links which subtly shape or influence the policies of governments at state and federal levels (Nwankpa, 2022; Falola, 2021).

While politics in Nigeria has been a zero-sum game in which opposition is ruthlessly suppressed, the power configuration remains competitive and fiercely contested, characterised by cartel agreements among the regional barons aimed at securing their own fiefs and sharing out federal revenues (Campbell and Page, 2018; Nwankpa, 2022). While largely repressed, some powerful foundational groups are still able to exert influence on several decisions and policies. Nigeria’s political settlement can therefore best be described as “broad–dispersed” (because of the wide distribution of power among competing factions and regional elites) and “challenged” (because of Boko Haram’s violent insurgency in the northeast).⁵

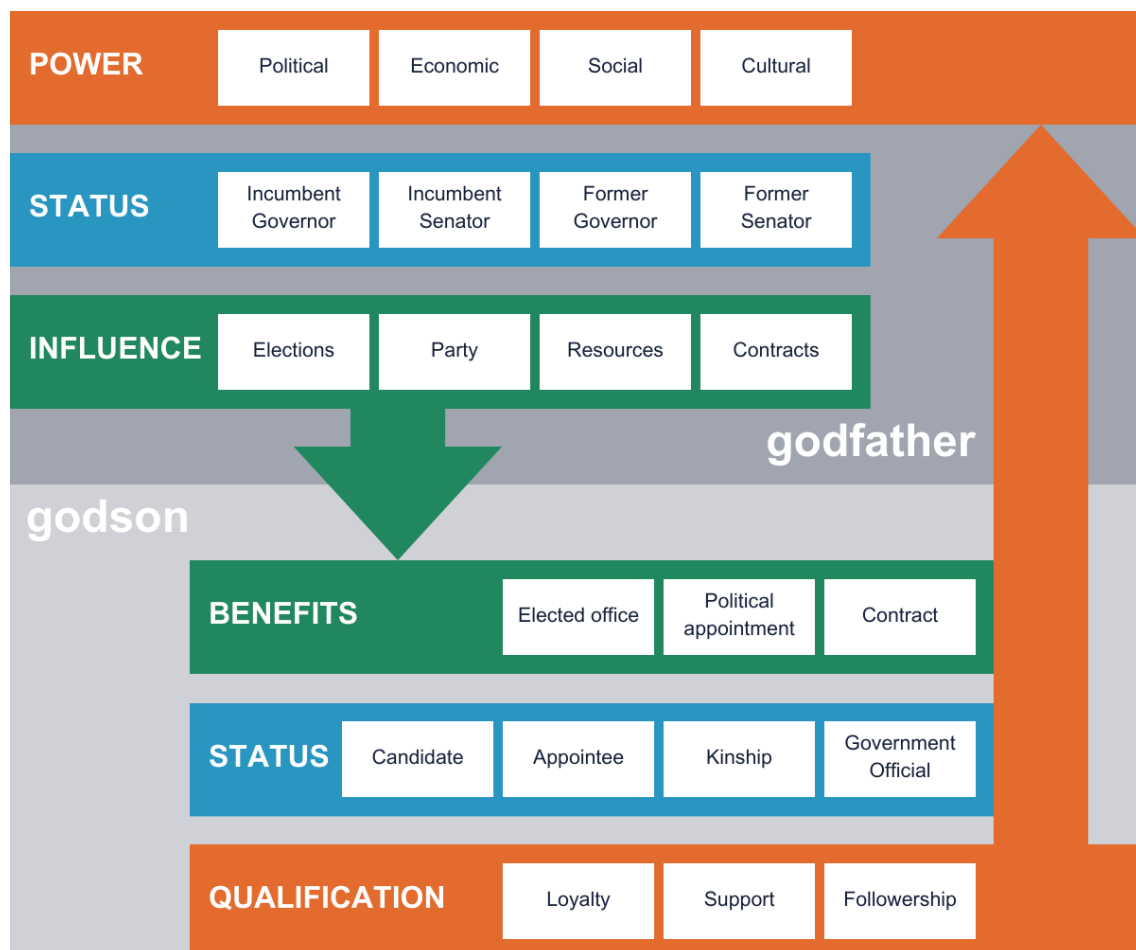
Elites participate in politics through political parties to protect interests, advance their agendas and achieve personal fulfilment or realisation. It is only with the backing of a political party that individuals can be democratically elected to leadership positions in Nigeria. However, party primaries and conventions often merely serve to affirm a prior elite consensus – the process for selecting candidates is often fraught with controversy, violence and litigation. In fact, the

A godfather is a person who is influential and powerful in the community. Their decisions are respected and hardly challenged. They become godfathers by sponsoring candidates who vie for political positions. They also determine who occupies what political office and gets benefits or rents therefrom.

⁵ The Effective States and Inclusive Development (ESID) Centre categorises settlements as challenged when, “there are serious and prolonged violent or disorderly challenges to the regime but in which it is not under tangible threat of being militarily overthrown by oppositional groups” (Kelsall et al., 2022: 217).

outcomes of party primaries are usually determined by imposition, consensus and compromise (Egwu, 2014; LeVan, 2019). Consensus becomes a problem when it is orchestrated by a party's godfathers, who see themselves as the owners and financiers of the party. The inability of political parties to raise funds internally makes them prone to being hijacked by party godfathers, who manipulate the selection of candidates. As such, a noticeable feature of Nigeria's party system is the fact that party leadership across the board remains nominal and subservient to such godfathers (Albert, 2005; Falola, 2021). This diminishes internal party democracy and political inclusion, making political parties in Nigeria institutionally weak, structurally defective and operationally fragile, thus failing as institutions with the capacity to uphold the tenets of democracy (Abba and Babalola, 2017; Egwim, 2022).

Figure 3: Maiduguri City godfatherism chart, political settlement



Source: Haruna et al. (2022).

The politics of godfatherism abound at federal, state and local government levels. The godfather uses his/her power, status and influence to retain political loyalists, otherwise known as "godsons". As incumbent or former governors, senators, presidents and other elected public officials, godfathers use political, economic, social and cultural advantages to exert influence over elections, appointments of traditional leaders, party affiliations and contracts, thus solidifying relations between the godson and godfather.

Godsons, on the other hand, enjoy benefits like political appointments, contracts and support for their candidacy. To qualify for such benefits, godsons must demonstrate loyalty to the godfather and enjoy some support and followership during and after elections, among other things (Albert, 2005; Nwankpa, 2022).

Maiduguri's strategic location in northeastern Nigeria, close to the borders of Cameroon, Chad and Niger, has enabled it to play a significant role in trade and education in Nigeria. It serves as a commercial hub for goods and services coming into and out of the country and Borno State. Hosting a number of higher education institutions, it has contributed immensely to the development of formal and informal education in Nigeria.⁶ The city serves as a strong base for Islamic education, attracting scholars and learners from across the country and beyond, particularly from the northern states of Kano, Jigawa, Bauchi and Katsina.

Maiduguri residents are known for their welcoming and receptive disposition to visitors. The city is also known for its rich cultural heritage, such as durbar (cultural festival characterised by horsemanship and equestrian parades), craftwork (leather materials) and horse costumes – which attract citizens of the neighbouring cities of Bauchi and Gombe to its markets.

Many young people are employed in rendering services to neighbouring countries such as Chad, Niger and Cameroon. They are mainly cross-border goods transporters, mechanics and unskilled labourers. Indeed, a common sight in Bolori (a local chain) stores and the Monday market in Maiduguri are the loading and offloading of goods for cross-border trade. The existence of these sectors reduces the pressure on the government to provide paid employment in the city. The government simply provides a conducive environment (corner shops, stores) for these commercial activities to thrive (Mercy Corps, 2018).

From 1999 to 2015, Maiduguri was under the leadership of the opposition party,⁷ so its influence on national politics and presidential elections was minimal. In 2011, Kashim Shettima (of the All Nigeria People's Party – ANPP) became the governor of Borno State,⁸ and in 2015 the APC (a merger that included the former ANPP) came to power at national level, headed by President Muhammadu Buhari. Thus, the city's relationship to the country has changed since 2015, and Maiduguri has become increasingly central to national politics. The city and national leaders now all belong to the ruling APC, with

6 These include: the University of Maiduguri, Borno State University, Ramat Polytechnic, Lake Chad Research Institute, Maiduguri College of Agriculture, Sir Kashim Ibrahim College of Education, Muhammad Goni College of Legal and Islamic Studies, College of Nursing and Midwifery, College of Health Technology and El-kanemi College of Islamic Theology.

7 Ruling parties in Borno State (in which Maiduguri is located) since 1999: 1999-2003 All People's Party (APP); 2003-07 All Nigeria People's Party (ANPP, which emerged as a faction of APP); 2007-11 ANPP; 2011-15 ANPP. ANPP merged with the Action Congress of Nigeria, the All Progressives Grand Alliance and the Congress for Progressive Change to form the All Progressives Congress (APC), one of the two major contemporary political parties in Nigeria, along with the People's Democratic Party (PDP).

8 Since May 2023, Kashim Shettima has assumed the role of Vice President of Nigeria.

Babagana Umara Zulum serving as Borno governor since 2019. As the former headquarters of the northeastern region of Nigeria (which included present-day Borno, Yobe, Adamawa, Bauchi, Gombe and Taraba states), Maiduguri has a large electorate and experienced politicians, which makes it a political powerhouse able to produce bloc votes for Muhammadu Buhari, contributing to his winning the 2015 and 2019 presidential elections,⁹ as well as to the victory of his successor, Bola Tinubu, in 2023.¹⁰

2.2. Relationships between the ruling coalition and the city

The national ruling coalition interacts with four powerful groups in Maiduguri:

1. The democratically elected elite/bloc: elected office holders who wield significant influence and authority, such as serving and former members of the National Assembly (senators and House representatives). They recommend or endorse individuals for appointments to the boards of various government entities, including ministries, departments, and agencies.
2. The traditional elite/bloc: the first-class emirs – especially the Shehu of Borno, who heads all traditional rulers in Borno state and serves as the Deputy National President of the National Supreme Council of Islamic Affairs – relate and work with other traditional rulers at the national level to unofficially advise government on certain decisionmaking activities, especially issues of security and national integration.
3. The business elite/bloc: this gets governmental support at the national level and invariably helps some people – youth and politicians – from the state to get employment and appointments outside the state.
4. The religious elite/bloc (such as the Christian Association of Nigeria and Jamaatul Nasrul Islam) that relate to their counterparts at the national level to influence political decisions (Paden, 2008; Kendhammer, 2016).

The nature and pattern of elections in Maiduguri help decide the outcome of elections at local government levels (even outside the city). The political party that rules in the city heavily influences local government elections and functioning across the state. In fact, nearly all the elected local government chairs in Borno State's 27 LGAs and their council members are governed from Maiduguri. The local government chairs and many councillors are physically based in Maiduguri and only visit their local government secretariats monthly. The city serves as the administrative hub, where decisions related to political administration and the allocation of resources are made or coordinated for a majority, if not all, of the local government entities within the state. This centralisation within the city is further compounded by the security challenges in the state.

9 "2019: We are going to replicate 2015 success in Borno, says APC". *Punch*, 27 December 2018 (accessed 12 March 2024); and "We've delivered our promise to Buhari in Borno – Ali Sheriff". *Premium Times*, 25 February 2019 (accessed 12 March 2024).

10 "#NigeriaDecides2023: Tinubu maintains lead in Borno, wins more LGAs". *Premium Times*, 28 February 2023 (accessed 12 March 2024).

While local government elites in Borno move to Maiduguri, highly influential elites in Maiduguri move to Abuja. Thus, the political leaders at the state, city and local government levels form a political alliance to support political leaders at the national level. They collectively ensure that whoever they support gets the most votes in their jurisdictions, even if it is through rigging. State and city politicians also use rural elites as channels to bribe the electorate to support city- and national-level political leaders. Hence, the national governance coalition relies on coordinated support from the state, city and local leaders to win national elections and ensure acceptance of policies and programmes.

The power balance between the national, state, city and local government politicians is skewed in favour of the first two. The elites who have national connections (and sometimes access to international development funds) dominate the local elites in the state, city and local government. This power balance is linked to the allocation of resources, including transfer of ownership of land and units in low-cost housing estates from the government to individual ownership; prioritisation of road construction and other development projects in preferred communities; and access to education scholarships (see further details in the 'land and connectivity' domain section). Constitutionally, the state and city are relatively autonomous. But, in practice, they are financially dependent on the federal government; their tax revenues are small, making them extremely dependent on monthly federal government allocations (to pay salaries and execute some capital projects), without which they would be bankrupt. This is why, in practice, the state and city depend on the patronage of national leaders, such as former governors, serving senators, members of the Federal House of Representatives, technocrats and senior civil servants who ensure these allocations are sufficient.¹¹

The national and local leaders share ideas about policies and depend on each other to effectively perform their responsibilities. Interviewees believe "the leaders are the same group, they are the same group of people".¹² Many agree that, even though the power concentrates at the national level, the leaders at all levels have "mutual understanding" and "they hardly disagree, even though they pretend to disagree but it is just to deceive the less powerful".¹³ The main source of conflict in national–city relations is appointments to the boards of national and parastatal agencies, and nominations as ruling party flagbearers to various elected positions, especially during election periods. Local leaders command some autonomy and may, for example, decide on a community project without consulting leaders at the national level.

Generally, the powerful group at the state and city levels – which includes the governor, politicians, businesspeople and civil servants and, to some extent, also the traditional ruler, the Shehu of Borno – associate with political leaders at the national level. This group is powerful because it has access to government, money, land and

11 Multiple interviews with cross-sections of Maiduguri residents, June–July 2022.

12 Multiple interviews with cross-sections of Maiduguri residents, June–July 2022

13 KII with ward head in Maiduguri, 17 June 2022.

state security. The members all belong to the APC party and are loyal to the governor. There is total loyalty to political leaders (in office) who have high-level connections with national leaders.¹⁴

2.3. Maiduguri's position within Nigeria's formal governance structure

Maiduguri hosts the governor and all the commissioners who head the 27 state ministries. The city is composed of two LGAs, namely, Maiduguri Metropolitan Council (MMC) and Jere LGA.¹⁵ The LGA tier of government is statutorily headed by an elected chair and supported by elected representing councillors and its legislative council, which oversees lawmaking at the governing council. The LGAs that constitute Maiduguri are headed by elected politicians, all of whom are members of the ruling APC, as is the case for LGAs across Borno State.

In addition to the two-tier governance structure, Maiduguri is the seat of the state legislature (the State House of Assembly), with 30 legislators representing 30 constituencies from 27 LGAs of the state of Borno. The House of Assembly is arguably a significant force in the power play of the city. Similarly, the representatives of the senatorial zone (Borno Central) and constituencies to which Maiduguri belongs (Maiduguri and Jere) at the Nigerian Senate and House of Representatives, who represent the interests of the people, have a stake in the power play and development of Maiduguri, through constituency projects and their economic empowerment activities.

This formal governance system appears decentralised in theory, but in practice the state and national government levels share a common relationship. National and city level leaders have a cordial relationship. The state government controls the affairs of the city and the national government controls the affairs of the country, but politicians at both levels share the same political ideologies and social circles. Although their roles may be different, they are members of the ruling party, APC, and thus part of the leader's bloc. They work together and decide on issues together. Representatives at the national level are more powerful, but local representatives wield strong influence over their constituencies, such that the former rely on the latter to exercise power in the cities.

Even the national-level city representatives (in the Senate and House of Representatives) are not independent; they depend on city-level representatives to carry out their missions but, likewise, decisions taken at the city level often require the

14 Multiple interviews with cross-sections of Maiduguri residents, June-July 2022.

15 As noted by the local researchers, this is the "popular definition" of what constitutes Maiduguri. This contrasts with the legal definition, which is the one used in the 'land and connectivity domain' section. The legal definition is based on the definition of what is "urban". The Land Use Act gives power to state governments to define urban areas. The Borno State governor asked the State Assembly to define this and it decided to delineate the "urban" as everything within a 25km radius of the Shehu's palace at the heart of the city. Based on this definition, other LGAs are part of Maiduguri. For more information, see the land and connectivity domain section and report.

consent of those at the national level. Besides the formal structure of interdependence, there is the informal structure which respondents attribute to godfatherism. Those occupying positions at both the national and city levels share bonds of party membership and mutual loyalty; they also share common loyalty to godfathers, in whose interests they collectively direct city affairs. The role of godfatherism is central to the emergence of political leaders at local/city, state and national levels.

LGA leadership is almost completely dependent on the state government, and LGA funding is controlled by the state government (Mohammed, 2022). The root cause of this situation lies in a constitutional gap that facilitated the establishment of the State and Local Government Joint Account (Dibal et al., 2020). The primary objective of this arrangement is to consolidate all financial allocations earmarked for various local government councils from the Federation Account. The states then distribute these funds to local councils. However, this system grants state governments significant leverage over local affairs.¹⁶ Even the emergence of statutorily elected chairs and representing councillors is influenced by state leaders. As one civil society representative put it:

The emergence of the LGA chairmen in the state is based on connection to the governor, they are usually selected by governor. They do the formality of election, but it is the governor's choice that wins. For many years, only caretaker chairmen were appointed but that has not changed much because even now people are selected to contest and win.¹⁷

While factors such as good character, family background and wealth play a role, godfatherism is the major determinant. Godfathers use their position to force their candidates on the people, which can mean the more dedicated and competent candidates are sidelined. Godfatherism surpasses even money politics and respondents noted that, without the support of the godfather, it is impossible to emerge as a political leader, even if one has financial influence. Godfathers only pick their loyal person to help actualise their interest.¹⁸ This facilitative role played by godfathers (not all of whom are in formal leadership positions) generally precludes the LGA tier from acting independently.

While traditional and religious leaders do not have formal political power, they are considered part of the powerful group in the city. The traditional institutions have become important ports of call for political office aspirants at various levels (national,

¹⁶ To rectify this issue, the Buhari administration introduced the "Local Government Autonomy Bill". The bill aimed to confer financial and administrative autonomy upon local governments, thereby diminishing the influence wielded by state governors. Unfortunately, the bill faced opposition from specific state governors and their legislative bodies, resulting in its rejection across several states, including Borno. In the course of amending the 1999 Constitution in 2022, numerous state houses of assemblies, including Borno's, voted against the proposed bill. See "Local Government Funds: Governors rise against NFIU, write Buhari". *Premium Times*, 19 May 2019 (accessed 8 March 2024) and "How Lagos, Rivers, Borno, others voted against LG autonomy". *Punch*, 29 January 2023 (accessed 19 February 2024).

¹⁷ FGD participant, CSO, July 2022.

¹⁸ Multiple interviews with cross-sections of Maiduguri residents, June-July 2022.

state and LGA), because their support is one of the fastest ways of gaining community entrance and community acceptance. Respondents noted that, to emerge as or replace a political leader, you need the support of the religious and traditional leaders. A traditional leader is someone with traditional or customary authority, such as lineage or succession. They are respected by the people and have considerable influence. The traditional and religious leaders are not directly or openly involved in party politics, but play a significant role in community mobilisation, as their endorsements legitimise actors in the political and economic institutions. Although succession/inheritance plays a role, the state governor also plays a role in formally approving the appointment of the Shehu, the highest traditional leader presiding over an emirate council with four figures of authority – *shehu* (state level), *aja/hakimi* (district level), *lawan* (ward level), and *bulama* (community level).¹⁹

3. City-level power balance and governance

3.1. Key blocs, actors and power distribution among them

Concentrated power configuration

In Maiduguri, power is heavily concentrated in the hands of political office holders, and elected and civil servants at the city and national levels, who are mostly Muslim and male. With few political officeholders from the opposition People’s Democratic Party (PDP) and New Nigerian Political Party (NNPP), the Maiduguri-level power balance is unequivocally dominated by the APC, the ruling party at state and national level. Most of the powerful groups align with or belong to the ruling party, in order to stay relevant and enjoy the benefits of being in power and having access to city resources. Respondents indicated that, although the opposition party would from time to time make their presence known through their press statements on issues of governance, the power balance tilts almost completely to the dominant party. The influence of opposition parties is deemed negligible, with some respondents suggesting that their public portrayal as opposition is nothing more than a facade to deceive the public. As one respondent asserted, “All the influential figures, without exception, are loyal to the political leader, supporting one another. Even the opposition is inherently loyal; it’s a mere formality.”²⁰

The power balance is stable and externally supported. The governor’s power is such that hardly anyone in the powerful group is prepared to act against him. The group’s loyalty usually lasts for the period of the political leader’s tenure. Even the national-level politicians support the governor in Maiduguri. As such, the leader’s bloc, with the governor and former governors at its core, is an extremely powerful set of people who can singlehandedly decide and dictate the rules of the political game in the city. The bloc is very cohesive, especially when it comes to deciding who gets what, when and how. Members are mostly Kanuri. They are also mostly male and elderly, having

¹⁹ Multiple interviews with cross-sections of Maiduguri residents, June-July 2022.

²⁰ KII, traditional leader, MMC, June 2022.

served in previous governments in the state; women and young people barely influence the rules of the game. There is no competing faction. The majority of Maiduguri residents are loyal to the incumbent governor, Babagana Umara Zulum, and to the former governor of the state and current Vice President, Kashim Shettima.

Power is highly concentrated in the statutory political leader – currently Governor Zulum – who controls and influences state affairs, from budgetary allocation and appointments to office, to approval of development projects, including those of all the LGAs that make up Maiduguri. Although the three arms of central government (the executive, legislature and judiciary) are replicated at the state level to provide checks and balances in state governance, there is a harmonious working relationship between all the arms in Borno, and they support the governor at all times. Even when there is a dissenting move by some legislature members, it is amicably resolved to avoid undermining the governor.²¹ In summary, both constitutionally and informally, the governor wields significant power at state level, and the incumbent, Zulum, with his personal charisma and strong popular support, is particularly powerful.²²

The governor is also part and parcel of the aforementioned system of “political godfatherism”, which determines access to power at national, state and city levels. Thus, “looking up”, the governor’s power is based on his ability to deliver the Borno bloc vote in national elections, acting almost as a presidential kingmaker; and “looking down”, his power lies in his command of revenue flows from the federal to the state government. Through his control of funds and appointments he can dominate the Jere and Maiduguri LGA councils, traditional and religious leaders, and politically connected businesses. These groups in turn provide moral and political leadership and trickle-down patronage to ordinary voters in the form of employment, favours and, to some extent, services, ensuring loyalty to the governor.²³

The leader’s bloc also includes some civil society activists who have been appointed advisers and social media influencers to the governor. They are quite powerful but they cannot single-handedly distribute resources, restrain or harm anybody without orders from the political leader. Other important actors are the security forces, who are trying to stem the tide of the Boko Haram insurgency, and NGOs, who provide humanitarian relief and services, especially to internally displaced people (IDPs) and vulnerable groups.

The governor usually counts on the support and loyalty he gets from nearly all political leaders and appointed political officeholders; they include those at the state level, like state House of Assembly members, state commissioners and advisers, and those elected or nominated for federal positions and appointments as Federal House of Representatives members and ministers.

21 “Borno Assembly passes confidence vote on Governor Zulum”. Premium Times, 26 March 2021 (accessed 24 April 2024).

22 “Zulum: Restoring hope in the midst of adversity”. *Punch*, 1 January 2021 (accessed 24 April 2024).

23 Multiple interviews with cross-sections of Maiduguri residents, June-July 2022.

Some of the appointed officeholders are “inherited” from former governors. The city leader, the local government chair, can be ousted through election if his tenure expires, or he loses the support of political godfathers as a result of insufficient loyalty. As noted by the respondents, incompetence, poor governance, corruption and disregard for the rule of law “do not count in changing a leader”. Likewise, the education and capacity of candidates, as well as their performance, do not count towards their success. It is only loyalty to godfathers, and “the support of religious leaders to pray for success and lobby party members to accept and agree to offer unflinching support to any candidate”, that enable an individual to acquire, and hold onto, power.²⁴

The contingently loyal bloc (CLB) in Maiduguri has little power. It is comprised of some religious or sect leaders who do not belong to the governor’s religion, sect or tribe. Their loyalty to the political leader is temporary and may shift to whoever becomes the new leader. The CLB also includes some CSOs, which form part of the ‘social foundation’ because of their significant contribution to development in Maiduguri, requiring coordination and collaboration with the Maiduguri political leadership, but their loyalty to the political leader is contingent.

The opposition bloc (OB) is mostly visible during elections and is otherwise insignificant. This bloc includes opposition political parties, especially PDP and NNPP. Only a small fraction of opposition party members actually oppose the governors’ decisions, policies and programmes. But since no member of the ruling party would oppose the governor, respondents noted “it is only the opposition party that can dislodge the political leader”.

Our research findings reveal that the leader’s bloc, CLB and OB can be divided into four power concentrations in Maiduguri. These are: 1) democratically elected politicians; 2) traditional leaders; 3) religious leaders; and 4) businesspeople. While all the blocs have these four subgroups, the leader’s bloc attracts the largest and most powerful contingent. They influence political decisionmaking at the city level. Elites and leaders in all four groups are mostly male. These four power concentrations are also not mutually exclusive because some people have electoral, traditional and business powers. The political leader who belongs to the democratically elected group counts on the loyalty of nearly all members of the other three groups – that is, traditional, religious and business. The power of the other blocs is rooted in advisory roles and guidance, especially during implementation of some projects and programmes in the city. The elected political elites always sing the song of the governor and try to persuade other people in the city to believe that he is right. The members of traditional, religious and business groups are mostly subservient to the governor.

Traditional elites are made and installed by the governor in accordance with Section 73(I) of the Borno State Local Government Law, 2000 and Section 5 of the Chiefs (Appointment and Deposition) Law, Cap 25 Laws of Borno State, 1994.²⁵ They can be

²⁴ KII with political party member and resident in Gongolon ward, Jere, 3 July 2022.

²⁵ “[Emir of Biu receives appointment letter](#)”. *Punch*, 22 September 2020 (accessed 19 February 2024).

installed or dethroned based on their dis/loyalty. Religious elites are expected to be politically neutral, but in practice they mostly submit to the governor, particularly those who hold formal governing roles paid from the public treasury, which the governor controls. (There is, however, a handful of religious leaders – particularly adherents of the Sunni Islamic doctrine – expressing opinions that may not be palatable to the governor. They can be considered part of the opposition bloc – not represented by government and not aligned with any political leader or party. Such religious leaders are rare and unpopular with the government, but popular with the masses.) Leading businesspeople are mostly submissive to the political leader (governor), as submission is rewarded by contracts for food supply and public construction projects (schools, roads, housing estates). During an FGD, a young participant described the symbiotic relationship between politicians and businesspeople, stating, “they leverage their positions to support their businesses by awarding contracts to themselves. The proceeds from these contracts are then reinvested to enhance their business ventures further”.²⁶

The powerless group comprises much of the electorate, but disproportionately includes women, people with disabilities, youth, and migrants. As some parents lamented regarding the non-inclusion of young people in politics: “our poor children are only used when politicians require them. Poor youth vote in large numbers because politics is a game of numbers. However, they fail to consider the needs of the youth after the elections.”²⁷ Our interviews with key stakeholders and analysis of legislation and policy suggest that there are no written laws, strategies or tactics for incorporating regular residents into the city power blocs in Maiduguri. But there are unwritten and hidden criteria, such as traditional and religious values, which exclude certain groups. For instance, Islamic values have defined the extent to which a woman should hold a political position and participate in politicking, especially during elections. Islamic values do not allow women to hold and participate in political decisionmaking. It is therefore difficult to find influential women within the powerful traditional, religious, business and political groups. As one respondent explained,

“on gender disparity, women are generally less powerful because of low level of literacy, early marriage, cultural belief putting women at disadvantaged position in communities contributes a lot to this practice. Also, religious factor, because some teaching do not allow or forbid women to partake in politics.”²⁸

Despite occasional efforts by a few women to run for elective positions and participate in primary elections, they have not succeeded in securing victory.²⁹ Currently, there is no female representative from the city in the National Assembly. Factors such as lower

26 FGD, members of youth associations, Maiduguri, June 2022.

27 FGD, mothers of youths, Modu Solumri, Maiduguri, June 2022.

28 KII, Borno State House of Assembly contestant, June 2022.

29 “[Borno’s only female APC candidate speaks on rough road to victory at primary](#)”. *Premium Times*, 10 October 2018 (accessed 19 February 2024).

literacy rates among women and early marriage tend to contribute to these difficulties (Egwu et al., 2018).

Young people are also excluded from these four powerful societal groups.³⁰ Most group members are over 40. It is difficult, if not impossible, to find someone of local and national influence below that age. While the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria sets the minimum age limits to contest a seat at the National Assembly at 35 for the Senate and 25 for the House of Representatives, there is no single instance in which someone from Maiduguri in the 25-35 age bracket has run and won an election to represent the city at the national level.

The power balance is stable because the politically marginalised groups tend to lack the resources and coordinating power to disrupt the political game played by elites and powerful groups, and bring down politicians who underperform. As one respondent complained, “because they do not expect young people to participate in politics, they sell contest forms for N5–10 million”.³¹ Even voting for candidates who promise to represent the marginalised does not result in change – once in office, such candidates tend to become unresponsive to their electorate. Political godfatherism and consensus candidates override the interests of the majority of the people. The powerful people do not listen to the poor because “the political leaders see the less powerful as a nuisance, so when they get into positions of power, they change their location and change their phone numbers, so that it would be hard to access them”.³²

3.2. Sub-city and everyday politics

There are 15 wards in MMC and 12 wards in Jere, which constitute the communities in and around the city. The wards are politically influential in determining who is to emerge as a political leader. Wards such as Bolori, Gamboru, Fezzan, Shehuri North and Shehuri South are predominantly inhabited by Kanuris, while Maisandari, Mafoni, Gwange and Hausari accommodate people from other ethnic groups, such as Hausas, Babur, Marghi, Shuwa, Chibok, Gwoza.³³ Like in other states and national elections in Nigeria, ethnic dominance underlies the city's election results and political processes (Isiaq et al., 2018). The largest ethnic group, Kanuri, tends to clinch state gubernatorial

30 “Young people” here refers to young adults between the ages of 15 and 39. This is more expansive than the UN definition (15 to 24) and the African youths charter definition (15 to 35).
31 KII, male NGO employee, Maiduguri, June 2022. The cost of the nomination forms imposed by the political parties ahead of the 2023 elections were set by the APC at N100 million (~USD240,884), governorship nomination forms at N50 million (~USD85,470), Senate nomination forms at N20 million (~USD34,188), House of Representatives nomination forms at N10 million (~USD17,094) and State Assembly nomination forms at N2 million (~USD3,418). While the party has implemented concessions for women and a 50% discount for young aspirants, the latter are still required to pay other high administrative and state secretariat fees before nomination forms are submitted for processing (Itodo, 2022).

32 KII, journalist, Maiduguri, June 2022.

33 There are no reliable data on specific percentages of Kanuri, Chibok, Babur and other ethnic groups in Borno State. Even in official censuses, Nigeria has omitted essential demographic indicators such as religion and ethnicity, to reduce controversy stemming from recurrent accusations of manipulating figures in favour of one group or another.

and LGA chairmanship positions. However, this often creates some dissatisfaction among residents from Southern Borno,³⁴ who alleged marginalization and called for more power distribution and access to resources and development despite not being openly aligned with the opposition bloc.³⁵

It is difficult for ordinary residents to access political leaders. Respondents noted that “everything that is done is in the interests of the powerful group. But they make it look like it is in the interests of the poor in society.”³⁶ Political leaders and elected officials interact with residents primarily during elections for vote seeking. Outside election periods, ordinary residents try to access and influence political leaders through the following modes: 1) the ceremonial access mode, when leaders visit communities for special occasions and this temporarily satisfies the masses; 2) the prayer and writing mode, where people ask God for direction and then write letters to the authorities, usually to no avail; 3) the traditional institution mode, where people channel their dissatisfaction through traditional leaders; while it is generally easier for traditional leaders to access political leaders (governor, senator) than it is for ordinary residents, this approach does not often produce results because some traditional rulers also find it hard to access leaders; 4) the new media mode, where people use social media to share complaints and get access to leaders; and 5) the conventional media mode, particularly through phone-in radio programmes, where people can air their grievances. Other channels through which ordinary people in Maiduguri try to access political leaders are: established agencies and pressure groups; community-based associations; and councillors, who live in the communities and are representatives of the people. Ordinary people also approach agencies such as the Human Rights Commission and Public Complaints Commission. But some respondents made clear that these channels barely work.³⁷

Channelling grievances through media, both social and conventional, is the most effective approach. The people resort to the media because “no one listens to the poor. So, when you're not satisfied you use the [traditional] media anonymously to complain. You do not complain through protest because you will go to prison.” (With the city still emerging from the aftermath of insurgency, gatherings of people in protest are not encouraged.) They “can use the media to get the attention of the leaders by airing the challenges of the people”. When leaders see or hear complaints, they sometimes visit the communities and respond appropriately, and there are instances where community problems have indeed been addressed as a result of public pressure exerted through media. As a respondent noted, these public pressures sometimes make political office

34 Southern Borno typically denotes the Southern Senatorial District of Borno State. The precise LGAs and communities encompassed by Southern Borno may fluctuate as a result of regional delineations, administrative shifts and local factors. However, commonly affiliated areas comprise LGAs such as Biu, Chibok, Damboa, Gwoza, Hawul, Bayo, Shani, Kwaya Kusar and Askira-Uba.

35 “Southern Borno leaders unite to fight marginalisation”. *Leadership Newspaper*, June 2022 (accessed 19 February 2024).

36 KII, opposition political party member/NNPP aspirant and resident of Jere, 8 July 2022.

37 Multiple interviews with cross-sections of Maiduguri residents, June-July 2022.

holders “come back to their senses to face the assignment of providing the dividends of democracy”.³⁸

The provision of basic services such as water, electricity and roads at affordable rates is the statutory responsibility of the government, but some communities complain that it has failed to commit sufficient resources to this end. Furthermore, they allege unfair resource distribution, with ruling-party politicians channelling limited resources away from neighbourhoods suspected of supporting opposition parties. Residents of neighbourhoods that have not fielded an influential ruling-party politician believe their services are worse as a result, a cynical view that seems to be substantiated by the visible neglect of certain parts of the city by successive governments.

NGOs support government efforts to provide services and infrastructure to the residents of Maiduguri and parts of Jere LGA, primarily in the sectors of education and health (renovation of schools, provision of school furniture and instructional materials, provision of school uniforms and bags, health services, renovation of health facilities and also boreholes). Over the years, as a result of the incessant attacks by Boko Haram, a large number of people from the remote local government areas in the state have been displaced and thus had to be given shelter in IDP camps across the city. INGOs and local NGOs have provided humanitarian support to the various IDP communities. In 2016, Maiduguri hosted about 120,000 to 130,000 IDPs in 16 IDP camps.³⁹

The Boko Haram-induced conflict has exacerbated the already poor food security situation in Maiduguri. High food and rent prices (driven by the influx of IDPs and the international organisation staff who help them), market disruption and a lack of employment opportunities have produced chronic poverty. The city lacks the capacity or institutional structures to cope with such upheaval.

Political leaders have taken advantage of people’s vulnerability to canvass for votes during elections. Before December 2021 (when the IDPs were repatriated from Maiduguri back to their original communities), it was considered too dangerous for IDPs to go back and vote where they were registered, because of the Boko Haram insurgency. So for the 2015 and 2019 elections, the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) enacted a “temporary transfer” of voter registration for IDPs and set up voting stations in formal IDP camps in Maiduguri to enable the displaced to vote. Political candidates competing in the elections turned the IDP camps into vote banks, by offering support to the displaced.⁴⁰ The opposition parties alleged that voters who lived in such IDP camps supported the ruling party’s candidates not only because of the success recorded against Boko Haram, but also as a result of the services received

38 KII, opposition political party member/NNPP aspirant and resident of Jere, 8 July 2022.

39 “Borno still has 32 IDP camps despite return of some displaced persons – NEMA”. *Premium Times*, 1 November 2016 (accessed 19 February 2024).

40 “Atiku, Secondus in Yobe, Borno, accuse INEC of plot to use IDP camps to rig polls”. *Business Day*, 6 February 2019 (accessed 19 February 2024).

at the camps, including shelter, food and stipends given by camp managers at the time.⁴¹

Other philanthropists have supported and sustained the survival of the IDPs. The State Emergency Management Agency (SEMA) and the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA), have collaborated in overseeing the daily operations of the camp management committees in different locations within the city.⁴² The committees are responsible for coordinating activities and addressing the needs of people in emergency shelters or camps. Initially, state and city politicians were sceptical of international humanitarian workers, fuelled as the former were by conspiracy theories suggesting their collaboration with Boko Haram insurgents.⁴³ There were also concerns that a significant portion of the donor funds allocated for the care of IDPs was being directed towards overheads and personnel costs, rather than the intended humanitarian assistance.⁴⁴ However, the perception shifted as the humanitarian situation worsened, and humanitarian workers actively engaged in advocacy efforts.⁴⁵ Subsequently, state and city politicians approved their presence and efforts. In 2022, when the city's systems were stretched to the limit, the state government returned the IDPs to their local government areas of origin, most to be resettled at the local government headquarters, which were reportedly safer. Humanitarian actors disagreed with the government's assessment of the security level, and have portrayed the resettlement process as harmful and conducted without consultation with those affected (Human Rights Watch, 2022; International Crisis Group, 2023).

4. City of systems overview

In the previous section, we examined how the distribution of power in Nigeria influences development and the prospects for developmental reform in Maiduguri; in this section, we add a more material dimension, analysing the systems by which various actors and agencies attempt to sustain and/or improve urban life. All these "urban systems" depend on both physical infrastructure and human actors (but in more "social" systems, such as healthcare and education, humans play a more pivotal role in system functioning). The partial dependence of all urban systems on physical infrastructure creates powerful constraints and path dependencies, and produces unintended (negative) externalities. We analyse how the externalities of systems

41 "[Group accuses APC of deploying threats, intimidation during campaigns in Borno](#)". *Daily Post*. 28 February 2023 (accessed 20 February 2024).

42 "North-east Nigeria: camp coordination and camp management". International Organization for Migration (IOM) Factsheet. February 2021. [Available online \[pdf\]](#) (accessed 20 February 2024).

43 "[Nigerian army says NGO aided terrorists, forces it to close office](#)". Reuters, 20 September 2019 (accessed 20 February 2024).

44 "[Borno governor attacks aid agencies, NGOs again](#)". International Centre for Investigative Reporting (ICIR), 11 January 2017 (accessed 20 February 2024).

45 "[How aid agencies avert humanitarian tragedy in north east](#)". ICIR, 13 March 2017 (accessed 20 February 2024).

(compounded by inter-system interaction⁴⁶) and the scale of system failures or fragmentations add to the challenges that residents and enterprises face.

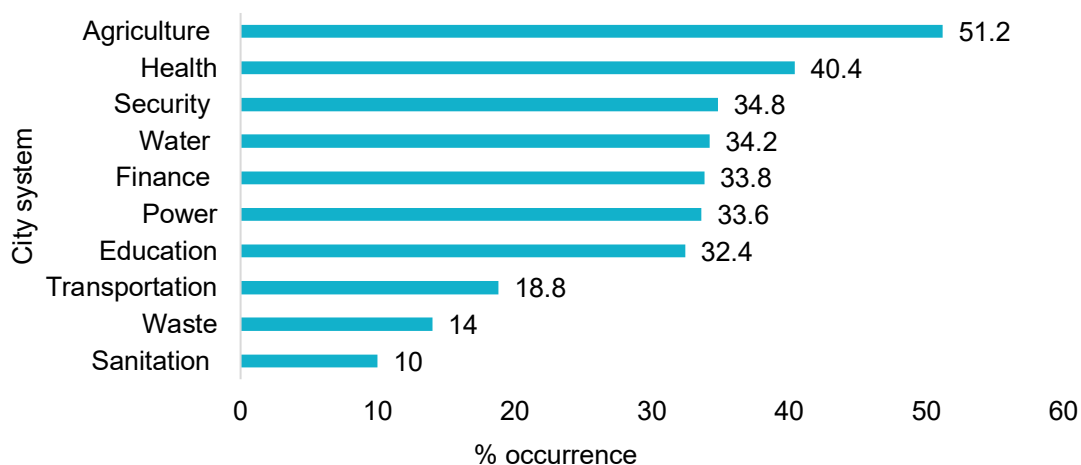
Since systems are governed and resourced by numerous human actors (formal or informal, public or private actors – but usually a combination of these), their functioning is affected by the political settlement described above, as well as by ideas deriving from developmental paradigms like modernism and neoliberalism. This means that systems tend to allocate goods and services unevenly, and may be used to extract benefits and secure political advantage.

The key systems in Maiduguri are agriculture, health, law and order, water, finance, power, education, transportation, waste and sanitation. We examine how they function, how they support or hinder urban development, and how they may be improved. We focus on food distribution, healthcare, and law and order in particular, because these are objectively salient to Maiduguri.

4.1. Most important systems in Maiduguri

Residents were asked, based on their activities, which systems most and least affected their lives each day. The ranking presented in Figure 4 was developed from a sample of 5,110 respondents from across the city.

Figure 4: Most important city systems (by day-to-day activity) in Maiduguri, based on the ACRC interview with 5,110 residents



All systems are interlinked, but the system that affects people's day-to-day lives the most in the city is food distribution (which is closely related to agriculture), followed by health and security. The agriculture system is seen as having the greatest impact across the city, as it is inextricably linked to food production and supply. Crops are planted in the peri-urban areas and rural parts of Borno, supporting the informal livelihoods of a large part of the population. They are harvested and transported to the

⁴⁶ Complex problems in African cities often involve multiple city systems that interact with each other; we will capture their interrelated nature with our third concept of "urban development domains".

city's markets, where they are sold to the people and to bulk buyers from as far afield as the neighbouring countries of Cameroon, Chad and Niger Republic, and from southern Nigeria. Highlighting the pivotal role of the transportation system and its interconnectedness with other systems, a respondent noted: "Transport system is the most important because it has the highest demand in the state of all the systems you mentioned. We convey both goods and people, without which life will be impossible."⁴⁷

The health system is affected by agriculture (in terms of nutrition), as well as by various other systems, particularly sanitation and waste management, which in turn are impacted by education, transportation and finance systems: without adequate government services, waste disposal methods depend on how much people know about hygiene, whether they can afford to remove their waste and, in some cases, the roads and transportation options available to facilitate this. The health system is in need of trained personnel, who are getting scarcer because they are migrating to areas where they may be better paid. The physical health infrastructure is of low quality and poorly maintained.

The security system affects agriculture and health. A stable security situation is critical to the functioning of agriculture and food supply to the city. When farms are attacked in the rural areas as a result of poor security, crop production is hampered and transportation disrupted. This raises food prices in Maiduguri's markets (which in turn affects nutritional health). The precarious health system may also be severely disrupted and overburdened when the security situation deteriorates, such as in the wake of terrorist attacks and the ensuing displacement of communities.

Table 1 summarises the main problems in key city systems, along with the listing of government reforms and actions of non-state, private and community actors to address these.

Table 1: Primary problems of the city systems

City system	Major problems	Government reforms	Community reforms
Transportation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Not enough bus stations (referred to as "motor parks" in Nigeria). ▪ Proliferation of illegal car parks and illegal transport operators. ▪ Attacks from insurgents on the roads. ▪ Poor road maintenance. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Liaising with the military to provide rapid response in cases of attack (but not security). Vehicles have been recovered and some counter-attacks have been successful. ▪ Collaboration and delegation of NGOs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Private sector has sponsored more cars for public transport; the scale of this reform is, however, negligible.

⁴⁷ FGD, staff of the Borno State Traffic Management Agency, July 2022.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Poorly trained drivers. ▪ Accessibility (cost). ▪ More cars are needed for public transport service. ▪ People in both informal and formal sectors walk more because of transport costs, waiting time and safety reasons. ▪ The poor condition of roads in low-income settlements affects waste management and water distribution. 	<p>to help teach drivers road safety.</p>	
Waste management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Town planning issues, such as problems in allocating zones for waste. ▪ Encroachment of residential real estate into areas marked out for refuse disposal. ▪ Illegal waste companies not trained and not properly registered. ▪ Very long process to register a waste management company in Maiduguri. ▪ Flooding exacerbates the problem of waste in terms of recovery and disposal. ▪ There are health issues from improperly disposed waste. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Collaboration with the UN Development Programme (UNDP) to build a new dumpsite along the Maiduguri to Damaturu road. ▪ Training through NGOs to better educate the waste recyclers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Private companies are set up to help manage waste but the scale of this sector is very small. ▪ Neighbourhood groups of waste disposal workers are available in some wards. They do not transport the waste far, however.

Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overburdened health infrastructure. • Despite the state government's efforts to counter the effects of terrorism and insecurity on the system by rehabilitating and building new healthcare centres and providing qualified health professionals, primary care remains inefficient, referrals are frequently difficult and hospitals are congested. • Significant gaps in the system, particularly in emergency treatment, surgery, transfusions and mental health. • Poor monitoring of environmental hazards that may affect the general health of the population. • Lack of proper facilities in the hospitals. • Not enough hospitals. • Not enough staff in the hospitals. • Poor control of the sale and circulation of illicit drugs. • Low awareness and knowledge among the population of practices that 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government has provided hospitals in collaboration with NGOs. • Non-state actors play a key role in the health system. Organisations like the UN, World Health Organization (WHO), and Médecins Sans Frontières complement efforts from the government. They run tailored sensitisation and awareness programmes, provide funds (conditional cash transfers) and quality health professionals, or rehabilitate dilapidated healthcare centres. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Free drugs in IDP camps through an NGO programme. • Education through NGOs in partnership with the Ministry of Health.
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	support health outcomes.		
Agriculture and food	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Climate change affecting certain crops planted outside the city • Insurgency leading to break in the farming framework. Farms are attacked and farming cycles disrupted. • Transportation of farm produce to the city is risky. • Electricity is needed to preserve some farm produce more effectively. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Military effort is being pushed to keep transport nodes clear of danger. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Market people are grouping to purchase goods at low cost, creating a clustering of supply and demand to reduce cost price of produce and decentralise risk.
Water	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Water scarcity. • Limited access to safe and potable water. • Lack of power supply to pump water to households. • Water system reticulation. • Depletion of pipes. • Lack of access to affordable and reliable piped water systems. • Lack of laboratories for water testing. • Lack of awareness of sanitation practices. • Certain pipe sizes are in short supply, also steel pipes are aging; high-density polyethylene pipes are lacking. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There has been no visible or significant reform in the water system, and the government's approach to addressing water-related challenges is more reactive than proactive, as it only intervenes when specific problems arise. • Non-state actors drill boreholes or wells to cater for their water needs. Many of these constructions are indiscriminate and some studies suggest that this practice may have adverse effects on the city's water level, further exacerbating water shortages. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of cheap maintenance labour. This is a rising trend and it is becoming an informal reform. • Borehole drilling. This causes health problems as the boreholes are often shallow as a result of poor finance. Hence they draw up impure water.

Finance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of funding sources to aid business. Specifically, access to formal credit is poor across Maiduguri districts and there is no sustainable system of formally financing people thanks to a lack of guarantors. • No proper training on finance to business people across the city. • Insurance is non-existent and hard to get for business because the city is considered high-risk by insurance companies. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Over 85% of the respondents indicated that the government is making no move regarding modes of financing. That said, the public does not look to the state government to address their financial woes, as only 3.88% of respondents listed receiving no financial aid from the state government as a problem. • Cash transfers for low-income city dwellers in partnership with certain NGOs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Informal and local loan systems among groups of people have been a growing trend • Higher purchase capital seeding by a few people with high incomes. Private investment for others in business with monthly (or periodic) returns.
Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor governance, poor teacher qualifications, and fear of attending school as a result of attacks on students and infrastructure. • Staff shortages because of the insurgency – low availability of trained personnel for teaching. • Limited infrastructure. • Unemployment and limited access to affordable financing makes paying for education out of reach for some. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Even though the system is managed by the federal and state government through parastatals and agencies, because of its strong connections with religion and culture, the education system is influenced by religious organisations, public–private actors, and by international bodies. • As a result of the increasing number of children out of school in the city of Maiduguri, Borno State partners with humanitarian. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The operations of non-state actors are mostly monitored through state agencies and national or local associations. The Islamic and Almajiri system – a non-formal educational practice – used to be largely autonomous from government control on inception. However, recently the federal government passed a bill that enforced official registration to provide learning and teaching services (Mohammed, 2015).

		<p>organisations and other relevant agencies to provide facilities and host skill acquisition programmes that empower both students and teachers. This helps in curtailing violence, drug abuse and political thuggery.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Borno State Ministry of Education, in collaboration with international humanitarian organisations, has attempted to reform and resuscitate the education sector by increasing access to learning aids and to projects that build teachers' capacity. 	
Law and order	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ill-equipped military in terms of facilities, superior weaponry and funding. • Limited trust in the military and the rise of CJTF. • Safety issues arising from the proliferation of tricycles (<i>keke</i>) as the main transport modality (see the land and connectivity domain section for an in-depth discussion of this problem). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The state government collaborates with relevant stakeholders to counter insurgency or promote unity and peaceful coexistence in many conflict-affected communities. • The federal government plays a major role in the orchestration of the system as the scale of the security threat has surpassed what state resources can provide. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Volunteer civilians who make up the Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF) and Vigilante groups also work to restore peace. • (See the safety and security domain section for more details on community-level vigilantism.)

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> International counterterrorism cooperation between military forces outside the city to com. The coalitions involve western forces from the UN and other national forces. 	
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Source: Developed based on the ACRC research in Maiduguri.

4.2. The role of politics in city systems

Politics influences the effectiveness of the city systems in numerous ways, from the allocation of resources to selection of schools and hospitals based on partisan affiliation, to the commandeering of waste transport vehicles for party rallies, as Table 2 below illustrates. There is a temporal rhythm to political influence, in that its intensity rises and falls depending on the political charge of events, with state and national election periods being the most highly charged.

Table 2: Manifestations of politics in systems

City system	Connection/influence of politics
Transportation	During political campaigns, incumbents take control of public transport vehicles, including their drivers, to initiate convoys throughout the city. Interestingly, no consideration is given to the party affiliation of the drivers during these events. However, when opposition parties commence their campaigns, the incumbents strategically deploy the vehicles and drivers out of the city, aiming to prevent their utilisation by the opposition. This is an example of how incumbents leverage state resources to gain an advantage during electoral campaigns.
Waste management	There is no proper union of waste management organisations. Sometimes the government waste management units are directed to clean the streets where high-status people reside. This was suggested (but not directly stated) in the interviews and focus groups. The public waste management system is largely unavailable in low-income neighbourhoods, partly thanks to lack of accessibility resulting from a limited road infrastructure in these areas, which is itself a symptom of politically driven infrastructure investments in the city, as described in the land domain section.
Health	Many studies suggest that improvements in the quality of healthcare provided can influence trust or support for a political leader or party. However, for Maiduguri, with strong cultural and ethno-religious inclinations, the quality of healthcare provided may bring little or no change in trust or support for the ruling or opposition party. Even though health policies may be used to canvass votes, the effect of politics on health (or the relationship between politics and health outcomes) requires further study. People feel helpless to address vices

	like drug abuse, and so are numbed to them. It must also be said that the health system is too expensive to be used for political campaigning purposes – incremental developments are not noticed; only substantive developments would be noticed.
Agriculture and food	Politics comes into the food and agriculture system first through security. Governments try to push back insurgents in the rural areas. The farms they thereby recover become a principal indicator of counterinsurgency progress and military success against the militants. Distribution of food and livestock by politicians to communities is a common campaign strategy – a form of political posturing.
Water	Digging of boreholes (useful or not) for photo opportunities across various zones has been practised by politicians, celebrities and even NGOs. While boreholes serve as the main sources of water in low-income communities, government and INGOs do not manage them sustainably. Boreholes require maintenance and have high operating costs; cash-strapped and understaffed local government authorities increasingly struggle to maintain them (Card et al., 2022). As highlighted in the political settlement findings, residents of low-income communities only benefit from government attention during elections, when borehole drilling is an easy and visible way for politicians to publicly demonstrate their (supposed) commitment to development.
Finance	Finance stands out as an underlying factor (not just a system) in urban development; our study consistently found that the finance system could kickstart and accelerate sustainable development across all wards. The influence of politics on finance is complicated; it involves corruption, which is tied to allegiances/connections to parties or specific politicians. There may be cases of contracts awarded in which due process is not followed. Similarly, government youth empowerment programmes, intended to support youth-led businesses, often favour individuals associated with politicians. Consequently, those linked to politicians benefit repeatedly without using the funds to start businesses, leading to unemployment and poverty for other youths aspiring to establish enterprises.
Education	Private fee-paying schools, registered under the National Association of Proprietors of Private Schools, boast more qualified teachers. However, these institutions are only accessible to the elites and middle classes. On the other hand, public schools that provide free education suffer from poor quality, primarily because of a shortage of qualified teachers. Some teachers in these public schools were appointed as a political reward for supporting the ruling party or having close ties to politicians. The substandard education in the public schools creates challenges for many children and young people, hindering their ability to pursue further education or secure decent employment. Politicians exploit young people's illiteracy, underdevelopment and unemployment. During election periods, they mobilise them for various reasons and reward them with money, food and other incentives.
Law and order	The problems with law and order in Maiduguri and Borno at large are political by nature. The mode of operation of inter-security agencies complicates

political, ethno-religious and cultural matters in the city. Security agencies are viewed as liabilities and pawns in the hands of political parties, persons or groups. They are perceived as a threat to livelihoods and safety, which leaves citizens confused over which security agency to trust or engage with when in need. This is even more the case during political events such as party rallies or elections, when some security agents may align themselves with opposition parties, introducing elements of corruption into the system. This compromises the perceived neutrality and effectiveness of the security forces. Further, security agents play key roles at polling stations in maintaining public order, mitigating crises and conveying ballot papers safely to collation centres.

Source: Developed based on the ACRC research in Maiduguri.

4.3. Effects of system failures on domains

Education: implications of insecurity and effects on youth

While the quality of education in Nigeria has been declining over the past four decades, the case of Maiduguri is particularly concerning. The education system is overburdened and woefully inadequate to support the city's development objectives. The insurgency has caused significant infrastructure damage to many schools, leading to their indefinite closure; a lack of human resources; the relocation of thousands of students; and the use of schools as temporary camps for IDPs (Borno Plan, 2020; Buba, 2019). As a result of insecurity – including killings of teachers – university graduates from other states have been refusing to accept mandatory one-year National Youth Service assignments in Maiduguri. Therefore the city has faced a severe teacher shortage in 71% of schools, making education delivery even more challenging (Granville, 2020).

In Maiduguri, most schools have re-opened, but they are inadequate and cannot cater for the large number of school-age children. IDPs have added pressure to the available schools and education resources. Residents of low-income neighbourhoods in Maiduguri lament that there are not enough schools, and these are usually too far away for their children to easily attend. Access to, and completion of, secondary education, as well as to technical, vocational or professional skills training, remains difficult for many young people, as only 30.39% of the youth sampled for the city of systems research reported actively going to school, with 45.58% working informally (as a primary activity) instead. Moreover, the education system emphasises theoretical training over practical training, which does not meet the needs of employers (Borno Plan, 2020).

Sanitation, waste management and health

Poor residents settle on more affordable land along the flood plains of two rivers that drain the city. This land is only affordable because it is prone to flooding. High residential densities lead to groundwater contamination and associated disease outbreaks, as well as outright displacement as a result of flooding during the rainy season, when the rivers break their banks. The buildings that suffer from annual flooding often encroach into the river channels, and are built by the poor. The lack of

provision of basic infrastructure including water, sanitation, drainage, electricity and solid waste management appears to have resulted in poor health outcomes (such as a high incidence of malaria and typhoid fever), high transport costs, insecurity and general urban squalor.

Many young people express rage, frustration and anxiety because of their inability to meet familial obligations and expectations in an environment with limited opportunities. Displaced youths' psychosocial needs often go unmet, leading some of them to engage in drug and substance abuse (World Bank, 2015; International Alert, 2016). Some displaced young women and girls resort to prostitution to survive, and face high maternal mortality rates and other pregnancy-related problems, as a result of limited access to sexual and reproductive healthcare. The Boko Haram conflict has led to food insecurity that harms nutrition and health, particularly for pregnant or breastfeeding women (Kah, 2017).

Infrastructure

While the insurgents were still embedded within the city's communities, the informal housing and street layouts played to their advantage and helped them elude state security forces and vigilantes. The absence of good infrastructure remains a major challenge, with significant implications for the safety and security of low-income neighbourhoods. Although the main roads and highways in Maiduguri have streetlights, the inner recesses of the neighbourhoods do not have any form of lighting, and "criminals and rapists take advantage of the darkness to perpetrate different forms of crime".⁴⁸

Law and order

The heightened counterinsurgency operations and human rights abuses by the security forces at the peak of the insurgency increased the susceptibility of young people to radicalisation by non-state armed groups (Human Rights Watch, 2019). Apart from allegations of illegal executions, dragnet arrests, extortion and intimidation by security agents (Onuoha, 2014), curfews shortened the working day and made it difficult for young people to conduct business (Mercy Corps, 2018). Farm cultivation was also restricted to areas near the city, thanks to peri-urban insecurity and, as a result, many young people who own farmland on the outskirts of Maiduguri were unable to farm for many years, which has affected their economic status and led some to turn to criminal activity (Kah, 2017). In addition to security challenges in peri-urban agricultural areas, the ban on motorcycles and restrictions on trucks transporting fertiliser and agrochemicals has further affected young farmers' productivity and purchasing power (Mercy Corps, 2019; Donli and Anegbeh, 2018).

⁴⁸ Interview with resident of Zango-Gwange, 15 July 2022.

Transportation

When the insurgents were still embedded within Maiduguri, they used motorcycles to launch drive-by attacks on security forces and individuals they perceived as enemies. The government thus banned the activities of motorcyclists in Maiduguri in 2011. But this move contributed to increasing levels of unemployment and poverty, as hundreds of commercial motorcyclists (taxis) were rendered jobless. When motorcycles were prohibited in 2011, many young men turned to the *keke* tricycle taxi (known as “tuk-tuks” in other contexts) business as a means of subsistence (Abubakar, 2011; Mukhtar et al., 2015). As a whole, transportation services constitute a major employment sector for youth, with many young men working as bus drivers, car taxi drivers, *keke* drivers and auto mechanics. In 2020, the state government restricted the importation of tricycles into Maiduguri to reduce traffic congestion and reckless driving by tricycle operators (Olanrewaju, 2016; Mohammed et al., 2022). This affected thousands of youths wanting to engage in the *keke* business, exacerbating the precarious situation of young people. Thus, attempts by the government to regulate this industry may have contributed to rising crime rates. Although insurgents have long been dislodged from Maiduguri, and a ban on the activities of commercial motorcycles remains in place, the commercial tricycle operators who emerged to replace commercial motorcyclists have recently been associated with crime, especially kidnapping and armed robbery.⁴⁹

Additionally, with borders remaining closed and military escorts required on Borno’s major roads, Maiduguri residents are increasingly vulnerable to irregular schedules, changing restrictions on the number of permitted vehicles and expectations of bribery by law enforcement officials, all of which directly increase the cost of transportation and affect prices.⁵⁰ While it is safe for young people to move within the city, the security risks outside it mean they cannot safely engage in businesses that require regular travel beyond Maiduguri’s periphery, which threatens the viability of transportation-dependent youth businesses (Mercy Corps, 2018). The crisis has also influenced agricultural product transportation and market and trade infrastructure (including fish markets).

Informal economy and finance

The insurgents previously used the markets in Maiduguri to sustain illicit financial flows needed to fund their activities. Cattle rustled from other parts of Borno State by Boko Haram were sold in cattle markets in Maiduguri and the proceeds used to buy arms to further the insurgency (Okoli, 2019). The insurgents controlled much of the commercial fishing in Lake Chad, using Maiduguri as a transit point for distributing fish to other parts of the country and making huge profits that fed into the insurgency (Salkida,

49 “[Maiduguri residents protest rising criminal activities](#)”. *This Nigeria*, 12 March 2022 (accessed 20 February 2024).

50 “[Highway extortion by security agents in Borno gulping millions yearly, affecting lives](#)”. *The Cable*, 1 July 2023 (accessed 20 February 2024).

2020). Because of the informal character of the economy and markets, the cattle and fish stolen by the insurgents easily eluded authorities.

Lack of financial literacy and credit impedes youth self-employment, entrepreneurship and agribusiness. Because formal financial service providers have ignored young people or provided services that are not tailored to their specific needs, the young in Maiduguri face numerous barriers to accessing finance, which is a significant impediment to business start-ups and entrepreneurship.⁵¹ Financial illiteracy or misinformation is also more prevalent among low-income youth, who may fall victim to scams, high-interest loans or mounting debt. Mobile money services have emerged as a viable business among Maiduguri's youth, thanks to the closure of banks during the peak of the insurgency. Many youths currently operating mobile money booths and kiosks in the city indicate that this line of business is thriving.⁵² Some young people in Maiduguri, particularly women, also organise savings groups, known locally as *Kungiyar Adashe*, to provide savings and credit systems for their members to start businesses with (Mercy Corps, 2019).

5. Domain summaries

We have examined the political settlement and city systems; now, we analyse how these shape some of the development domains in Maiduguri. A development domain is a distinct field of power, policy and practice that has formed around a complex, intersystemic development challenge in a city, wherein various actors (political, bureaucratic, professional and popular) offering solutions collaborate or compete for authority.

These development challenges usually fall under the remit of specific central and/or local government departments. In most cases, affected residents and civil society groups become involved in addressing them; experts (often constituting an “epistemic community”) also get involved; and ruling elites may or may not get involved, depending on the opportunities that these domains offer for asset accumulation, rent extraction and electoral success (through the representation of ideologies, demonstration of state capability or manipulation of voters).

In each development domain, particular ideas, practices and systems interoperate in ways that either sustain or reshape the power configuration in the city and country. If we wish to change the way a domain's problems are framed and addressed, we need to understand its key actors and interoperating ideas, practices and systems. Here, we generate such an understanding for the domains of youth and capability development, safety and security, and land and connectivity in Maiduguri.

The youth and capability development section examines the many challenges young people face, including lack of access to high-quality education, unemployment, drug

51 Multiple interviews with young people in Maiduguri, June-July 2022.

52 “[Life without banks in Borno LGAs](#)”. *Daily Trust*, 1 August 2021 (accessed 20 February 2024).

abuse and exclusion from formal decisionmaking processes. It explains how, notwithstanding these challenges, most young people remain optimistic about graduating from school and gaining decent employment. The safety and security domain section examines why, despite many safety and security interventions over the past decade in response to the Boko Haram insurgency, the city has experienced a rise in crime levels and the proliferation of crime enclaves, forcing residents in low-income areas to resort to locally mobilised self-defence. The land and connectivity section points to road and drainage connectivity as the most important determinant of land and property values in Maiduguri; government investment in roads has a particularly significant impact on valuations. When it comes to land acquisition, informal transactions appear to be the only recourse for low-income residents, but this often leads to land conflicts and contributes to the emergence of informal settlements in flood-prone areas.

5.1. Youth and capability development domain

Youth in Maiduguri are in a state of perpetual “waithood”,⁵³ as they struggle to achieve the markers of maturity associated with modern life – a job, a life partner and homeownership. Largely excluded from formal decisionmaking processes at the state and local government levels, many young people feel that youth interventions are used primarily as a tool to gain their political support. However, many proactively participate as Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF) volunteers and within other local structures – such as registered youth-led organisations, community development associations and informal neighbourhood clusters (*Majalisa*) that contribute to community and city development processes.⁵⁴

Dominant actors and ideas

The policy of youth empowerment is addressed at all three levels of government: federal, state and local (National Youth Policy, 2019). Various actors implement youth capability development programmes, including the federal government, state governments, international humanitarian and development partners, local CSOs (including youth-led organisations) and private sector actors. In accordance with the city’s political settlement, federal government actors – the Federal Ministry of Youth and Sports Development, the Borno State Ministry of Youth Empowerment and Sports – collaborate with traditional and religious leaders to mobilise young people to participate in these programmes. Some humanitarian INGOs are also increasingly collaborating with CSOs, including youth-led groups, to implement programmes directly.

53 “*Waithood*” is a term that describes an extended period of suspension between childhood and adulthood. This portmanteau combines “wait” and “hood”, conveying the idea of “waiting for adulthood”. On one hand, young people are no longer children requiring care but, on the other, they are still unable to achieve independence as adults (Honwana, 2012; 2014). In Maiduguri, waithood is not just a brief pause in the transition to adulthood; instead, it is gradually becoming a substitute for the traditional concept of adulthood itself.

54 *Majalisa* is a Hausa word for a neighbourhood meet-up point or hangout spot.

Youth and capability development programmes can, for the most part, be divided into three categories: 1) those that ensure long-term participation of all youth in education and training; 2) those that prioritise the welfare of youth in terms of humanitarian needs and finding employment; and 3) those that support youth participation in politics and national development. Agencies tend not to focus on any single category. While the state government focuses on long-term education, lifelong learning, employment and entrepreneurship, the federal government and humanitarian actors focus on short-term vocational training and entrepreneurship support, including start-up capital distribution to promote micro, small and medium-sized businesses. Most humanitarian youth programmes target displaced young people and prioritise immediate needs over long-term, sustainable livelihoods (Oginni, 2022; World Bank, 2019).

The key ideas that underpin youth and capability development policies and programmes available in Maiduguri are shaped either by the belief that “youths are the nation’s future” (National Youth Policy, 2019; Borno Plan, 2020) or by humanitarian youth development approaches that view young people as a “vulnerable” or “dangerous” class, as reflected in the 2016 Buhari Plan for Rebuilding the North-east and the 2018 Regional Strategy for the Stabilization, Recovery and Resilience of Boko Haram-affected Areas of the Lake Chad Basin Region.

Youth participation, links to the political settlement and city-level power balance

Like other young people in Africa, Maiduguri’s youth are generally excluded from formal decisionmaking processes at the state and local government levels. Many elders believe that young people lack the experience to make decisions and should instead carry out the elders’ wishes. Thus, even youth-focused positions, such as advisors on youth and student issues, are filled by adults. This circumstance makes it difficult for the young to participate effectively in governance. Also, despite constituting a sizeable voting bloc, with prohibitively high costs of nominations being imposed by political parties, many young people lack the resources necessary to run for local elective office themselves; they are mobilised for the electoral success of older candidates only.⁵⁵

A few Maiduguri young people are involved in politics and local governance, primarily through the youth wings and support groups of political parties. Their primary responsibility is to actively mobilise the city’s youth to participate in politics in favour of their party and to mobilise voters during elections. Political parties select some “youth leaders” at the state, local government and ward levels – mostly “elderly youth”, meaning adults in their mid-40s and 50s who claim to represent the young. Many young people in Maiduguri define youth as people under 35. They do not believe that the participation of “elderly youth” advances their development because these elderly youth are only interested in receiving money from top politicians. During an FGD with youth in Mairi community, Jere LGA, a male respondent stated: “most of the [elderly] youth who participate in politics do so to take a cut from the political moguls; they

⁵⁵ Multiple interviews with cross-sections of Maiduguri residents, June 2022.

mobilise youth for them and lead campaigns in return for money”.⁵⁶ Some of these politically connected young people also work through formal youth participation platforms at the national level, such as the National Youth Council of Nigeria (NYCN) and the National Youth Parliament (NYP). These platforms were intended to encourage youth participation in politics, but have instead become places of “passive consultation” because the elderly politicians do not actively engage with them, nor are their voices heard in decisionmaking processes (Kwaja, 2018, p 365).

Many young people (especially young men) regard their relationship with politicians as exploitative, because, as already mentioned, politicians only see youth as necessary during elections, to obtain their votes. Even unregistered young IDPs in the city are considered important during elections because they can attend political rallies and improve politicians’ public image. Youth empowerment interventions are one of the methods politicians use to entice their supporters to help them win elections, or as a reward for electing them (Haruna et al., 2022). Most of the time, such interventions are only available to young people associated with politicians, and they exclude those perceived to be of a different political affiliation. Many young people also stated that, while a few good politicians support their empowerment, many political actors view them negatively. When young people go to such elected officials to complain about their problems, the officials assume they are there to beg for money. Young people also claimed that, when the government designs youth empowerment programmes to help unemployed youth, self-interested politicians usually hijack recruitment processes and deny many low-income youths opportunities.⁵⁷

Since the 2003 elections, political elites have exploited youth unemployment to recruit young men as thugs to commit violence. One such well known gang of political thugs, ECOMOG,⁵⁸ became notorious for its involvement in politics, primarily through the protection services it provided for politicians. It was used in the 2003, 2007 and 2011 elections to harass opponents, disrupt political rallies and snatch ballot boxes, among other things. It was linked to a wave of politically motivated violence in the city (Haruna and Jumba, 2011; Kwaja, 2018). After the elections, ECOMOG was usually abandoned by the political elites and some members committed other crimes, reinforcing public perceptions of young people as deviant (Kwaja, 2018; NSRP, 2014). Persistent poverty and unemployment render young people consistently susceptible to exploitation. Young individuals struggling with drug addiction receive compensation in both money and drugs. Their association with politicians, especially during election periods, gives them a sense of relevance and importance. In an FGD with parents of young people, one participant noted that “some politicians utilise young drug users as political thugs during

56 FGD, educated male youth, Mairi, Jere, June 2022.

57 FGD, uneducated male youth, Kuseri, MMC, June 2022.

58 ECOMOG gained notoriety as a prominent political thuggery gang in Borno State, especially in Maiduguri, from 2003 to 2011. Despite adopting the acronym of the Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group, a Nigerian-led West African multilateral armed force established by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the gang holds no official status or affiliations with the Nigerian government.

elections to incite violence. You can observe them following the politicians' convoys and wearing campaign T-shirts adorned with their images."⁵⁹

With the advent of social media, and its popularity among young people, the elderly political class is compelled to embrace this new technology to remain relevant, particularly during election season. Political office holders usually appoint a few media-savvy young people as social media aides and personal assistants, or as members of the Borno Social Media Frontiers Forum. Many activists have criticised these attempts to use the young as politicians' "social media attack dogs" and compare it to politicians recruiting young people as thugs to harass opponents, steal ballot boxes and commit violence during elections. Outside the "politicised social media spaces", some young people use social media objectively, to critique government policies and draw attention to issues affecting them.

As a result of these apparently exploitative relationships, young people have become cynical about politicians and government officials. During an FGD, a disillusioned youth expressed frustration with politicians, revealing:

"I have put in significant effort to enter politics. With two friends, we set up three local campaign groups for politicians, but our involvement was limited to political rallies. Once the elections were over, we were quickly forgotten. Because of such exploitation, we do not see the point of collaborating with government structures and institution."⁶⁰

Even though civil resistance is uncommon in the city, some Maiduguri youth have organised local protests and participated in national protests and movements against older politicians through civil society and professional organisations.

Traditional governance, like state and local government, has a hierarchical structure and is dominated almost entirely by elders (Creative Associates International, 2022). Young men are given some responsibility, with the children of *shehu* and *lawans* serving as *bulamas* of smaller districts and representing the concerns of young people at the emirate level. There are also encouraging signs of progress, as some traditional leaders are consciously integrating more young people into community leadership positions to raise awareness of the latter's role in community development (Oginni, 2022). However, these attempts are uneven and heavily reliant on the efforts of humanitarian organisations that collaborate with them. During the peak of the Boko Haram conflict and associated displacement, for example, young people became increasingly involved in decisionmaking, primarily at the community and camp level.⁶¹

Many young people also participate in local structures, such as registered youth-led organisations, youth community development associations and informal neighbourhood clusters (*Majalisa*) to contribute to community and city development processes. These organisations work on a variety of issues: they unite youth against terrorism and promote a culture of peace and tolerance, are involved in activism to improve

59 FGD, mothers of young people, Pompomari, MMC, June 2022.

60 FGD, male youth, MMC, June 2022.

61 KII, displaced female youth, Jere, June 2022.

transparency and openness in governance, lobby the government for community development needs, help sexual and gender-based violence survivors cope with emotional trauma and educate young people about climate change mitigation.⁶²

Furthermore, young people (both men and women, including young women with children) are involved in neighbourhood and city security decisions. Some of these actions are motivated by a desire to survive, to protect themselves and their loved ones from Boko Haram. For example, members of Yan Gora – a militia group formed in 2013 by about 500 young people, then self-styled as the “Civilian JTF” (after the special Joint Task Force that fights Boko Haram)⁶³ – began arresting Boko Haram members. Hundreds of the CJTF’s members live in Maiduguri (Agbibo, 2020). They are involved in military or intelligence operations against Boko Haram insurgents. In addition to their counterinsurgency role, various CJTF units have taken on policing responsibilities to secure the city from criminal elements, especially the “Marlians” criminal gang, given the limited capabilities of the Nigerian police (Mercy Corps, 2019).⁶⁴ Even though CJTF fighters are typically young men with few employment options, their participation in the CJTF represents one of the new avenues through which they can gain respect in their communities (CIVIC, 2018). Despite the CJTF’s success, many residents have expressed concern that it is also “brewing trouble” and that, if the state does not regulate its activities, it could transform into new militias or semi-criminal outfits (Agbibo, 2015, 2020). During the 2015 and 2019 elections, some CJTF members escorted politicians to and from rallies and were accused of assaulting people when there were disturbances. Although the governor has prohibited the group from participating in political activities, some local politicians continue to seek its protection during political rallies, and some CJTF members have joined their entourage.⁶⁵

Aside from political thuggery, the lack of opportunities for many young people in the 2000s created enabling conditions for their recruitment into Boko Haram. For example, education was underdeveloped and grossly inadequate, with 91% and 72% of students unable to read after grades 4 and 6, respectively, and 29% unable to do simple arithmetic after primary school (Buba, 2019). There was also a high rate of formal unemployment of 26.7%, higher than the national average of 3.7% in 2010. This helped Mohammed Yusuf, the founder of Boko Haram, gain a large following in Maiduguri from 2006 to 2009, thanks to his preaching against the corrupt leadership of the Nigerian state. He blamed youth unemployment, a lack of opportunities for socioeconomic and political mobility, poverty and inequality on bad governance and corruption perpetrated by a secular state (Kwaja, 2018). Boko Haram’s destruction of infrastructure and

62 Multiple interviews with young people in Maiduguri, June 2022.

63 ‘Yan Gora’, which translates “stick-wielding people” in Hausa, is the name of a vigilante group that originated in mid-2013, when civilians in Maiduguri picked up sticks to root out Boko Haram from the city. The group is now more commonly known as the Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF), named after the special Joint Task Force (JTF) dedicated to combating Boko Haram insurgents (Agbibo, 2020; CIVIC, 2018).

64 “[Notorious Marlians gang members kill three and make life in Zajeri a living hell](#)”. Radio Ndarason Internationale, 31 August 2022 (accessed 20 February 2024).

65 KII, female NGO staff, MMC, July 2022.

disruption of livelihoods exacerbated already low levels of access to education, health and other social services in a city with one of the highest levels of poverty and unemployment in the country (Kwaja, 2018).

Key challenges within the youth domain

As we have seen, young people face challenges not just in terms of barriers to political participation, but also in terms of inadequate education, unemployment, insecurity and drug abuse. These concerns vary by youth cohort, specifically by gender and socioeconomic standing. For instance, social status and gender significantly determine access to education and employment, with youth from low-income families and females facing particular issues in this regard (Mercy Corps, 2018).

Education. One of the most severe issues confronting young people in Maiduguri is a lack of access to high-quality education. Even though the government has built many public schools, these often lack qualified teachers and sufficient training materials. Furthermore, while primary and junior secondary education in public schools is free, there are several other direct and indirect costs. For example, school-related fees (such as parent–teacher association fees), uniforms, textbooks and transportation pose a significant barrier to many young people accessing education (Buba, 2019).

Unemployment. Unemployment is prevalent among Maiduguri’s youth. Opportunities exist in informal services, primarily cross-border trade, but these are insufficient to absorb the number of people willing and able to work. Respondents reported nearly universally that persistent unemployment or underemployment of young people was trapping them in “youthhood”,⁶⁶ because they could not help their families or afford marriage. Even though many young people have benefited from federal government and INGO youth interventions, these employment interventions are inadequate and fail to address the realities of unemployment and underemployment. While some educated Maiduguri youth have been employed and well compensated by INGOs, albeit temporarily, many such positions have been filled by people from outside the city. As related by one unemployed youth:

“I have applied for INGO jobs over 50 times. After submitting each application, I double-checked my resume and cover letter to ensure they were error-free, but I received no response. Some individuals even switch jobs from one NGO to another while earning hundreds of thousands of dollars, despite their inability to speak the local language.”⁶⁷

66 “Youthhood” represents a transitional phase bridging childhood and adulthood, embodying features from all three critical human growth and development stages (Namuggala, 2018). Consequently, individuals in their youthhood can simultaneously exhibit characteristics associated with childhood and adulthood. Compared with Honwana’s concept of “waithood”, “youthhood” is a more temporary stage. In Maiduguri, research participants shed light on the intricate nature of this stage. Young people, especially males, are grappling with attaining traditional markers of adulthood, including homeownership, marriage, parenthood and supporting their parents and families.

67 FGD, unemployed male youth, MMC, June 2022.

There are also few job openings in the federal and state governments. The recruitment processes for these are not transparent and appear to be primarily aimed at specific individuals close to politicians and godfathers, rather than at deserving youth. Because of this favouritism, some state government interventions have exacerbated a sense of exclusion and frustration, with opportunities perceived to be unjustly distributed, largely ineffective or otherwise out of reach for many young people. The young people interviewed emphasised that they wanted formal employment, but most employment opportunities are informal. Government and NGOs have offered some support to those engaged in informal economic activities.

Insecurity. Because of their limited access to education and employment opportunities, some young men join Boko Haram. And, because of the insurgency, many youths in the city displaced from rural areas are traumatised, live in overcrowded conditions, have infrequent access to food, face high levels of unemployment, and are forced to rely on humanitarian aid. Many women have become single mothers as a result of family separation or mass killings. In addition to the insurgency, some political elites have recruited young people as thugs to commit violence. While political violence has declined since the 2011 elections, as the ECOMOG gangs that later joined Boko Haram have largely been driven out of the city, youth gang violence has recently increased. As already mentioned, there are also concerns that some members of the state-sponsored CJTF militia are acting like political thugs.⁶⁸

Drug abuse. Drug abuse is prevalent; there are an estimated 300,000 users and many drug dens across the city where young people congregate to use cannabis, codeine and other drugs derived from various roots and chemicals (Borno Plan, 2020). Drug abuse has been a growing problem in Maiduguri since the 1980s because of unemployment, the poor quality of education, a rise in manual labour occupations (including informal transport, construction and farm labouring) with a high risk of injury, and a lack of healthcare services (Igun, 1983; Albert and Albert, 2018). The current drug problem is attributed to the Boko Haram insurgency. Some of the drug addicts are displaced youths and teenagers, including young women, who picked up the habit in IDP camps and kept it up even after they moved to host communities.⁶⁹ One of the displaced youths narrated his decision to start engaging in drugs: “I began using drugs after Boko Haram assassinated my two brothers in my presence. When I take drugs, nothing matters to me anymore. When anxiety arises, drugs alleviate it.”⁷⁰ Substance abuse exacerbates the factors that cause it, resulting in a self-perpetuating cycle of poverty and low productivity.

68 FDG with cross-sections of residents and KIIs with community leaders in Old Maiduguri, Shuwari, Zango-Gwange and Old Government Reservation Area (GRA), 29 June-19 July 2022.

69 “Freed from Boko Haram, Borno IDPs embrace drug use”. *Punch*, 26 October 2016 (accessed 20 February 2024).

70 KII, uneducated displaced male youth, MMC, June 2022.

Current and potential reforms

Reactivating the multistakeholder drugs control committee to prevent drug trafficking and deter addiction. The state government, NGOs and the Network of Civil Society Organisations in Borno State (NECSOB) have implemented multiple programmes and had some success in addressing the drug problem, with some users being supported to end their addiction. However, these programmes are mostly short donor projects that do not address the problem's root causes. Addressing such systemic causes requires multistakeholder engagement and a massive awareness campaign to prevent drug use and discourage those already abusing drugs. Such an approach would require close coordination between government officials, law enforcement, healthcare providers, local youth groups and other relevant national and community-based organisations.

In 2016, the government set up a Drug Control Committee comprising the military, the National Drugs Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA), the police, civil defence and other humanitarian and NGOs to implement some sensitisation on drug abuse in all the IDP camps.⁷¹ The committee has successfully reduced the drugs problem within IDP camps but, now these are all closed, the problem has spread to many other neighbourhoods within the city, and the committee is not active.⁷² Thus, a potential reform intervention could be to reactivate the drug control committee and include many additional stakeholders like youth groups, religious leaders and traditional leaders. The feasibility of this approach is further discussed in Section 6.

Addressing the low quality of primary and secondary education through teaching service reform. The state government and many stakeholders have acknowledged that a lack of skilled personnel has reduced the quality of teaching in primary and secondary schools (Borno Plan, 2020; USAID and Education Crisis Response, 2015). The state government and official development assistance organisations have implemented many programmes to address low-quality education. The state government has built and renovated schools, formed a committee to develop a long-term education management plan, introduced a digital platform designed to facilitate access to education to all students in Borno State, and increased teacher compensation.

Additionally, several donor-funded education projects, including from the US Agency for International Development (USAID), the then UK Department for International Development (DFID) and the EU, are helping to increase access to learning, build teacher capacity and develop curricula. This has compelled NGOs to work with the state government to reform teaching services at the primary and secondary school levels. However, gaps in the education reform programme remain. There is a continuing need to support the efforts of the state government and education

71 “Borno to declare state of emergency”. *PM News*, 26 October 2016 (accessed 20 February 2024).

72 Interviews with a cross-section of low-income residents of Old Maiduguri, July 2022.

stakeholders to provide qualified and skilled teachers and a good welfare package for teachers (Ali et al., 2020). A proposed solution is described in more detail in Section 6.

5.2. Safety and security

The state of safety and security in Maiduguri defies simplistic characterisation. Residents of low-income neighbourhoods define safety in terms of access to basic needs, including food, shelter, water, education and health services, and security in terms of the presence of security agents and checkpoints and the absence of crime. Maiduguri was the stronghold of insurgents and, almost a decade after their departure, residents of the city are still reeling from the trauma of that experience.⁷³ On the one hand, the city has seen an avalanche of programmes and interventions in the past decade aimed at engendering safety and security.⁷⁴ On the other hand, it has experienced an increase in street gangs and crime, including drug trafficking and abuse, armed robbery and other forms of crime, with implications for safety and security, particularly in low-income neighbourhoods, but also increasingly in middle- and high-income neighbourhoods.⁷⁵

Dominant ideas and actors

The safety and security domain in Maiduguri has three streams of discourse and practice, focusing on: 1) preventing insurgents from infiltrating and gaining a foothold in the city; 2) dealing with the after-effects of the insurgency; and 3) responding to the surge in crime levels. These three streams bring together diverse actors, with varied but interrelated definitions and understandings of safety and security, as well as different programmes and initiatives for achieving their objectives.

At the national level, several security agencies are involved: the military, the Nigeria Police Force, the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps, and the Nigeria Immigration Service. They are all governed by different federal ministries: the army, air force and navy are under the Federal Ministry of Defence; the police are under the Ministry of Police Affairs; the Nigerian Immigration Service is under the Federal Ministry of Internal Affairs; and the National Security and Civil Defence Corps is under the Federal Ministry of Interior. These security agencies are coordinated under the JTF Operation Restore Hope. Responses at the national level involve military deployments and missions aimed at dislodging extremists from their strongholds and retaking the territories under their control. According to a military officer well acquainted with the JTF,

“A key objective of these responses is to ensure that extremists are prevented from infiltrating and establishing a foothold in Maiduguri by stationing major military

73 “How North-East children battling mental health, trauma of Boko Haram war find solace in rehabilitation home”. *Punch*, 8 January 2022 (accessed 20 February 2024).

74 Phone KII with CSO official in Maiduguri, 30 July 2022.

75 FGD with residents of Old Maiduguri, 11 June 2022.

checkpoints on all the main roads leading into the city, as well as regular patrols and surveillance within and around the city”.⁷⁶

At the state level, several stakeholders are involved in the safety and security domain, notably the Borno SEMA and the Borno State Agency for Coordination of Sustainable Development and Humanitarian Response (BOACSDHR). Coordinated by BOACSDHR and working alongside SEMA, local and international NGOs and grassroots organisations are at the forefront of responding to the after-effects of the insurgency, including the large waves of IDPs and other related issues.⁷⁷ The stakeholders respond through a broad range of overlapping activities, including providing shelter, food and healthcare for populations devastated by the insurgency; youth and women empowerment programmes; and initiatives aimed at building community resilience. These actors operate alongside existing institutional structures, such as the MMC, Jere LGA and Borno state traditional ruling council. Armed groups, militias and vigilantes are key actors in the safety and security domain in Maiduguri. These groups include:

- The CJTF. This started in 2013 as a group of young men known at the time as “Yan Gora”, who mobilised themselves to help dislodge Boko Haram from Maiduguri. Many of the city’s residents believe these young men were self-motivated, but some experts believe the military played a role in the establishment of the group. It is possible that it emerged as a local community effort, but later got the backing of the military and the state government. Composed mainly of young men from poor communities affected by the insurgency, the CJTF played a pivotal role in dislodging Boko Haram from Maiduguri in mid-2013.
- Borno Youth Empowerment Scheme (BOYES): BOYES is Borno State government’s effort to formalise and institutionalise the CJTF; it has absorbed many of its operatives (all BOYES members are CJTF), while some of the remaining CJTF operatives have been brought directly under the state Ministry of Justice.
- Many community-based vigilante and anti-crime networks at the neighbourhood level, coordinated by residents to tackle the growing spate of crime in the city’s low-income areas. These security networks are largely informal, organised by communities and operating under the local *bulamas*. They are not linked to government or any state security agency. Often, residents contribute small amounts to help members of these informal security networks (CIVIC, 2018).

⁷⁶ Interview with a military officer, Abuja, 16 July 2022.

⁷⁷ Various international partners, including France, Germany, Japan, the UK and the USA, along with donor organisations like the UK Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO), the EU, the USAID, Lake Chad Basin Commission (LCBC) and the African Union (AU) Commission, have actively engaged in non-military responses across Maiduguri and other parts of the northeast. This involvement primarily includes grants and funding for international bodies and INGOs such as UNICEF, the World Health Organization (WHO), Save the Children, IRC, FHI360, Action Aid, Action Against Hunger, the World Food Programme (WFP), Plan International, NRC and numerous local NGOs.

Political role of the domain: Safety and security as a source of political support and rents

Since the return to democratic government in 1999, Nigeria has experienced an increase in incidents of communal violence and insecurity. Over the past decade, the security situation across the country has deteriorated to crisis point. Security is at the heart of political discourses and campaigns. The political elites opportunistically use the security situation to discredit their political opponents or prop up their own positions, and have used the insurgency in the northeast as the basis for canvassing political support. For example, when the PDP was the ruling party, members of the APC, as the main opposition, accused PDP of being incapable of addressing the security situation, proposing an APC-led government as the solution. The tables turned in the 2015 elections, when APC became the ruling party and PDP the main opposition. Members of PDP have since been blaming APC for the growing insecurity across the country, and presenting themselves as the solution, especially as campaigns intensified in the lead-up to the 2023 general elections.⁷⁸ At the local level, party supporters act similarly. In Maiduguri, supporters of the ruling APC emphasise the efforts made by the government, while the supporters of the opposition focus on the failures of the government to tackle the problem.⁷⁹ Successive governors of Borno State have made improving the security situation one of their key objectives. The former governor, Kashim Shettima, pledged to rebuild communities destroyed by the insurgency as part of broader efforts to tackle the security situation.⁸⁰ His successor, Babagana Zulum, emphasised the successes recorded against insurgents in the northeast and promised that his administration will end the insurgency by 2023.⁸¹

How the military frames the security situation and its implications for safety and security outcomes is much more complex. On the one hand, the military chiefs and commanders want to demonstrate their capacity and competence in tackling the insurgency by showcasing their victories against the insurgents and downplaying their losses.⁸² On the other hand, elements within the military “who view the insecurity as an opportunity for making money are motivated to ensure the insecurity lingers so as to maintain their source of wealth”, according to a vigilante leader.⁸³ Many residents of Maiduguri believe that some military officers and soldiers are contributing to escalating

78 “Politicising nation’s security challenges insensitive, unpatriotic – APC tells PDP”. *Premium Times*, 21 December 2021 (accessed 20 February 2024).

79 Interview and informal discussions with a cross-section of residents in Maiduguri, 28 June-3 July 2022.

80 “Shettima promises to rebuild destroyed communities by end of year”. *The Guardian* (Nigeria), 11 October 2016 (accessed 20 February 2024).

81 “Zulum commends military for recent successes on insurgency”. *This Day Live*, 6 April 2021 (accessed 20 February 2024); and “Boko Haram insurgency will end by 2023 – Zulum”. *Vanguard*, 11 February 2022 (accessed 20 February 2024).

82 “Army in Gwoza offensive downplays casualties in Mainok: reports”. *PM News*, 27 April 2021 (accessed 20 February 2024).

83 Interview with vigilante leader, 29 June 2022.

the insecurity to ensure the situation remains volatile, so as to “keep making money from the fight”.⁸⁴

In addition to exploiting the security situation to amass legitimacy and political support, the political elite and top security officials, as well as community leaders and CSOs, draw rents from the security situation. Across Nigeria, security programmes are a major conduit for syphoning funds. For example, the 36 state governors receive monthly “security votes” – monetary allocations given to their states by the federal government for the purpose of fostering security. Security votes are not subjected to any form of legislative oversight or independent auditing, and serve as a channel for state officials to steal money. The amount of these monthly allocations is not publicly known. What is known is that the amount varies every month and between states, and it depends on the security situation. In states across the country, governors use security votes to accumulate property, finance their campaigns and sustain political patronage and support. According to Transparency International, governors and LGA chairs are pocketing over N375 billion in the name of security votes annually.⁸⁵ Transparency International has also alleged that the Nigerian military officers, politicians and other elites have enriched themselves by diverting funds meant for fighting insurgents in Borno and other parts of the northeast. The report emphasised that: “The kleptocratic capture of the Nigerian defence sector has seen over US\$15 billion stolen, leaving the military without vital equipment, insufficiently trained, low in morale and under resourced”.⁸⁶ The money is syphoned through “kickbacks, payments to ‘ghost soldiers’ who don’t exist, or via no-bid contracts resulting in inflated spending that benefits politically connected contractors”.⁸⁷

Safety and security governance: Rivalries, trust deficit, exclusions and implications for security outcomes

Residents of Maiduguri generally perceive the top military officers and commanders as corrupt. Across interviewees from both low- and middle-income neighbourhoods, there was significant consensus that military commanders posted to Borno state have used the fight against the insurgents as a means to enrich themselves. Residents’ dissatisfaction with the military originated at the start of the insurgency, when they perceived that it was not doing enough. But corruption does not stop at the level of the political and military elite. At the neighbourhood level, residents of low-income neighbourhoods accuse community leaders of appropriating aid in the form of food items, toiletries and other necessities meant for IDPs. The pervasive corruption that

84 Interview with resident of Old GRA, 29 June 2022.

85 “Insecurity: govs, LG chairmen pocket over N375bn security vote annually, yet situation persists”. *Business Day*, 27 June 2021 (accessed 20 February 2024).

86 “International community must join fight against defence corruption in Nigeria”. Transparency International, 18 May 2017 (accessed 20 February 2024).

87 “Report: Corruption in Nigerian military benefits Boko Haram”. 19 May 2017 (accessed 20 February 2024).

characterises security interventions and aid programmes has undermined the legitimacy and effectiveness of these programmes.

In all of this, it is important to point out that governor Zulum enjoys significant legitimacy and support within Maiduguri. Many residents believe that he is “well intentioned” and that “though almost all politicians do not mean well he is better than many of them”.⁸⁸ Other residents go as far as emphasising that Borno is lucky to have Zulum as governor: “We’re very lucky to have Zulum because the situation would have been worse if not for him. He’s one of the best governors in the country and has shown commitment in trying to fight the insurgency.”⁸⁹

The challenge of fostering safety and security governance is compounded by ambiguities around levels of authority and control. One such ambiguity relates to the role of the governor as the chief security officer of the state. Although the governor of Borno holds this position constitutionally, he is not in control of the armed forces and the police. The armed forces are coordinated at the federal level under the defence ministry and office of the security adviser. Similarly, the police operate under the Federal Ministry of Police Affairs, which is directly under the command of the Inspector General of Police at the police headquarters in Abuja. This chain of command bypasses the governor, who has more local knowledge, and leaves decisionmaking in the hands of officials who are far removed from the local context. This can cost lives. For example, the governor of Borno has on several occasions faulted security strategies used by the military, but he does not have the power to order any changes.⁹⁰ This has caused unnecessary delays in responding to emergencies, as well as tensions between the state government and the military commands in Borno State.

While the governor’s power is technically limited, he has found other ways to exert influence – politically and through PR stunts. He has publicly criticised the military for not doing enough to secure Borno State, and challenges them openly. He takes calculated risks and personally travels to unsafe areas of the state without clearance from the military, as a way of “shaming them”; these actions have been publicly praised by the president of Nigeria, who has expressed admiration for the governor.⁹¹ The governor also reportedly uses funding from the federal monthly security votes to provide additional logistical support to the army, the police and the civil defence. The vehicles provided by the governor are inscribed with “Donated by the State Government”.

Constitutionally, the police are responsible for internal security. But from 2011 to 2013, Borno, Yobe and Adamawa states were under emergency rule because of the fight against the insurgency. The police became subservient to the military, which eventually

88 Interviews with a cross-section of community leaders and residents of Maiduguri, 29 June-7 July 2022.

89 FGD with a cross-section of residents and interview with a resident of Old GRA, 15 July 2022.

90 “Boko Haram: Borno gov, Zulum faults new military strategy”. *Vanguard*, 25 August 2019 (accessed 20 February 2024).

91 As explained by one of the local researchers.

led to clashes between the two, including the killing of police officers. When Zulum came to power in 2015, based to a large extent on his promises to improve the security situation, he was dissatisfied with the military and believed other security agencies had to be brought into the fight. He empowered the police by creating a rapid response squad, which is close to the governor. The governor's support for the police became a source of friction between the latter and the military. While the relationship between the two forces is cordial nowadays, tensions remain.⁹²

Another factor that undermines safety and security governance are the tensions and distrust between government and civil society actors, especially INGOs. Both the former (Shettima) and current governor (Zulum) have accused NGOs of mismanaging funds donated for addressing the plight of IDPs.⁹³ Zulum has recently suspended all INGOs from operating in Maiduguri and banned NGOs from distributing food items to resettled IDPs.⁹⁴ The 2021 campaign for the relocation and resettlement of IDPs from camps back to their communities by the Borno State government was generally perceived as too hasty by aid organisations. Many IDPs lament that the decision to resettle them back in their communities was, in the words of one, "hurried and inhuman"; they were not consulted, and it has put "many of them in harm's way". This created tensions between the state government and NGOs and hindered partnership and cooperation towards more effective intervention.

Similarly, residents of low-income communities in Maiduguri are excluded from discourses and practices of safety and security. For example, they were not adequately involved in decisions around the rehabilitation and resettlement of thousands of so-called "repentant insurgents" under Operation Safe Corridor – a demobilisation, deradicalisation and reintegration programme established in 2016 by the Nigerian government to rehabilitate and resettle former extremists.⁹⁵ This exclusion has fostered a general sense of mistrust towards government institutions and forced residents to resort to self-help. The general belief is that the popularity of self-defence groups in Maiduguri (such as the CJTF) and other conflict-ridden parts of Nigeria is a result of the inadequacy of state forces. While this partly explains the situation, another factor is also at play – communities are distrustful and suspicious of state forces, which undermines their legitimacy. Many residents of Maiduguri emphasised that vigilantes are more reliable than the military and police. This, along with the relative absence of government in the city's low-income communities, explains the proliferation of unregulated self-defence and anti-crime vigilantes (and other street gangs) which sometimes turn predatory.

92 As explained by one of the local researchers.

93 "Updated: Boko Haram: Borno governor alleges misuse of donor funds". *Premium Times*, 25 June 2021 (accessed 20 February 2024).

94 "Zulum bans relief materials distribution in resettled Borno communities". *The Guardian*, 10 December 2021 (accessed 20 February 2024).

95 "IDPs angry as Borno govt plans reintegration of 1,000 'repentant' Boko Haram fighters". *Punch*, 4 August 2021 (accessed 20 February 2024).

Key challenges

Street gangs and criminal enclaves in low-income neighbourhoods. One of the major safety and security issues facing Maiduguri's low-income neighbourhoods is the proliferation of street gangs and other criminal networks, and the resultant sharp increase in crime levels. For most residents of low-income neighbourhoods, the most urgent security problem is the increase in armed robbery, burglary, theft, drug trafficking, gang fights, and rape and other forms of sexual violence. Residents are more concerned about the activities of street gangs and criminal networks than they are about the possibility of Boko Haram insurgents invading and establishing a foothold in the city again.⁹⁶ These street gangs and criminal networks engage in theft, armed robbery and drug trafficking, and residents are often caught in the middle of turf wars between rival gangs. Many residents fear that, if not curbed, street gangs and criminal networks – already a major source of insecurity – could become even more dangerous.⁹⁷

A key element of the increase in crime levels is the growing prevalence of criminal enclaves – urban spaces associated with drug trafficking, drug use and other criminal activities. Residents identified particular areas as a major source of insecurity, describing them as places where criminal elements converge. These criminal enclaves serve as hideouts for criminals, who usually harass and sometimes rob passers-by. Most residents, especially women, avoid these places, particularly at night. In addition to being unsafe for residents, these enclaves are sites of turf wars between rival gangs. Such clashes involve lethal weapons and residents are often caught in the crossfire. The military reportedly also partakes in drug use, with respondents suggesting that members of the military may also be involved in selling drugs.

Politicisation and possible instrumentalisation of the CJTF by politicians. While residents of Maiduguri are quick to applaud CJTF operatives for the pivotal role they played in dislodging Boko Haram from the city, there are many complaints about “their misconduct, abuse of power and taking the laws into their own hands”.⁹⁸ Additionally, although the CJTF continues to provide security in local communities in Maiduguri, many residents and stakeholders are concerned that it is experiencing a gradual process of politicisation and that this could lead to politicians instrumentalising the group during elections.⁹⁹ This politicisation of the CJTF is happening, first, through members' recruitment into BOYES and, second, through the group's increasing participation in political events.

Both residents and key stakeholders in the safety and security domain in Maiduguri observed that the recruitment of CJTF operatives into BOYES (whereupon they receive

96 FGD with a cross-section of residents of Zango-Gwange, 28 June 2022.

97 FGD with residents of Zango-Gwange, 28 June 2022 and KII with community leader in Old Maiduguri, 29 June 2022.

98 Interviews with a cross-section of residents in Old Maiduguri, Shuwari and Gwange-Zango, 29 June-19 July 2022.

99 Interviews with a cross-section of residents and experts in Maiduguri, June-July 2022.

stipends from the Borno state government) is marred by favouritism and patronage. The government officials who handle the enrolment process populate the list of recruits with their own relatives and associates, often in exchange for political loyalty and support during the elections.¹⁰⁰ CJTF operatives who come through this arrangement are politicised and will most likely pursue the interests of their benefactors during elections, by either intimidating voters or rigging elections in favour of their benefactors.¹⁰¹ For example, the PDP – Nigeria’s main opposition party – recently complained about the “harassment and intimidation of its members by the Civilian Joint Task Force ahead of the 2023 general elections in Borno State”.¹⁰²

The second politicising process is the increasing recruitment of CJTF members to maintain order at campaign rallies and other political events, particularly for the ruling APC. By participating in such events, CJTF has increasingly developed ties with politicians, making them susceptible to being instrumentalised by political actors.¹⁰³ Because it has a wide network of operatives and it enjoys a significant degree of influence across many local communities in Maiduguri, CJTF has the capacity to influence what happens at polling stations during elections. Politicians are aware of this, hence their interest in mobilising this vigilante group at election time.

Current and potential reforms

Stakeholders have adopted three different approaches to addressing security challenges: 1) securitised and military approaches; 2) non-military or aid approaches; and 3) community-based approaches. Securitised and military approaches are based on a traditional understanding of security that conceives of the state as its main provider (Lin, 2011). This provision includes the use of violent force to eliminate or apprehend insurgents and criminal organisations, disrupt their support base and networks, and undermine or completely destroy their organisational capacity. From the perspective of both the national government and the Borno State government, security is understood and enforced through a strong state-centric lens. To this end, a central objective of securitisation in Maiduguri has to do with protecting the territorial integrity of the country.

Non-military responses fall into three main categories: programmes that seek to strengthen local conflict prevention and mitigation systems; programmes that seek to restore local governance and basic services; and programmes that seek to foster social cohesion and ensure the reintegration of former combatants.¹⁰⁴ Aid approaches that focus on delivering economic and development benefits, such as social and economic empowerment programmes, infrastructure development, provision of health services

100 Interviews with residents of Shuwari, Old Maiduguri and Gwange, July 2022.

101 Interview with civil society actor, 5 July 2022.

102 “[PDP decries harassment of members by CJTF in Borno](#)”. *Daily Trust*, 8 September 2022 (accessed 20 February 2024).

103 Interview with academic/expert, 7 July 2022.

104 “[Stabilizing Northeast Nigeria after Boko Haram](#)”. Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 3 May 2019 (accessed 20 February 2024).

and of social amenities, are grounded in a concern about the social and economic wellbeing of local communities as a core part of responses to insecurity in Maiduguri.

Similarly, community-based approaches focused on securing the community against insurgents and criminals are rooted in the notion of human security. This conceptual framework offers a more encompassing understanding of security, emphasising the basic needs of individuals and vulnerable groups in communities affected by violence (Kaldor, 2007). Community-based approaches are responses and actions planned and implemented by local residents in the form of vigilante groups, self-defence groups and other community initiatives aimed at securing the community against insurgents and criminals.

The approaches and programmes advocated by international partners, donors and INGOs are strong on tackling corruption and fostering transparency in both state and society in all intervention programmes. The national government has mainly focused on military and securitised measures, and has not demonstrated much commitment to good governance, tackling corruption, improving the provision of social services or addressing the underlying social and economic factors that fuel and sustain insecurity. One of the main factors that determines the success or failure of programmes is the degree to which the target population is involved at every stage – conception, design, implementation and termination. The mobilisation of local residents (vigilantes) as the main security network in local communities exemplifies an intervention that has worked. In most cases, the emergence of these vigilantes is driven by local needs and exigencies, not by any external factors or influences. They enjoy a considerable level of public trust and local legitimacy, which explains their success (CIVIC, 2018). Potential reforms must be grounded in these principles (for further details see Section 6).

5.3. Land and connectivity

Maiduguri is one of Nigeria's fastest developing cities. It grew from only 50,000 inhabitants in 1950 to over a million in 2022, and from a small settlement to an area of about 189 km² (Jimme et al., 2019). Road and drainage connectivity stands out as the most important determinant of land and property values in Maiduguri, with government investments in roads significantly affecting valuations. At the peak of the Boko Haram conflict – between 2012 and 2014 – security replaced connective infrastructure as the main factor influencing land value. Conflict-driven displacement increased land prices, with land being more expensive in safer areas of the city.¹⁰⁵ For IDPs and low-income residents, acquiring land informally by purchasing from local traditional leaders who issue customary titles may be the only available option. However, the absence of proper documentation frequently results in conflicts over land ownership and the development of informal settlements in flood-prone areas.¹⁰⁶ These settlements face

¹⁰⁵ "A former Boko Haram stronghold is now one of Nigeria's fastest growing property markets". *Quartz Daily*, 19 May 2016 (accessed 20 February 2024).

¹⁰⁶ "Borno orders Maiduguri residents to relocate over imminent flooding". *The Guardian*, 12 September 2022 (accessed 20 February 2024).

challenges such as inadequate sanitation, adverse health outcomes and limited access to transportation (Nkwocha et al., 2020).

Land and connectivity administration and key actors

Land administration in Maiduguri is governed by Nigeria's 2004 Land Use Act, which is the national legislative framework. According to the Act, urban land is held in trust by the state governor (where not held by the federal government), while other land within the state comes under the purview of local government areas.¹⁰⁷ The Federal Ministry of Works and Housing also administers about 10 km² of Maiduguri's land, which it acquired from the state government. The governor's power to manage land in the state is discharged by the Borno State Geographic Information Service (BOGIS), which is the most important agency in land administration. The successes recorded in land administration through the use of information technology-based approaches in some Nigerian cities, notably Abuja (Abuja Geographic Information Service) and Kaduna (Kaduna Geographic Information Service), may perhaps have inspired the establishment of BOGIS. These successes are measured in terms of increased citizen confidence in land sales and purchase, which reduces conflicts over land and tightens development control measures (Dukiya and Morenikeji, 2017).

But it is also important to recognise that the establishment of BOGIS was not completely independent of broader reform efforts. The agency has been significantly influenced by the World Bank's States Fiscal Transparency, Accountability and Sustainability (SFTAS) support to encourage fiscal sustainability across Nigerian states. One of SFTAS's results indicators requires "states to strengthen the foundation for state property taxation by updating property records of at least 20% of all properties in urban areas".¹⁰⁸ This demonstrates how domestic land reform initiatives are connected to external reform factors. Borno State thus qualified for the World Bank's assistance by capturing relevant data for 95,000 houses in Maiduguri. In 2020 (the baseline year of the World Bank land reform in Borno), BOGIS started to record significant revenues from property tax. Revenue collection was only N68 million in 2019, but increased to N450 million in 2020, when SFTAS was introduced, and further to over N1 billion in 2021.¹⁰⁹

Even though the Act entrusts land to the governor, in practice land in Maiduguri is administered by all the tiers of government, including traditional leaders and non-state actors. Pursuant to Section 3 of the Act, which provides power to the state governor to delineate an urban area, in 2000 the Borno State House of Assembly passed into law a bill designating all areas within a 25km radius of the Shehu's palace (the symbolic centre of the city) as urban.¹¹⁰ Today, this defined radius in practice falls within five

107 Land Use Act. See laws.nigeria.placng.org (accessed 8 March 2024).

108 States Fiscal Transparency, Accountability and Sustainability (SFTAS) Performance for Results (PforR). See sftas.org.ng/about-us (accessed 7 March 2024).

109 "Ground rents, titles add N1.42 billion to Borno IGR". *The Guardian*, 7 February 2022 (accessed 20 February 2024).

110 Borno State Urban Planning and Development Board Law 2000.

contiguous LGAs – Maiduguri Metropolitan, Jere, Konduga, Mafa and Magumeri – consisting of built and unbuilt areas with different actors administering land and in contravention of the law. As the city straddles these five LGAs the latter's land departments also administer limited portions. This power appears to conflict with the governor's Land Use Act-derived powers to delineate an urban area. It is noteworthy that the federal and local governments are weak actors in the land domain in Maiduguri, while the state governor's power over land is overwhelming. This can be seen in the high number of layouts the state government has created and allocated over time.¹¹¹ Between 1978 and 2022, successive governors of Borno State approved the creation and allocation of 29 layouts within Maiduguri. Access to these layouts has been based largely on patronage and rent-seeking considerations, for both the political class and civil servants.

A sizeable area of land is also held by local traditional leaders under customary tenure. It is not possible to determine the scale of this land as the boundaries are subjective, without clear delineation, which explains the contestations between government and traditional leaders in some areas around the city. The customary tenure system, headed by traditional rulers during the precolonial and postcolonial periods before the initial promulgation of the Land Use Act in 1978, still explains traditional rulers' active involvement in land administration in Maiduguri until today. By virtue of their role in the informal exchange and registration of customary titles in the city, they are powerful actors;¹¹² so also are registered and unregistered property vendors who work in concert with these local leaders. Both groups derive economic advantage in the exchange of land outside the formal system, in contravention of section 20 (a) of the Land Use Act.¹¹³ Since land transactions by these two groups are not registered with the state government, which charges 7% of the total sum on land and property transfer, the state government is short changed.¹¹⁴ Poor registration of titles by local leaders has been identified as the main reason for conflicts over land within the city.

Beyond the pivotal institutional, infrastructural and ecological city systems, the ACRC land and connectivity domain approach significantly emphasises transportation and telecommunications (Acheampong et al., 2022). In Maiduguri, the involvement of both federal and local governments in transportation is minimal, resembling the weak role observed in land administration. The primary authority lies with the Borno State government, specifically through the Ministry of Works, responsible for road

111 A layout is a planned piece of land consisting of several plots formally allocated to individuals by the government. They are often not serviced, although there are provisions for such services as roads, schools, clinics and places of worship.

112 The involvement of traditional leaders in land matters is so pervasive that they had to receive training in documentation of customary titles by the British Council.

113 This section provides that: "It shall not be lawful for any customary right of occupancy or any part thereof to be alienated by assignment, mortgage, transfer of possession, sublease or otherwise howsoever- (a) without the consent of the Governor in cases where the property is to be sold by or under the order of any court under the provisions of the applicable Sheriffs and Civil Process Law."

114 KII with director, legal services, BOGIS, 5 August 2022.

construction and maintenance, and the Ministry of Transport, overseeing policy, intra- and inter-urban transportation, and the enforcement of traffic regulations on state-owned roads.

Digital connectivity, on the other hand, is primarily steered by the private sector in Maiduguri. The federal government contributes to this landscape by providing policy frameworks and regulations. Major telecom companies like MTN, Airtel, Glo and 9mobile operate in the city, with MTN and Airtel being the predominant players. These companies have interlinked the city using fibre optic cables, offering limited connectivity with the external world. Interestingly, unlike in many other cities, the values of land and property in Maiduguri remain unaffected by digital connectivity.

Political role of the domain

Although land is of immense significance to many groups in Maiduguri, formal access to it is difficult, despite the existence of a guideline which many believe does not take care of the needs of low-income and ordinary community members, including women. The Land Use Act specifies that a Land Use Allocation Committee (LUAC) to receive applications and allocate land to citizens be established in all states of the federation. While a LUAC exists in Borno State, it has limited powers to satisfy the needs of ordinary people, for whom formal access to land usually goes through third parties (land vendors) who make brisk fortunes by selling land acquired by powerful politicians and public servants from government at high rates.

The importance of land and connectivity to the political elite in Maiduguri is evident in two respects: first, elites use land and public housing as a tool for political patronage by allocating land to powerful local politicians who have assisted them; second, they influence its connectivity within the city space. The powers accorded by the Land Use Act to the state governor to hold land in trust for the people with absolute control of its administration are open to abuse – land becomes an easy tool for patronage in a plural community divided along ethnic, religious and political lines. Allocation of one or two rental units to local supporters within government housing estates is an even more effective patronage tool, as it confers better advantages than owning undeveloped parcels of land, particularly when, as per government tradition, these estates are sold on an owner-occupier basis at a 90% discount after a period of time. So, upon completion of housing estates, units are allocated to powerful politicians, their relations and associates (and to a lesser extent to high-ranking civil servants). At the moment, 80% of government estates in the city have been sold.

Similarly, road connectivity in Maiduguri appears to be strongly correlated with political support and patronage. To illustrate this point, we examined development in Maiduguri Metropolitan LGA, the focus of elite attention. There are 15 wards in the LGA, with the population distributed unevenly among them, which is reflected in their respective numbers of polling units. Local politicians spend lots of resources and pay significant attention to wards with many polling units, that is, with a larger number of voters, even at the expense of other wards with more pressing challenges. While the city's

developed area spans about four LGAs, most attention is given to Maisandari ward, where a significant proportion of the voting population of the city resides. The Maisandari ward has two parts: the affluent and low-density but most developed part of the city, consisting of the GRA and its surroundings, which provide residential accommodation to the city's elite and political class, and the high-density, low-income, cosmopolitan but rapidly expanding part, which produces most of the voter population. This ward has nearly a quarter of the polling units in Maiduguri and is regarded as one of the largest political wards in the country, hence its strategic value to political leaders. It was described by one politician as “a ward that is more important than several local governments combined, its results often decide who becomes the governor or local government chairman”.¹¹⁵ Patterns of road and drainage provision between 2010 and 2022 make this evident: Maisandari enjoyed 89% of government investment (see Monguno et al., 2022).

Dynamics of land value change: connectivity and conflict as key determinants.

Unlike Lagos, Abuja and Kano, Maiduguri does not have any site-and-service schemes. The government is the most important provider of infrastructure (road and drains especially), which often comes after buildings have been erected by individuals. Road and drainage connectivity stands out as the most important determinant of land and property values in Maiduguri, and government investment in road connectivity significantly affects land and property values. According to estimates made by valuation experts, the value of land and properties in Maiduguri is influenced by their proximity to available road points.¹¹⁶ This is primarily because locations with better road infrastructure are often more desirable for various purposes, such as residential, commercial or industrial use. Thus, land and property values across the city reflect the politicised and lopsided patterns of government infrastructure investment.

At the peak of the Boko Haram conflict, when safety became the overriding consideration, security overshadowed connective infrastructure as a factor influencing land value. Despite the insecurity in peri-urban areas, there has been a remarkable increase in the amount of land converted to agricultural use. In other areas, however, agriculture has decreased as a result of the conflict. Some central areas of the city experienced massive abandonment of housing and a plummeting of land values between 2012 and 2014, but this trend has largely reversed in recent years. In other areas, the insecurity continues to negatively affect land values, particularly around military facilities such as Giwa Barracks, where hundreds of insurgents were initially detained, making it a deliberate target of attack. The effect of the Boko Haram conflict on telecommunications and electricity infrastructure was substantial too, and led to reduced livelihood options and an increased cost of living. The destruction of land records by insurgents, for instance in Konduga, meant that titles could not easily be

115 Telephone interview with a politician and former resident of Maisandari, Maiduguri, 24 August, 2022.

116 Multiple interviews with valuation experts in Maiduguri, July 2022.

verified by government in the affected parts of the city, so people avoided purchase of land in these areas, which led to a decline in land values.

One of the most significant shocks to land and connectivity in Maiduguri was the large influx of IDPs into the city. At the peak of the conflict and associated displacement in 2016, there was a population of about 300,000 IDPs living in formal and informal camps and in host communities.¹¹⁷ Several other informal settlements sprang up within the city and its outskirts. Many displaced families who could afford to bought land, which created high demand and price increases. Given that most of these IDPs were involved in informal land transactions, often facilitated by informal land agents, *bulamas* or other local traditional leaders, this also has implications for both land tenure policies and security in the city. In some neighbourhoods, for example, this situation has led to heightened land insecurity and increased competition among IDPs, host communities and returnees within an increasingly constrained land space (Kamta et al., 2020).¹¹⁸

Urban land taxation, customary land registration and vulnerable informal settlements. In principle, land is taxed annually by BOGIS in Maiduguri (via payment of ground rent), although enforcement has been rather weak until recently. The creation of BOGIS in the latter part of 2019 was responsible for the reforms that led to improvements in the collection of land taxes (from only N68 million in 2019 to N1.045 billion in 2021).

However, the continued use of customary titles for land and property is common in the city. Estimated figures for customary titles in the LGAs were 90% (Mafa), 85% (Konduga), 80% (Jere), and 30% (Maiduguri Metropolitan).¹¹⁹ Because these titles are often issued by local traditional leaders who profit therefrom, and without adequate land registration techniques, they are liable to cause conflict. And because transactions witnessed by local leaders are outside the formal system, BOGIS views them as lost revenue. BOGIS's increase in systematic land registration is likely to affect the power and rent-seeking opportunities of traditional rulers (and other unlicensed land dealers). Unless traditional rulers' roles are properly defined in the new system, they may continue administering land as they have done for several generations, buttressed by the social legitimacy they have acquired therefrom, thus posing a significant threat to the success of BOGIS.

Key challenges and existing/potential reforms

From customary to systematic land registration. Formal systems to access land do not account for the needs of low-income and disadvantaged community members.¹²⁰

117 "City of Challenge and opportunity: Employment and livelihoods for internally displaced people in Maiduguri, Borno State". *IDMC*, February 2018 (accessed 8 March 2024).

118 "Landowners evict unofficial displaced people's camp in Nigeria's Borno State". *HumAngle*, 5 August 2023 (accessed 20 February 2024).

119 KII with land officers of the Jere, Konduga, Maiduguri and Mafa LGAs, June–August 2022.

120 Informal developers mostly divide a standard 450m² plot into a maximum of up to four smaller units to respond to the needs of low-income households which may not be able to afford the standard size plot. When they sell this land, private developers often neglect the need for

Although BOGIS officials disagreed with this notion in interviews, it was confirmed by most groups and individuals we spoke to. The result, as we have seen, is a booming informal land business headed by local traditional leaders, with no proper oversight, which leads to land conflicts and informal settlements that do not comply with the city's master plan. In these settlements, flooding and poor sanitation are prevalent, affecting low-income people yearly.¹²¹ The state government's efforts to coordinate the roles of BOGIS, local government councils and traditional rulers in land registration could help solve these problems. The digitisation of all parcels of land and buildings with owners' details is already underway through a proposed "systematic land registration" approach by BOGIS. The feasibility of this reform is discussed in more detail in Section 6.

From a restriction on *keke* imports to Maiduguri, to a transition to a green alternative. Motorcycles were the commonest means of commercial transport in Maiduguri until 2011, when they were banned following their use by the Boko Haram terror group to perpetrate crime. In their place, the government approved the use of motorised *keke* tricycle taxis within Maiduguri. Soon they became the dominant means of transport, with great appeal to unemployed youths. At present, *keke* transport directly employs 23,000 registered youths as operators (more when the vehicles' owners are factored in), making it the city's largest employer of informal youth labour.¹²²

The unregulated rise of *kekes* led to a chaotic traffic situation, pollution and problems with on-board theft and other lawless behaviour. In 2020, the government placed a two-year ban (later extended indefinitely) on the importation of *kekes* to the city, to reduce their numbers.¹²³ The *kekes* have to be replaced every three years, so this ban has had a significant impact on the numbers on the road. It has resulted in many of the city's young people, IDPs and women losing their livelihoods, which has led to a spike in crime within the city. It has also made transport inefficient and expensive; by 2022, it had almost paralysed poor people's mobility. The government created the Borno State Traffic Management Agency (BOTMA) and introduced biometric data capture of all *keke* riders and owners to monitor the lawlessness of riders and increase revenue generation. Despite these measures, the *kekes* are still heavily linked to crime in the city.

To address these challenges, the government could expand on an existing public-private partnership that converts fuel-engine minibuses to solar-powered ones that charge the same fee as the *kekes* and could gradually replace them. However, this would result in further job losses among young people.

public services other than roads. It is only recently that BOGIS has enforced strict compliance with the provision of such services.

121 For instance, heavy rainfall recorded in 2023 has rendered homeless many poor families living in such badly planned informal settlements within Maiduguri.

122 One *keke* may have two to three part-time riders.

123 Some members of the political elite were accused of importing and selling *kekes* at very high prices despite the ban.

From inadequate roads and drains to improvements through participatory budgeting. Most low-income neighbourhoods and IDP camps in Maiduguri suffer from inadequate government attention to roads and drainage.¹²⁴ This partly stems from the politicisation of infrastructure within the city. To secure infrastructure communities must pressure the state, with their chances increasing if they align with the ruling party. Neglected and underserved low-income neighbourhoods lack political voice and a strong sense of community engagement. While it is the responsibility of local government councils to provide minor access roads, this role has been made increasingly difficult thanks to the appropriation of finances by the state government since Nigeria's return to democratic rule in 1999.

Infrastructural neglect has led to poor access to transport services, including *keke* services. Where *kekés* are available, costs are often prohibitive for the urban poor, which affects children's school attendance, among other things. Poorly drained neighbourhoods also suffer from the prevalence of transmissible waterborne diseases, especially during the rainy season when streets become inundated.¹²⁵

These problems could be addressed through the coordinated action of networked civil society for policy influence, modelled on the recent successes of the NECSOB with support from the FCDO-funded Partnership to Engage, Reform and Learn (PERL). For the past four years, NECSOB has fostered citizen-driven budgeting, involving wide-ranging stakeholder consultations and inputs into the annual state budgeting process, so that the budget reflected community needs.

6. Overarching analysis

This report has shown how national and city-level politics, urban systems and particular configurations of actors, agencies, ideas and practices have shaped development in the domains of youth and capability development, safety and security and land and connectivity in Maiduguri. It has also shown that developmental problems persist, affecting the wellbeing and life prospects of urban dwellers – particularly marginalised groups – and damaging the environment. The holistic analysis presented in this report enables us to identify the most pressing developmental problems in Maiduguri, and the challenges likely to be encountered in efforts to solve them in an equitable and (environmentally and fiscally) sustainable way. In this concluding section, we sum up the main developmental problems, and propose suitable ways of addressing them in light of the challenges described.

124 "Flood submerges Maiduguri IDPs camp". *Daily Trust*, 20 July 2016 (accessed 20 February 2024).

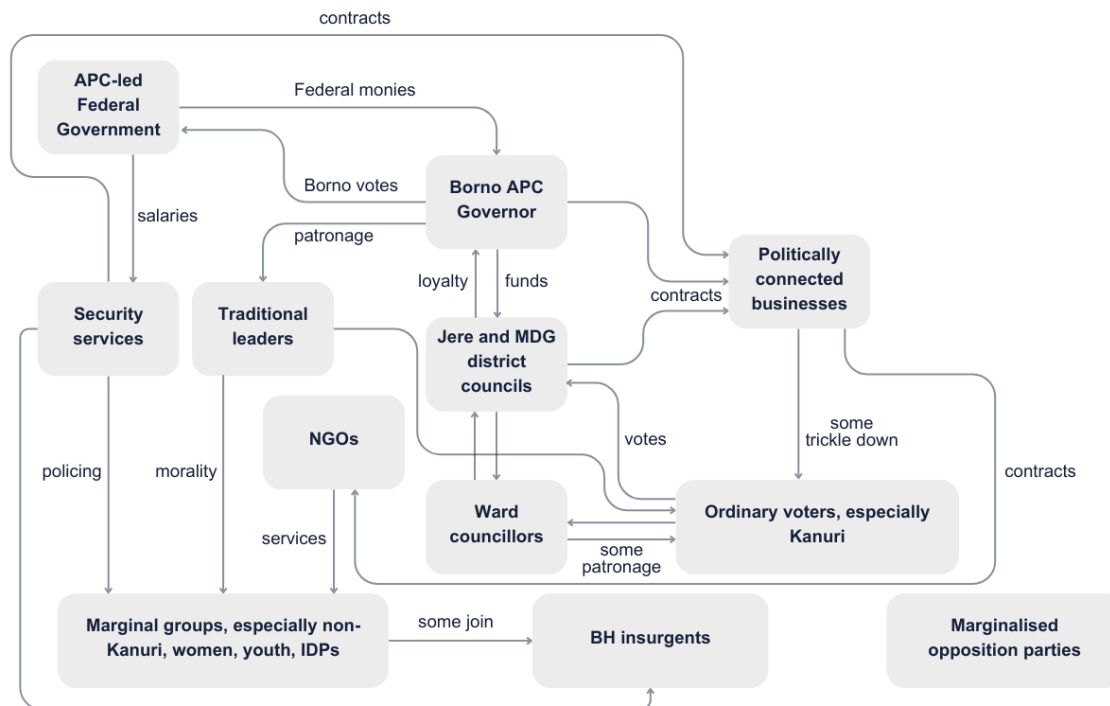
125 "Cholera, measles kill 252 persons In Nigeria's Borno". *HumAngle*, 14 October 2022 (accessed 20 February 2024).

6.1. What does the above tell us about the political economy of development in Maiduguri?

Maiduguri does not have a city government. Administratively, the urban area is spread across five LGAs – Maiduguri Metropolitan, Jere, Konduga, Mafa and Magumeri. This does not mean the power in the city is dispersed or contested – quite the opposite; power is highly concentrated, and the current party alignment between the national and Borno State governments means opposition parties struggle to challenge the ruling coalition, which is led by a charismatic state governor with strong popular support. As the capital of Borno, Maiduguri is the seat of the state government and the state governor is the city's de facto political leader. He controls and influences the affairs of the city, from budgetary allocations to official appointments, and approves development projects in the state, including those of all the LGAs that make up Maiduguri. Through his control of funds and appointments, he can use his patronage to dominate the Jere and Maiduguri metropolitan councils, traditional and religious leaders and politically connected businesses. These groups in turn provide moral and political leadership and trickle-down patronage to ordinary voters in the form of employment, favours and, to some extent, services. Power in Maiduguri is concentrated in the hands of political office holders, and elected and civil servants at the city and national levels, who are mostly Muslim, members of the Kanuri tribe and male. The combination of federal money, ethnic dominance and control of patronage ensures that there are no credible challengers to the governor and that opposition parties remain marginal. The current and former governors form the core of the leader's bloc in Maiduguri. The power balance in Maiduguri is disproportionately skewed towards the APC, the ruling party at state and national level.

Politics appears to be the most lucrative business in Maiduguri and “the state” is the main source of wealth and power. This wealth and power is accessed either through direct participation in the government, as is the case for elected and civil servants, or through connections to those in the government, which is the case for businesses which benefit from government contracts. These dynamics are captured in Figure 5.

Figure 5: Political dynamics in Maiduguri



National, city and state-level elites are mutually dependent: the former needs the political support of the latter, while the latter need the financial support of the former. Once the capital of Northeastern State – a former administrative region in Nigeria in the 1960s and 1970s comprising the present Borno, Yobe, Adamawa, Bauchi, Gombe and Taraba states – Maiduguri has a cadre of experienced politicians and a large electorate. This makes it a political powerhouse; for example, it produced bloc votes for President Buhari, contributing to his winning the 2015 and 2019 presidential elections, which made the Borno State governor appear a “presidential kingmaker”. As noted in the political settlement section, the city, in turn, is dependent on monthly federal government allocations to cover state and local government salaries and execute capital projects. State elites depend on national leaders to get these budgetary allocations. Elites at city, state and national level are bound together through personal loyalty and a system of godfatherism, which spreads down to the lowest tier of formal governance. Politically connected business elites collaborate with security agencies to secure no-bid contracts, leading to inflated spending that ultimately favours them. This arrangement not only ensures financial gains but also guarantees the protection of their properties and personal safety. Furthermore, these politically connected business elites leverage their influence to secure contracts for their own ventures, particularly from NGOs. This influence is especially pronounced among local NGOs aligned with their allies within the powerful group in the city.

The rise of the insurgency and insecurity in northeastern Nigeria seems to have supercharged these dynamics. As noted by the safety and security section,

insecurity across the country has placed security at the heart of political discourse and campaigns. The political elites are opportunistically using the security situation to discredit their political opponents or prop up their own position. At the local level, party supporters act similarly, exploiting the security situation to boost their legitimacy and win votes. Both the present and former APC governors of Borno centred their political campaigns on their purported ability to destroy the insurgency in the northeast. Conflict-induced displacement, driving many IDPs into government-operated camps in Maiduguri, where they were able to vote, provided an opportunity for politicians to harvest additional votes for the APC during general elections.

Further, as mentioned in the safety and security section, security interventions are major conduits for syphoning funds. An example of this are the monthly security votes, discussed above, given to state governors across Nigeria by the federal government for the purpose of fostering security. The size of allocations varies monthly and between states (according to need), but is not publicly known; nor are allocations independently audited. The shadowy nature of this allocation process makes it particularly amenable to personal enrichment and patronage. Pieterse (2014: 213) argues that political capture by powerful elites is even more common at the local level, where political parties use the city government as an “instrument in a larger game of patronage, extortion and selective development”.

Since Maiduguri is governed by a state-level administration with direct access to federal funds, and since local and state government authorities are intertwined, and the path from the former to the latter can be short for political loyalists, it is possible and likely that the security votes play a key role in political patronage and godfatherism in Maiduguri, which, in turn, keeps on feeding the national elites. In this context, the state governor must carry out a careful balancing act – projecting a sense of security to win votes locally, on the one hand, while retaining a sufficiently high level of insecurity to warrant monthly security votes from the federal government, on the other, so that he can sustain his network of supporters and loyalists. (In this he is certainly aided by the political alignment of state and national governments.) The posturing of the governor against the military, and the PR stunts described in the safety and security section of this paper are probably best understood as expressions of this balancing act, and a successful curating of the narrative around security in the state.

At the city level, and independently of federal influences, the local political elites, including traditional leaders who control the informal land market, utilise land and housing allocations and the delivery of infrastructure to reward their supporters. But their power and influence in this regard is threatened by ongoing land administration reform to formalise transactions and thereby increase local revenue from property tax.

6.2. What do the interaction of national, city and domain level power and politics tell us about the prospects for and approaches to solving development problems in selected domains?

The section on the city's political settlement describes the national power configuration in Nigeria as dispersed, and the city-level power configuration as concentrated. The social foundation appears to be narrow, with the Muslim Kanuri tribe dominating city politics, at the expense of several minority tribes. Women are largely excluded from decisionmaking. Low-income residents are marginalised too, and only engaged by politicians during elections. The city and state political elites all belong to the APC, which is the ruling party at the state and national levels. While this provides a favourable political climate for city and state elites to access federal funding, the benefits for low-income residents in Maiduguri are not certain. With the security forces strong enough to protect the political elites from the insurgency, and with opposition parties weak, the APC's "narrow-concentrated" power over the city appears relatively secure (while the APC holds power at national level). As such, the commitment of elites to more inclusive forms of development is questionable.

Applying the ESID 2x2 matrix of political settlements,¹²⁶ it appears that the way forward for Maiduguri is to focus on technical and financial support for the state government, and non-confrontational approaches to promoting greater social inclusion and government responsiveness to marginalised groups. Thus solutions must either (1) align with the state government's priorities and the Borno State Development Plan, and/or build on existing initiatives (as do the proposed solutions to the youth and capability development and land and connectivity domain problems); or (2) be collaborative, bottom-up and sensitive to the contexts of low-income residents at the community level (as are the proposed safety and security domain solutions). The proposed solutions also build on or suggest improvements to previously implemented programmes, identify existing reform coalitions and key actors, and are cognisant of funding trends and priorities among international actors that could facilitate implementation. These approaches, and their political feasibility, are described in more detail below.

Youth and capability development domain

In terms of the goals of prosperity and poverty reduction, addressing the needs of young people is a priority. Research highlighted specific challenges around the rise of a drugs trade and consumption, and a lack of educational opportunities. The analysis suggests particular approaches may be effective, and they are elaborated below.

¹²⁶ According to the Effective States and Inclusive Development (ESID 2x2 matrix on political settlements), development takes unique pathways based on various settlement types. As Maiduguri falls into the broad-dispersed settlement, reformers must focus on pockets of effectiveness, adopt non-state and multi-stakeholder solutions, and address power dispersion (Kelsall et al., 2021: 14).

Reactivating the multistakeholder drugs control committee to prevent drug trafficking and deter addiction. The drug abuse problem is entwined with the city's politics and business interests. The governor and some state commissioners have complained about the problem, and the state government has considered declaring a state of emergency in response to it since 2016. However, some drug addicts are political thugs, which means they are of service to politicians, and addressing the drug problem could affect the latter's political base. Thus, the governor will probably face the "politician's dilemma" of whether to initiate change or keep party loyalists happy. Most political thugs support nationally representative politicians who are all members of the ruling APC. However, unlike local politicians who can rely on the CJTF (which is controlled by the State Ministry of Justice), national politicians pay thugs with money and drugs to attend political events and attack their opponents. This means the governor's political will to address the problem must translate into concrete action that addresses the complicity of national politicians (predominantly members of his party) in enabling drug abuse. Given that the governor has overwhelming support and will start his second term in 2023, he is likely to prioritise making a change.

Some military and other law enforcement agencies are also associated with the problem, as they are part of the larger war economy in the city, profiting from instability and conflict. For example, some corrupt law enforcement officers and CJTF members have been accused of peddling drugs and collecting bribes from drug dealers to allow them to pass checkpoints or sell drugs unhindered in the city.¹²⁷ These corrupt law enforcement actors, who are still very important in the city's politics, are likely to oppose addressing the problem. However, many religious and traditional leaders have expressed concern about drug abuse and are willing to support efforts to address it.¹²⁸ Given that certain traditional leaders, such as the Shehu of Borno, command respect from the security forces,¹²⁹ they can influence military and other law enforcement leaders to discourage their subordinates from enabling the problem.

Pharmaceutical dealers have vested interests (some are actively involved in the illicit drug trade), and some may have connections with influential government officials at the local and national levels. The links between pharmaceutical businesses and drugs cartels may explain why the problem is also prevalent in other cities in northern Nigeria.¹³⁰ Some drug dealers even undermine the work of NDLEA officers by threatening to use their political connections to sack them if they do not allow them to carry out their illicit drug trafficking.¹³¹ Nevertheless, there is also a good opportunity for

127 "NDLEA unable to prosecute over 500 suspects in Borno due to COVID-19". Channels TV, 31 January 2021 (accessed 20 February 2024).

128 "Shehu of Borno decries drug abuse among the youth". *Daily Trust*, 26 June 2018 (accessed 20 February 2024).

129 "GOC Pays Homage to Shehu of Borno, Seeks Royal Blessings". *Militainment News*, 27 May 2023 (accessed 8 March 2024).

130 "How drug abuse is fuelling banditry, terrorism in northern Nigeria". *This Day*, 27 September 2021 (accessed 20 February 2024).

131 KII, male government employee, MMC, July 2022.

the drugs control committee to work more closely with the NDLEA now to report some of these cartels.

Even though NDLEA is the national agency tasked with addressing the drug problem, the preferred approach would be for them to work more closely with many other stakeholders. At the state level, ministries like those of health, justice and youth, and various state agencies that work in youth development will work with local and international NGOs to address some systemic root causes of the problem. For example, NGOs could train healthcare providers who provide mental health services to support youth recovery on their path to leading a drug-free life with livelihood support. The approach also requires the NDLEA to work with other actors, like traditional and religious leaders, who can play an essential role in raising awareness about and addressing the problem. However, the state government's resettlement of IDPs and ban on INGOs providing humanitarian services in the resettled locations has reduced the presence of INGOs in the state, limiting the availability of partners who might help address the problem.

Addressing the low quality of primary and secondary education through teaching service reform. Reforming the teaching service to address the issue of poor educational quality is politically feasible – it aligns with the state government's agenda and will therefore receive political support from the governor and other education stakeholders. One of the state development plan's strategic objectives is to “enhance and embed teacher and school standards and verification for quality education and development” (Borno Plan, 2020). INGOs and development partners would also provide funding and expertise for the reform. For example, the government is leading a tripartite education programme with the Nigerian Stock Exchange and Bridge International Academy to transform education across the state.

However, as with any ambitious reform, some people will significantly undermine it because it will affect their political base or source of income. Some teachers in government schools were appointed by the previous administration as a political reward for supporting the party or being close to politicians. Most of them lack the necessary teaching qualifications or experience. Because the same party is still in power, some politicians will oppose the reform because it will upset their loyalists and disrupt their political support. Some of these top politicians have ties to government contractors who prefer school construction projects over teaching service reform projects. Private school owners may have vested interests, and some may be connected to powerful government officials or traditional leaders. Because many private schools are approved arbitrarily and lack basic facilities, some corrupt public officials will oppose any reform that will reduce their popularity. Some influential traditional and religious leaders and labour unions may advise against any verification of teachers' qualifications and experience for fear of retrenchment of unqualified teachers and deprivation of “livelihood”. For example, in Kaduna State, the Nigerian

Labour Congress (NLC) leaders and religious clerics have voiced opposition to education reform, labelling it “anti-people”.¹³²

The state government could reduce some opposition to the reforms through consultations with political party leaders, traditional and religious leaders, the NLC, the Nigerian Union of Teachers, and the Teachers Registration Council of Nigeria. There should also be a better option than abruptly terminating teachers’ contracts. Those who have education certificates, for example, could be trained, while those who are unqualified could be transferred to other agencies.

Safety and security domain

Strategies for political domination are closely linked to the security apparatus that has been created by the government. The reforms proposed for the safety and security domain encourage a counterbalancing, if not reversing, of this dynamic and, grounded in the reported success of existing community-led approaches, propose collaborative, bottom-up approaches to devise context-sensitive solutions for low-income residents at the neighbourhood level.

Increasing CJTF/BOYES recruitment transparency and mandate definition. This report has identified two ways in which the CJTF/BOYES has become politicised: 1) through its recruitment process, wherein loyalists, friends and relatives of government officials and politicians are favoured; and 2) through its involvement at political events, where CJTF members are paid an undisclosed amount by politicians (usually transacting with the commanders) to provide security and traffic control. Both of these modes of politicisation engender clientelist relations (an exchange of economic opportunities for political support) between elites and vigilantes, which is a major risk. The material and non-material benefits of these relations induce CJTF operatives to protect the interests of their benefactors during elections rather than working to safeguard local communities. A recent example of this was highlighted by the opposition PDP when it complained about “harassment and intimidation of its members by the Civilian Joint Task Force ahead of the 2023 general elections in Borno State”.¹³³

To address these two modes of politicisation, we need two avenues of reform. The first would focus on transforming the recruitment of vigilantes from a top-down process controlled by government officials, to a more inclusive, bottom-up process that involves the participation of residents of poor neighbourhoods. Central to this reform would be the establishment of a neighbourhood vigilante committee, consisting of committee leaders as well as members of marginalised and vulnerable groups, such as youth groups, women’s groups, people living with disabilities and IDPs. This committee should participate in the screening and vetting of individuals before they are recruited

132 “NLC President leads protest against sack of 22,000 Kaduna teachers”, *Premium Times*, 8 November 2018 (accessed 8 March 2024). And “Christian Leaders Beg El-Rufai To Suspend Teachers’ Sack”, *Channels TV*, 17 November 2017 (accessed 8 March 2024).

133 “PDP decries harassment of members by CJTF in Borno”. *Daily Trust*, 8 September 2022 (accessed 20 February 2024).

into CJTF. The committee should work with relevant state agencies such as BOYES to have a say in who should be recruited as a vigilante. Although this reform may experience a degree of pushback, it is politically feasible because it does not involve the investment of resources on the part of the government. What is needed to make it work is commitment on the part of the community members sitting on the committee. Such a commitment is almost guaranteed, because safety and security is a key priority for most residents of Maiduguri.

The second reform would focus on moderating the interactions between CJTF and politicians to prevent the development of clientelist relationships. The onus in this case is on BOYES. The agency should ban CJTF operatives from participating in campaigns, rallies and other political events, as these usually give politicians the opportunity to woo them into their support structures and then instrumentalise them during elections. BOYES should set up a disciplinary and enforcement committee that can monitor the interactions of CJTF operatives and political actors in this regard. This reform could face some opposition from political actors, but it is feasible if BOYES can gain the backing of the state government in implementing it.

Tackling street gangs and criminal enclaves in low-income neighbourhoods.

Criminal enclaves have a strong connection to the political settlement in Maiduguri. Understanding the dynamics of criminal enclaves and empowering communities to tackle them would upset the system of rents that politicians draw from crime. Street gangs and criminal networks have for long featured in the political landscape of Maiduguri as enforcers and fixers who intimidate, threaten and attack their benefactors' political opponents. But the recent sharp increase in the emergence and spread of criminal enclaves across the city has provided more opportunities for politicians to instrumentalise criminal elements than ever before, with a potentially devastating impact on the legitimacy of political processes and structures.

Politicians at the national, state and city levels use middlemen to engage the services of criminal gangs, in the form of help during elections to control what happens in nearby polling stations and manipulate the voting process. Thus, criminal enclaves affect political dynamics and outcomes at all governmental levels.¹³⁴ Tackling criminal enclaves has some important implications for politics at the city level. To start with, the political relevance and value of many middlemen depends on their connection to and influence over the criminal enclaves that control polling stations and electoral outcomes. Dislodging these criminal enclaves would weaken these political middlemen, and in turn weaken the patronage linkages between politicians at the different levels. Tackling criminal enclaves would contribute to violence-free political campaigns and elections, and consequently increase the legitimacy of the democratic process and governance structures and institutions. Moreover, politicians are more likely to be accountable when they know that they cannot influence electoral outcomes by buying the loyalty of political middlemen and criminal elements.

¹³⁴ Interviews with a cross-section of experts and stakeholders, June-July 2022.

The preferred approach to dealing with criminal enclaves among a cross-section of key stakeholders, including academics and civil society officials, is to first understand the factors shaping the emergence and spread of criminal enclaves, and then to set up local special taskforces made up of community leaders, vigilantes, youth leaders, women's leaders and other residents to recommend steps towards tackling the criminal enclaves within their communities.¹³⁵ Similar initiatives in other states have achieved notable success. For instance, the Community Resilience Groups created by Mercy Corps under the EU-funded project Support to Early Recovery from Conflict and Resilience Building (2019-21) in Yobe state demonstrated effectiveness in crime reduction and fostering community development, free from external political interference. This reform measure is feasible as long as politicians and top government officials are not involved in or do not substantively depend on the criminal activity in the enclaves. What could boost the measure's feasibility is the fact that residents of poor and marginalised neighbourhoods will be committed to tackling this problem, since they are negatively affected by these criminal enclaves. From this perspective, it is a promising reform strategy because, rather than the usual securitised responses such as crackdowns and arrests, it sets out to understand the dynamics of the criminal enclaves and to engage with local communities to come up with context-sensitive responses.

Land and connectivity domain

The reform proposed for dealing with unregulated land sales, resultant land conflicts and informal developments on flood-prone areas of Maiduguri, is technical and non-confrontational in nature: it will identify fault lines in the current government-led systematic land registration, and focus on ways to address them.

From customary to systematic land registration. Customary land titling is an entirely local issue involving lower-level traditional and community leaders and it has no bearing on the national political settlement. As such, the problem has very little relationship to what happens at national level. A few national-level politicians own farms outside the city, the titles of which were registered through a customary method. It is expected that, in the course of time, such farmland will become part of the city and increase in value. Even though they are unlikely to be affected by land conflicts, national elites are likely to register these holdings with BOGIS as a result of the growing importance of statutory land registration.

The same cannot be said for city elites. Land registration by customary means has enjoyed legitimacy in the city area for centuries; local leaders make money from the endorsement of titles when land is exchanged. In many instances, lower-level leaders (*bulamas* or ward heads) who also serve as property agents are accused of land grabbing or forging land documents. Since a power shift brought in the current government in 2019, a new programme of systematic land registration has been

¹³⁵ Interview with a security analyst in Maiduguri and an academic and a journalist in Abuja, July 2023.

initiated through BOGIS, which is likely to erode both the power and the associated rents enjoyed by local leaders over land. Unless the latter's role is properly defined in the new system, these leaders could pose a significant threat to its success.¹³⁶ This needs to be properly understood through research. Beyond this, it would be necessary to gauge how ordinary citizens view the new land-tax collection that would accompany formal land registration, and whether it makes sense to deal with each of these aspects of reform separately.

As identified in the political settlement section, the city's political economy is dominated by politicians in power, businessmen (land vendors), top ranking civil servants, and religious and traditional leaders. Professional associations, notably of commercial tricycle riders and traders, and community-based organisations (youth groups especially) are also significant players in the city's politics at present; this was particularly so during the 2023 elections. These groups are relevant not only in terms of the city's politics, but also in terms of its land economy, because of the resources and power they exert. Being a member of any of these groups (especially a politician from the APC) facilitates land transaction and registration through the customary method controlled by the traditional leaders. Conversely, being outside these groups and poor heightens the risk of being displaced from one's land, when customary title to it is given to a member of one of the aforementioned groups. Revolutionising land registration will create challenges for powerful groups attempting to seize land. While the primary objective of this reform is to mitigate land conflicts, it also offers the added benefit of protecting people with low incomes, especially when the reform considers their needs in its design.¹³⁷

An improved system of documentation would improve internally generated revenue to the government, which would lead to more effective management of the Maiduguri urban environment. Increasing both accountability and revenue are priorities for the Borno State government, as demonstrated by the harmonised tax system passed into law by the state legislature in 2020. It is also important to note that BOGIS is one of the agencies involved in the World Bank's fiscal reforms – the SFTAS programme designed to support states in Nigeria to implement a fiscal sustainability plan.

Land administration reform requires raising the awareness and capacities of the local *bulamas* – the traditional custodians of the land, who number over 7,000 in Maiduguri – and clarifying their role in the new processes. Similarly, the roles played by local

136 This was the case of Omo Onile in the context of Lagos's land administration. Omo Onile, translating to "children of the owners of the land" in Yoruba, asserts indigenous residency in Lagos communities and claims the right to sell land and collect payments, compensation, rents and taxes. Because of its disruptive activities and land conflicts, the Lagos state government enacted the Lagos State Property Protection Law in 2016. However, concessions in the "Land-Grabbers' Act" later legalised some Omo Onile payments, providing legal recognition of some of their rights over property, contrary to the law's initial intention to restrict their activities (Goodfellow and Owen, 2020).

137 This approach aims to prevent a situation similar to that in other states, such as Lagos, where the complexities of land administration bureaucracy have excluded the poor (Olajide et al., 2018).

governments in the proposed new system, in particular land officials in Maiduguri Metropolitan, Jere, Konduga and Mafa, must also be clarified. Land officers of these LGAs (who have been reported to be part of the problem of land conflicts in Maiduguri) have themselves complained of the overbearing influence of BOGIS in reforming land administration. They therefore represent another group that is part of both the problem and the solution. Local civil society groups in the city could represent a veritable tool for change. Although there are no organisations with specific mandates on land reform, the well consolidated NECSOB, along with the local branch of the Nigeria Union of Journalists could be mobilised to support systematic land registration. Finally, iMMAP, an international organisation that provides geographic information system (GIS) support to humanitarian organisations, could provide technical assistance to drive this change.

6.3. Key crosscutting issues

Climate change

Despite the environmental degradation of Lake Chad and the adverse effects on the local economy, climate change is only explicitly mentioned during our research in three instances. The city of systems study reports climate change is affecting agriculture in areas adjacent to Maiduguri. The youth and capability development domain study mentions the existence of youth-led CSOs to educate young people about climate change mitigation (Buba, 2022). One of the proposed solutions to congestion in Maiduguri in the land and connectivity domain report is to transition from gas-fuelled *kekes* to solar-powered transport to reduce carbon emissions (Monguno et al., 2022). Climate change did not come up as a threat to human security in the safety and security research (Madueke, 2022). Approaches to dealing with seasonal flooding in Maiduguri do not seem to be grounded in a climate change adaptation agenda. It is possible that climate change would have been identified as a more salient issue if systems that are more directly affected by it – particularly agriculture, water and possibly sanitation – had been investigated in depth in Maiduguri.

Gender

Urban developmental problems affect men and women differently, according to all five of our research strands (political settlement, city systems and the three developmental domains). Women are considered a powerless group, as a result of their low levels of literacy and early marriage, and of predominant cultural beliefs about women's position in society.

Women in Maiduguri are largely excluded from politics and from decisionmaking at the city level, according to our research into the city's political settlement (Haruna et al., 2022) and the domain reports. That said, they are, in fact, involved in neighbourhood and city security decisionmaking, according to the youth domain interviews. But as a result of Islamic values and cultural norms, there are no female religious authorities. And business elites are predominantly male, too.

Gaining formal access to land is more difficult for women, as the land and connectivity research highlighted. Women are less educated and have lower rates of employment, as shown in the youth domain and city of systems research, both of which call for the promotion of greater inclusion of women (Buba, 2022; Ajadi, 2022). On the upside, young women in Maiduguri, more so than men, are organising themselves into savings groups which provide loans for their members to start businesses with.

Insurgency and insecurity have affected both young men and young women in Maiduguri, albeit differently, according to our youth domain research. Low-income, unemployed young men are often recruited into militias. Many women have become single mothers because of family separation or mass killings. While drug abuse among IDP youth affects men and women, conflict has also had specific and detrimental effects on women's health. Displaced young women and girls often resort to prostitution to survive and face high maternal mortality rates and other pregnancy-related problems as a result of limited access to sexual and reproductive healthcare. In addition, the effects of the conflict on food insecurity and poor nutrition are particularly damaging for expecting and lactating mothers. The safety and security domain section noted that, while all residents avoided criminal enclaves, this was even more the case for women because of potential harassment.

Public urban finance

Controlling public finance and funnelling funds to supporters and loyalists (through an informal system of patronage) is central to establishing and keeping power in Maiduguri. Two dynamics in particular are worth highlighting.

First, as described in the political settlement section, the state governor controls all revenue flows from the federal to the state government and down to the local level. Through his control of funds and appointments he can use his patronage to dominate the Jere and Maiduguri LGA councils, traditional and religious leaders, and politically connected businesses. Because the funding of the LGAs is controlled by the Borno state government, the LGA leadership depends on and is accountable to state leadership. As a result of this dependency, state leaders can influence the emergence of loyal LGA chairs and councillor candidates for election. In turn, while constitutionally autonomous, in practice the city is almost entirely dependent on monthly federal allocations. As such, the state leadership depends on national leaders (former governors, serving senators, members of the Federal House of Representatives, technocrats and other senior civil servants) to get budgetary allocations from the federal government.

Second, as revealed by the safety and security domain section, defence budget funds seem to be particularly amenable to personal enrichment and sustaining patronage networks. For example, governors use security votes to accumulate property, finance their campaigns and sustain political patronage, including through the allocation of contracts to politically connected businesses.

The most important recent development in Maiduguri in terms of public urban finance has been the establishment of BOGIS. The functioning of the agency, which leads land administration in Maiduguri through information technology-based systematic land registration, has been influenced by the World Bank's SFTAS programme, which encourages fiscal sustainability across Nigerian states. The ongoing systematic land administration reform has resulted in a considerable increase in local revenue. In 2019, property tax revenue was only N68 million, but it increased to N450 million in 2020 and to over N1 billion in 2021.

7. Implications for future research and interventions

The political settlement framework did well in uncovering the dynamics of the settlement between parties at the state level, and it worked in unpacking the national and city-level dynamics. It helped to identify the rules of the game that permeate the political economy, from the federal to the local government level. However, there were some limitations to its application in Maiduguri.

The first limitation of the political settlements framework is its inability to easily accommodate the many international nongovernmental actors involved in a fragile post-conflict context, such as Maiduguri, into the tri-bloc structure (leader's bloc, contingently loyal bloc, opposition bloc). These INGOs are key actors in the provision of resources, services and infrastructure in areas affected by urban displacement; they thus hold a level of influence with local populations and community leaders.¹³⁸ They collaborate with local power holders, and they depend on the Governor's Office for operational licensing (and can be prevented from operating in the state by the governor),¹³⁹ but they do not depend on the state government financially in the way other actors in the patronage network controlled by the governor do. INGOs are not accountable to local powerholders; they are accountable to their donors, who are, in turn, accountable to the taxpayers in their respective countries,¹⁴⁰ and, ideally, to the populations they serve. As such, it is not clear exactly what role INGOs play in the power balance, and how they engage with, or are affected by, the rules that dominate the political economy of Maiduguri – godfatherism, party loyalty and patronage – or

138 The collective influence of INGOs prompted some Maiduguri residents to view some of them as a de facto second government during the peak of the insurgency. This perception plays a role in shaping some dynamics of urban governance and power relations within the city. It notably affects interactions between displaced people and host communities, particularly concerning the criteria for determining who qualifies as a beneficiary of intervention.

Additionally, it influences relations between the state government and the NGOs, particularly in discussions about which neighbourhoods and camps deserve to receive interventions.

139 A large international NGO had its licence to work in Borno State revoked by the governor after a security incident in Maiduguri, and there are rumours it might get banned from the country altogether, a result probably facilitated by the governor's link to the federal government through party alignment.

140 This is different for private sector donors, who play an increasingly important role in the aid sector. However, in fragile areas, provision of aid is still dominated by traditional governmental donors and development agencies. This is a result of the national security interests of countries providing aid, on the one hand, and the limited appetite for risk taking in fragile contexts by private donors, on the other.

how their role in this system affects the outcomes for residents of low-income urban areas. This is not to say that INGO offices are immune to capture and personalisation; but local NGOs and CSOs are more likely to be affected by the rules of the game, thanks to their embeddedness in the system, and the importance of personal connections, particularly for smaller organisations.

The second observed limitation of the political settlement framework is its inability to fully capture how the traditional and religious authorities affect local politics and the local balance of power. They are parallel to the formal authorities in Maiduguri, and so do not fit within the political party hierarchy and political loyalty-based system of godfatherism, but they are nevertheless embedded in the patronage system. The political settlement analysis did not penetrate the sphere of micropolitics at the (especially low-income) neighbourhood level, where these informal figures are most influential in people's lives and which have limited government presence (little provision of services and investment). Thus it did not illuminate exactly how neighbourhood micropolitics interacts with broader city politics. Since neighbourhoods that are marginal (both figuratively and physically) rely on traditional authorities to champion their interests with formal authorities, a deeper and more nuanced analysis of the relationship between formal and traditional governance structures, and between those structures and marginal neighbourhoods, is required, especially if we wish to understand the prospects for improvements in these neighbourhoods. The political settlement research characterises traditional leaders as critical channels for politicians to gain support at the community level. But, as highlighted in the land and connectivity domain research, the state government is also on a collision course with low-level traditional authorities because of the land administration reform, which will, through the formalisation of land titling, decrease the latter's influence over, and profits from, property sales. As noted in that section, it is necessary to understand how the land reform will reconfigure the relationship between the state government and the traditional authorities, and how the patronage system might adapt to "provide" for traditional leaders so that they may continue to play a role in securing popular support for the state government.

Similarly, the mechanics of the role of business elites in supporting the existing power configuration would benefit from further research (but this is less a weakness of the political settlement framework and more a limitation of the sampling). The political settlement section described how business elites in Maiduguri are able to support local politicians not only to obtain employment on boards and parastatal companies, but also to get nominations for ministerial appointments at the national level. This symbiotic relationship could be further examined, to shed light on the types of businesses that specifically benefit from it and on how local business elites leverage connections to businesses operating in Abuja to provide support for local political elites.

It is important to note that it is not entirely clear if these two limitations are inherent to the political settlement framework, or attributable to the structure and methods of the research teams applying it. The research was characterised by an insider/outsider

dynamic that corresponded to a North–South division of labour with respect to theorisation and data collection, a remote management team, and nascent research partnerships that were either fairly new at the start of the research or established exclusively for the purpose of this research. Much as the impact of an intervention cannot be fully understood without examining how it was implemented, the assessment of an analytical framework cannot be entirely disentangled from the technicalities of its application in a specific context and organisational set-up. The implementation of the political settlement framework in Maiduguri was supervised by a researcher based in the global North, who was deeply familiar with the framework itself, while the data collection and analysis were conducted by local researchers who were less familiar with the framework, but deeply knowledgeable about the researched context. In other words, “knowledge insiders” to the framework were outsiders to the Maiduguri context and knowledge insiders of the context were outsiders to the potential of the analytical framework, at least initially. Ideally, it appears, a researcher would be deeply familiar with both the context and the framework to fully exploit the analytical potential of the framework and maximise the learning and understanding of a context. This is a requirement that is not easily met and certainly harder to achieve in nascent research collaborations.

This observation does not diminish the value of the framework for theory generation and it remains useful for cross-context analysis. But it highlights its limits for knowledge co-production in the context of decentralised, localised research teams. There is a certain rigidity to the framework that does not easily lend itself to adaptation and contextualisation. Maybe a simpler and less structured approach to political economy analysis would have worked better in this operational context. Perhaps researchers who are “double insiders” – completely in command of the framework and deeply knowledgeable of the context – would have been able to bend, adapt and stretch the analytical framework to fully tease out the essence of the power dynamics explored in a specific context without decreasing its analytical rigour. Experiences from other cities might provide an answer to this question.

Finally, the application of the framework to the city level included an attempt to spatialise the analysis, but this was too rudimentary and too ad hoc to result in a sociospatial analysis that would add value to the understanding of the power relations and dynamics at the neighbourhood–city interface. The framework currently lacks the methodological tools and procedures to conduct a sociospatial analysis of relationships between social groups, power blocs, resource inputs and political outcomes. The mapping of loyalties and power levels onto urban neighbourhoods should be based on quantitative data gathered through representative sampling (polling data, party membership data, demographic data or, at a minimum, opinion surveys). Maps generated based on these data could then be overlaid with input and output data (infrastructure investment, tax revenue, voting patterns and results – all at the neighbourhood level) to illuminate the relationship between the ruling coalition, the social base and the levels of loyalty between these, along with the levels of power. Enhancing the framework’s methodology by incorporating modules and procedures

supporting the integration of GIS-powered socio-spatial analysis would significantly improve its capabilities. By incorporating such an analysis, the framework could leverage geographical and spatial data to provide a more comprehensive understanding of how power operates within a city. This enhanced methodology would allow researchers and analysts to explore and visualise the spatial distribution of power relationships, helping to uncover patterns, connections and disparities in a city's political landscape.

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