

RURAL BANDITRY AND CONFLICTS

IN NORTHERN NIGERIA



CENTRE FOR DEMOCRACY AND DEVELOPMENT

EDITED BY:
PROF. MOHAMMED J. KUNA & DR. JIBRIN IBRAHIM

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This Publication was made possible by the following:



*Centre for Democracy and Development,
Pastoral Resolve(PARE) and
Nigeria Stability and Reconciliation Programme (NSRP)*



978-978-952-168-5

A Publication of :
Centre of Democracy and Development
CITECT Estate Abuja
E-mail:info@CDDwestafrica.org

First Published in Nigeria by CDD, 2016

ISBN: 978-978-952-168-5.

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Foreword



This book arose from the concerns of a group of Nigerian civil society activists, academics, development practitioners, politicians and policy makers on the frequent incidence and ravaging impact of violence in rural communities in Northern Nigeria. In 2013, these incidences of violence, which took the form of midnight raids by unknown bandits on sleepy villagers, had led to the sacking of communities in parts of Plateau, Benue, Taraba and Kaduna states. A major concern of the group was that media reports of the incidents did not indicate the existence of tensions among communal, religious or ethnic groups prior to the attacks. However, media reports of the apparently 'senseless' violence uncritically assumed that the violence was perpetrated by 'Fulani' herdsmen.

It is against this background that the stakeholders approached the Nigeria Stability and Reconciliation Programme (NSRP) to convene a meeting aimed at making sense of what senseless violence. The brainstorming session, which attracted renowned researchers, academics, civil society activists, politicians and policy makers, only scratched the surface of what was regarded as a complex phenomenon. The main finding of the session was that the country was faced with violence associated with the collapse of governance and absence of law and order in rural Nigeria. This situation of anomie has become a hospitable environment for banditry in the country. However, the meeting resolved that more research was

needed to shed light on the multiple causes of banditry, the actors involved, their motivations, the validity of popularised causal narrative that indict pastoralists, the scale of the phenomenon and its impact. The stakeholders proposed that NSRP should consider commissioning a research on the causes and impact of rural banditry in Northern Nigeria. It was suggested that the Centre for Democracy and Development (CDD) and the Pastoral Resolve that have worked on the issues from the research and practitioner perspectives respectively should facilitate the research.

The book is the outcome of two years endeavour. The contributors are seasoned academics, activists and practitioners that draw on theoretical insights and local knowledge of the contexts to help us better understand the multiple variables driving banditry and how the phenomenon has become more complex over time. Given the history of the book project, the authors not only provide analysis but also draw attention to the policy implications of their findings. Ahead of this book, three policy briefs have been published and disseminated to policy makers, academics and practitioners in Kaduna and Plateau states, which are among the worse affected states. It is hoped that this volume will help to fill the gap in knowledge on the phenomenon of rural banditry and serve as a valuable resource material for policy makers and practitioners who are seeking for solutions to the violence that has undermined human security in Northern Nigeria in the past 5 years.

Dr. Ukoha Ukiwo

Nigeria Stability and Reconciliation Programme (NSRP)

Abuja

Preface



In the last decade, rural banditry and violent conflicts between pastoralists and farmers in Nigeria have been on the rise. This social conflict has traditionally consisted of disputes over natural resources and is often presented as a conflict between settlers and nomadic people. However, what began as conflict between pastoralists and farmers over land has recently developed into rural banditry with heavy human and economic cost, ranging from the sexual assault of women and girls, attacks on villages, to cattle rustling, amongst others. The bandits traversing Benue, Plateau, Niger, Kwara, Nassarawa, Zamfara, Kaduna, Sokoto, Kebbi, Kano are involved in crimes such as armed robbery and kidnapping. There have also been reported cases of rural banditry in Delta, Enugu, Ondo, Oyo and Ebonyi states.

In response, a military-led offensive was ordered by the Federal Government and a state of emergency declared by State Governors in Northern Nigeria against cattle rustlers and bandits. These are beginning to yield positive results. However, the ongoing reign of bandits in rural communities within northern Nigerian continues to heighten public insecurity. The death toll resulting from the activities of cattle rustlers, and the seemingly intractable conflict over limited resources between farmers and herdsmen, is alarming. For example, in the space of only a month, between January 1st and February 2nd 2016, around 100 people have been allegedly killed across Nassarawa, Benue, Taraba, Kaduna and Abuja.

It is in the light of the foregoing that this research was undertaken by the Centre for Democracy and Development (CDD) and the Pastoral Resolve (PARE), with the support of the Nigeria Stability and Reconciliation Programme (NSRP). The research aims to systematically unravel the root causes of rural banditry and social conflicts in Nigeria, with specific attention placed on the northern Nigeria. The frequency and intensity of rural banditry in recent years is cause for serious concern. In our view, most efforts to understand rural banditry in contemporary Nigeria are simplistic and have not provided a framework for better understanding of its varied forms, causes, patterns and dimensions. This book offers an in-depth analysis of these previously under explored issues.

Examining the root causes of rural banditry and social conflict requires an understanding of its historical trajectory, social contexts, development and the dynamics of the often conflictual, but also symbiotic relationship between two production systems (agricultural and pastoral) that not only depend on land and its related resources, but are also fundamentally different in important respects. It is against this backdrop that we undertook a broad interrogation of the economic and social forces that might have triggered the current realities. The 10 chapters of this book focus on wide-ranging issues, including: cattle rustling; animal husbandry; transhumance; grazing reserves; herdsman and farmers association; media and construction of popular narratives; social impact of the phenomenon; and women's livelihoods.

The findings of the 10 reports reveal that factors which account for rural banditry and social conflicts include: ecological and climate change and consistent shift in the human and livestock population; expansion in non-agricultural use of land; weak state capacity and the provision of security; proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALWs); rise of criminality and insecurity in rural areas;

and weakening or collapse of informal conflict resolution mechanisms.

The reports also draw attention to the international dimensions of rural banditry and social conflicts, from the perspective of the rising incidences of cross-border crimes and how it impacts on the proliferation of SALWs in Nigeria. The book incorporates recommendations to policy makers and other relevant stakeholders that, if considered and implemented, may help mitigate and manage this challenging phenomenon.

Idayat Hassan
Director,
Centre for Democracy and Development (CDD)
February 2016

Acknowledgement



The Centre for Democracy and Development (CDD) expresses its profound appreciation to all researchers who contributed to this book. This book project would not have been completed without the support of our partner, The Pastoral Resolve (PARE). We acknowledge the leadership of Prof. Mohammed J. Kuna and Dr. Jibrin Ibrahim, the editors of the book.

We acknowledge the contributions of Prof. Dung Pam Sha, Prof. Oshita Oshita, Prof. Augustine Ikelebe, Mrs. Kemi Okenyodo, Dr. Garuba Dauda, Dr. Kole Shettima, Dr. Otiye Igbuzor, and Ms Julie Sanda for their reviews and useful insights which no doubt enriched the content of this book.

We acknowledge the funding support provided by the British Council through the Nigeria Stability and Reconciliation Programme (NSRP) towards the implementation of the overall research project. We are immensely grateful to the NSRP team led by Dr. Ukiwo Ukoha, Ms. Priscillia Ankut and Ms Habiba Makanjuola for their immense support at every stage of the project. This project would not have been possible without the dedication, patience and support of Mallam Saleh Momale and Yusuf Shamsudeen.

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Chapter 1

THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF RURAL BANDITRY IN CONTEMPORARY NIGERIA

Samuel Egwu



Rural banditry associated with cattle rustling has become a major concern for public policy in contemporary Nigeria. It refers to the practice of stealing cattle and animals from herders, or the raiding of cattle from the ranches. Although driven by different needs and factors, it is increasingly an economically-based form of criminality perpetuated by informal networks (Kwaja, 2013). Rural banditry thrives as a means of 'primitive' accumulation of cowherds in the context of subsistence and commercial pastoralism. The most disturbing effect of this banditry is the unsettling of pastoralist transhumant activities. Furthermore, rural banditry is accompanied by rape, kidnapping, organized attacks on villages and communities, and looting.

Transhumance is a system of animal production characterized by seasonal and cyclical migration between complementary ecological areas as a means of adapting to unfavourable conditions. Migration is supervised by a few people. As an enduring system of livestock production, transhumance is based on practical and economically-viable management of pastoral resources. Transhumance has not only enabled pastoral people to survive the major ecological and climatic crises that periodically occur, it has also enabled groups to affirm and maintain their cultural identities.

Rural banditry and cattle rustling intersect with several other important themes in the Nigerian political economy: the problems of human and national security; altered balance in state-society relations; the impact of climate change on agricultural practices and different occupational groups; the emerging challenge of food security and the modernization of agriculture; and the question of intergroup relations and social harmony in Nigeria's diverse and plural context. Even more important cattle rustling's impact on livestock production. Livestock production is not only a significant aspect of agriculture in Nigeria's quest to diversify its economy, It also remains crucial to the overall wellbeing of pastoralist communities, particularly the nomadic Fulani herders.

Furthermore, cattle rustling and rural banditry appear to be tied to the incessant conflict between Fulani herdsman and crop farmers. The conflict may be connected to the wider context of identity politics and intergroup relations, including the relationships between pastoralist groups on the one hand and the Nigerian state system on the other. Transhumant pastoralists are perceived as violent and deliberately armed to deal with unsuspecting crop farmers; the farmers allege intentional crop damage by animals. The herders, on the other hand, perceive themselves to be victims of political marginalization, lacking a voice within the Nigerian state system. The exclusion of nomadic Fulani herders from the policy process and their lack of voice is so acute that the Miyetti Allah Cattle Breeders Association (MACBA), an urban-based Fulani pressure group, stands as the only known civic group that engages in policy advocacy on their behalf. '

In more recent times, there has been a dramatic increase in the spates of conflict between herders and farming communities, alongside the attendant problems of rural banditry and cattle rustling. This

increase in conflict results from increasing sedentarisation along grazing routes. Increased sedentarisation could be seen as pastoralist communities' response to the numerous challenges and constraints they are facing; sedentarisation has been one means of adapting to changing conditions over time. This is what Manger (1994) identifies as a part of 'expanding the spatial scale of exploitation', or the 'uncanny ability to survive and sometimes prosper under considerable adversity' (World Bank, 1987). Unfortunately, this has given rise to misconceptions regarding the self-inflicted hardships of herders by an apparent choice of a traditional lifestyle, which inhibits their capacity for innovation and adaptation to change (Concept Note, 2006). Consequently, there is a negative perception of pastoralists; in the frequent violent conflicts with agricultural farmers, the pastoralists are often blamed for problems related to crop damage, farming along cattle routes, and access to water. As Tukur (2013) has summarized the issue, more often than not nomadic Fulani herders are perceived to be prone to violence.

The tendency to blame nomadic herders for the problems they bring as an occupational group is reinforced by perspectives like the 'cattle complex' and the 'tragedy of the commons' in the academic research on pastoralism. The cattle complex concerns environmental damage that harms pastoral societies; the environmental damage is attributed to inefficient traditional methods of raising livestock, and herders' penchant to keep large number of animals beyond their economic and reproductive functions. The tragedy of the commons suggests that pastoralists, primarily driven by self-interest in their use of land and water resources, overgraze the land; in pursuing their immediate interests, they compromise the long-term interests of all grazers (Iro, 2015). The tendency to simply blame pastoralists from these perspectives obscures the multiple meanings cattle have

for pastoralists, and how the choices they make are informed by the survival strategies of pastoralist households.

Closely associated with this is the tendency to see nomadic Fulani herders as the primary perpetrators of rural banditry, including cattle rustling. The fact that Fulani nomads are familiar with the forest tracts tends to reinforce that perception. There are documented instances of pastoralists who resort to rustling after losing cattle to disease, inclement weather, and violence; there also are Fulani nomads active in the international syndicate of cattle rustlers. Fulani herdsman, however, are also victims of the illicit transactions (IRIN, 2013). There were reported cases of cow population depletion around the Birnin Gwari in Kaduna State, an area that reportedly experienced cattle theft by criminal gangs. It is believed that the cows lost include some lost by Fulani nomads as part of the incessant resource conflict with settled farmers and/or fellow Fulani rustlers.

Cattle rustling and associated forms of rural banditry have persisted despite efforts by the Nigerian state to fight them. The Nigerian police, for example, have constituted a 'Task Force on Cattle Rustling and Associated Crime', saddled with the responsibility for pre-emptive intelligence gathering, anti-cattle rustling action and prevention of associated crimes. The task force is also responsible for the investigation and potential prosecution of people involved in rustling. Other initiatives include a proposed bill to establish a 'Federal Commission to Cater for and Manage Transhumant Stock Routes and Grazing Reserve Areas'; the bill is currently pending before the National Assembly. Furthermore, the federal government has decided to provide states with N100 billion to establish mini-ranches (Daily Trust, November 20, 2014). These initiatives have yet to be executed, and are being contested. Crop farmers consider the

idea of grazing reserves and routes inimical to their interests, and defenders of nomadic pastoralism consider sedentarisation an erosion of the pastoral way of life (Tukur, 2013).

Yet the context that frames the conflict between nomadic cattle grazers and sedentary crop farmers is global in nature, and efforts to grapple with the challenges need to draw from existing regional and sub-regional frameworks, and from existing initiatives intended to address the problems. At the sub-regional level of West Africa, for example, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) has recognized the critical role livestock mobility plays in preserving the environment and maximizing livestock productivity. This recognition has provided improved institutional frameworks for herd mobility, and for some of the reformist legislation in a number of countries (including Niger, Mali, and Mauritania). The framework and legislation have sought to address issues of pastoral land use, the provision of pastoral 'home areas' and livestock corridors, including free movement of cattle and herders across borders (Hesse and Thebaud, 2006). Similarly, at the regional level of the African Union, there is recognition of the need for legislative, institutional, and operational reforms in pastoral policy development. There is recognition of the need for coordination of political commitment to development of pastoral policy, consultations with pastoral communities in the development of appropriate policies, and the role indigenous institutions play in conflict resolution (CSAO, 2007). Although these regional frameworks may not necessarily address the peculiarity of some national situations, they are nonetheless useful reference points.

This research investigates the phenomenon of cattle rustling in Nigeria in terms of its meaning, its changing forms, the underlying causes, and its diverse manifestations in different parts of Nigeria.

This research also examines the perpetrators and victims, and the impact banditry has on different occupational groups and sectors of the Nigerian economy. The central task of this research, therefore, is to provide a historical narrative of cattle rustling, its emergence over time, and the changing economic, demographic, climatic and social factors that have transformed cattle rustling from its original forms.

This paper addresses a number of questions: What new trends are associated with the phenomenon? Who are the perpetrators and victims? What is the link between cattle rustling and rural banditry, on the one hand, and the wider social, economic, and environmental conditions on the other? What policy framework can be developed to address the challenge posed by cattle rustling, and the threat it poses both to livestock production and also to the wellbeing of cattle grazer? Answering these questions provides the foundation for an effective review of existing public policy for addressing the problem, and for prescribing measures to counter cattle rustling in the short, medium and long terms.

Methodology

The data for this research was drawn from both primary and secondary sources. Primary data was generated from a field survey carried out in three states in the North-Central part of Nigeria plagued by incidents of rural banditry and cattle rustling. The three states are Kaduna, Plateau, and Nasarawa. The distribution of respondents across the three states and local governments is reflected in the table below:

Distribution of Respondents across the three states

States	Local Governments	Villages
Kaduna	BirninGwari Chikun Kachia	Shebula and Badimi Falale and RugaBuji Tilde and Kachia (reserves)
Plateau	Riyom BarkinLadi	Ganawuri Tafawa
Nasarawa	Awe Kokoma Lafia	RuganKwano Bassa TudunAdamu

According to the table, the three local government areas (LGAs) selected for data collection in Kaduna state are: BirninGwari, Chikun, and Kachia. The villages selected for the purpose of questionnaire administration were Sharbula and Badimi villages in BirninGwari LGA; Falale and RugarBuji in Chikun LGA in the Central Senatorial Zone; and in Tilde and Kachia grazing reserves in Kachia LGA. In Plateau State, two LGAs — Riyom and BarkinLadi were selected for data collection. Interviews were held with respondents in Ganawuri in Riyom LGA and Tafawa in BarkinLadi LGA. In Nasarawa State, three LGAs — Awe, Kokona, and Lafia — were selected for data collection. Interviews were held at RuganKwano in Awe LGA, Bassa in Kokona LGA, and TudunAdamu in Lafia LGA. It is important to note that the pastoralists interviewed in Lafia LGA were internally displaced persons from Obi LGA of the state.

In each of the settlements, community leaders were approached to assist in mobilising respondents, and in assigning a community representative who assisted the interviewing team in reaching out to individual respondents in their homesteads. Interviews were

conducted face to face, and with the discussions held in the Hausa Language, but they were recorded in the interview schedule in English. In total, 81 respondents were interviewed; 97% of respondents were male, and 3% were female; reflecting the preponderance of the male gender in both herding and farming activities.

Data generated from the survey was complemented by extensive desk or literature review on the topics of cattle rustling and rural banditry. The review provided understanding of the global and domestic dynamics of the problem based on existing research knowledge, and from policy-oriented conferences and workshops. Media tracking and records of cattle rustling and rural banditry provided further sources of information.

The main limitation of the research methodology lies in the time constraints and the inability of researchers to employ qualitative sources such as focus group discussions and Key Informants Interview (KIs) that would have further enriched findings.

The Transformation of` Cattle Rustling in Nigeria

Cattle rustling is an age-old and deeply-entrenched feature of pastoralist livelihoods, which fostered competition between groups that found themselves in harsh, delicate environments. Cattle rustling also served as a means of primitive accumulation of a cowherd in the context of subsistence and commercial pastoralism (Blench, 2004). The practice dates back to ancient history; the first recorded cattle raids are said to have been conducted over seven thousand years ago (Rangers and Osborne, 2006). The Greek historian Herodotus reported livestock raiding by Scythian horsemen 2,500 years ago. In Australia, cattle theft, often referred to as 'doffing', is widely practiced. In the American Old West, Mexican

rustlers were a major concern during the American Civil War. Texans likewise stole cattle from Mexico, swimming them across the Rio Grande; these cattle were called 'wet stock'. Apart from these examples from antiquity, disturbing trends in cattle rustling have recently been reported in the United States. The problem is not confined to past ages, even in developed countries. The San Francisco Chronicle (2007) reported that cattle rustling was on the rise in California, involving an estimated 16,000 herds of cattle, with the calves reportedly missing and stolen from California farms and ranches valued at more than \$9 million. The underlying economic motive is confirmed by the tendency for incidents of rustling to increase as the prices for beef and milk rise.

Among Nigerian pastoralist groups and communities, therefore, there is nothing new about cattle rustling; the practice is driven by different needs, which may include need for cash, some ethnic groups' need for meat, or as a means of revenge for damaged crops. This, however, does not imply that rustling is condoned — it is criminalized by the penal code of Northern Nigeria. Frequent clashes have occurred between transhumance pastoralists, who move from dry areas to wet areas, and crop farmers. The clashes have been a regular feature of inter-group relations, and have pitched different ethnic communities against the Fulbe pastoralists in the back-and-forth movement of the herders between the north and south of the country. Over the past decade, however, cattle rustling has been transformed into a vicious criminal activity, far beyond a quasi-cultural practice that had important livelihood-enhancing functions, and far beyond the low-intensity conflict that had previously defined the relationship between farmers and grazers. New criminal gangs, armed with sophisticated weapons, have reportedly carted away cattle in commando-like operations that have resulted in the killings of herders.

The transformation of cattle rustling is widely acknowledged by scholars, who have traced the evolution of an old practice into organized crime conducted with immense sophistication and efficiency. Rustlers' activities are now characterized by the use of modern weapons, and their operations are both trans-locational and transnational (Alemika, 2013; Okoli and Aguda, 2014). Available evidence also suggests that cattle rustling has not only metamorphosed into an immensely sophisticated and efficient organized crime, it is now

also motivated by both 'subsistence' and 'commercial' imperatives (Gueye, 2013). Accordingly, cattle rustling can be located properly within the domains of the crimes of the 'dominant' classes and the crimes of the 'dominated' classes. The former broadly defines those who have turned rustling into a criminal activity with discernible hierarchical networks that link rustlers with markets in a thriving underground economy that generates untaxed wealth. The latter describes actors who are involved in cattle rustling within the rural economy as part of a coping mechanism responding to socio-economic pressures.

Media reports of cattle rustling suggest that victims include large scale, commercial livestock farmers and nomadic pastoralists who graze their cattle across the country. It has been reported that in 2013, gunmen armed with automatic weapons attacked the commercial farms of Vice-President Namadi Sambo, along Birnin Gwari road in Kaduna, and also the commercial farms of the Emir of Zaria, Alhaji Shehu Idris, in Zaria — taking over 1,000 cows in the former case and 200 in the latter. High-profile cases of cattle robbery of this nature are commonplace, involving millions of naira (Weekly Trust, May 16, 2015). The powerful effects threaten the very survival of pastoralist communities. The problems extend beyond instances of nomads

who are said to have been completely stripped of their cattle as a result of rustling. There are also disturbing cases of hypertension, insanity, and sudden deaths among nomads who are victims of cattle rustling. Rustling has specific gender implications, as a result of its ruinous impact on the economy of Fulani women who depend on *Fura do Nono* (cheese, oil, and other dairy products) (Tukur, 2013).

Survey results confirmed respondents' perception that both cattle rustling and rural banditry operate in a criminal and underground fashion; findings also corroborated the concealed nature of social networks that sustain the theft and sale of cattle. First, survey questions sought to establish whether the respondents were aware of the identity of individuals involved in cattle theft; only 38% of the respondents claimed they knew bandits' identities. Regarding whether respondents knew about markets where stolen cattle are sold, only 30% claimed awareness, while an overwhelming 70% said they were unaware of the markets. 12.7% of the respondents, however, identified the Makurdi cattle market as the place where stolen cattle are sold; they were silent regarding other known markets, such as Kaduna, Vom, Lafia and Keffi.

The growing evidence of the menace of cattle rustling and rural banditry in contemporary Nigeria is seen in the disturbing increase in cattle rustling incidents in different parts of the country, and in the accompanying humanitarian tragedies. Recent documentation of cattle rustling incidents by the Sunday Trust Newspaper (June 1, 2014) brings the pervasive nature of cattle rustling in Nigeria into clear relief. Cattle rustling has a global character, and clear economic consequences for countries where it is entrenched. Recent Nigerian evidence shows just how frightening it has become. Aside from the estimated high figures of internally displaced persons (IDPs) and

forced migrations of some victims into neighbouring countries, the estimated 300 deaths and 60,000 rustled cattle in both urban and rural settings indicate how pervasive cattle rustling has become.

Table 1: Estimated No. of Rustled Cattle and Associated Deaths in 2013

State	Herders Killed	No. of Cattle Rustled
Plateau	87	7,200
Nasarawa	125	12,000
Benue	17	2,000
Zamfara	37	2, 462
Niger	15	500
Gombe	NA	29,040
Sokoto	NA	99
Yobe	NA	92
Bauchi	NA	204
Kwara	NA	204

Source: Sunday Trust, June 1, 2014

The facts and figures of incidents of cattle rustling for 2013 alone are quite instructive, as reflected in Table 1. More recent figures of rustled cattle and the number of herdsmen killed across the country show the humanitarian crisis associated with cattle rustling as an expression of rural banditry, including incidents in the North Central states of Benue, Nasarawa, Plateau, Kwara, and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Abuja. According to Dr. Garus Gololo, secretary of the Benue State branch of the Myetti Allah Cattle Rearers Association of Nigeria (MACBN), these include 28,000 cows rustled in Plateau; 25,000 in Nasarawa; 8,680 in Benue; 1,650 in Kwara; and 1,500 in the FCT. The human casualties include 2,500 herders in Benue; 264 in Plateau; 150 in Kwara; 70 in Nasarawa; and 7 in the FCT (Weekly Trust, May 16, 2015). Reports further indicate that criminal cattle rustlers have drifted southward to the North-Central states, having been dislodged from the northern states of Zamfara, Sokoto and Kaduna (Weekly Trust, May 16, 2015). Although the identities of cattle rustlers' victims were not revealed in the investigations, it is believed that most of the victims are nomadic herders. However, there is a need to recognize that to some extent cattle rustling intersects with other forms of rural banditry, which appear to have acquired a dynamic of their own when situated within the wider context of the challenges of human security, climate change, and the declining capacity of the state to perform its routine governance tasks.

Other publicly-reported incidents include the March, 2014 attack on the Maroa Chieftdom in Southern Kaduna State; reportedly over 200 people were killed, About 3,000 Fulani herdsmen were displaced by the spate of clashes between Fulani herdsmen and several 'indigenous' communities in Taraba State in 2013, where about 500 herdsmen were reportedly killed and about 23,000 were forced to move into the Cameroon Republic (Daily Independent, March 14,

2014). For much of 2013 and 2014, the theatre of conflict between Fulani herdsmen and agricultural farming communities in Benue State widened to such an extent that Tiv and Agatu farmers in the state were locked in internecine battle with the Fulbe herdsmen, which resulted in wanton killings, destruction, and a large number of IDPs. Between May and September 2014, for instance, a spate of attacks on Agatu communities in Agatu Local Government Area of Benue State, reportedly carried out by Fulani herdsmen, resulted in the displacement of an estimated 10,000 people. The IDPs were forced to seek refuge in neighbouring communities and local governments (Daily Independent, March 14, 2014).

The protracted conflict between Fulbe herdsmen and Tiv farmers reached unprecedented levels in 2013 and 2014, resulting in massive displacement of both Tiv communities in Guma Local Government of Benue State; thousands of Fulbe herdsmen were displaced in Obudu Local Government Area of Cross River State. Tiv farmers alleged crop destruction and contamination of community water points; they were met by counter-allegations by Fulbe grazers, who claimed cattle theft. In the aftermath, both sides resorted to criminality with impunity. Farmers turn to cattle rustling as a form of revenge for alleged damage to crops and water points, while criminal gangs were motivated by commercial opportunity; both forms of rustling are very common in this part of the country. Tiv and Agatu communities accused the Fulani militias and suspected mercenaries of resorting to scorched-earth tactics, which resulted in the ruin of villages and settlements. After supposed revenge attacks, Fulani herdsmen accused these communities of blocking grazing routes, and believed that the state government was involved in the organized attacks and raids on Fulani herdsmen and their cattle (The Nation, May 13, 2013).

Even more intriguing is that cattle rustling in many parts of the country tends to be linked with apparent criminal activities, and with wider political and identity issues. In Benue State, for example, media images generated around the hostility between farmers and grazers link the problems to foreign mercenaries, and to activities of Islamic extremists who had targeted predominantly-Christian communities. In some instances, these activities were linked to the Boko Haram insurgency in the north-eastern parts of the country; extremists were supposedly extending their frontiers to destroy the Christian communities of the Middle Belt. Another example is seen in the tendency to interpret the cycle of violence in Plateau State between the “settlers” Hausa/Fulani communities (including pastoralists and the indigenous ethnic communities) in terms of the Islamic agenda of the former. This view is widely shared by Plateau elites, who have played a critical mobilization role in their communities (Concerned Plateau Citizens, 2004).

The results of the surveys conducted for this research reflect the pervasiveness of the twin problem of cattle rustling and rural banditry, as suggested by Table 1, and the disturbing media accounts. Three important trends can be deciphered from the results of the survey, illuminating (1) the rising trends in rural criminality associated with cattle rustling; (2) the level at which people encounter cattle rustling, and; (3) rural banditry and the timing of its occurrence.

With respect to increased rural banditry over time, only 21% of the respondents identified the period between 2006 and 2010 as the time when banditry became a matter of public concern. By contrast, 55% of respondents identified the peak of the problem occurring in the past four year, in the period between 2011 and 2015. The pervasiveness of the problem is illustrated by the percentage of respondents who reported having witnessed rural banditry. 54% of

the respondents reported having personally witnessed banditry, while, 46% claimed that they did not witness cattle rustling and associated banditry. An overwhelming majority of respondents, 89%, who had claimed to have witnessed incidents of cattle theft which occur in the daytime said they had witnessed such incidents more than five times. 65% of respondents reported having seen instances of cattle theft at night, with affirmative respondents concentrated in Keffi, Lafia Awe and Giza.

The survey provided additional evidence of the transformations of rural banditry and cattle rustling. Cattle rustling in purely traditional settings (for either cultural purposes or for those who rustle cattle to supplement domestic protein intake) involves an average of five cows, goats and/or sheep. The survey result indicates the dramatically divergent economic and commercial motives behind cattle rustling and rural banditry. An overwhelming majority of the respondents, 65%, reported that the number of cattle involved in each of the rustling incidents was no fewer than 80. This figure matches the estimates of rustled cattle obtained from other locations where the survey was carried out.

The survey results contradict the popular notion that nomadic herdsmen are the major perpetrators of cattle rustling. Respondents were asked whether indigenes, armed robbers, or Fulani herders were responsible for cattle theft; 50% identified indigenes as the culpable parties. The remainder was evenly split, with 25% identifying criminal gangs and 25% identifying Fulani herdsmen as the perpetrators. The evidence suggests that cattle rustling is a major rural crime, and is sustained by a carefully networked gang of armed rustlers, which operates under the control of gang leaders.

A recent event in Katsina-Ala, in Benue State, is indicative of the organized violence. An Assistant Superintendent of Police, Baba Ibrahim, and members of his team were dispatched from the Cattle Rustling Unit in the Abuja police headquarters. Ibrahim and his team were attacked and killed by armed young men; it is believed they were working for the leader of a known rustling gang. According to the report, the Secretary of the Benue State branch of Miyetti Allah Cattle Breeders' Association of Nigeria (MACBAN), Dr. Ganus Yololo, had reported the activities of this particular gang; the gang was known to be responsible for several cases of cattle rustling. Police authorities eventually dispatched a team to investigate the gang's activities. The policemen were killed during the course of their investigation, (Weekly Trust, May 16, 2015).

The trends and peculiarities associated with cattle rustling vary in different parts of Nigeria. In the North-Central geopolitical zone, especially in Plateau, Nasarawa, Benue, and Taraba States, the problem of cattle rustling and rural banditry is framed around wider identity issues, including ethnic differences, ethnicity (minority/majority divide), religious difference, and the indigene/settler split; these are linked to struggles over land and water resources. Rustling is capable of impacting these identity issues as they are played out at regional and national levels. Furthermore, tension and conflict are sharpened by clear-cut occupational and ethno-cultural differentiations between farmers and grazers.

Rustling, including animal theft and other unchecked actions in grazing reserve areas, has a different significance in the context of the perennial conflict between Fulani herdsman and crop farmers. In that context, conflicts are driven by grazers' insecurity in tenure, especially where land belonging to indigenous ethnic communities

has been acquired without payment of adequate compensation. More often than not, tension and conflict are generated by the increasing number of court cases related to crop damage, and disputes over land within the reserve areas (Sulaiman, 1986:6).

The growing menace of cattle rustling by armed gangs and bandits appears to differ in terms of scale and economic consequences in 'ungoverned' spaces, and territories between Kaduna, Katsina and Zamfara States. These armed gangs and bandits routinely raid cattle ranches owned by traditional pastoralists. In order to understand the various ramifications of cattle rustling and rural banditry in Nigeria, it will be useful to examine the human security dilemma facing Nigeria, which we turn to in the next section.

Agrarian Change, Environmental Decline and Resource Conflict

Resource conflict occurs at the vortex of internecine conflict between agricultural crop growers and transhumant pastoralists, and is linked to issues of cattle rustling and rural banditry. The basis of the conflict itself can be found in the scarcity of land and water resources. The scarcity arises from a number of factors, including changes in agrarian relations, climate change, and environmental decline. The tendency for competition among different occupational groups over scarce resources further exacerbates the tension. Such competition tends to pitch different communal groups into deadly confrontations, especially where occupational and communal boundaries overlap. This appears to be the case in the conflict between Fulani herdsmen and the different ethnic groups that constitute the bulk of agricultural farmers in the central and southern parts of Nigeria during the seasonal movement of cattle for pasture.

In order to formulate effective public policy, there must be understanding of the direct consequences of changes in agrarian relations and climate change for resource scarcity. Furthermore, there must be consideration of how they are linked to resource-based conflict, rural banditry, and cattle rustling.

The literature on cattle rustling in Nigeria recognizes the centrality of resource scarcity and competition between different occupational and ethno-cultural groups. Shettima and Tar (2008) have offered an excellent review of the different theoretical perspectives of conflicts between herders and farmers. The review shows convergence on the centrality of resource scarcity and environmental decline, as shown by the excellent review of the theory of 'the tragedy of the commons' (Hardin, 1968), and the works of Homer-Dixon (1991). While the tragedy of the commons offers a useful perspective by bringing the issue of resource scarcity-induced conflict to the fore, however, the inherent logic throws the crisis of pastoralism back at the pastoralists themselves; by focusing on self-interested actors, whose quest is to maximize exploitation and receive the full benefits of resources held in common, the theory tends to spread the costs among the users. The tendency for the theory to blame herdsmen and grazers for attendant problems of overgrazing and soil erosion, rather than focusing on the constraints and challenges that face pastoralists as an occupational groups under very hazardous conditions, has been identified as a basic weakness of this perspective (African Union, 2013).

Nevertheless, the combined factors of resource scarcity, agrarian change, and environmental decline have altered the relationships between the two groups. Whereas their relationships were previously characterized by varying degrees of cooperation, competition, and conflict, the groups are now largely locked into

hostility and violent conflict. As Shettima and Tar (2008) have argued, historically the two occupational groups were intertwined in sharing land, water, fodder, and other resources. They also show that in some instances, occupational identities of pastoralists and many sedentary cultivators are blurred, as many sedentary cultivators are also 'stock breeders', and vice versa. Over time, however, climate change induced competition for resources, and other environmental factors have undermined the basis for cooperation and complementarities that bound the two groups together.

Emergent patterns of agrarian change and the intensification of agrarian capitalism have substantially altered patterns of land use and access among the different occupational groups. The issues involved go beyond the processes of internal differentiation within the peasantry as a result of agricultural commodity production. A primary factor is the impact of direct state policies that have sought to expand agricultural production as a strategy of diversifying the economy in the non-oil sector, both for domestic food security and for export. These policies, introduced in the mid-1980s by General Ibrahim Babangida's administration, led to the phenomenon of land grabbing. The policies also caused alienation in urban and rural Nigeria, in the context of economic decline and the imposition of harsh neo-liberal policies. In diverse ethnic and occupational settings, the policies have driven land scarcity, and intensified inter-communal conflict between different ethnicities and occupational groups, especially farmers and grazers.

In addition to the scarcity engendered by this process and the pressure on the African lineage system of land allocation, the need to cope with economic hardship occasioned the structural adjustment programme. People were forced to expand the land they had under

cultivation just to meet the basic social needs of their families, as the cost of social services rose to high levels. According to Baker (1991), while peasants have shown remarkable adaptation and dynamism in the face of sustained pressure, the need to cope with the reality of ethnic diversity has, in some instances, stressed the social relations that regulate the acquisition of land and regulation of labour. The consequence, as Mafeje observes, is that, 'in some cases lineage members have, as a response to increasing land scarcity, tried to regain land that had been sold to individuals, whether these be kinsmen or strangers' (1991: 34). Other sources of pressure on rural land include the reality of straddling urban and rural areas, and the adoption of multiple modes of livelihood, as urban-based workers and salaried groups who suffered severe decline in real incomes participated in the cultivation of family land (Egwu, 1998). The situation is complicated by the fact that in Africa, land assets include trees used commercially, opportunities for game to thrive, and considerations that may not be tied to economic interests. As a matter of fact, land is immersed in the wider political and ideological discourses, because land is not 'just to provide the material conditions of survival and enrichment, but also to gain control over others, and to define personal and social identities' (Shipton and Goheen, 1992: 307).

The state has been drawn into the arena of land politics and land allocation; the 1978 Land Use Act conferred the authority to allocate rural land to the chairman of a Local Government of Council, and to the Land Allocation Committee. By granting the authority to allocate urban land to state governors, and rural land to the chairmen of local governments, the 'law deliberately sanctioned political control over land access, which does not preclude commercialization' (Berry, 1993: 131). Land became central to political calculations at the local level, and, more importantly, there was conformity to the dominant

situation in post-colonial Africa, in which local councils tend to function as 'ethnic organizations, legislating so as to restrict ownership of land to local ethnic groups and to divest "strangers" of rights of permanent tenure' (Bates, 1983:158).

The problem of increasing land scarcity, both for farming and grazing purposes, and the tendency for competition for land between different ethnic and occupational groups results in inter-communal conflict; the problem is further entrenched by the pressures of climate change, especially the challenge posed by desertification and erosion. The problem of desert encroachment in northern parts of Nigeria has been a challenge for decades, with desertification extending southward; it is said that the desert is expanding by a kilometre every 35 years. This has affected the availability and fertility of soil for crop farmers. It has likewise affected the availability of pastures for grazers, who have increasingly been forced to move southward in search of pastures. Similarly, gully erosion and the washing off of topsoil have affected both the size and fertility of land available to agricultural farmers in the states in the north-central and south eastern parts of the country. It is a situation that has increasingly intensified competition for land and water resources among the farmers and herdsmen (Egwu, 1998b).

As is well known, pressures generated by land scarcity and threats to livelihood of peasant communities are always responsible for peasant rebellions; to a large extent they are also responsible for the frequent conflicts between agricultural crop farmers and Fulani herdsmen. Peasant rebellions are not perfectly analogous to crop farmers' reaction to cattle grazers in the context of competition for land and water resources. That being said, more often not peasant rebellion may give rise to localisms of different kinds, including

ethnicity; these localisms may obscure the real economic and social grievances of the populace (Wolf, 1969).

In the Mambilla Plateau in the Gembu Local Government Area, of the present Taraba State, land grabbing, alienation, and demographic changes (both of humans and animals) engendered competition for land. The competition took place in a context of occupational differentiation; the occupational split also followed ethno-cultural lines. What followed was a classic case of changes in agrarian relations driving protracted conflict between crop farmers and grazers. At the height of the conflicts, which ran from the early 1980s through the 1990s, deadly confrontations and severe losses of cattle and crops drove emigration across the Nigerian border and into the Cameroon Republic; over 10,000 inhabitants of the Plateau, mostly the small peasant farmers and grazers, were forced to migrate.

The soil of Mambilla was reputedly exceptionally fertile, and wealthy Nigerians rushed to acquire land. As a result, the value of land dramatically increased, with land speculation occurring as a logical consequence (African Concord, June 14, 1988). According to available evidence, between 1979 and 1989 115 corporate bodies and individuals acquired plots of land of varying sizes through the Ministry of Land and Survey in Yola, while the Sardauna Local Government made a total of 254 allocations, covering 8,815 hectares of land (ha) (George, 1990).

The massive alienation of land on the Plateau, which diminished the amount of land available for farming and grazing purposes, coincided with an exponential increase in human and cattle populations. This led to the collapse of the traditional, balanced pattern of land use that had been evolved over time by farmers and

grazers. In their constant interaction with nature, an arrangement was evolved whereby the farmers cultivated the flat bottom of the valley, while the cattle rearers occupied the hilltops. However, this was to be overturned by the dramatic increase of the human and cattle populations. For instance, the human population on the Plateau increased from 95,148 in 1963 to 134,256 in 1976, and to 169,872 in 1989. The cattle population witnessed even more rapid growth, from 234,980 in 1963, to 450,000 in 1976, and to 617,000 in 1989 (George, 1990; Egwu, 1998).

This increase defied measures taken by the colonial authorities, who in the 1930s anticipated the long-term effects of overgrazing and land scarcity. The impacts would be especially acute for the Mambillas, who were predominantly farmers. The farmers in particular stand to experience more adverse effects, as the reduction of available land and overgrazing cause soil depletion. Overgrazing has accelerated widespread sheet erosion, which often turns into gully erosion. Similarly, it led to the elimination of the legume *Tephrosia Vogelli* (Yom), a good soil improver. Grazers' movement into the valleys during dry seasons became a source of constant conflict with farmers. Overall, access to land became skewed against the smallholder farmers. They had an estimated population of 51,383, representing 98% of the population of land users on the Plateau. However they only had access to 28,000 ha, which represents 7.1% of the total land available. In contrast, grazers, who account for only 2% of the population, controlled 328,000 ha of the land. What followed was inter-ethnic competition and conflict over land for farming and grazing purposes. The conflict took place in a situation of overlapping ethnic and occupational identities, pitting Fulani cattle grazers against the indigenous Mambilla farmers (Egwu, 1998).

As previously mentioned, climate change has also played a prominent role in the course of the evolving conflicts. The impact of climate change in the Lake Chad region reflects the general picture. It has taken a heavy toll on the livelihoods of over 8 million pastoralists and fishermen around Lake Chad. As a result of damming, the lake has shrunk from about 25,000 km² to its present size of 18,000 km². Dams have altered the volume of water flowing into the lake from within and outside Nigeria. The impact of dams has been compounded by the effects of desert encroachment. About 21% of the entire Conventional Basin of Lake Chad, which extends to six other African countries around North-Central Africa, is covered by Nigeria. Within Nigeria, dams have been constructed in the two sub-basins that flow into the Lake Chad – the Yedseram and Ngadda dams, and the Hadeija-Jumaare-Koundougou and Yobe dams. They have had adverse effects on the water inflow into the lake. They have caused the recession of the lake, and negatively affected irrigation for both fishing and pastoral activities. As Babagana (2014) has established, the result has been increasing drops in fishing activities around Lake Chad, as well as reduction in water supply for pastoral and irrigation farming activities.

Another relevant factor was the deforestation resulting from increasing reliance on wood fuel for cooking. The combined effect of dam development, desert encroachment, and deforestation has been a series of conflicts and violence induced by resource scarcity and growing social and economic misery. It is plausible that deepening poverty in rural and urban areas may have turned people away from the contemporary social order, and predisposed them to appeals of extreme groups such as the Boko Haram, who have offered alternate social orders. The extremist groups have gained ground in the northeastern region of the country; the escalation of such sectarian uprisings may have provided an additional fillip to incidences of

rural banditry and cattle rustling in the region. This is all the more plausible considering the huge economic benefits of the cattle trade, which can boost the financing of insurgent activities. What exists, in a nutshell, is a complex combination of factors, including scarcity of land and water resources for different occupational groups, and the emergence of extremist social movements that mobilise on the bases of mass poverty and social misery.

While these realities have dramatically diminished the availability of land for both agricultural farming and also for grazing purposes, different cultural notions and understanding of land and land use have fuelled conflict between nomadic groups and farmers. For instance, Lattimore (1962) describes the 'sovereign importance of movement' for pastoralists, driven by little regard for boundaries and territories. That conception clashes with the delimited spaces ingrained in the modern state system, and the farmers' lack of flexibility in responding to constraints imposed by the pressures arising from climate change. The constraint imposed by the modern state system is more complex in the Nigerian case, where interests fuelled by ethnic demands and the ideology of indigeneity have occasioned frequent redrawing of internal administrative boundaries. The administrative boundaries are claimed as exclusive economic and political spheres of interests by elites and the majority of people. The lack of flexibility on the part of the farmers predisposes them to conflict with nomadic grazers, who have greater adaptability and less exposure to risk. While the nomads can disperse their herds and move to new areas, farmers are tied to their land and their products, and can suffer crop failure and starvation caused by a lack of comparable options (Kaudugor, 2005; Dysun-Hudon and Dysun-Hudson, 1980).

The result is that rustling and other forms of rural banditry cannot be seen solely in terms of underlying economic factors and motives. Rather, they are immersed in wider discourse on politics and power in Nigeria. As Greiner (2013:1) has shown with respect to Kenya, rustling has become part and parcel of politicized claims over administrative boundaries, struggles for exclusive access to land, and attempts to safeguard ethnically homogeneous electoral bases. Similarly in the Nigerian context, the issues are not unrelated to divisive state and local government policies that discriminate on ethnic and religious grounds (Human Rights Watch, 2013). It is in this context that Winter and Rowley (1986: 26) suggest that political powerlessness has been a recurring issue 'where rules governing the trespass of animals are made and enforced by farmers with an inherent bias against pastoralists and animal keepers'.

The importance of political factors and power relations, which appear to be skewed against nomadic pastoralists, emerges in bold relief in states in the North-Central region; it is there that the most violent conflicts between farmers and grazers have occurred. In states such as Benue, Plateau, Nasarawa, and Kogi, animosity against herdsmen has been fuelled by the largely-indigenous farming communities' exclusive claims to land and water resources. Those claims have reinforced competition between the two different occupational groups for land and water. In the context of the subsisting Land Use Act of 1978, elected and appointed local government officials and traditional institutions play an active role in regulating access to land and water resources. In some cases, this includes requiring officials' express permission for grazers to settle for a period of grazing in particular domains. In states where there had been long-standing identity issues dividing ethnic majorities minorities, and where indigene/settler dichotomies existed, the politics of protecting local resources against perceived 'others'

increases the likelihood of more animosity and conflict. Thus, cattle rustling has become a key issue in the inter-group relationships between Fulani nomads and indigenous ethnic communities along pasture routes.

Rural Banditry, Cattle Rustling and the Human Security Dilemma

The deteriorating situation of human security in Nigeria accounts for the increasing incidents of rural banditry and cattle rustling. 'Human security' is much broader than national security, which tends to focus on the security of the state in military terms, and the protection of the state from external aggression. Human security shares the conceptual space of the people-centric approach to human development pioneered by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). Central to the idea of human security, as espoused by the 1994 Human Development Report on Human Security, are two important concerns: freedom from fear intended to indicate freedom from violence, and freedom from want, which is intended to indicate freedom from poverty. In this conception of human security, human beings become the 'vital core', with a 'fundamental set of functions related to survival, livelihood and dignity' as the irreducible minimum.

The multidimensional nature of human security is underlined by the recognition given to economic, food, health, environmental, personal, community, and political security. The number of central issues is greatly expanded, to include the welfare of citizens, larger issues of development, and redistribution of wealth among the different strata of society. There is also concern given to issues of governance, the realization of social citizenship for subaltern social groups and classes, and respect for group identity and self-determination of minority groups. The key assumption is that a nation cannot be secure if it fails to address issues of governance,

unemployment, and corruption, all of which can subvert the rule of law and can undermine the welfare of the citizenry, even if the state has the most modernized army or the most sophisticated police force.

The human security situation in Nigeria has remained precarious despite the results of the 2013 rebasing of the Nigerian economy, which identified the country as having the 28th largest economy in the world and the largest in Africa, with the per capita GDP raised from \$1,555 to \$2,688 (The Economist, April 12, 2014). For example, Nigeria is ranked low on the Human Development Index (HDI) report of the UNDP, which focuses on life expectancy, school enrolment, and income indices, and is similarly ranked low on Inequality Adjusted Human Development Index (IHDI) since 2010; from the countries measured, the report ranked Nigeria 153rd in 2011 and 2012, and 152nd in 2013. These rankings tell the sad story of the declining material wellbeing of Nigerians. The crisis of human security in Nigeria has its roots in high levels of corruption and an entrenched culture of impunity; these are coupled with an absence of efforts on the part of government at all levels to implement pro-poor policies, and to effect redistribution of wealth.

The human security challenge is also evidenced by Nigeria's declining global status as a peaceful country where people can live in happiness. Once described as having one of the happiest populations on earth, it has become a country torn by civil strife, violence, and crimes of all sorts, including rural banditry that has made existence oppressive. The 2014 Global Peace Index, which ranked 162 countries by measures such as security, extent of conflict, and degree of militarization, puts Nigeria as the 14th-least-peaceful country in the world. Noting that the level of peace in Nigeria had fallen by 5% since 2008, the report rates countries like Chad,

Lebanon, and Yemen as more peaceful than Nigeria (The Fund for Peace, 2014). The Boko Haram-led insurgency in the northeastern part of Nigeria, the frequent ethno-religious combustions in different parts of the country and the activities of ethnic militias, cult groups and rural bandits have made Nigeria the 20th-saddest country to live, according to the latest ranking by Forbes Magazine. Nigeria's global ranking along these dimensions is a consequence of the debilitating state of poverty, unemployment, and illiteracy, all of which are compounded by the failure of democratic governance and state inadequacies.

The argument that human insecurity contributes to the problems of rural banditry and cattle rustling is partly borne out by the results of the survey. Respondents were asked to identify the underlying causes of rural banditry among factors such as unemployment, ethno-religious conflict, greed, robbery, insecurity, and psychological issues. The responses to the survey indicated in Table 2 show that 44% attributed rural banditry to unemployment, while 23% identified rural banditry as fallout from frequent ethno-religious conflicts. Another 18% of the respondents identified greed as the underlying cause; robbery, insecurity and psychological factors were identified as the underlying causes in declining order.

Table 2: Underlying Causes of Rural Banditry

1.	Unemployment	-	44%
2.	Ethno -Religious Conflict	-	23%
3.	Greed	-	18%
4.	Robbery	-	5.9%
5.	Insecurity	-	6.8%
6.	Psychological Needs	-	2.3%
Total			100%

Source: Field Survey, 2015

The rising incidence of cattle rustling as a part of the problem of rural banditry may also be partially attributed to the problem of small arms and light weapons (SALW) that have found their way into the hands of non-state actors, part of the wider challenge of human security confronting Nigeria. At the domestic level, the discourse on illicit SALW has often implicated the fragility of the state system in Africa, which explains the power vacuum that is exploited by non-state actors and criminal elements who need unfettered access to weapons in these categories. Nigeria, for example, provides evidence that state failure and an overall decline in the capacity of the state to regulate, extract and distribute – the very core functions of the modern state – are at the heart of the problem of SALW. In a recent collection of thoroughly-researched contributions by Nigerian scholars, Okome (2013) drives home the different ways in which the weaknesses of the state system account for the persistent flow of arms into the country, and the corresponding

democratization of the instruments of violence. And when in the hands of non-state actors, the legitimate monopoly of the state over instruments of coercion is compromised.

Although it is difficult to obtain reliable data in Nigeria, it has been suggested that between 7-8 million illicit small arms and light weapons are in circulation in West Africa alone, with a huge number entering Nigeria. This is largely a result of porous borders, including the affinity between border communities which consider any stringent border control as an infringement upon the social and cultural rights of the people (Chuma-Okoro, 2013). This estimate is far above the figure of 1-2 million illicit small arms in the early 2000s (Egwu, 2014). Public policy responses must recognize that most of the factors potentially driving the proliferation of SALW are linked to the decline in state capacity and the human security dilemma facing both state and citizens.

The situation in many parts of Nigeria resembles broader Sahel-region governance voids. Ungoverned spaces provide a power vacuum, which is at times filled by religious extremist groups and/or criminal elements; they have taken over remote areas where state presence is reduced or non-existent (Aning, 2009). The point made by Mohammed Bello Tukur, Secretary of Myetti Allah Cattle Breeders Association of Nigeria (MACBAN), supports the thesis that weak state capacity to regulate and establish effective governance accounts for the high level of illegal activities perpetrated by criminal gangs and networks. With specific reference to the BirninGwari area of Kaduna State where cattle rustling and related criminal activities have been concentrated, Tukur says,

Almost all the entire herds around that area have been stolen. In fact that belt – the belt from BirninGwari, through Funtua,

Faskari, parts of Zamfara going to Anchau – that is like a no man's land, for cattle rustlers and bandits. Every cow there has been stolen including cows belonging to general and top civil servants; talk less of small herdsmen whose names you don't hear (Tukur, June 11, 2013).

The problem of cattle rustling is worsened by the rapid build-up of SALW in the communities and regions affected by conflict, especially in the African Sahel region, which has led to a proliferation of arms caused by a lack of successfully-implemented disarmament programmes. More often than not, targeted groups merely cross porous borders, acquiring new identities in the process. This occurs particularly across communities that straddle national borders, as found in states like Adamawa and Borno, both of which share borders with other countries in the Sahel. Arms flow easily into the hands of non-state actors in both urban and rural areas, thereby fuelling crimes and rural banditry. The difficult terrain of many rural areas, coupled with poor communication, a lack of socioeconomic infrastructure, and poverty aggravate the situation, transforming it into ideal space for rustling, smuggling, and small arms trade; these conditions also provide potential routes for terrorist activities. The conditions have been exacerbated by the absence of the state, effectively encouraging rustlers to undertake raids with utter impunity.

These core challenges of human security are increased further by democratic governance's failure to deliver development and livelihood security for either individuals or groups. Despite trends that suggest entrenchment of democratic elections and peaceful regime change at both national and sub-national levels, the democratic institutions of parliament, the judiciary, political parties, and civil society have remained weak and fragile. A complex of

political factors have contributed to heightened tension and violence across the country: these include an absence of accountable governance at all levels, the marginalization of groups (including nomadic herdsman), the resurgence of identity politics, and the exploitation of ethno-regional and religious differences. The tension is worsened further still by the weakening of national cohesion resulting from patterns of social and economic inequalities, which tend to occur along ethno-regional lines.

Major violent crises have been manifestations of the deteriorating human security situation and the failure of democratic governance; they have also sparked discourses that frame conflicts between different occupational groups, such as crop farmers and grazers. The consequence is that local conflicts between these groups inflame national passion, and reinforce ethno-regional and religious differences at the national level. These major crises have included the raging insurgency led by the Boko Haram, an extremist Islamic group in the north-eastern parts of the country, and ethno-religious conflicts in the central northern parts of the country.

These linkages make confronting the salient elements of human security identified here crucial for efforts to arrest the disturbing problems of rural banditry and cattle rustling. Outside the human security dilemma, however, there are policy failures that need to be redressed. One failure fundamentally tied to rural banditry and cattle rustling in contemporary Nigeria is the eminently unsuccessful grazing reserves policy, which had been half-heartedly implemented since Nigeria's independence in 1960; that failure is explored in the section that follows.

The Failure of Grazing Reserve Policy and the Crisis of Pastoralism

It is obvious that nomadic pastoralists are implicated in the rising phenomenon of cattle rustling and rural banditry, both as perpetrators and as victims. However the popular perceptions shared by non-pastoralist groups portray Fulani herdsmen as belligerent, as evidenced by their movement with deadly weapons; that is sometimes their response to the menace of rustlers targeting their own cattle; the cattle not only constitute their primary economic interests, they also define their economic, social, and cultural identity. Insufficient attention has been paid to the threat posed to pastoralism over the years by the failure of the grazing reserves policy, and the overall threats to pastoralism that define the anxiety facing pastoralists in general and pastoralist transhumance. There are presently 417 grazing reserves that have failed in terms of the objectives for which they were established (Tukur, 2015).

Pastoralism and livestock production form a considerable sub-sector within agriculture; according to the Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO), they account for 40% of the global value of agricultural output, providing a partial source of income and food security to 70% of the world's poor (FAO, 2009). Despite the lack of an integrated approach that creates synergy between crop and livestock production in Nigeria, policymakers recognize the importance of livestock for the overall policy of attaining food security, as well as for adequately meeting the nutritional needs of the population. This was the reasoning behind the establishment of the National Livestock Production Project (NLPP) within the Federal Ministry of Agriculture in 1976, with support from the World Bank. The broad mandate of the project includes identifying the challenges and obstacles to livestock production, and addressing those challenges. That includes the challenges faced by

transhumance pastoralists who control over 90% of the total national herds (Awogbade, 1987).

Studies have established that the common sources of pressure and anxiety for pastoral groups include population pressure from both external encroachers and internal demographic growth; insecure tenure and the weakening or complete breakdown of customary governance institutions; restriction of transhumance and loss of access to key resources; sedentarisation policies leading to land degradation and severely reduced carrying capacity; and conflict between pastoralist groups, as well as with crop farmers. These generic sources of pressure on pastoralist communities are relevant to the Nigerian situation. They help account for the threats to pastoralism and the cycle of conflict and violence that has always pitched nomadic pastoralists against crop farmers in deadly confrontations. Consequently, these issues should occupy the focus of government efforts to find solutions to the problems facing pastoralists, and for promoting the growth of the livestock sub-sector within agriculture (Briefing Note, 2010).

In 1976, the government of Northern Nigeria passed the grazing law, primarily to encourage the settlement of herdsmen for several reasons, including addressing their lack of land rights, reducing or limiting movement of herds (which limits access to health facilities and improves the management of the herds), facilitating the adoption of a modernized approach to cattle rearing, and the institution of a ranching system (Awogbade, 1987). The idea of seeking to deliberately entrench legal grazing rights and title to land flowed from the recognition of increasing pressure on traditional grazing lands by farmers seeking arable plots and by government agricultural projects. On the basis of the grazing law, a 121,762-hectare plot of land was marked at Rumar-Kukar-Jangali in Kaduna

State, with investment made in demarcation, fire protection, and water development (see Awogbade, 1987).

Unfortunately, there had been no remarkable progress in the establishment of grazing reserves until the establishment of the National Livestock Development Project (FLDP); the FLDP was established with the support of the World Bank, including a \$21 million loan in 1976, and a counterpart contribution of 50% and 25% by the federal and state governments, respectively. However, it was during the Second National Development Plan (1970-1980) that the government became directly involved in establishing grazing reserves. Under the supervision of the Federal Livestock Department in the Federal Ministry of Agriculture, the National Livestock Project established grazing reserves with a total of 115,000 hectares of land. In addition to the reserves, cattle were clearly designated or demarcated (Awogbade, 1987).

Despite limited success in the Federal Government grazing reserves policy, especially in the settlement of herdsmen, several states in northern Nigeria have established grazing reserves. One example is the Kachia Grazing Reserve established by the Kaduna State Government. Others include grazing reserves such as the Rumar-Kukar-Jangaligrazing reserve, which occupies 121,762 hectares of land, Gujba (Borno State), Udobo (Bauchi State) and Garkada and Sorau in Adamawa State, where a total of 1,850 families were expected to be settled. The old Gongola State, comprised of present-day Adamawa and Taraba States, proposed 72 reserves; 52 reserves were to be controlled by the state government, with the remaining 22 expected to fall under the purview of local government. The government of Bauchi State similarly proposed the establishment of 105 grazing reserves. Efforts to establish grazing reserves are not limited to the northern states; Oyo State recently established grazing

reserves, linking herders to markets.

The establishment of grazing reserves has not been accompanied by the establishment of a clear-cut production unit. By contrast, other African countries like Kenya, Tanzania, and Burkina Faso have clearly-defined production units within grazing reserves in the form of cooperatives among groups of pastoralist or individual leasing, such that herders in established ranches have access to long-term loans. Furthermore, the grazing reserves established by these states have not been demarcated enough to permit introduction of rotational or block grazing, bush control and control of overgrazing around water points, thereby threatening ecological balance (Awogbade, 1987). On the whole, government efforts to establish grazing reserves are far from meeting the conditions of a successful grazing reserves policy, which, among other elements, must include guarantee of financial commitment by the government for the provision of necessary infrastructure – dams, dips, veterinary clinics and drugs; outlawing setting reserves on fire; adequate supply of supplementary feeds; eradication of tsetse fly; adequate security against theft; and construction of market outlets and access roads.

In the context of increasing land and water scarcity, the associated crises of confrontations between sedentary farmers and grazers, and the disturbing incidence of rural banditry and cattle rustling, governments at all levels (especially in the northern parts of Nigeria) need to aggressively pursue the policy of establishing grazing reserves. Similarly, the areas of the country experiencing conflicts between farmers and herdsman and the states in north-central Nigeria would need to consider establishment of grazing reserves, and protection of designated cattle routes to reduce the incidents of conflict.

The Challenge of Public Policy: Overcoming the Crisis of Pastoralism and Cattle Rustling

It appears that cattle rustling and rural banditry constitute a real challenge to public policy. An effective analysis must be situated within the wider crisis of pastoralism, the threat to livestock productivity, and the ways in which a combination of factors have framed the problem of material survival for both pastoralist transhumant and the crop farmers. Key relevant factors include climate change, environmental degradation, and over-farming. It is important to address specific issues, such as nomadic hunters' lack of voice and political representation and their lack of access to education. A broader policy framework, however, needs to be developed, with an expansive architecture designed to address the complex network of issues involved.

What effective policy choices are available to government and the stakeholders in the pastoralist sector that can address the scourge of cattle rustling and rural banditry affecting pastoralism in Nigeria? What kinds of institutions and rules can be developed to manage the resource conflicts currently locking crop farmers and cattle grazers in deadly confrontation? How can policies bridge this occupational divide, which tends to frame cattle rustling and rural banditry in intractable terms?

The answers to these questions are to be found in public policy capable of addressing the manifold dimensions of the problem as a set. These dimensions include the threats to the livestock industry and the survival and economic wellbeing of the transhumance pastoralists. Effective policy must foster integrated development of agriculture designed to enhance the interdependence of crop farmers and herdsmen. In addition, such policy should be anchored in very broad consultations that can bring together relevant

stakeholders, including the likes of the Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Water Resources, the National Animal Production and Research Institute, the National Commission for Nomadic Education, the National Livestock Development Project (NLDP), the court system, traditional rulers, and community leaders.

First and foremost, public policy should seek to address the interconnected issues that are at the heart of the anxiety of the transhumant pastoralists. Key contextual factors include land scarcity, pressure on land occasioned by climate change, and environmental challenges, including erosion. These factors have conspired to make conflict between crop farmers and herdsmen virtually inevitable. The persistence of these problems is tied to the failure of the grazing reserves policy, and to the disappearance of designated cattle routes; the cattle routes have disappeared as farmers encroach on the land the government acquires land for its projects. As has been well established, Nigeria lags behind many other African countries in establishing effective grazing reserves and cattle routes as components of reformist policies intended to protect the livestock industry and the pastoralist communities. Countries such as Mali, Niger, and Mauritania have made progress in the addressing pastoral land use, home areas, delimiting livestock corridors, and improving institutional frameworks for herd mobility. The legislation that has been put in place in these countries has been informed by both indigenous pastoralists' knowledge and practice, as well as by scientific research, which has shown the critical role livestock mobility plays in preserving the environment and maximizing livestock productivity in dry land environments (Hesse and Thebaud, 2013).

There three key lessons for policy reform related to pastoralism that can useful to Nigeria. First is the recognition of herders' right to

move with their livestock in search of pasture and water, coupled with legal protection of grazing lands and cattle corridors from encroachment from by crop farmers. Second is the need to consider and respect customary tenure arrangements, and the multiple and sequential use of land by different actors at different times of the year. Third is the need to give strong consideration to managing local conflicts such that rights of access are constantly renegotiated by different groups at different times of the year. Given the tension between recognizing herders' rights to free movement (as guaranteed in the Nigerian Constitution) and respecting agricultural crop farmers' customary rights, the need for dialogue and negotiation cannot be overemphasized.

There are, however, difficulties in developing a policy framework that can comprehensively address the multifarious challenges found in the pastoralist sector of the economy. There is the dominance of the policy space by state officials and lack of a significant involvement and participation on the part of citizens. The conditions are worsened further still by the low level of sedentarisation of Nigerian pastoralist communities, who are only represented by urban-based elite groups, who bear a responsibility to advocate on behalf of pastoralists. This requires the government to foster genuine dialogue among the stakeholders in the livestock sector, which considers the interests of pastoralists and crop farmers. There is also the breakdown of traditional conflict resolution mechanisms in many parts of the country. Traditional institutions have lost legitimacy and the trust of the people, as they have failed to resolve the perennial crises of farmers and grazers.

Satisfying those complex goals requires government at all levels to vigorously pursue the establishment of grazing reserves, in order to encourage the sedentarisation of nomadic pastoralists, and to offer

them secure land tenure (Sulaiman, 1986; Ingawa, et al (1989). In so doing, it is important to avoid replicating reserves where it has been established that some of the settled pastoralists were not previously nomadic (Kjunstad, 1988). The establishment of such functional reserves will encourage sedentarisation of nomads, and will provide the framework for addressing some of the core concerns of pastoralists, such as access to education and improved livestock productivity through medicine.

It is impossible to overstate the need for an integrated framework for addressing the issues of access to land and water for different actors, especially for transhumant pastoralists and crop farmers; a sectoral approach simply will not suffice. Although an integrated framework must contend with the varying occupational needs and resource contestation, it will coordinate the responsibilities split between different government agencies and bureaucracies. The need for an integrated approach is reinforced by the consideration that in many communities there are agro-pastoralists who practice a combination of agriculture, livestock rearing, and other activities. Furthermore, it is important for both occupational groups to recognize the complementarities between them, particularly the need for grazers to integrate into the broader social and economic environment, and the concomitant need to foster cooperation between the two occupational groups. Bridging the gap is a need that will not naturally resolve by assimilation — herders will not abandon nomadic pastoralism, because they assign deep and diverse meanings to their animals, just as farmers are committed to their lifestyle, as they inject deep social, political, and cultural meanings into the land they till.

Additionally, there is need to deliberately promote an understanding among the relevant stakeholders regarding the

mutual benefits that can be derived from cooperation between occupational cattle herders and agricultural farmers. According to one policy paper, there are at least four mutual benefits to be derived from cattle mobility for cattle herdsman, farming communities, and other groups (CSAO, 2007).

First, mobility offers herders access to markets for the sale of animals, livestock and dairy product. More importantly, mobility provides a channel for exchanging information on disease outbreaks, conflict areas to be avoided, and opportunities to access sources of medicaments and supplementary foods and minerals. Such mobility also allows for the distribution of livestock and animal products to communities without reliance on trucks for transportation. Second, farmers benefit from the movement of animals between different agro-ecological zones and grazing reserves, as animal droppings facilitate nutrient cycling. This could give the lie to the common narrative that labels nomadic pastoralists as 'unproductive' and environmentally destructive.

Given the very real impacts of climate change and environmental decline, deliberate government efforts aimed at mitigating climate change should be encouraged. One important measure should be salvaging the Lake Chad Basin resources, and restoring its support to the livelihoods of millions of people who have depended on them over the years. The Lake Chad Basin Commission was established for the purpose of ensuring rational use of water, land and other natural resources, and to coordinate other issues of regional development for countries around the basin. The commission needs to be adequately funded to undertake research and related activities that can lead to the redevelopment of Lake Chad. In addition to the importance of a more careful approach to the construction of dams and increased consideration of the environmental impact

assessment reports, it may be useful to have a regional approach supported by willing development partners to consider diverting the water that flows from the River Congo into the Atlantic Ocean into the Lake Chad, considering the importance of the lake for the livelihoods of millions of people around the lake, both within and beyond Nigeria's borders.

Coming to terms with the problem of cattle rustling and the other consequences of criminals acting with impunity across Nigeria's urban and rural area requires addressing the broader issues of human security and the proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW). The issues of unemployment, rural poverty, and the perversion of governance at all levels are issues that cannot be tackled with quick-fix solutions; they require long-term solutions, both in terms of strengthening governing institutions and also in terms of increasing citizens' capacity to hold their governments to account. It will also require building effective partnerships and synergy among the three pillars of governance — the state, the private sector and civil society. Security agencies, especially the police, must become subject to democratic control. That change fits within the broader framework of security sector reform, as part of an extensive initiative to curb agencies' lack of accountability and their egregious violations of human rights, and their prolific abuses.

There is urgent need to check the widespread availability of SALW to a wide range of non-state actors, as the Nigerian state has shown increasing inadequacy in meeting its citizens' basic security needs. The state's ineffectiveness partly explains the proliferation of private security outfits and vigilante organisations, which have proliferated to fill the void. Civilians quest to obtain arms and ammunitions, sometimes driven by self-defence needs in the context of state agencies' failure to guarantee personal security. That quest is

exemplified by the substantial stock of arms carried by nomadic herdsmen, who place a high premium on their own security and that of their cattle. The Nigerian government needs to curb the local manufacture of weapons; since the 1990s, production has exceeded local demand for weapons used for hunting and traditional rites. As production has risen, it has provided a cheap alternative to imported weapons. The oversaturation of SALW has been further driven by the theft of weapons belonging to individuals and state authorities; emboldened criminals have assaulted the police and the army, both of which report arms lost to the bandits.

There is, therefore, an urgent need to respond to the special security needs of pastoralists in addition to policies encouraging sedentarisation through the establishment of grazing reserves. Reliance on vigilante groups to provide security for cattle and individuals has proven to be grossly inadequate, as this research has shown. For instance, while a substantial 48.6% of respondents said they had relied on vigilante groups to prevent rural banditry and rustling, only 27% said they had relied on a Community Peace Forum, and a paltry 18% reported relying on security agencies. Despite those tendencies, 54% of the respondents admitted that they were not comfortable relying on vigilante groups to combat armed bandits.

Rural banditry and cattle rustling are on the rise, with aggressors motivated largely economic and commercial motives; they have been encouraged by the ready availability of markets serving their underground economy. The expansion of banditry demands improved policing of both urban and rural areas. Policing is currently solely the responsibility of the federal government, but there is an acute shortage of police personnel. There is an urgent need to consider the potential for multi-level policing. The

establishment of state police can facilitate recruitment from the local population and an increased emphasis on intelligence gathering through local knowledge. Working with local communities will bring about a considerable improvement in the security environment, empowering the police system to tackle the twin challenges of rural banditry and cattle rustling much more effectively.

To reiterate, promoting understanding between different occupational groups, establishing platforms for managing conflicts and promoting peace would go a long way in deescalating conflicts between crop farmers and herdsmen. That reality bears repetition here because it provides another impetus for devolving some responsibilities from the central government, as the cultivation of such linkages must involve state and local government officials, joined by traditional, religious, and community leaders. Only such a multi-level approach can disentangle the occupational disputes, which have become tied up in protracted ethno-religious conflict, especially in the northern-central parts of Nigeria.

The ultimate goal of public policy should be addressing the human security confronting Nigeria, as they appear to be key drivers of rural banditry and cattle rustling. There are neither silver bullets nor quick fixes to address the human security challenge in all its facets, which span the realms of governance, job and employment creation, and increasing state capacity to provide security and advance the rule of law.. While some could be addressed in the short to medium terms, the most critical issues require long-term solutions. Nevertheless, addressing these challenges is necessary if the problems of rural banditry and cattle rustling are to be resolved in a manner that eases the anxieties of pastoralist communities and crop farmers. Ultimately, comprehensive policy could address the

overall threats to pastoralism and promote increased productivity in the livestock sub-sector of the economy.

Conclusion

Rural banditry associated with cattle rustling has several dimensions, with links to declining human security and state capacity, pressures on land and water resources caused by the combined effects of land grabbing, climate change and environmental decline, the failure of government grazing reserves policy over the years, and the disappearance of designated cattle routes. These underlying issues need to be addressed both in order to protect pastoralism as an economic activity that provides livelihoods to millions of poor people, who are struggling in very adverse and uncertain conditions, and also to protect a sub-sector of agriculture that has huge potential in contributing to food security. Given the two sectors' significance, there is an inescapable need to modernize pastoralism through grazing reserves, and to strengthen agriculture by encouraging an integrated approach.

Addressing these issues would require comprehensive public policies that are sensitive to the needs and anxieties of both agricultural farmers and nomadic herdsman. Doing so would require a consultative framework; its functions would require the active participation of the important stakeholders in the agricultural sector, and would have to enlist both traditional institutions and also religious bodies to become part of enduring structures for conflict resolution and peace promotion.

Resolving conflicts in a sustainable fashion would also hinge on increased understanding between the different occupational groups involved. Members of both groups would have to appreciate the complementarities that exist between crop farmers and grazers.

Farmers and nomads would have to revitalize traditional mechanisms of conflict management at local levels, so as to restore social capital in the forms of norms, social relations, and organizations that enable people in the society to coordinate actions to achieve their objectives. The breakdown in trust and the rising levels of mutual suspicion between crop farmers and grazers is at the heart of the internecine conflicts that have framed the problems of rural banditry and cattle rustling.

In the long run, there must be deliberate efforts by government at all levels to address the challenges of human security by addressing livelihood issues. The government must stimulate job creation and guide inclusive growth, so as to reduce the high levels of poverty, unemployment, and social misery in both urban and rural areas. Deliberate efforts to address these problems are expected to go hand in hand with entrenching democratic governance, and providing participatory space and political to those currently marginalized or excluded from the policy arena. so that they can be part of decision-making that affect their daily existence. Considering the peculiar challenges of pastoralist transhumance, it is important to prioritize the establishment of grazing reserves, so as to address the issue of access to education for pastoralist groups, as a part of their sedentary life in the grazing reserves.

There is also a need to encourage the emergence of pastoralist civil society organizations, which can to create mass awareness of Nigerian pastoralism's endangerment. These organizations can publicize the peculiar challenges faced by Fulani herdsman, including their increasing dependence on arms and habituation to violence in their daily encounter with crop farmers. At the present, the MACBN is the only known active civil society organization advocating on behalf of pastoralist communities. The role of such

civic groups is also to educate nomadic herdsmen to respect local farmers and their vital economic interests, and to recognize the seasons most valued by crop farmers. Education and sensitization of nomadic herdsmen must be complemented by the state meeting the security needs of pastoralists. Security must not only be more efficient, it must also reduce law enforcement agents' impunity. Security agents, farmers, and grazers must thoroughly and consistently respect others' human rights of. Security sector reform must also include the enforcement of existing laws that regulate individuals' and non-state actors' access to SALW, and laws that restrict the conditions under which the arms may be used.

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Chapter 2

CHANGING METHODS OF ANIMAL HUSBANDRY, CATTLE RUSTLING AND RURAL BANDITRY IN NIGERIA

Saleh B. Momale



1.0 BACKGROUND

1.1 Introduction

The methods of traditional animal husbandry are changing, not only in Nigeria, but across the African countries where pastoralism is practiced. There are over 25 million pastoralists spread in almost all the countries in Africa (African Union, 2010). The pastoralists are major players in livestock production, particularly in the breeding of ruminant livestock. In West Africa, livestock production contributes to nutritional and food security; to poverty reduction; and foreign currency earnings in most Sahelian countries. Livestock and poultry production represents 17%, 20% and 18% of the GDP of Mali, Mauritania and Niger, respectively. In Nigeria, livestock was accounting for about 26% of the agricultural GDP and about 10% of the Nation's Gross Domestic Product in the 1990's (Maina, 1998) but the level of this contribution has significantly declined with agriculture contributing only about 19.65% of the GDP in the first quarter of 2014 (National Bureau of Statistics, Abuja, 2014).

The dominant method of pastoral production involves free-ranging of animals, mainly through the use of natural range and grasslands (Morton, n.d.). Grasses and woody plants (browse) provide feed for animals while also depending on natural sources of water,

particularly rivers. In areas where surface water is limiting, underground water has been exploited for watering livestock. Thus, most of Nigeria's ruminant livestock resources are managed under pastoral and agro-pastoral production systems that adopt mobility as a means of accessing feeds and water.

There are many challenges limiting the contributions of livestock sub-sector to the socio-economic development of Nigeria. Some of the challenges facing the sub-sector include low productivity resulting from the pastoralists' adoption of traditional breeding techniques; the degradation of rangelands due to overgrazing and climate change; and conflicts between pastoralists and farmers. In recent years, cattle rustling in the North-western and Middle Belt areas of Nigeria have further affected the productivity and viability of the sub-sector. Incidences of cattle rustling have significantly expanded in Nigeria since 2010 in many States thereby affecting the livelihoods of pastoral and agricultural households.

This paper examines the links between changes in methods of animal husbandry and the occurrence of armed banditry and cattle rustling, using Kaduna and Zamfara States as case studies. It identified the major areas affected by cattle rustling, the ongoing changes in the methods of livestock production among pastoralists and its influence on livestock productivity and cattle rustling. The paper also identified the effects of rustling on husbandry practices as well as the strategies adopted by affected communities to respond to the problem. Recommendations are offered on potential ways of addressing the problems.

1.2 Conceptual Framework

Cattle rustling and other forms of rural banditry are threatening the existence of rural communities in Northern Nigeria. This may be

caused by a number of factors. With the growth of cattle herds and rise in human population, land resources—especially fodder, water and necessary space for husbandry practice—are becoming increasingly scarce, leading to intense competition and conflicts. But, in recent times, rural banditry has emerged as another important problem. Cattle rustling involves the use of arms to steal households' entire livestock possession, thereby threatening the very existence of the affected households and communities. Conflicts and rural banditry are closely inter-linked as they are all forms of social insecurity, characterised by weaknesses in the institutional capacity of the State to address the problems of insecurity, joblessness and acute poverty. While conflicts could trigger and cause cattle rustling, incidences of cattle rustling could also trigger and cause violent conflicts between pastoral and farming communities.

1.3 The Research Questions

- What are the ongoing changes in the methods of livestock production among pastoralists in Northern Nigeria?
- How has the changes in methods of livestock production are influenced cattle rustling?
- How has cattle rustling affected the livestock husbandry methods?
- What are the policy implications of the ongoing changes in the methods of animal production, particularly with regard to the incidences of cattle rustling and rural armed banditry?

1.4 The Research Objectives

The objectives of the research are to:

- identify the ongoing changes in the methods of animal production and assess the implications on livestock production;
- examine the influence of changing methods of cattle

husbandry on rural banditry;

- examine how the phenomena of cattle rustling impacted animal husbandry practices; and
- Identify the policy implications of the ongoing changes and proffer recommendation on how the problems can be addressed?

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Definition of Pastoralism

Pastoralism is a livestock-based production system where ruminant livestock freely graze in open grasslands. It is widely practiced in many countries of the World. Pastoralism is viewed as a livelihood system that integrates livestock husbandry with other activities; and a rational economic activity with strong social, environmental and cultural objectives (Momale, 2003; Hesse and MacGregor, 2006). In Nigeria, the major pastoral groups are the Fulani (Fulbe) who are mainly cattle breeders, but also rearing sheep and goats. Other pastoral groups in the country are the Shuwa Arabs, the Badume and Koyam.

Until recent years, pastoralists depended primarily on livestock production for their livelihoods; milk being the dominant source of nutrition and income to families. The milk economy is managed by the women, who process it locally and sell its products in both rural and urban markets. Animals were rarely sold to meet major family needs, thereby making off-take very low. In the recent years however, pastoralists are increasingly engaging in subsistence crop farming and other menial activities to augment income from milk and sales of animals due to the declining number of animal holdings per household.

2.2 Methods of Pastoral Animal Husbandry

An important feature of pastoral production is mobility, which involves movements of both livestock and people in search of feeds, water and friendly grazing areas. When ecological, political and socio-economic conditions favour livestock grazing in specific areas, pastoralists move to those areas to exploit the resources. And, when grazing conditions become unfavourable, they migrate elsewhere.

Over the past decades, there has been increasing sedentarisation of pastoralists in many areas, with a growing number of pastoralists establishing permanent settlements throughout the Middle Belt of Nigeria (Ezeomah, 1983; Awogbade, 1983; Gefu, 2008).

Pastoralists' movements vary, based on the reasons for the movement, the distances covered and the members of the pastoral family involved (Awogbade, 1983; Ezeomah, 1983). These forms of movements have been classified as follows:

- i) Nomadism: The pastoral family and the livestock are involved in constant migration. There is no permanent settlement for the group. They may have a regular pattern of migration, or may sometimes keep moving in different directions.
- ii) Transhumance: This is a form of regular movement, often dictated by seasonal variability in climatic conditions and availability of pasture and water. In Nigeria, livestock migrate to the North in the wet season and to the South in the dry season. These groups are also described as semi-sedentary pastoralists, particularly if they have established permanent settlements where some members of the family reside throughout the year.
- iii) Short-distance split movement: This is mostly associated with sedentary pastoralists who migrate with part of the livestock and the family either during the wet or dry season to nearby areas, in search of better grazing conditions. These groups of pastoralists are commonly referred to as sedentary pastoralists or agro-pastoralists, because of the level of engagement in crop production; and, today, they constitute the highest proportion of Nigerian pastoralists due to high level of sedentarisation that occurred in Nigeria over the past decades.

In most parts of Nigeria as elsewhere in Africa, pastoralists adopt opportunistic utilisation of pastures and watering facilities, and rarely establish permanent controls over land and water resources. They rely on communal access to resources such as grazing lands, watering facilities, migratory routes, social infrastructure and sites for habitation (even if temporary). Again, access to resting points and camping fields during mobility; and seasonally flooded areas along rivers (*fadamas*) during the dry season are important (Awogbade, 1983; Gefu, 2008; Momale, 2014).

2.3 Relevance of Animal Husbandry to the Nigerian Economy

At least 40% of Africa's land mass is dedicated to pastoralism, with significant variations among countries (IRIN, 2007). Globally, livestock is growing faster than any agricultural sub-sector, and it is predicted that, by 2020, it will produce about 30% of the value of the global agricultural output (Delgado, et al 1999). This development can potentially exacerbate conflicts over access to, and use of natural resources, particularly between farmers and pastoralists.

Nigeria has the largest population of livestock in West and Central Africa—about 16.6 million cattle; 35.5 million sheep; and 56.5 million goats. It amounts to about 26% of the agricultural GDP; and about 10% of the Nation's GDP. Over 90% of the ruminant livestock population are owned and managed by traditional livestock breeders (Maina, 1998). Meat, milk and butter are important nutritional products derived from the animals, while hides and skins are important foreign exchange earners. Additionally, the sub-sector provides jobs and livelihood activities to millions of Nigerians. Livestock also play important cultural and religious functions and serves as a source of prestige for traditional chiefs and merchants.

2.4 Major Problems Limiting Pastoral Productivity in Nigeria

There are many problems facing animal production in Nigeria (Momale 2003, 2005; Blench 2004; Bello, 2008). First is the inadequate grazing lands due to rapid population expansion and opening up of additional farming areas. Furthermore, this expansion of cultivations has led to massive encroachments on pastoral grazing areas such as *hurmi* (traditionally designated grazing areas around towns and villages) forest reserves, grazing reserves, watering points, migratory routes, and dry season fadama grazing areas. Second is the inadequacy of feeds, including natural pastures; browse trees; and supplementary feeds, particularly in the northern parts of the country. This is further compounded by rangeland degradation associated with overgrazing and climate change, particularly in Nigeria's major grazing reserves such as Runka (Katsina); Gidan Jaja (Zamfara); Bobi (Niger); Wase (Plateau); Kachia and Gayan (Kaduna); and Awe (Nasarawa). Third, with inadequate feeds, livestock productivity (particularly for beef and milk) had declined, affecting livelihoods levels. This has significant effects on the income available to women, since milk is their main source of income. Such a situation has resulted in poor nutrition, clothing, child care and provision of household essential needs. Fourth, there are recurring conflicts between pastoralists and farmers caused by existing occupational, social, ethnic, economic and religious differences, and which are further exacerbated by weak institutional dispute management mechanisms.. Fifth is the phenomenon of cattle rustling that causes the destruction of both the pastoral and farming communities' entire livelihoods, which leads to further conflicts and displacement of people, with significant impact on women and children.

The capacity of the pastoral and farming communities to adequately respond to these challenges is limited by weak institutional support for livestock production such as the inadequate provision of extension services and insufficient infrastructure for livestock and crops production. Again, the high level of illiteracy among the rural pastoral and farming communities had diminished their capacity to engage institutions of government for increased support. For example, UNICEF and the Nomadic Education Commission estimated that there was over three million out-of-school nomadic children in 2008 (with the nomadic girl child being most disadvantaged).

In the face of such challenges, the sustainability of pastoral systems are threatened, and enormous efforts need to be made to address the issues. The sustainability of livestock production and the livelihoods of the pastoralists depend on ensuring access to land suited to pastoral systems. It also hinges on policies design to help pastoralists acquire the knowledge and resources necessary to manage such lands, on a sustainable basis.

2.5 Cattle Rustling

“A Cattle rustling is the act of forceful raiding of livestock from one community by another often leaving behind destruction of property and loss of lives” (Cheserek, Omondi, and Odenyo, 2012). Cattle rustling significantly affects the livelihoods of families, heavily impacting on women and children. In some societies, it has been associated with kidnapping of girls, rape and destruction of properties. This concept, according to Cheserek et. al (2012) has been differentiated from “cattle raids which involve stealing livestock from one community by another without destroying property or killing people”, as it has been recorded among the Maasai and Karimajong in Eastern Africa. Cattle rustling is generally a large

scale theft of cattle through violent means and often involves the use of weapons. Cattle rustling is regarded as a form of armed banditry (which is wider in scope and including different forms of crimes such as highway robbery and gang-like invasion of settlements to confiscate wealth and properties) (Cheserek, et. al. 2012). Cattle rustling is an ancient practice that is associated with societies suffering from social and economic upheavals and where the structures and functioning of leadership and governance have collapsed or are significantly weakened. It is more common in rural and marginal communities. According to Cheserek et. al. (op cit), there are two forms of cattle rustling:

- i) Rustling of livestock by opposing ethnic groups or clans. This form of rustling often involve large number of people from a defined ethnic or family background. The purpose of this form of rustling is to build-up the stock of livestock wealth for the ethnic group or clans. The rustled cows are shared among the family or group members for breeding. In some situations, part of the cows may be given back to families or groups whose animals were previously rustled by the opposing parties. Examples of these forms of rustling are common in the Greater Horn of Africa, particularly in countries including Somalia, Kenya and Uganda.
- ii) Rustling of cattle by criminal gangs or thieves who sell-off the stolen cows. The purpose of this form of rustling is purely criminal; it is to steal the cows and sell them off for monetary gains. For this form of rustling to exist, there must be ready markets which are built around powerful cartels with wide networks and support from state institutions, particularly security agencies.

In recent years, the commercialisation of livestock raiding has gained prominence in many countries including Kenya, Southern Sudan and Somalia, among others. In Nigeria, cattle rustling is relatively a recent development, particularly on a large scale. The incidences became prevalent in the last five years and have widely spread, affecting hundreds of pastoral families in many parts of the country (Schilling, et. al, 2012). The problems of cattle rustling are most prevalent in the Middle Belt and North-western parts of Nigeria. In the Middle Belt, ethno-religious conflicts provided fertile grounds for the criminal activity to thrive, particularly in the States of Plateau, Nasarawa and Benue. In States like Kaduna, Katsina and Zamfara in North-western Nigeria, as well as in parts of Niger and Kogi States and the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja, cattle rustling is carried out by armed bandits, mostly residing in remote rural areas and forests, with active collaborators in urban markets.

3.0 METHODODOLY

3.1 The Study Area

The study on rural banditry and cattle rustling was focused on five states of the Nigerian Federation; Plateau, Nasarawa, Benue, Kaduna and Zamfara. The States of Zamfara and Kaduna were purposively selected for field data collection, because of the high level of cattle rustling reported in both States. In Zamfara State: Maru, Birnin Magaji and Zurmi LGAs; and in Kaduna State: Birnin Gwari, Chikun, Kagarko and Kachia LGAs were purposefully selected, based on reports of high levels of cattle rustling.

3.2 Data Collection and Analysis

The research adopted a qualitative approach to data collection and results synthesis. Focus group discussions (FGDs) were held with community representatives in seven settlements as summarised in Table 1. The ages of respondents widely ranged from about 30 to 70 years for both men and women; with men aged around 45 years and women of about 50 years been the dominant respondents. The interviews featured mostly older people because youths were rarely met in the settlements, as most of them were involved in herding activities in distant locations. As for young people from the farming communities, they were reluctant to participate in the discussions because of fear of possible attacks by armed bandits if they learnt that they granted interviews to the researcher.

In Maru LGA, Zamfara State, FGDs were held with farmers only as most of the pastoralists in the area had migrated due to severe cattle rustling and the violent conflicts the phenomenon triggered. In Gayan grazing reserve, FGDs were conducted only with pastoralists as there were no sedentary farmers close to the interview sites in the grazing reserve. In all the other locations, FGDs were conducted

with both farmers and pastoralists. However, the FGDs were conducted separately for men and women because of cultural practices that often separate women from men in many rural areas and as well as high level of insecurity in some of the settlements that made it inexpedient to hold interviews in the open in which both men and women could participate. Thus, interviews with the women was held within the premises of compounds.

Key informants interviews (KIIs) were also conducted. It mostly featured opinion leaders, including five (5) Ardos (from Kaduna, Zamfara, Katsina, Plateau States, and FCT Abuja); seven (7) leaders of pastoral associations (from Kaduna, Zamfara, Nasarawa and Plateau States); and four (4) village heads (from Zamfara and Kaduna States). Government officials were also interviewed, including grazing reserve officers (for Kachia, Runka and Bobi grazing reserves); and staff of the National Livestock Projects Division (NLPD) and National Animal Production Research Institute (NAPRI). Only males participated in these interviews, as there were very few women leaders in the communities and institutions where the discussions were held, including government institutions.

Table 1: Sampled LGAs, Communities and interviewed Groups

State	LGAs	Sampled Communities	Groups Interviewed	No. of Persons	
				Male	Female
Zamfara	Maru	Mutunji; Angwan Galadima	Farmers	16	7
	Birnin Magaji	Bakin Lamba, Tungan Buzu	Pastoralists	9	3
	Zurmi	Lugga, Tsanu	Farmers; Pastoralists	21	11
Kaduna	Birnin Gwari	Gayan grazing reserve; Doka	Pastoralists	32	14
	Chikun	Buruku (Gorso); Kasaya	Pastoralists; Farmers	23	18
	Kagarko	Jere; Kasiri	Pastoralists; Farmers	39	16
	Kachia	Kachia grazing reserve; Awon by	Pastoralists; Farmers	25	23
Total No. of Respondents				165	92

Information generated from the FGDs and KIIs included the understanding and perceptions of the respondents with regard to:

- i) Changes in animal husbandry methods over the last two decades;
- ii) The trends in livestock holdings per household;
- iii) Changes in the levels of animal productivity;
- iv) The major areas affected by cattle rustling;
- v) Perceptions on the links (relationship) between changes in animal husbandry methods and incidences of cattle rustling and banditry;
- vi) Perceptions of the influence of ranches on incidences of armed banditry and cattle rustling; and
- vii) Insecurity in the rural communities and potential ways of addressing the different issues.

An analysis of the views and key information expressed by the respondents was carried out to determine similarities and differences in views and perceptions. Dominant views were

extracted and the wider implications of respondents' perceptions, views and understanding were put to context. This enabled a good comprehension of ongoing changes in animal production and how they relate to cattle rustling, within the affected communities.

4.0 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 The Affected Areas

The research found out that cattle rustling was most prevalent in Zamfara, Kaduna, Plateau, Benue and Nasarawa States as well as in FCT Abuja. The Most affected LGAs in Zamfara State were Zurmi, Maru, Birnin Magaji and Kauran Namoda. In Kaduna State, they were Birnin Gwari and Chikun LGAs, with lower level of incidences in Kachia, Kagarko, Kajuru and Zangon Kataf LGAs; In Plateau State: Lantang South, Wase, Kanam, Riyom, and Barkin Ladi LGAs were most affected. In Benue State, cattle rustling was prevalent in Guma, Makurdi and Agatu LGAs. In Nasarawa State, the most affected LGAs included Awe, Keana, Doma and Obi. Within the FCT, the incidences were widely reported in Bwari, Kuje and Gwagwalada Area Councils.

Cattle rustling was also found to be common, although to a lesser degree, in Katsina, Niger, Kebbi, Sokoto and Bauchi States. In Katsina State, the most affected areas are those sharing borders with Kaduna State (Mairua, Dandume and Faskari LGAs). In Niger State, areas sharing borders with Kaduna State were mostly affected (Muya, Rafi, Shiroro and Mariga LGAs). In Kebbi, LGAs sharing borders with Zamfara and Niger States were most affected including Sakaba and Damko/Wasagu LGAs. Bauchi State LGAs sharing borders with Plateau State were most affecting, including Tafawa Balewa, Bogoro and Alkaleri LGAs.

4.2 Changing Trends in Animal Husbandry

Animal husbandry methods are changing in Northern Nigeria as a response to social, economic and environmental developments. The most important changes identified were

- i) increasing sedentarisation of pastoralists households, thereby transforming nomadic pastoralists to sedentary agro-pastoralists, but with an increasing migration of livestock (while their households remain in permanent or semi-permanent settlements).
- ii) The nature of the social relations between pastoralists and farmers has also changed.
- iii) Livestock productivity has declined due to inadequate pasture (feeds), resulting from the degradation of grazing lands caused by climate change, overgrazing and encroachments on pastoralists' traditional grazing areas
- iv) The negative developments have reduced the number of livestock holding per household, thereby affecting the livelihood levels of pastoral families.

Sedentarisation of Pastoralists and Increased Mobility of Livestock

Both farmers and pastoralists explained that presently there are very few total nomadic groups, but migration of cattle is widely practiced, which means that more and more families were no longer staying with their animals for most of the year. This has effects on the social construction and discipline of pastoral families. Herd boys who are mainly children and youths aged 9 to 25 years stay for long periods of time away from their parents who adopted sedentary lifestyles. Table 2 present the estimated number of months that herd boys used to stay with animals outside their families in the 1970s and in present times (from respondents' memories).

Table 2: Estimated Length of Stay of Youths away from the Families

LGAs	Community	Length of Stay (months per year)		% of Youths involved	
		1970's	2013 - 2015	1970's	2013 - 2015
Birnin Magaji	Bakin Lamba	2	8	20	70
	Tungan Buzu	3	8	30	60
Zumi	Lugga	4	9	30	50
	Tsanu	4	10	40	80
Birnin Gwari	Gayan grazing reserve	2	7	20	70
	Doka	1	8	20	70
Chikun	Buruku (Gorso)	0	9	0	50
	Kasaya	0	10	0	70
Kagarko	Jere	2	6	20	40
	Kasiri	3	6	40	70
Kachia	Kachia grazing reserve	4	9	50	80
	Awon	0	8	0	80

From Table 2, it was evident that in the 1970's, herd boys were staying with their parents for most of the year, except for 2 to 4 months. In some places like Buruku, Kasaya and Awon, they were with their parents throughout the year. Presently, herd boys are away from their parents for as long as 7-10 months. Since they are teenagers, mostly below the age of 20, they have little contact with their parents. Also, as Table 2 reveals, the percentage of male children involved in migration with animals, away from homes, has dramatically increased from about 20%-50% in the 1970s to as high as 50%-80% in present times. This implies that most of the young male pastoralists remain without any contact with their parents or guardians for a long time.

This development have a number of implications. First, the herd boys have no access to education. Second, they receive little training on indigenous cattle management from their parents. Third, while the youths are away with the animals, they are largely left without sufficient guidance and control by parents and livestock owners. Both pastoralists and farmers respondents agreed that the youth's behaviours are often negatively influenced by peers. Again, the youths get exposed to money, and without proper education and guidance, are influenced into selling their parents' livestock. Often, some parents do get angered and expel such children from their homes. Such children easily get attracted to cattle theft and become ready recruits for organised armed groups. Respondents were of the view that increased parental control is needed but difficult to implement because the parents are sedentary and the livestock have to migrate elsewhere to search for feeds, water and grazing areas. Respondents agreed that some of the foot soldiers carrying out cattle rustling were youths of pastoralist extraction who are controlled by sophisticated and well connected cattle rustling merchants, who organised the rustling, transportation and marketing of the stolen cattle.

Changes in Social Relations

Respondents indicated that an important practice that guaranteed pastoralists access to grazing lands in the past was building strong social ties with sedentary farming communities. Through these ties, pastoralists were granted access to land, water and security. However, when conflicts between pastoralists and farmers escalated over the past two to three decades, this system of harmonious relations changed. Both farmers and pastoralists agreed that, today, most of the migratory herders do cut-off most social ties with farming communities, which makes it more and more difficult to relate with the migratory groups and ascertain their identity. This allows armed bandits to move with stolen cattle over long distances without being identified.

Decreasing Livestock Holdings

The number of livestock owned by individual household has significantly decreased in recent years. Indeed, many pastoral households no longer own animals. During FGDs, pastoralist respondents provided opinion on the estimated livestock holdings per household. Their estimation is presented in Table 4. The data suggests that while the number of livestock holding decreased, the number of children per household increased. Since it is mainly male children that share the cattle owned by their parents, pastoralists respondents were also requested to provide opinion on the average number of male children found in most families in the 1970s (based on their recollections) and in present times (Table 3).

Table 3: Respondents views on the Estimated No. of Livestock and Male Children Per Household, both in the 1970's and in Present Times

LGAs	Community	Av. No. of cattle holding per household		Av. No. of male children per household	
		1970's	2013 - 2015	1970's	2013 - 2015
Birnin Magaji	Bakin Lamba	70	15	4	8
	Tungan Buzu	50	10	3	9
Zurmi	Lugga	120	15	5	10
	Tsannu	80	30	4	7
Birnin Gwari	Gayan grazing reserve	80	25	5	9
	Doka	50	5	5	9
Chikun	Buruku (Gorso)	100	10	3	7
	Kasaya	150	50	4	8
Kagarko	Jere	70	15	5	6
	Kasiri	100	20	3	9
Kachia	Kachia grazing reserve	50	15	5	8
	Awon	100	40	4	9

The views expressed by respondents in Table 3 suggest that the number of livestock holdings per household significantly declined. The major factors attributed to this decline are: high level of expansion in the size of pastoral families; lower level of livestock productivity; and increasing demand on cash derived from sale of livestock.

In the 1970's, the number of male children within each family rarely exceeded five (5) due to high miscarriages and infant mortality. Today, with improved medical services and nutrition, as well as polygamous practices among pastoral communities, some fathers can have as many as 15 male children and several female children as well. While the former share the bulk of the cattle owned by their parents, the latter are married out, often between age 13 and 15, and only given a cow or two as inheritance. This demographic change has had significant impact on the size of livestock holdings per household. Since livestock are shared among all male children within the family, many of them barely have cattle and some have to be sent out, either to engage in herding activities for wealthier families, or to the cities as *almajiri*. Among those who serve as herd boys to wealthier families, some often abandon grazing livestock and join armed gangs.

Changes in the Levels of Productivity

To ascertain the level of livestock productivity, respondents were requested to compare the productivity of cattle in terms of calving interval, average milk yield, and age at first calving between 1970's and the present period (around 2013 to 2015). The respondents' assessments are presented in Table 4.

Subjectively, pastoralists viewed the productivity of livestock as being higher in the 1970's than for the present period, based on their

experiences as regards calving interval, average milk yield and age at first calving (Table 4). This suggests that pastoral production in Nigeria has stagnated due to the failure to transform the traditional system of livestock breeding. This have enormous effects on Nigeria's quest for food security and the country's fight against poverty.

Table 4: Respondents Perceptions of Levels of Livestock Productivity in the 1970s and the Present Period.

LGAs	Community	Calving interval		Milk Yield per Cow (litres)		Age at First Calving	
		1970's	2013-2015	1970's	2013-2015	1970's	2013-2015
Birnin Magaji	Bakin Lamba	1.5	2.5	4.0	0.5	3.0	4.0
	Tungan Buzu	1.0	2.0	3.0	0.5	2.8	4.0
Zumi	Lugga	1.0	2.0	3.5	0.5	2.5	4.2
	Tsanu	1.0	1.5	4.0	1.0	2.5	4.3
Birnin Gwari	Gayan grazing reserve	1.0	2.0	2.5	1.0	3.0	4.0
	Doka	1.2	2.0	2.5	0.5	3.0	4.5
Chikun	Buruku (Gorso)	1.0	1.8	4.0	0.5	2.7	4.0
	Kasaya	1.0	2.0	5.0	1.0	2.5	4.0
Kagarko	Jere	1.5	2.5	3.0	0.5	3.0	4.0
	Kasiri	1.5	2.0	3.5	0.5	3.2	4.2
Kachia	Kachia grazing reserve	1.5	2.5	3.0	0.5	3.5	4.5
	Awon	1.0	2.0	4.0	1.0	3.0	4.0

The decline in milk supply in particular has weakened the economic base of mothers, and their capacity to cater for their children. Respondents were of the view that children from poor pastoral families, particularly the male children, rarely respect their parents because of their inability to provide for their needs. The role of mothers in controlling male children has also weakened. Some respondents were of the view that, with violent conflicts in certain areas, some pastoral youths have become restive and are therefore participating in criminal activities, including cattle rustling.

Development of Ranches

It was widely asserted that the development of ranches was one of the factors that promoted wide scale armed banditry and cattle rustling. Contrary to this perception, responses from the field suggest a very weak relationship between the development of ranches and armed banditry. Respondents gave examples of areas where large scale cattle rustling started such as Langtang South, Wase and Shendam LGAs in Plateau State; Awe and Doma in Nasarawa State; and Maru LGA in Zamfara State. Ranches were non-existing in those areas. Again, it was explained that cattle rustling in ranches, mainly in the States of Katsina and Kaduna as well as in FCT Abuja started after bandits had become more sophisticated.

In general, the ranches were really few in number and were owned mostly by retired military personnel, civil servants and some politicians. With the exception of few ranches that kept improved and exotic species of cattle, most of the ranches maintained local breeds of cattle, which also made them vulnerable to cattle rustling.

4.3 Animal Husbandry, Cattle Rustling and Banditry

Respondents were of the view that cattle rustling and banditry was alien to Nigeria. Again, they believed that changes in animal husbandry methods were not directly related to incidences of cattle rustling and banditry in the study area. However, careful analysis of the prevailing situation will reveal some level of relationships between the two.

First, pastoralists, farmers and key informants agreed that some of the cattle rustlers were youths of pastoralist extraction. Reasons adduced for involvement include drugs abuse, absence of education and good moral upbringing. These behaviours were closely tied to the strong disconnect between families and youths within some of the pastoral communities. As highlighted earlier, youths are separated from their families while grazing livestock in distant locations and therefore such young children are no longer under the control of their parents.

Second, with expanding cultivations and increasing level of high-handedness against pastoralists by security agencies, particularly in the last five years, many pastoral families migrated to remote rural and forested areas to avoid persistent confrontations with farming communities. This was particularly true for communities in Zamfara, Kaduna and Nasarawa States. As they move further into the hinterland, they got more exposed to armed bandits since security agencies rarely give cover to these areas. Again, the pastoral families became further alienated from essential services like health care and education, which makes them more vulnerable, especially when incidences of armed banditry and cattle rustling escalate in the remote rural areas where they live, far from the public eye and government services that largely ignore their plight. Indeed, cattle rustling only came to the limelight when cattle rustlers started raiding farms owned by elites and political leaders.

Indirectly, the unresolved conflicts over the years in many States of Central Nigeria have impoverished thousands of farming and pastoralists households. Livelihoods resources such as farming lands and livestock had been lost. With the proliferation of light arms and the presence of weak institutional frameworks for control of criminal activities, cattle rustling and other forms of rural banditry escalated, especially when many people engaged in criminal activities have not been arrested or punished, particularly in the rural areas.

Although changes in methods of animal husbandry has not significantly led to cattle rustling, cattle rustling has by far significantly impacted animal husbandry methods by causing large scale migration of pastoralists from high risks areas to less risks areas. Today, thousands of pastoral families had migrated from Zamfara, Kaduna and Plateau States to other parts of the country, and even beyond.

4.4 Insecurity in Rural Communities

In the last decade, Nigeria has witnessed increased insecurity, especially in rural areas in Northern Nigeria, including widespread armed conflicts. Security agencies in the affected areas were unable to curb the violence, and this promoted rural banditry. The rising insecurity led to formation of vigilante groups to aid in the control and prevention of banditry and cattle rustling in the affected areas. The vigilante groups that emerged proved ineffective in preventing the crimes, but rather, led to alleged excesses by the vigilante groups, whose members are accused of collusion (such as cover ups for criminals), harassments of citizens, unlawful killings of "suspects" even without any tangible evidence and confiscation of properties (e.g. motorcycles, cattle) especially those owned by pastoralists. In some areas, particularly in Zamfara and parts of Kaduna State

(Birnin Gwari), pastoralists respondents alleged that some vigilante groups were aiding rural banditry.

The low level of education, the isolated nature of the affected settlements and the weak representation of the affected pastoralists and other rural people in governance resulted in poor institutional and security response to the challenges, thus the ongoing acts of violence against community members (such as rape and abduction of young girls and women) continued unabated.

The consequences of rural insecurity identified by this research were very alarming, the most visible being the high level of frustration and abuse of people's fundamental rights. The violence has been particularly directed against women and children, who had suffered sexual abuse, abduction and killings. Young men and family heads were repeatedly killed by cattle rustlers in all the States, which led to reprisal attacks on various communities and/or households. In addition, poverty and loss of livelihoods are on the rise, with women and children being the greatest victims. Many heads of households affected by cattle rustling have abandoned their families, leaving women to engage in excessive labour to cater for the families.

It is also worth noting that farming activities were seriously impaired due to reduction in number of animals used for traction and decrease in quantity of manure, which lead to reduced crop yields. Farming communities in various states like Plateau, Benue, Nasarawa, Kaduna and Zamfara have lost substantial parts of their crop yields to conflicts that were triggered by cattle rustling.

Changes in culture have also been observed as a result of cattle rustling. For instance, decline in livestock productivity resulted in inadequate supply of food, particularly milk to pastoralists. In some cases, even the eating habits of pastoral and farming families have been modified, which has a wide impact on children's survival. This is also closely linked to decline in social services like education and health care delivery. Many schools and clinics in the rural areas have also collapsed. With anxiety and frustrations, emotional and psychological disorders such as high blood pressure, hypertension and mental disorders are on the increase in rural communities. Pastoralist migrations have also increased, leading to more conflicts among rural communities as a result of increased competition over natural resources between migrants and the sedentary communities in the "receiving regions".

Moreover, the declining livestock and crop productivity is worrisome and could affect future availability of food and animal proteins to Nigeria's fast growing population.

4.5 Survival Strategies adopted by Communities

Three forms of survival strategies were identified among the communities, the first being migration away from areas most prone to cattle rustling to more secure areas; the second was the formation of vigilante groups to checkmate the activities of the armed bandits; and the third was for families to sell off all their animals (particularly the case of farming communities with work bulls). Pastoralists mostly adopted the first strategy while farming communities mainly opted for the second and third strategies.

Migration from Areas Prone to Cattle Rustling

There has been a large scale outmigration of pastoralists from areas most prone to cattle rustling. Respondents during FGDs gave an estimation of the percentage of pastoralists that have adopted this option (Table 5). It varied from one area to another, depending on the severity of cattle rustling. In worst affected LGAs like Birnin Magaji and Zurmi in Zamfara State; and Birnin Gwari in Kaduna State, as much as 80% to 90% of pastoralists migrated. In other LGAs like Kauran Namoda in Zamfara State; and Chikun in Kaduna State, as much as 40% to 60% of them migrated.

Table 5: Estimate Percentage of Pastoralists Families that Migrated from Areas affected by Armed Banditry and the Receiving Areas of Displaced Families (2012 - 2014)

LGA's	Estimate % of Pastoral Families involved	Receiving areas
Birnin Magaji	80%	Kwara and Oyo States, Benin Republic
Zurmi	85%	Niger, Kwara and Oyo States, Benin Republic
Kuwaran Namoda	60%	Kebbi, Kwara and Oyo States, Benin Republic
Birnin Gwari	90%	Niger, Kwara, Oyo and Kaduna States (around Kachia grazing reserve)
Chikun	40%	Nasarawa, Kogi, Kwara and Oyo States
Kagarko	20%	No large scale out-migration, but some to Niger and Kwara States
Kachia	5%	No large scale out migration, largely short distance relocations to parts of Zangon Katat and Jaba LGAs

The option of migrating from the high risks areas was not without its own implications. For example, there were reports of cattle rustlers following pastoralists en-route, killing them and confiscating the animals. This partly explains migrant pastoralists hiring trucks to transport the livestock, rather than trekking with the animals as was culturally practiced.

Formation of Vigilante Groups

Respondents explained that nearly all communities in the affected areas have formed vigilante groups to provide security because of the inadequacy of Police personnel to protect them. Respondents were also of the view that the Police, and in some places the Army, were reluctant to responding to reports of cattle rustling. Thus, most communities in the most prone areas have vigilante groups. For some pastoral families that live close to farming communities with which they have a good relationship, a way out was building partnership with those communities and forming vigilante groups to reinforce security.

Perception on the role of vigilantes varied widely among respondents and key informants and was highly variable. With the exception of few places (particularly Kachia and Kagarko LGAs), pastoralists were opposed to vigilante groups as they alleged that the vigilantes illegally extort money from them. The worst cases of negative influence of vigilante groups was reported by pastoralists communities in Zamfara State and Birnin Gwari LGA in Kaduna State. In these areas, there were allegations of extra-judicial killing of pastoralists; confiscation of livestock; burning and looting of pastoral households; and force evictions perpetrated by vigilante. Similar cases, though to a lesser degree were reported for Katsina and some parts of southern Plateau States. For farming communities, perceptions about vigilantes also varied, but generally, farmers had more positive perceptions for vigilantes than

pastoral groups. Notwithstanding, some farming communities would have preferred to live without the presence of vigilantes, who they accuse of making draconian rules; punishing innocent farmers over menial issues. There were also reports of vigilante's highhandedness against many community leaders especially those opposed to the excesses of the vigilante groups. Generally, in most of the areas studied, vigilantes had abrogated enormous powers to themselves.

Respondents' perceptions on the vigilantes' effectiveness in preventing cattle rustling and other forms of armed banditry also varied. In areas around Kachia and Kagarko, it was reported that vigilantes have positively contributed to minimising cattle rustling and armed banditry. In areas around Birnin Gwari LGA, the opinions varied on the subject, however the majority of respondents believe that vigilantes were not effective. In Zamfara State, pastoralists believe that vigilantes also participate in cattle rustling while farmers viewed them as more effective than the Police in mitigating armed banditry.

Selling of Work bulls and Small Ruminants

The third strategy farming communities adopted was selling off all work bulls and small ruminants, and in some instances, sheep and goats. This has enormous implications on farming activities since families were losing farm labour. As a result, more women and children had to work on farms. Another implication of this loss in animal labour is the decrease in the total acreages that individual families could cultivate, thereby reducing the quantity of crops available to them. Since small ruminants were mostly owned by women and children, selling off these animals seriously affected the income levels of women, which further translated to poorer healthcare, clothing and quality of nutrition.

5.0 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Conclusions

There was a linkage between rural banditry, cattle rustling and changes in the methods of animal husbandry in Northern Nigeria. In fact, some changes in the methods of animal husbandry might have contributed to rising incidences of cattle rustling, which in turn, along with rural banditry, have caused changes in animal husbandry methods. Rural banditry, cattle rustling and conflicts between farmers and pastoralist have resulted to an alarming decrease in livestock holdings per household, leading to a decrease in livestock productivity. The scenario has already established a vicious cycle of poverty, frustration and socio-cultural deviations in the affected households and communities.

Growing insecurity and the consequent proliferation of arms has aided rural bandits and cattle rustlers who utilise proceeds from cattle rustling to purchase sophisticated weapons. In some States like Nasarawa, Benue, Plateau and Kaduna, there is an increasing linkage between rural banditry, cattle rustling and the frequent conflicts between farmers and pastoralists. In other States like Zamfara and parts of Kaduna State like Birnin Gwari, bandits rustle all types of livestock from pastoral and farming communities. This also triggers communal conflicts between pastoralists and farmers in form of reprisal attacks.

The inefficiency and non effectiveness of security agencies have worsened the situation of the communities affected by banditry, cattle rustling and by farmer-pastoralist conflicts as well. Corruption and the unlawful killings and confiscation of properties (including livestock) by vigilante groups are serious challenges affecting the efforts put in place towards controlling and overcoming the problems of rural banditry and cattle rustling.

5.2 Recommendations

During FGDs, pastoralists were very reluctant to suggest solutions to the issue of cattle rustling, because of the widespread belief among them that the rustling of animals was a deliberate act of dispossessing them with animals and rendering them "economically useless". Farming communities were equally apprehensive as they explained that the governments knew exactly what to do, but still allowed criminal gangs to perpetuate crime, killings and destruction of livelihoods. Though both pastoralists and farmers did not propose concrete solutions to the problem, their frustration was evident. They detested the inability of political leaders, governments and security agencies to deal effectively with the situation.

During KIIs, stakeholders, including community leaders, leaders of pastoral associations and officials of government institutions provided their views on what needed to be done. Overall, there was unanimous consensus that unless the Nigerian government take a firm political stance to deal with the situation, incidences of rustling will escalate and may result in major civil unrest in Northern Nigeria.

The following recommendations are offered:

- i) There is the urgent need for the Federal Government to take a decisive action on issues of cattle rustling and armed banditry throughout Northern Nigeria. A thorough investigation need to be carried out by relevant security agencies to unravel the network of armed bandits, including the identification of those involved in supplying arms, rustling of the cattle, transporting the stolen cows to the markets and those buying and disposing off the stolen livestock.

- ii) There is need for a re-orientation and change of tactics that will lead to greater cooperation between Nigerian security agencies and rural pastoral and farming communities. In particular, the current perception among security agencies that pastoralists are criminals need to be changed. Involvement of genuine and patriotic leaders from both the pastoralists and farming communities should be encouraged.
- iii) The ongoing marginalisation of women and the abuse of their rights by armed bandits, some vigilantes and part of the security agents need to be stopped and controlled. Mechanisms must be put-in place for reporting incidences of violence against women and ways of conducting investigations. The continued exclusion and marginalisation of women in crop and livestock production need to be addressed. There is also need for increased women's employment in the security agencies and extension workers, as well as deliberate efforts at girl child education in the rural areas.
- iv) There is need for better provision of extension services and input for crops and livestock production. Similarly, there is need for greater involvement of farmers and pastoralists associations in policy formulation and in the implementation of government programmes with regard to crops and livestock production.
- v) The Federal Ministry of Agriculture and the States' Ministries of Agriculture and Animal Resources need to device a mechanism for the branding and registration of all cattle in the country. Cattle traders should also be certified, the livestock markets restructured, and all the country's abattoirs and slaughter houses upgraded and regulated as well.

- vi) There is the need to provide support to victims of cattle rustling and rural banditry. Initiatives like restocking, the provision of seeds and inputs, and the rehabilitation of destroyed buildings need to be considered. The current practice of ignoring victims need to be stopped. Additionally, counselling and health services for persons (especially women and children) who were abused must be provided by the States and Local Governments.
- vii) Political leaders, traditional rulers and local governments' administrators need to increasingly embrace the pastoral communities and treat them fairly and equitably. The increasing isolation of pastoralists and the ongoing aggression against their communities in many States and localities will only lead to further degeneration of peace and security. Leaders of pastoral communities need to be duly recognised and taken into confidence in efforts geared towards preventing criminal activities. Thus, the current onslaught on pastoral settlements by security agencies and vigilante need to be stopped; and all cases of extrajudicial killings recorded and investigated.
- viii) Civil society organisations and the media need to strongly "blow the whistle" on the injustices meted on farming and pastoral communities arising from cattle rustling, armed banditry and other forms of deprivation such as the confiscation of grazing lands, the destruction of houses, forceful evictions, and arbitrary arrests and extortions. International support organisations and other human rights bodies need to support this initiative.

As a strategy, it is proposed that a strong coalition of civil society organisations be established to serve as a pressure and support group to deal with the issue of armed banditry and cattle rustling. The pressure group should, on one hand, have an advocacy role; and on the other hand support cooperation between pastoral and agricultural communities to address the challenges they face. Linkages with relevant institutions of government and security agencies need to be established; and mechanisms for detection, investigation and prosecution of criminal bandits be developed.

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Chapter **3**

THE EFFECT OF ARMED BANDITRY ON RURAL WOMEN'S LIVELIHOOD AND SECURITY: CASE STUDY OF KADUNA & PLATEAU STATES, NIGERIA

**Dayo Oluyemi-Kusa
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Introduction

In the past five years, armed banditry (AB) in rural areas seems to have taken on a life of its own, with dire consequences for the citizenry in Nigeria. Many analysts associate the phenomenon of rural banditry (RB) with the failure of the State (Ibrahim, 2014) to provide security and basic services for the populace.

Ethnicity and social differences have been deployed by elites as tools to divide and generate conflicts among various groups that have hitherto lived together harmoniously. Banditry may well be a *political economy problem* resulting from the absence of equitable access to resources and a deliberate agenda to exclude others from social formations.

Banditry leads to disruption of life as we know it. The desire to avoid strife and its attendant consequences leads to displacement and loss of lives and properties. AB also leads to the existence of constant fear of attacks, which take away human dignity and people's ability to organize, seek and engage in livelihoods (ThisDay, 2014).

When social services are rolled back, women bear the brunt, as they have to carry an additional burden, irrespective of the fact that their child bearing and nurturing roles are demanding enough. When the State fails to provide essential services, women are forced to

stand in the gap because they and their children need to continue to live. Such unconventional roles for women are even more problematic in situations of conflict, strife or unrest, as they could be occasioned by armed banditry and retaliatory actions.

The two case studies that pertain to Kaduna and Plateau states, in North-west and North-central Nigeria respectively, have had recurrent instances of RB and attacks by Jama'atu Ahlul Sunna li Da'wati wal Jihad – “People Committed to the Prophet's Teachings for Propagation and Jihad”/JAS, better known as Boko Haram, or its more recent name, Islamic State's West African province. For example, on the 5th of February, 2014, 71 people were killed in four states, including Kaduna and Plateau. In Kaduna, 22 people were killed by unknown gunmen suspected to be Fulani militia men in two villages of Kaura Local Government Area (LGA). In Plateau state, the same day, 30 people were killed and more than 50 houses burnt (AllAfrica.com, 2014).

On May 29, 2014, in Jos south LGA, 4 members of the same family were killed in an early morning raid in the village of Wat, near Kuru (NigeriaNews, 2014). Many other examples abound. It is pertinent to note here that most of the predictions for election violence in 2015 placed Kaduna and Plateau states in the danger zone. No thanks to the activities of rural bandits and others (Fund for Peace, 2014).

The research seeks to find out how RB has affected the daily life of women, especially their sources of income (livelihood) and security with a view to suggesting policy options that could assuage their pains. The following key research questions formed the fulcrum of the discourse with the respondents:

- Causes of attacks on women by armed bandits
- Nature of the attacks on women by armed bandits.
- Nature of the effects of AB on particular aspects of women's lives.

- Changes in lifestyle and livelihood as a result of AB.
- Psychological effect of AB on women and girls.
- Coping strategies
- Role of government and its institutions
- Sources of support for female victims of AB

Literature Review

The concept of the *crime triangle* (Women's Self-Defense Institute, 2010)¹ posits that for a crime like rural banditry to occur:

- There should be a *motivated offender*, in this case the rural bandit attracted by cattle, goats and sheep. The cattle, in particular, have high economic value and are easily disposable. Sometimes abduction of women, girls and boys could be part of the mix.
- An *available and suitable target*. Suitable targets are the unprotected citizens in rural Nigeria.
- *No authority figure to prevent the attack from taking place* because many rural areas remain un-governed.

The foregoing triangle exhibits the vulnerability of the rural populace to attacks by armed bandits who constantly wreak havoc on their domain.

Herdsmen are the first to go out and kill women, children and the elderly (John, 2014). Such attacks are possible because 'normal' conflicts between pastoralists and farmers have degenerated into generalized RB (Ibrahim, 2014). These widespread assaults on vulnerable groups are 'facilitated' by the government's absence of in rural areas.

¹ Visit the following for more information on the concept:
<http://www.self-defense-mind-body-spirit.com/crime-triangle.html>

Poor physical access to basic social services like water, electricity, education, security makes market trading the major viable option for rural women. This lone avenue for survival—petty trading is disrupted by RB (Porter, 2007). The relationship between herdsmen and farmers could be likened to an exchange of dairy products for grain, access to local markets and the provision of manure on arable land while the cattle consume crop residue.

This symbiotic relationship between farmers and herdsmen is disrupted by AB. When cattle are stolen, and women raped, there can be no exchange of meat and dairy products for grain. The women are particularly concerned about the dairy products because they are 'in charge' of milking the cows. Their major source of income is put in abeyance and they have to seek survival strategies.

Gender based violence (GBV) is an under-researched aspect of the activities of rural bandits and JAS (Zenn, 2014). Specifically, women are more affected by GBV in both peace and conflict times, because of inequality between men and women dictated by some negative factors such as tradition and religion (Abara, 2012).

The issue of sexual violence in Nigeria/African conflicts is complex, with implications for international programmes and policies related to health, humanitarian relief, global women's issues, the justice sector and multilateral activities (Arieff, 2010). The weakness of institutions in Nigeria and other African countries imply that victims of GBV get little or no redress because of the high level of impunity within the system.

There are also psychological implications for survivors of GBV which are often not addressed. Some of these abuses are opportunistic, while other incidents appear to be carried out systematically as a strategic tool to intimidate and humiliate

civilian populations (Arieff, 2010).

GBV is addressed in clear terms under the section 'feminism and patriarchy' in the African Feminist Charter (2009). The Charter rejects patriarchal structures which promote GBV in line with the principles of the wider feminist movement.

What then are the root causes, dynamics, evolution and politicisation of cattle grazing conflicts in Nigeria? The abandonment of the gazetted routes for cattle grazing; the indigene/settler dichotomy; the breakdown of traditional methods of conflict resolution; and climate change are some of the factors responsible for the politicization of such conflicts (IFRA, 2014). Some of the key actors in rural violence are herdsman, farmers, community members, vigilantes, security operatives, government officials and religious leaders.

“Heavily armed bandits continue to prowl the vast Dajin Rugu forest which spans several square kilometres across Zamfara, Katsina, Kaduna and Niger states. The gangs steal herds, loot and burn homes, and assault women in the attacks, according to Fulani leaders”(AllAfrica.com, 2013). This has dire consequences for the very existence of the average rural woman in many parts of Nigeria.

Methodology

The research adopts a largely qualitative approach, and focuses on the narratives that enable women to engage with RB and have a voice in the analysis while proffering solutions to the problem. The primary sources of data are one-on-one interviews; Focus Group Discussions (FGDs); and Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) with women, girls, men, Community Based Organizations (CBOs) and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) in communities studied in the two focal states—Kaduna and Plateau.

The research questions elicit social, economic, demographic and psychographic responses which reflect the respondents' level of understanding of issues. FGDs, KIIs, primary and secondary sources are the methods employed. The questions were open-ended, and they were about women's safety, livelihoods, sexual assaults and changes in lifestyle as a result of RB.

What types of weapons are used to attack women? In this regard, responses on specific cases of sexual assault and rape are elicited. The respondents also tell us their assessment of various types of intervention from the government, CBOs, NGOs and other relevant stakeholders in AB targeted at women. We are also interested in the use of Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR), especially *mediation*, for the prevention and amelioration of conflicts between women and other social groups as a result of AB (Oluyemi-Kusa, 2013).

Respondents were assured of confidentiality before each interview; and they were told that the information obtained from them would be used only for the study. They were not required to submit their names and addresses to the interviewer. This approach reassured respondents and made them more forthcoming in their responses.

Sources of data

Desk review of extant literature, examining the nature of AB in other climes was undertaken in order to examine the nature, trend and effects of banditry in other countries and compare the phenomenon with the form of RB experienced in Nigeria. It is worth noting that the cross border nature of banditry cannot be ignored.

Government official records, police reports, prison reports and vigilante groups' narratives were analysed. FGDs and KIIs comprised the following categories of respondents: "women only" groups, religious leaders, traditional rulers, policemen, families, youth, farmers, cattle rearers, community members/leaders, LG officials, elected representatives, adolescent girls, businessmen/women, displaced families, residents affected by AB, and NGOs.

Extant literatures, relevant documents, newspaper/magazine articles/reports in electronic media were content analysed. The key words used are Arms, Banditry, Women, Livelihood and Security. These terms are clearly operationalised, mindful of the fact that women's perspective is only a sub-set of the larger study on AB.

Qualitative Research

The research adopted a qualitative approach focused on the use of narratives that give visibility to the thoughts, aspirations, perceptions and expectations of communities as regards women. Although the research is on the effect of AB on women, the literature has shown that women cannot be taken in isolation from the needs and aspirations of their communities (Oxfam, 2005; Young, 1993). Therefore, other community voices were interrogated and represented in the research. They serve both as foil to buttress the women's perspective and to give a wider scope to the dimensions of the issues facing women and girls in the communities.

It was difficult to speak with the women without some male presence. The nature of the Focus Group Discussions was such that they were held in the respondents' respective communities. These are traditional patriarchal societies where the consent of the male

'gate keepers' is required to speak to other family members. This was even more pronounced as communities were in a state of 'siege', where vulnerability to attacks was high and where there was a perception that attacks could happen at any time. So the Responsibility to Protect (RTP) principle for family members was keenly upheld.

We however found that where we asked to speak with women alone, they were forthcoming and expressed their thoughts clearly, even with male presence. In some communities women and men formed the FGDs, and each person was given a chance to express her/his thoughts. We toured the communities to ascertain the statements shared and to further comprehend the dimensions of the current conflicts and the proposals offered.

Introductions preceded every interview. Researchers explained their objectives as non-governmental well-wishers and concerned Nigerians seeking information as to the true situation of things. We also made it clear that proposals were required from the communities on what could be done to ameliorate the situation so that the government and other interested bodies are advised accordingly.

Being in situations of conflict, guides known to the communities were employed. NGOs with good working relationships with the communities were secured to provide credible guides. These guides facilitated researchers' access to the communities with a view to eliciting the necessary responses. The languages of enquiry were *Hausa*, *Fulfulde* and *English*. It was a huge advantage that researchers were culturally aware and responsive to the nuances of the respondents. Researchers spoke Hausa and worked with guides who spoke Fulfulde and Hausa.

Respondents were assured of confidentiality before they were interviewed. They were informed that their responses would be used for the study only. This assurance coupled with the presence of trustworthy guides and researchers who could communicate well opened the doors of conversation.

Given the fear expressed that those who gave information could sometimes be tortured and killed, we refrained from mentioning names of respondents or a specific community location where the situation referred to may be construed as potentially putting in danger the lives of our sources.

Scope

The study focused on 8 LGAs—4 in each of the two select states of Kaduna and Plateau. In Kaduna state, the focus was on Chikun, Igabi, Kagarko and Jema'a LGAs. In Plateau state, the focus was on Jos North, Jos South, Bassa and Barikin Ladi LGAs, which gave a good representation across two geo-political zones namely: North-West and North-Central. These are also states with recurrent reportage of armed bandits' activities in rural communities.

Between 6 and 12 participants were invited for each FGD. In Kaduna state, specifically in Chikun LGA, the target communities of Falale and Hayinmallam Garba 'recorded' 3 FGDs and 2 KIIs. In Igabi LGA, 2 KIIs were held. Kagarko had 3 FGDs, while in Jema'a LGA 2 KIIs were held. 4 all-female FGDs were recorded across the two states (with 48 women).

In Plateau state, 2 KIIs and 1 FGD were held in Jos North LGA. In Jos South LGA, the team interviewed 6 volunteers from two NGOs. Bassa LGA was able to 'accommodate' 1 FGD and 1 KII. In Barikin Ladi LGA, we held 5 FGDs and 1 KII. 6 policemen, 6 traditional leaders, and 6 NGO personnel were also interviewed. A total of 135 respondents were interviewed across the two states (See Appendix 1).

We were quite conscious of being engaged in research in conflict-prone zones, and our intervention could even fuel conflict if our strategy was inadequate. The team took cognisance of cultural dynamics and the potentially volatile nature of conflict zones. The professional rules of working within such a context were always applied, namely respect for cultural sensitivity, appreciation of respondents' lived reality, ensuring our safety and that of the crew.

Limitations and Delimitations

Paucity of data

The data and literature on AB in Nigeria are few and far between. The study therefore relied largely on newspaper reports, anecdotal evidence, FGDs and KII sources. What this implies is that it may be necessary to conduct a more in-depth study of AB and women's issues to build on the present study.

Limited time

Some issues require confidence-building over a period of time for them to be discussed with strangers. An issue such as rape is very sensitive, especially for the victims. With regard the study, rape victims were not willing to be interviewed by our team. We obtained information from other Fulani persons who were not members of the communities where the girls were reported to have been raped.

The 'secondary respondents' had either sympathized with the rape victims, or by virtue of their role as facilitators of social and economic opportunities got to know about the situation. Insisting on getting answers to such a question would have yielded false answers. For example, when we asked in euphemistic terms whether any of the 'girls or women were touched' instead of using the Hausa word for rape, *pyade*, the answer was 'no they were

not'—even in the communities where we had been told there were incidents of rape.

FIELD REPORT

The two states in focus, Kaduna and Plateau, are of interest to the Centre for Democracy and Development (CDD) and the Nigeria Stability and Reconciliation Programme (NSRP) partners. In Plateau state, Hausa community members living between the Birom and Fulani ethnic groups were interviewed to obtain a perspective that was neither Fulani nor Birom—the two contending communities. Although affected by armed conflict, the Hausa are neutral because they have not been victims of, or accused of perpetuating any form of violence related to armed banditry in Plateau State. In Barikin Ladi LGA, the Hausa community constitutes the 'border', which is a 'war free zone' where all ethnic groups may converge and live side by side, in relative peace (FGD with Katako community, Barikin Ladi LGA).

8 LGAs considered *flash points* and vulnerable to armed banditry were visited across the two select states as illustrated below.

135 persons were interviewed (*See Appendix 1 for breakdown*):

- 13 FGDs were held with citizens in Kaduna & Plateau states
- 10 KIIs were held with citizens in Kaduna & Plateau states
- 1 FGD, comprising 6 Policemen, led by CPD of Police and a retired Police officer, was held.
- 3 KIIs with traditional rulers
- 2 KIIs with Religious leaders
- 4 Women FGDs
- 3 Volunteers from each of the 2 NGOs contacted
- Each FGD comprised 12 respondents
- 4 LGAs were visited in each state: Plateau & Kaduna

Causes of attacks on women by armed bandits

When bandits attack, they do not specifically come to attack women. In fact communities have lost more men than women; more men than women have been beaten. From the findings, women are attacked as 'casualties of war.' They come primarily for the cattle and anything else they can find that is of 'value.' In one of the communities, the bandits threatened to slap a woman when she did not stop crying and appealing for the cattle to be spared. A traditional ruler came in to douse the tension, using local mediation skills. In another instance, the bandits took away a brand new pair of shoes, exchanging it for their battered one. In some communities where the women were raped, we were told the bandits did it because it assuaged their sexual needs and as a way of bruising the pride of the community.

Women are valued assets for the family, 'acquired' either by birth or through marriage. Raping or harassing women is a demonstration of power and further victimization of the persons attacked. It is also an extension of the appropriation of the wealth of the victim, a bonus on the animals stolen. Women are especially vulnerable in situations where the men, who biologically have more physical strength, have been subdued.

Women are an integral part of any community which is under siege. They are in fact very fundamental to reproduction. Therefore, any violation of women diminishes the chances of that community's ability to reproduce itself (Discussion with community guide, 2014).

Women are vulnerable as community assets to be violated as elements of the spoils of war. This reality is well documented in the literature on the analysis of conflict situations. This is why rape or the abuse of women's bodily integrity is a punishable offence under the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (2002).

Nature of the attacks by armed bandits on women and their community

The main bone of contention in armed banditry is the *killing of young men, the rape of women, the rustling of cattle, the destruction of farm produce, and the bruising of community pride*. Appendix 1 shows that the highest numbers of animals stolen are cattle, probably because they are easy to herd, are in high demand and yield sizeable income. Sheep and goats are not stolen in large quantities because they are less 'disciplined' animals, so more difficult to herd (FGD respondents), and their economic value is lower compared with cattle.

While similarities exist between dimensions of AB in Kaduna and Plateau States, there is variance in the nature, *the perceived perpetrators* (especially in the case of Kaduna communities); and the causes of AB across the two states. In the study, the offenders are labelled 'perceived perpetrators' because, according to a respondent:

We have never caught anybody. So it is all conjecture and conjecture can be dangerous (Chikun LGA, Kaduna state).

This lack of clarity as to who the bandits are is corroborated by an NSRP report:

...several rural communities experienced attacks by unknown invaders. Worst hit have been communities in Southern Kaduna where allegations of cattle rustling have ignited inter-communal violence (NSRP, 2014: 3).

As another respondent tells us about the uncertainty of the source of banditry:

If you say it is the Fulani, but then the Fulani are not spared. If you say it is those in the bush, but then farmers are affected. If you say it is from government but then government is affected (Guide, Kaduna state).

The above statement alludes to former Vice President Namadi Sambo's farm which was raided in Kaduna state. The Police and soldiers were deployed, but they could not retrieve the stolen cattle (Research Guide, 2014).

Some communities however acknowledged that the bandits, who come in large numbers, between 15 and 40 each time, (in the respondents' estimation) spoke either Hausa or Fulfulde fluently. According to a respondent, this could imply that it is the bad eggs amongst the Fulani that are colluding with strangers equipped with *sophisticated arms and vehicles* to steal cattle.

The Kaduna Experience

The experiences of Armed Banditry cut across the four LGAs visited in Kaduna state. The attacks are well organised, brazen and highly effective, with the use of *intimidating weapons*. Respondents said that raiders come during the daytime, evening or at night.

During the daytime they may introduce themselves and their mission and advise the residents to be calm. In one instance, a helicopter was reportedly sighted in a village in Chikun LGA. The cattle raiders allegedly used it to convey slaughtered animals. Speaking with one of our guides on the issue, he thought it might have been surveillance helicopter that landed in the community rather than one used for stealing cattle.

The respondents' experience of cattle rustling is that some raiders would take away entire herds of cattle (Bassa LGA, Plateau state). Some armed bandits would take some of the herd (Chikun LGA) and leave some. In other instances, cattle and sheep are all led away or only cattle minus the sheep. In instances where sheep may be spared, the community believed it was because sheep have less economic value and are more difficult to herd than cattle. The mode of raiding is to lead the cattle away *en masse*, as in the following testimony:

Last year (2013) at about 4pm my son went to herd cattle. He left cattle to go to the water source to perform his ablution. By the time he returned, the cattle had been led away and only the sheep was left. He searched until 8pm and came home without them. It was our intention to sell some of the cattle to meet some food needs (Falale, Chikun LGA).

When raiders come at night, they blind the community by shining torch lights into their eyes and ask them to remain in their huts. Bandits beat some of the men whom they suspect may want to resist the attack, or they do so just to subdue the community. Women were reportedly *raped* and girls *abducted*. However no community reported that its women were beaten or raped by the bandits during the research.

We learnt about the rape incidents from people who had established relationships with the community and were privy to information considered 'deeply shaming and damning to the family'. The marauders sometimes went from house to house beating up the men, which left the women crying helplessly. During the week of our visit, there was a young man in hospital recovering from severe battery by bandits (Chikun guide). The Bandits dared the families with impunity. The respondents were

told: *'If you have anyone who can interfere, we dare you to ask them to follow us.'*

Then, a rhetorical question was asked by the respondent:

Who do we have? (Nursing mother, Kagarko LGA, Kaduna state)

There was the case of a woman who cried and begged the bandits to spare some cattle. In the end they separated some of the weaker ones and drove them towards her after which she was told if she didn't take the seven cattle given to her — out of a total number of 70 cattle stolen—they would shoot her (Kagarko LGA). She has since become the village *shero* for saving a few cattle.

The bandits are usually armed with what the communities consider to be sophisticated weapons. Such 'sophisticated weapons' disarm the attacked communities and render them unable to defend themselves. According to a respondent:

If it was that they came armed with sticks like we are, then we could have met them measure for measure but they come with guns. Some of the policemen, when we call them, they tell us they cannot compete with the bandits (Chikun LGA respondents).

The source of these arms is of great concern in the communities. They are worried about the organized nature of banditry —helicopter, arms and the confidence to approach communities in broad daylight.

The Plateau experience

Marauders waylay the young Fulani boys in the bushes, kill them and lead away the cattle. A community in Bassa LGA informed us that they lost 5 sons whose heads were missing. They only buried the bodies. Communities interviewed believe they know who the perpetrators are due to the existing feud between the Birom and Fulani communities.

The only similarity with attacks in Kaduna state lies in the use of sophisticated weapons. Fulani have migrated from locations where they owned privately procured land in search of safety for family and cattle. The Birom are unable to go to farms that are far from their homestead for fear of attacks by the Fulani. The Birom agricultural produce ripen on the farms. At the point of harvest, they find their crops slashed, vandalized and laid waste.

Issue	Kaduna picture	Plateau picture	
Who is attacking	Not known. Thieves suspected.	Suspected thieves drawn from Hausa, Fulani & Birom youth; and Birom or Fulani youth in reprisal attacks	
What is stolen	Cattle, sheep, personal items, e.g. shoes and phones	Cattle and sheep	
Reason for attack	Unemployment Poverty Decline of national security	Poverty Conflict and need to hurt the 'enemy' & the 'impostor'	
Nature of attack	Day light Night, from 8p.m. at the 'Ruga' (homestead) settlements Surround Ruga to restrict movement in & around animal pen. Shine torch in eyes, using surprise element.	Daylight with bandits in uniform. Ambush on the farms. Ambush in the bush as boys herd cattle. Ambush on the farms as women and men farm. Surprise element. Homesteads burnt.	
Weapons and tools	Guns Helicopter Torchlight	Guns 'Hilux' vans	
Location of attacks	Ruga (homestead) Bush during herding	Farms while farming Bush during herding	
Appearance	Hooded, masked or fully visible	Sometimes dressed in clothes worn by persons in 'authority'	
Effects on women	No access to milk, so income diminishes. Social obligation such as marriage preparations for daughters and expectations from in-laws reduced. Girls are abducted&/or raped. Trauma of loss and of violation is palpable.	No access to milk, so income diminishes Income from farming is diminished Trauma of loss is palpable	
State response	Silence. No visitation or commiseration. Any Fulani caught with machete or firearm is arrested and assumed to be a cattle rustler.	Silence from authorities. No visitation. Discriminatory. Fulani feel defenceless against the state.	

Nature of the effects of AB on particular aspects of women's lifestyle and livelihoods

The Fulani live in 'Rugas' or small settlements comprising thatched round mud huts with hard packed floors. They usually contain basic items like a wooden bed with a mat, floor spread or a mattress (where it is affordable), calabashes and other crockery. Sheep and goats are considered 'women's assets'. They are mostly owned by women and reared by them, although male members of their families, and occasionally their daughters take them to graze along with the cattle. From the sheep, women get milk and meat on special occasions such as a naming ceremony. The goats are sold for income and to meet other needs.

The cattle, which are usually referred to as 'men's assets,' are held in trust by the men. The women however get milk and butter from them for sale and household consumption. Where the Fulani have farms, the women get millet, which is used for fura (gruel), sold with nono (milk). With armed banditry, the cattle (which usually provide the manure used to grow the crops) are in short supply. Without the cattle, there is no *organic manure* and no money to buy inorganic fertilizer to grow cereals. Furthermore, there are changes in social obligation such as marriage preparations for daughters and expectations from in-laws.

Armed banditry has ensured that family income is reduced. Accordingly, social demands are more modest. When a Fulani girl is about to get married, the mother's kith and kin contribute '*kayan daki*' or a marriage trousseau, which includes bed and bedding, enamel and calabashes. The groom provides a set of boxes with clothes and beauty accessories (including jewellery). But, that is changing. The priority in marriages since 2013, when communities began to experience banditry, has been to focus on securing the ties of kinship and friendship without any expenses that cannot be afforded.

The Birom live in mud or cement brick built houses, roofed with corrugated iron or thatch. They have houses spread in rows within a close-knit community, with a centre where the community could gather under a tree. They are predominantly farmers who grow cabbage (and other vegetables), Irish potato, pepper and tomato.

There are inevitably changes in the lifestyle of women as a result of armed banditry. Fulani girls are abducted and raped by armed bandits (Kaduna). When they go to collect broomsticks by the riverside, Fulani women are killed (Bassa community). Although we could not establish the extent to which AB affects communities, the trauma of loss and violation was palpable during the interviews. We learnt that many Fulani are migrating out of Plateau state and settling somewhere near Bauchi, which means that *internal displacement* is in progress as a result of AB, and it has very negative consequences in rural areas.

Movement is restricted to places considered 'safe'. Women and children cannot leave the villages after dark or attempt to return to it. The children (youth) have less rest and leisure time, because in addition to their regular chores, they must stand guard around the clock to protect the community. There are some communities in Plateau where no one can enter except if they wish to risk death (Respondent, Plateau state). There are fewer chickens and no goats or sheep to rear. Loss of income from milk means that women are more destitute. While in the field, we saw first-hand the *feminisation of poverty*. Loss of income from farming reduces purchasing power and affects the health of the family. A female respondent said:

Those who gave us before can no longer do so. Who do we look up to but the Almighty (Female respondent, Plateau state).

Women who sold kerosene and trailer loads of firewood before the conflict can no longer sell these commodities (Plateau north). Armed banditry has ensured that relations are severed between women who used to share household utensils and relate in closely knit groups.

Responding to the question: what can women do to help bring the community together again?

Birom women think that it will be difficult because: *Now we don't relate anymore when we go to the market. The Fulani women look away and we do the same. We used to live together...* (Birom woman, Plateau north).

The communities are on war alert, and trust is scarce. The youth fear the call for any peace meeting from government. A Birom youth said during an FGD:

Any day there is a call for peace we will prepare for war because it will most likely be an ambush (Barikin Ladi LGA).

The community fears exploitation as was said during the women's FGD in Barikin Ladi:

Jamma sun zama kasuwa arika chiniki damu—people are now like commodity, others bargain away their rights and they are exploited (Old Birom woman)

Psychological effect of Armed Banditry on women and girls

I wish I were dead before I had to witness this. (Women in Fulani Village in Chikun LGA)

It is common folklore that the Fulani are besotted with their cattle. They are not just viewed as economic assets; they are also cultural symbols of wealth and status. They beget respect for the owner. The bigger the herd, the wealthier and more respected the family and the prouder their women.

Another subjective perception of the Fulani is that they love their cattle more than their children. This may be borne out of the open affection and communication, which is apparent between the Fulani and their cattle and the fact that they would send their children into the bush with the cattle. They however love their children more than the cattle. A respondent told us what she said to her attackers one gruesome night: *Please take the cattle but spare our children.*

They locked all women up in their rooms, beating the adolescent boys and men. A father who lost over 300 cattle in a single attack said to the team: *Who is talking about animals where our sons have been killed?*

So, it may be deduced that the Fulani love their children **and** their cattle. Such that: *If the Fulani loses one cow it is as if his life is about to end. Imagine losing an entire herd. I tell you those people are no longer themselves they are in a trance* (Kaduna state guide).

This was corroborated by a response to the question 'what can government do to help you?' Respondents proposed access to credit to enable them to procure farm inputs, domestic animals and

birds. Out of the profit, it is anticipated that they could buy cattle stock to re-commence rearing because: *Shanu shine rumbun Fulani — The Fulani's cattle is their store of wealth.*

The trauma is therefore at multiple levels:

Loss of sons and husbands, the stress of nursing battered sons back to health, dealing with social and physical pain of rape and sense of economic hopelessness, hunger, the anger of being rendered destitute and feeling neglected by government (Chikun LG guide).

Men had tears in their eyes and women's voices shook when they spoke and they sometimes lapsed into silence to manage the apparent trauma. One woman said: *Here are children, women and cattle gone. If you are not careful, you lose your life (from worrying about the situation) and still the cattle will not be back. We have children who are orphans, and there is no assistance for them from any source.* (Kasiri village, Kagarko LGA).

Coping strategies

The Birom women still farm, but on a smaller scale on farm lands closer to home. The Fulani women say they have little or no milk source left, so they are unable to sell much milk or obtain millet from the farmers to make the gruel that goes with the milk because there is no capital to buy inorganic fertilizer and no cattle to give organic manure. They have begun seeking alternative livelihoods. In both states, Fulani women go to the nearby bush to collect *broom-sticks* which are made into bunches and sold to bulk buyers. Education now has more relevance, because community members can earn income as teachers, if/when there is relative confidence to venture away from the house. Education is also seen as important because it ensures a bright future for their children, with the possibility of multiple sources of income.

They want to acquire vocational skills. The Fulani women complained of skills acquisition opportunities not reaching them. One respondent said: *A woman can do business in her house, she need not go out. I know how to go from Ruga to Ruga to sell my wares. I just need the skills* (Kuwait Barikin Ladi LGA).

Many residents now have weapons. We were told that after the retired soldiers equipped the Birom with guns, they in turn sold them to the Fulani when they were broke (Plateau state guide).

Government and State institutions' role

There are three points of possible connection between the community and the institutions of government. They are local, state and federal governments; the Police; and the Military.

Government

The Communities in Kaduna were of the view that banditry is not limited to just cattle rearing communities. To them, it is a symbol of the collapse of security nation-wide. A respondent said in response to the question, 'what do you see as possible solutions to banditry?': *Why, even those in the cities (privately owned farms) are not spared. Those at the top are equally not spared (alluding to the Vice President's farm that was raided). So how will we in the bush be spared? How can we be singled out and protected* (Chikun and Kagarko LGAs).

Communities feel that there may be no solution in sight, and that the government is only interested in palliatives. There appears to be a scathing view of government as can be deduced from the following narrative: During one of the FGDs, a report was given of a meeting organized by the government, which was attended by the Governor and *Miyetti Allah*, an umbrella organization for Fulani herd communities. At the meeting, respondents said the federal

government promised communities surveillance equipment that would enable them to track animals when stolen. An elderly Fulani man was said to have responded to the proposal as follows:

Well, if [the] government truly has this effective surveillance weapon, then they should first use it to rescue the Chibok girls after which we would have no doubt about its efficacy.' (Chikun LGA)

The Police

The Police are the closest law enforcement and protection agency to the people. They have offices and outposts within the communities. Their duties include safe guarding the rule of law, peace and order in communities; and protecting lives and properties (Kagarko Policeman).

The communities are of the opinion that the Police are not able to perform these duties effectively (Plateau State). They are considered *ill equipped* and *ill prepared* to tackle the bandits. Although there were no cases of banditry reported to the police which did not elicit the visit of policemen/women to the site, the concern of the villagers is that the Police preferred to *choose the safer options* such as showing up at the scene after the bandits had left, or tracking the bandits on the highway rather than through the forest or bush (Kaduna State and Barikin Ladi, Plateau state). Also, they sometimes demand money before they act (Kaduna), or may have no ammunition (Plateau).

We were informed that bandits would usually herd the animals through bush paths rather than highways. In some cases the police would engage in an exchange of gun fire with the bandits but then run out of ammunition and abandon pursuit; or they may tell the community upon report of an ongoing banditry exercise that the informants need to return to the community and confirm the

bandits are still raiding before they (police) would set out! (Jema'a LG, Kaduna state). In Barikin Ladi LGA, the Police Community Relations Committee (PCRC), of the Special Task Force (STF), which meets with various stakeholders every month, was commended for encouraging peaceful coexistence in the community.

When researchers spoke with the Police, some problems they face were unearthed, including lack of vehicles in good condition. In fact, some newly acquired vehicles are not suitable for the pursuit of bandits—they have a maximum speed limit of 100km per hour! The Police said that the bandits were sometimes equipped with weapons and vehicles more sophisticated than theirs. Moreover, the fact that the Police are not trained to track animals in the bush and do not have modern tracking equipment is a major problem in the fight against armed bandits.

The police complained that sometimes reports of armed banditry were made after the raiders left the community, so making it difficult to track them. One of the police officers we spoke to anonymously was concerned about the need to improve the welfare package of the rank and file of police forces and provide good and strong work tools.

He further posed the following question: *When will democracy take care of us?* (Field Research 2014)

The Military

In Kaduna state, the Military were regarded as faithful partners in the fight against bandits. When the Military was deployed to guard the communities in 2013, armed banditry reduced but they have since been withdrawn. The communities fear the return and

possible escalation of cattle rustling. In Plateau state, it was alleged that findings from the various spaces of dialogue revealed that *soldiers sometimes fuelled the crises* by setting citizens' houses on fire (Plateau).

The women's primary demand of government can be summarised as follows:

- Restoration of peace and security for their families and properties
- Provision of jobs for their children—the youth
- Access to capital which can help them earn a living and enhance their livelihood.

Sources of support for female victims of Armed Banditry

This was difficult to evaluate given the following observations:

- Communities allege a lack of police capacity to respond effectively in situations of armed banditry.
- The Police lament their handicap due to weak work tools and poor welfare package.
- Communities are unable to talk about rape openly and may not do so even if counsellors were to visit the village because trauma management begins with an acknowledgment of trust in the source of support and must be done within certain cultural frameworks.
- When soldiers were deployed to troubled communities, banditry was halted. They have now been withdrawn, so communities fear a return of 'intense' armed banditry.

However, responding to the question 'what is your source of support?' Some respondents said: *The grace of God is our only source of support. We have no pillar but the Almighty.*

There is greater reliance on family and kinship ties where persons who still have some means of income give support to their kith and kin that have been affected by AB (Igabi LGA KII, Kaduna state). The apparent inadequacy of this arrangement is illustrated by the situation of children who were in school but are now out of school in some of the villages visited in Kaduna state because the parents can no longer afford the school fees which may be only a sum of six thousand naira (N6,000) per annum.

Communities have constituted themselves into Vigilante groups and are armed (Religious leader, Jos North LGA). Each community has its defined boundaries where persons from the opposing ethnic group or religion cross at their own peril. Children of different backgrounds have their own schools and even play in distinctive football teams. There is no more learning or playing together (Plateau State).

Some NGOs, such as Pastoral Resolve (PARE) in Kaduna and Apurimac Onlus in Plateau; and Development partners such as EU, UNDP and Mercy Corps are working with communities on peace building and livelihood matters. In some of the communities we visited, they have introduced women and male youth to new skills in new enterprises. These organizations share with the communities the need to have hope and perseverance alongside the economic support they offer them. This strategy was acknowledged as reassuring to the concerned communities and opens their minds to the possibility of sustainable peace amidst increased security.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Drawing upon the findings, there are certain analytical conclusions that can be drawn from the research. They border on the issues of perception of the state by the citizens, the challenge of citizenship, role of religious groups and the political economy of conflict. These issues are examined below and they inform the recommendations proffered.

Perceptions of the state as weak and unresponsive

Respondents perceive of government at the state level as an entity that does not care about its citizens; is discriminatory in its application of justice; and instigates conflict. It was particularly shocking that in all Fulani communities visited, we were told that the team was the first outside body (not family or friend) to visit after their encounter with bandits. They had never received a government visitor before. Respondents told us that the effort we made in visiting the communities was the main reason why we were able to extract information from them.

The Challenge of Citizenship

There are fundamental issues of citizenship and self-determination that need to be resolved to adequately provide safe spaces where the rights of girls and women and their communities can be protected and affirmed. In Plateau State, the narrative of a youth leader in Jos South LGA shows that the 'non indigenes' are seen as a people who wants to take away what belonged to the 'indigenes' forebears — the land; so they (the 'indigenes') will in turn take away what belongs to the Fulani's forebears — the cattle.

In Plateau state, researchers had the clear impression that each community has 'an agenda' to annihilate the other. The Fulani and Hausa communities think that cattle rustling and the killing of their youth was part of a larger 'agenda' to encourage Fulani migration

away from the state. Fulani in Kaduna also hold such a view. The Birom community also spoke of an 'agenda' of the Fulani to take over their land (Field research, 2014). Of course, there are some others who think cattle rustling was a combined action of hooligans who band together across ethnic groups (Birom, Hausa and Fulani). Some youths acknowledged that their forebears, the Birom and Fulani in Barikin Ladi LGA of Plateau State lived together, side by side, in harmony. Trade by barter led to the Birom keeping cattle and the Fulani farming. Inter-marriage has also occurred between the two ethnic groups, including the Hausa. We were also told that xenophobia and religious intolerance exist in contemporary times... Birom Christian women, who are in the majority, ostracise Birom Muslim women, calling them 'boko haram'.

What then is responsible for conflict? An FGD with Birom youth gave these possible explanations:

- The Fulani want to take away the land that belongs to the Birom ancestors. They have changed the names of some locations, for example 'fasta' to 'Tafawa'
- The Fulani population has increased in recent times. They therefore have more cattle and more need for grazing and farmland, and are working to capture more land.
- The Fulani do not ask permission from the Birom like they used to do before settling down on any land. In contemporary times, they 'grab' land by force. They don't respect the Chiefs and the *Gwoms* (Birom for chief).

As for the Fulani in Plateau state, they in turn believe that Birom attack them because:

- The Birom covet the wealth that comes from their vast cattle herd
- The Birom want to capture the vast tracts of land which the Fulani have bought. The Fulani were now forced to flee.

- The Birom want to practice xenophobia because they (the Fulani) are of a different religion. The result is they are denied access to indigeneship forms and their children cannot enjoy affirmative action like the 'indigenes' as regards scholarship, admission into schools and employment.

It is worthy of note that Plateau state only serves as a litmus test for the consequences of the 'indigene/settler' divide. Identity issues abound in all other states of Nigeria. As a route towards true nationhood and lasting peace, constitutional amendment will be required to provide a legal framework for citizenship in Nigeria (Oluyemi-Kusa, 2008). The issue of citizenship particularly affects women, especially where they may have married men from states other than that considered their father's state of origin.

Religious leaders and the crises of trust

Another dimension to the crisis is the role religious leaders are supposed to play (Jos North, Jos South and Barikin Ladi LGAs). On both sides, (Christian and Muslim) it is alleged that the institutions of worship may be encouraging retaliation, which feeds the cycle of conflict and further destruction of lives and properties. The utterances coming from the pulpits may be instigating violence.

If they have lived together in harmony, why the conflict now?

The Hausa who are 'neutral' on the issue of cattle rustling (since they have no cattle and are not in conflict with either Birom or Fulani) were of the view that the solution to the problem is 'at once simple and complex.' The Birom should leave the Fulani cattle alone and the Fulani should leave the Birom farms alone—then there will be peace. The Hausa also suggest that for sustainable peace to reign, there should be an end to discrimination and xenophobia towards persons considered to be non-indigenes (Respondents' advice).

A Hausa community leader said:

From time immemorial, we never thought that the Fulani and Hausa would be friends because the Fulani have always lived in the bush and their neighbours were Birom. The Fulani lived in the bush for their cattle and the Birom for farming. The relationship with the Hausa and Fulani in Plateau is latter day development (Hausa community, Barikin Ladi LGA).

Bandits as thieves and political actors

It is necessary to take cognisance of the types and causes of banditry so as to proffer the appropriate solutions. There are economic and socio-political dimensions to banditry. There are instances where banditry is viewed as perpetuated by bad eggs from Birom, Hausa, or Fulani communities—they form 'coalitions' to steal and share the loot. In Kaduna, we were told that the bandits spoke fluent Fulfulde and Hausa, implying that they came from within the community. This was why the fear of victimisation was palpable as respondents were of the opinion that there were moles within the communities who report citizens that give out information on the bandits.

Some of the women in Plateau particularly lamented the role *drugs* are playing in facilitating and emboldening young people to engage in 'bad daring acts'. We were told that the youth who take hard drugs cut across all ethnic groups. They buy the drugs from 'reputable drug stores' which sell them much like they do with over the counter medication. Some of the drugs are in fact sold over the counter, and they are abused only when an overdose is ingested. Drugs fuel the cycle of poverty and conflict as those addicted use their meagre income to procure drugs and could stoke the embers of conflict when 'high'. The mothers interviewed believe that employment would serve as the antidote to drug use as the children will be gainfully employed and can be better guided by their parents.

Where it is political, attack is largely by youths (young men) from both sides that perpetuate acts of violence against the communities. It is important to note that in all the conversations with either Birom or the Fulani in Barikin Ladi and Bassa LGAs, in Plateau state, no side owned up to terrorizing the other. It was more of one side accusing the other of acts of violence. This may arise from the fear of betrayal or an awareness of the consequences of being caught owning up to acts of violence. In Kaduna, there was concern about giving out information on banditry experiences, as those who do may become victims of attack afterwards.

In a curious case in Jema'a local government, a widow whose cattle was stolen received a phone call through which she was asked to pay a ransom of the sum of N360,000. The cattle were returned so she could sell some and pay the sum given as ransom. After payment, researchers learnt that the remaining cattle were again stolen by the same gang of rustlers because they alleged that the authorities were notified of the transaction, which led to the arrest and imprisonment of one of the kingpins. They put out a death warrant on the head of the suspected whistle blower. Though we learnt that the 'boss-man' was arrested on other charges, the cattle were never returned. The widow, a Fulani woman who lives in the city, inherited the cattle from her late husband and was keeping it in trust for her children. She now can no longer pay their fees and is making do with the provision of grinding services to the community around her home.

The Role of Oil

We were told that oil prospecting is at an advanced stage in Plateau state. It is in Wase LGA, which is a predominantly Hausa community, that oil has been struck. We learnt that the state government was keen to begin drilling for oil and so wanted the

Hausa out of the way, hence the attacks.

There were allegations that previous commissions of enquiry indicted the governor for complacency or inciting comments or discriminatory actions that further fuelled the crises and discrimination against those considered non-indigenes (Respondents Bassa, Jos South-Rukuba and Barikin Ladi Oct 2014).

We were told: *Once there is discrimination, sustaining peace may be difficult.*

In reality though, petroleum prospecting is on the exclusive list and is the prerogative of the federal government, so it is doubtful that the state government can commence drilling. But the perception is there, and it is fuelled by the ethnic tone to the attacks.

Prospecting for oil may be a good thing if it is true that Plateau state has it in commercial quantities. Vested economic interests may force the ruling class to come together and work out an agreement around citizenship based on residency, which could significantly douse tensions.

Impact of conflict on self-esteem, psyche and livelihoods

There is a keen awareness of the need for peace as a precursor to every other aspiration in life. Education is seen as a way out of the poverty quagmire because it provides other avenues for livelihood through teaching and provision of alternative paths for children, especially the Fulani's. Girls and boys, both go to school. In some communities visited, they lamented the inability of children to go to school because they fear attacks and/or they no longer could afford to pay the school fees, which, as mentioned earlier, are as little as N6000 per annum (Chikun and Kagarko LGAs respectively).

Of concern to the researchers was the absence of *trauma counselling* or its recognition as an integral part of resolving the kind of pain associated with loss of lives and properties. Some NGOs focus on livelihood matters, but the counselling dimension needs to be emphasized as a youth told us: *It eats you deep inside* (Jos South Youth Leader).

Hali na rashin yafewa juna shi yake kawo wa maimaitawa — The act of not forgiving each other is what feeds the cycle of violence (Elderly woman, Barikin Ladi LGA)

Youth bulge/energy and the lingering conflict

The Birom, Fulani and Hausa elders said they cannot guarantee control over their youth. When they consider themselves sufficiently provoked, attacks and retaliation may begin again. This should be cause for concern. It also underscores the role of the youth in conflict mitigation. A Jarawa youth said:

Jos crises ended not because government or development partners came in to put an end to it but because we the youth got tired of it all — we were tired of the deaths, killings, fear, pain, tears uncertainty and began to talking to one another (Youth, Jos South LGA).

The lingering conflict to be feared is not that borne out of cattle rustling or armed banditry, but that derived from the conceptualization of citizenship, self-determination and the zeal to express political rights. In Plateau state, the rustling of cattle is in fact considered a consequence of the challenge of citizenship. The Hausa and Fulani communities are excluded from socio-political benefits such as jobs, education and political appointments, which might lead to unexpected conflict.

A Political Economy (PE) Analysis

A PE analysis is called for to fully understand the underlying causes of armed banditry, either as a pure act of theft or as one meant to frighten a group into submission and subsequent migration. What or who are the sources of arms? What is the bigger agenda, of which armed banditry may just be a manifestation?

The Birom we spoke to didn't accede to the fact that the Fulani were asked to leave because they are 'strangers'. The only allusion to a difference in status was the words that a youth said during the FGD: *This land belonged to my father and his father before him.* There were allegations that the Fulani are expansionist by nature, procuring land and denying the Birom land to farm.

Such allegations of *irredentism* should be viewed against the backdrop of the challenge of access to grazing land for the Fulani on the one hand, and farmland for the Birom on the other. In Kaduna, designated grazing lands are filled up. An example was given of Laduga Grazing Reserve in Kachiya LG, in Kaduna which is unable to accommodate the needs of the large size of cattle and the families that own them.

In different conversations, the Fulani said they were not interested in politics. A respondent from Bassa LG said:

We have educated children but we have never sought for even councillorship position. We pay tax, we pay jangali ["tax on livestock"]. Our cattle give meat and milk to the citizenry. They give manure to the farmers. Why are they after us after hundreds of years of peaceful co-existence...They refuse our children indigeneship form (Bassa LG, Plateau State).

The Hausa community corroborated this perspective. The Hausas believe they are more politically inclined to compete for power than the Fulani.

A Jarawa youth in Jos south LGA said:

Give the Fulani his transistor radio and endless bush with his cattle and he is a happy man. He does not need your roads, or your electricity (Jarawa Youth, Jos South LGA)

There are however communities that lament the absence of government, where in over 30 years, no services have been enjoyed, aside from the collection of refuse. There is no good source of water, electricity is epileptic, and no access to solar energy. This situation affects the quality of life and increases women's burden. Even relief materials provided after the 2010 crisis were allegedly 'distributed in a skewed manner'. This is the lamentation of the community considered to be 'non indigenes' in Plateau state.

The genesis of the 2001 Jos riots was an 'indigene's' refusal to accept a 'Hausa non indigene' as Chair of the Poverty Alleviation Programme (PAP). Shortly afterwards the case of a young Christian girl violating prayer space during a Muslim Friday prayer led to tension, causing the death of many people and huge loss of property.

This was the beginning of a call for 'non indigenes' to leave Plateau State. This situation was limited to Jos South LGA. Upon receipt of the information that 'non indigenes' were killing 'indigenes' in some parts of the state, the conflict proliferated to other parts of the state (Youth Leader, Jos South).

The ruling class/conflict merchants

Those considered 'conflict merchants' are said to be behind incidents of cattle rustling, murder and arson. They were identified by members of the community—religious leaders, politicians and wealthy members of various ethnic groups. Some of them are in government or in established businesses. For the purpose of this research, they are referred to as members of the ruling class or conflict merchants. There were allegations by Fulani that the ruling class was involved in the arming of communities that attack them. The allegation was that some people were buying weapons and arming the bandits to terrorise the Fulani in order to dissuade them from any desire to remain in Plateau state. A respondent said:

Where a man does not have N50,000 to his name, where would he find N350,000 to buy an AK 47 rifle? If you gave him that kind of money won't he use it for his immediate need instead? (Plateau state community).

Role of Non-Governmental Actors

Pastoral Resolve (PARE)'s work in Kaduna has been commended. In fact, PARE's guidance in the field was very useful during our fieldwork. Apurimac Onlus—an Italian Nigerian partnership, UNDP and Mercy Corps have also been commended in Plateau state. The peace manual developed in Jos with the collaboration of peacebuilding NGOs and the EU, and implemented by Apurimac shows the role of young children in building a culture of peace through mutual respect and understanding. It tells why all should abhor violence and respect the human rights of women, girls and people in general. The manual also teaches how to express needs in ways that lead to positive responses. *Women Without Wars* and other widows' associations struggle to preach peace and provide alternative livelihoods.

Inappropriate venues for peace fora

Respondents would rather have peace fora held in the villages where the conflicts occur, rather than in cities away from the people who really need to hear the message. According to them, some of the 'armchair analysts' who preside over the affairs of warring rural communities in posh hotels in the cities have never been to see the citizens they are pontificating about. The NGOs however informed us that the issue of safety of life was a serious consideration in determining the location of peace interventions in crisis situations.

RECOMMENDATIONS & POLICY OPTIONS

Following the findings and analysis, the following recommendations are proffered:

Change the narrative from exclusion to inclusion: Government policy and pronouncements should consider residency as the basis of citizenship. The National Assembly should legislate on this issue. This entails:

- Giving *citizenship opportunities* as symbolized by access to *residency certificates* to all who live in Plateau state and other parts of Nigeria.
- Setting aside *grazing reserves* and *cattle routes* for herds communities
- Economic opportunities for all, regardless of ethnic group or religion
- Rights should go with responsibility. Therefore, all stakeholders should agree to a stiff penalty as the consequence of farm vandalisation by cattle.

Cattle movement should be eventually phased out: In this regard, the National Economic Council (NEC), at its October 2014 meeting, announced that the government has resolved to gradually phasing out the movement of cattle from one place to the other, and restrict

them to grazing reserves instead. All grazing reserves; and cattle routes already gazetted and encroached upon by farmers should be retrieved.

The struggle for land and water resources between farmers and pastoralists should be resolved. The Ministries of Water Resources and Agriculture, in collaboration with other stakeholders, need to look into this issue.

The influx of nomadic pastoralists into Nigeria should be controlled. The Ministry of Interior should interrogate the matter in sync with relevant Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) and neighbouring countries.

Government presence should be felt in the rural areas: Many respondents were of the opinion that armed bandits traverse the length and breadth of rural areas with impunity because they can operate unhindered due to minimal or no 'government presence' at this level. Local government, being the level of governance nearest to the people, needs to be strengthened, since most rural areas are located within particular LGAs.

Constitutional reform: Encourage the National Assembly to review the Constitution to recognise residency as the basis for citizenship in Nigeria.

Employment for Youth: Programmes that give training, capital and mentoring to young people and women, such as Youth Enterprise With Innovation in Nigeria (YouWIN) and Growing Girls and Women in Nigeria (GWIN), need to be made more visible at the state level.

Access to credit for women and men: This should be provided in a timely manner and in adequate quantity. Opportunity to be part of the government e-wallet agro scheme, under the Agricultural Transformation Agenda of the federal government should be extended to survivors of armed banditry.

Awareness campaigns: Use leaders from warring communities to speak to their people to enable citizens to accept co-existence and mutual respect as the basis for living together successfully. To demonstrate the commencement of mutual coexistence, dialogue fora, which bring together women and the youth from both sides, should be encouraged in Plateau and Kaduna states.

A role for traditional and religious leaders: They need to lead the change they want to see and propagate the new message of peace and citizenship both in religious spaces and in social interaction. Leaders should incorporate alternative dispute resolution methods, especially *mediation* into the methods of resolving conflict in their domain. This is relevant when there are accusations and counter-accusations about the true identity of the armed bandits and the negative effects of their activities on the populace. *Traditional methods of conflict resolution* abound in every domain, including Kaduna and Plateau states. They can be resuscitated and applied for sustainable peaceful co-existence.

The era of impunity for conflict merchants should end with stiff punishment stipulated for the identified sponsors of conflicts and those who allow themselves to be used as willing tools to perpetuate RB and similar conflict-igniting endeavours. The *National Policy on Migration* (2012), domiciled in the National Commission for Refugees, Migrants and Internally Displaced Persons (NCFRMI) contains some recommendations in this regard.

There should be enlightenment about legal options to seek redress for victims of rape as a result of armed banditry. The National Commission for Human Rights (NCHR), the Nigeria Bar Association (NBA) and the International Federation of Women Lawyers (FIDA) should look into the matter.

Citizens, especially women, should be trained to defend themselves against attacks by armed bandits and rapists. The suggestion here is for Nigeria to have her own version of the Women Defense Institute (WDI) for capacity building.

The Police and other security agencies should be better equipped and given enhanced welfare package to be able to improve on their response time and efficiency in the pursuit of rural bandits. There should be *customized training for Special Forces* that deal with the *retrieval of stolen cattle* in rural areas. Research has shown that the Police are yet to be able to handle issues of armed banditry effectively. They should also be trained to apply the UN standards for *rules of engagement* with armed bandits and other criminal gangs.

The availability of SALWs should be regulated: Small arms and light weapons have been tagged *Africa's weapons of mass destruction*. In this regard, the Inspector General of Police gave a directive on November 12, 2014 for the mop up of SALWs. This is a step in the right direction, and it should be pursued to a logical conclusion. These weapons are too many in circulation. They are used by armed bandits and other criminal gangs.

Strengthen the capacity of farmers' & herders' associations to protect their farmlands and cattle. Local and state governments should assist in building the capacity of the 'vigilante arm' of such associations.

Trauma management: Trauma and psychological succour must be provided for survivors of conflict of any form, and be linked to economic opportunities. This is required to keep idle minds and hands busy and to douse tensions. It is not enough for the Federal government to provide blankets and buckets as 'relief materials' through the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA). NGOs and CBOs should collaborate with the Federal and state governments to make trauma management of victims of AB more effective.

School attendance and curriculum review: Education for all should be firmly pursued. Children from different ethnic and religious backgrounds have to return to learning from the same shared classroom space. The peace manual prepared by Apurimac Onlus with the support of the EU in Plateau state is a tool that should be further studied, revised and popularized in all Nigerian states. All children must go to and finish a course in school. Only Adults should be put in charge of cattle herding. They have more maturity and ability to control large herds of cattle than children. More states should have adequate legislation as regards compulsory Primary and Secondary education.

Internally displaced persons (IDPs)as a result of armed banditry need to be adequately taken care of. Special attention should be given to the protection of women, children and other vulnerable groups in IDP camps. NCFRMI, NEMA and the Institute for Peace & Conflict Resolution (IPCR) should work in collaboration with other stakeholders to care for IDPs.

Role for development partners: Development partners and NGOs have to continue to play the role of honest brokers and facilitators in the following ways:

- Inter links between communities should include joint peacebuilding project design and implementation by communities working together, e.g. rebuilding one house at a time, bringing the children back to mixed cultural schools, etc.
- Curriculum development and application: Adapt the peace studies Apurimac peace club manual for all schools in Nigeria, especially in conflict prone areas. UNICEF and NSRP have similar programs for establishing peace clubs in schools.
- Skills: Vocational studies should be accompanied by start-up funds and mentoring.
- Focus should be on the youth leading ideas for change that impact their lives positively. They should be supported with regard to the monitoring and evaluation (M&E) of their on-going projects.
- Long term support should be committed to attaining sustainable peace. The road to peace is a journey. In this regard, the setting up of a *peace fund* by the Federal and state governments may be necessary.
- National level advocacy for a constitutional amendment in favour of residency as against indigeneity as the basis for citizenship.

Giving Back to the Community

The '*do-no-harm-but-leave-good-behind creed*' is a perspective that demands that the research team leaves the community better off than when it met it. This requires giving back to the community where research is conducted. Some practical steps in this regard are:

Researchers should share the recommendations in this report cautiously with the community and acknowledge contributors without mentioning their names because of the fear of reprisal mentioned earlier. *Communities should be linked up with opportunities for self-development such as scholarships, farming inputs and skills.

ACRONYMS

AB - Armed Banditry

ADR – Alternative Dispute Resolution

CBO – Community Based Organization

EU – European Union

FGD – Focal Group Discussion

IDPs – Internally Displaced Persons

IPCR – Institute for Peace & Conflict Resolution

KII – Key Informant Interview

LGA – Local Government Area

NCFRMI – National Commission for Refugees, Migrants & Internally Displaced Persons

NEMA – National Emergency Management Agency

NGO – Non Governmental Organization

NSRP – Nigeria Stability & Reconciliation Programme

PARE – Pastoral Resolve

RTP – Responsibility to Protect

SALWs – Small Arms & Light Weapons

UNDP – United Nations Development Programme

UNICEF – United Nations Children's Programme

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APPENDIX

Appendix 1: Field work template

Total number of guides: 5; Total number of respondents: 135 (See breakdown in last column of table below)

States Kaduna and Plateau Oct 28 – Nov 1, 2014									
S/N	Name of LGA official work	Target Communities,	Target Population,	No. of Key Informant Interviews (KIs)	Date(s) KIs and FGDs were conducted	No. of Focus Groups Discussions (FGDs)	Date armed banditry	Number of cattle stolen known to respondents	Total No interviewed
Kaduna									
	Chikun	Fale	Fulani families women's groups		28 Oct 2014	3		70, 77 37 cattle 16 sheep	17
	Hayinnallam Garba	youth farmers cattlerearers Community members		2					2, 8
	Igabi	Sarki Police LG officials Elected reps Adolescent Girls		2	28 th Oct 2014				2comm leaders and business people
		Business men Fulani displaced families							

Kagariko	Kasiri			29 th oct	3	27 April 2014
	Kwasau - Tinko					
Jena'a	Kario	Fulani displaced families	2	29 Oct		
	Jagindigari	Community leaders Business woman Traditional ruler				
	Plateau State					
Jos North LGA	Rukuba	Muslim leader	2	30 th Oct 2014	1	Mar 2014
		Youth group				
		Affected residents				
Jos South	NGOs	Apurimac Widows without War		30 th Oct		
Bassa	Dutsen Kura	Community leaders 'Ardos'	1	31 st Oct	1	Sept 2014

BarikinLadi	Rakung Village	Women's groups	1	1 st Nov	5	July 2014	12 youth 10 women group (W FGD)
	KatakonLadi	Youth Groups					Men 15 women 5 (WFGD)
	Kuwait / Rugan bet	Religious leaders Community leaders					youth 5 women 8 (WFGD)
					13		130 + 5 guides -= 135

Chapter **4**

SOCIAL IMPACT OF RURAL BANDITRY

**Kyari Mohammed
Chinyere Alimba**



Introduction

Rural banditry, often characterised by depredations, cattle rustling, armed robbery, kidnapping for ransom, and illegal toll collection at village markets have all become recurrent features of several communities in Northern Nigeria. The ongoing Boko Haram insurgency localised to north-eastern Nigeria has exhibited all of these features and more, like the Robinson Crusoe style of rural banditry. Bandits easily have their way in unsecured environments.

Therefore, ungoverned or poorly governed rural areas are prone to banditry as this condition allows bandits relative freedom to roam around and prey on hapless, and unprotected citizens along the highways and rural roads where travel is cumbersome. Banditry is both a symptom and a cause of rural underdevelopment. Bandits are persons usually perceived by state and society as outlaws but often seen differently in peasant communities. To peasants, they are often viewed as those able to defy a malfunctioning state system and able to right the wrongs of society.

Hobsbawn (1959), who proposed the construct “social bandit”, considers them as peasant outlaws who maintain some respect within peasant society. Bandits are sometimes considered by their people as heroes, champions, avengers, fighters for justice, perhaps

even leaders of liberation. In any case, they are seen as men to be admired, helped and supported. This description can best be understood within the purview of what Blumell (2007) described as “ancient banditry” or possibly “traditional banditry”, which thrived in preindustrial era. This form of banditry is totally different from the nature of modern banditry. Modern-day bandits are more vicious and destructive in nature. Social bandits today have the capacity to: **(i) strain government capacity by overwhelming police and legal systems through sheer audacity, violence, and numbers; (ii) challenge the legitimacy of the state; (iii) act as surrogate or alternative governments; (iv) dominate the informal economic sector, establishing small business and using violence and coercion to compete with legitimate business while avoiding taxes and co-opting government regulators; and (v) infiltrate police and non-governmental organisations to further their goals and in so doing, demonstrate latent political aims** (Sullivan, 2012). These groups are emerging as a serious impediment to democratic governance and sustainability around the world. In Nigeria, the activities of bandits have been so conspicuous in this era of democratic governance, particularly in Northern Nigeria. All parts of Northern Nigeria have experienced some form of banditry in the last twenty years and the situation seems to worsen progressively, perhaps proportionately to poor governance. The ongoing Boko Haram insurgency has transmuted from urban-based guerrilla warfare to rural banditry between 2009 and 2012. This has led to massive displacement of populations in several communities with attendant social, economic and demographic consequences.

In North-West and North-Central zones of Nigeria, there have been increasingly frequent clashes between farmers and grazers, and also between sedentary agriculturalists and nomadic herders; likewise, there has been a rise in the number of ethno-religious conflicts. It has

also become increasingly common for armed bandits disguised as Fulani herders to wreak havoc in several communities in the states of Zamfara, Kebbi, Sokoto, Katsina and Kaduna. This has stressed and strained relations between communities that have shared the same ecology, environmental resources, and habitat amicably for several generations. The state has apparently been unable to apprehend the criminals and resolve the crisis. As a result, bandits' unchecked criminality has led to the loss of lives and livelihoods, crippled economic activities, broken social cohesion, and led to massive displacement of peoples. The situation is virtually the same on the Jos plateau, in Nasarawa, Taraba, and Benue states, where intermittent clashes have continued unabated. The frequency of bandits' attacks, the intensity of the conflicts, and the loss of lives and property occasioned by such attacks in parts of the North makes this study highly imperative.

Research Problem

There seems to have been a rise in the frequency of armed banditry since Nigeria's return to civil rule in 1999. Neither central nor state-level governments' efforts to curb banditry have had significant impact, rather enormous amounts of public resources were wasted, which surely could have been put to better use. Therefore, there has been no coordinated attempt to contain banditry. The deleterious effects of the phenomenon are more pronounced in the North, particularly the North-West and North-Central zones of the country. The activities of bandits adversely affect many social groups, with certain occupational groups suffering most acutely. Occupational groups such as farmers, herders and traders experience greater harm both during and also in the aftermath. Furthermore, the bandits give no quarter to the women, children, markets and schools in communities attacked. Between 2013 and 2014, Kaduna State experienced incessant bandit attacks.

Table 1: Cases of banditry attacks in Kaduna State

DATE	PLACE/ IMPACT
14 th October, 2012	Bandits attack the Dogon Dawa village in Birnin Gwari district, killing 20 people.
8 th June, 2013	Bandits attack three villages in Birnin Gwari District, Kaduna State, killing seven residents and carting away over 300 cattle. The attack displaced 3,000 residents, who were sheltered at a primary school.
13 th June 2013	Bandits raid Kwasa -Kwasa village in Birnin Gwari district of Kaduna State, killing five people, including two soldiers and three local vigilantes.

Source: IRIN (2013)

Table 1 shows that between October 14, 2012 and June 13, 2013, bandits attacked villages in Birnin Gwari three times. These attacks culminated in various atrocities: killing and maiming of people, burning of a police station, carting away of hundreds of cattle, stealing of farm produce, and abducting women. Also, on July 7th 2014, Daily Trust reported that 'Birnin Gwari is notorious for gangs that attack vehicles and dispossess passengers of their moneys and valuables. In some cases, they abduct and rape female passengers. Residents of various villages in the area revealed that all their cows had been stolen by the bandits, giving rise to a situation that they say will affect food production in the area'.

Bandits' attacks were also recorded in Taraba. In February 2012, over 23,000 Fulani herders poured into Cameroon from Nigeria's north-eastern state of Taraba, following deadly clashes with farming communities. The gangs stole herds, looted and burned homes, and assault women during the attacks (IRIN, 2013). The report also revealed that many of the armed bandits were Fulanis, who had joined gangs involved in cross-border armed robbery and cattle rustling in Nigeria, Niger, Chad, Cameroon, Senegal, and Mail.

Clearly, bandits' attacks bear adverse social effects for both human and material resources in the targeted communities. Accordingly, this study attempts to assess the social impact of rural banditry in some communities in northern Nigeria.

Purpose of the Study

This study seeks to understand the upsurge of rural banditry in Northern Nigeria as a whole and as part of a general trend within the Nigerian state. Zeroing in on areas with recent histories of banditry, the study seeks to explore the social impact of banditry on communities in Northern Nigeria. Specifically, the study seeks to understand the social impact of rural banditry on people such as herders, women and children as well as social factors such as farming, markets and schools in affected communities. With those inquiries in mind, six research questions were formulated to guide the study.

1. How frequently have communities been exposed to banditry and which occupational groups suffered from bandits' activities?
2. In what ways has banditry affected farming in the targeted communities?
3. In what ways has banditry affected the herders in these communities?
4. How has banditry affected the operations of markets in the communities considered for the study?
5. What is the impact of banditry on women?
6. In what ways has banditry affected schools and children in the selected communities?

Scope of the Study

This study investigated the social impact of rural banditry in Northern Nigeria. The construct “social” encompasses a broad set of variables, that reflect the interrelations, connections and ties between human beings. Therefore, it becomes imperative to clearly indicate which aspect of “social impact” this study intends to cover. For the purposes of this research, social impact includes the plights of women, children, and herders in bandits' attacks, as well as social elements like school, farming, and market. The thematic areas designated to measure social impact of rural banditry are limited to the social variables highlighted above. The study used Taraba and Kaduna states as a case study, and three communities from each state were selected for a close study.

Literature Review

Conceptual Explanation of Bandit and Social Banditry

There has been some ambiguity in understanding banditry in both historic and contemporary terms. According to White (1981), a social bandit is a person who has been forced to become an outlaw by robbing from the rich and giving to the poor. This description portrays a bandit as someone preoccupied with seeking revenge on behalf of society's underclasses. This suggests that the poor state of the downtrodden can functionally be attributed to the attitudes and behaviours of the rich in a society. This is why bandits had robbed the rich to pay the poor. Following Blok (1972), bandits are persons regarded by the state as outlaws, but whose umbilical cord is tied to the moral order of the peasant community. Peasants therefore see bandits not as outlaws but rather as avengers. Rife (2011) writes that '[the] social bandit flaunts authority, lives with abandon, and champions the causes of the masses against elite oppression. In turn, the peasants aid, admire and protect the bandit from authorities'. These assertions are in accord with Hobsbawm's (1959) position that

social bandits are criminals and outlaws who operate outside of the state, but are perceived differently within peasant societies. This is what Blumell (2007) refers to as 'ancient banditry' or 'traditional banditry', which existed in the primitive or pre-colonial time. Modern banditry has changed in scope, nature and extent from historic antecedents. For Sullivan (2012), modern day bandits are criminally inclined insurgents and conventional terrorists. To Bunker and Sullivan (1998) bandits are 'gangs, criminals enterprises, insurgents or warlords who dominate social life and erode the bonds of effective security and the rule of law'. Williams (1998) conceived of bandits as transnational gangs and criminals who extend their reach and influence by co-opting individuals and organisations through bribery, coercion and intimidation; they do so in order to facilitate, enhance or protect their own activities. Sullivan (2012) argued plausibly that these groups are a cog in the wheel of democratic governance and free market economy.

Bandits in the era of globalisation therefore are more than mere rural gangs and criminals. Banditry is now a sophisticated enterprise with the capacity to challenge the authorities of weak and failing states. Studies have reported that banditry has metamorphosed into a network, exerting strong forces on remote areas and extending its tentacles to urban settings, the expansion has been accompanied by increasing level of violence. The scope, dimension and operational pattern of banditry have been enlarged around the world, and particularly in Africa in particular. According to Wartyo (2011), social banditry is the act of crime committed either by the residents of a village or people in the low economic and social strata in order to fulfil their basic needs. Such acts are response to the structural pressure, which deprives people of access to the natural resources that support their lives. It is an act of taking property by force or the threat of force. The act is often done by a group, usually of men

(Slatta, 1994). Banditry is not restricted to rural settings, it has also extended its tentacles to urban settings, incorporating women and children into it. Banditry has equally assumed a level of violence that is no longer constrained to targeting the rich, which has been its main focus in the past. Men, women, and children have become real targets of social bandits. Furthermore, both public and private social institutions are now included as targets of bandits.

Drivers of Social Banditry

The conditions necessary but not sufficient for banditry to thrive according to O'Malley (1979) include: (a) the presence of a conscious chronic class conflict; and (b) the absence of an effective institutionalised political organisation of the interests of the direct producers which would coordinate efforts to attain direct producers' commonly-sought ends. These ideas can be linked to Hobsbawm's (1969) suggestion that there are two primary conditions necessary for the existence of social banditry-a social environment constituted by a 'traditional peasantry' and a 'preindustrial' environment. Blumell, (2007) associated banditry with conditions of famine, economic instability, social distress, and general societal breakdown resulting from civil war or rebellion. Mburu (1999) considered social breakdown as a constant stimulus for brigandage within the state. Sztompka (1993) asserted that the emergence of bandits is greatest during periods of social crisis, when established ways of life, rule and laws are undermined, ruling elites are discredited, and traditions are rejected. Social instability, poverty, politics, corruption, and economic depression are factors that often precipitate banditry. These causes exist as a common denominator in most African societies including Nigeria. For instance, East, Central and North African countries are experiencing the invasion of bandits. West Africa is not spared from the orgy of bandits. It is clear from the review that banditry has bearing on the internal dynamics

of a society, occasioned by social, political, economic and environmental problems. These internal dynamics directly undermine security and stability, thereby enabling a multitude of criminal activities across societies.

Consequences of Banditry

Bandits are outlaws and fugitives in society. An outlaw is someone who failed to stand trial becoming a fugitive from the law (Manderson, 2003). Society may declare such a person wanted, dead or alive; that gives any member of society license to kill the declared bandit with impunity. That creates a state-endorsed radical inversion of the social contract (Manderson, 2003). Slatta (1994) was of the opinion that bandits usually operate in the shadows, often on the fringes of society, in geographically isolated areas. Those who operate on that platform are regarded as bad people, who have nothing good to offer society. Usher (1992) divided the costs that can be incurred from the activities of bandits into four categories. First is society's loss in terms of the opportunity cost of resources used by bandits. Second is the loss from the opportunity costs of the resources employed by members of society to fend off bandits. Third is the destruction of assets by acts of banditry. Fourth is the social deadweight loss incurred because members of society shift resources from production processes relatively vulnerable to theft to less vulnerable production processes. Curott and Fink (2010) further explore the havoc wrought by bandits upon individuals and societies. They argue that by stealing from a member of society, the bandit not only takes from the victim, (thereby breaking a widely-accepted rule against theft), but also offends the unwelcome authority that oversees law enforcement. The victim suffers from the losses caused by the act of banditry (Curott and Fink, 2010). Creveld (1991) posits that bandits can cause violence that governments find difficult to control, which leads to insecurity. According to Creveld

(1991), bandits can reach a level of violence resistance to governments intervention as regular armies perceptibly lose the initiative and monopoly of policing society.

Mburu (1999) opines that the motive for contemporary banditry is the pauperization of people living in a harsh physical environment. The activities of bandits are inhumane and lead to violence, creating insecurity challenges that encourage other forms of criminalities. The large scale effects of contemporary banditry cannot be justified on any ground when compared with what existed in the past, when bandits were feted as heroes by the peasant population, celebrated for their opposition to the oppression of the rich or predation of the government. Hobsbawm's (1959) thesis on banditry suggests that the link between banditry and violence is tied to terrorism, well rooted in peasant culture. Banditry as a social phenomenon adversely affects all spheres of life. Insecurity and instability easily surface in banditry inflicted societies.

Research Methodology

This is descriptive research. This allowed the researchers to develop the format for data collection from various locations in order to answers the research questions raised earlier. The study was carried out in Taraba and Kaduna States in Nigeria. Taraba state is located in the North Eastern part of Nigeria, while Kaduna State is situated in the North Western part. These states were chosen because of their prior history of banditry. The target population consisted of farmers, herders, village heads/chiefs, security agents, youth leaders and trade leaders. Purposive sampling technique was adopted to draw out samples from three selected communities in each of the two states used. In Taraba State, the communities selected were Ardo Kola, Lau and Zing. In Kaduna State, the communities used were Birnin Gwari, Jema'a and Kaura. Key

Informant Interview (KII) was used to collect data. A guide on the research subject matter was developed to guide researchers in framing their questions during interactions with potential informants. Researchers personally visited these locations to collect data. Two research assistants assisted the researchers in conducting the KII on the participants identified for the study. A total of 60 informants were interviewed in both Taraba and Kaduna States. 30 key informants were selected from each state and ten informants were chosen from each of the three communities selected in the states. The informants interviewed included farmers, herders, village heads/chiefs, security agents, youth leaders and trade leaders. The information gathered was analysed qualitatively, generating answers to the research questions raised in this study.

Analysis and Results

Frequency of Attack by Bandits and Occupational Groups that suffered from Banditry

In Taraba State, while key informants (KIs) reported that banditry attacks had occurred in their respective communities, they also noted that the frequency of banditry attacks varied between communities. Two interviewees, from Ardo Kola and Lau reported frequent bandits attacks in their areas, while the rest of the KIs indicated that banditry attacks occur only occasionally in their communities. One major consequence of attacks is the movement of people, either shifting within their communities or departing entirely. The movement, following attacks, varies dramatically by occupational distribution. All the KIs interviewed in Taraba State explained that banditry attacks often drive people's movements into and out of their communities. Farmers, herders and traders were identified by the KIs as the occupational groups that suffered most during banditry attacks in their communities. This is two-way traffic, while some people are moving out, there are cases of hunters

moving into the communities. This phenomenon also varies by place. While some interviewees claimed that they never witnessed anybody moving in as a result of the attacks over the years, the participants from Lau and Zing indicated that they had experienced movement of hunters into their territories following armed attacks. In Kaduna State, banditry attacks have occurred in Birnin Gwari, Jema'a and Kaura. The experiences of armed attacks vary, but most of those interviewed reported that armed attacks were usually carried out at homes, while few others indicated markets. In Birnin Gwari, six of the informants reported attacks taking place at home, while four reported attacks at the market. In Jema'a, seven of the KIs reported home attacks, while three stated that attacks occurred in the market. Six of the KIs interviewed in Kaura indicated that the attacks took place at homes, while four of the KIs reported attacks in the market. According to the KIs, the frequency of incidents varies by locality. Kaura was attacked more frequently than Birnin Gwari and Jema'a.

These attacks caused people to move in and out of their communities. The movement was tied to individuals' occupations. The participants interviewed at Birnin Gwari concurred that the attacks induced herders and traders to move out of their community, while hunters moved in. Similarly, KIs interviewed in Kaura reported that farmers, herders and traders moved out of their areas, while hunters moved in. In Jema'a, the KIs indicated that only traders moved out without any movement into their community. In summary, it is the farmers, herders and traders who most frequently suffer during attacks. The occurrences of armed banditry demonstrate the limited capacities and capabilities of the police, JTF and even vigilante groups to address the phenomenon. Given, hunters' movement into communities, while others are leaving, there should be attention given to the possibility of collaboration

between the hunters and mainstream security agents, in order to fully contain future attacks.

Effect of Banditry on Farming

Most inhabitants considered in our study are farmers. Their contribution to the overall progress and growth of the economy is large. As banditry primarily displaces farmers, it has an accordingly negative impact on farming and other associated economic activities. Following attacks, farming suffers for several farming seasons. In Taraba State, banditry led to stoppage of farming in all communities. The degree of an attack's impact varied by season, and by the rate at which normalcy returned to communities. In Ardo Kola, farming suffered greatly due to armed banditry; farming activity became impracticable for two or three farming seasons. One of the interviewees indicated that there was no farming for almost two years due to bandits' attacks on their community. The fear and tension created by the attackers drove people to leave farming for a period of time. Those interviewed in Lau revealed that farming had suffered greatly in their community. They explained that attacks had prevented people from farming for two farming seasons. According to our informants, when armed attacks occur, fear of recurrence often deters farmers from tilling the land for some time. Farming was equally affected at Zing, as villagers were unable to resume farming until they were assured that the problem was over. Four of those interviewed revealed that armed attacks entirely stopped people's farming for a long period in their areas.

In Kaduna State, farming activities was seriously disrupted in Kaura and Birnin Gwari due to internal displacement of farmers who relocated to safer places. The situation in Jema'a was different as most of those interviewed explained that the attacks had less impact on farming activities in their localities. Even in these cases, however,

there were two key informants who reported that farming was disturbed for two farming seasons in their area. Considering the importance of farming, its disruption, will certainly affect the livelihood of the farm families, the income of local government, the state government and the federal government at large. This has implications for food security, nutrition, health and food price stability, both locally and regionally. Disruption of farming also leads to rising unemployment and increased rural-urban migration.

Impact of Banditry on Herders

Cattle rustling or theft is a major indicator and consequence of banditry in the northern states of Nigeria. Cattle herders and farmers are the victims most affected by banditry. In Taraba State, some of those dispossessed of their herds become permanently impoverished. In one fell swoop, they go from property ownership to destitution. According to those interviewed, it usually takes a period of two to three years before herders can return to their community. In Lau, Ardo Kola and Zing, herders disappeared for four to five years following bandit attacks. The length of herders' departure depends to a large extent, on the community's perception of herders' culpability in the conflict. When community members see herders as active participants in the conflict, it may take much longer for the herders to return.

In Kaduna State, herders were also victims of rural banditry, losing large herds of cattle to attacks. In Kaura, Jema'a and Birnin Gwari, herders moved out of the community for at least a year. In Birnin Gwari, the attack only prevented herders from operating for no longer than four weeks. Policy must account for the fact that any benefits that accrue to communities from herders' activities will be lost, at least for the period that herders are forced to flee. That reality makes security agents' incapacity to respond to banditry all the more critical.

Impact of Banditry on Market Operations

Markets form the hub of both commercial and social activities. They are also one of the social institutions often affected by armed attack in rural areas. In fact, there are cases where the market itself draws attackers; some attacks were carried out on market days. In Taraba State, particularly in Ardo Kola, for several years the thriving market towns of Iware and Malum were repeatedly targeted for attacks by bandits. These markets were shut down for several months because of banditry in 2013 and 2014. For a month, people completely stopped patronising the markets. Baba Gasa, Donada and Sunkani markets in the Lau local government area were similarly affected by banditry. As a result of attacks, community members stopped attending the markets in 2010, 2013 and 2014. The interviewees explained that for a period of one to two months following bandit attacks, people refused to patronise the markets for fear of recurrence. Markets in the Zing local government area were not as badly affected by banditry, perhaps because they were perceived to be less lucrative. Zing markets usually deal in agricultural produce, distinct from the livestock markets of Lau. However, the Yakoko and Kwanti Napo markets had been negatively affected by bandits' operations.

The situation in Kaduna state is different, as bandits did not deliberately disrupt commercial activities nor did they target market days for operations. However Pualwayu and Birnin Gwari Green markets were the exceptions, however, as they suffered limited attacks in 2011 and 2014. Shutting down market due to banditry has implications for the economies, both at the community and local government levels. A set proportion of communities' and local councils' earnings come from these markets, and closing them means losing a huge amount of income for the period. This can worsen the poverty levels of households operating in the affected communities.

Conditions of Women during Banditry Attacks

Women and female children are adversely affected by banditry, as they are in all conflict situations. The abduction and involvement of women in banditry have increased in recent times. They are abducted for various reasons, and are, in some cases, used as instruments of warfare. It was noticed that women were not deliberately targeted for abduction in the communities surveyed in Taraba State. However, in several communities in Taraba state, women were actually sighted as direct participant in fighting and looting.

In Kaduna State, women were not abducted, but they were sighted fighting and looting alongside bandits in two communities. In Kaura, two of the key informants explained that women were sighted during banditry attacks, and were actually fighting and looting valuable items from people alongside bandits. In the communities of Birnin Gwari and Jema'a informants reported that women were neither abducted during banditry operations, nor participating in banditry activities. Policy must recognized the ways in which banditry can disrupt women's critical roles in family and society, and the long term negative implications of such upheaval.

Impact of Armed Banditry on School and Children

Schools, which serve as critical social institutions are not spared in situations of armed conflicts. Attacks on schools have increased exponentially in recent times, in armed violence around the world. In every community investigated in this study, it was found that schools were not only prevented from operating during instances of armed banditry, they were also in some cases, targeted for attacks. The participants interviewed in Ardo Kola concurred that both primary and secondary schools were prevented from operating as a

result of banditry in their community. According to those interviewed, primary schools were more negatively affected than the secondary schools in Ardo Kola. However, school closure was for short periods, usually about a month. Primary and secondary schools lost several weeks of learning due to banditry in Lau. In Zing, by contrast, school disruption was minimal. According to informants from Ardo Kola and Lau, there was neither abduction nor involvement of children during banditry in their communities. In Zing, however, two of interviewees noted that they have seen children being used in banditry in their community. According to one interviewee, children were actually involved in the attacks. They were fighting and looting alongside the bandits.

In Kaduna State, primary schools bore the brunt of banditry more so than secondary schools. This is because primary schools were prevented from operating long periods in several communities, schools closed anywhere from six months to a full year following attacks. Jema'a and Birnin Gwari were the areas worst affected. In Kaduna state, there were no recorded cases of child abductions or use of children in banditry. Nonetheless, the implications of this scenario include the closure of schools. That closure negatively affects the implementation of universal basic education, and may, in the long run, contribute to higher levels of illiteracy. Students may develop phobias of school attendance, potentially leading to an increased dropout rate. This vicious cascade of banditry's effects may lead to declining student enrolment, as well as lower completion and transition rates.

Findings of the Study

There are five major findings discovered in the study:

1. The frequency and intensity of banditry varies between communities, even between communities in the same state. Banditry impact negatively on occupational groups differently, with farmers, herders and traders suffering most in communities.
2. Agricultural activity is negatively impacted by banditry. In most affected communities, farming is disrupted for several farming cycles.
3. Herders suffer most, as their wealth is tied their animals; they depend upon herds' easy mobility, and herds that rarely need to be transported. Pastoralists are sometimes seen as conspiring with bandits in raiding sedentary communities; that perception makes conflict resolution difficult.
4. While there were reported cases of women actively participating in conflicts, they generally were not targeted by bandits.
5. Banditry led to the disruption schools' calendars, forcing prolonged closures. Primary schools suffered more than secondary schools, perhaps because of their number. Similarly to the case of women, while children were occasionally employed by bandits during attacked, they were not targeted for abduction in the communities studied.

Conclusion

Rural theft and cattle rustling has been frequent in several communities in northern Nigeria. There are slight variations in the operations of bandits from one locality to another, but, the outcomes are basically the same. Public and private facilities have been destroyed by bandits. In Taraba and Kaduna States, the conditions of farmers, herders, traders were examined, as well as the state of

both markets and schools. Women and children were generally victims, even though there are cases of their involvement. Banditry has become a serious issue that is in dire need of government and community action. In the absence of effective interventions, banditry will escalate to become a major national crisis in Nigeria.

Recommendations

Banditry leads to instability, negatively affecting both social and economic development as well as undermining democratic governance in affected states. An effective response to banditry substantially affects the lives and livelihoods of people in affected communities. In the light of these realities, we recommend the following four measures:

1. Adequate security facilities should be provided to be communities which are exposed and vulnerable to acts of banditry.
2. Education and support should be provided for farmers, herders and traders as they are the groups suffering more from bandits' attacks.
3. Women should be protected and should be discouraged from involvement in banditry. Their positive roles in both family and society must be preserved.
4. Markets and schools should be prioritized for the provision of protection from banditry. When bandits attack these facilities, there should be a quick response, as they serve critical roles in society.

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Chapter 5

THE STATE OF GRAZING RESERVES AND THEIR POTENTIAL CAPACITY TO ABSORB PASTORALISTS

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Introduction

Livestock production directly and indirectly provides livelihood for millions of Nigerians and others in the West and Central Africa. The sub-sector contributes a significant percent to the Gross Domestic Product of Nigeria and the other countries. Cattle, sheep, goats and even poultry production have been, in the main, the major occupations of pastoralists in Nigeria like the Ful'be (or Fulani), Shuwa Arabs, Kanuri (Koyam), Challa, to list a few. Nigeria has abundant livestock resources and traction animals like horses, donkeys and camels. These animals provide livelihoods for millions of Nigerians citizens and that of neighbouring countries like Niger Republic, Chad, Cameroon and Benin Republic. Livestock production as an economic and social activity has received the attention of political leaders, policy makers, bureaucrats, scholars and researchers, international development and technical partners, donor agencies, security agencies, civil society and faith-based organizations from the colonial period to the present day.

Accurate statistics of livestock population is not available in Nigeria, but the country has been known to be one of the four leading livestock producing countries in Africa, surpassed only by South Sudan in per capital livestock numbers (Muhammad-Baba, 2014: 20). Current estimates of livestock population shows that there are about 18 million cows, 35.5 million sheep, 56 million goats and 20,000 camels.

In the realization of livestock's contribution to the Nigeria's Gross Domestic Product (GDP), investments in transforming the sector have been made. In general, the efforts had failed to yield significant impacts productivity and lives of producers. Production is still dominated by the traditional methods. Free-range transhumance has been the bedrock of this production method, but with increasing sedentrizationof the livestock breeders. Agro-pastoralism is also being practiced with migrations occurring during dry-season or in the event of disease outbreaks or conflicts. Livestock support or extension services to improve production and modern veterinary services are inadequate. A mix of native and quack veterinary services is practiced in most parts of Nigeria.

The above factors coupled with changes in the ecological, political and economic settings has resulted in once crisis or another, negatively affecting the pastoral economy and wellbeing of the people, particularly for the Ful'bewho are the major livestock breeders. Arguably, since the establishment of the modern state over 100 years ago, the objective of "modernizing" and integrating livestock production and pastoralists into the Nigerian political economy remained unrealized.

Part of the colonial policy of addressing the challenges facing pastoralism was the establishment of grazing reserves. The policy was adopted and continued by the post colonial governments of Nigeria, and till date, still remain the most important policy of the Nigerian government geared towards the development of traditional livestock production.

The overall objective of the grazing reserves were to settle pastoralists with a view of reducing conflicts, provide access to improved fodder and social facilities, improved animal health and husbandry practices, active participation of the pastoralists in the

national economy, wealth creation and increased incomes amongst others. The Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (FMA &RD) lists 415 grazing reserves, but number will grow if the reserves in Enugu, Oyo and Ogun are listed and gazetted by their respective state houses of assembly.

The establishment and management of grazing reserves, their sustainability and viability, etc., in Nigeria have thus remained controversial. Questions have remained about the advantages and disadvantages, or even feasibility of the need for a radical transformation of the traditional system through its “modernization” as embodied in the grazing reserve policy. On the other hand, the pastoralists have remained marginalized, living at the mercies of the vagaries of nature with very little help/support from modern public policy and the machineries of government in terms of the euphemistic “dividends of democracy”. There is a perception that Pastoralists are richly endowed but live the most wretched of material lives and a change in their living conditions through policies that will guarantee socio-political inclusion will go a long way in resolving the pastoral crisis which should ramify in the political economy.

In recent times, a new and perhaps more insidious dimension to what may be termed the “pastoral problem” has reared its head and this has to do with insecurity and conflicts between pastoralists and sedentary, non-pastoral communities. The level of conflicts have again heightened the debate about the merits or otherwise of grazing reserves. Can grazing reserves development be sufficient in addressing the challenges facing pastoralism in the country. Is the policy direction at settling pastoralists a viable one, and how practical can it be? Again, do the existing and proposed grazing reserves have the capacity to absorb the Nigerian pastoralists and their livestock? And possibly what need to be done to pragmatically

address the challenges and guarantee sustainable livestock production that will meet the food and nutritional requirements of the country.

Against the background of increasing rural insecurity associated with armed banditry and cattle rustling, this study was commissioned by the Centre for Democracy and Development on the *“State of Grazing Reserves and their Potential Capacity to Absorb Pastoralists”* component within the broader framework of study on rural banditry and social conflict of the Nigeria Security and Reconciliation Project (NSRP) was conceptualised. Specifically, the research focuses on the policy of the establishment of grazing reserves for the cattle-rearing population in particularly in Northern Nigeria and to a limited extent in some southern Nigerian States like Oyo, Ogun and Enugu that had also adopted the policy of grazing reserves establishment.

The research commenced in September, 2014 and ended in March, 2015. In addition to literature studies and broad consultations with diverse stakeholders, data was collected from Kachia and Gayan Grazing Reserves of Kaduna State. The study was to collect data from GidanJaja Grazing Reserve in Zamfara State but the level of insecurity in the area restricted access to the grazing reserve due to violent conflicts, the menace of kidnappers, cattle rustlers and other bandits.

Statement of the Problem

Over the years, there have occurred changes in the ecological and political-economic settings within which livestock production has been taking place. Changes in pastoralism were triggered by ecological imbalance, environmental degradation, climate change, rangeland degradation, rapid population growth (human and animals), rapid urbanization, rigidification of international, internal

and community boundaries, commoditization/commercialization of access to land, changing patterns of land use as influenced by urban elites, the politics of state subsidies and economic liberalization, state intervention in the agrarian political economy, state failure syndrome and its politics, protracted social and civil conflicts, armed violence/warfare, criminality and other world-wide social changes such as globalization (Muhammad-Baba, 2014: 21). Other equally critical factors include legal and legislative inaction, inertia or outright stagnation of regulations and policies, policy changes and policy summersaults. The combined effects of such developments had put the pastoral production and pastoralists into crisis. For example while pastoralists have remained at the margins of society and living at the mercy of nature, they are all too often accused of perpetrating violence, crop destruction, armed robbery, territorial ambition, expansionist designs, and of recent even expansionist and/or “Jihadist” tendencies. This is as even when most transhumant pastoralists are often only superficially religious or at best, merely ritualistic in matters of religious practices. Adding to the conundrum, is the emerging phenomenon of pastoralists featuring in the national security architecture of many a nation. As well, the security of lives and property of especially transhumant pastoralists and local host communities have become worrying concerns.

In Nigeria, the past few years have seen the pastoralists in particular, suffer persecution in the hands of host communities, vigilantes, armed robbers, cattle rustlers, insurgents and state security personnel, resulting in loss of lives and property, displacements and forced migrations with concomitant conflicts along the lines. For all practical purposes, pastoralism and pastoral mode of production as practiced by the Pastoral Ful'be is now in a serious state of crisis.

The basic guiding assumption of the study was that the grazing reserve concept is generally little understood and its reality may surprise both sides of the debate. It was also believed that a case can be made for the establishment of grazing reserves but under a well-thought out, with radically different policy philosophy with rights and obligations of all stakeholders, pastoralists and non-pastoralists alike. A critical study of grazing reserves as envisaged here should yield sound policy recommendations for the way forward in viable and sustainable livestock development and conflict mitigation.

Overview of Livestock Production in Nigeria

Reliable statistics on livestock species in Nigeria have been notoriously unavailable or often out-dated, because no systematic censuses have been under-taken. It is why analysts have had to make do with estimates from multiple sources with different degrees of reliability. The March 2003 **Report of the Presidential Committee on Livestock**, Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (March 2003) comprised of representatives of government, research institutions, the academia, development and technical institutions, producer organizations and eminent Nigerians estimated Nigeria's livestock population as at 2001 as follows: cattle, 15.6 million; sheep 28.69 million; goats, 45.26 million; pigs, 5.25 million, poultry, 118.59 million; and horses, donkeys and camels at 1 million. The report says that livestock sub-sector contributed between 5 – 6 percent of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and 15 – 20 percent of the total agricultural GDP over the years.

As earlier indicated, the livestock sub-sector is dominated by traditional systems of production processing and marketing. Though, a high proportion of cattle, sheep and goat are reared by transhumant pastoralists, there is a growing segment of agro-pastoralists who practice mix crop and livestock farming. Finally,

there is a growing number of fairly large ranches (by Nigerian standards) being established by large scale farmers that include retired army officers, bureaucrats, academicians and of recent multi-national corporations. Animal traction is also common in the northern parts of the country.

Nigeria's abundant livestock resources have continued to provide livelihood for millions of people. In realization of livestock to make significant contribution to the nation's Gross Domestic Product (GDP), efforts have continued to be invested in transforming the sector. In general, the efforts have failed to yield appreciable results as stated earlier. Production has remained dominated by the traditional methods which have sustained the sub-sector for years, with free-range transhumance as its the bedrock, complemented by a mix of native and (grossly inadequate) veterinary medical facilities. Still, due to changes in its ecological and political economic setting, the livestock sub-sector in general and pastoral Fulani specifically, have continued to face one crisis after another. Such developments are argued to exert pressure on the system.

The challenges facing the pastoral mode of production in Nigeria are several and diverse. They range from environmental factors like land degradation, inadequate pasture and water, to human and veterinary diseases, to conflict and civil strife, and of recent rural banditry and cattle rustling, biased development and trade policies, uneven market relationships, ineffective institutional frameworks, weak literacy skills and growing poverty due to the combination of the above factors amongst others. The African Union Maputo Declaration on Agriculture and Food Security provides that National Government should make sure to establish committees on the sector and that "at least 10% of national budgetary resources to agriculture and rural development" and 3% of the 10% should be

allocated to livestock development. Nigeria has not made this requirement and budgetary allocation for agriculture, rural development, including livestock production had been falling over the years. This is the bane of livestock production and Pastoralists in Nigeria and indeed other parts of Africa.

Evidently, the pastoral mode of livestock production has not seemed to receive policy attention commensurate with its potentials for contributing to Nigeria's development. However, in view of the developments above and the need to address same, in recent times a specific line of thinking had focused, *inter alia*, on the provision of grazing reserves, through the designation of certain areas for exclusive or semi-exclusive use by pastoralists and agro-pastoralists, with government providing support services such as livestock extension services, pasture and water, veterinary services, health care delivery, schools, etc. As will later be explored, a number of such reserves had been in existence in different parts of Northern Nigeria but they been ineffective, and even when gazetted cannot be protected from incursions and does not confer exclusive usage.

In the period since the country's "oil boom" days and up to end of the 20th Century, the idea of grazing reserves was kept out of public sphere and thus the phenomena largely remained "localized" with minimal (or at least rigorous) intervention by Federal, State and International Development agencies.

Yet pastoralists have remained devoted to livestock rearing, which activity had remained paramount to the pastoralists who harbour scant territorial and political ambitions beyond the welfare of their herds. The escalation of the crisis of pastoral society and its production systems in recent times has re-focused attention on the grazing reserve issue, with general and specific public debates on

the merits and demerits of the proposed policy, often expressed in emotional terms, attimes coloured with ethnic, religious and even political considerations. These debates have centred on the justifiability, political viability, legislatability feasibility, workability and sustainability of the grazing reserves policy as a solution to the problems facing livestock/pastoral production systems (or, as some will rather misleadingly dub as the 'Fulani problem' in Nigeria). Some see the policy as the much needed elixir and an over-due solution to pastoral crises, but others see the policy not only as some unmerited advantage but also a potential conflict driver. Both sides of the debates have continued with vehemence and the mobilization of supporters to for or against it. Indeed, indications are that the problem will be dichotomized (if not already so) into a “we-versus-them” issue pitching pastoralists and non-pastoralists, farmers and animal herders, Fulani and non-Fulani, etc., against each other. The problem is such as to evoke fear, misunderstanding, apprehension, suspicions, resistance, security concerns, political manipulation, etc.

III. Methodology

The qualitative research study utilised data and information from multiple policy documents (from national and state institutions such as FMA&RD, National Production Research Institute (NAPRI), Nigeria Institute of Trypanosomiasis Research, (NITR), National Veterinary Research Institute (NVRI) etc.), facility assessments reports, demographic data of human and animal populations, Land Use Legislations, Grazing Reserve Laws, International Protocols and Obligations among others. The idea was to enable an assessment of what was on ground, what should be and what could be, under what terms, relating to the availability and viability of the reserves, their legal status, and potentials for meeting the needs pastoralists and the political economy in general, in relation to their relevance as outlined under above.

Primary data were sourced from Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) and Key Informant (KII) to generate direct experiences of pastoralists at Kachia and Gayan Grazing Reserves in Kaduna State and GidanJaja Grazing Reserve in Zamfara State. These were selected first because they have been basically functional for decades and therefore provide case studies of the operation of the concept (of grazing reserves) in actual practice. Second, the location of the reserves in the semi-arid (GidanJaja) Sahel as well the Guinea (Kachia and Gayan) Savanna Zones should afford a cross zonal comparison of experiences since the two zones carry the highest animal population densities across the dry and wet seasons. Thirdly, because they have existed for a fairly long time, these reserves should point to field experiences as lessons about the promises and challenges of the operation of grazing reserves in Nigeria. At any rate, the limitation of time and, especially funds, could not allow a wider or nation-wide study. An FGD and KII guides were prepared and utilised to generate data (Appendix II). In practice, data was collected from Kachia and Gayan grazing reserves. Insecurity could not permit collection of data within the GidanJaja grazing reserve. Thus interviews were held with pastoralists at the periphery of the grazing reserve in BirninMagaji and Zurmi LGAs of Zamfara State.

The Experience of Grazing Reserves in Nigeria: History, prospects and Challenges

History of Grazing Reserves

A grazing reserve as the term implies, are areas of land demarcated, set aside and reserved for exclusive or semi-exclusive use by pastoralists. As will be seen in pre-colonial Nigeria, such sites were located near farmlands around cities and towns and utilized for the purposes of grazing such as to obviate damage to crops. In the formal sense, especially since the establishment of their establishment by the colonial state, sustained by post-independence

governments, grazing reserves were additionally provisioned with supporting facilities such as feeder roads, earth dams, boreholes, veterinary and health clinics, bush fire protection, milk marketing facilities, improved pasture, etc.

At the present, Nigeria has a total of 417 grazing reserves all over the country, out of which only about 113 have been gazetted (N. Y. Leo, 2014: 17). However, an official of The Pastoral Resolve (PARE) a nongovernmental organisation working with pastoralists suggested that the effectively gazetted reserves and which are currently available and useful to pastoralists may hardly exceed 40 all over the country (Saleh Momale, Abuja, 26/04/2014).

The concept of grazing reserves has had a long history in Nigeria, indeed predating the establishment of the modern state. In general, the practice of setting aside grazing areas in much of northern Nigeria had existed as part of communal land use practices and forms. As a concern of state policy towards pastoralists, such reserves emerged in the aftermath of the 1804 Jihad which engendered the establishment of the Sokoto Caliphate (see Muhammad-Baba, 1990: 118). They were then known, in the Hausa language *ashurumi* (plural = *hurumai*) or communal grazing areas) near major towns and settlements and away from farmlands. The *hurumai* were administered under the jurisdiction of the *masusarauta* (the ruling aristocracy, under emirs and chiefs). In addition, different locations of settlements and *hurumai* were linked by stock routes or *burtali*, which were customarily recognized as rights of way and under the administrative protection of the *masusarauta* (Hausa), *lamib'be* (in Fulfulde), other community leaders. The practice of reserving *hurumai* for use by herdsman was influenced or entrenched by customary gifts and cattle tax (*Jangali*) paid by the Fulani pastoralists.

During the colonial era they were attempts to preserve the *Hurumis* Hausa city-states like Zaria, Katsina, Kano, Daura, etc., as documented by historians such as Y. B. Usman, Shenton and Freund (1978), as well as under the Sokoto Caliphate (Muhammad-Baba (1990), by granting them colonial recognition. As documented by the Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, attempts were made to improve pasture in this areas by sowing the of the *gambagrass* and other improved pasture seeds in order to increase the carrying capacity of the *hurumai* in terms of the number of livestock that they can accommodate. The Europeans had recognized the great potentials of indigenous livestock production in terms of revenue generation, protein needs, dairy, hides and skins. Thus they encouraged the sedenterization of pastoralists in the *hurumai* around cities and towns in northern Nigeria provinces such as Katsina, Kano, Zaria, Sokoto, etc.(see Leo, 2014: 1 - 3). The major objective of the colonial regime was to make the grazing reserves a foci of livestock development in Nigeria, and to encourage the sedentarisation of the nomadic elements of pastoralists and to reduce land resource use conflicts between hers and crop cultivators. The initial set of colonial grazing reserves were sites converted from forest reserves, themselves initially set up to conserve woodlands (see Ingawa, Tarawali and von Kaufmann, 1989; Waters-Bayer and Waters-Bayer, 1994: 214).

The British colonial authorities first established the African Ranches Limited (1914 – 1931) to try the idea of intensive sedentrization in Northern Nigeria. It was hoped that the operation and management of company will serve as a model for Pastoralists to emulate. Unfortunately the venture could not succeed due to poor economic return and a force claims that the indigenous breeds cannot thrive under sedentary conditions (Gefu, 2014).

According to Leo (2014), there were constraints to the colonialist policy of sedentization of pastoralist in Northern Nigeria these included encroachment in to the *hurumaidue* to population expansion, lack of legal protection as customary law was gradually weaken, non adaptation to the environment by some of the breeds amongst others. This lead to review of the policies and formed part of the terms of reference of a mission from the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development which visited Colonial Nigeria on several mission between 1949 and 1954 the mission was to examine the livestock sub-sector and suggest improvement in the pastoral mode of production. The report of the mission considered unrestricted grazing system as use by pastoralist was counterproductive inefficient resource depleting and that's undesirable it felt that Pastoralism should be discouraged and sedentary mix farming system be encouraged. In line with recommendation of the IBRD mission a pastoralist program known as the "Fulani Amenities Program" was introduce to among other things offer services in animal health, promotion of hay and silage, production and provision of supplementary feed for dry season feedings using bye-products of groundnut and cotton. Modest achievements were recorded in this regard especially in animal health and increasing number of stocks but along with it also came negative effects like over-grazing pressure that accelerated the degradation of the fragile rangelands and depletion of natural feeds. This again led to transhumance and mobility rather than sedenterization (see also Ingawa, et. al., 1989; Waters-Bayer and Waters-Bayer, 1994).

After independence in 1960, the "Fulani Amenities Program" was reviewed and consolidated in to a Comprehensive Pastoralist Resource Development Program that included aspects for the establishment of grazing reserves in major pastoral areas in

Northern Nigeria, establishment of watering points, veterinary outposts, pasture development and marketing channels. It was envisaged that this will bring enhanced livestock production through better animal health services, cross breeding, pasture production, controlled grazing and pastoralists welfare needs. Thus in 1965, the Northern Nigeria Regional House of Assembly passed the Grazing Reserve Law to give legal backing to grazing reserves and stock routes that were customarily recognized (Ingawa, et. al., 1989; Leo, 2014).

It should be emphasized that all along, pastoralists' and livestock development programs had been a Northern Nigeria regional affair. The post independence regional administration placed high priority on the development of livestock sub-sector with a view of increasing production and sustaining its comparative advantage in production of meat, hides and skin, dairy and other animal product both for internal consumption and export trade. With the creation of states in 1966 most of the states in Northern Nigeria abdicated in their responsibility in developing the agricultural sector. The end of the civil war brought a new low in the neglect of the sector especially livestock development. The oil boom era made state governments to depend more on the Federal Government for revenue than developing and harnessing their internal products (Leo, 2014).

Prospects

As earlier highlighted, from 1965 to the present, some 417 grazing reserves were proposed for establishment. Out of this, only about 113 have been gazetted (N. Y. Leo, 2014: 17). This imply that only 27.1% of the total number of grazing reserves proposed for establishment were actually acquired, surveyed and gazetted.

The estimated total land area of all the 417 proposed grazing reserves was just about 2.8 million hectares. Since only about 113 of the proposed grazing reserves were gazetted, the total land area established as grazing reserves is far from being adequate to address the livestock needs. Most of these reserves were established in the 1960s and 1970s and since then, most of the State Governments had ignored the establishment and development of grazing reserves.

In 1988 Agricultural Policy of the Nigerian Government planned to demarcate 10% of Nigerian total land area as grazing reserves. However, since the promulgation of the policy to date, only about 2% of Nigeria's land area have so far been designated as grazing reserves, with most of these reserves established before the policy as earlier stated.

Even, within the 113 grazing reserves that were gazetted in different parts of the country, fewer than 20 were provided with some basic infrastructure. Improvement in infrastructure and services have been neglected in most of the reserves. As a consequence of the neglect of the grazing reserves and protection of their boundaries, there is high level of encroachment of farming activities. In addition, many of the reserves have completely been taken over by farming communities in many States of country.

Notwithstanding the aforementioned limitations, there had been several intervention programs in the development of some of the grazing reserves. Leo (2014: 9ff) listed these to include the First Livestock Development Project, (FLDP), the Second Livestock Development Program, 1987-1995, the National Commission for Nomadic Education Program, the Inter-Ministerial Committee on Pastoralist/Crop Farmers Conflict Resolution, 2007, the Petroleum (Special) Trust Fund Pastoral Development Program 1996-1999, The Presidential Committee on Livestock, 2003 and the Millennium

Development Goals (MDG) program. However, all these interventions yielded minimal results in the few grazing reserves that benefitted from these interventions because of non sustainability of initiatives, inadequate involvement of pastoralists and other stakeholders, among others.

Examples of the Kachia and GidanJaja grazing reserves are highlighted below:

- (a) Kachia Grazing Reserve. The Kachia Grazing Reserve is located in southern part of Kaduna State in Kachia Local Government area. It has total of 33,411 hectares and it is created under the Kaduna State Grazing Reserve Law, CAP 62 Laws of Kaduna State, 1990. The Reserve has 6 earth dams, 9 boreholes, 44 pasture areas, one seeds (grass) multiplication plot and 50km of feeder roads. Most of the infrastructure was developed by the Federal Government under the Second Livestock Development Project that was funded by the World Bank.
- (b) GidanJaja: More widely known as Zamfara Grazing Reserve (ZGR), it is located between longitudes $6^{\circ}4'$ and $7^{\circ}15'E$ and latitudes $12^{\circ}20'$ $13^{\circ}10' N$, i.e. in the northern part of Zamfara State and contiguous to the Ruma-KukarJangarai Grazing Reserve in Katsina State, covering a total area of $2,355\text{km}^2$, with four enclaves of a total of 37km^2 (see Kyiogwom, et. al., 1994, cited in Bashir, 1995). ZGR is perhaps the oldest of all grazing reserves in Nigeria, having been first established as a Forest Reserve under the then Sokoto Native Authority in 1919, and later converted into a Grazing Reserve in 1957 (Bashir, 1995: 2). Various developmental projects by the Sokoto Native Authority, the Northern Nigerian Regional

Government, the United States Agency for International Development(USAID), the Northwestern, Sokoto and Zamfara State Governments, as well as the European Economic Commission (EEC) had variously and over the years to date attempted to implement one development project or another in ZGR. Initially viable, over the years the ZGR has continued to suffer decline leading to its current parlous state due to a variety of problems including lack of clear (or in fact a multiplicity of) management authority, increases in the population of human and livestock numbers, encroachment by sedentary farming activities, droughts, policy neglect, lack of facilities, deterioration of pastures, lack of support facilities such as markets, schools, veterinary and human medical facilities, conflicts between herders and crop cultivators, the machinations of and/or collusion among political and security officials, the traditional institution, unsustainable land resources management practices, deforestation and desertification, total lack of titles to pastoralists, to list the major problems (see Bashir, 1995, Kyiogwom, 1994).

There is deterioration of ZGR to the extent that it is most livestock-friendly areas has been almost total taken over by crop cultivators to the detriment of hapless pastoralists who have begun to move out of the area. Apart from the unbridled expansion of crop cultivation in the reserve, along its cattle routes or *burtalai*, virtually no infrastructural development has been implemented in recent decades. Added to all the problems listed by Bashir (1995) and Kyiogwom, et. al. (1994) armed banditry, herder/farmer conflicts, harassment of pastoralists by vigilante groups, outright expulsion of pastoralists, physical attacks on them, complete breakdown of civil order, cattle rustling, armed robbery, etc. have become the order of the day at ZGR.

Challenges of Grazing Reserves in Nigeria

There are many problems facing the implementation of the provisions of the 1965 Grazing Reserve Law and the management of the established grazing reserves. First, most of the grazing reserves were established by the Northern Regional Government Governments. Since the creation of States in Nigeria, only very few States in the region established grazing reserves in the 1970's. Subsequent military and civilian governments ignored the establishment and development of grazing reserves. As a result of this, the number of grazing reserves in the country is far from meeting the grazing lands requirements. The estimated total land area of all the 417 proposed grazing reserves was just about 2.8 million hectares.

Second, State governments ignored the surveying and gazetting of grazing reserves. For this reason, only 113 (about 27%) of the 417 proposed grazing reserves were gazetted. The remaining non gazetted reserves have been seriously encroached upon over the years by farming and other activities.

Third, the development and provision of infrastructure in most of the grazing reserves was ignored. For example, the largest intervention in grazing reserve under the Second Livestock Development Project was implemented from 1986 to 1996. That intervention was restricted to only 20 grazing reserves. By implication therefore, some minimal infrastructure was provided in only about 20 grazing reserves out of the 113 grazing reserves that were gazetted.

Fourth, control of number of livestock that grazed in each grazing as provided for in the Law was never enforced. With inadequacy of grazing reserves, there was massive concentration of livestock in the

major grazing reserves of the country such as Runka in Katsina State, Gidan Jaja in Zamfara State, Tsauna in Sokoto State, Udubo in Bauchi State, Bobi in Niger State, Gayan in Kaduna State and Wase in Plateau State leading to massive degradation of the range condition of the grazing reserves. Thus, the availability of pasture is grossly inadequate, while many of these reserves are currently unproductive.

Fifth, because of the failure of Governments to enforce provisions of the Law, there were massive encroachments even within the 113 gazetted grazing reserves. This has reduced the available grazing areas available to pastoralists and heightened tensions between farmers and pastoralists.

As a case study, the challenges of the grazing reserves can be viewed from the challenges facing the Kachia grazing reserve and Gidan Jaja grazing reserve which is widely applicable to other grazing reserves in the Nigeria that had negatively affected the attainment of the goals of the grazing reserves. Some of these issues may be summarized as follows:

- (i) Funding for the establishment and maintenance of infrastructure, payment of compensation for land expropriated for grazing reserve development has been grossly inadequate, often not available at all. This singular factor is at the heart of the deterioration, neglect, encroachment, etc., that the reserves continue to suffer. For example, pastoralists respondents near Gidan Jaja grazing reserve in Zamfara State explained that the last efforts at pasture development was in the 1990's supported by EEC. The EEC Project ended around 1997 and since then, all the sown pastures were allowed to degenerate. No other efforts

at improving feeds. Even in the EEC Project, the officials established the sown pasture plots, grew the pasture and sold to the pastoralists. There was little involvement of pastoralists in the activities.

- (ii) Related to the above, the establishment and maintenance of grazing reserves on a sustained basis is highly capital intensive. This is with particular reference to the provision of fodder, feedlots, dams, boreholes, and other watering facilities, roads, veterinary and health clinics and drugs, cattle dips, etc. Pastoralists interviewed indicated that nobody is taking responsibility for the maintenance of the reserves. The pastoralists generally feel that they are on their own and are neglected by the LGA, State and Federal Government. Thus, they do not make any efforts at maintaining the facilities because they feel that they have no right to "repair or maintain" property owned by the government.
- (iii) An important challenge has been the inability of government to prevent encroachment into the grazing reserves. While most of the *hurumai* in Northern Nigeria have been converted to crop fields, even the statutory reserves that were gazetted are heavily encroached. In Gidan Jaja grazing reserve for example, pastoralists respondents opined as follows:
 - ..there is a very high level of encroachment along all the borders of the grazing reserve. Indeed, nearly half of the grazing reserve is now cultivations. Some settlements of farmers have been established particularly along the boundaries of the reserve in the last 15 years. All

of these are due to the encouragement given to the farmers to encroach on the reserve by political leaders. Some few selfish traditional rulers (particularly village heads) also give out some portions of the reserve to farmers for a fee

....

Similar situations exists in most of the grazing reserves. For example, there are very high level of encroachments in some the major grazing reserves in the country including Runka in Katsina State, Gayan in Kaduna State, Wase in Plateau State, Awe in Nasarawa State, Udubo in Bauchi State, Bobi in Niger State and Abejukolo in Kogi State among others. The ability of the State Government to control and manage encroachment has been significantly compromised and weakened by either or a combination ethnic, religious and political considerations, which often give premium to the needs of farmers than that of the pastoralists.

- (iv) Lack of a coherent, regional policy pursued in a co-ordinated manner by the different states that have since emerged from the larger single Northern Region of Nigeria. Different states have continued to pursue different policies, with some out rightly hostile and resentful of the very concept of reserving any areas for pastoralists. This factor is at the crux of the failure to gazette the identified grazing reserve entities, as earlier pointed out. Related to this factor has been the lack of synergy between the different levels of government – local, state and Federal.
- (v) Inadequacies of existing land tenure laws (the Land Use Act of 1978 as amended) and especially its push for private acquisition of land. Provisions of the Act remain little

understood by pastoralists. Unless the issue of ownership and entitlement is addressed, pastoralists will continue to be victims of landlessness, alienated and dispossessed. In Kachia, Gayan and Gidan Jaja grazing reserves for example, none of the pastoralists had title to any land. Respondents explained that they were encouraged to settle in the reserves in the 1970s to late 1980's by the Government. Formal land allocation is yet to be established. This was a major concern to the pastoralists. However, with the current levels of threat, insecurity and intimidation especially in Gayan and Gidan Jaja grazing reserves, many are already looking up to migrating away from the areas rather than seeking to establish titles for land ownership.

- (vi) Related to all the above is the problem of increasing hostility to pastoralists, perception of them as aliens, settlers, and such pejorative terms and stereotypes. Others see them as belligerent aggressors and even as Islamic proselytizers. Equally, pastoralists are seen as “pampered”. Around Gidan Jaja grazing reserve for example, vigilante have been intimidating pastoralists. Many households at the boundary of the reserve had already migrated due to intimidation by vigilante who are mainly from farming background.

Conclusions

The pastoral mode of production had survived for centuries due to its adaptability and flexibility as well as low production costs. Interventions by government and development partners had no worked much to change the system. One reason for such dismal policy failure has been the non involvement of pastoralist themselves in the planning, execution and implementation of these programs and interventions. One of the critical failures is the

perception of that pastoral mode of production is archaic and outdated by policy makers, researchers, academicians and development partners. A new mode of thinking is called for.

Pastoralist should be accorded title rights over the grazing reserves with restriction as to alienation to preserve its communal usage. For now, pastoralists who occupy the grazing reserve are treated at the discretion of the state or traditional institution hence the rapid state of encroachment and attempts to take back lands. Non protection of stock route had also led to increasing conflict especially for those who do transhumant between one grazing reserve and another, laws and regulation that should facilitate cross-border mobility and transhumant right needs to be put in place by but state and the federal government. One of the challenges of transhumant is the provision contained in the Land Use Act 1978 which vest land on the State Governor rather than the Federal Government, thus making it difficult to recognize pastoralist's rights as to the use of stock routes. The National Assembly had attempted to address this issue by proposing a bill to have a National Grazing Reserves and Stock Route Management Commission, which had also been caught in the constitutional quack mire as to the status of land in the Constitution of Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999 (as amended).

While the concept of grazing reserves was noble and the objectives for enacting the policy was clear and development oriented, its implementation has significantly suffered. As a consequence, successive governments had failed in the implementation of the grazing reserve policy. Thus, the policy has largely remained in name than in practice.

With only about 113 gazetted reserves and which also have large scale encroachment and poor feeds (pasture) availability, it is easy to

argue and conclude that the current grazing reserves lack the capacity to absorb the national herd and cater for the need of Nigerian pastoralists. Additionally, the gross inadequacy of infrastructure and poor provision of services promoted the degradation of the grazing reserves. However, the prospects of using the grazing reserve policy for harnessing and developing the livestock resources of the country still exist as an opportunity. To succeed in this direction, lots of efforts need to be put in place, supported by a long term strategic development approach involving all stakeholders including the farming communities. More grazing reserves need to be established, encroachments need to be stopped and controlled and capacity development for the pastoralists also need to be given prominence.

Recommendations

From the perspective of this study, grazing reserves have the capacity to absorb a significant proportion of pastoralists in Nigeria provided:

- (a) There is guaranteed definite fiscal commitment to funding them adequately and on a sustained basis;
- (b) If pastoralists are accorded ownership or other long-term entitlement to land as incentive to invest. This should be pursued vigorously in accordance with applicable by-Laws in line with the provisions of the 1965 Grazing Reserve Law. While individual ownership of land can be granted where necessary, group ownership of pasture areas may be a more viable option.
- (c) The issue of banditry and other manifestations of insecurity communal strife are addressed (threats and actual expulsion of pastoralists from communities, indiscriminate killing of pastoralists by vigilante groups as is happening in Zamfara and other states, threats by the Federal Government to ban transhumance without a viable alternative on ground).

- (d) A comprehensive, holistic approach to livestock development policy planning and implementation, as advocated by Kandagor (2005) for the Horn of Africa, to specifically incorporate economic and political empowerment of pastoralists, gender sensitivity, networking to share experiences, advocacy and the utilization of traditional knowledge systems and processes.
- (e) The conscious Integration of the interests of pastoralists along with crop cultivators as well as other natural land resources users (fishermen, hunters, wood cutters, etc.), in the planning and implementation of agriculture-based or other land use policy programmes and projects (Waters-Bayer and Waters-Bayer, 1994: 227). There is need for the state and local governments to plan and implement an integrated program for settlement of pastoralist without “rigidification” of movement along the customarily recognized stock routes, to link the reserves, with due attention to (e) above.
- (f) Comprehensive livestock extension services should be provided by state and local government and supported by Federal Government and development parties.
- (g) Accelerated passage of passage of the bill on National Grazing Reserves and Stock Routes Management Commission by the National Assembly.

Finally, the concept of grazing reserves as shown in this study is a welcome idea to most pastoralists especially with the increasing levels of conflicts with farmers. There is need to put in additional structures to develop the grazing reserves to accommodate increasing number of livestock producer who had move into this grazing reserve to seek refuge especially in around Kachia. The Gayan grazing reserve had shown that security is a major concern with thousands of cattle being rustled. There is need for adequate security in conjunction with pastoralist and local populations

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Chapter 6

HERDERS' AND FARMERS' ASSOCIATIONS AND SOCIAL CONFLICTS IN NORTHERN NIGERIA

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Introduction

This study, primarily seeks to critically investigate and analyse the role of selected herders' and farmers' associations in the management and/or mismanagement of rural banditry and social conflict in Northern Nigeria. These issues are especially timely, as rural banditry and herder/farmer conflicts are more frequent, intense, and consequential than ever before. Although notable associations on both sides of the herder/farmer divide exist, they have not been accorded significant attention in the relevant literature. This study aspires to make a modest contribution toward filling this conspicuous gap.

For this study, two organizations were selected for in-depth study and empirical illustrations: the Miyetti Allah Cattle Breeders Association (MACBAN), the umbrella socio-cultural group of the Fulani's herders in Nigeria, and the All Farmers Association of Nigeria (AFAN), the equivalent farmers' organization. Such a focus is justified; despite the existence of representative bodies at national and subnational levels, little is known about them vis-à-vis their location in the convoluted landscape of rural banditry and social conflict, particularly in Northern Nigeria.

The chapter is organised into a number of sections. After this introduction, the first briefly presents the research puzzle that underpins the study, codified into specific research questions and objectives. The second sketches the methodological map of the study. The third presents a review of relevant literature on herder/farmer conflicts in Nigeria, together with contending theoretical perspectives on the subject. This is followed by a brief historical background of MACBAN and AFAN in section four, with emphasis on their historical evolution, motives, goals, and organisational structure, and how they relate to the organizations' roles in herder-farmer relations. The analytical fulcrum of the chapter is presented in section five, which considers the diverse roles played by MACBAN and AFAN in promoting or undermining stable herder-farmer relations, especially in the areas of social capital formation, conflict resolution and peacebuilding, the strategies and mechanisms explored, and an assessment of the impact of such interventions and strategies. It also explores some of the challenges confronting MACBAN and AFAN in these processes, as well as the relations between these associations, the state, and local communities, including other local associations and vigilante groups. The concluding section reviews the central research puzzle and findings of the study before offering some critical reflections on the research findings' policy implications. This will form the basis of policy prescriptions regarding how to reposition MACBAN and AFAN as a tool for sustainable, stable, and peaceful relations between herders and farmers in Northern Nigeria on the one hand, and between these associations, the state and local communities on the other.

The Research Puzzle

Much has been written on rural banditry and social conflict as important themes in the history of conflict in Nigeria. However the confounding question of persistent herder-farmer conflict remains largely underexplored. Indeed, the few works on the subject have focused primarily on the causes and consequences of the problem. The few exceptional cases that consider the management of the problem focus almost exclusively on the state, without due attention given to the roles of non-state actors. Yet non-state actors are crucial to the management of herder-farmer conflicts. They can either stabilise or destabilise social relations among herders, farmers, and local populations, particularly in developing sustainable social capital, conflict resolution, and peacebuilding. The roles non-state actors play vary according to their goals, actions, available resources, and dominant strategies, as well as their relationships with other grassroots organisations.

MACBAN was officially inaugurated as the socio-cultural group of the nomads/Fulanis in Nigeria in 1987; AFAN, the national platform for farmers in Nigeria, emerged following the successful merger of different farmers' organisations and subsequent adoption by the National Council on Agriculture (NCA) at its March, 2004 meeting. They are two major non-state actors in Nigeria. Despite their fairly long history and expansive networks, with representation in almost every state of the federation and local links across the country, little to nothing is known about their historical evolution and dynamics — despite the fact that their activities may have been having major positive or negative impacts on both rural banditry and also herder-farmer relations in Nigeria.

These conditions prompted the questions underlying this study: What are the motives and goals of MACBAN and AFAN? In what ways are their goals translated into concrete actions? How are such goals, motives, actions, and inactions interpreted by the larger society, especially local populations? In the pursuit and execution of their goals, do MACBAN and AFAN reinforce or undermine rural banditry? How do these associations affect social relations among herders, farmers, and local populations? How do they interact with other grassroots organisations, including vigilante groups? Do the associations' actions engender cooperation or conflict? What challenges and obstacles are MACBAN and AFAN facing, particularly in terms of leadership, effective representation of members' interests, and power and social relations with local populations? What can be done to reposition MACBAN and AFAN for greater impact in the fight against rural banditry, and for fostering social capital, conflict resolution and peacebuilding?

Driven by the aforementioned questions, the general objective of this study is to critically explore the roles MACBAN and AFAN play in the management and mismanagement of social relations between herders and farmers in Northern Nigeria. Specifically, the study seeks to: a) identify and explain the motives and goals of MACBAN and AFAN, as well as the factors, both historical and contemporary, that gave rise to their goals; b) explore the mechanisms and strategies deployed in the pursuit and execution of such goals; c) explore public perception and interpretations of the associations' goals, especially in terms of power and social relations between herders and farmers on the one hand, and between MACBAN, AFAN, the state and local communities, on the other; d) assess the associations' impact on the fight against rural banditry, especially the development of social capital, conflict resolution and peacebuilding among herders, farmers, and local populations; e)

identify and explain the challenges and obstacles MACBAN and AFAN are facing, particularly in terms of leadership, effective representation of members' interests, and power and social relations with local populations; and f) Suggest possible ways of strengthening MACBAN and AFAN as positive influences in the fight against rural banditry, and as contributors to sustainable cultivation of social capital, conflict resolution and peacebuilding, both for herder-farmer relations, and for relations between associations, the state, and local communities.

A Note on Methodology

The chapter adheres strictly to the broader methodological prescriptions of this project, with specific emphasis on descriptive qualitative methods. As such, the study adopts survey research design, supplemented by historical analysis. The study population generally consists of herders' and farmers' associations in northern Nigeria, as well as other grassroots organisations that are connected, directly or indirectly, with herder-farmer relations, including vigilante and market associations.

In pursuing in-depth study and empirical illustrations, this study places specific emphasis on MACBAN and AFAN. Spatially, the study focuses on Kaduna and Plateau States, with occasional references to other states such as Benue, Nasarawa, Niger and Zamfara. The two case studies (Kaduna and Plateau States) were selected not only because of the high incidence of herder-farmer conflicts, but also because of controversial official responses to herders' migration in these states, including the 'deportation' of Kaduna herders from Niger state by the state government in 2014, and attendant accusations and counter-accusations made by MACBAN and state officials.

Data for the study were drawn from both primary and secondary sources. Primary data were collected through interviews, especially key informant interviews (KIIs) administered on intentionally selected interviewees. Specifically, KIIs were conducted with the leadership and members of MACBAN and AFAN at the national, state, and local government levels. In all, a total of 20 KIIs were conducted in a fairly evenly distributed manner across the selected cases, with emphasis on the motives and goals, strategies, and actions of MACBAN and AFAN in promoting or undermining relations between herders and farmers on the one hand; and among these associations, the state and local community, on the other.

The inability to extend the KIIs to other crucial segments outside the two main groups, MACBAN and AFAN, represents a major limitation in the data collection process. This was due to resource constraints, especially finance. In order to remedy the situation and reduce its impact on the study, primary data were supplemented with secondary data collected from books, journals, official publications, magazines, newspapers, and the internet. The use of triangulation not only helps data verification and elimination of errors, but also increases the reliability and validity of data. Data were analysed using descriptive qualitative methodology, together with content analysis.

Despite the robustness of the data collection procedure, there were still discernible limitations. The most obvious relates to the inability to adhere strictly to the proposed methodology, especially in terms of fieldwork. The original proposal was to cover at least five states for in-depth study, the other cases being Benue, Niger, and Zamfara states. The research was designed to include a variety of respondents in the KIIS, specifically including experts who have written on the

subject, leadership of non-governmental organisations focused on conflict resolution and peace building in the study areas, market women, vigilantes, and state officials, especially Special Advisers on Nomadic Matters and Agriculture in the study area. Unfortunately, financial constraints precluded inclusion of these crucial segments. Only two women were interviewed; that gender imbalance may skew findings.

Due to the constraints, the narrative is dominated by the voices of actors within MACBAN and AFAN, without the benefit of confirmation or refutation by voices from other critical segments of society, particularly non-members of these associations. Despite those limitations, we consider the combination of data collected with supplementary secondary sources to provide sufficiently strong answers to our research questions. The gaps we faced could also serve to provoke further research into the important but neglected subject of social conflict in Northern Nigeria.

Overview and Perspectives on Herder-Farmer Conflicts

Conflicts between herders and farmers in Nigeria are not a new phenomenon, as underscored in the history of West African herder-farmer conflicts written by Shettima and Tar (2008: 169). Many other studies lend credence to this historical reality (Awogbade, 1987; 1993). Despite its long history, however, the problem has assumed broader scope and cost.

Rural banditry has been a major source of insecurity in the country, affecting the political economy negatively (Omotola, 2014). This is in line with the findings of a major study by USAID (2014: 14), which reports that 'a recent spike in resource driven conflict between sedentary farmers (mostly Christian) and pastoralists (mostly Muslim) in the North Central zone threatens to assume a more

overtly religious dimension and overwhelm the already overstretched security forces' capacity to respond'.

The problem has become so deeply entrenched that in the first quarters of 2014 alone, 262 persons lost their lives in 15 separate attacks; also in Plateau and Kaduna States, 16 separate attacks were reported during the same period, leading to the loss of 139 lives with scores of people injured. In another single attack of 14 March, 2014 on AngwanSakwai, a rural community in Kaura LGA of Kaduna state, 57 people lost their lives (Kumolo, 2014). Such attacks have continued unabated in places such as Nasarawa, Zamfara, Plateau and Benue States. In Benue, for example, bandits brazenly attacked the governor's convoy in 2014. In one of the most horrific acts of banditry, over 120 people were massacred in 'YarGaladima village, Zamfara State, by bandits who have, for at least the last ten years, been terrorizing rural communities as well as highway users by rustling cattle, looting, laying siege on rural markets and killing innocent people' (Kuna, 2014: 1). Okoli and Atelhe (2014: 84) also document how more than 130 people lost their lives across ten conflicts between herders and farmers in different parts of Nasarawa State between 2011 and 2013. Benue State is notorious for incessant herder-farmer conflict, similar to other parts of the north central geopolitical zone. Okeke (2014: 72-73) compiled newspaper headlines reporting such incidents and the attendant casualties, including hundreds of deaths, destruction of property, and the displacement of 5,000 residents in Benue and Nasarawa States over the same period (2011-2013).

The terrible human toll detailed above has been accompanied by huge losses of cattle to banditry. In Chukun LGA of Plateau State, for example, the chapter chairman of MACBAN lamented the fact that about 1,778 cattle were rustled between October and November 2014

(although he noted that though there were no accurate figures about cattle rustling in the LGA; this figure was what was available to them but they believed it could be higher. This figure is alarming, given that the incidents occurred over a period of only two months. If the figures for all local governments across the state were available, the full scale of banditry's impact would no doubt be staggering. However, one must not lose sight of the fact that there are possible spatial variations in the intensity of the crime across different local government areas in the state.

These consequences have significant ramifications for gender power relations. Loss of cattle translates to loss of family income, thereby putting more pressure on the family in terms of meeting their financial and material obligations, including the education of female children. In an attempt to make up for the shortfall, women may be pressured into undertaking the burden of additional responsibilities.

Prior analyses of this problem have yielded several explanatory themes. Hesse and Odhiambo (2006: 3) explained the problem in terms of defective policy frameworks for dealing with power relations between crop farmers and herders (this includes, for example, issues surrounding grazing reserves), as well as the poor implementation of existing policies. Awogbade (1987) addressed the specific concerns of policies relating to grazing reserves as a major issue of contention. Ingawa, Tarawali and Kaufmann (1989) took a similar approach, underscoring the problems, prospects, and policy implications of grazing reserves in Nigeria. Hesse and Odhiambo (2006: 3) emphasise the necessity of adapting the African Union's (AU) framework policy to the Nigerian domestic context, to formulate and implement a National Action Plan to navigate past the logjam.

A 2014 USAID study on Nigeria Cross-Sectoral Conflict Assessment attributed the set of related conflicts to many factors. The first was the ineffective management of natural resources, which could accentuate competition for resources— in this case, land and water. The second relates to the negative effect of climate change, including encroachment on nomadic herders' corridors and grazing reserves, which has decreased the land available to both pastoralists and farmers. The third pertains to the existence of economic needs and economic grievances, which could lead to violence if not properly managed. The fourth has to do with the absence of sustainable conflict management mechanisms. The missing mechanisms could enable all parties to adjust to changing conditions and agree to peaceful resolution; their absence was found to be another major underlying explanation for herder-farmer conflict in Nigeria. This last explanation resonates well with Ibrahim's (2012: 3), who explained the problem in terms of the lack of functional herder civil society, which can effectively mediate relations between herders and farmers. By logical extension, if the absence of functional herder civil society hampers tensions in herders-farmers relations, then the same could also be said about farmers, whose civil society has also not been very functional. This particular explanation is curious, especially now that MACBAN and AFAN, mandated to play such roles, exist at the national level and have subnational subsidiaries across the country. Whether they have lived up to expectations or not will be addressed in subsequent sections.

For some others, the problem can be attributed to declining state capacity to effectively govern the rural areas, changes in demographic, ecological and climatic conditions, and to the land question, land use rights, and alienation of land (Kuna, 2014). After reviewing existing work, Shettima and Tar (2008: 170-174) attempted a classification of these diverse explanations into the categories of

environment-related factors, including climate change; social factors, such as ethno-religious considerations (especially salient, as the ethno-religious boundaries of herders and farmers are almost coterminous with those of Islam and Christianity, respectively); political factors, particularly the apparent political powerlessness of pastoralists in the post-colonial state, including their landlessness; and changing demographic conditions. Such powerlessness was emphasised by Kandagor (2005), when he alluded to the marginalisation of pastoralists in terms of their socio-economic, political, policy, and land situations.

Whatever the explanations, however, it is obvious that these conflicts have always had negative consequences for affected regions and countries. Tiffen (2004), for instance, noted the negative effect of population pressure, migration, and urbanisation on crop-livestock systems, and how these engender tensions between farmers and herders in West Africa. The World Initiative for Sustainable Pastoralism (WISP, 2010a; 2010b) underscored the significance of climate change; population pressure and land loss provoke conflict both between different pastoralist groups, and also between pastoralists and crop farmers. Fre (2010) examined how the phenomenon of land grabbing has profoundly negative effects on the livelihoods and ecosystem of pastoralists. In a recent study by the World Bank, et al (2013: 3) on *Investing in African Livestock: Business Opportunities in 2030-2050*, it was found that livestock production would not keep pace with consumption, as Africa 'is anticipated to increasingly become a net importer of animal-sourced foods'. Although the study did not establish any direct link between this negative prognosis and farmer-herder conflict, connections are easily discernible. As Shettima and Tar (2008: 178) demonstrated, such conflicts have always had negative consequences for both human and physical security at regional, national, and international levels.

Background Information about MACBAN and AFAN

MACBAN was officially inaugurated as the socio-cultural group of the nomads and Fulani pastoralists in Nigeria in 1987, but has been operational since 1979. Its general goal is to unite all Fulani herders in Nigeria under one umbrella. Its core specific objectives include the promotion and protection of the interests of herders and grazing facilities in the country (Farouk, nd: 5).

The current state chairman of Plateau State traces the association's formation back to its first meeting in Bauchi, organized by Alhaji Saidu to lay its groundwork. That meeting was followed by another in Sokoto, held with the sultan (Abubakar III); participants sought and received his approval for the body's establishment. The sultan accepted a role as a patron of the organisation. He was joined by other reputable traditional rulers in the north, most notably the emirs of Kano (Alhaji Ado Bayero), Zazzau (Alhaji Aminu), and Katsina (Aljahi Usman Nagogo). With formalities concluded, Alhaji Abba Kawo spearheaded the drive to register the association, after which Alhaji Adamu was appointed as its pioneer leader.

MACBAN strives to function democratically. According to a short case study by the NGO Enhancing Nigerian Advocacy for a Better Business Environment (ENABLE, 2010: 1), MACBAN operates 'a simple but effective governance structure whereby elections are held every four years by delegates from all local government areas'.

AFAN has a shorter history. It was established during Chief Olusegun Obasanjo's administration, with the general goal of having a unified farmer's body at the national level. It emerged as a national platform for Nigerian farmers following two critical events: first, the successful merger of two different farmers' organisations —the All-Farmers Association of Nigeria (ALFA) and the National

Farmers' Association of Nigeria (NAFAN), and, second, the subsequent adoption by the National Council on Agriculture (NCA) in March 2004. The specific objectives of AFAN are implicitly codified in its vision, which is 'to enhance the skills of farmers and other related stakeholders to advocate and contribute towards improved national economy', through the use of 'modern technology and [an] agribusiness approach focused on wealth and job creation' (AFAN, nd). It also aspires to serve as an intermediary between farmers and the government.

Like MACBAN, AFAN has a national secretariat and subnational subsidiaries at state and local government levels across the country, for ease of administration. Its National Board of Trustees, according to the association's Kaduna State chairman, includes Vice Admiral Murtala Nyako, Chief Femi Coker, and Dr. Shettima Mustafa. AFAN, like MACBAN, has utilized a number of strategies, including collaboration with relevant stakeholders (most notably the government, local communities, and vigilante groups), and periodic meetings for the advancement of members' interests. For example, in Plateau State AFAN enlisted as a member of Growth Enhancement Scheme (GES), Plateau Agricultural Development Programme (PADP), and other related organisations. Such collaborations reportedly allow AFAN access to some government privileges that further their interests. In the state, AFAN is also known for seeking assistance from both state and local governments. This strategy has reportedly led to sponsorship of some AFAN members for training; the governments have also provided fertilisers, improved seeds, and tools free of charge.

Research Findings: MACBAN/AFAN, Herder-Farmer Relations, and Social Conflict

The lofty nature of both MACBAN's and AFAN's goals prompts questions regarding how they are to be translated into practice in a sustainable fashion. If the associations pursue their objectives intelligently and diligently, herder-farmer relations may improve; if the associations fail to do so, herder-farmer relations will either remain contentious or worsen further. We deployed our survey instrument, namely KIIs, to investigate this research concern. The findings are revealing as discussed, below:

Relations between MACBAN and AFAN: Ideally, MACBAN and AFAN will provide the bridges for cordial and sustainable relations between herders and farmers in Nigeria. Despite being engaged to varying degrees, it appears that the organisations have fallen short of expectations. When asked to evaluate both organisations, almost every respondent's assessments ranged from partial success to complete failure. These respondents included chairpersons of state and local government chapters.

There are many reasons that even the agencies' managers give such poor ratings. First, findings show that in most cases relations between MACBAN and AFAN are abysmal; in many other instances relations are entirely non-existent. In Plateau State, for example, all interviewees — including the leaders of MACBAN in Riyom, Bassa and BarkinLadi local government areas (LGAs) — attest to the absence or deteriorating condition of such relations. Although the situation in Kaduna State may be slightly better, many of the interviewees still alluded to the absence or weak nature of inter-agency relations; the state chairman of MACBAN and Chikun LGA chairman were notable dissenters in this case, however, It is, however, important to note that even the few exceptions also had

reservations about the current state of relations between the two organisations.

Comments by the Plateau State's AFAN leadership further underscored deteriorating or virtually non-existent relations with MACBAN. The state's AFAN chairperson, Mrs. Sarah Chunwang, said that 'at the early stage of AFAN, there was little relationship between AFAN and MACBAN, but for the past eight years there is no relationship between these two organisations'. Even starker claims were made by Mr. Dariyan Musa Rapp, of the Riyom LGA office of AFAM, and by Mr. Timothy MadorKamto, the BarkinLadi LGA Chairman of AFAN; both claimed that there was no relationship of any kind between the two organisations in their jurisdictions. By contrast, the Kaduna State chairman of AFAN, Alhaji Nuhu Aminu, reported that relations with MACBAN were 'very good'. Concrete exemplifications of such relations, according to him, include the fact that (a) MACBAN members are also AFAN members; (b) AFAN and MACBAN periodically come together to discuss issues of cattle rustling and other security needs in the community; (c) AFAN and MACBAN officials have a committee that convenes to discuss peace building, and to resolve conflicts between their members. The secretary of the committee is a MACBAN member, and the negotiator/mediator is an AFAN member; and (d) The AFAN Chairman serves as a guarantor for MACBAN members who receive any government loans.

The inability to establish and consolidate sustainable relations between the two associations poses unique challenges for power relations between these organisations; likewise, it poses challenges between them and other critical stakeholders, especially with local communities, the state, and vigilante groups. Failure to establish relations between the organisations represents a lost opportunity to

cultivate social capital, which could be decisive in building a sense of generalised trust. Trust could first be established between the organisations' leadership, and subsequently diffuse into more local units, including community, township, and village levels. Such broadly diffused trust would bode well for sustainable conflict resolution and peacebuilding.

The failure to secure relations between the organisations and other stakeholders represents an inability to forge a common front of engagement with relevant groups on matters of common interest, including climate change, population pressure, and environmental scarcity (particularly of land and water), which both organisations suffer severely from. Members of both organisations will likely be confronted with a deeply compromised market economy, and will suffer compromised security networks that are ineffective in confronting rural banditry. The ease with which rustled cattle are traded, vanishing with little or no trace, provides a vivid illustration of the compromised markets and failed security networks.

Relationship with the state/government: The fact that relations between MACBAN and AFAN has not been patterned in a way that fosters sustainable consolidation is largely established by some other salient findings of the study as shown in the following passages. While the level of MACBAN and AFAN interactions with the state/government varies from place to place, each of the associations made concrete attempts to relate with the government separately. MACBAN officials in Plateau State (Riyom LGA) claimed some relations with the government, especially regarding matters of security threats; in cases of insecurity, the organisation's leadership is usually contacted for intervention. This presupposes that the government takes the initiative to engage the leadership, not the other way around. Such a reading was confirmed by one of the

respondents at BarkinLadi LGA, who said that relations with the state were not only limited, but also restricted to a privileged few leaders; the interactions were often prompted by the government, and, for one reason or another, frequently occurred during *Hajj*. The Kaduna State chairman of MACBAN corroborated the claim that only a privileged few are involved in relations with the government, albeit inadvertently, when he said that they interacted directly with the government. While it is unreasonable for every member of MACBAN to expect direct contact with state officials, the comment suggests some communication gaps, or possibly a lack of trust between the leaders and members. Moreover, *Hajj* should be a purely religious matter; its inclusion on MACBAN's agenda suggests that the supposedly professional non-governmental organisation may have some political and religious undertones, as is been insinuated in some quarters.

The relationship between AFAN and the government was also said to be functional. One of the interviewees, AFAN Plateau State chairperson Mrs. Sarah Chunwang, described the relations between the two as 'satisfactory, because the state government recognises and respects AFAN and has also given AFAN an official vehicle, grants, halls for members to organise meetings, and an open door with the Ministry of Agriculture to address any issues affecting AFAN'. In a related assessment by Mr. Dariyan Musa Rapp of Riyom LGA, the relationship with government could be described as positive, because 'AFAN have [sic] been writing to the government and they have been responding. Before the coming of the Growth Enhancement Scheme [GES], AFAN was the organisation that directly supplied fertiliser to the locals at a subsidized rate, but now the GES is in charge of that aspect'. Other elements and indices of cordiality listed by Mr. Dariyan included the fact that:

- the state government has provided AFAN with an official vehicle, farm inputs, and improved seedlings;
- state government gave AFAN a grant some years back;
- at the local government, AFAN has been supported by the chairperson, whereby its members are sponsored for trainings/workshops;
- the local government provides a venue for AFAN meetings;
- the state governor has promised AFAN an office, although the promise has yet to be fulfilled.

AFAN is said to have cordial relations with the government in Kaduna State as well. The state chairman of the association illustrated the relationship with two examples. First, 'at the state level, [for] any committee on peace building that the government wants to form, AFAN and MACBAN members are always included'. Second, 'some KADP officials do come to AFAN when they intend to organise, and select farmers to participate in any of their programmes'. The other side of the relations, as pointed out by the state chairman, was that 'after the orientation, [the government does not pick any AFAN members, but they choose within themselves and give out names, which AFAN considers as negative attitudes'.

The benefits MACBAN and AFAN have garnered through their relationships with the government are positive, but listing the benefits does not capture the entirety of the situation. It fails to reflect the form and character of relations, especially in terms of the autonomy of these associations as NGOs. For example, it is difficult to rationalise the associations' reliance on the government for the provision of office space.

Relationship with local communities:

In terms of relations with other stakeholders, particularly local communities, findings reveal some disparity between MACBAN and AFAN. In Plateau State, the extent of MACBAN's relations with local community varies from place to place. In BarkinLadi LGA, the relations were said to be limited; in Riyom LGA, on the other hand, there was concrete evidence of relations. MACBAN's efforts to resolve conflicts and build peace provide the clearest illustration of the association's engagement; it was reportedly working with eight communities in the northern zone of the local government. This engagement was reportedly conducted through the platform of the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue (HD Forum). While similar relations with local communities were also found in Kaduna State, the state chairman of MACBAN admitted that the relations had been diminishing, the relationship was 'no longer as it used to be'. He identified growing security concerns as the main cause for the relationship's decline. The Chairman of Chikun LGA in Kaduna State emphasised collaboration in conflict resolution and public education, but also attested to diminishing relations with local communities.

But for AFAN, relations with local communities seem much deeper. As our findings reveal, AFAN connects with youth, traditional leaders, and security agents to mitigate any security issues that could lead to violence. Issues concerning farmers, as listed by the BarkinLadi chapter of AFAN, include crop damage, water point blockage, cattle rustling, and kidnapping. In order to deal with these threats, AFAN in BarkinLadi helped organise the youths, leaders, and security agents to help ameliorate the problem. Such interventions reportedly enabled both farmers' and pastoralists' youths and leaders to work together. Moreover, the intervention of an NGO also makes it possible to resolve issues

together, which has made some of the Hausa people (largely herders) to join AFAN. In Riyom LGA, AFAN formed a Fulani-Farmers Dialogue Community (FFDC), which attends to problems under the supervision of security agents and the local government peace building committee. The Plateau State AFAN chairperson summarised the patterns and platforms of engagements with local communities in broader terms:

AFAN has officials at the local government level and wards. Each local government has a chairman who is directly linked to the community members and is based in the community. He [or] she acquires from AFAN members of any need or challenges, and resolve it [sic] with the help of the local government and security agents and send his [or] her reports to the head office in Jos for possible solution, where need be. Local government has a structure on ground already for peace building, and AFAN works hand-in-hand with it. AFAN has [a] commodity group in each ward, which has been formed to help the farmers. AFAN has been invited to some peace building workshops, and the last one that the chairperson was invited [to] and interviewed was organised by Search for Common Ground (KII, Sarah Chunwung, Plateau state Chairperson of AFAN).

There were reportedly similar patterns of engagement between AFAN and local communities in Kaduna State, to cultivate social capital and build peace. As the state chairman explained,

Kaduna has 33 LGAs and AFAN has chairmen at the Local Government and Ward levels. These

officials help to meet the people's needs at the LGA and Wards levels. Therefore, I can say that AFAN has good contact at the local community and is always involved in affairs of farmers in many villages throughout Kaduna State.... AFAN has committees that handle issues on peace building. All AFAN members, including the leaders at the local government and wards levels in Kaduna State have the telephone number of the state's chairman and other key officials of AFAN. They call him to report most cases, particularly those related to conflicts and disputes that they cannot handle at the LGA or ward level. The state chairman reports the case to the PPRO, who then pass the information to the DPO and his officers. The state chairmen also report the case to the director of DSS Kaduna.

Relations with vigilante groups: AFAN and MACBAN both have significant relationships with local vigilante groups, although the degree of engagement varies by place. In Plateau State, there were several reported joint patrol between MACBAN and local vigilante groups in BarkinLadi LGA. However, respondents said such collaboration was absent in several other LGAs in the state, including Riyom and Bassa. Also in Kaduna State, the state chairman of MACBAN affirmed that relations with vigilante groups were not good. This was corroborated by the chairman of the Chikun LGA chapter, who averred that their attempts to forge relations with local vigilante groups had failed. Though the reasons for the failure were not disclosed, the collapse suggests some degree of poor collaboration and consensus building on the part of MACBAN.

Unlike MACBAN, respondents reported that AFAN had developed a better system of relations with local vigilante groups. In Riyom LGA of Plateau State, for example, the local vigilante groups reportedly help community members to watch over crops, and to guard the community against armed banditry and immigrants who may be sent to steal cattle, attack people, or damage crops. As the chairman of the local chapter described them, 'these vigilantes are youth within the community and when there are any issues, they do not take laws into their hands, but forward most of the cases to the dialogue committee or security agents'. Similarly, in BarkinLadi LGA, the pastoralist and farmer youths are said to have formed a vigilante group, through which they reportedly 'work together day and night to make sure that the case of cattle rustling is greatly reduced'. The claim that they do not take laws into their own hands is quite interesting, given that vigilantes elsewhere are known for flagrant violation of human rights and 'jungle justice', including the Bakassi Boys in eastern Nigeria and the Odua People's Congress (OPC) in south western Nigeria (Baker, 2012a, 2012b).

Strategies and Platforms for goal attainment:

As seen in the above narrative, AFAN's and MACBAN's strategies are frequently closely related. Both associations are known for holding periodic meetings of their members to aggregate and articulate their collective interests for collective action, at times in collaboration with other stakeholders, particularly the government. According to Kaduna State AFAN Chairman Alhaji Nuhu Aminu, the association holds three meetings every year in the state. Both AFAN and MACBAN are also known for organising conferences to critically address matters of interest to members. Both are also known for enlisting the support and influence of traditional rulers to facilitate the associations' efforts. That strategy is substantially more pronounced by MACBAN, whose board and patrons consist of

leading traditional rulers from the north. Both AFAN and MACBAN are also known for pursuing collaboration with other key stakeholders in the pursuit of their goals. There are many layers of such collaborations, notably with local communities and vigilante groups. Collaboration with and assistance from the government appears to be both the most prominent and also the most rewarding of all their strategies.

Alhaji Hunu Aminu, the Kaduna State Chairman of AFAN, was much more detailed in itemising the organisation's strategies. According to him, these included the following:

- AFAN has a corporate account, with each member contributing only two hundred Naira (N) yearly. These contributions serve to benefit the farmers if any farmer encounters any problem, such as illness or lack of children's school fees; the body assists farmers in paying their resulting bills.
- AFAN's Kaduna State chapter has about 150 hectares of cultivated land. It also has a warehouse where it stores its grain. AFAN contacts the government to come and purchase goods, or it contacts Zenith Bank to connect AFAN with marketers who would purchase the gains. At present, AFAN has about 40 million bags of grain saved in its warehouse.
- To support its farmers, AFAN buys grain from its registered members above market price, so as to encourage its members. For example, if the price of a bag of maize in the market is sold at N3,200.00K, AFAN may purchase it from its member at the rate of N6,000.00k per bag. Furthermore, if after the purchase any farmer gets a buyer willing to pay a

price higher than AFAN's, the farmer is allowed to come back to AFAN and demand his or her crops after refunding AFAN.

- AFAN organises general meetings three times per year, where all members come together to share their challenges, develop potential solutions, and give out awards to farmers.

The AFAN Plateau State chairman reaffirmed the fact that collaboration and seeking assistance from the government were arguably the most effective activities of AFAN, stressing these two strategies in describing the association's work in the state:

AFAN [is a] member of Growth Enhancement Scheme (GES) and Plateau Agricultural Development Programme (PADP) and other organisations, whereby this collaboration allows AFAN some privileges and helps it to achieve its objectives. AFAN also seeks assistance from the state and local government, whereby it helps also to sponsor some members for training and have provision for fertilisers and improved seeds. For example, last year the government gave free tomato seeds, maize, produce package packs, and sprayers to AFAN, and AFAN distributed the items to the farmers.

Achievement of goals and contributions:

Despite using these strategies, there has only been questionable success in their jurisdictions, in terms of accomplishing organisational goals, promoting sustainable social capital, fostering mutual trust, resolving conflict, and building peace. Even these

organisations' own managers' self-assessments partially echo this conclusion, although it is important to note the nuanced variation between organisations, and between different locations. Different jurisdictions' ratings ranged from success all the way down to outright admission of failure at different levels. The rising incidence of rural banditry and associated ills across the country, most prominently in the north, remains the most conspicuous sign of failure.

Illustrating the regional variation, while the AFAN Kaduna State chairman rated the organisation as highly successful, his counterpart in Plateau State considered it to be 'partially successful' because some of its goals remain un-achieved. In Riyom LGA of Plateau State, the chairman rated AFAN as 'successful, because it has been able to reach [out] to people within all localities'. His counterpart in BarkinLadi LGA, however, noted varying degrees of success in different jurisdictions. As he put it, 'At the state level, AFAN can be rated satisfactory, but at the local government level, it can be seen as poor'.

The variance in MACBAN's performance in different locations and levels is equally apparent. For instance, MACBAN's leadership at the BarkinLadi, Riyom, and Bassa LGAs of Plateau State considered the organisation unsuccessful. The Kaduna State chairman was of the view that despite some hiccups, the organisation could be rated as successful. The reverse was true in the case of Chukun LGA, where the association was considered to be unsuccessful.

Irrespective of these reservations and varying degrees of perceived success, both MACBAN and AFAN have made some positive contributions to the management of social conflicts in northern Nigeria. Their contributions are clearest in the areas of peace

building and conflict resolution. They do these through a variety of ways. First, the two organisations engage in education campaigns, both among their members and the general public, explaining the need to eschew violence and embrace peace. Second, they engage in grassroots advocacy for peace, exemplified by the HD Forum, with presence in eight LGAs in the northern parts of Riyom LGA in Plateau State. Third, they collaborate with youth and security agencies for peace building, as aptly illustrated by AFAN's formation of a Fulani-Farmer Dialogue Community (FFDC), which helps mitigate conflicts before they degenerate into violence. Fourth, they form joint committees on peacebuilding, comprised of members from both sides. In the case of Kaduna State, the secretary of the committee is a MACBAN member and the negotiator/mediator is a member of AFAN. By sharing leadership positions, they aspire to instil a sense of belonging to all, and thereby build social capital and enhance generalised sense of trust. Fifth, they serve on government committees on security and peacebuilding, at both state and local government levels. Sixth, both AFAN and MACBAN collaborate with youth and security agencies to form local vigilante groups to watch over crops, animals, and the community at large; there are examples of such groups in Riyom and BakinLadi LGAs. Interestingly, such vigilante groups, contrary to the reported trends elsewhere (Baker, 2002a, 2002b), operate largely within the confines of the rule of law, without taking laws into their own hands.

Challenges/Problems affecting performance level:

Despite roles assumed and contributions made, AFAN and MACBAN have fallen short of expectations. The explanations for the perceived underperformance are many, but are generally rooted in the interplay of political, economic, and social forces. At the political level, there are two plausible dimensions. The first relates to

leadership problems, which were widely noted by almost all the respondents in the two states under consideration. As our findings reveal, in some cases, scrambles for leadership positions have dramatically undermined the organisations. In some others, there have been cases of leadership corruption, poor organisation, and inadequately focused leaders. For example, the Kaduna State chairman of MACBAN reported that a leadership scramble between Ambassador Ka'oje and Alhaji Abba Kawu laid the foundation for continuous disunity within the association, which has persisted until today. Similarly, AFAN's Kaduna State chairman said that 'some AFAN members are not satisfied and/or do not appreciate the effort AFAN is putting in to make the organisation and its members successful'. Ibrahim (2012: 3) and Hesse and Odhiambo (2006) identified also this problem in their studies on the subject.

The second dimension has to do with the increasing and multidimensional politicisation of these associations. Heavy reliance on governments at various levels for their livelihoods may have exacerbated this problem. Our findings reveal that both associations lobby the government for sponsorship of their members for holy pilgrimage; both associations are also quick to flaunt this advocacy as evidence of harmonious relations with the government, and as an important exemplifier of their success. A more recent and seemingly dangerous trend in the organisations' politicisation lies in the on-going controversy over the endorsement of the two leading presidential candidates in the 2015 presidential election. By one account, MACBAN national leadership allegedly reaffirmed its endorsement and support for incumbent President Goodluck Jonathan (Ebe, 2014). In another, the Kebbi state chapter suspended its chairman for allegedly endorsing and canvassing support for Muhammadu Buhari, the opposition presidential candidate of the All Progressive Congress (APC)

(See <http://www.talkofnaija.com/politics/kebbi-miyetti-allah-suspend-chairman-over-support-for-buhari>). In yet another incident, the national chairman of the association, Alhaji Bello Abdullahi Bodejo, was suspended for allegedly dragging the association into partisan politics by endorsing President Jonathan for a second term in the name of the association, a step the association claimed seriously embarrassed it and, indeed, all Fulanis across the country (see Mudashir, 2014).

MACBAN and AFAN are both reportedly coping with acute shortages of resources, especially funding support. All respondents noted this problem, and commented on the need for greater financial patronage from the government and international donors/NGOs; according to respondents, support should come in the form of soft loans, grants, and other relevant inputs. AFAN's Kaduna State chairman tacitly alluded to this shortfall, saying that one of the association's problems was that 'the governments do not take AFAN cases seriously, especially when the issues [have] to do with finance; they only do so if it has their interest'.

However, it would appear that the greatest challenges confronting these associations are social, not financial. Problematic social forces include ethno-religious divisions, which made it difficult to cultivate social capital and mutual trust. Findings reveal some measure of suspicion on both sides, which may have contributed to the poor state of collaboration between MACBAN and AFAN. AFAN members apparently perceive MACBAN as an exclusively Fulani and Muslim organisation, while viewing their own association as transcending ethnic and religious boundaries. AFAN's Plateau State chairman voiced this view, saying, 'AFAN is a non-ethnic and religion organisation, while MACBAN is an ethnic and religion organisation'. His counterpart in Kaduna State echoed his claims:

AFAN is an organisation that has people from different religious and ethnic groups. This has helped the organisation to grow and has united the people more. It helps to reduce biasness among individuals. Meetings are held at the LGA level, and it takes turns so that all the members will feel very important. AFAN also includes traditional leaders in its decision-making at the ward level, so that they will be fully aware of AFAN activities.

Evidence of the atmosphere of mutual distrust can be seen in the fact that AFAN and MACBAN could not forge lasting relations with each other, within each of them, nor with other stakeholders— most importantly local communities and vigilante groups. As demonstrated in the preceding analysis, relations between MACBAN and AFAN have been tenuous. There are also indicators of tension within each association. AFAN, for example, has been seen by some as an agent of the federal government unable to effectively enlist the trust of smaller farmers' associations. Amina Djibrin, president of the Association of Small Agroproducers in Nigeria (ASAPIN), for instance, denounced AFAN as 'an agribusiness type of producers' apex organisation that does not defend the interests of small farmers'. In a related criticism, Dr. Olaseinde Arigbede, president of the Union of Small and Medium-Scale Farmers of Nigeria (USMEFAN), characterised AFAN as 'a political instrument in the hands of the government, and has never truly defended the interests of small producers' (see [Revue Grain de sel](#) 51, [Special Issue on Nigeria](#), 2011).

With respect to MACBAN, Ibrahim (2012:3) summarised the challenges when he argued that the association has been

...run for over a decade without a substantive leadership due to recurring crises in the organisation. The activities of the organisation are influenced and dictated more by the government(s) rather than the pastoralists. Most pastoralist associations in Nigeria are becoming partisan, usually in support of whichever government that is in power. While the pastoralists are taxed continuously, there seems to be little or no efforts by the associations in defending their interest especially in times of conflicts. Most pastoralists are beginning to question the relevance of and losing confidence in these institutions as umbrellas for the protection of their rights.

Concluding Reflections and Policy Implications

As stated, the primary objective of this chapter was a critical investigation and analysis of the role of selected herders' and farmers' associations in the management (or mismanagement) of rural banditry and social conflict in Northern Nigeria; specific emphasis was placed on MACBAN and AFAN. These cases were selected not only because they represent the national umbrella bodies of Fulani herders and farmers in the country, respectively, but also because the associations have enormous potential in two regards. The first area of potential is at the individual and communal levels, as the associations are positioned to promote sustainable social capital, resolve conflicts, build peace, and foster harmonious relations between herders and farmers in Northern Nigeria. AFAN's and MACBAN's second area of potential is at the institutional level, as they are positioned to strengthen communication and

collaboration between the associations, the state, and local communities. In distilling these research concerns, the study explored, among others, the strategies and mechanisms utilized by these associations in pursuing these goals, and offered explanations for the organisations' accomplishments and failures.

The study shows that MACBAN and AFAN developed organisational structures at the national, state, and local government levels in order to facilitate their initiatives. Both associations rely on a similar variety of other tactics. One prominent tactic includes hosting periodic meetings and conferences. In another avenue, the associations leverage the influence of members of their boards of trustees, and pursue collaboration with other stakeholders, especially the government, local communities, and vigilante groups. These strategies have yielded some positive gains; in the view of the associations' leader, achievements include political and economic patronage from the government in many spheres, especially allocation of financial aid and sponsorship of members to holy pilgrimage and specialised trainings. More significantly, these associations have contributed to peacebuilding and conflict resolution, as members of both associations are occasionally incorporated into the government's security and peacebuilding committees, both at state and local government levels. Collaboration with local communities and vigilante groups were also found to have aided peacebuilding in some cases. The organisations' uneven success in different areas and at different times suggests a lack of adequate and effective coordination and control.

Despite these advances, however, the study found that both associations still have a lot of ground to be covered if they are to fully actualise their potential. With few exceptions, almost all respondents believed that neither association has lived up to

expectations, especially in the arena of peacebuilding, which could help stem the tides of rural banditry and social conflict in the country. Instead, the problem continues to grow by leaps and bounds, particularly in Northern Nigeria.

As revealed by the study, poor relations between the two associations hinder their capacity to effectively mediate and check rural banditry and social conflict. In most cases, relations between the organisations were almost non-existent. In the few cases where relations reportedly existed, respondents admitted that not only were relations declining, but were also arguably unsustainable in an atmosphere of mutual distrust and growing security concerns. In this context, the associations have failed to secure a platform for united effort. In the absence of such a platform, each association enters into separate relations with other key stakeholders on matters of mutual concern from a position of weakness rather than strength. The lack of coordination helps to account for the uneven progress each organisation has been able to make. That problem is compounded by a variety of common internal problems. These included a variety of leadership crises, funding shortfalls, internal polarisation, politicisation, and an overreliance on government support.

These shortcomings should not overshadow the two associations' unique potential for mediating and checking rural banditry and social conflicts. Their credibility and capacity must be revitalised. The situation bears a number of critical policy implications: First, both AFAN and MACBAN urgently require streamlining, harmonisation, and coordination of their activities. Leadership is a central component of this process. The leadership recruitment process should be strengthened and conducted in a more democratic and participatory fashion.

Second, mutual trust between the two associations must be established. Sustainable and actionable plans to foster stronger relationships must be implemented; these should include the creation of a regular platform for meetings between the leaderships of these associations at all levels.

Third, both associations are occupational and professional in orientation, and should endeavour to remain so. This will reduce the risk of political entanglement that may lead to undue politicisation and factionalism.

Fourth, both associations should end their overreliance on government support, instead working towards a partnership built on mutual trust.

Fifth, both associations need to improve their relations with local communities and vigilante groups. This can be accomplished by creating separate organs within the associations for periodic meetings and dialogue with these important units at state, local government, and community levels. These meetings can be a powerful tool for providing early warnings before threats escalate to violence.

Sixth, the associations must attend to the gender dimensions of their activities. More broadly speaking, both associations need to address inclusiveness of the societies that they claim to represent. That requires reaching out beyond existing membership, actively including the groups and individuals marginalised from decision-making processes; this includes not only women, but also male youths and individuals with disabilities. MACBAN and AFAN should also ensure the decisions made reflect the interests and conditions of individuals across the society, paying particular

attention to the ways in which conflict affects men and women differently.

Seventh, the government must meet its obligation to provide an enabling legal, political, economic and social environment in which these associations can flourish. Doing so requires the formulation or revision of an actionable policy framework and substantive action plans.

Finally, the government should genuinely encourage and support these associations, and must not hijack them to pursue its own agenda. Only then can AFAN and MACBAN be empowered and energised to promote peace building, resolve conflicts between herders and farmers, and at last live up to their potential.

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Chapter

7

**RURAL BANDITRY AND HATE SPEECH
IN NORTHERN NIGERIA:
FERTILE GROUND
FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF
DANGEROUS NARRATIVES IN THE MEDIA**

**Jibrin Ibrahim
Kop'ep Dabugat**



INTRODUCTION

There has been a massive expansion of rural banditry in Northern Nigeria over the past decade. As the phenomenon grows, popular narratives creating meaning, context and [mis]understandings have been emerging. The emergent narratives on rural banditry, both in the media and in popular discourse, are becoming drivers of conflicts in Northern Nigeria. The popular narrative here presents bandit attacks as occurring against a background of intense competition over increasingly scarce land and water resources between various distinct “types” of rural communities that exist within the common geographical space of Northern Nigeria. In that, the nomadic Fulani cattle herders, who are predominantly Muslim, are depicted as the perpetrators of banditry. On the other hand, sedentary farmer communities, consisting of several other ethnic groups that are generally non-Muslim, are depicted as the victims of banditry. Perspectives of the social, religious and ethnic characteristics of these rural communities are framed into expansive essentialist discourses that actively breed and sustain suspicion and distrust. The resulting negative stereotyping leads to further ethnic and religious bigotry, culminating in a succession of attacks and counter or revenge attacks between these different groups. In the end, property is destroyed, communities are dislocated, lives are

lost, instability increases, and misery grows. Then the government steps in with some relief materials and a promise that the perpetrators will be found and prosecuted, but there is almost never any follow up action in that regard. Meanwhile, the positions of opposing groups harden and the conflicts become ever more intractable.

The emerging narratives appear to offer logical explanations for rural banditry in Northern Nigeria by reconstructing particular incidents and analysing their escalation patterns and dynamics. These reports often make use of compelling primary information “like quotations” that describe the gory details of the incidents, their direct and indirect effects on the people, the situation in the communities in the aftermath of attacks, etc. Media accounts are often very graphic, and validate their claims by including statements ascribed to eye-witnesses and descriptions of the reactions of community leaders, security commanders or government officials.

The problem is that the character of such 'media speech' is usually inflammatory, freely dispensing hate messages in the guise of information and analysis. The stories are often followed by threats and counter-threats, accusations and counter-accusations. In that way, the media becomes the conduit through which the perceived plight and grievances of actors are broadcast. By amplifying the negative conversations between aggrieved parties, the media may be serving to deepen existing conflicts and inciting further violence. Clearly, hate speech in the media may play a substantial role in promoting popular narratives about rural banditry and social conflicts in mass social discourse, thereby influencing how the issue is generally viewed by society.

Hate speech is not only inflammatory, it can often be downright dangerous. According to Suzan Benesch, 'dangerous speech' refers to hate speech that 'has a reasonable chance of catalysing or amplifying violence by one group against another, given the peculiarity of the circumstance in which it was made or disseminated' (Benesch, 2013, p. 2). She outlines five variables by which to evaluate the extent to which speech can lead to violence:

The most dangerous speech act, or ideal type of dangerous speech, would be one for which all five variables are maximized:

- i. A powerful speaker with a high degree of influence over the audience;
- ii. The audience has grievances and fear that the speaker can cultivate;
- iii. A speech act that is clearly understood as a call to violence;
- iv. A social or historical context that is propitious for violence, for any of a variety of reasons, including longstanding competition between groups for resources, lack of efforts to solve grievances, or previous episodes of violence, and;
- v. A means of dissemination that is influential in itself, for example, because it is the sole or primary source of news for the relevant audience. (Benesch, 2013, p. 2)

This framework offers a very useful model for analysing the role of hate speech in the promotion of rural banditry-related attacks across Northern Nigeria.

Accordingly, this report focuses on generating data to respond to the following questions: 1) How does hate speech produce and/or reinforce popular narratives on rural banditry and social conflict in

the media? 2) To what extent is hate speech in the media relevant to explanations of social conflicts involving farmer and pastoralist communities in Northern Nigeria? 3) What connections exist between 'media' and 'society' in the framing of dominant understandings about rural banditry and social conflict in Northern Nigeria?

In essence, we are engaged in a systematic endeavour that seeks to explain how understandings of rural banditry are forged between the media and the society.

CONTEXTUALIZING RURAL BANDITRY IN NORTHERN NIGERIA

We begin our discussion of rural banditry by considering how the coincidence of certain physical, social, and economic realities in any given locale at a specific point in time may predispose it to rural banditry. In Northern Nigeria, there is intense competition between farmers and pastoralist Fulani groups over scarce arable land and water resources, which frequently leads to conflict. This has been used to explain repeated cycles of violence and reprisals that have occurred in different parts of Northern Nigeria, and, recently, even in some parts of Southern Nigeria. Within this framework, we find acts of banditry embedded in agricultural practices and conflicts. Second, and even more disturbing, is the seeming incapacity of the Nigerian state to effectively exercise authority and sovereignty over its area of jurisdiction. This is usually evident in the relative absence or inadequacy of the security and administrative services of government; it is likewise apparent in the lack of social amenities in most rural areas of the north, while urban areas enjoy relatively greater amenities. Such inadequacy provides room for banditry to emerge. These realities will help us account for a steady increase in banditry across Nigeria recent years.

The location of Northern Nigeria, off the southern fringes of the Sahelo-Saharan desert regions of west and central Africa, accounts for another causal factor, tied to climate change: the negative impact of environmental and climatic pressures on the Sahel can be linked with social conflict and rural banditry in Northern Nigeria. First, it is forcing a southward migration of pastoralists from the Sahelian belt, who leave in search of water and pastures for their livestock in Northern Nigeria. This migration creates pressure on land and water resources in the area. Second, climate changes have driven intensified cultivation by farmers across cattle routes, which are used by pastoralists to travel and access pastures and water resources. This often results in crop damages by the Fulani's cattle, as the pastoralists seek alternative routes; the crop damage is a genuine grievance among farmer groups. This situation, while resulting in conflict, also intensifies what has been called the 'crisis of nomadism': many pastoralists, having lost their cattle to banditry, drought, and disease, have themselves turned to armed robbery and cattle rustling (Ibrahim, 2014).

A major feature of the crisis of nomadism is cattle rustling, which is usually deeply intermingled with different forms of social conflicts in Northern Nigeria. Mohamud Adan and Ruto Pkalya (2005, p. 16) describe cattle rustling as 'a criminal activity of raiding other communities for cattle and other livestock'. Another scholar has described it as a 'system of predatory exploitation of economic resources...' in the form of 'armed attacks by one group on another with the purpose of stealing livestock and not necessarily territorial expansion' (Osamba, 2000, p. 12 - 13). Cattle rustling is distinct from other forms of banditry, like armed robbery, which may carry no social significance beyond the perpetrators' economic gain. Cattle rustling, on the other hand, may carry a much broader social significance. For East African nomadic communities, for example,

cattle rustling can be tied directly to the sustenance of local livelihoods. It is described in those terms by some observers: 'Traditionally, pastoralist communities raided each other as well as sedentralised communities for livestock, mainly to replenish their herds depleted by severe droughts, disease, raiding or other calamities' (Adan and Pkalya, 2005, p. 16).

THE CONCEPT OF HATE SPEECH

There is a diverse body of literature that covers the subjects of hate speech and media discourse, and how they are related to actual acts of violence. This includes literature on racial/ethnic profiling and stereotyping, as well as dangerous speech flowing from hate speech. It is extremely important for us to understand both how these negative modes of communication in media reportage can influence social processes, and also how social processes have influenced media in the first place. Our area of inquiry, concerning the relationship between hate speech in the media and rural banditry, provides a conceptual focus — the question of how hate speech in media reportage contributes to violence.

In summary, the literature suggests that despite the difficulty of pinning-down the extensive connotations of the hate speech genre, its presence in media reportage often manifests as the expression of grievances in a manner that can incite violence.

Hate speech is a very peculiar kind of narrative. While hate speech is often politically engineered or motivated, those articulating it assume the speech to be factual. That characteristic allows fundamental disrespect for an 'Other' to be disguised as fact, most frequently along the lines of a social cleavage and/or conflict. It is 'a term of convenience... that is readily understood as referring to objectionable, harmful and (very often) illegal types of expression

motivated by one kind of animus or another.' (McGonagle, 2012, p. 3) In broad terms, 'hate speech' has been defined simply as a 'form of offensive language that makes use of stereotypes to express an ideology of hate' (Warner and Hirschberg, 2012). In the interests of a more functional description, we may subscribe to John T. Nockleby's definition of hate speech as 'any communication that disparages a person or a group on the basis of some characteristic such as race, color, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, nationality, religion, or other characteristic.' (Nockleby, quoted in Warner and Hirschberg, 2012).

There are other terms with meanings and usages related to hate speech. These include: 'extreme speech', 'which can be used to describe a wide variety of expressions such a holocaust denial, extreme pornography, and speech inciting hatred or likely to provoke public disorder' (Rowbottom, 2010, p. 608); 'sedition', the publication of 'false scandalous, and malicious writing with intent to defame' (Stone, 2004, p. 36); and 'dangerous speech', a type of hate speech that 'has a reasonable chance of catalyzing or amplifying violence by one group against another (Benesch, 2013, p. 2). These all form part of the discussion related to press freedoms, a topic of discussion that is simultaneously slippery and thorny. We will turn now to the relationship that media hate speech has with conflict and violence.

The media is a multifaceted product that conveys diverse views and perspectives on society. The extent to which hate speech is present in the different types of media reflects the openness and ease of access to a particular medium. Hate speech is easily produced and disseminated on the internet, a medium that is both very easy for people to use and free of tight legal limitations. Hate speech on the internet can be sustained if the originator is seen as a thought leader,

or if the person has a significant following. Ayse Concavar (2013) outlines the dynamics of hate speech's production and promotion of the 'discourse of dominant ideologies' in new media. He argues that the liberal, user friendly, highly dynamic, and interactive features of new media serve as an instrumentality that produces and reproduces hate speech. But we must note that this only goes as far as demonstrating that 'speech' in general is easily generated and circulated within social media, without any reasonable margins for regulation of what can be termed 'natural speech'. For that reason, all kinds of hate speech can be spotted, being casually expressed on different internet information-sharing forums including Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, and even in so-called news items. Other types of media have less liberal terms of access, as they are subject to regulatory controls.

Although freedom of speech laws are very popular in contemporary times within the context of democratic free speech, media regulatory frameworks ensure some form of media content moderation. Dieter Grimm, for instance, writes that 'Natural Speech and media-based speech differ in a more fundamental respect. While everybody can express his opinion, not everybody can amplify his speech via the mass media. Media-based speech is therefore speech by the few for the many' (Grim, 2009: 11). And, by these terms, the amount of hate speech that finds its way into popular media may as well be regulated. Hence, hate speech on radio, television, and in print media may, in fact, be limited.

As research has shown, however, that does not by any means precludes the possibility of hate speech in the mass media. That reality was explored by empirical research commissioned by the Chicano Studies Research Centre (CSRC) at the University of California, Los Angeles. The research focused on quantifying hate

speech on commercial radio talk shows. It identified four kinds of hate speech related to the profiling of minority or immigrant populations within the US: (1) False facts, (2) flawed argumentation, (3) divisive language, and (4) dehumanizing metaphors. These four types of hate speech consistently appeared in a series of three commercial talk radio shows that were studied (Noriega and Iribaren, 2009). Wendy Chan's study on media profiling, 'Media Representations of Immigrants and the Canadian Criminal Justice System' (2013), clearly demonstrated how the negative portrayal of immigrants in newspaper articles reinforces negative stereotypes and profiling about Canadian immigration policies in general. In addition to newspapers, both social and audio-visual media may provide insights into our current research topic of hate speech and the construction of popular narratives on rural banditry in the media.

MEDIA NARRATIVES OF RURAL BANDITRY IN NORTHERN NIGERIA

Media is produced by a dizzying array of actors across a multitude of outlets; this research requires selecting a narrower set of data for analysis. This section of the paper relies upon perspectives on rural banditry drawn from print and online news sources. These two were selected both for their accessibility and also for the wide audiences each commands. Newspaper reports have been found to be particularly influential in setting the frameworks through which audiences interpret the 'facts' about social phenomena (van Dijk, 2000).

It is imperative to avoid a cursory, uncritical survey of newspaper articles on any social phenomenon. Hence, we must bear in mind practical concerns related to articles' character and authenticity. Articles contents and style vary, each with its own distinct slant, and

with varying levels of analytical and conceptual depth. A variety of factors can contribute to this variation in quality and slant, including possible influence by the dominant interests being served. Interests in this regard may include profit maximization, pressure from politicians, the preference of journalists, and the drive to carve an innovative niche (Gentzkow and Shapiro, 2006, pp 31 – 43).

Moving beyond these concerns, newspaper reports on rural banditry in Northern Nigeria are often presented as accounts by eyewitnesses, or the 'authoritative' statements of key figures, such as community leaders, security commanders and government officials. The first concern about media reports on the topic is the tendency to view rural banditry as an expression of social conflict induced by ethno-religious sentiments. The problem is that media reports rarely differentiate between actual acts tied to ethno-religious conflict and ordinary acts of banditry. Consider the following passage, which weaves the acts of looting with religion-incited violence together:

In every area visited, survivors of the April violence consistently described extensive looting occurring prior to the torching of their properties, and the deliberate targeting of church leaders and church-owned buildings. Several reported finding their possessions and clothing in the homes or on the persons of local Fulanis. In Soba LGA in northern Kaduna, where 85 homes were destroyed, 22 churches razed and five girls were raped, victims reported their attackers had been bussed in from elsewhere (Christian Solidarity Worldwide [CSW], 2011, para. 4)

In the statement, there is a clear representation of the alleged perpetrators as 'antagonists', who commit all sorts of dehumanizing crimes, including looting, arson, killing, and rape. The repeated

references to 'church leaders', 'church buildings', and the number of destroyed churches implies a religious dimension to the events. This is unsurprising, as most conflicts in Northern Nigeria are seen as having some sectarian aspect, mostly religious or ethnic. This is a problematic default lens of analysis, as there are increasingly frequent acts of banditry with no purpose beyond seizing resources and cash. Some of the articles go beyond mere reference to factional symbols, painting vivid pictures of open war between actors and their presumed victims. Such media reports may serve as conduits for the open trading of accusations and counter-accusations, as well as threats and counter-threats between prominent figures from both sides of the conflict. The opening of 1 2012 article typifies this trend:

A Fulani group called Miyetti Allah has denied an allegation by Governor Jonah Jang of Plateau State that Fulanis were planning to launch spontaneous attacks in the state. Instead, the group said they would only fight back in self defense if they were attacked by members of the Berom ethnic group. ("Fulani will fight back", 2012, para. 1)

Even more provocative articles present patterns of escalating conflict, tracing seemingly isolated attacks to earlier bouts of violent conflict between the Fulani and the people of the villages attacked. Furthermore, they indicate that the parties sometimes carry out peace talks, and even negotiate 'ceasefires' (Banniyat, 2014). Such reports are more likely linked to the long-standing idea of conflict between cattle herders and sedentary farmers, with the invasion of farmlands by Fulani herders as the most popular trigger. For example, a Berom public office holder is credited with the following reaction to incessant attacks in Bachit district of Riyom LGA of Plateau State by alleged Fulani herders: "The Fulanis come into our farmland and will deliberately lead their cattle to graze on crops, if you complain you are killed instantly" (Idegu, 2014, para. 24).

However, while this narrative of conflict often refers to individual events, it leads to dangerous generalisations about specific groups. Sometimes, the attacks are carried out by multi-ethnic teams of bandits, but they are attributed to a single group that has been targeted for social reasons. One security operative, for example, said flatly, 'The attack is a reprisal kind of attack, it followed cow rustling, when people kill cows: the cow owners will stage revenge' (Idegu, 2014, para. 33). In fact, the clear linkage between these attacks and acts of banditry are often shown from the opening sentences of media reports on the issue. For example, one article opens, 'Heavily armed Fulani herders attacked several villages in Southern Kaduna killing at least 100 villagers in the early hours of today' ("Suspected Fulani herdsmen", 2014, para. 1). The foregoing report clearly presents the Fulani as perpetrators of the attack and the non-Fulani as victims. Further, the usage of terms like 'Middle-Belt', "Southern Kaduna" (Ibid), and 'Beromland', suggesting that the attacks occur in non-Fulani areas, presents a picture of the Fulani as alien to the sites of the attacks. The use of contrast identity labels for the *other*, such as 'settlers' vs. 'indigenes', 'natives' or 'Muslim Fulani' vs. 'Christian indigene' or 'Fulani Attackers', often clearly demarcates the ethno-religious boundaries between the Fulani and their supposed victims. In fact, some of these reports are very clear on their perspective from their headlines alone. Consider the following array of newspaper article titles:

"Nigeria-Soldiers Sent To [Southern Kaduna] Following Armed Attack" (CSW, 2011),

"Suspected Fulani Herdsmen Kill At Least 100 in [Southern Kaduna]" ("Suspected Fulani herdsmen", 2014)

"Anger in [southern Kaduna] over 'ceasefire' with Fulani" (Banniyat, 2014)

Such media reports consistently promote the idea that the Fulani are perpetrators of the acts. The spectre of danger from the other (in this case, the Fulani) is reinforced when empirical evidence is brought to bear. Consider a report about several incidents claiming that a number of captured alleged perpetrators were found to be Fulani: 'We first thought that they were unknown gunmen, but we later discovered that they were Fulani. The youths were able to capture two of them' (Banniyat, 2015, para. 4).

The implied wickedness of the other is strengthened by media representations of rural banditry in Northern Nigeria, which depict the alleged attackers operating at night, unleashing crass violence on their victims with the aim of wiping out whole communities by 'heartlessly' killing indiscriminately, showing no mercy for vulnerable groups of people like women, children and the elderly; by torching buildings; by carting valuable property off; and, in rare cases, by taking captives ("Suspected Fulani herdsmen", 2014). This type of reporting deepens concerns about atrocities directed at specific ethno-religious groups.

Causes of the incidents are also widely discussed in the media. Several justifying linkages are in turn often suggested as causes for the acts of rural banditry committed by the Fulani. Two of the most popular of these are the argument of political grievances and religious differences. Politically, what is by far the most relevant incident in contemporary times happened in 2011, when the victory of the PDP's presidential candidate, Dr. Goodluck Ebele Jonathan, over General Muhammadu Buhari of the Congress for Progressive Change (CPC), was violently rejected. Mayhem erupted in parts of the north, with reprisals peaking in Southern Kaduna. The following passage recounts relevant events:

There has been continuing tension in Kaduna State since April, when hundreds were killed and thousands displaced in deadly post-election violence initiated by supporters of the unsuccessful presidential candidate of the Congress for Progressive Change (CPC) party. The violence, which quickly took on a [sectarian] dimension, erupted in 18 of Kaduna's 23 LGA. Tensions were further raised following the electoral victory of the ruling Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) gubernatorial candidate, the first elected Christian governor in Kaduna's history (CSW, 2011, para. 2)

In the above passage, the word 'sectarian' subtly ushers in an ethno-religious dimension to the attacks. The same article continues:

On the evening of 3 September, four Hausa-Fulani youths were detained by a team from Operation Yaki, the joint security unit charged with counter-terrorism, as they scouted out the mainly Christian neighbourhood of Malali, situated in a predominantly Muslim area of Kaduna City (para. 3)

Attacks are often prevented by the deployment of security forces, as a way of trying to calm the situation of frayed nerves:

Soldiers and riot police have been drafted to Bitaro Village in southern Kaduna State following an armed attack that occurred in the early hours of Sunday. Four people were killed and over ten injured when armed Fulani tribesmen stormed the village in Jaba Local Government Area (LGA), [Southern Kaduna], in Nigeria's [Middle Belt]. (CWS, 2011, para. 1)

While the killings continue to occur indiscriminately, security agents reportedly often come in only after the attacks have concluded and the attackers are long gone. By the time that security operatives are deployed, they are confronted only by the anger of non-Fulani youths, who often vehemently oppose the presence of the security operatives in their communities, or actively oppose the attempts by any form of government official to placate them. (Southern Kaduna People in the Diaspora [SOKADASU], 2014)

It is also significant that the response of the authorities, whether government officials or security personnel, has always been to condemn attacks and appeal for calm, with promises that the perpetrators will be brought to justice. Whether the commitment of the authorities is true or not, victims' perceptions have always been expressed as accusations that the government was doing too little, or even that the government was complicit in organizing the attacks and providing support for the attackers. The rumours surrounding the death of former Kaduna State Governor Ibrahim Yakowa provide a typical example. The popular conviction was that Yakowa's death was orchestrated by his former deputy, Ramallan Yero, who happens to be Fulani. It was in that context that the president of the Ninzon Progressive Youths (NPY), Mr. Bazard Wuya, reportedly blamed the government for allowing attacks to occur in the villages of Fadan Karshi and Nandu, on June 24, 2014:

The Fulani wrote a letter to our chief in Gwantu early this month, warning that they will come and kill our people even when we never offended them. We took the threat seriously and took copies of the letter to the government. But no efforts were made to protect vulnerable places. This is the third but most barbaric attack on us. (Banniyat, 2014, para 10)

The Southern Kaduna Indigenes Progressive Forum (SKIPFo) threatened to take legal action against the government: 'Chairman of the group, Major George Nchok Asake (rtd) said: "We are living in a state of anarchy and we will do everything possible to take the government to the International Criminal Court (ICC) to answer charges on the massive killings of our people on daily basis."' ("Over 100 Killed", 2014, para. 6)

While some allege that security personnel are complicit in attacks, others simply see the security forces as powerless against better-armed attackers. In one case, attacks reportedly lasted for several days across seven villages in Bachit District of Riyom LGA in Plateau State, despite the deployment of security personnel, who even lost two members in the process: 'In most of the villages attacked, there was presence of men of the STF. Why are they not going after the attackers?' (Idegu, 2014, para. 27) This statement is credited to Hon. Daniel Dem, a member of the Plateau State House of Assembly who represents the Riyom constituency. Even when the security forces sustain losses, they are accused of doing nothing.

The Fulani have not kept mute in the face of these widespread accusations. In some instances, they have responded that Fulani involvement in reported violence is a form of self-defence. For example, a statement credited to one Mr. Sale Bayari, Secretary of the Miyetti Allah Cattle Breeders' Association of Nigeria (MACBAN), reads,

We want to categorically tell the people of Plateau State and all Nigerians that the Fulani have never and will never attack anybody and will only fight back in self-defense; even this shall be as a last resort as the Fulani believe in the rule of law and will continue to rely on the law to protect them." ("Fulani will fight back", 2012, para. 5)

Bayari has made contradictory statements, however. For example, he seems to have confirmed that the Fulani are fighting back against the Berom ethnic group in particular, which is antagonizing them. Bayari said,

The fact is that the Fulani of Plateau State, in particular, and Nigeria in general, have no problem with the people of Plateau State, to warrant any attack on the people. The people who have consistently attacked the Fulani of Plateau State and other Fulani on national cattle routes in Plateau State have been the Berom ethnic tribe of Governor Jang in Jos South, Riyom and Barkin Ladi LGs since 2001 to date. The Fulani in Plateau State have never attacked any other tribe in any aggression or reprisal except the Berom who have so far since 2001 killed over 700 Fulani in these Berom-dominated areas. The Fulani minority in these places have been fighting in self-defense against the Berom majority killer squads and militia which are allegedly being recruited and sponsored by the Plateau State Government. (para. 7)

Such statements seems to confirm that the Fulani sometimes do commit attacks, which they justify in terms of self-defence. Furthermore, this type of response confirms affected communities' beliefs that their attackers are Fulani.

The more common Fulani response to allegations is to simply dismiss them as falsehood, and to claim that the allegations are driven by ulterior motives. For example, Muhammadu Damina, a Fulani leader from Karu, in Nassarawa State, claims that the Fulani are victims of xenophobia. He asserts that between January 2013 and April 2014, 357 Fulani herdsmen had been killed, and 60,000 cattle stolen by rustlers (Vincent Yusuf, 2015:15). He added, 'we hardly

sleep at night because we don't know who is coming after us or our animals' (Vincent Yusuf, 2014:14). He concluded that the mass killings are orchestrated by some important people in society, who provide sophisticated weapons to the assailants so they can kill the Fulani cattle herders. In the same article, the Fulani association MACBAN was quoted as expressing the view that the attacks were politically motivated, and that evidence of ethnic cleansing against the Fulani people exists. In a similar vein, the Steering Committee of the Jos Forum of the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue has alleged a deliberate attempt to present the Fulani as terrorists, so that they could be attacked and destroyed. As the centre's spokesperson, Salihu Musa Umar, has argued:

“There are attempts by some people to tag the entire Fulani community in Riyom as terrorists and a den for perpetuating terrorist activities.” (Onimisi Alao: 2014:7)

There are therefore very strong positions held on both sides of the debate, extending to claims of mass atrocities; contending claims should compel us to maintain caution in assessing the veracity of what is said.

METHODOLOGY AND DATA COLLECTION

The issue explored in this study is located on the point of intersection between two types of rural community – farmer and pastoralist – that cohabit within much of the rural parts of Northern Nigeria. This forms the background against which the population of study was selected. The area of study includes all of Northern Nigeria, but we deliberately narrowed our field data collection to Plateau and Taraba States. Both states fall within the category of states experiencing the highest frequency of rural banditry as at the period of study. Both states are also very prone to conflicts generally, in which acts of banditry are prevalent. The two states also share a boundary that forms part of a heavily-forested region, stretching into parts of Nassarawa and Benue States – an area that has seen a fair share of ethno-religious conflicts over the past 20 years. These conflicts have occurred between the Tiv-Jukun, Fulani-Jukun, Eggon-Alago, and others. Some conflicts have been accompanied by pogroms, such as the Yelwa-Shendam killings of 2001, the Ombatse Killings of 2013, and the Wukari Crisis of 2014. The zone is characterised by a *mélange* of people and communities from different ethnic extractions, with a sharp distinction between the Fulani-pastoralists and the others, whose main occupation is farming. The different groups found within that vicinity include Fulani, Goemai, Hausa, Jukun, Kwalla, Taroh, Tiv, and many more, all living side-by-side in distinctive communities and settlements of their own. These common characteristics informed our choice of Plateau and Taraba States as the areas of field study.

Table 1: Characteristics of FGD Groups

Name of Community	Characteristic of Population	Experience of Attacks
Pandam	Farmers from several ethnic groups, including Tiv, Jukun, Eggon, Kwalla, Muaghavul, Berom	Incidents in Originating Community of IDPs among participants
Goes-Kwalla	Fulani Herders	One incident in the past
Mile Uku	Fulani Herders	Incidents in neighbouring community
Dinka	Taroh Farmers	Incidents in neighbouring community
Pwadzu 2	Jukun Farmers	Several incidents within the ir community
Nwuban	Jukun Farmers	Several incidents within their community
Kaamem	Tiv Farmers	Several incidents within their community

The methods used for collecting data are basically qualitative, with two main data collection methods employed. Secondary data consists of relevant literature, including books, scholarly articles, and news media reports relevant to the subject. Primary data was gathered through Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) with rural communities (See Table 1 above for characteristics of the FGD Groups).

Both primary and secondary sets of data were analysed through the use of discourse analysis. Discourse analysis is an analytical methodology that focuses on the exertive effects of communication on society and social processes. It focuses on how 'discourse', taken to mean 'a shared way of apprehending the world' in relation to a broad social context where it 'enables those who subscribe to it to interpret bits of information and put such together into coherent stories or accounts' (Dryzek 1997, p. 8). In synthesizing different

discourse perspectives on the issue, a simple comparative analysis methodology was used. The comparative methodology in general has been defined as 'the analysis of a small number of cases, entailing at least two observations, yet too few to permit the application of conventional statistical analysis' (Collier, 1993, p. 105). Our comparisons in this work were carried out on two different levels, with different sets of variables involved. On the broader level, we compared perspectives revealed from the content of media reports on rural banditry and social conflict with perspectives deduced from the statements made by rural dwellers during FGD discussions. At the level of field data, we also compared the perspectives expressed by pastoralists with those expressed by the farmer groups. This has afforded us a rich set of data to analyse in the research.

Two Local Government Areas (LGAs) within each of the states were chosen for the study, from which two communities in each were targeted for FGD sessions. In Plateau State, Shendam and Qua'an Pan LGAs had one farmer community and one Fulani community selected from each for study. In Taraba State, three farmer communities were visited; one in Ibi LGA and two in Wukari LGA were studied.

The intended participant size of the FGDs was between eight and twelve people, to allow for the ease of management and coordination. However, in certain groups these numbers could not be maintained, as the number of participants at some FGDs exceeded the target number. All participants in the FGDs fell within the adult age bracket (18 and above), with both male and female genders represented in several groups in fair numbers. It must be stressed here that not all the FGDs had women represented, as the FGDs with the Fulani communities had no female participants. This may be attributed to the religious and cultural background of the

communities involved. In total, seven FGDs were conducted within a total period of six days, spread over two months. (See Table 2 below)

Table 1: FGD Conducted

State	LGA	Name of Community	Number of Participants	Date
Plateau	Quaan-Pan LGA	Pandam	13 people	22.11.2014
Plateau	Quaan-Pan LGA	Goes-Kwalla	9 people	22.11.2014
Plateau	Shendam LGA	Mile Uku	8 people	23.11.2014
Plateau	Shendam LGA	Dinka	12 people	23.11.2014
Taraba	Wukari LGA	Pwadzu 2	14 people	23.12.2014
Taraba	Wukari LGA	Nwuban	13 people	23.12.2014
Taraba	Ibi LGA	Kaamem	10 people	24.12.2014

The field data collection process faced some constraints, with insecurity constituting the greatest limitation. Security factors associated with the terrain limited accessibility in the field, especially with Fulani communities in Taraba State. While it took the researchers a long time to determine when it was safe to travel to Taraba, the Fulani communities were located in the forests, where rumours of ongoing attacks continued to circulate. It appeared unsafe to visit these Fulani communities as at the time of the study. In addition, the sensitivity of the subject of the research bred some suspicion among rural community members about the researchers' motives. This prevented participants from conversing freely.

The degree of suspicion was reflected by the fact that in all the communities visited, not a single FGD participant agreed to fill attendance sheets during the sessions. Lastly, the study had to contend with rural community dynamics and customs. Elders were accorded great respect; youths often refrained from talking after elders had spoken. Similarly, female participants tended to speak

less than their male counterparts. The respect accorded to elders tended to prevent participants in FGDs from freely responding to questions asked. In several cases, participants had to wait and read the body language of the eldest person or their community head before thinking of their comment. In other instances, after a leader made a comment, no other participant would comment; it was especially unlikely that a comment of differing logic would be presented. This has been a distinctive feature of interactions particularly with the Fulani groups. But despite these challenges, the researchers were able to organize some very interesting FGD sessions, which produced extremely valuable information.

PRESENTATION OF STUDY FINDINGS

We now turn to the analysis of the findings from the FGDs, which revealed a variety of ways in which rural dwellers encounter the issues of rural banditry. From the outset, we sought to establish respondents' level of media awareness, their preferred media sources, and their perception of media reportage on rural banditry. That information provided us with insight into how rural community residents received and processed information from the media on the subject of rural banditry and social conflict in general.

Next, we sought to understand community members' actual perceptions concerning modes of reportage about rural banditry and social conflict in Northern Nigeria. By engaging participants in discussions along these lines, we hoped to come into contact with the lines of exchange that may connect media representations of the phenomenon with its perceptions and reality among the rural community dwellers. Below, we present the perceptions that we encountered.

Media Awareness among Rural Community Dwellers

The values and beliefs imparted by the news media have a significant effect in shaping and informing how society encounters and internalizes public discourse issues (Crespi, 1997). The extent of rural dwellers' media awareness will certainly offer insights regarding the extent to which the media shapes their thinking, and, invariably, their behaviour. Drawing from FGD participants' responses, we assess the media sources patronized, the frequency of exposure to news reports on rural banditry, and the mood of media reportage.

Popular media sources patronized

Radio is generally the most patronized media source in Nigeria's rural areas. Unsurprisingly, the rural communities studied had radio as a major source of news, information, and entertainment. That does not denote an absence of other news sources; it only suggests that radio was more readily available than newspaper, television, or internet news sources. In Nwuban village of Wukari LGA of Taraba State, for example, there is indication of intermittent patronage of newspapers, television stations, and even internet news sources among some of the FGD participants. However, it should be noted that in those areas television station bands/waves are very weak, and newspaper distribution services and sales are similarly rare or low. Furthermore, most rural community dwellers do not own television sets, nor are they literate. As one elderly participant asked rhetorically during one of the sessions, 'what will we do with television in these parts?' (Focus Group Discussion [FGD], November 22, 2014) It is understandable that they would mostly turn to radio stations as sources of news.

The Frequency of Exposure to News Reports on Rural Banditry

Since radio serves as rural community members' main source of news, it is most likely that any reportage or discourse on rural banditry (or any other subject) would be generated from radio sources. Indeed, several participants in all of the FGDs indicated having come across radio reports related to rural banditry. The narrative casting Fulani gunmen as perpetrators of such violence has always been in the news, as the FGDs confirmed. Such reports are sometimes tempered with a bit of critical thinking, as news reports may also indicate the involvement of other ethnicities within the immediate localities where the attacks have taken place. Discussions during the FGDs revealed that although the Fulani were considered to be perpetrators of some acts, other people were also identified as likely participants in the banditry. As one Fulani said, 'There has [sic] been several reports, but the ones within our immediate area has attributed the incidences to Fulani and sometimes also [Taroh people]' (FGD, November 23, 2014). A farmer gave another account corroborating the Fulani man's statement, saying, 'It is Fulani that are featured in the reports as troublemakers. Sometimes no cause is mentioned for their attacks. Sometimes they are said to simply be [gunmen] or [unknown gunmen].' (FGD, December 23, 2014) But the fact that Fulani men are often portrayed in news reports as perpetrators of violence does not necessarily mean they are in fact perpetrators of violence. Participants confirmed that some of the radio reports have, in fact, indicated the Fulani were not the only group involved in violent attacks:

The reports say it is the Fulani that are involved all around the country. But there is one report that said some other people who are not Fulani were disguised as Fulani when they go to attack. (FGD, November 22, 2014)

Broadly, comments from the FGDs suggest that the popular notion portraying the Fulani as the sole perpetrators of violent acts of banditry in rural communities may not necessarily be true.

The Mood of Media Reportage

Different groups have varying interpretations of media reports involving sweeping generalizations, depending on whose point of view is represented in the stories, where the events occurred, and who the narrators are. In the FGDs we investigated how rural community members see media reporting on rural banditry in general, and the labelling of Fulani as perpetrators in particular.

Generally speaking, farmer communities tended to view reporting as fair, while Fulani tended to view reports as unfair or biased. The point of contention is usually whether Fulani were, in fact, perpetrators of the attacks. Members of farming communities generally expressed certainty that media reports of Fulani banditry were fair. For example, a fairly well educated young man of Taroh extraction in Dinka village, near Yelwa-Shendam, expressed his view that,

The accusation of Fulani is a fair accusation because they are always agitating about grazing reserves. They are saying that the farmer communities are the ones preventing them from having grazing reserves. So they are always attacking us so that they can chase us away. (FGD, November 23, 2014)

For the Fulani FGD participants, the disputation was not tied to a blanket denial of Fulani involvement in such attacks. Rather, Fulani FGD participants complained about the unfair heaping of accusations on the Fulani alone, excluding other ethnic groups that may be involved in carrying out similar attacks. Some speculated

that criminal gangs with multi-ethnic membership may have carried out the attacks in question. As a young Fulani man in southern Plateau State said,

"We think the reports are not fair because all the accusations are being heaped on the Fulani, but it is mostly the Taroh people that are doing the attacks. Sometimes, there are usually several ethnicities that are involved in the gang including Fulani people. Sometimes, some people also disguise [themselves] as Fulani to go and carry out the attacks" (FGD, November 23, 2014)

Doubts about reports' veracity were not limited to the question of Fulani culpability. One farmer expressed general concern about the media's accuracy:

The reports are sometimes false because they mention events that are said to happen in certain areas that are close to us but we are not aware of any such incident. (FGD, December 23, 2014)

Another Jukun farmer suggest that reporters may have confused the locations or dates of attacks. 'Maybe it is something that happened somewhere else, 'he said, 'and they do not know so they say it happened in a different place entirely' (FGD, December 23, 2014).

Media Source Preferences

Given that pastoralists and farmers may have differing perceptions on the issue under consideration, we also sought to find out the role that their media preferences might play in shaping their opinions. Several questions were explored: First, we sought to determine where they get their information and news from, and what the

contents of those news items were. We then evaluated whether the different groups patronize distinctively different media sources, and what reasons might account for the different consumption patterns.

None of the FGD participants remembered specific messages that tended to arouse suspicion or shape their perceptions of the issues in question, but they were all able to remember the radio stations that they frequently patronized. There was striking similarity in the lists of radio stations that participants named, including both local stations like Radio Kaduna, 90.5 Peace FM Jos, 99.9 FM, and Ashiwaves, and also globally-broadcast Western stations like BBC, VOA, DW, and RFI. However, while the Fulani exclusively mentioned international radio stations, some of the farmers also included local radio stations and other sources of media, including online news and newspapers, as their principal sources of news on rural banditry.

The differences in the two groups' media consumption may contribute to their differing perspectives on rural banditry. One potential factor worth bearing in mind is that some local radio stations are owned by state governments, which may be biased. Such bias (or even perceived bias) may account for the fact that the Fulani do not depend on local stations as a source of information.

Dominant Narratives on Rural Banditry among Rural Dwellers

In our earlier survey of media articles, we identified five subtle discourse frames related to rural banditry. First, rural banditry in Northern Nigeria is fundamentally characterized as an expression of social conflict. This conflict often happens in rural areas, and may operate along several identity-based dimensions, including ethnic, religious or communal identities.

The second frame also concerns the identities of the primary actors involved — both the perpetrators and victims of attacks. These two distinct groups are often depicted as being locked in irreconcilable conflict as a result of their different modes of economic activity. In other words, the Fulani-pastoralists and sedentary farmer groups are seen as entirely distinct categories of primary actors in conflict. The pastoralists are presented as aliens, while the farmers are presented as locals.

The third discourse frame regards the dynamics of the conflict; references to the causes, grievances, triggers, and drivers of banditry are situated within the theoretical underpinnings of the supreme pastoralist-farmer conflict paradigm. Within that framework, banditry for its own sake is considered unlikely (with the exception of cattle rustling).

The fourth discourse frame captures the role intervening actors play in addressing the situation; actors under consideration include the government, security operatives, and other social actors.

The fifth and final discourse frame covers the consistent allegations that Fulani pastoralists are the sole perpetrators of attacks. While the farmer groups continuously accuse the Fulani of violent banditry, Fulani responses are more varied and nuanced.

These five frames were taken to the field and tested for consistency with rural dwellers' experiences.

Rural Banditry as Social Conflict

As news media reports have indicated a strong linkage between rural banditry and social conflicts in the cycles of rural violence, it is necessary to ascertain to what extent the two are connected. We

found that pastoralists' and farmers' perception of possible linkages differed sharply. The Fulani claim that attacks are 'mostly pure banditry' (FGD, November 22, 2014), with only secondary connection to other conflicts. The secondary connection is seen as the result of the strong feelings of loss experienced by Fulani victims of banditry, primarily in the form of cattle rustling. As one FGD participant reflected,

When such attacks started, it was not in connection with any conflict, but purely banditry. But now it has developed into conflict because people whose cattle are taken will not be happy. If you take their herd, they do not have any means to sustain themselves and their families, so they will feel bad. So if they identify the people responsible, they will attack them. (FGD, November 23, 2014)

For the farmers, acts of banditry are connected to conflicts within their immediate environment. In their accounts, there is often a clear indication of conflicts around the destruction of farmlands by stray Fulani cattle. 'The grazing of cattle on farmlands that are left to fallow to grow thatch for the roofing of huts is a cause of the conflict,' one respondent said. 'Even grazing of cattle on planted fields also causes conflicts', he continued (FGD, November 23, 2014).

Farmers also drew connections between different conflicts around the Middle Belt, using the farmer-pastoralist conflict paradigm as a general frame. As one farmer recounted, 'Several conflicts are reported on the radio that have the same characteristics, including the Eggon-Alago conflict, in which Tiv is said to be supporting the Eggon, while the Alago went to bring Fulani to support them' (FGD, November 22, 2014). Perhaps farmers' most interesting claim was the connection drawn between acts of banditry and socio-political

conflicts. In this narrative, the Fulani are allegedly struggling to gain political control of Taraba State in particular. As one farmer said,

The attacks are not connected with any form of communal conflicts but attempts by the Fulani to dominate the Taraba land. The attacks are caused by religious factors like the connivance of the Hausa and the Fulani. It may also be politics. They want to take over Taraba State. (FGD, December 23, 2014)

Through our research, we sought to identify whether there is a significant connection between rural banditry and social conflict, and how strong any such connection might be. We followed a line of inquiry establishing the extent to which current and past attacks are connected, and how such connections may pitch communities against one another. There were no FGDs in which participants drew a direct link between contemporary violent banditry and past or present conflicts. Nonetheless, there is still a sense in which a strong line of connection can be drawn.

The Fulani see the connection between rural banditry and social conflict as stemming from more mundane causes, like 'envy'. When asked what connections existed between the attacks involving Fulani with rural banditry, one Fulani man said, 'None in our present vicinity. Here, there is peace, but in other places the farmers [envy] the Fulani, and this causes conflict and dissatisfaction that eventually lead to conflicts' (FGD, November 22, 2014). In cases of Fulani cattle being taken by cattle rustlers, it is certain that the Fulani herders will attempt to get their cattle back by any means at their disposal. One Fulani participant said, 'there is no form of conflict really. But there is the issue of banditry, and the Fulani sometimes attempt to get their cows back when they are stolen, because that is

their only means of livelihood' (FGD, November 23, 2014). Through the process of attempted recovery, there may be violent confrontations with groups sympathetic to the cattle rustlers. This is how one of such incidents was described:

At one time when the Taroh people took Fulani cattle, the Fulani went with military men in pursuit of the cattle rustlers and got the cattle back. In the process, some of the cattle rustlers were killed, and it was discovered that some of them are Taroh, and Taroh communities along the route that the cattle rustlers followed tried to engage the search party violently, in order to stop them. This is the only thing that usually creates conflict (FGD, November 23, 2014).

Farmers also consider their proximity to theatres of conflicts involving the Fulani (or groups sympathetic to them) as a major factor potentially leading to violent banditry. For example, farmers in Dinka village of Shendam LGA, located just on the outskirts of Yelwa-Shendam, observed that the highly-publicized pogrom that took place in that town in 2001 could be a factor in the attacks that their community and surrounding areas were experiencing (FGD, November 23, 2014). It should be noted that this speculation involved an event that transpired over a decade earlier. However the connection with conflict was a more palpable reality for farmers in Pandam, located on the Plateau-Nassarawa boundary; FGD participants included internally-displaced persons who had been displaced by inter-ethnic clashes in parts of Lafia-East Development Area. There was strong reason for them to be convinced that violent banditry may be spill-over from the long-standing Eggon-Alago conflict, in which Fulani support of Alago is widely speculated. This is how the situation was explained:

The conflict has involved rural bandits coming about to harvest and carry away foodstuff from the farms of those displaced from the area. Farms are being deliberately destroyed by cattle herders on the farms, property is being vandalized, and valuable parts like doors and roofing sheets are removed and sold off by the bandits; buildings are also being destroyed. The conflict is possibly connected with the refusal of the Tiv and the Eggon to pay tribute to the chief of Asakio, so the Tiv and the Eggon are said to be having an alliance (FGD, November 22, 2014).

Primary Actors involved

It is clear from the consultations that there is widespread belief that Fulani pastoralists have significant involvement in cases of rural banditry, especially within the Middle Belt area, where we carried out our fieldwork. Thanks in part to the mass media, the popular image of the Fulani herdsmen as armed marauders has spread.

One of the Fulani communities confirmed the involvement of some Fulani in some of the attacks that took place around Southern Plateau, but the comments did not conform to the media's simplistic narrative. One respondent reported that, 'in the case of cattle rustling, the attackers work usually in gangs that include people from different ethnic groups including the Fulani. But in this area, most of those responsible for the attacks are Fulani and Taroh' (FGD, November 23, 2014). So while there were Fulani individuals involved in banditry, the attackers were not a homogenous group, with variance by locale. In Southern Plateau, it was said that the Taroh were also involved in attacks (FGD, November 23, 2014), while in Nassarawa, the Alago were mentioned (FGD, November 22, 2014). In Taraba State, it is the Hausa that were mentioned as part of the cattle rustling gangs.

The complex reality on the ground is that both pastoralists and farmers have been victims of the banditry attacks. The attacks are characterized mainly by the use of overwhelming force, as dozens or even hundreds of attackers are involved in an operation. It is this use of overwhelming force that pushes people to flee their villages and settlements. In addition to sheer numbers, attackers tend to be highly organized. Both pastoralists and farmers confirmed that the attackers set up camps, which they use as planning and staging grounds before attacking communities. A participant in Goe's village shared his knowledge of the bandits:

The attackers are usually said to be very organized, sometimes numbering up to 100. There is a story that was told, saying that the rustlers have their chief. At a particular time, the rustlers came to steal the fattened cattle of a Fulani man, and when the Fulani man went to plead with the chief of rustlers, he got some of the cattle back (FGD, November 22, 2014).

In this case, the gang of attackers appeared to be very similar to other gangs in organized crime which are involved in smuggling, trafficking, and racketeering.

A popular Hausa proverb holds that 'for a town to be conquered, someone from that town must be involved in the plot' (*'da dan gari akan ci gari'*). If the attackers are in fact organized enough to establish camps as staging grounds, they certainly must have a means of gathering intelligence. Since most of the communities are small, and strangers would likely be conspicuous, it is very likely that locals with knowledge of the terrain are involved in the planning or execution of raids. When confronted with this issue, participants in the FGDs had very interesting ideas to share. Here again there is some difference between the perceptions of pastoralists and farmers.

Pastoralists clearly dismissed possible involvement of their Fulani community members in the planning of attacks on neighbouring communities (FGD, November 22, 2014). They did, however, allow for the possibility of involvement of community members in other places in planning attacks. They expressed the opinion that Taroh communities sometimes conspire to carry out acts of banditry in some place. One respondent said, 'There are collaborators within some communities, and sometimes whole communities connive to carry out attacks, and this is done by the Taroh people' (FGD, November 23, 2014).

Farmers expressed a strong belief that none of their community members were likely involved in the planning of attacks against their kinsmen. They also speculated that if there were community insiders collaborating with bandits, they would most likely be individuals sharing the attackers' religion, or would be the Fulani living among them. As one of the FGD participants remarked, 'Yes, there may be members of our community that may be involved with the attackers, especially those that share the same religion, that is, Islam, with them. Some of the Fulani that were living together with us in our communities are part of the attackers' (FGD, December 23, 2014).

The most striking opinion was the insinuation that the government may have a hand in the attacks, motivated by some elites' biases. One FGD participant, an IDP from the Nassarawa State communal clash, expressed such a view:

There is also the possible involvement of the government in the conflict, because it is said around that Fulani people from different places, including Niger and Mali, are part of those perpetrating the attacks, and it is said that the government is

camping them at Obi. The attackers come mostly on foot, but sometimes they come in cars and motorcycles. It also seems that the attackers may be supported by helicopters, as sometimes we see helicopters take off and land around the heavily forested areas where the attackers are hiding. (FGD, November 22, 2014)

This is suggestive of a massive conspiracy to instigate and sustain conflicts. This is not an uncommon allegation in several conflict situations across the country which involve Fulani parties. We must note, however, that no allegation of this type has been proven true thus far.

The Dynamics of the Phenomenon

The fact that conflicts usually have complex dynamics is widely accepted. In considering the causes, triggers, effects, and factors of rural banditry, many explanations are bound to emerge. It is clear that different motivations play roles, including ethnic, political, religious and socio-economic grievances. The popular farmer-pastoralist conflict paradigm, was also alluded to several times during FGD sessions. From the farmers' perspective, the paradigm holds that attacks are intended as acts of intimidation by the Fulani, so as to scare farmers away from their land, so that the Fulani 'can have land to graze their cattle and then later the land will be converted to grazing reserves' (FGD, December 23, 2014). Seeking to justify this belief, a farmer said, 'The Fulani move around freely with sophisticated weapons, including machine guns. Because of that, they can easily attack and kill people anytime they want' (FGD, November 23, 2014). Another explanation proposes political and religious motivations driving attacks:

It is politics and religion. While the objective of the Hausa is to dominate anywhere they go to, the Fulani think they are still doing Jihad. Look at Ibi. Now the Hausa people who came to settle there are claiming that they are in control of the place. (FGD, December 23, 2014)

A Jukun farmer expounded further upon the Hausa's alleged quest to establish dominance in Taraba State:

Also, there is the traditional issue in which the Hausa are agitating for chieftaincy title. They want to have a right to succeed to the throne of Aku Uka of Wukari, since several of them have married Jukun princesses in Wukari. (FGD, December 23, 2014)

Some explained the attacks as part of an evolutionary sequence involving banditry and conflict as interlinked phenomena. A Fulani elder argued that the attacks were simple banditry, devoid of any 'religious' or 'cultural' motivations, although he conceded that some acts of banditry 'sometimes change to become [broader] conflicts' (FGD, November 23, 2014).

A Taroh farmer took the inverse position, seeing banditry not as a cause of social conflict, but rather as one of its effect. He said,

"It is involving three things. It is politics that is the foundation, which leads to conflict, and the conflict gives birth to banditry. Part of the political aspect is the lack of effective political leadership. Sometimes it comes as a result of misconceptions, misinformation, and deception by political leaders." (FGD, November 22, 2014)

The Taroh farmer's emphasis on politics was a significant and recurring theme in the discussions. In Pandam for example, it was seen more as a trigger of ethnically-motivated violence involving acts of banditry, rather than as a distinctive cause. This was how one participant explained the situation:

At first, we all thought it is part of the long-standing Eggon-Alago conflict, which escalated recently, after Solomon Ewuga visited the area as part of his governorship campaign in 2007. Immediately [after] he left, the violence started. At that time, the attacks by the Alago [had] been targeted at the Eggon mostly, while the Fulani where not part of it. But presently, the attacks are involving other ethnic groups, because the Alago perceive that the other ethnic groups are conniving with Eggon, so they did an alliance with Fulani. Now also churches are being burnt, while there are also religious killings of Christians on the highways by Alago and Fulani. (FGD, November 22, 2014)

The FGDs further revealed that these same causes or triggers of political, religious, and ethnic differences could also explain why certain communities suffered attacks. Participants shared the belief that the communities targeted by bandits are being profiled, whether in religious, ethnic, or political terms. For example, an elderly participant in Goe'es explained that

In places like Jos, I know that the Fulani have long-standing differences with the local Berom people. And there is also a perception that the Fulani is [sic] troublesome, so sometimes the Fulani are attacked without any provocation. (FGD, November 22, 2014)

A Fulani participant offered a different perspective on the issue of group profiling:

How can you tell me that the cattle rustlers pass through other communities and not attack them, and then they come straight to the Fulani communities and steal all their cattle? Is that fair? Maybe it is because the Fulani have no political power in this place, since the cattle rustlers pass through the Taroh communities and do not steal their cattle, but they come to steal the Fulani cattle. (FGD, November 22, 2014)

A farmer from Taraba attributed attacks to both religious and political differences, saying,

[We] are not the same religion with [them] and they are planning to take over the state so they are attacking communities that are not having the same interests with them. (FGD, December 23, 2014)

A Jukun farmer emphasized ethnic differences, saying, 'our community was attacked because we are Jukun. We are not the same people with them' (FGD, December 23, 2014). From the viewpoints of the several ethnic groups displaced by conflict in Nassarawa State, violence was a clear manifestation of active communal conflict driven by ethnic divisions. As one participant said, 'The attacks are focusing on all the other ethnic groups in the area because of the perception that all the ethnic groups are conniving with the Eggon against the Alago' (FGD, November 22, 2014). Only the farmers in Dinka presented a perspective that diverged from the narrative of community profiling:

They attacked us because of the closeness of our community to the attackers in Yelwa as a result of the escalation of the conflict in 2001. Also, the lack of security deployment in the area is a cause of the attacks. (FGD, November 23, 2014)

The two additional factors, 'proximity to the attackers' and the 'lack of security deployment', both suggest the relatively weak reach of governmental authority and public security services.

Within the area under study, attacks involving acts of banditry have been occurring for about 15 years, but these have steadily increased in the past two or three years. Media reports do not clearly explain whether past and present attacks are part of a continuous trend, or whether the recent escalation has been caused by a new set of factors.

Our FGD discussions revealed some interesting perspectives about the nature of these attacks. First, some groups mentioned that past attacks were more significantly limited by an effective deployment of military troops; according to participants, this was particularly true with regard to the attacks on rural communities in Taraba State, which occurred in 2006. More recently, the military has failed to play an effective role in checking attacks. As a result, increasingly frequent and severe attacks are forcing many rural farmers around Wukari and Ibi towns to abandon their rural abodes, as they seek safety in the towns. The displaced farmers included individuals from Jukun, Tiv, and other ethnic backgrounds (FGD, December 23, 2014).

It is possible that the recent escalation in violence may be related to increasing political activities in the run up to Nigeria's 2015 general elections (FGD, December 23, 2014). The Tiv farmers in Taraba were particularly convinced of such a causal link, saying the attacks were

'connected with the conflicts between Fulani and Tiv, as well as that between the Fulani and other ethnic groups in both Benue and Nassarawa States' (FGD, December 24, 2014).

The farmers in Plateau State, which have been more peaceful than Taraba in recent times, described the increase in cattle rustling as a potential contributor to the escalation of conflict (FGD, November 22, 2014). This escalation has discouraged some of them from keeping cows in recent times (FGD, November 23, 2014).

Cattle rustling has been a feature of Fulani pastoralists for a long time, and they may have developed methods of defending themselves against banditry. As one elderly Fulani man said,

Well, in some instances that we can say, the involvement of Fulani in attacks is as a result of self-defence. When they come and take our people's cattle, it is only natural that the people will go after them immediately [after] they discover [the attack] and try to take back their property. (FGD, November 22, 2014)

But Fulani involvement in violent encounters does not in any way mean that they deliberately plan attacks on communities that they suspect to have taken their cattle. As one young Fulani man puts it, 'It is [just] cattle rustling that has been disturbing us for a long time. That is all we know about these attacks' (FGD, November 23, 2014).

Government and Security Agencies as Actors

With the escalation of several different security challenges in Nigeria, particularly since the return of democracy in 1999, the country has seen a gradual decline of its citizens' trust in the state's capacity to maintain law and order. Faith in the state's ability to

guarantee citizens' security has declined particularly sharply in Northern Nigeria, the area hit hardest by ethno-religious and communal conflicts, especially with the advent of the Boko Haram insurgency. The rural dwellers of Taraba and Plateau States gave voice to this trend. At one of the FGDs, a young man derisively dismissed the government's role in security matters, saying, '[the] government is not really doing anything'; other participants quickly concurred (FGD, November 23, 2014).

Alleged government complicity in the planning and execution of attacks was identified as an explanation of the government's apparent inability to quell violence in Nassarawa State:

Even though we are displaced from Nassarawa State, the government of Nassarawa State has not given us any relief materials, but the Plateau State government has given us [some]. We think also that the government may be behind the issue, since with all the people displaced, you will hardly hear any news about the conflict on Nassarawa State radio stations. (FGD, November 22, 2014)

It should be noted that IDPs reported that they have received some relief materials from state governments. Accounts from both Taraba farmers and also some Fulani have corroborated the provision of relief materials (FGD, December 23 - 24, 2014). There were, however, mixed views regarding the government's role in addressing the situation; one farmer explained that while the government often dispatches security personnel to quell the banditry, the provision of relief materials is not part of the deal. The same farmer, however, was sure that the government is trying its best' (FGD, December 23, 2014).

The Fulani pastoralists interviewed, on the other hand, thought the government is doing less than expected, either due to a lack of commitment (FGD, November 22, 2014), or due to a lack of capacity and necessary equipment:

Government is not doing enough. It is the government that has the ability to go and collect back the stolen cattle of Fulani from the Taroh, but they are not doing enough. Also the government does not have enough sophisticated equipment, like helicopters to patrol the areas such that they can spot the cattle rustlers when they are running away. (FGD, November 23, 2014)

Other participants believed that the government had the capacity to affect the situation. A Fulani elder remarked that, 'the deployment of security operatives to address the issues may be helpful in some instances. He also said, 'If we are to find ourselves in such a situation, we think it is always best to cooperate with the security' (FGD, November 22, 2014).

Farmers generally held a dim view of security deployments' potential to resolve the issues. First, they expressed concern that security personnel carry out extortion when deployed, which diminishes their effectiveness (FGD, November 23, 2014). For Nigerians everywhere, extortion by security personnel is virtually expected to occur whenever security personnel are deployed in a theatre of conflict. Farmers' doubt extended beyond the standard anticipation of corrupt behaviour.

Another concern was that security deployments around rural communities are simply inadequate, leading residents to abandon their farm settlements and villages, and seek refuge in towns (FGD, December 24, 2014). Farmers in Dinka expressed a similar

perspective, claiming that 'security operatives are usually deployed only in the towns, leaving the villages with no protection' (FGD, November 23, 2014). These two accounts suggest that security personnel have either been deployed in inadequate numbers or are entirely absent from remote villages — precisely the places they are most needed.

Those critiques pale in comparison to the allegations that deployed security forces act according to their biases. Allegations extend in severity all the way to the attacking and killing of innocent people (FGD, December 24, 2014). Security personnel have also been accused of freeing guilty parties; as one Jukun farmer explained, 'Some of the attackers were apprehended at Sondi village and were handed over to the security men, but they later let those people to go free' (FGD, November 23, 2014). A third unsettling allegation is that security personnel are themselves involved in vandalizing or appropriating property left behind by fleeing IDPs. One Eggon IDP, displaced from Sabon Gida and relocated to Pandam, said,

The security men are not cooperative with the people. Security men are also involved in vandalizing property, as well as mopping up abandoned property by the displaced people. We heard that some of the security men have been going round and taking abandoned Boxer motorcycles of our people, and selling them, and they also use the bayonets of their guns to puncture the fuel tanks of those motorcycles that are very old and will not have any value in the market. (FGD, November 22, 2014)

FGDs also involved discussions of the measures that have been taken to improve localities' security. One security measure discussed was Fulani collaboration with security personnel, who

together would conduct operations to restore normalcy after banditry attacks. In those operations, the Fulani report that their main role was to track cattle rustlers and identify any stolen cattle which was recovered (FGD, November 23, 2014).

Another security measure described was the participation of rural community leaders in multi-stakeholder forums at different levels, which were organized by different actors, including government and community associations. Security meetings organized by the Qua'an Pan Local Government Council, which oversees a relatively peaceful jurisdiction, have reportedly been very helpful in defusing tensions (FGD, November 22, 2014). The Wukari Development Forum organised a similar meeting, which has reportedly been effective in promoting mutual understanding among all the different ethnic groups within the Wukari area (FGD, December 23, 2014). Sometimes, two or more communities may come together to establish and maintain peace. In other cases, a community may take its concerns to the closest governmental authority to them, that is, the local government councils; the people of Dinka claimed to have occasionally done so (FGD, December 23, 2014). However, the fact that such meetings are organized does not necessarily mean they are effective in dousing tensions. As a Jukun farmer remarked, 'There have been up to five peace conferences that have been held over the years to talk with the Fulani and the Jukun and other tribe leaders. But all the time it is immediately the next day after the conference that the attacks do take place' (FGD, December 23, 2014). When such peace-building initiatives fail or are unavailable, people are left only with the option fleeing to areas considered safer. This was the route taken by the people of Kaamem, as security personnel were no longer in their area (FGD, December 24, 2014).

Allegations against the Fulani

As demonstrated earlier, the news media commonly depicts Fulani herders as perpetrators of attacks. When questioned about that reality, Fulani representatives often make statements that might seem imprudent if considered in the light of the issue's sensitivity.

Farmer groups tended to agree with the assumption that the Fulani are perpetrators of violence. They also shared the impression that the Fulani neither listen to nor care about the perspectives of others (FGD, November 23, 2014). The farmers expressed the opinion that the Fulani's apparent lack of sensitivity may be tied to an agenda that they are implementing, which may include their attempts to gain control of land, as many of them are now becoming farmers (FGD, November 2, 2014). Farmers' suspicions extended to the most significant Fulani socio-economic organisation. As one respondent bluntly claimed, 'Miyyetti Allah is involved in planning the attacks involving the Fulani herders if you look at their comments related to the accusations. They always say that they are protecting themselves' (FGD, November 22, 2014). For another farmer, the comments of the Fulani are indeed very imprudent. 'If you know that someone is suspecting you of something,' the farmer said, 'you will say what will calm him down, but these people just don't care and they are proud of even attacking people' (FGD, December 23, 2014).

The Fulani respondents offered similarly assertive responses. For example, one Fulani participant said,

Well, we may not deny that Fulani cannot be involved in attacks, but banditry is now a very general phenomenon in which you will find all ethnic groups. Although before now, you cannot find Fulani stealing. But if the Fulani are targets of

attacks because of the perception that Fulani are stealing, then the Fulani will always defend themselves. (FGD, November 23, 2014)

As inter-group tension has increased and conflicts have escalated, parties on all side are imputing great meaning to others' statements — although their conclusions may or may not be correct. Both sides of the conflict need to reflect on their modes of communication, and should seek less acrimonious ways of expressing themselves.

DISCUSSION

We began by painting a vivid picture of how hate speech is encountered in reports related to rural banditry, and by highlighting the fact that the media's use of hate speech has implications for Nigerian politics and society. We then contextualized rural banditry in relation to the realities of Northern Nigeria. Next, we reviewed literature demonstrating how hate speech and the media interact, while also reviewing illustrative news media articles to show how rural banditry in Northern Nigeria is represented in the media. We then went to the field, in order to establish how rural dwellers encountered these realities, both through media reports and in their lived experiences. Finally, we presented the findings of our encounters on the field.

Our guiding questions were straightforward: 1) How does hate speech produce and/or reinforce popular narratives on rural banditry and social conflict in the media? 2) To what extent is hate speech in the media relevant to explanations of social conflicts involving farmer and pastoralist communities in Northern Nigeria? 3) What connections exist between 'media' and 'society' in the framing of dominant understandings about rural banditry and social conflict in Northern Nigeria?

Hate speech, as we have seen above, is expressed through subtle means that disguise its intent of fomenting 'an ideology of hate'. Often couched as an expression of social conflict, acts of rural banditry in the media are described simply as 'violent attacks', carried out by 'gunmen' or 'unknown gunmen'. More often than not, these perpetrators are identified as Fulani. In these contexts, hate speech often wears the guise of 'free speech', expressing an idea that is accepted by a certain audience as the norm.

If such hate speech is allowed to proliferate freely, at a certain point it risks spiralling out of control and priming society for hate crimes. Hate crimes consist of '...criminal conduct motivated by prejudice'. While 'prejudice' is an 'amorphous' term on its own, a hate crime can be said to have occurred where a 'causal relationship' is established between criminal conduct and an officially-recognized prejudice (Jacobs and Potter, 1998, pp.11-28).

In a country like Nigeria, where ethnic and religious prejudices run deep, news reports that attribute repeated acts of atrocities to a specific group are liable to take the form of dangerous hate speech, which could amplify violence. In fact, prejudices may seem to be the only plausible explanation that we can give to the way in which the different groups perceived themselves in relation to similar groups across the country. FGD participants on both sides of the divide perceive themselves as connected in a way with the experiences of other groups similar to them in other parts of the country, even where no form of remote connections are involved. That explains why the narrative of the Jukun in Taraba and that of the Eggon in Nassarawa may seem similar.

In our field study, we saw graphically, how participants tended to accept media reports that confirmed their prejudice and to reject

those that did not. Jukun farmer groups in Taraba State provide a clear-cut demonstration of that tendency: the farmers claim that their communities are attacked by Fulani gunmen who have a grand design of political domination in a state seen as that of the Jukun people. The Jukun farmers unanimously accepted media reports that make similar claims (FGD, December 23, 2014). This tendency was also seen when the Eggon and Tiv IDPs from Nassarawa State accuse media stations in Nassarawa State of not reporting on the conflict which displaced them. They claimed that the silence of the media is because the state government is headed by a Gwandara man, Governor Umar Tanko Almakura, whose ethnic group has some affinity with the Alago (FGD, November 22, 2014).

The formulation of popular narratives on rural banditry and social conflict seems to occur at two distinct levels. The first is the level of actor perceptions about the issue, and the second is the level of secondary reports and analyses. While real-life experiences are the source of actor perceptions, the media perspectives may fall under secondary reports and analyses. The intersection of media perspectives and actor perception forms a two-way exchange. For the primary actors (the two sides presumed to be in conflict), quotations and ideas attributed to 'eye witnesses', 'community leadership', 'authority structures', 'security operatives', 'expert analysts', and a whole range of other similar labels are supposedly the ways in which their ideas and experiences travel through the media space. On the other hand, media reports constitute one of the most popular means through which the realities and experiences of these same actors are presented in the public arena. The point at which these two meet is the same point at which the popular narratives of rural banditry and social conflicts are formed and/or reinforced.

In this context, prejudice provides the justifications further fuelling cycles of atrocities and counter-atrocities between and among different groups caught in conflict. The fact that media reports claim actors' accounts as sources does not necessarily amount to validation of the report's contents. Likewise, an actor who expresses a concurring perspective does not necessarily validate a media report.

With relation to prejudice, we have seen how the same media perspectives have been opposed or rejected at different levels by both farmers and pastoralists. We have also seen how the conflict's two primary groups, farmers and pastoralists, have differing levels of media awareness, and different preferred news sources. While media reports on the issue transmit information around banditry into the public domain, individual experience in relation to the same issue seem to define the nuances of narratives subscribed to by any of the groups. It is these variously-segmented 'popular narratives' that may eventually become reinforced and entrenched as the different perspectives expressed on the issue by the different actors.

CONCLUSION

This work has highlighted how media hate speech engineers the formulation of popular narratives of rural banditry and social conflict in Northern Nigeria. That endeavour required operationalizing many complex concepts – these include hate speech, media, rural banditry, social conflict, Northern Nigeria, etc. given that complexity, our organizing principle has been to move from what was available (media reports and scholarly material) to what was not (primary accounts of rural community dwellers), while avoiding conceptual confusions. Our goal was not to establish complete definition of the complex concepts we encountered, but rather to use them to sketch a broad picture of the issues at hand. Hence, far from presenting a complete picture, this work represents

only a modest first look at the relationship between media hate speech and rural banditry and social conflict in Northern Nigeria.

In the light of issues considered through the work, we must here sound the alarm about the need for hate speech to be taken seriously in Nigeria. There is no coherent legal framework for the identification and control of hate speech, nor is there one for the punishment of the producers of hate speech. That is a grave threat to the peace and stability of the country. It is true that Nigeria is a signatory to several international instruments that are directly relevant to discriminatory actions including hate crimes – these include the [International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights](#), the [Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination](#), the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, the African Charter of Human and Peoples' Rights, and several others. Nonetheless, the Nigerian legal system has been very slow in appreciating and acting on the serious damage that hate speech causes in contemporary Nigerian society. The result is that rural banditry and violent social conflict continue to escalate.

In concluding this work, we must also highlight the implications that the interactions between rural banditry and social conflicts in Northern Nigeria present to researchers. First, rural banditry is a serious crime that does not receive the attention it deserves from scholars. This is unfortunate, as it is an enormous driver of other crimes – including arson, rape, and murder. The rural poor are being traumatised, losing their livelihoods, and even losing their lives. The number and scale of attacks are increasing, and the multi-ethnic gangs involved are growing. This element of organized crime must be investigated thoroughly in order to determine the true nature of the problem, and to assist in raising awareness about them for the improvement of security, governance, and safety in Northern

Nigeria. A second issue requiring further investigation is the incidence of significant population displacement as a result of violent banditry. Population displacement's effects on Nigerian society and economy are not fully understood. It is a serious problem, because most IDPs have lost their means of earning a livelihood, leaving them exposed to countless health and social dangers. The dangers they are exposed to may include social vices and crime such as prostitution, robbery, and delinquency, as well as health challenges like HIV/AIDS, malaria, and water-borne diseases. Both local and international attention have been given to IDPs displaced by the Boko Haram insurgency in north-eastern Nigeria, but this focus has marginalized other IDPs. Scholars must help to highlight the fact that the plight of IDPs from rural banditry and associated social conflicts is as serious a problem as those generated by the insurgency.

PUBLIC POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

The extent and complexity of the challenges render rural banditry in Northern Nigeria an enormously formidable problem, requiring herculean efforts from many different quarters.

The following measures are broad sets of suggestions for concrete actions to be taken towards addressing the issue:

1. Given the multifaceted nature of the problem of rural banditry in Northern Nigeria, there is no doubt need for in-depth research to provide a holistic understanding of the phenomenon. Greater understanding will facilitate a hastened response to the problems in question. One pressing area of research involves properly defining the dynamic connections between rural banditry and violent social conflict. The advantage of such an exercise is that it will serve

as a background resource for both practitioners and policy makers in developing practical and results-oriented policies and programs to address the problem of rural banditry effectively.

2. Efforts should be made to ensure that lines of communication and dialogue are sustained between and among all the different parties that are usually thrown into conflict by acts of rural banditry. Here, government, development partners, and civil society actors must work closely to support peace-building initiatives, and to facilitate awareness and capacity building initiatives aimed at addressing disputes between groups.

Similarly, linkages between the communities and the media must be strengthened, so as to provide reporters with a better understanding of the problem and its context. This will help to reverse the trend of negative stereotyping, and will help ensure balanced and factual reporting on issues related to rural banditry.

3. Practitioners should support the intensification of cooperation and coordination, so as to ensure sharing of information and obtaining feedback that could serve as early warning information in times of impending crisis. Here, the public-private partnership approach should be adopted in all practices, so as to involve communities, vigilante organizations, security agents, specialized institutions, and experts in addressing the situation. Such collaboration will improve the safety and security profiles of rural communities.

4. There is need for the development of a media code to be used in sensitizing the media on the relevant international standards on reporting issues of conflict and banditry. This process should involve conflict sensitivity and safety training, and it should be based on very strict journalistic standards. Appropriate laws and regulations should be developed at both the federal and state levels, aimed towards ensuring that the margin of what is considered 'free speech' in the media will be effectively regulated. Social media regulation is of particular importance, given its ease of use and wide appeal, especially among the young and most active segments of the population.
5. International collaboration in addressing the problem should be strengthened, in light of the trans-border connections that exist within the milieu of rural banditry. Most important is cooperation with the Lake Chad Basin Authority member countries, as it will help to curtail the sale and transfer of arms to bandits. Such cooperation can be implemented most effectively through a multi-stakeholder framework in which government departments, security agencies, local organizations and associations, and community leaders are involved.
6. The Nigerian government should give top priority to the domestication and implementation of all relevant international instruments that address the different aspects of rural banditry. This will ensure that the relevant legal framework is in place, so as to adequately manage incidents of rural banditry. Once all the relevant international instruments have been domesticated, there will be a need for

the criminal justice system to be reformed and updated to take into account all the forms of rural banditry. Legal reform should involve recommending appropriate procedures for prosecution as well as just punishment guidelines. Such a policy framework should be developed within a national policy framework that seeks to promote intergroup relations.

7. Concrete efforts should be made to strengthen the reach of governance institutions in rural areas through the installation of adequate law-enforcement and administrative systems, especially around the areas most prone to banditry. An improved security and administrative presence of government in rural areas entails more than stationing and provisioning infrastructure in the rural areas to serve the communities. Personnel should be adequately trained and equipped, and they should be granted reasonable compensation packages. This will reduce the level of corruption in the system and minimize the compromising of the security personnel, while enhancing integrity and competence among the security personnel.
8. The Nigerian government should take concrete steps towards addressing the immediate effects associated with incidents of rural banditry. Some of these effects include the destruction of property, the loss of livelihoods, population displacement, disruption of social processes, and the loss of life. The government should endeavour to deliver relief materials to those displaced, institute schemes to help victims cope and reclaim their livelihoods, and provide trauma counselling that will enable them to return to normal

life as quickly as possible. Addressing these effects will provide the stability necessary for concrete developmental programmes to flourish. In addressing these problems, it is also crucial that the Nigerian government adopts the best practices that have worked in other countries, so as to develop a robust architecture for addressing the problem of violent rural banditry.

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Chapter 8

RURAL BANDITRY AND SOCIAL CONFLICTS IN PLATEAU STATE

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**Background / Context:**

In the last two decades, Plateau State has faced different forms of violent conflict, with devastating impact for both rural and urban dwellers. Most of these conflicts have an ethno-religious character, with huge connections to power and resources (or lack thereof). Rural conflicts, however, are increasingly taking a different dimension. Patterns of death, destruction, and displacement associated with rural banditry and other forms of violence have become a dominant feature of daily life in the rural communities of Plateau State.

Criminal acts occur almost daily, and include armed robbery, the vandalizing of pipelines, oil theft, cattle rustling¹, overnight attacks against communities by armed groups, and rape. The various forms of violence have led to deaths, displacements, and the disruption of both individuals' livelihoods and also the broader economy of Plateau State. Furthermore, weaknesses of policing and justice administration have given rise to a climate of insecurity, unchecked criminality, rural banditry, and conflicts across the state.

¹The point need to made that not the ownership of cattle is not only limited to pastoralists. Many farmers who keep cattle have had their cattle rustled too.

Increasingly frequent and intense conflicts between farmers and pastoralists form a major component of the state's social conflict. The groups compete over access to land and control of its resources; the competition sometimes devolves into violence. A majority of the people in Plateau State live in rural areas, and depend on subsistence agriculture as their primary basis of livelihood. For most households, daily agrarian existence consists of cultivating small plots of land, coupled with tending a few animals as livestock. While farmers are concerned about land as a factor of agrarian production and primary source of food, pastoralists depend upon arable land for livestock grazing.

Rural banditry has also been linked to the crisis of nomadism, involving huge losses for pastoralists. Youths are directly involved as perpetrators, using armed robbery, cattle rustling, and other forms of criminality to make a living². The dynamics of violent conflict in Plateau State has have exacerbated rural banditry, in which cattle rustling and other violent crimes have persisted due to the diminishing capacity of the state, as evident in its weak monopoly over instruments of violence.

The proliferation of small arms and light weapons (SALWs) in the state reflects a trend in the privatization of violence, which has created a condition whereby non-state entities possess weapons beyond state control. The pressing question is which factors account for such proliferation. It is imperative to find answers, give the strong link between proliferation of arms and the emergence of rural banditry. As bandits operate beyond state control, tracking the persons involved in acts of criminality has become increasingly difficult.

² See Jibrin Ibrahim, Pastoralist Transhumance and Rural Banditry, available at www.premiumtimes.com/opinion/157305-pastoralist-transhumance-rural-banditry-jibrin-ibrhim.html

In most parts of the state, violent confrontations between farmers and pastoralists have stemmed from encroachment in farmlands, farming on grazing routes, struggle over grazing space, cattle rustling, and other forms of violence that continually put communities at risk. This situation continues to pose serious security threats to people's livelihoods and very lives. Security agencies are perpetually unable to adequately provide much-needed security for the people. Furthermore, the weak administration of justice has contributed to the climate of insecurity, and has allowed bandits to resort to violence with impunity.

The rise of social conflicts and establishment of banditry's political economy in Plateau State can be seen through the prism of poverty, which is perpetuated through inequality in terms of access to security and social amenities, and unemployment. In addition, the underdevelopment of the economy's productive forces has served as an obstacle to the transformation of the structure of the economy. While social conflicts have created the basis and condition for insecurity and division, rural banditry continues to obstruct livelihood transformation.

In the current discourse on social conflict and rural banditry in Nigeria generally and Plateau State particularly, economic factors have taken centre stage, with social and political factors sidelined. The argument presented is that at the heart of conflict, violence, insecurity, and rural banditry in the state, economic greed is the key driver, rather than political or social grievances. This approach, however, misses the significance of poverty, unemployment, competition over scarce resources (such as land and water), and the rise of parasitic, self-financing bandits. The reality is that there is an organic link between conflict and livelihood.

In the light of that fact, this paper draws heavily from Collier (2000), whose thesis regarding the economic agendas of conflict underscores the link between the economic conditions of people as principal drivers of discord and banditry. Collier's theory holds that where high and rising unemployment exists, social conflict and rural banditry are fundamentally driven by economic factors, rather than ideological influences. For the vast majority of the people of Plateau State living in rural areas, whose livelihoods are primarily based on subsistence agriculture, social conflicts are seen as arising from contest over livelihood opportunities; accordingly, banditry is seen as being driven by commercial motives.

Research Questions:

- (I) What is the character and what are the dynamics of rural banditry and social conflicts in Plateau State?
- (ii) What is the relationship between rural banditry and social conflicts in Plateau State?
- (iii) What is impact do rural banditry and social conflicts have on the political economy in Plateau State?
- (iv) To what extent has the character of the state influenced the management or escalation of rural banditry and social conflict in Plateau State?

Research Objectives:

- (I) To examine the character and dynamics of rural banditry and social conflicts in Plateau State
- (ii) To understand the relationship between rural banditry and the dynamics of social conflicts in Plateau State
- (iii) To understand the impact of rural banditry and social conflicts on the political economy in the state
- (iv) To examine the role of the state in the management or escalation of rural banditry and social conflict in Plateau State

Methodology:

We adopted a community case study approach, which, according to Yin (1994), is investigation built on an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context. This approach enabled us to collate detailed information on the factors that contribute to social conflicts, criminality, and banditry in the rural communities of Plateau State. Our aim was to provide detailed and in-depth analysis of various aspects of inter-group relations, and of the divisions within ethnically- and religiously-diverse communities.

Fieldwork was carried out in select local government areas of Plateau State; selection was largely based on these communities' experiences of social conflicts and rising crime rates linked to rural banditry. Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) and Focused Group Discussion (FGDs) were conducted in these communities. Information on the selected areas are detailed in Table 1.

Data Collection:

This research relied on data drawn from both primary and secondary sources:

(I) Primary Sources: The use of Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) for this research was interactive, and afforded researchers an opportunity to understand both content and context. The PRA allowed us to follow up on responses as a basis for obtaining full and objective responses. The PRA emphasizes the involvement of communities in the collation and analysis in a way that takes their priorities and peculiarities into consideration. Here, open-ended questions were used for both the KIIs and also for the Focused Group Discussion (FGDs). In all, 26 KIIs and six FGDs were conducted across the six communities targeted for this study.

(ii) Secondary Sources: This research relied on literature, published reports, and documents relevant to the study.

Sampling Technique: The use of a purposive sampling technique was adopted to generate data for this research. The purposive sampling technique helped to identify individuals and locations where the data required was to be generated, based on participants' knowledge and the experience that they are willing to share (Bernard, 2002). This technique was utilised with an emphasis on communities in Plateau State that have directly experienced rural banditry and social conflicts. Two local governments were used to represent each of the senatorial districts of the state, as follows:

Table 1: LGAs and Communities Targeted Key Informants Interview (KIIs) and FGDs

<i>S/N</i>	<i>Name of LGA where field work was conducted</i>	<i>Targeted Communities</i>	<i>Targeted Population,</i>
1	* Riyom * Barkin Ladi	i) Riyom i)Fan	i) Farmers ii) Police iii) Pastoralists iv) Youth and Women Groups
2	* Bokkos * Mangu	i) Fakkos i) Pushit	i) Farmers ii) Police iii) Pastoralists iv) Youth and Women Groups
3	* Wase * Langtang South	i) Wase i) Mabudi	i) Farmers ii) Police iii) Pastoralists iv) Youth and Women Groups

Method of Data Analysis: Given the nature of the data to be generated, we employed qualitative investigation; our qualitative analysis relied on the Thematic Content Analysis (TCA). TCA generates a descriptive set of qualitative data from the interview transcripts collected. By grouping and distilling interview texts, we were able to extract a list of common themes; this revealed the common meanings and expressions from the set of respondents. The distillation facilitated direct examination of the link between rural banditry and social conflicts, in terms of how they impact the economy and livelihoods of people in Plateau State.

Literature Review:

The term “banditry” refers to criminal acts associated with armed robbery and violent crime. Banditry involves the use of threat or force to intimidate targets, with intent to kill or rob the victims (Okoli & Okpaleke, 2014). In Nigeria, banditry has become increasingly prevalent over the years. Since 1999, Nigeria has seen a vicious rise in crimes against persons, including both robbery and murder (Rotberg, 2007:33).

The fact that some Fulani herders have been labelled as members of Boko Haram is indicative of the complexity of violent clashes between sedentary agriculturalists and cattle breeders across different parts of Nigeria; the charge of Boko Haram membership has been corroborated both by politicians and also by the Nigerian military (McGregor, 2014). The fact that conflicts may spill across international borders further complicates the issue. For example, camel pastoralists from Niger have allegedly crossed into the North Western and North Central regions of Nigeria, sparking further conflict. These claims need to be more thoroughly investigated, to explore the multidimensional causes and the politicization of a problem that leaks into neighbouring countries (Abbass, 2012; Audu, 2013; Krause, 2011).

According to Abbass (2012), the point of contention between farmers and pastoralists is fundamentally economic, with a majority of the conflicts resulting from land-related issues. In a broader context, the political economy framing the struggle has been defined by demography, as there has been increasingly fierce competition as a growing population fights to control a fixed amount of land (Olabode & Ajibade, 2010; Solagberu, 2012). Sellen (1996) broadens the contextual analysis further, considering 'local socio-ecological conditions', arguing that the diversity of pastoral population also accounts for their nutritional habits. The clear lesson is that a holistic, functioning system of local economies requires overcoming the socio-cultural stereotypes of nomadic life and nomads' related experiences (Gefu & Gilles, 1990).

Based on report from the database of Nigeria Watch (2014), 615 deaths were reported out of a total of 61,314 fatalities, which could be either due to location of occurrence either in rural or border areas which are not easily accessible or reporters are not attracted to such areas. Conflicts related to cattle grazing account for 35% of all crises reported from 1991-2005 in Nigeria (Adekunle & Adisa, 2010). The North Central states in Nigeria most affected by crises included Plateau, Nassarawa, Taraba, and Benue (McGregor, 2014).

83 deaths were documented in 2009, double the number of deaths in the previous year. The deaths were spread across the states, with reports from Plateau State in June, June, July, and December having the highest rate of deaths per month (Olayoku, 2014). In 2010, only 39 fatalities related to cattle grazing occurred, according to reports from Plateau State from April, July, and October. A report from Plateau State in 2010 noted the use of sophisticated weapons, and portrayed pastoralists as victims, following the claims of the spokesperson of the Miyetti Allah Cattle Breeders Association of Nigeria

(MACBAN). The spokesperson's report referred to clashes between Fulani and Berom farmers, which led to the death of a Fulani youth and 30 cows (Lalo, 2010: 2).

The security situation in Plateau State was threatened by the resurgence of violence in Jos South, Barkin-Ladi, Riyom, Wase, and Langtang Local government Areas (LGAs). According to a report by the Nigeria Stability and Reconciliation Programme (NSRP), the violence was linked to the rising incidence of cattle rustling (NSRP, 2014). The increased incidence of cattle rustling has had an adverse effect on the peace and security of the state. It promoted distrust in the affected communities, and provoked misdirected aggression. Aggrieved cattle owners mobilized to unleash havoc on suspected cattle thieves (NSRP, 2014). Organized criminals, whose networks extended beyond the state, are linked to the increasing incidence of cattle rustling in Plateau State.

In Northern Nigeria generally, and particularly in Plateau State, the eruption of ethno-religious conflicts drove pastoralists of Fulani descent to leave Wase LGA in 2009. Also, conflicts in the northern part of the state led to the killing of livestock in Heipang and Barkin-Ladi LGAs; 70 head of cattle were reportedly killed following exposure to poisoned pastureland and water points (Abbass, 2012).

Understanding the Drivers and Dynamics of Rural Banditry and Social Conflict in Plateau State:

The rustling of cattle, human trafficking, car and motorcycle theft, livestock and crop theft, ritualists, and other petty crimes in the rural areas of Plateau State have become major security challenges that continue to fuel violent conflict and insecurity. For instance, during a press conference on the activities of the Plateau State Police Command, the Commissioner of Police reported that two persons

were arrested upon suspicion that they were involved in human trafficking. In September 2014, the Plateau State Police Command arrested 25 suspected criminals, including a man who attempted to sell his wife to ritualists, and another man who attempted to slaughter his father and others. In the LGAs studied, however, cattle rustling takes centre stage. As a criminal enterprise that functionally has targeted communities under siege, this illegal activity has been viewed as part of an underground economy that is deeply entrenched in the political economy of agrarian communities facing extreme economic hardship (Kwaja, 2014).

See www.channelstv.com/2014/05/17/security-operatives-arrests-2-human-trafficking-suspects-in-plateau/
See www.premiumtimesng.com/regional/168284-police-arrest-25-suspected-criminals-in-plateau-state.html

**Table 2: CATTLE RUSTLING IN SOME COMMUNITIES
ACROSS PLATEAU STATE, JAN-OCT, 2014.**

S/No	Date	Location/LGA	Number of Cows Rustled	Number of Cows Recovered	Number of Arrest Made	Number of Persons Killed
(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)	(f)	(g)
1	13 Jan 14	Mangor village, Bokkos LGA	18	18	-	-
2	17 Jan 14	Nwore Zamko District, Langtang North LGA	15	-	-	2
3.	17 Jan 14	Bangala Village, Wase LGA	-	-	1	-
4	17 Jan 14	Zamko District, Langtang North LGA	-	-	-	-
5	17 Jan 14	Duwi Village, Wase LGA	-	-	-	1
6	19 Jan 14	Makera village, Riyom LGA	-	-	-	2
7	20 Jan 14	Tinaiya village, Riyom LGA	-	-	-	-
8	9 Feb 14	Sabon Gidan village, Jos South LGA	-	-	-	2
9	11 Feb 14	Dorowa village, Barin Ladi LGA	55	-	-	-
10	11 Feb 14	Jama-Jama village, Barkin Ladi LGA	-	-	1	-
11	15 Feb 14	Bisichi village, Barkin Ladi	9	5	-	-
12	19 Feb 14	Miango village, Bassa LGA	30	30	-	1
13	25 Feb 14	Kuru Jenta, Jos South LGA	-	-	-	-
14	27 Feb 14	Kwall Miango village, Bassa LGA	-	-	-	1
15	4 Mar 14	Yelwa, Shendam LGA	-	-	-	1
16	8 Mar 14	Sha Village, Bokkos LGA	19	19	-	-
17	13 Mar 14	Bisichi village, Barkin Ladi LGA	22	22		-
18	21 Mar 14	Matabos Digot village, Bokkos	40	40	-	-
19	28 Mar 14	Yelwa-Ibi Rd, Shendam LGA	300	-	-	-
20	4 Apr 14	Ganawuri village, Riyom LGA	85	85	-	-
21	7 Apr 14	Wada village, Jebbu Miango in Bassa LGA	-	-	-	1
22	8 Apr 14	Jebbu Miango, Bassa LGA	2	2	1	-
23	9 Apr 14	Dun village. Riyom LGA	50	50	-	2

24	17 Apr 14	Mushere village, Bokkos LGA	29	29	-	-
25	26 Apr 14	Timshak village, Langtang South LGA	20	15	-	-
26	7 May 14	Wase, Wase LGA	30	-	-	-
27	11 May 14	Langtang North LGA	100	-	-	-
28	12 May 14	Rim, Riyom LGA	8	-	-	1
29	16 May 14	Fulshi, Jakko in Guguk ward of Amper Forest, Kanke LGA	20	20	-	-
30	18 May 14	Kanga area Jos South LGA	2	2	-	-
31	29 May 14	Palgore Forest, Wase LGA	75	-	-	-
32	22 Jun 14	Mavo, Wase LGA	55	-	-	-
33	23 Jun 14	Quanpan LGA	50	50	-	-
34	24 Jun 14	Sector	88	57	-	-
35	8 Jul 14	Kanke LGA	188	188	-	-
36	8 Jul 14	Bassa LGA	30	30	-	-
37	15 Jul 14	Bokkos	20	-	-	-
38	28 Jul 14	Gyel, Jos South LGA	37	-	-	-
39	29 Jul 14	Gurji, T/Balewa LGA	5	-	-	-
40	1 Aug 14	Kuru, Jos South LGA	40	-	-	-
41	4 Aug 14	Barkin Lai LGA	18	18	-	-
42	10 Aug 14	Mangu LGA	40	40	-	-
43	10 Aug 14	Dorowa village, Barkin Ladi LGA	56	47	1	-
44	11 Aug 14	Yelwa village, Shendam LGA	50	-	-	2
45	19 Aug 14	Lakushi, Shendam LGA		33	-	-
46	27 Aug 14	Doss village in Mangu LGA	22	22	-	-
47	9 Sep 14	Boto village, T/Balewa LGA	53	53	-	-
48	18 Sep 14	Kudebo, Jos East LGA	41	41	-	-
49	19 Sep 14	Wase LGA	100	-	-	-
50	17 Oct 14	Made village, Mangu LGA	200	200	-	-
51	18 Oct 14	Sunji village, Kanke LGA	55	55	1	1
Total			2,077	1,171	5	16

Source: Author's Compilation from the Special Task Force (Operation Safe Haven), 2014

From the ten months tracked in this dataset, it is evident that cattle rustling, which gained currency since 2014, is indeed a frequently-recurring crime that occurs across the state. A total of 2,337 head of cattle were rustled, and 18 people killed. It is also important to note that 1,171 of the cattle rustled were later recovered, leaving a net loss of 1,166 head of cattle. Despite the scale and frequency of cattle rustling, only six arrests were made. The single most significant incident was the loss of 300 cattle on Yelwa-Ibi road, in Shendam LGA, which occurred in March 2014. Following the incident, no arrests were made and no cattle was recovered.

In other cases, it was found that most pastoralists do possess neither formal land-use rights nor ownership of land. They rely almost solely on open land for their cattle's grazing, which consistently leads to frequent clashes with farmers (Abbass, 2014).

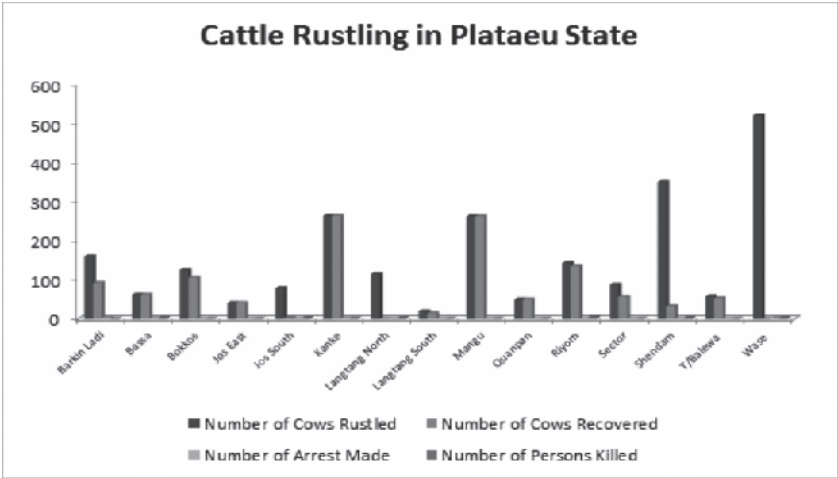
In reinforcing the link between poverty and banditry in Plateau State, a respondent argued that,

When you are poor, you stand to lose nothing since life is hopeless. Most people who resort to banditry in the rural areas are hopeless and they feel the only way they can make ends meet is by robbing people of their property. It is this criminal act that has resulted in series of attacks and violence in our communities. Since they security agencies cannot deal with these criminals, they are encouraged to do more.

The statement above also gives credence to the widespread perception that poverty and unemployment create an environment ripe for rural banditry and social conflict in Plateau State. In the words of a respondent,

The absence of jobs creates poverty, which in turn breeds banditry and social conflicts in our state. Like the saying [goes], 'an idle mind is the devil's workshop'. A lot of our unemployed youths are involved in banditry because of the money they get from it. The stealing of cattle has become a big employer of labour for these youths.

Figure 1: Trends of cattle rustling in some selected local governments of Plateau State

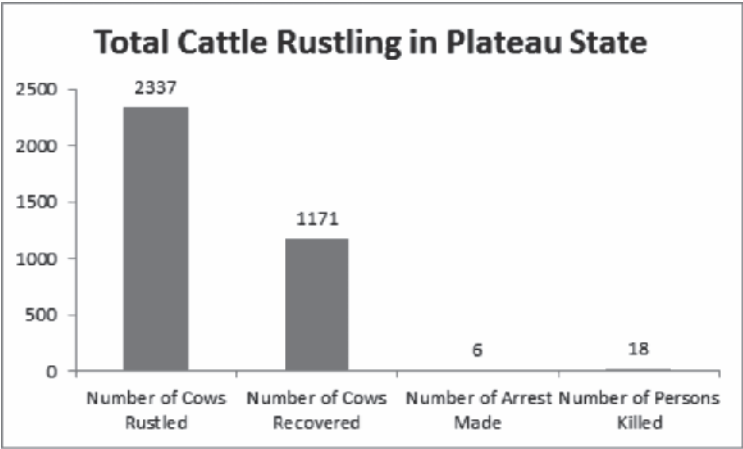


Source: Authors' compilation from the Special Task Force (STF), Operation Safe Haven, 2014.

When this table is compressed and reported as an aggregate by location, we see a perfect match between the rates of rustling and recovery of cattle in some areas, including Bassa, Jos East, Kangke, Mangu, and Quanan. In these areas, recovery of rustled cattle was possible both when fewer heads were involved, as in Jos East, and also when higher figures were involved, such as the case of Kangke, which included 253 head of cattle. The data shows a lag even when

only 20 head of cattle were rustled in Langtang South; only 15 were eventually recovered. In the worrying case of Wase, 520 head of cattle were rustled, but none were recovered. Low recovery rates were also observed in Shendam, Langtang North, Jos South, and Barkin Ladi.

Figure 2: Number of Rustled Cattle in Plateau State



Source: Authors' compilation from the STF in Plateau State, 2014.

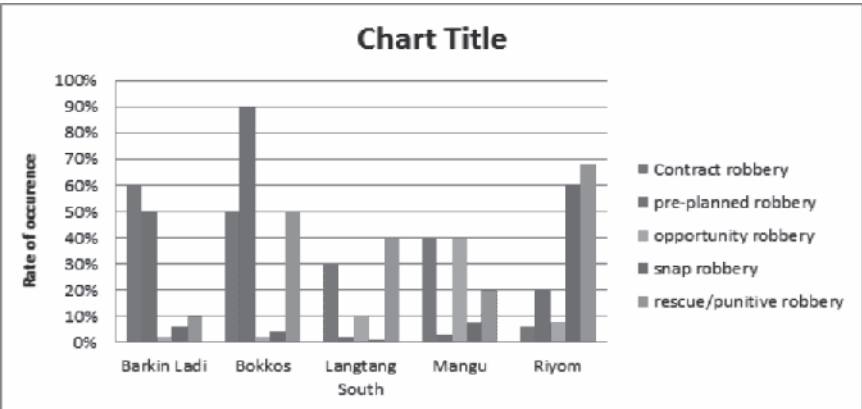
In the long term, public policy should aim to halt cattle rustling entirely. Short-term policy and immediate strategic interventions, however, must also emphasize improving the recovery rate of rustled cattle. Communities and cattle owners in areas such as Wase would be reassured if some of their stolen cattle were to be recovered. While cattle rustling persists, there must also be a focused effort to improve arrest rates. The prosecution and punishment of bandits should provide closure to victims, and should restore normalcy in the affected communities. When specific individuals are held responsible for crimes and punished accordingly, victims are less likely to ascribe guilt to the entire communities perpetrators

come from;discouraging broad assignment of blamereduces the likelihood of reprisal attacks.

Rural banditry is primarily driven by the rustling of cattle for economic gain. Banditry increasingly thrives in a climate of deepening fear, violence, and insecurity. This illicit activity poses serious security threats to people's lives and livelihoods; affected communities have been left exposed and vulnerable, as security agencies have failed to proactively and effectively ensure adequate security (Kwaja, 2014). Criminals are neither arrested nor prosecuting, allowing them to raid and plunder with impunity. Some respondents lamented the realities of state ineffectiveness, saying,

Because our security agents are supporting these criminals by not arresting them, it makes it difficult for us to rear our cattle freely and feel safe. Everywhere we go, we are not safe. We expect the security, particularly the Special Task Force, to protect us, but it is clear that we have to defend ourselves and our cattle. If the security agents are committed to our security, I am very sure that they will do it.

Figure 3: Percentage of Rural Banditry in Plateau State



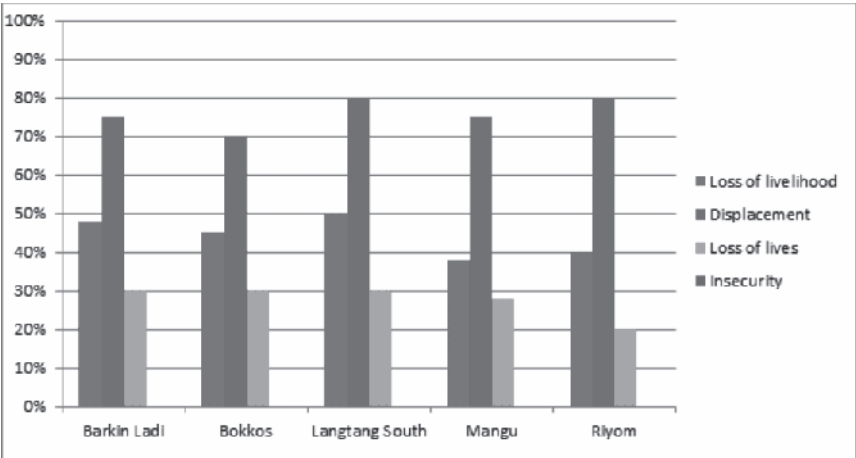
Source: Author's compilation from the field, 2014.

The chart above tracks the occurrence of five different types of banditry, which occurred across five local government areas in the state. Contract and pre-planned robberies were severe in Barkin Ladi and Bokkos LGAs, which are contiguous communities. Particularly in Mangu LGA, opportunist robberies emerge as a frequently recurring problem. In opportunist robberies, criminals do not have a preconceived plan. Rather, the victim simply happens to be in the wrong place at the wrong time. To commit such crimes, perpetrators must have some confidence that they could not be identified, apprehended, and punished. The guarantee of impunity therefore helps to trigger incidents of rural banditry.

This data reveals the self-reinforcing cycle of rural banditry. Robberies of one or more types occur, whether of the contract, pre-planned, opportunist or snap robbery variety. Victims respond to the attack with potentially violent actions to rescue seized cattle and potentially to exact retribution against those seen as the perpetrators of the original robbery. That response may only further the degenerative cycle, providing both impetus and justification for future incidences of rural banditry, thus reinforcing the deadly circle of rural banditry.

Disrupting this cycle requires swift and effective state intervention. We argue that if the state responds to rural banditry and social conflicts effectively, we will likely see fewer vigilante recovery missions and fewer punitive robberies. Such effective intervention will also demonstrate that criminals can no longer operate with impunity, easing communities' concerns and lessening the overall sense of insecurity.

Figure 4: Effects of banditry and conflicts on women and children in some selected LGAs of Plateau State.



Source: Author's compilation in the field, 2014.

For the women and children of the Plateau State LGAs reviewed for this research, the most frequent and severe effect of rural banditry was displacement. Banditry's second most frequent impact on women and children was a loss of livelihoods, in terms of access to means of survival. Least frequent was a loss of life.

There is a sense in which rural banditry has transformed women and children of Plateau State into widows and orphans. Many are forced to grapple with the psychological trauma of losing loved ones, and become exposed to the harsh economic realities of becoming primary breadwinners. Among respondents, these harsh realities are further compounded by the exposure of women and children to all forms of abuse, as there are no properly designed and maintained camps for displaced persons. Displaced individuals struggle to access food, health services, nutrition, security and protection, potable water, and effective sanitation.

The insecurity and spates of violence in the rural areas of Plateau State are part of a wider social conflict. Ramsbotham and Lewer (1993:7) provide some basic indicators of social conflicts, which include:

- (I) The conflict occurs between enduring identities, which often take the form of religion or ethnicity;
- (ii) State authority over the areas in conflict has either collapsed or is so weak that the people, or the parties to the conflict, are left unprotected;
- (iii) The conflict has broken out of the domestic arena, which is also followed by the militarisation of the conflict beyond the capacity of the police to control; and
- (iv) The conflict is accompanied by a large-scale violation of fundamental human rights, atrocities and human suffering.

All of these conditions have been met in Plateau State; in May 2004, the resulting instability prompted the declaration of a state of emergency. The state consistently displayed its inability to provide much-needed security for its citizens and their property. According to former Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo,

Tension and social differences have been exacerbated rather than building new bridges of harmony, tolerance, inclusion, and accommodation. Political errors have been magnified and politicised by opportunistic politicians that often put personal interest above those of the people and state. Violence has reached unprecedented levels and hundreds have been killed with much more wounded or displaced from their homes on account of their ethnic or religious identification...Christians and Muslims that used to live together have become arch-enemies and the embers of hate have reached totally unacceptable levels.

People in the rural areas of Plateau State lacked the minimum security required to guarantee basic public safety. As a result, criminality and banditry thrived, and established a real threat to the security and stability of rural communities across the state. Experiences of banditry have reinforced the strong public perception that security was essentially a political commodity that only the elites could afford, at the expense of safety and protection for the people of rural areas.

The displacements caused by violent conflicts and attacks against communities have led to serious humanitarian challenges that are linked to individuals' very survival. The conflicts between farmers and pastoralists have been particularly disruptive.

While we were unable to collate data on the situation in Plateau State, there are reportedly about 47,276 displaced persons scattered across Plateau, Nasarawa, Abuja, Kano, and Kaduna States, largely as a result of violent conflicts. Drought has not only put direct pressure on livelihoods, it has also led to the movement of people in search of greener pasture. Herdsmen have been forced to move with their cattle, attempting to protect themselves and their livelihoods from ethnically-and religiously-motivated exclusion and discrimination.

For over a decade, the pattern of social conflicts and rural banditry in Plateau State has been shifting radically. While the number of identity-based conflicts has decreased, conflicts arising from competition for scarce resources like land and water have increased in both frequency and intensity. This is particularly true of the conflicts between pastoralists and farmers; the shrinking resource base has direct implications for their very survival. However there is also a significant link between rural banditry and broader economic

agendas, to such an extent that banditry in the rural areas of Plateau State has become a commercial enterprise. Between 2006 and 2011, Plateau State reportedly experienced higher crime rates within the Middle Belt area of Nigeria (Nigeria Watch, 2014).

Response to Social Conflicts and Rural Banditry in Plateau State:

As social conflicts and rural banditry have impacted the economy of Plateau State and citizens' livelihoods, there have been varied responses from both state and non-state actors.

A primary component of the state's response to social conflicts and rural banditry in Plateau State has been the deployment of security agents, who are tasked with arresting and prosecuting criminals. While the Nigerian police are charged with the responsibility of managing internal state security, the military has become a dominant actor in crime and violence prevention under the Special Task Force (STF) – Operation Safe Haven. Both the police and STF are directly involved in the arrests of criminals. The responsibility of initiating prosecution remains with the police, however.

Through presidential approval, the Plateau State government established a security framework outside the police and STF, known as Operation Rainbow (OR). The OR, which is funded solely by the Plateau State government, was put in place with the clear mandate of providing early warnings that would assist other security agencies in crime and violence prevention. The OR established and trained Neighbourhood Watch (NW) groups, which were intended to provide intelligence across communities and report it to OR, which, in turn, would transmit the intelligence to the relevant security agencies for action.

In addition to the state response highlighted above, non-state actors such as community leaders and youths have played critical roles in social conflict resolution and crime prevention. For instance, communities have been able to establish vigilante groups as a form of community policing, which enjoys the support of the Nigerian police. Through collaboration between the vigilantes and STF, sixteen cattle rustlers were arrested in Barkin Ladi LGA. Additionally, traditional and community leaders have been effectively employed to manage conflict and mitigate the scourge of rural banditry. They have played useful roles in coordinating vigilante actions, and have provided platforms for aggrieved parties to seek redress over issues, including encroachment on farmland and other criminal activities in the communities. As reported by a respondent,

Our traditional leaders are really trying. While some of them are corrupt, [a] majority of them are working hard in ensuring our communities are peaceful and free of criminals. The vigilante[s] are recording the kind of success we are witnessing because of the support and backing of our traditional leaders.

Key Findings on the Impact of Rural Banditry and Social Conflicts on the Political Economy in Plateau State:

Plateau State has great potential and vast resources, which have been crucial to its development and growth in the decades since colonial times. Sadly, though, the state's potential has been overshadowed by tragic experiences of conflict and rural banditry, which have come to influence its present condition. Although the state has not witnessed any form of violent conflict in recent times, public safety has been compromised by rural banditry and other forms of criminality; this constitutes a major challenge for the state and its citizens.

a) Cattle Rustling as a Major Security Challenge

The rustling of cattle has become a major security challenge in Plateau State. This problem has become more visible and more severe in the recent years. The rise in cattle rustling has been accompanied by increasingly frequent communal conflicts in Plateau State. Cattle rustling inspire suspicion and mistrust both between members of a particular community, as well as between farmers and pastoralists. The tension and contestation arising from cattle rustling and also from land disputes make acts of vengeance inevitable. Although the co-causality of these crimes has not yet been proven, the problems of cattle rustling must be resolved if a broader, enduring peace is to be established on the Plateau.

b) Fragmentation and Loss of Social Cohesion

The fragmentation resulting from deep-seated divisions and conflict has undermined social cohesion, and has limited social capital, social trust, a sense of belonging, and principles of hospitality. The social climate also breeds inter-group resentment, as evidenced by public expressions drawn along religious or ethnic lines. As noted by one respondent,

We don't trust visitors among us now. Unlike in the past when people just come [sic] into our communities and we welcome them, the situation has changed as a result of the conflicts and high level of crimes we have witnessed in our community. We don't want to take chances again, because in the past, we trusted people and they have not reciprocated. Why will a Fulani man attack us when we have cared for them by providing them with land for grazing and shelter? Though we suspect that the real criminals are not the Fulanis we have grown or lived with. At least, the ones we have lived with should help us by informing us about an impending attack if truly they live with us.

In response to that comment, one of the pastoralists interviewed lamented the ways in which he has been severely affected by cattle theft:

We Fulanis are peace-loving people. All we have is our cattle, that are constantly been stolen. If you steal my cattle, what do you want or expect me to do? We have been reporting cases of cattle theft to the village head and police, but nothing has been done about it. We are not saying there are no bad people among us. We will continue to work with the village head and police to identify and punish such people. Our grandparents came and lived in these villages and gave birth to us. Where on earth do you think we can go to?

The data collected and analysed reveals a strong link between protracted social conflict and rural banditry. Under such conditions, the state plays a crucial role. In most communities, there is a deep sense of reliance on the state for the preservation of law and order, and for the provision of security. Where these public goods are not forthcoming, however, people have resorted to independent security measures, with vigilantes the power vacuum left by the state. As pointed out by a respondent,

It is clear that if we rely solely on the security agents, we will all be killed as a result of violence or by armed robbers. The best option for us is to set up vigilantes in our communities. With the help of these vigilantes, we can now sleep with our eyes closed. Though we are forced to report cases of robbery and other crimes to the police since our youths cannot punish criminals when they are caught.

This study highlights the diverse consequences of rural banditry. Ultimately, banditry's impact is largely determined by the presence or absence of state power, and the extent to which the state controls

rural communities and areas. The inability of the state to effectively respond to conflicts, violence, and banditry has allowed an expansion of the frontiers of banditry and other forms of criminality. Herbst (2000) argued that where the state in Africa is unable to exert control and govern effectively, the state cannot provide order throughout its territories. One of the respondents in Langtang South expressed disaffection with the state, saying,

We cannot rely on the state for security any longer. As member[s] of this community, the conflict and crimes we experiences [sic] as a result of the inability of the government to provide police station and equip the security personnel. Most of the police stations are just there, without any functional vehicle for patrol or operational tools to function effectively.

c) Linkage between State Response to Insecurity and Rural Banditry

One of the primary responsibilities of the state is the provision of security. The limited security provided to rural areas is responsible for extensive violence and criminality. Based on the findings of this research, it is evident that the primary challenge hinges on the state's inability to effectively provide security in the hinterlands. The lack of state-provided security, in turn, fuels criminality, violence, and general insecurity. Across most local government areas where conflict and insecurity thrive as a result of criminality fuelled by cattle rustling, the state's inability to check and contain violence is viewed as an obstacle to protecting people, livelihoods, and economic development.

Data also clearly established the clear connections between the circulation of arms, state response, and rural banditry. We find that one experience of rural banditry very frequently provokes further

violence in response, whether in the form of vigilantes attacking to recover lost cattle, or raids conducted on perceived perpetrators as a punitive measure. This cycle of rural banditry is self-reinforcing and self-perpetuating. Breaking that cycle requires strong state response in the form of rapid and effective reactions to every incident of rural banditry, in order to deter retributive attacks and further rotations through the cycle of banditry.

(d) Protection of Private Property

One of the central tenets of private economic activity is that individuals hold the right to property ownerships, and that the state bears the responsibility to guarantee property rights (Kirwin & Cho, 2009). In the rural areas of Nigeria, public perception of the state is characterized by broad and deep doubts regarding the state's capacity to protect private property rights. That perception has shaped citizens actions, particularly when reinforced by personal experiences of losing property to criminality or social conflicts. As one respondent said,

If the government cannot protect our property, we have a duty to protect them either individually or collectively as a community. That is why we have also established our own vigilantes to protect us and our property'.

(e) The Primacy of Informal Security Providers

Amidst rising crime and insecurity, informal security providers such as vigilantes have emerged as a substitute for formal state institutions that are either weak or outside the reach of the people residing in the rural areas. Where the formal institutions are weak, informal actors are increasingly showing greater potential and increased capacity to fill the security gap currently confronting people. Both state and federal governments have failed to expand their presence and to seize control of instruments of force. These two

failures have given rise to violent conflicts and acts of criminality. That is why one respondent indicted the government, saying, 'the weak projection of the state in terms of its presence through its security agencies exacerbates insecurity'.

(f) Production and Distribution of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALWs)

Individuals' access to arms facilitates social conflicts and cattle rustling in Plateau State. The absence of an effective policy managing production and distribution of these arms has created an economy where criminality thrives. The establishment of a commission for the control of small arms and light weapons would go a long way in definitively resolving this issue.

(g) Absence of Designated Transhumance Routes

The absence of designated transhumance routes for the free movement of herders is yet another major source of conflict and insecurity in Plateau State. As herders move with their cattle, they are often involved in violent confrontation with farmers. In the words of a herder,

We are forced to move from one place to the other in search of pasture. There are no livestock routes, places of rest, special grazing sites, and water points for us. Yet we supply this country with all the meat that is required. If these issues are not taken seriously, there are bound to be problems.

Policy Implications and Pathways on Social Conflicts and Rural Banditry in Plateau State:

(I) The state should address the menace posed by cattle rustling and other forms of crimes, as they are the dominant type of crime in Plateau State. A significant step in the right direction could be the provision of designated cattle routes and surveillance equipment to the security agencies. The equipment would be used for tracking rustled cattle, as well as for working with herders to provide unique identification numbers or codes, which could be used to link particular cattle with their owners.

(ii) In a state that is experiencing a breakdown of community relations along ethnic and religious fault lines, mechanisms for trust and confidence building should be put in place. Such mechanisms, will contribute to an environment in which disputes do not escalate into violence. Reconstruction programmes designed to help people and communities ravaged by rural banditry and conflicts will go a long way in revitalising their economies.

(iii) From an early warning and early response perspective, state response to violence and insecurity should be prioritized by government at all levels. This should be seen as part of an overall crisis prevention strategy that should be sustained through an effective intelligence gathering architecture. This also calls for stronger partnership and collaboration between state and non-state actors on response to early warning signs.

(iv) The protection of private property remains the primary responsibility of the state. Since the idea of freedom is linked to the protection of private property, this is a responsibility that the state should perform in both peace and conflict times as a way of safeguarding the livelihood of its citizens, both from the standpoint of conflict management and the provision of security for lives and livelihoods.

(v) Synergy between state and non-state actors in building social cohesion remain an imperative. Since the provision of security for the citizens is embedded in local processes of livelihood sustenance, local and informal initiatives for public safety have proven to be very effective. Here, it has to do with shared values, aspirations and identity among members of the communities. While the local or informal security providers are involved in the arrest of criminals, conflict prevention and management, the formal security providers of the state should play a leading role in the prosecution of these criminals.

(vi) Combating the menace posed by the illicit production and distribution of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALWs) should be a key priority for creating safer and secured communities. Governments at all levels should work towards strengthening laws and control mechanisms on arms as they relate to the production, sale, licensing as well as possession of SALWs in Plateau State.

(vii) Unlike in the past when cattle routes were established by the government as a way of mitigating clashes between farmers and herders, urbanisation and population growth has led to the distortion at of these routes. There is a need for government at all levels to re-examine these challenges with a view to addressing them, so as to mitigate or contain the frequent clashes that occur between farmers and pastoralists.

Conclusion:

This study drew attention to the fact that social conflicts and rural banditry has emerged as one of the most pressing security challenge in Plateau State. Individuals and groups who are involved in acts of criminality have vested interests that are economic in nature, as they perpetuate conditions of insecurity and banditry because they are its greatest beneficiaries. In fact, wide spread crime, insecurity and loss

of confidence on the capacity of the Nigerian state to protect citizens have resulted in conflicts and banditry, thereby making the use of violence an acceptable tool by individuals and groups either in fuelling conflict and banditry or in self defence in the case of its victims.

This paper posited that from the perspective of social conflict and rural banditry, violence is the outcome of economic processes whereby some groups take on other groups living in the same community. Failure to identify and thoroughly address the fundamental causes of social conflicts and banditry in Plateau State would likely cause the state to continue to experience and suffer the brunt associated with violence and insecurity.

The paper argued that beyond any ideological underpinning that are rooted in political or identity constructs, economic agendas are the principal drivers of contemporary social conflicts and rural banditry in Plateau State. Hence, the manifestation of conflict, violence, insecurity and the pursuit of livelihood becomes the underlying narratives for understanding contemporary conflict and the upsurge in banditry in the state.

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Chapter 9

RURAL BANDITRY AND CONFLICTS IN KADUNA STATE, NORTHERN NIGERIA

**I.M. Jumare
SewueseSurma**



Introduction

Kaduna State is one of the heterogeneous states in northern Nigeria. It houses about twenty five different ethnic groups that are indigenous to the state, but are however socially and culturally distinct. The state of Kaduna is also a vast melting pot of many Nigerian ethnic and religious groups, coming from all over the country, residing both in the state's rural and urban areas, and pursuing a variety of occupations and trades. This has therefore created highly complex inter-group relations, characterized by pluralism, in both rural and urban areas of the state, which sometimes transform into violent ethno-religious and political conflicts, unprecedented in the history of crises in the country. Actually, inter-group relations among the population of the state have become characterized by mutual suspicion, fear and mistrust, manifesting in the rural and urban politics, including the state's social life. Thus, there exists an ethnic and religious divide between different segments of the state's population, which has become a persistent cause of all kinds of conflicts and has led to destruction of lives, property unemployment and poverty, with consequences of displacement of rural and urban communities in several local governments of the state; banditry and cattle rustling.

The violent conflicts caused by the disagreement between sedentary farmers and pastoralists²—resulting from herds of cattle grazing on crops, coupled with an incessant cattle rustling and banditry in several local governments, especially the rural areas affected by the migration of the pastoral groups—ignited a state-wide crisis. The consequences of such violent conflicts manifest in the deprivation of the livelihoods of both farmers and herders; the destruction of lives and property; and a serious threat to the state's farming populace food security. Very often, these conflicts veer into political, religious and ethnic tensions, mainly due to the nature and composition of Kaduna's population; and consequently engulf the state as a whole into violent crises. As the phenomenon of banditry and cattle rustling in many parts of northern Nigeria has become a serious threat to pastoralists and sedentary agricultural communities, with a very devastating impact on national economy, the print and electronic media; civil society and non-governmental organizations have been attempting to conduct systematic studies on rural banditry, conflict and cattle rustling in different parts of northern Nigeria, in order to understand both the remote and immediate causes of the issue.

Scope

This research on rural banditry and conflicts in Northern Nigeria focuses on Kaduna State, with particular reference to 6 local government areas (LGAs) which are located in the 3 senatorial zones of the state (Appendix A). The selection of the 6 LGAs and their communities is informed by the frequency of violent conflicts, cattle theft and robbery, as well as rural banditry, which makes it possible to use sampling to analyse the statistics of stolen and recovered cattle; destroyed farmlands and crops; size of cattle ownership; number of destroyed houses; and the number of male and female persons who were affected by the conflicts in the areas

earmarked for focused group discussions (FGD) and key informant interviews (KII) (Appendix A).

Research Questions

The following are the study's main research questions:

- I) What are the main causes of rural banditry and cattle rustling in Kaduna State?
- ii) Why does cattle rustling and rural banditry persist in the State?
- iii) How do the persistent incidences of rural banditry and cattle rustling affect pastoralists and farming communities in Birnin Gwari, Kaura, Lere, Igabi, and Chikun?
- iv) What were the major impacts of conflicts and cattle rustling in the select LGAs?
- v) How has banditry and cattle rustling affected the weekly markets of the select LGAs?
- vi) To what extent has rural banditry and cattle robbery affected the women and their children, in both sedentary and pastoral communities in the state?

Research Objectives

The objectives of this study are:

- i. To examine the incidents of rural banditry and conflicts in Kaduna State;
- ii. To identify the causes and consequences of conflicts and cattle rustling in Kaduna State;
- iii. To find out the ways through which both banditry and cattle rustling affected the life of pastoralists and local farming communities in the select local governments;;
- iv. To understand the reasons for the inability of the State to resolve conflicts, banditry and rustling of cattle in Kaduna.

Literature Review

The substantial relevant literature for this Kaduna research project has mainly been produced by some non-state actors and non-academic agencies. However, it is very important to start the literature review by looking at a particular academic work, namely a two-volume scholarly contribution focused on crisis and conflict management in Nigeria. The two volumes have examined the root causes of ethno-religious, communal and political conflicts that have affected different parts of the country, including Kaduna State, since the 1980s, as well as the effectiveness or otherwise of the measures that were taken to forestall, contain and resolve them.

This was achieved through analysis of various case studies based on a multidisciplinary approach to resolving conflicts, and also through the perspectives of government and non-governmental organizations (Yakubu, et al, 2005). A study of violent conflicts in Kaduna state indicates how women were found to have played an active role in ethno-religious conflicts, by taking arms and uprooting crops in farms (Abdu, 2002). In another related work, "Managing Ethno-Religious Violence and Area Differentiation in Kaduna Metropolis" , the author demonstrates that the ethnic and religious tool was used for group assertion, and to get one's share of wealth, equity and justice in national life (Enukora, 2005). The role of balanced media reportage in conflict mitigation and management has been identified as a very important tool for conflict resolution and peaceful co-existence in a plural state like Kaduna (Umar, 2005).

A study of post 2011 elections violence has shown how Kaduna state suffered from an ethno-religious conflict that underlay a political crisis , and which led to the loss of thousands of lives and the destruction of properties as a result of the inability of government agencies, traditional institutions and civil societies to manage the

unexpected results of the presidential elections(Paden, 2012). This situation consequently enabled some youths and other criminal elements in the state to be involved in banditry and cattle rustling, including the kidnapping of women, especially around the villages of Birnin Gwari local government area.

One media report pointed to land and water sources disputes as the main cause of the conflict between the Fulani people and the Atoka Community in Southern Kaduna. According to the report, shortly after a district head was assassinated by gunmen, a Fulani militia attacked 16 villages, killing about 180 people and forced about 10,000 others to flee their homes, becoming Internally Displaced Persons or IDPs (Enietan-Mathews, 2015).

A correspondent of the Daily Trust who visited Ladduga grazing reserve which was earmarked for grazing in the 1960s reported a total neglect of the area, by both local and state authorities. However, the reserve has benefitted from the efforts of some NGOs and programs under the Millennium Development Goals, which on the whole, have not very much helped pastoral activities (Ujorha, 2014). Misbahu Bashir, also a correspondent of the Sunday Trust, reported that rustlers killed Kaduna herder and drove away 300 cattle in Sabon Gaya, Chikun LGA, Kaduna; armed thieves went during the night to a village called Unguwar Fulani, they fired guns, frightened the villagers, and stole, within thirty minutes, between two hundred sixty (260) and three hundred (300) cows, from 3 herds of cattle (Misbahu, Bashir, 2015).

Methodology

Data Collection and Collation

The primary source materials were collected through the administration and analysis of questionnaires in the identified communities. Focused Group Discussions and Key Informant Interviews were used to collect and analyse the narratives of victims, community leaders; sedentary farmers; herders; community members; eye witness accounts and participants in the conflict. They serve as primary sources of data. As shown in appendix A, sampling technique was used in 6 identified LGAs and some selected communities, mostly those affected by the crisis and rustling. The secondary data was collected and collated from textbooks, the media: newspapers, magazines, internet materials; NGOs and Civil Society Organizations' reports or studies of conflicts in the state. Reports of informal organizations on the issues that were relevant to the research project were also used as part of the secondary source materials.

Methods of Data Analysis

All the data obtained from the primary and secondary sources mentioned above were subjected to critical analysis in order to establish their veracity. Quantitative and qualitative methods of data analysis were applied to the narratives from the local governments selected for sampling. FGDs in Kaura, Chikun, Kauru had women respondents seated and answering questions individually in the same rooms. FGDs in Birnin Gwari, Lere and parts of Igabi had only male respondents answering questions by themselves and for their wives and children. Females were not physically present at the FGD. Quantitative analysis of the research materials is based on the number of destroyed farms and crops; number of deaths, injured persons, destroyed houses, shops, mosques, churches; number of cattle rustled and recovered; burnt

vehicles; widows; orphans and widowers. Affected villages and towns where banditry took place were visited for the purpose of interviewing key informants who provided a basis for the data used in sampling, corroborating facts and figures. The final analysis is based on percentage and fractions of the population, number of cattle and average age of bandits and rustlers. The qualitative analysis of the research data is based on critical evaluation of the narratives of victims, eye witnesses, participants in the conflicts, and cattle rustlers. Narratives of community leaders; reports and narratives of members of the security agencies; media reportage of the conflicts: print and electronic were subjected to analysis in order to ascertain their originality and relevance to the study. Men and women engaged in the FGD and KII were all above the age of 18.

Summary of Findings

The ages of the perpetrators of rural banditry and cattle rustling, as given by respondents, fell within the age range of 18 to 45 years. The farmers and herders' associations did not go beyond giving advice on how to live with farmers in the case of pastoralists and buying of fertilisers in the case of farmers. The victims of rural banditry and cattle rustling said that the bandits were armed with sophisticated weapons. There was no veterinary clinic, and when there was one available, it was not fully equipped. Nomadic schools were not evenly distributed in the LGAs visited. The respondents stated that going to court, or even reporting rustling and banditry incidences to authorities was not necessary. This is because they never get back their stolen cattle. Women and children were the hardest hit across the communities visited. Both men and women couldn't plant crops because of conflicts. The pastoralists' wives had no milk or butter to sell as a result of cattle rustling. Hence poverty became pervasive in the households of many pastoralists, which particularly affected the women. All respondents in the FGD and KII indicated that failure to

punish perpetrators was one of the major reasons why armed banditry and cattle rustling remained persistent. Respondents who were displaced from Kaura and moved to Lere LGA wanted to go back as they had little or no farmlands, no businesses, and were treated as strangers or settlers in Lere. The issue of state and local government boundaries was also of concern as bandits and rustlers escaped to neighbouring states such as Plateau, after attacking communities in the villages of the southern part of Kaduna State. This was a major concern for Ungwan Gata as it shares boundary with Plateau State through Ganawuri.

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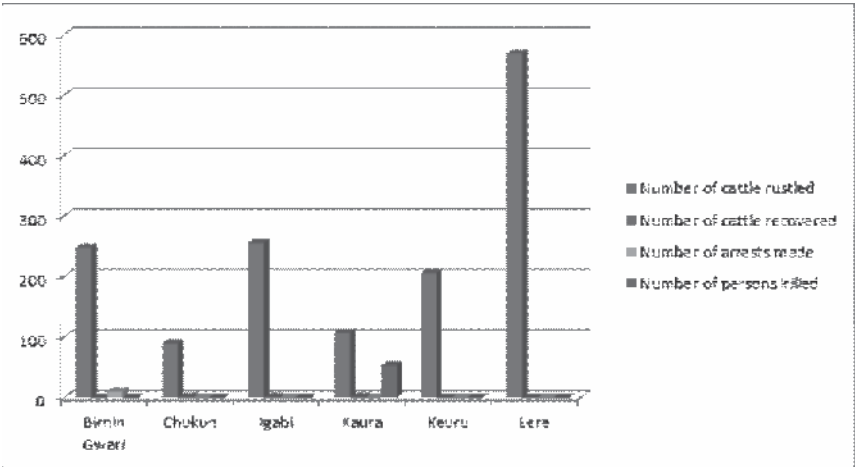


Chart 1: Aggregate of Cattle rustling in 6 LGAs of Kaduna State.

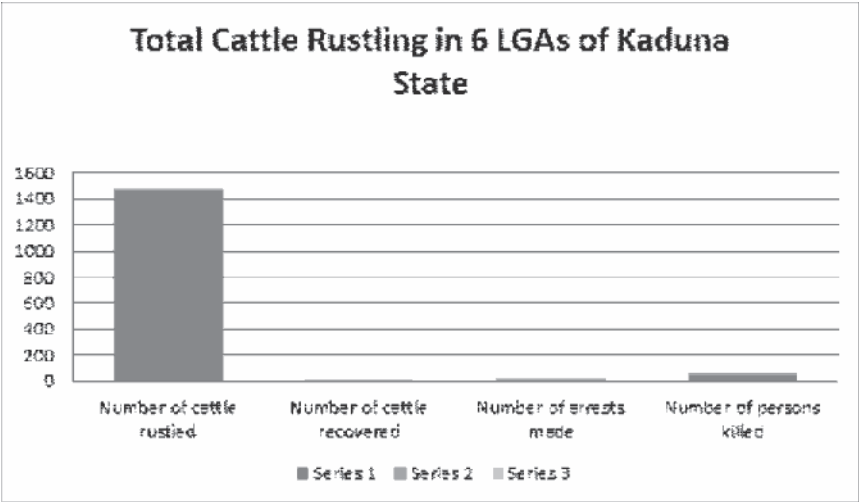


Chart 2: Source: Data from FGDs and KIIs

Discussion of Findings

Causes of Banditry and Conflicts

Some of the basic causes of armed banditry and cattle rustling in the state revealed how those who lost their cattle transformed into bandits and rustlers in the rural areas of Kaduna State. Actually, unemployment, abject poverty and high prices of cows in every market in the state contributed to the increase in the robbery of cattle. Some of the victims who were interviewed during the KII and FGD did not rule out the involvement of military officers and desperate hemp smoking young men who were looking for money in the neighbourhood. A traditional and, of course, a common cause of conflict between sedentary agricultural and pastoral communities remains cattle grazing on either food or cash crops; and when farmers complained, pastoralists often respond by attacking their villages as it happened in Bungen and Ungwan Gata villages of

Kaura LGA. The people of Bungen fought back and destroyed the pastoralists' houses. This forced the pastoralists to leave the village and consequently became part of the state's IDPs. A revenge attack by the pastoralists resulted in the killing of 8 people, the burning of 3 bicycles and 10 houses. Some farmlands were abandoned in the village because of fear of reprisal attacks by the pastoralists. Unemployment in most of the communities was one of the factors that caused the youths in the communities to be easily mobilized for violent conflicts in many parts of the state. This conflict between pastoralists and farmers became a basis for the unemployed to embark on all kinds of criminal activities, especially in the urban areas, as the conflict spreads across the state.

It was revealed that pastoralists wanted to turn farming land into grazing land because they went to some of the villages armed, in case they were attacked by members of the communities.' Even the presence of the police in some of the LGAs did not stop violent conflicts as no perpetrator of any crime was caught and punished. Therefore, people in some of these villages with such terrible experience of crime control decided not to take cases of banditry and rustling to the authorities, which means that the affected communities could take the law into their hands. Conflicts will certainly, remain persistent as long as pastoralists continued grazing on farm land and destroying crops. It was alleged that pastoralists believed that they owned the sole right to rear cattle, and as such, rustle the non-pastoralists' cattle.' Another cause of cattle rustling was poverty and the high prices of cattle in the markets.

The crisis in Kaura started as a result of attacks on farmers in the community, who in turn reacted to the destruction of crops and killings of their people by the pastoralists. Consequently, Kaura youths started killing the pastoralists in the community. Politics,

religion and poverty were also identified as some of the remote causes of conflicts in most of the areas where FGD and KII were carried out. Failure by the state and local authorities to pay compensation to both farmers and pastoralists became a causative factor as both groups were forced to resort to banditry and rustling as a solution to poverty. The availability of guns and the presence of retired security personnel who made guns to fall into the wrong hands of bandits were perceived to be another causative factor for violent conflicts and increase in the regularity of attacks in the rural and urban centres of Kaduna state. Petty theft and burglary that included stealing of chickens and household items have been identified as strong manifestations of poverty which culminated into violent crimes, especially if they remained unchecked. Armed banditry started about 10 years ago in various parts of Kaduna State.

Course of Banditry and Conflicts

The rustlers operated in the night, dressed in military uniforms and were heavily armed. They fired shorts in the night to scare the neighbourhood. It was revealed in both FGD and KII that some hemp smoking boys who were desperately looking for money attacked some of the villages, scared both farmers and pastoralists in order to rob them of their cattle and money. The age of the bandits ranged between 18 and 45years according to most of the key informants. During conflicts, bandits went to the villages with weapons that were more sophisticated than the ones used by the police. They sold the stolen cattle and bought weapons which they used in attacking villages and rustling of more cattle from other villages or farms. Bandits rustled cattle and went to hide in a forest where even the authorities could not reach them as it happened in Kaura and Birning Gwari LGAs. No one in Birnin Gwari town, Bungen village in Kaura LGA received compensation for any cattle lost as a result of banditry and rustling. The victims reported cases of

cattle rustling to the appropriate authorities but no actions were taken to recover the cattle. During the robbery in Sabon Gida village, the bandits surrounded the Ruga settlement, shot the head of the settlement in the foot and held at close range all his sons and their wives to prevent them from reprisal attacks. Their phones were removed in order to prevent them from calling the police and alerting the neighbourhood. This was how the Ruga pastoralist settlement, located in Sabon Gida village, behind the Air Force Base, Mando, Kaduna was robbed.

Role of Non-Governmental Organisations and State Actors

The Miyetti Allah Cattle Breeders Association is of one the Non-Governmental Organizations that bring together all the pastoralists groups in the state. The association believes that government should provide them with security that can be used to protect villages from cattle rustlers and banditry attacks; agricultural loans, including veterinary services to improve the breeding of cattle and other livestock. All the pastoralists in Lere town, Saminaka, belonged to Miyetti Allah. They wanted the government to give them agricultural loans through the organization and provide well equipped veterinary clinics as well as nomadic schools to educate their children. The pastoralists have also requested better security around Saminaka so as to prevent, through the association, bandits and rustlers from operating. They also have demanded a grazing reserve for their herds of cattle as a way of forestalling on their own future conflicts in the area. One of the common points of view articulated by the association in all the villages where FGD and KII were carried out was that banditry and rustling could stop when, in collaboration with the communities, the perpetrators are brought to book and punish according to the law. Pastoralists from some of the villages belonged to Miyetti Allah, but never attended its meetings though they wanted the organization to convince government to

provide better security and vaccinations for the cattle to prevent further rustlings. Some of the pastoralists have actually become pessimistic about the idea of access to agricultural loans, because taking such loans to buy more cattle would only result in financial loss as the additional cattle could easily be stolen either by bandits or rustlers. Miyetti Allah has given them advice on how to live with farmers and resolve conflicts peacefully. Moreover, the association has been helpful in providing them with food. The mosques of the communities have also provided relief materials to internally displaced persons. There is also another organization called Farmers' Cooperative Association in Bungen which extended membership to its neighbouring villages. This association did not speak about issues between pastoralists and farmers. It only helped farmers to buy fertilisers after they contributed money to the association; they also helped pastoralists resolve conflicts with farmers peacefully.

Very few of the communities visited had nomadic schools and veterinary clinics, which were poorly equipped with unqualified staff and inadequate veterinary vaccines and medicines. In the camp where IDPs resided, there was a nomadic school, a hand pump well, one borehole, and the houses they built by themselves, but no veterinary clinic. There were 6 nomadic schools and two veterinary clinics that were not equipped and functional in the villages where they were displaced from.

Problem of Inter-State Boundary

People have complained about the border between Plateau and Kaduna State. Bandits and rustlers who were chased from some of the villages like Bungen and Ungwan Gata in Kaura LGA escaped through the border towns of Ganawuri to Plateau State, after committing crimes. The main victims of banditry and cattle rustling

in Ungwan Gata formed vigilante groups to prevent any bandits from attacking the village again. In Birnin Gwari, the border forest that links Kaduna State, Katsina State and Zamfara State also served as both escape route and a source of migration of bandits to the local government whenever they wanted to rustle cattle and kidnap women into the forest. This problem has remained persistent, and authorities, including vigilante groups in the three states, have not been able to successfully tackle it.

Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs)

Armed banditry started in Me-Sankwai, 5 years ago. In 2013, bandits attacked the village in the night, killed about 53 people; burnt 50 generators, 48 houses and about 60 motor cycles. People were displaced and evacuated to a nearby camp. At the time of the research visit, the camp was empty, but security operatives were still there. IDPs complained that security operatives could not get to their rescue fast enough because the roads were bad. About hundred seven (107) cows were rustled from the village and other neighbouring communities. The victims claimed that the Fulani felt that they had the right and monopoly to cattle rearing. Relief was given to them in terms of food and other materials provided to the camp by government and individuals. So far, many houses have been destroyed, and about 150 people displaced from the village. The pastoralists of the village belonged to the Miyetti Allah organization. Like other Kaura community members, they were displaced LGA during the crisis between pastoralists and farmers. The displaced pastoralists lost all their personal belongings, including houses, motorcycles, livestock and crops. As a result of loss of cattle, wives of the pastoralists had no milk or butter to sell as they traditionally do to earn some money and provide for the basic needs of their households. This has affected their livelihoods and taken a toll on the family income. The displaced pastoralists wanted

to go back to Kaura because life under displacement was affecting them in a very serious way. They therefore, requested the government's help in resolving the crisis. All the IDPs had to pay rent where they took refuge, which was tough without stable source of income and livelihood.

Challenges of Security Agencies

One of the basic challenges that precipitate conflicts in Kaduna State is the complicity of the law enforcement agencies that fail to arrest and punish criminals who engaged in banditry and cattle theft. This has become a major concern in the affected rural areas of the state to the extent that no one could differentiate between real criminals and members of vigilante groups. Victims of the criminal activities perpetrated in most of the villages felt that the police did not stop rustlers and ask questions about cattle ownership or suspicious cattle movement, even at military or police check points. So, most victims—mainly pastoralists who also belonged to Miyetti Allah and attended the organisation's meetings—felt that it was needless to report cases of banditry and cattle rustling because of such an attitude. Furthermore, they believed that government should work with Miyetti Allah to provide them security. According to some of the study's key informants, what further facilitated the unchecked movement of the stolen cattle to the various markets was the use of fetish by criminals. The rustled cattle were taken to the bush where police could not reach or were afraid to go, and were then sold in the open markets of distant towns and cities. Informal security alternative through the formation of vigilante groups to protect the community was set up in places like Unguwan Kaje, Lere and Saminaka. Members of the vigilante groups usually take turns to patrol villages at night, which the time when bandits generally operated and the cattle rustled. This was to provide better and more effective security to pastoralists, their cattle and even to sedentary farmers.

Use of Alternative Dispute Resolutions

In some of the villages, community heads settled disputes between farmers and pastoralists through dialogue in the event that the latter were identified or even caught in so. As mentioned early, cases of banditry were never reported to the security agencies due to their alleged complicity with bandits and negative attitude. Victims stated that perpetrators were not punished by the state or local government, hence the continuous destruction of crops and killings in the villages where they escaped from. As in banditry cases, when crops were destroyed, pastoralists and farmers would not go to court for arbitration, they had dialogue under the supervision of elders or village heads. Actually, such cases were just reported to the community heads of the village for arbitration and resolution, sometimes through the use of informal security to enforce decisions made by the community institutions. Herders who destroyed crops were disciplined and made to pay for them. They usually prefer to honour compensation payments through their Ardos (Fulani community leaders). It is however worth mentioning that some of the pastoralists in the concerned villages belonged to the Miyetti Allah organization, which helped them resolve conflicts with farmers in a peaceful way.

Plight of Women

Female farmers of Bungen village were also victims because when their crops were destroyed by herders or as a result of the conflict they suffered. This has greatly affected them as they had less crops, vegetable or even food stuff to sell in order to provide for their basic needs. Women were hit hard because they did not have anything to feed their families as they could not farm and had nothing to sell in the markets. Specifically, the conflict took a toll on women in the Kaura village. About 10 of the displaced pastoralists said that their wives who came to Lere from Kaura had nothing to do or sell but

depended on help from philanthropists and NGOs, mainly because their husbands had lost their cattle. About 17 of the wives of the displaced persons had nothing to do and were just staying at home as mothers and house wives. More than 17 women in Saminaka displaced camps became completely redundant house wives who could neither go to markets nor work on their farms. Some women lost their husbands and became widows responsible for taking care of children and elderly relatives. Women farmers were found struggling to find food to feed their families as most people did not farm. Women farmers in particular were afraid of being attacked on their farms by the bandits who could rape or even kidnap them.

Impacts of Banditry and Conflicts

A survey of the impacts of the conflicts and banditry in the 6LGAs earmarked for the Kaduna case study has shown how cash and food crops, grains, human lives, cattle and other properties were destroyed since the year 2007. Consequent upon this, between 2008 and 2014, the select LGAs' population, especially the directly affected villages, were thrown into an unprecedented level of poverty and unemployment that led to closure of schools, worship places, markets and, indeed, devastation of agricultural and pastoral land. The statistics on the impact of the conflicts on local populations have indicated that some of the sedentary agricultural communities suffered substantial loss. The figures are as follows: about 3.75 acres of land representing 45 per cent of crops value were destroyed; 53 people were killed; 50 generators burnt; 48 houses destroyed; 60 motor cycles burnt in Me-Sankwai in 2013. As a result of this loss, people could not farm because they had no money to buy fertilisers, let alone that their houses, with all the stored grains, were burnt down. Children were out of school because there was no cash crop to sell and get money to buy uniforms, purchase books and pay for their school fees. Families' livelihoods had been destroyed. The

destruction of crops by pastoralists had been going on for a longer period in several villages, which led to shortage of food supply in the villages as less farm lands were cultivated. In Bungen village, crops of about 3.75 acres of land were destroyed; 8 people killed; 10 houses and 3 bicycles were burnt in the last five years. In Ungwan-Gata, crops of about 11.25 acres of land were destroyed; 143 houses and 100 motor cycles were burnt; over 500 people displaced. In Unguwan Kaya, crops of about 4.5 acres of land were destroyed; many houses were destroyed; and more than 150 people displaced since 2010. The pastoralist communities had also suffered their own loss because in almost every Fulani settlement that was attacked, there were also losses of cattle and lives. In Bakin Kogi, there was no Fulani family that did not suffer from cattle theft or attacked by the farmers' communities. About 70 cattle were stolen in this village over the last five years, and 135 in Damakasuwa. In Ungwan Bawa, a village in Lere LGA, a total number of 48 cattle were stolen. The pastoralists who settled in Lere after their displacement from Kaura LGA lost about 118 cattle to rustling and theft; 70 houses; 5 motor cycles; 4 bicycles; and grinding machines and cloths.

In Saminaka, displaced pastoralists lost a total number of four hundred and two (402) cattle as a result of theft, banditry and conflicts, as revealed during the KII and FGD held in the camps. Most of these pastoralists were displaced from various places within Kaduna State during some of the violent conflicts that took place in the state. The displaced pastoralists were just kept in the camp without compensation and even basic relief materials. They needed a demarcated grazing land to avoid new violent conflicts with farmers and better security in their camps so as to prevent further attacks by the bandits and cattle rustlers. This has negatively impacted on the food supply and exchange of basic commodities in the LGA markets.

In Chikun LGA, Nissi and Ungwan Kaje villages suffered in particular from banditry and rustling. In the former, 27 cattle were stolen while in the latter sixty (60) cattle were lost to rustling. The victims in Ungwan Kaje believed that rustlers used fetish means in cattle theft, considering the ease with which the cattle were stolen.

In Kutungare village under Igabi LGA, farms were shut down due to cattle rustling. Three farms in this very village had lost a total of 126 cattle, all in one night, through rustling by armed bandits who robbed the farms one after another and escaped. In Sabon Gida located in the same LGA, a Rugan Fulani (Fulani Settlement) was attacked and 100 cattle were then rustled. The rustlers escaped and only 1 of the stolen cows returned to the Rugga. This Rugga settlement of 6 men, their wives and children had its entire livelihoods taken away when they were robbed of their cattle.

Pastoralists were getting their cattle ready to migrate from the Ifira village community, also under Igabi LGA because armed banditry has gotten worse since the last five years as out of a total of 82 cattle, 30 were rustled overnight. This scale of robbery has greatly frightened the pastoralists in the village (who also happen to be farmers) who had less and less milk and butter to sell and buy the basic household goods.. In fact, rustlers had better arms and could easily take the stolen cattle to bush, which, as in many other cases was inaccessible to the police and vigilante groups. The stolen cattle were usually sold at a very cheap rate. For example, a cow that was supposed to cost about N100,000.00 would now be disposed at the rate of about N30,000.00, and that only in the markets of the rural areas or even in towns far away from the villages where the cows were stolen.

The case of Birnin Gwari local government also provides an overview of the plight of farmers and herders in the state. There were over 100 cattle stolen in the villages of the LGA. The proximity of Birnin Gwari to a very large forest that straddles the states of Kaduna, Katsina and Zamfara makes it easy for bandits and rustlers to rob cattle, kidnap women and escaped to the forest where law enforcement agencies could not reach and/or dare search, due to lack of access roads; and the presence of hardened criminals and sophisticated weapons. In fact, the forest has been operating as a criminal colony for several years, unchecked by the authorities.

Conclusion

This case study has established the fact that rural banditry, cattle rustling and ethno-religious conflicts are the major drivers of the persistent crisis in Kaduna which has espoused various religious and ethnic and has led to general and complex social violence and insecurity in Kaduna State over the last decade and a half. The research has also revealed the negative impacts of the various conflicts, which include displacement of people from their communities; destruction of lives and property; and a growing number of widows, widowers and orphan children, mostly in camps where IDPs reside, following the killings in the affected communities. Moreover, the study has revealed the existence of cattle rustling markets where stolen cattle were readily purchased at very low prices. Armed bandits continue to attack both farming and pastoral communities without being arrested by law enforcement agencies. This is mainly due to the sophistication of the arms being used by the bandits, as well as the complicity of both formal and informal security agencies in the state.

Policy Recommendations

The Following Recommendations are Hereby Proffered

- State and local governments should increase access to security agencies in the communities that are far from the state capital and local government headquarters.
- Effective measures should be taken to allay the fears of incessant attacks on both farmers and herders.
- Governments should provide adequate grazing lands for pastoralists, but such lands should not be earmarked on any community's farmland.
- State and local governments should earmark and protect grazing land in all LGAs where pastoralists seasonally traverse with their cattle.
- Farmers and Herders' communities should be encouraged to use dialogue to resolve disputes over cattle theft and crops destruction instead of resorting to violence.
- Traditional and religious institutions, including relevant government agencies should provide strong support to strengthen dialogue as a process of alternative dispute resolution.
- State and local governments should support the associations of pastoralists and farmers through provision of vaccines for their cattle; and securing cheap fertilizer, seeds and seedlings.

- Civil society and Non-Governmental Organizations should promote sustained legal and mediation advocacy in handling disputes between farmers and pastoralists.
- Alternative Dispute Resolution should be integrated in the legal advocacy as an important and cost effective mechanism for resolving conflicts without bloodshed.
- Governments should very effectively ban the use of small arms and encourage the surrender of the arms in the possession of communities.
- Security agencies, with the cooperation of the heads of communities, should search and investigate the perpetrators of banditry and rustling for appropriate punishment.
- IDPs should be given relief and adequate compensations, by both state and local governments.
- The issue of local boundary security should be addressed in order to prevent bandits from crossing to neighbouring states after committing crimes.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Sampling Technique

List of LGAs/Communities Targeted for KIIs and FGDs

S/N	<i>Name of LGA where field work was conducted</i>	<i>Targeted Communities</i>	<i>Targeted Population</i>
1.	Birnin Gwari	Birnin Gwari town	Herders, Community heads and police
2.	Chukun	Ungwankaje, Nissi Village	Herders, Community heads,
3.	Igabi	Ifira, Sabon Gida and Kutungare	Herders, Community Heads and Commercial farms.
4.	Lere	Saminaka, Ungwan Bawa and Lere	Herders, Community heads
5.	Kaura	Me-Sankwai, Bungen and UngwanGata	Farmers, Community Heads and police
6.	Kauru	Damakasawa, Bakin Kogi and Ungwan Kaya	Farmers, Community heads

S/N	Kaura LGA				
	Me-Sankwai village	Farmlands owned in acres.	Crops destroyed in acres	% of crops destroyed ¹	Sex
1		8	1/2	6.25	M
2		10	1/4	2.50	M
3		20	1	5.00	F
4		6	1	16.67	M
5		8	1/2	6.25	F
6		12	1	8.33	M
Total		64	3.75	45	F=2,M=4
	Bungen village				
1		6	1	16.67	F
2		4	1/4	6.25	F
3		5	1/2	10.00	F
4		6	0	0	M
5		7	1	14.29	M
6		6	0	0	M
7		4	1/2	12.50	F
8		5	1/4	5.00	F
9		4	0	0	M
10		3	0	0	F
11		7	1/4	3.57	M
Total		57	3.75	68.28	M=5,F=6
	Unguwan Gata village				
1		30	1	3.33	M
2		35	1	2.86	F
3		6	1/2	8.33	M
4		10	1/4	2.50	M
5		30	1/4	0.83	F
6		29	5	17.24	M
7		12	1/4	2.10	M
8		10	3	30.00	F
Total		162	11.25	67.19	F=3,M=5
	Kauru LGA				
	Unguwan Kaya village				

1		6	1/2	8.33	M
2		6	1/2	8.33	M
3		10	1	10.00	F
4		8	1	12.50	M
5		7	1/2	7.14	M
6		2	1/2	25.00	M
7		3	1/2	16.67	M
Total		42	4.5	87.97	M=6,F=1
	Damakasuwa				
		Number of cattle owned	Number stolen	Number recovered	Sex
1		150	0	0	M
2		49	0	0	M
3		40	15	0	M
4		45	17	0	M
5		150	48	0	M
6		35	11	0	M
7		35	13	0	M
8		40	12	0	M
9		40	19	0	M
Total		584	135	0	
	Bakin Kogi				
1		37	7	0	M
2		33	0	0	M
3		36	0	0	M
4		120	20	0	M
5		28	9	0	M
6		38	8	0	M
7		20	6	0	M
8		48	13	0	M
9		35	14	0	M
Total		358	70+135=205	0	
	Birnin Gwari LGA				
1		19	5	0	M
2		30	0	0	M
3		100	100	0	M
4		40	10	2	M
5		75	20	0	M
6		80	30	0	M

7		50	15	0	M
8		35	10	0	M
9		40	10	0	M
10		60	25	0	M
11		30	5	0	M
12		70	18	0	M
Total		629	248	0	M
	Lere LGA				
	Saminaka				
1		28	19	0	M
2		70	70	0	M
3		2	0	0	M
4		100	20	0	M
5		130	60	0	M
6		70	20	0	M
7		50	15	0	M
8		60	10	0	M
9		80	20	0	M
10		55	13	0	M
11		55	15	0	M
12		60	40	0	M
13		150	100	0	M
Total		910	402	0	M
	Lere				
1		96	17	0	M
2		21	2	0	M
3		42	6	0	M
4		50	50	0	M
5		48	8	0	M
6		33	13	0	M
7		35	15	0	M
8		56	7	0	M
Total		381	118	0	M
	Unguwan Bawa				
1		50	10	0	M
2		30	0	0	M
3		10	2	0	M
4		20	20	0	M
5		40	0	0	M
6		56	8	0	M
7		8	8	0	M
Total		214	48+118+40 2=568	0	

	Chukun LGA				
	UnguwanKaje				
1		25	5	0	M
2		55	15	1	M
3		65	20	0	M
4		27	7	0	M
5		30	10	0	M
6		25	5	0	M
Total		227	62	1	M
	Nissi Village Kamazo				
1		30	0	0	M
2		70	27	0	M
3		30	0	0	M
4		27	0	0	M
Total		157	27+62=89	0	M
	Igabi LGA				
	Sabon Gida				
1		100	99	1	M
Total		100	99	1	M
	Ifira				
1		32	0	0	M
2		50	30	0	M
3		0	0	0	M
Total		82	30	0	M
	Kutungare				
1		4	4	0	M
2		77	77	0	M
3		45	45	0	M
Total		126	126+30+99 =255	0	M

Source: Feedback from FGDs and KIIs.

Appendix C

List of People Interviewed in the LGA/Towns/Villages

Birnin Gwari LGA

BirninGwari Town

1. MahammaduDamaru
2. Umaru Ali
3. Abubakar Ibrahim
4. Garba Aliyu
5. Ahmed Sani
6. Mamam Usman
7. Garba Usman
8. Umar Umar
9. Julde Ibrahim
10. Sani Usman
11. Abubakar Ibrahim Abubakar
12. Abubakar Adamu
13. Aliyu Audu
14. Mamam Usman

Chikun LGA

Nissi Village/Kamazo

1. Rufai Tukur
2. Nura Shehu
3. Suleiman Shehu
4. YushehuAbdullahi

Ungwan Kaje Village

- 1.EzekielKaura
2. Musa Mamuda
3. Mamuda Muhammed
- 4.ArdoMamuda
5. Mohammadu Alhaji

6. Buhari Alhaji
7. Salisu Ibrahim

KauraLGA

Bungen Village

1. Ruth Emmanuel
2. Mr. Silas
3. DeboKabai
4. LadiBwagyat
5. Andrew Abin
6. Kande Emmanuel
7. Woje Andrew
8. Joseph Thaddeus
9. Lydia Yohona
10. Cecilia Silas
11. Justina Emmanuel
12. LikitaBature

UnguwanGata Village

1. PiusNnah
2. IshakuNwanmagyi
3. Obadiah Dodo
4. Ishaku Dodo
5. DungGyang
6. Hannatu Pius
7. Angelina D.Nachi
8. Philip Andrew

Me-Sankwai Village

1. Yakubu Muntunwa
2. IliyaIshaya
3. PolinaDuniya

4. Philip Sunday
5. Margaret Sunday
6. Alica Yakubu

Kauru LGA

BakinKogi Village

1. Mohammed Ahmed
2. Ahmed Julde
3. Bello Mohammed
4. Sani Bello
5. Yakubu Julde
6. Usman Yakubu
7. Sani Usman
8. Bello Saidu
9. Saidu Mohammed

Damakasuwa Village

1. Yakubu Umaru
2. Bello Sani
3. Mohammed Ahmed
4. Saidu Ahmed
5. Sani Sani
6. Abdullahi Julde
7. Yakubu Sani
8. Umaru Sani
9. Yau Umar Sani

Ungwan Kaya Village

1. IyaMagaji
2. BulusYashim
3. Aye Bulus
4. Amos Musa

5. Monday Musa
6. Bonet Yakubu
7. MagajiAnnock
8. Rebecca Bulus
9. John Yakubu
10. Friday Duniya

Lere LGA.

Lere Village

1. Ardo Ibrahim Madaki
2. Adamu Saleh
3. ArdoBayaroAmadu
4. Idris Suleiman
5. Ardo Abdullahi Nono
6. Musa Ibrahim Jowbe
7. Hardi Hari Ibrahim
8. Musa Abubakar

Saminaka Town

1. Yakube Julde
2. Sani Aliyu
3. IliyasuJaafaruJulde
4. Umar Dahiru
5. Husaini Haruna
6. HamsuAlhasan
7. Hamidu Aliyu
8. Ibrahim Adamu
9. Saidu Usman
10. Abdullahi Adamu
11. Muhammadu Musa
12. Salisu Idris
13. Usman Mohammed

14. ArdoJa'afaru Julde

UngwanBawa Village

1. Saleh Adamu
2. IsyakuHusaini
3. Ahmed Mohammed
4. Mohammed Alhassan
5. Abubakar Ahmed
6. Yau. S. Ismail
7. Abubakar Usman

Igabi LGA

Ifira Village

1. Adamu Abubakar
2. Adamu Abubakar
3. Garba Isaah

SabonGida

AlhajiBarwa

UngwanDogo Village

1. Turakin Adamawa farms.
2. Ibrahim Samari
3. AFAS Farm

Chapter 10

PASTORAL TRANSHUMANCE AND DYNAMICS OF SOCIAL CONFLICT IN NASARAWA STATE, NORTH-CENTRAL NIGERIA

Okoli, Al Chukwuma



Introduction

Cattle transhumance is a dominant mode of mobile pastoralism in Nigeria. It is characterized by a seasonal forth-back movement whereby herdsmen move their flock southwards during the dry season in search of greener pasture. This movement is returned during the rainy season when the herdsmen move back their flock northwards in prospect of a more favourable grazing. This annual movement follows a more or less regular migratory pattern, given rise to a network of transhumance routes and corridors in most parts of Northern Nigeria.

Over the years, transhumance corridors and routes in Nigeria have increasingly become a theatre of ecological conflicts. With particular reference to central region of Nigeria, there has been a wave of crises on the transhumance fields of Plateau, Nasarawa, Benue, and Kogi States (Okeke, 2014). The adjoining States of Kaduna, Niger, Taraba, and Kwara have also had their own shares of the crisis (Okoli and Atelhe, 2014). Recent indicators suggest that the situation has been degenerating into livelihood struggles characterized by immense arms-bearing and militancy. This development has engendered dialectics of instability that threaten sustainable peace and security in the affected areas. It is the need to investigate this trend that has informed this study.

The purpose of the study is to interrogate contemporary trends and dynamics of transhumance crisis in the North-Central Nigeria with particular focus on Nasarawa State with a view to leveraging scholarly understanding as well as making policy recommendations. This is against the backdrop of the prevalence of violent resource conflicts on the transhumance corridors in these States over the years, which threaten sustainable livelihood for the affected populations. The conflict situation (henceforth designated pastoral crisis) has taken a complex dimension, manifesting variously in the form of herder/farmer confrontation, indigene/settler (landlord/tenant) dichotomy, minority/majority divide of identity politics, and inter-communal conflagrations. The need to focus on Nasarawa State was informed by the fact that the State has hosted series of internecine conflicts arising from, and complicated by, farmer-herder existential dialectics. There currently a paucity of research on the subject matter. Relevant extant works in that regard tend to have focused rather disproportionately on farmer/herder conflict without properly emphasizing its organic socio-ecological dialectics (Blench, 2005; Alubo, 2008; Tenuche and Olarewaju, 2009; Okeke, 2014, Okoli and Atelhe, 2014). The present study, among other things, seeks to fill this pertinent gap in literature with a view to leveraging a more robust and engaging academic cum policy conversation on the subject. Specifically, the research objectives are:

- i. to explore relevant conceptual and theoretical issues that relate transhumance practice, migration and migratory routes;
- ii. to situate contemporary trends on the transhumance corridors in the study area;
- iii. to examine the nature and dimensions of transhumance crisis in the area of study;

- iv. to underscore the impacts and complications of transhumance crisis in the study area;
- v. to draw up some policy implications and recommendations on the subject matter.

Methodological Orientation

The approach of the study is exploratory and qualitative. Data were generated through a combination of primary and secondary methods. Primary sources of data included Key Informant Interviews (KII) and Study Chats (SCs) conducted at various locations of the study area (see appendix 4). The Study Chat was an improvisation designed to deal with the challenge of conducting a normal Focused Group Discussion (FGD) as originally proposed. Frantic efforts at convening sessions of FGDs repeatedly failed in view of the volatile security ambience in the State during the period of our research, necessitating thereby what is herein referred to as Study Chat. The Study Chat took the form of casual discussion whereby persons deemed to be knowledgeable on the various aspects of the subject matter were interacted with based on chance-contact. A total of ten (10) individuals were so interacted with. For the KII, a total of twenty-five (25) persons were purposively selected and interviewed in the study area in the following manner: five farmers, five herders, five government officials, five public security personnel, and five community stake-holders (including three village leaders and two vigilantes). A group of five stakeholders drawn from Miyetti Allah Cattle Breeders' Association of Nigeria (MACBAN) and Fulani Traditional Council of Chiefs (Ardos) as well as five indigenous students of Nasarawa State selected from the Federal University Lafia were each engaged in two rounds of study chat with a view to triangulate the outcome of the KII. Details pertaining to the procedures and locations of the field research are highlighted in Table 11 in the appendix. Secondary data were

elicited from library and official sources, including books, journals, unpublished works, dailies and periodicals, online materials, as well as publications from relevant government establishments. Data and information generated from the aforementioned sources were triangulated and analyzed under a number of themes and sub-themes in an effort to attend to the research objectives.

In seeking to achieve its objectives, the study was faced with a challenge principally arising from; (i) the sensitive nature of the subject matter and (ii) the volatile character of the context/field of study. The former created the tendency of emotive evaluation and value judgment of the subject matter on the part of our research informants, while the latter posed a serious hazard (safety risk) to the researcher. For instance, our field investigation in Nasarawa State coincided with a period of active wave of inter-communal violence in most hinterlands of the State. This posed a major challenge to the conduct of the study, necessitating a somewhat circumscribed scope and depth for the research, as well as a purposive field investigation. The main focal areas of the research include: Awe, Doma, Keana, Lafia, and Obi Local Government Areas of Nasarawa State.

Conceptualizing and Contextualizing Pastoral Transhumance

Transhumance has been recognized as a dominant mode of mobile pastoralism in many parts of the world (Stenning, 1957; WISP, 2007; Rakshieva, 2011; McPeak, 2012; Sulieman, 2013). Transhumance refers to “the seasonal movement of herds occurring between two points and following precise routes repeated each year (Silieman, 2013:5). According to Rakshieva:

Transhumance was a particular form of mobile pastoralism with seasonal utilization of different

ecological niches. It was based on all-year round maintenance of the livestock on the pastures taking advantage of seasons' climatic changes and grass vegetation in the zone of highlands and in the plains (2011:8).

Unlike other forms of pastoral system, such as nomadic pastoralism and sedentary pastoralism, transhumance is characterized by cyclical seasonal movement of herds and herders away from a more or less stationary or settled base (WISP, 2008; Sulieman, 2013). Hence, while the transhumant herding community live in a "permanent settlement", only "the shepherds move with the flocks seasonally" (Rakshieva, 2011:4-8). According to Kaimba et al:

Compared to other types of pastoralism, e.g. resident pastoralism, transhumance is based on more or less regular seasonal and cyclical migration of varying degrees between two complementary ecological areas. Their mobility is a key strategy to gain access to seasonal availabilities of quality forage and to reduce vulnerability of livestock to local environmental risks (as cited in Sulieman, 2013:1).

Transhumance practices "not only provide critical grazing when resources elsewhere have depleted, but they are part of the strategies to allow wet season grazing areas to rest" (Flintan, 2012:1). Furthermore, transhumance "is also important for animal husbandry including the breaking of livestock parasite cycles" (Flintan, 2012:1). Other advantages associated with transhumance pastoralism can be highlighted thus: it provides access to minerals and medical herbs required to maintain the natural health and vitality of livestock; it provides access to transit markets along the migratory routes and corridors; it also aids fertilization of the soil through organic fertilizing, etc.

Transhumance pastoralism is characterized by cyclical seasonal migration per annum, which follows more or less precise routes (Sulieman, 2013). Regarding the importance of these migratory routes, Sulieman (2013:2) succinctly observes:

(L)ivestock seasonal migration routes represent the life artery of any transhumance pastoral system. Therefore, maintaining these routes and keeping them functioning are vital components of the existence of such an endangered livelihood system. Those routes shouldn't (sic) been seen as a transit routes for the trespassing of livestock to grazing resources.

Transhumance migratory routes have also provided an avenue for rural development administration. In Sudan, for instance, the “migratory routes served the dual purpose of providing a template for the development of essential infrastructure and services in rural areas, such as water catchments like dams, seasonal water beds and natural depressions...and deep bore holes” (Sulieman, 2013:3). In addition, the routes serve as an efficient mechanism for moderating contacts between the pastoralists and settled farmers in an attempt to mitigate conflicts. In this regard, it has been observed that the migratory routes “also mark recognized grazing land and passage ways through which pastoralists could move with their herds in order to avoid contact and potential conflict with farmers and sedentary communities by circumventing areas of concentrated agricultural activity” (Sulieman, 2013:3).

Regular transhumant migration is dictated by the annual seasonal dynamics. In Africa, the take-off occurs during the dry season of the year and the return is made during the wet season of the following year (WISP, 2007). In effect, “The migration routes are north-south, with southward movements in the dry season and northward

movements in the raining (wet) season” (WISP, 2007:17). During the movement, “each transhumance tribe has its own routes with a certain stopping sites along these routes...” (WISP, 2007:17). Apart from the factor of seasonability, transhumance migration can be determined by other factors including:

- i. cyclical movement from North to South;
- ii. daily movement in search of grazing and water, returning to the same camp at the end of the day;
- iii. occasional movement of herds to deal with temporary constraints, e.g. Lack of pasture due to late arrival of rains, or outbreak of disease;
- iv. seasonal movement of livestock in search of pasture in relation to rainfall patterns;
- v. exceptional displacement of the herd as a result of eco-crime, conflict or drought;
- vi. migration as a last resort in the face of insurmountable socio-political or environmental constraints, e.g. war, epidemics, etc (Monimart, 2008: 6).

Transhumance is a dominant mode of pastoralism in Nigeria. According to Bobalobi, Ogundibe and Esuruoso (2000: 1), “A major feature of Nigeria's traditional production system is the seasonal transhumance herd migration between one geographical zone to another, in search of natural pasture, crop residues, water supplies and disease-free environment; and to avoid conflict with arable crop farmers”. This practice follows a seasonal pattern of movement described thus:

During the dry season, the movement is southwards from the (arid and semi-arid) Sahel and Sudan Savanna. The movement pattern is reversed during the rainy season, and seeks to maximize use of scarce

resources (pastoral) that are seasonally available (Bobalobi et al, 2000: 1).

In the main, the cycle of transhumance migration in Nigeria begins around October and ends in September the following year. It is characterized by North—South or upland—lowland movement as highlighted in Table 1.

Table 1: Cycle of Transhumance Movement in Nigeria

Period	Event/Activity
October-December	The beginning of southwards movement of herd, and along rivers and valleys
January-February	Intensification of southward movement; Longer grazing hours, herd splitting and more frequent visits to water resources
March- April	Peak of southward movement: Short grazing hours; sunset grazing
May- June	Beginning of the northward movement
September	Peak of southward movement and farmer-herder conflict

Source: Adekunle and Adisa (2010: 2-3).

Box 1: Nature of Pastoral Transhumance

Herd mobility follows a seasonal pattern called transhumance along specific paths called corridors. Passing through agricultural areas, corridors vary between 5 and 20 meters in width, allowing livestock to move through cultivated zones without removing significant amounts of land from agricultural production. Mobility is north-to-south oriented with coordinated seasonal movements that allow both crops and livestock to use key resources. During the rainy season, livestock move to northern pastures to take advantage of the sparser, but higher quality vegetation found there. During the dry season, livestock move along corridors to the south where agricultural pressure is often, but not always, higher. Livestock progress along transhumance corridors between relatively well-defined resting points, generally close to water. The length of time that livestock remain at these resting points varies from one day to several weeks. Each day, herders take livestock to graze and or water in the area then return to resting points in the evening. The attractiveness of a resting point, the length of the stay of a herd, and the size of the herd present in any given year is strongly affected by the availability of forage and water in a 4 km radius surrounding the point (McPeak et al, 2012:1).

Transhumance migration and migratory routes constitute “a vital strategy to gain access to seasonal availabilities of high equality forage and reduce vulnerability of livestock to local rainfall deficit” (McPeak, 2012: 1). This important dimension of pastoralism has been associated with a number of challenges, ranging from shortage of pastoral resources to encroachment of the settled and large-scale farmers on the transhumance corridors (Sulieman, 2013). This has often precipitated violent resource conflict with dire humanitarian and development consequences (Blench, 2003; Concords International, 2012). In the view of Sulieman (2013:1), “dispossessing pastoralist of their traditional system and putting it under an unproductive farming system, which is largely a direct result of inappropriate development interventions, is creating a cruel dilemma of increasing resource conflicts...” The Nigerian experience of transhumance conflict has been vividly acknowledged by President Goodluck Jonathan:

The intensity and dimension of the conflicts over the years have reached alarming proportions with the attendant unfortunate losses of lives and properties. These conflicts have been more predominant in Plateau, Kaduna, Nasarawa, Benue and Taraba, and virtually no State in Northern Nigeria has been insulated from one form of violence or the other associated with pastoralists. Minor skirmishes have also been reported in some States in the South. The spate of conflicts continues to pose serious threat to our national's security, stability and economic wellbeing (Jonathan, 2014:2-3).

Contemporary pastoral transhumance in Nigeria has been threatened by a variety of factors such as unfavourable land-tenure and land-use systems, land grabbing, resource conflict and violence,

as well as the expansive settlement practices along the corridors of transhumance (Flintan, 2012; WISP, 2007; McPeak, 2012). The transhumance crisis has been complicated by the global phenomenon of climate change whose dialectics have exacerbated livelihood struggles in contemporary society.

1. Transhumance Crisis: Towards a Theoretical Framework

The subject matter under investigation can be explained from a number of theoretical standpoints. One of the relevant theoretical perspectives is what has been termed the “eco-violence theory” (Okoli, 2014). The eco-violence theory seeks to explicate the relationship between environmental factors and violent conflicts. Pioneered by Homa-Dixon (1999), the theory holds that:

Decreased in quality and quantity of resources, population growth, and resource access act singly or in various combinations to increase the scarcity, for certain population groups, of cropland, water, forests, and fish. This can reduce economic productivity, both for the local groups experiencing the scarcity and for the larger regional and national economies. The affected people may migrate or be expelled to new lands. Migrating groups often trigger ethnic conflicts when they move to new areas, while decreases in wealth can cause deprivation conflicts (Homer-Dixon, 1999:30).

Implicit in the eco-violence theory is the assumption that struggles over scarce ecological space and resources engender livelihood crisis, which, in turn, drives violent conflicts (Okoli and Atelhe, 2014:79). This situation derives impetus from the dynamics of climate change which have accentuated ecological scarcities and struggles across the world (Blench, 2005; Onuoha, 2007). The

conflicts between the herders and crop growers on the transhumance corridors and routes of North-Central Nigeria typify ecological resource-conflict aggravated by the impacts of global climate change. What is at issue in the conflicts is livelihood struggles in a context of stiff ecological scarcity and competition. The desperation exhibited by the principal actors in the conflicts can only be properly conjectured by understanding the conflict situation as a struggle for collective subsistence in an ecological domain fraught with resource- scarcity and do-or-die contestation. In this context, it becomes expedient for the parties to apply counter-group tactics in an attempt to live through the ecological struggle. This apparently explains the level of violence that has characterized such conflicts situation in contemporary times.

Another theoretical paradigm that is relevant in explaining the transhumance crisis in Nigeria is the theory of ecological existentialism. As adapted to the purpose of political ecology (Okoli, 2008), the theory looks at the behavior of humans in a queer, hostile and indifferent environment, where he must devise means of taking charge of his destiny. The theory holds that the imperative of survival in an unfriendly ecology necessitates violent living (Okoli, 2014). This is more-so the case when there is a persistent threat to ones means of survival and subsistence. For the Fulani nomads, such threat to their common source of livelihood as exemplified in blockade of grazing routes and passage, cattle rustling, and incessant arrests and killings of cows, is a call for aggression. This survivalist worldview of the nomadic-Fulani is explicit in the following citations:

- i. “Our herd is our life, because, to every nomad, life is worthless without his cattle. What do you expect from us when our source of existence is threatened? The

encroachment of grazing field and routes by farmers is a call to war” (IRIN as cited in Abbass, 2010: 331).

- ii. “This is a hostile environment in which the Fulani man lives. You have to be hostile as your environment to survive. There must be a balance of terror for you to survive in the jungle. The Fulani herdsman is a man that believes the entire world is after him and what he has. He believes he has to arm himself to the teeth...” (*Tell Magazine* No. 447, November 26, 2012, p.51)
- iii. “He (the Fulani man) has found himself in a situation whereby if he does not pay somebody to take care of his enemies, the enemy will kill him and take over his property” (see Iyorchia and Dura, 2014: 8-9).

The afore-stated citations are instructive of the militant worldview and posture of the Fulani nomad in respect of their response to the ecological conflict with settled farmers in the study area. On the side of the farmers, the same level of militancy is being cultivated. As a Key Informant interviewed in the course of the research opined: “It's survival of the fittest for us”. This militant posture has been culminated in the emergence of the local militias such as *Sojan Patari* (a Tiv militia) and the *Ombatse* (an Eggon militia) in Nasarawa State, whose principal aim to protect the farmers against the onslaught of the Fulani militants (Okoli and Uhembe, 2014; Iyorchia and Dura, 2014).

The point being established on the foregoing is that the spate of arms-bearing and militancy that characterizes the herder/farmer conflicts on the transhumance corridors and passage of North-Central Nigeria is a reflection of desperate struggle for survival and subsistence in an atmosphere of stiff ecological scarcity, desperate competition and hostility. This tendency has been aptly captured in

the conceptual schema of “eco-survivalism” (Okoli and Atelhe, 2014:80). It is against the backdrop of the above theoretical exegeses that we set out to interrogate the subject matter of the study.

2. Setting of Study: Nasarawa State in North-Central Nigeria

The field research that underpinned this study was conducted between October and December, 2014 in parts of North-Central Nigeria, with particular focus on Nasarawa State. Casual pilot study, in the fashion of in-depth interview and study chats, was conducted in parts of Benue State for the purpose of comparative insights. The focal State– Nasarawa - is hereunder presented for the purpose of contextual background.

Nasarawa State was created out of the old Plateau State on October 1, 1996. Situated in the North-Central region of Nigeria, the State is bordered on the West by the Federal Capital Territory, on the North by Kaduna, on the South by Benue and Kogi, and on the East by Plateau and Taraba States. Nasarawa's traditional economic activity is agriculture: cash crop production, livestock production and plantation farming. Exploitation of minerals, such as salt production and quarrying, are also important traditional economic activities in the State (Okoli & Atelhe, 2014).

Nasarawa has a diverse range of indigenous ethnic groups. Prominent among these ethnic groups are: Eggon, Kambari, Milgli, Alago, Tiv, Wamba, Jukun, etc. According to the 2006 census, a little less than 2 million people reside in the State. The State has 13 local governments and the capital is located in Lafia. The thirteen Local Government Areas of Nasarawa State are: Akwanga, Awe, Doma, Karu, Keana, Keffi, Kokona, Lafia, Nasarawa, Nasarawa Egon, Obi, Toto, Wamba (Ayih, 2003).

The obvious ethnic diversity of Nasarawa State is attested to in the multiplicity of local languages and native dialects spoken in the State. In effect, there are 29 languages spoken as first tongues in Nasarawa State. Most of these languages are marked by strong linguistic incongruities, while some are fairly mutually intelligible. Major languages are Agatu, Basa, Eggon, Gbagyi, Gade, Goemai, Gwandara, Ham, Kofyar, and Lijili. One language – Basa-Gumna – is apparently extinct. Table 2 highlights the spread of local languages across the various Local Governments of the State. Note that the list in Table 2 excludes the linguistic categories of Hausa and Fulani, which are generally considered not very indigenous to the State. Hausa is incidentally the official language of the State alongside English language.

Table 2: The Spread of Local Languages across Local Governments of Nasarawa State

AGATU	Awe and Nasarawa LGA's
AKE	Lafia LGA
ALAGO	Awe, Doma, Obi , Keana and Lafia LGA's
ARUM-TESU	Akwanga LGA
BASA	Nassarawa LGA
BASA-GUMNA (+)	Nassarawa LGA
BU	Akwanga LGA
DIBO	Nassarawa LGA
DUHWA	Akwanga LGA
EBIRA	Nassarawa LGA
EGGON	Nassarawa, Akwanga, Lafia, Awe, and Obi LGA's
ELOYI	Awe and Nassarawa LGA's

GADE	Nassarawa LGA
GBAGYI	Keffi, and Nassarawa LGA's
GBARI	Nassarawa LGA
GOEMAI	Lafia and Awe LGA's
GWANDARA	Keffi, Lafia, Nassarawa, and Akwanga LGA's
HAM	Keffi LGA
HASHA	Akwanga LGA
KOFYAR cluster	Lafia LGA
LIJILI	Awe and Lafia LGA's
MADA	Akwanga LGA
MAMA	Akwanga LGA
NINZAM	Akwanga LGA
NUMANA-NUNKU-GWANTU-NUMBU	Akwanga LGA
NUNGU	Akwanga LGA
TIV	Lafia LGA
TORO	Akwanga LGA
WAPAN	-

Source: Nasarawa State Liaison Office, Abuja

Nasarawa State is richly endowed with agricultural and mineral resources. A wide and varied species of food crops ranging from fruits, root and tuber, cereals to legumes is produced in the State in two broad farming seasons as indicated in appendix 2. Besides, the State is famous for the production of livestock products, prominent among which are cattle, assorted poultry birds, and fish. The solid minerals found in the State include salt, limestone, talc, mica, tantalite, tourmaline, barite, clay, feldspar, galena, iron-ore, quartz, cooking coal, amethyst, etc.

1. Situating the Context of Pastoral Transhumance in Nasarawa State

Pastoral transhumance is a dominant land use practice in Nasarawa State. Two systems of transhumance practice are obtainable in the State, namely: localized transhumance and trans-state transhumance. Localized transhumance refers to the seasonal movement of herds from one part of the State to another in search of better pasturage. Trans-state transhumance has to do with the migration of herds from neighboring States into Nasarawa State. This pattern of transhumance follows a calendar of movement that proceeds predominantly from three important locations as illustrated in Table 3.

Table 3: Transhumance Movement into Nasarawa State

POINT OF ENTRY INTO NASARAWA	REASONS FOR MIGRATION	TIME OF ARRIVAL INTO NASARAWA
Kaduna-Abuja axis	i) Seasonal drift in search of pasture ii) Escape from violent conflicts iii) Escape from cattle rustling	i) November- December ii) Anytime of the year iii) Anytime of the year
Bauchi -Plateau axis	i) Seasonal drift in search of pasture ii) Escape from violent conflicts iii) Escape from cattle rustling	i) November- December ii) Anytime of the year iii) Anytime of the year
Kogi-Benue axis	i) Seasonal drift in search of pasture ii) Escape from extra- wet and swampy grazed-feild south of the state.	i) May-June ii) May-June

Source: Fieldwork, November, 2014.

As indicated in Table 3, movement from the northern region into the State starts in November and culminates in December, while movement from the southern part starts in late May and climaxes in June. The reason for this seasonal movement ranges from the search for better pasturage to the need to escape from volatile areas characterized by violent conflicts and/or cattle rustling. Migrations as a result of search for forage are more or less fixed at a certain point in the year while insecurity/conflict-driven migrations are not fixed and determinate.

The main transhumance group in the State is the nomadic Fulani. There are, however, pockets of no-Fulani herders who are in engaged in varying degrees of localized transhumance in the State. Some of these nomadic Fulani are 'settler-residents' in the State, who practice what we have referred to in the foregoing as localized transhumance. On the other hand, there are other groups of nomads who migrate from neighboring States to do pastoral transhumance in Nasarawa State. For the latter group, two patterns of

transhumance migration are identifiable namely: early migration (*Duumal*) and late migration (*Shedde*). Information on Table 4 further buttresses the foregoing observations.

Table 4: Facts on Transhumance Migration into Nasarawa State.

ITEM	FACTS
Main transhumance group	Nomadic Fulani
Early migration arrival (<i>Duumal</i>)	May-June, mostly from the River basins of Benue and Kogi
Late migration arrival (<i>Shedde</i>)	November-December, mostly from the neighboring States of Plateau, Kaduna, FCT Abuja
Important transhumance/grazing corridors/areas	Awe, Keana, Doma, Obi, Assakio, Wamba, Gitata and Kurundu

Source: Fieldwork, November, 2014.

Trans-state transhumance migration into Nasarawa State obtains at the various ends of the State: East, West, North, and South. At these ends, the intensity of transhumance activity, the volume of transhumance traffic, as well as the nature of transhumance crisis varies quite significantly. Table 5 sheds some light on this observation.

Table 5: Activities on Selected Transhumance Routes in Nasarawa State

Transhumance route	In-Migration season	Out-migration season	Degree of transhumance traffic	Nature of transhumance crisis
Northern axis (Gwonto– Adaha)	Nov-Dec	April-June	High	Prevalent
Western axis (Karu-Keffi)	Nov-Dec	April-June	Low	Sporadic
Eastern axis (Wuse-Chinkai-Tunga)	May-July	Dec – Jan	Very high	Very prevalent
Southern aixs (Obi-Keana-Doma-Toto)	May-June	Oct – Nov	Very high	Very prevalent
Central axis (Wamba-Eggon)	April-May	Dec- Jan	High	Prevalent

Source: Fieldwork, November, 2014

As could be deduced from Table 5, there is high intensity of transhumance traffic along the Southern and Eastern routes. This is because of the pasturable vegetation that characterized the region, making it a veritably irresistible grazing destination in the State. Much as the Eastern and Southern regions of Nasarawa State constitute the fulcrum of grazing activities of the State, they have also invariably become the epicenter of transhumance crisis in that context. The basis for the spate of transhumance crisis in the State is the contradiction arising from claims and counterclaims regarding competitive land use in a volatile atmosphere of resource scarcity and shrinking ecological space. It is to this pertinent theme that we now turn.

1. Crises of Transhumance in Nasarawa State: Issues and Perspectives

The transhumance corridors in Nasarawa State have been a veritable theatre of resource conflict and internecine violence. This situation has its essence in claims and consternations regarding land tenure and use as well as livelihood struggles between the farming and herding communities in the State. Underlying the crisis is the quest for survival in the context of ecological scarcity and alienation (Okoli and Atelhe, 2014). In its apparent dynamism of degeneration, the crisis has progressively produced a trend of ethno-communal complications in recent times. Associated with this trend is a wave of inter-communal conflagrations that threaten the collective wellbeing of the population. Some of the critical dimensions of the crisis are outlined hereunder in the subsequent sub-sections.

7.1 Farmer/Herder Conflict: Conflicts between herders and farming communities have been a common manifestation of transhumance crisis in Nasarawa State (Okeke 2014:72). The conflicts have been “primarily about of transhumance corridors (Burtali), farming along the valleys and stream/river banks and uncomplimentary agricultural policies by government” (Tukur, 2013:1). The situation has assumed a more critical dimension in recent times following “the infusion of ethnic, religious and political factors into it” (Tukur, 2013:1). In effect, “some of the conflicts are also co-extensive with disputes over indigene-ship between the herders and the farming communities (Okeke, 2014:72).

Our field study revealed that the conflicts are often triggered by encroachment on farm-field or cattle thoroughfare. Both the farmers and the herders are equally culpable of the encroachments. The crop farmers claim that the herders deliberately or negligently graze in their farm-fields thereby damaging their crops. The herders, on the

other hand, claim that the farmers cultivate their traditional and approved grazing corridors, thereby blocking the transhumance passage. This often leads to confrontation by the parties, which sometimes results in cycles of violence.

Often times, the conflicts are caused by mere ignorance and/or negligence. For instance, when a straying cow makes its way into a farm and eats up growing crops, the incident is understood by the farmer as a case of wilful damage that must be retaliated. Similarly, when an ignorant petty dry season farmer cultivates a river bank and incidentally blocks stock access to fresh water, “the herdsman would simply drive in the cattle, over-run the farm and makes away” (KII, December 2014). Occurrences like thus often leads to affray wherein the native farmers and the Fulani nomads confront themselves in mutually destructive waves of violence.

Farmers/herder conflicts have been prevalent in the southern transhumance corridors of Nasarawa State. In this regard, typical flashpoints include Awe, Doma, Keana, Obi and Lafia hinterlands. In apparent dynamics of degeneration, the conflicts have deteriorated into inter-group tensions and communal conflagrations. According to Okoli and Atelhe (2014:83), “The current stage of the situation is characterized by pathological hate and vindictive vendetta, which threaten the mutual wellbeing and co-existence of the parties”. Table 6 gives useful insights in this regard.

Table 6: Instances of Major Herder/Farmer Conflict in Nasarawa State (2011-2014)

DATE	CONFLCT LOCATION	PROXIMATE CAUSE	OUTCOME
20/1/2011	Akpanja, Ondori Rukubi in Doma Local Government Area	Trespass into Agatu, Tiv and other farms by Fulani herders	4 persons killed; houses and farm produce destroyed; population displaced.
17/4/2011	Border communities between Doma LGA of Nasarawa State and Guma LGA in Benue State	Killing of a Fulani herder by Tivs farmers	30 persons killed; human injuries sustained; population displaced.
13/1/2012	Doka, Kwara and Ugwan Yaran Mada in Keana and Doma LGAs	Fulani herders alleged stealing and killing of their cows by Tiv/Mada/Migili communities	10 persons killed; household and farm assets destroyed; population displaced.
24/7/2012	Kotsona village in Tunga, Awe LGA	Encroachment of Tiv farmlands by Fulani herders	About 35 killed; property destroyed
5/1/2013	Agbashi town in Doma LGA	Maiming of an Agatu man; rapping of Agatu women and girls by Fulani	5 Fulani killed; Fulani camps raided; population displaced
6/1/2013	Agbashi town in Doma LGA	Reprisal attack by Fulani herders over the killing of their men	16 Agatu killed; property destroyed
Jan– November, 2014	Various parts of the State: Obi, Awe, Doma, Keana and Lafia suburbs	Sundry factors pertaining to resource conflict, livelihood struggles and their ethno-communal complications	Loss of life and property; mass population displacement; inter - communal conflagrations

Sources: Okoli and Atelhe (2014: 87); Nasarawa National Orientation Agency's Pulse Report 2011-2013; Author's updates and modifications apply.

7.2 Inter-Group/Communal Disturbances: The crisis of transhumance in Nasarawa State has produced dialectical inter-group relations between the farming and herding communities. Hitherto, the relationship between the two groups was largely symbiotic and mutually supportive. Today, the relationship is characterized by mutual suspicion and mistrust. The native farmers view the Fulani nomads as “predators”, “intruders” and “usurpers” (KII, November 2014). A key informant interacted with in the course of the field study insisted that “these guys are bands of terrorists on rampage (Uhembe: KII, November, 2014). For the Fulani nomads, the native farmers are nothing but “local bandits” and “ethnic champions” that do not mean well for “our collective heritage and survival” (KII, November, 2014).

The strained inter-group relations between the farmers and herders have engendered a dynamic of ethno-religious contradictions that finds expression in spite of inter-communal violence in the State. For instance, there has been a perennial violent conflict between the Fulani and the Tivs in the State – a conflict that is rooted in the desperate struggles over land use and livelihood (Al-Makura, 2013). This is also the case regarding the hostility between the Fulani and the Eggon people of the State. These conflicts have the tendency to assume ethno-religious characterisation. In the case of the conflict between the Fulani and the Eggon, the Kambari and Alago communities were joined in the animosity owing to their ethno-cultural affinity with the Fulani. This trend has the tendency to engender widespread ethno-religious violence in the State (Okoli and Uhembe, 2014).

7.3 Resource Militancy:

Militancy refers to the belief in, and resort to, the use of aggression in the pursuit of a group cause (Okoli and Atelhe, 2014:80). Resource militancy is understood in this context to imply the application of military tactics in the prosecution of resource struggle. The transhumance crisis in Nasarawa State has manifested elements of resource militancy in a number of ways. For instance, the Fulani have overtime evolved a “standing self-help army” by which it confronts the hostile farmers “on the volatile transhumance corridors of the State” (KII, November, 2014).

Given this scenario, it has been observed that:

The conflict between pastoralists and farmers in Nigeria has changed drastically over the years from the usual isolated cases of attacks and reprisal attacks between the nomads and farmers to full scale war levied against host communities by Fulani herdsmen and foreign mercenaries (Iyorchia and Dura, 2014:4).

In an attempt to retort the rising Fulani militancy on the transhumance corridors of Nasarawa State, the dominant ethnic group in the State - the Eggon has deployed the militia rank of the *Ombatse* cult to contend with the Fulani militants (Okoli and Uhembe, 2014). What have played out of this scenario are flagrant arms-bearing, which has accentuated the transhumance crisis in the State.

The *Ombatse* militia is “helping the Eggon nation to protect the land and people of Eggon origin from the onslaught of the Fulani militants and their foreign mercenaries” (KII: November, 2014). Aggression by the Fulani and the *Ombatse* militants has led near desolation of a number of villages in the State, namely Assakio, Agyaragu, Deddere, Tudun Adabu, and Barkin Abdullahi District (BAD).

7.4 Rural Banditry and Cattle Rustling: Rural banditry and cattle rustling represent a critical dimension of crisis of transhumance in Nasarawa State (Okoli, 2014; Okoli and Okpaleke, 2014). The herders and farmers are in constant blame game regarding who perpetrates these acts of criminality. The herders commonly believe that their valuables and cattle are raided by the “criminal elements among the natives” (KII: November 2014). On the other hand, the farmers maintain that the bulk of the violent crimes in the villages are committed by the herders. These crimes range from rape to armed robbery to farm raids. The resource struggles between herders and farmers in that context has been characterized by immense arms bearing and arms proliferations. This has escalated both rural and urban insecurity in the State. Armed robbery, for instance, has been on a steady rise in the urban areas in the State as a necessary corollary and spill-over of rural banditry.

Organized cattle rustling seems to be assuming an alarming scale and proportions in Nasarawa State. In effect, there have been sporadic incidents of cattle theft and raids by armed groups in the State over the recent years. Tables 7 and 8 are insightful in this regard. The Fulani accuse the native farmers as being behind these incidents while the farmers insist that the perpetrators are “unknown external bandits, some of whom must have been ex-cattle grazers in the locality” (KII: November 2014). The argument is that it takes a 'cowboy' to carry out cattle rustling successfully (see Okoli and Okpaleke, 2014). Another dimension of the argument is to the effect that such incidents of cattle rustling are perpetuated by mercenary militants “who had been hired by the herders to fight their local adversaries” (KII: November 2014).

Table 7: Estimated No. of Rustled Cattle and Associated Deaths in Nigeria in 2013

State	No. of Herders Killed	No. of Cattle Rustled
Plateau	87	7, 200
<i>*Nasarawa</i>	<i>125</i>	<i>12, 000*</i>
Benue	17	2, 000
Zamfara	37	2, 462
Niger	15	500
Gombe	NA (Not Available)	29, 040
Sokoto	NA	99
Yobe	NA	92
Bauchi	NA	204
Kwara	NA	204
TOTAL	281	53, 801

Source: Sunday Trust, June 1, 2014.

Among other things, table 7 clearly indicates that cattle rustling, alongside its deadly impacts are endemic in Nasarawa State, with an estimated whooping death toll of 125 herders and 12, 000 cattle rustled. It is important to note that cattle rustling are not peculiar to Nasarawa State or North-Central Nigeria (see Table 7 for instance). It is a common instance of rural banditry that is increasingly getting transnational (Tueye, 2013; Okoli, 2014; Okoli and Okpaleke, 2014). It is also a common dimension of organized crime in most States of Northern Nigeria where pastoralism thrives. The occurrence of cattle rustling on Nasarawa graze-fields is, therefore, not to be blamed on one social group or another. Empirical insights

emanating from our field study reveals that both the Fulani herders and local breeders (prominent traditional/community leaders, politicians, local investors who own cattle) have equally lost cows to cattle thieves, who often connive with criminal elements on both sides to perpetuate the crime (KII: November 2014). More recent records suggest a telling incidence of cattle rustling in the focal area, with Nasarawa State standing out as a critical flashpoint.

Table 8: Estimated Incidence of Cattle Rustling in North-Central Nigeria along Nasarawa State (2013-early 2015)

State	No. of Cattle Rustled	No. of Human Causality
Plateau	28, 000	264
<i>Nasarawa</i>	<i>25, 000</i>	<i>70</i>
Benue	8, 680	2, 500
Kwara	1, 640	150
FCT	1, 500	07
Totals	64, 820	2991

Source: Weekly Trust, May 16, 2015

From the foregoing, it is evident that the transhumance terrain in Nasarawa State has been volatile and crisis-laden. This scenario mirrors the crisis and contradictions of contemporary transhumance practice in Nigeria in general. As Tukur (2013:1) succinctly puts it “Cattle rustling, availability of dangerous weapons, intra-pastoralist conflicts, mercenary elements and dangerous drugs had all added to the combustion”. This combustion is a reality in the various transhumance corridors and migratory avenues in Nasarawa State. The consequence has been a vicious cycle of internecine conflicts and violence for which the State has been prominently notorious since its creation. The dimensions and dialectics of this vicious cycle are sketched in Figure 1 for vivid elucidation.

Figure 1: Vicious Cycle of Transhumance Crisis in Nasarawa State

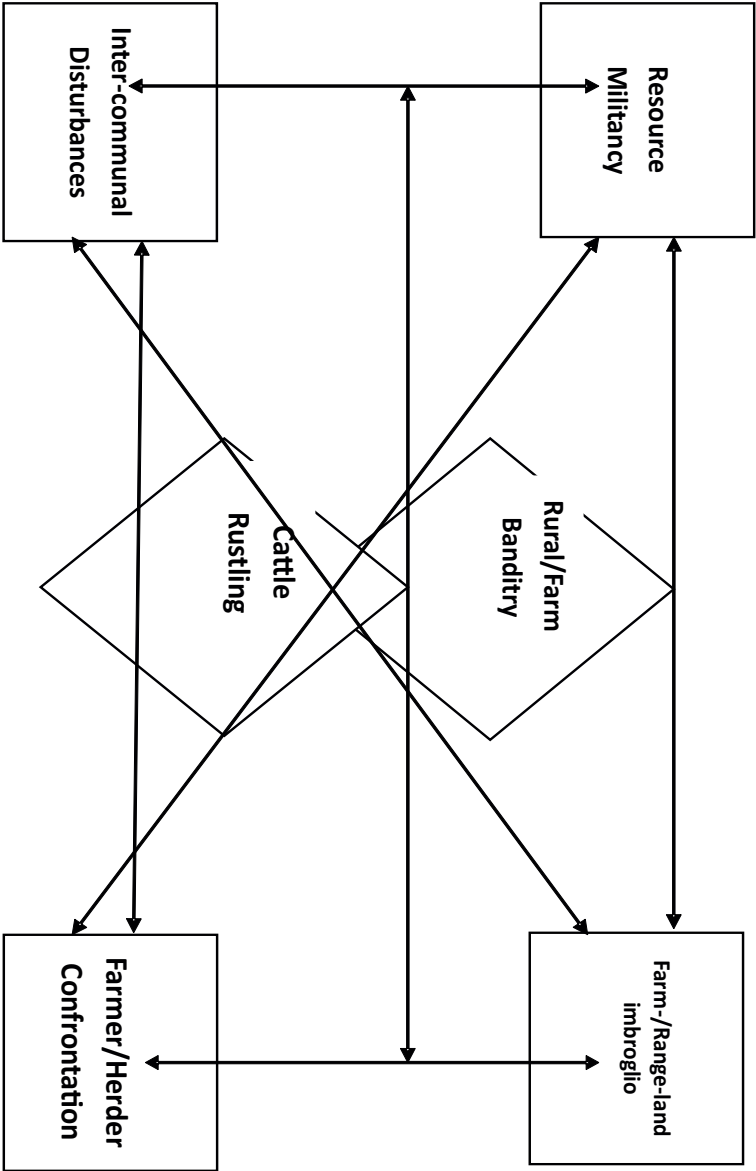


Figure 1 suggests that the transhumance crisis begins with quarrel over encroachments on farmland or rangeland/routes by parties, which usually results in farmer/herder confrontation. This conflict most times degenerates into inter-communal disturbances that often find expression in identity politics: indigene/settler dichotomy, Christian/Muslim schism, majority/minority conflict, and the like. Beyond its ethno-communal characterization, the crisis situation takes the form of resource militancy marked by active violence and destruction. The combustion is further complicated by the twin phenomenon of rural banditry and cattle rustling, creating a complex vicious web of instability and insecurity. Figure 2 showing hereunder highlight the incidence of transhumance-related conflagrations across the research's focal local government areas, based on the outcome of our field investigation.

Figure 2: Perceived Incidence of Transhumance Crisis in the Focal Local Areas



Source: Fieldwork, November 2014=Lafia

Key: NC=Obi; NE=Lafia; SS=Doma; NW=Awe; SW=Keana; SE=Others

Empirical insights from the field study suggest that transhumance crisis is prevalent in most parts of the Nasarawa State. However, in terms of scale and frequency of occurrence, the incidence has been highest in Obi Local Government Area, followed by Lafia Local Government Area. But in terms of magnitude of impacts, complications, and multiplier effects, the incidence has been clearly highest in Lafia Local Government. In effect, in respect of the aforementioned LGAs, the phenomenon of transhumance crisis has been most endemic, intractable, pervasive, and destructive.

1. Over-viewing the Drivers and Triggers of Transhumance Crisis in Nasarawa State

A number of factors account for the growing crises on the transhumance corridors of Nasarawa State. The foremost factor is the geographical location and vegetation of the State. Nasarawa State is situated in the heart of the semi-arid ecological zone of Nigeria, which is highly susceptible to pastoral conflict (Blench, 2005). The expansive Savannah vegetation of this area makes it a veritable hub for transhumance activities. The region is also a choice destination for crop cultivation and allied agronomical practices. The intensity of transhumance movement in this area predisposes conflictual relations between herders and crop growers. This is against backdrop of ever shrinking ecological space and resources in the area in the present era of rapid urbanization and climate change. In these circumstances, there prevails an intense struggle and competition for scarce ecological resources among the various categories of land users in a manner that often precipitates conflicts (Shettima and Tar, 2008; Blench, 2005).

Contemporary trajectory of transhumance movement in Nigeria suggests that Nasarawa State is a veritable migratory route and/or destination. The contradictions of this movement as it relates to

farmer/herder relations bring about conflicts. As Blench (2005: iv-15) rightly observes, “At the heart of much of the pastoral conflict is the changing pattern of pastoral migration from the nineteenth century onwards”. The influx of herders with their herds into Nasarawa State is a necessary manifestation of the seasonal transhumance sojourn in Nigeria. This practice obtains as a matter of existential imperative. According to Tukur (2013:1) pastoralists just don't move for the sake of it”. He further notes that:

... the seasonal movements are not only primarily in search of pasture but could be influenced by other factors like climate change, epidemics, conflicts, bush burning and even market forces (Tukur, 2013:1).

The explosion in the transhumance activities in Nasarawa State is therefore not unconnected with the trends and impact of climate change which has accentuated the problems of desertification and drought in the far North, necessitating thereby a southward drift of transhumance. Also important is the prevalence of violent conflicts and insecurity in many parts of the North–East. For instance, the Boko Haram insurgency has displaced many herding clans from Borno, Yobe and Adamawa States. Borno State has been reputed as having the highest number of cattle in Nigeria (Iro, n.d). A good number of these displaced herders moved their herd to the North-central part of Nigeria and currently operate in places such as Nasarawa State.

Similarly, the rising incidence of cattle rustling in the southern ecological basins of Plateau, Bauchi and Kaduna States (Okoli and Okpaleke, 2014) tends to be driving herders from those volatile areas to places considered safer in the Benue Valley axis (Tenuche and Olarewaju, 2009). Nasarawa State presents an irresistible grazing terrain in this region. The intensification of transhumance migration

from far North into States like Nasarawa has obtained at huge social and economic costs. As observed by President Goodluck Jonathan, “The movement had exposed pastoralists to various hazards and challenges between them and farmers, as well as loss of herds due to diseases and associated conflicts” (2014:2).

At issue in most transhumance conflicts is commission and omission on the part of the farmers and herders alike, leading to the blockade of stock-route or trespass of farmland as the case may be (see Shettima and Tar, 2008). It must be noted, however that the blockade of stock-routes is not perpetuated by farmers alone. As observed by Ajuwon:

... stock routes have been blocked by farmers, individuals with buildings and government development purposes to the detriment of pastoralists; and watering points for livestock are now converted to sources of irrigation water to the discomfort of the pastoralists. This blockage of local cattle routes leading to watering points and increased activities in the Fadama (activities) are major sources of conflict between pastoralist and farmers (Ajuwon n.d:4).

The transhumance crisis in Nasarawa State has also been promoted by cultural prejudice. The resentment of the perceived Fulani cultural infiltration and domination is at the issue in this regard (Azuwike, n.d). The average Fulani nomad is culturally adamant and assertive. In their transitory settlement in various parts of the host State, the Fulani carry along the fundamentals of their civilization. Rather than assimilate in the cultural mainstream of the host communities, they would rather seek the propagation of their cultural heritage. This has often been resented by the host

communities in a manner that precipitates inter-group tensions and rift. As Azuwike (n.d) rightly observed, “Resistance to Fulani cultural audacity is presently at the heart of most bloody ethnic conflicts in Nigeria”. This is to some extent true of the situation in the hinterlands of Nasarawa State where herder-farmer conflicts have ever prevailed. A Fulani herder interviewed during the research put it: “There is something about us that they don't really like; but we can't afford to change our identity and heritage for them to like us” KII: November 2014).

In addition to the drivers and triggers of transhumance crisis already highlighted above, the role of the State in the situation needs to be interrogated. According to Tenuche and Olarewaju (2009:361), the Nigerian State has played the following culpable role in that regard:

- (i) the inability of the government to resolve the indigene/settler dichotomy;
- (ii) the failure of the government to establish and/or develop grazing reserves;
- (iii) the Nigerian land use and land tenure system, that alienates the peasants;
- (iv) the inability of the government to come up with efficient enabling legislation to regulate grazing/transhumance practice;
- (v) the inefficiency or excesses of state security operatives (military, police, civil defence) in ensuring objective application of relevant public laws;
- (vi) the failure of the state to effectively control arms proliferations and criminality (author's modifications apply).

The failure of the Nigerian state to deal with the transhumance challenge is exemplified in the vacuum of effective policy and legal frameworks to effectively regulate the practice. The land Use Act of 1978 does not provide traditional pastoralists with any legal rights over land; hence, they are still at the mercy of their host communities (Hoffmam, 2004 in Manimart, 2008:12). Apart from this structural alienation and deprivation, pastoralists' rights-of-way and right-of-use on the transhumance corridors and routes are barely guaranteed by the law. As observed by Iro:

The lack of legal validation or legislation on stock routes, for example, makes blocking of routes a non-punishable offence. The absence of enforceable penalties discourages herders from suing farmers who extend farms into the cattle thoroughfare (n.d:2).

In absence of established avenues and instruments for legal redress and recompense, the pastoralists often resort to taking laws into their hands when their interests are threatened. As pointed out by Tukur (2013:2), “unprotected by law, and a times victimized by agents of the law, some pastoralists are forced to resort to revenge missions with devastating consequences on poor rural population”. This has been the case in southern parts of Nasarawa State where the pastoralists “have been engaging the local communities in fierce gun battles over common disputes” (KII: November, 2014).

A critical dimension of government's neglect of transhumance of practice in Nigeria is the failure of the successive administrations to develop grazing reserves and routes. At present Nigeria has a total of 417 grazing reserves (Tukur, 2013). Of all these reserves, only about one third are properly marked, demarcated, gazetted and developed. The few reserves that are fairly developed are bereft of requisite infrastructure (Awogbade, 1987; Ingawa, Tarawali and

Kaufman, 1989; Iro, n.d). Creation of new grazing reserves has been constrained by impediments arising from land tenure and land use legal regimes (Ezeomah, 1985; Ladan, 2004; Iyorchia and Dura, 2014; Ndukwe, 1987). In Nasarawa State, availability and sufficiency levels of grazing reserves show gross deficits (Umaru, 2008). Table 9 lists the grazing reserves in use in Nasarawa State.

Table 9: Grazing Reserves in Nasarawa State

Reserve	Status	Establishment Year	Grazettment Year
Assakio	Gazette	1997	1997
Awe	Marked & Gazette	1979	1992
Doma	Gazette	1997	1997
Gitata	Gazette	1997	1997
Keana	Marked & Gazette	1979	1992
Kurundu	Gazette	1997	1997
Wamba (Konvah)	Gazette	1997	1997
Obi	Proposed	2007	*

Source: Fieldwork, November, 2014.

Table 9 shows that of the eight (8) gazing reserves in Nasarawa State, only two (2) are appreciably developed by way of surveying, mapping, gazettment and provision of enabling facilities. The rest are at varying stages of stagnation and neglect. Facilities such as earth dam, fire-fighting equipment and sufficient bore holes are

virtually lacking in these dams. In absence of organized grazing reserve system in the State, pastoralists (localized and migrant) resort to traditional pattern of transhumance, which is hardly sustainable given the contemporary climatic, demographical, social and environment dynamics of the contemporary ecology (Okoli, 2013; Okoli and the Atelhe, 2004).

Apart from its inability or failure to provide the enabling environment for effective and sustainable transhumance, the government has also been implicated in the transhumance crisis by way of questionable deployment of public security operatives in an attempt to resolve the crisis. Local narratives claim that the public security operatives (the military, police, civil defence, etc) often exhibit some level of operational bias or highhandedness in dealing with conflict situations. A Key Informant in Obi Area of Nasarawa State claimed that “these security operatives have behaved in a manner that gives them out as agent of vested interests; we don't seem to trust them? (KII: Fieldwork, November, 2014). Besides, there have been cases of highhandedness and extrajudicial detentions and killings by the police and the military. There have also been instances where these security men simply looked on while a section of the community is being attacked by Fulani assailants “(KII, November, 2014). The claims and observations ostensibly show that the role of the State in the crisis through its security operatives have been somehow suspect.

In its latest manifestation, the transhumance crisis in Nasarawa State has been further complicated by the phenomenon of identity politics. This becomes salient given the ethno-cultural differentiation of the feuding parties into more or less occupationally distinct categories. For instance, the Fulani nomads are coincidentally predominantly Muslim while the bulk of the native farmers are largely non-

Muslims. The political elites appear to be investing in the crisis to advance their political agenda. In this regard, it is widely held that the Fulani and *Ombatse* militias who are the harbingers of the crisis have been armed by some prominent politicians in the State to serve their partisan interests.

9. Strategic Implications of Transhumance Crisis Nasarawa State
 The conflict situation under review has led to manifold social, economic, and humanitarian consequences, which threaten human security and societal sustainability (see Okoli and Atelhe, 2014). Table 10 gives skeletal insights in respect of this observation.

Table 10: Impacts and Implications of the Transhumance Crisis

Impact	Empirical Instances
Social impact	Volatile inter-group relations: e.g.: Fulani/Tiv crisis, Fulani/Eggon crisis, Eggon-Fulani/Alago/Kamberi crisis, indigene/settler crisis, etc.
Economic impact	Loss of material assets, destruction of farmlands, loss of farm produce and cattle, low rural productivity, etc.
Socio-economic impact	Rural impoverishment and destitution, exacerbated hunger, livelihood crisis with far-reaching gender implications, etc.
Humanitarian impact	Population displacement, loss of life, human injuries and disabilities with far-reaching gender implications, etc.
Security impact	Rise in rural banditry with urban spill-over; general insecurity and instability (arms proliferation, youth restiveness and militancy

Fieldwork, November 2014.

It is estimated that not less than one thousand (1,000) persons have died in the wave of inter-communal violence occasioned by transhumance conflagrations in the State since 2010 (Okoli and Atelhe, 2014)). Although this claim cannot be independently verified, isolated facts and figures emanating from various conflict areas in the State indicate that scores of people have been killed on both sides of the feuding divide. For instance, the Justice Joseph Gbadeyan-led

Judicial Commission of Inquiry (2013) revealed that no fewer than 534 persons were killed in communal disturbances in the State between 2012 and 2013. In terms of population displacements, the situation has been critically dire. The latest waves of crisis in the state (since September, 2014) have displaced both households and communities. In places such as Assakio, villages and families were massively dislocated and dislodged in selective attacks targeted at the ethnic Eggons by the Fulani and their sympathizer-tribes of Kambari and Alago. The displaced people are currently harboured at various improvised Internally Displaced Persons' (IDPs) camps at different locations in Lafia town. There are more than one hundred (100) of such camps scattered in the Lafia urban circles.

The humanitarian complications of the crisis go with some significant gender implications. For instance, most of the Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in the various IDPs camps in the State were found to be mostly women and children (KII: November 2014). Mass displacement of women in such volatile circumstances increases their vulnerability to socio-economic and socio-political insecurity. There were also claims and allegations of rape and sexual exploitation against women and girls residing in conflict arenas in the hinterlands as well as the IDPs camps in the urban areas. Similarly, some women and girls have taken to undignified living such as begging and prostitution (KII: November 2014). For the men folk, the exigencies of survival in the context of the conflict situation have plunged some of them into opportunistic and unsustainable modes of livelihood such as toutage and petty theft. Some able bodied young men on both sides of the conflict divide have been conscripted into self-help vigilantism and community soldering at the expense of their routine occupation (KII: November 2014). What has resulted from the scenario is a cycle of rural impoverishment and human destitution.

The social, socio-economic, economic and humanitarian effects of the crisis as highlighted in Table 8 hold strategic implications for Nigerian's national security. As aptly observed by Okoli and Atelhe:

The attendant security and livelihood crisis threaten the collective subsistence and survival of the affected populations. There are also other externalities, such as diminution of agricultural productivity and decline in household capital, all of which do not augur well for society and national sustainability. It suffices, therefore, to say that farmer/herder conflict in Nasarawa State is inimical to human security, and by extension, national security in Nigeria (2014:85).

The need to address the transhumance crisis in Nasarawa State has led to the constitution of series of investigation panels and inquests. In effect, there exist volumes of official reports emanative from such commissioned inquiries. Incidentally, the outcomes of such inquiries have hardly been implemented by successive governments. According to an anonymous Key Informant (Fieldwork, November 2014), "The constitution, proceedings and outcomes of this litany of investigation panels have been largely compromised by vested interests or outright procedural abuse". A review of the empirical narrative emanating from some of these panel reports reveal that the root causes of the crises have hardly been significantly addressed. As a result, the bulk of the observations and recommendations from these reports merely address the symptoms and externalities of the crises without underscoring the material bases and undercurrents. In any case, it is incumbent on the state government muster requisite political will to ensure that these reports are reviewed and implemented in the interest of lasting peace in the State.

Table 11: Overview of Crisis Situation in the Transhumance Corridor of Nasarawa State

Issue	Finding(s)
Nature of crisis	Violent ecological/resource conflict
Contemporary manifestation	Militant livelihood struggles waged along ethno -communal lines
Actors	The Fulani nomads; Ethnic Tiv, Eggon, Alago, etc; Farming and herding associations (Miyetti Allah, AFAN, etc); State security operatives; Local vigilantes
Contexts	Mainly along the transhumant corridors with spillover effects on adjoining hinterland and sub-urban settlements
Bone of contention/issue at stake	Scarce ecological resources and space: land, water, pasture, passage for grazing or farming.
Drivers	Climate change, human and livestock population explosion, governance failure, population explosion, urbanization, arms proliferation, cultural prejudice and primordialism, land holding and land -use practices, ethno -communal factors, political/partisan/elite manipulation, etc.
Triggers	Farmland/rangeland encroachments, blockade of cattle passage, cattle rustling, rural banditry.
Impacts	Loss of life and property, population displacement, ethnic militancy, communal violence, human injuries and disabilities, decline in agricultural productivity.
Complications	Livelihood crisis, strained inter -group relations, ethno -religious conflagrations; general insecurity and instability
Implications	Threat to peaceful co-existence, sustainable development and stability; threat to human security and national sustainability.

Source: Fieldwork, November 2014.

10. The Way Forward

The transhumance crisis in Nasarawa State is largely driven by the imperatives of survival and subsistence in the context of stiff ecological scarcity and competition. The prospect of remedying this crisis rests with the determination of stakeholders to strategically evolve a regime of land resource holding/use that pragmatically harmonizes their respective interests, allays mutual distrust and fears, and fairly distributes the burden and gains of land resource exploitation among the stakeholders. This model of resource holding/use enables the stakeholders to give and take from a common heritage whereof they exercise mutual stakes and enjoy equal opportunities. This concept is illustrated in Table 12.

Table 12: Mutual Stake-holding Entrustment Model for Transhumance

STAKEHOLDER	GIVE	TAKE
Farmers	- i). Provision of food stuffs for households - ii).Provision of feed supplements for livestock - iii).Contribution to food sufficiency and security	- i).Growing crops for subsistence and surplus - ii).Sustenance of life through livestock protein and dairy - iii).Fertilization/manuring of farmlands via livestock excrement
Herders	- i). Provision of meat, milk and livelihood to households. - ii).Fertilization of farmlands through livestock excrement - iii).Contribution to food sufficiency and security	- i).Growing of livestock for subsistence and surplus - i).Appropriation of farm residues as feed supplements for stock - iii).Community and state protection/support of grazing
Host Communities	- i).Maintenance of effective intergroup relations and peaceful co-existence - ii).Provision of self-help community service/security - iii).Hospitable community relations	- i).Peaceful co-existence ii) Intergroup solidarity - iii)Community development and stability
Government	i) Regulation of transhumance practical activity through policies and legislations - ii).Moderation/regulation of farmer/holder relations - iii).Provision of enabling infrastructure and incentives. - iv). Provision of public security	- i).Rural productivity - ii). Food sufficiency/security - iii).Wealth creation - iv). Job creation - v).Human development

Source: Fieldwork, November 2014.

In tandem with the above, the study recognizes the transhumance crisis in Nasarawa State as being more of development concern than a security challenge. The diverse drivers and triggers of the crisis are fundamental development issues that can be best addressed through pragmatic intergovernmental policy remediation whereby the Federal, States, Local Governments and relevant community stakeholders collaborate in bringing about the repositioning of the transhumance sector. This would entail a number of policy reforms and mitigative measures including the following:

- i). **Revitalization of grazing routes/reserves:** the Federal Government of Nigeria in conjunction with the relevant State governments should undertake urgent revitalization of moribund grazing reserves/routes in Nigeria and establishment of new model grazing reserves in all the States of Northern Nigeria (North East, North West, North Central).
- ii). **Resettlement and compensation for displaced farmers:** the Nasarawa State Government should ensure proper resettlement of sedentarized farmers and native populations who have been in the course of acquiring fields for grazing reserves/routes development so as to keep them from incessant encroachment on the range fields. A token of compensation is needed to allay their grievances.
- iii). **Establishment of modern ranches:** the State Government should also create modern ranches to be operated on Private-Public Partnership (PPP) basis with a view to mainstreaming sustainable pastoralism in Nigeria.
- iv) **Enabling laws/policies/institutional mechanisms:** the Federal Government should ensure the promulgation and efficient enforcement of laws (reformist legislations) and policies to govern transhumance practice and harmonize farmer/herder relations. Relevant institutional frameworks should also be put in place to

facilitate civic engagements with herders and farmers by the government.

v) **Gazettment and proper demarcation of extant grazing reserves/routes:** the Nasarawa State Government in liaison with the Federal Government should ensure proper surveying, demarcation and gazettment of all approved grazing reserves/routes in Nasarawa State. Urgent measures should also be taken to ensure infrastructural development of these reserves and routes.

vi **Government-enabled synergy among stakeholders:** strategic stakeholders, such as local vigilantes, farmers' associations, cattle breeders' associations, community leaderships, and public security operatives should be synergized through proper policy co-ordination by the government to exercise complementary stakes in securing and sustaining the national transhumance heritage in such a manner that makes for mutually beneficial and sustainable practice.

vii) **Efficient penal sanctioning against culprits:** perpetrators of all forms of violence and crime within the transhumance terrain in Nigeria should be properly punished by the Nigerian state so as to deter further committal as well as dissuade criminal impunity.

viii) **Dismantling of the cattle rustling economy:** government should ensure that the demand and supply chains as well as the operational routes, markets, networks, syndicates and infrastructures of cattle rustling are systematically identified and dismantled so as to do away with the criminal practice.

ix) **Civic re-orientation for practitioners:** practitioners of transhumance and crop farming should be educated on the ideals of sustainable and progressive resource exploitation in a manner that forecloses the 'tragedy of commons'. They crop growers should be made to understand that land is significant only as a means of

production and not as an identity symbol or an ancestral heritage; likewise the herders should be made to jettison the apparent belief that their herd is worth a supreme, sacred communal inheritance that should be protected at all cost.

x) **Improved capacity for governance:** the Nigerian state should groom capacity for efficient governance in the areas of regulatory, extractive and distributive competences. With particular reference to resource governance, the state should ensure that pragmatic measures are put in place to bring all resource spheres in the country under effective control. This would entail repositioning relevant extant governmental institutional mechanisms and strategies designed to guide resource holding, exploitation, and relations for optimal performance.

11. Conclusion

The transhumance corridors and routes in Nigeria have been a veritable theatre of violent conflict and militancy. What is at issue is intense livelihood struggle that is informed by the imperative of survival and subsistence in a fast changing societal context. The crisis derives impetus from a combination of demographic, climatic, ecological, socio-economic, political and socio-cultural factors. The explosion in human and livestock population has complicated the pressure on land use, leading to intense ecological scarcity, competition and conflicts. This has been compounded by the phenomenon of the global climate change, whose dynamics have hard untoward impacts on sustainable ecology and livelihood. Failure or deficit of governance by the state, particularly in the area of ecological regime, has made it impossible for the state to efficiently moderate and regulate the competitive stakes and struggles over scarce ecological resources among different groups of land users. Also the socio-cultural context of the resource conflicts has tended to have reproduced dialectics of inter-group relations

characterized by widespread suspicion, mutual mistrust and animosity. This scenario has equally been associated with ethno-primordial manipulations and grand-standing that set one group against the other, leading to a cycle of violence and vendetta.

As we have seen in the case of Nasarawa State, the volatile state of affairs on her transhumance corridors and routes has been a product of sociological dialectics, which has been complicated by the inter-mix of climate, politics, ecology, demography, governance, identity (religion, ethnicity), economy, and criminality. The dire impacts of this crisis on human life and property, agricultural productivity, livelihood, national sustainability, peaceful co-existence and inter-group relations hold strategic implications for national security in Nigeria.

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Appendix1: Table 13: Diary of Major Crises in Nasarawa State (2000-2014).

Period	Crisis Situation	Nature of Crisis	Outcome
2000-2005	Spate of inter-communal conflicts, eg. Egbura/Bassa conflict, Tiv/Kwala conflict, the anti-Tiv crisis in Southern Nasarawa, and Farmer/herder conflicts.	Varied	Loss of life and property, population displacement, strained inter-group relations.
2010-2011	Fulani (herder)/farmer clashes on the borderlines of Doma and Keana LGAs (Akparaja, Rukubi, Doka, Kadorko, Kwara)	Ecological	Loss of life and property, population displacement, strained inter-group relations.
April, 2012	Fulani (herder)/farmer clashes in Gidinye, Kyakale, Duduguru, Baba and Yelwa areas	Ecological	Loss of life and property, population displacement, strained inter-group relations.
May, 2012	The <i>Ombatse</i> attacks against the Alagos in Assakio	Ethno-communal	Loss of life and property, population displacement, strained inter-group relations.
November, 2012	i. The <i>Ombatse</i> attacks against the Milgilis in Agyaragu ii. The <i>Ombatse</i> uprising leading to the blockade of the Lafia-Akwanga Federal Highway at Nasarawa Eggon	(i) Ethno-communal (ii) Ethno-political	(i) Destruction of life and property; population displacement (ii) Youth brigandage

January, 2013	The Ombatse attacks against Iggah (in Nasarawa Eggon LGA); Burun-Burun (in Doma LGA); Yelwa - Bassa (in Kokona LGA); and Kwandere (inLafia LGA)	Ethno-communal	Destruction of life and property; population displacement
May, 2013	The Ombatse Mayhem at Alakyo, leading to the massacre of security personnel	Ethno-political	Killing of more than sixty (60) state security personnel; destruction and/or confiscation of public security valuables
September, 2013	The Ombatse attacks against Odo bu and obi (in Obi LGA) and Assakio (in Lafia LGA)	Ethno-communal	Loss of life and property, population displacement, strained inter-group relations.
September 2013 – May, 2014	Fulani (herdsmen)/farmer skirmishes in parts of Awe, Obi, Keana, and Doma LGAs	Ecological	Loss of life and property, population displacement, strained inter-group relations.
September, 2014 – December, 2014)	Fulani/Kamberi-Ombatse counter-militancy and communal disturbances	Communal	Loss of life and property, population displacement, strained inter-group relations, desolation of communities

Source: Fieldwork, November, 2014.

		Wet season				Dry season			
	Crop	Beginning		Ending		Beginning		Ending	
		Month	Week	Month	Week	Month	Week	Month	Week
	Cassava	May	1	August	4	November	1	December	4
	Cotton								
	Cowpea	July	2	August	4	December	1	January	2
	Garden Egg	July	1	July	4	December	1	February	1
	Ground nut	April	2	May	2	December	3	January	3
	Maize	May	1	July	2	November	2	February	2
	Millet	July	1	August	1	-	-	-	-
	Okro	April	2	May	3	December	1	February	2
	Onion	June	1	July	2	-	-	-	-
	Pepper	July	1	August	1	November	1	January	4
	Potato	June	2	July	3	November	2	January	2
	Rice	May	2	July	3	December	1	February	2
	Sorghum	May	1	June	2	-	-	-	-
	Tomato	July	2	August	2	November	2	December	3
	Sugarcane	June	1	August	2	November	1	February	4
	Wheat	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Yam	April	2	May	2	December	1	March	1
	Cashew	June	1	July	2	-	-	-	
	Coconut	June	1	August	4	-	-	-	-
	Cocoyam	May	1	June	2	December	1	January	3
	Cocoa	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Kola nut	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Melon	April	1	May	2	September	2	October	2
	Oil Palm	June	2	July	4	-	-	-	-
	Pineapple	May	2	July	4	November	2	January	2
	Plantain								
	Rubber								
	Soybean	July	2	August	2				

Source: Nasarawa State Liaison Office, Abuja.

Appendix 3: Figure 2: Nassarawa State in Brief



Capital:	Lafia
Area:	10,770 km ²
Population:	1,863,275 (2006 census figures)
Language:	Hausa (Predominantly spoken)
Governor:	Umaru Tanko Al-Makura (CPC, now APC)
ISO 3166-2:	NG-NA
Date Created:	1 October 1996
Population Rank:	Ranked 34 th of 35 on national scale.

Source: Nasarawa State Liaison Office, Abuja.

Appendix 4: Table 15: Diary of Field Study (of Interviews & Study Chats)

Interviewee	Designation	Place of interview
Anonymous	Local Government official	Lafia, November 2014
Anonymous	State Government official	Lafia “ ”
Anonymous	Federal Government official	Lafia “ ”
Anonymous	State Government official	Lafia “ ”
Anonymous	Local Government official	Lafia “ ”
Anonymous	Fulani Herder	Awe, November 2014
Anonymous	Fulani Herder	Obi “ ”
Anonymous	Fulani Herder	Doma “ ”
Anonymous	Fulani Herder	Keana “ ”
Anonymous	Fulani Herder	Lafia “ ”
Anonymous	Native farmer	Lafia, November 2014
Anonymous	Native farmer	Asakio “ ”
Anonymous	Native farmer	Obi “ ”
Anonymous	Native farmer	Keana “ ”
Anonymous	Native farmer	Awe “ ”
Anonymous	Police	Lafia, December 2014
Anonymous	Civil defence	Lafia “ ”
Anonymous	Military personnel	Lafia “ ”
Anonymous	Police	Lafia “ ”
Anonymous	Police	Lafia “ ”
Anonymous	Community leader	Alakyo, December 2014
Anonymous	Community leader	Doma “ ”
Anonymous	Community leader	Keana “ ”
Anonymous	Community vigilante	Obi “ ”
Anonymous	Community vigilante	Doma “ ”

