NOMADIC PASTORALISM AND HUMAN SECURITY : TOWARDS A COLLECTIVE ACTION AGAINST HERDERS-FARMERS CRISIS IN NIGERIA

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Nomadic Pastoralism and Human Security: Towards a Collective Action against Herders-Farmers Crisis in Nigeria

By

Chikodiri Nwangwu & Chukwuemeka Enyiazu

Department of Political Science,
University of Nigeria, Nsukka.
chikodiri.nwangwu@unn.edu.ng

Abstract

Land use is a fundamental agrarian question which remains central to the economic survival of humanity, especially in Africa. The limited access to land in most African social formations has engendered a fierce competition between non-agricultural user groups and their agricultural counterparts, on the one hand, and among various agricultural user groups, on the other. The two major groups of agricultural land users are nomadic pastoralists and sedentary peasant farmers. As a predominantly agrarian nation, more than half of Nigeria's workforce is engaged in farming. Nonetheless, the internecine conflict between these two groups of agro-land users, which continues to acquire ethnic, religious and political tinge, has grave implications for human security in the country. Explanation of the conflict between nomadic pastoralists and sedentary farmers has centred on climate change, population growth, and insecurity. However, the transnational character of this conflict has not received adequate scholarly attention. Despite the existence of regional frameworks like the *ECOWAS Transhumance Protocol*, there is a dearth of knowledge on how these regional efforts could be leveraged by the Nigerian government in order to contain the harmful impacts of transhumant pastoralism in the country. Using the regional security complex theory, this paper argues that networking of relevant security agencies, regional bodies and other stakeholders, including civil society organisations, is the panacea for tackling the tension-soaked relationship between these land users.

Keywords: Nomadic pastoralism, Peasant farming, Human security, Regional security complex theory, ECOWAS Protocol, Nigeria

Introduction

This paper investigates the link between nomadic pastoralism and human security in Nigeria. It argues that the pastoral crisis has increasingly become a regional contagion in West Africa and requires collective, interlocking, and transnational approach. Human security in Nigeria has come under severe threat by a combination of both natural and anthropogenic forces. While these factors, which are not mutually exclusive, vary based on contexts, others like extreme poverty, social exclusion, human rights violations, failure of governance, proliferation of small arms and light weapons (SALW), food insecurity, environmental degradation, illiteracy, endemic diseases, climate change, terrorism as well as transhumant pastoralism[1], are cross-cutting. Although some of these drivers of insecurity are very endemic in West Africa, threats of transhumant pastoralism appear to have burgeoned and gained currency mainly because of weak politico-security environment. This herding tradition is commonly associated with the nomads of Central, East, North, and West Africa, particularly in countries like Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Côte d'Ivoire, Gambia, Kenya, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, and South Sudan. With about 20 million Fulani living across West Africa (Levinson, 1996; Okoli, 2017), nomadic pastoralism in the region is almost exclusively associated with the Fulani ethnic nationality. This presupposes that they constitute the largest pastoral community in West Africa.

Transhumant pastoralism is as old as recorded history. Although significant cultural and technological variations exist across the globe, the underlying practices of taking advantage of remote seasonal pastures are largely similar. The primacy of livestock rearing (both nomadic and sedentary pastoralism) to economic sustainability and food security in West Africa cannot be overemphasised. It provides about 44% of the region's agricultural production and also boasts of 60 million heads of cattle, 160 small ruminants, and 400 million poultry (SWAC-OECD/ECOWAS, 2008). In sub- Saharan Africa, for instance, West Africa contains 25% of the cattle, 33% of the sheep, and 40% of the goats.

West African transhumant pastoralists and sedentary peasant farmers have long coexisted in mutually supportive relationships that have also witnessed contentious encounters. They have had established practices of mutual trade and production relations that allow herders' cattle to fertilise the farmers' land in exchange for usufructuary over land and related resources. However, both population growth and increasing commodity production have led to the expansion of agriculture by peasant farmers and other investors on formerly shared grazing lands. Contrary to the existential

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[1] It is noteworthy that transhumant and nomadic pastoralism are not exactly the same but they are used interchangeably in this discourse.

realities in the relationship between these land users in other jurisdictions outside Africa,[2] transhumant pastoralism in West Africa has become extremely conflictive and tension-soaked.

Academic literature and newspapers are awash with reports of violent and frequently fatal clashes between herders and farmers (Agyemang, 2017; Bello, 2013; International Crisis Group, 2017; Moritz, 2006, 2010). Although widely regarded as resource-use conflicts in the intellectual tradition of neo-Malthusianism (Homer-Dixon, 1994; Hussein, Sumberg & Seddon, 1999; Moritz, 2010; Percival & Homer-Dixon, 1998), clashes between nomadic herders and peasant farmers (or what many refer to as coordinated attacks on farming communities by transhumant pastoralists) in Nigeria have not only become very frequent, sophisticated, and well-coordinated since 2015; it has also continued to acquire ethno-regional, religious, and political tinge. In Kaduna, Taraba, Plateau, and Nasarawa States, attacks by nomadic Fulani pastoralists have been focused rather selectively on non-Muslim communities. In other places like Zamfara and Kebbi States, the attacks have targeted non-Fulani villages (Okoli, 2017). Thus, most of the attacks would seem as if people are targeted and victimised on religious or ethnic grounds.

Scholarly discourses of the causes of nomadic pastoralists-peasant farmers' conflicts can be broadly segmented into three. First, recurring violent conflicts between these two groups of land users have been attributed to climate change and environmental security (Cabot, 2017; Odoh & Chilaka, 2012; Onuoha, 2008, 2010; Onuoha & Ezirim, 2010). The security implications of climate change in Africa gained currency since 2007 following debates by the African Union (AU), the United Nations Security Council (UNSC), and the Conference of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol. Scholars in the field of environmental security see causal links between environmental scarcity and violence (Bachler, 1999; Homer-Dixon, 1999). However, some political ecologists have rejected this simplistic argument that environmental scarcity precipitates violent conflicts, because of inadequate reference to complex empirical realities (Peluso & Watts, 2001). Rather than being the source of conflict, they conceptualised the environment as "a theater in which conflicts or claims over property, assets, labor, and the politics of recognition play themselves out" (Peluso & Watts, 2001: 25).

Second and closely allied with the above is the Malthusian perspective that urbanisation and the explosive growth in population relative to available resources in Africa can explain the clashes between sedentary farmers and nomadic pastoralists (Cilliers, 2009; Fabiyi & Otunuga, 2016;

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[2] In other jurisdictions outside West Africa, there is no widespread conflict between these two groups of land users. For more, see : Gentle, P. & Thwaites, R. (2016). "Transhumant Pastoralism in the Context of Socioeconomic and Climate Change in the Mountains of Nepal", *Mountain Research and Development*, 36 (2), 173-182.

Fratkin, 1997; International Crisis Group, 2017; Neupert, 1999; Onuoha, 2010; Oyama, 2014). There has been an unprecedented expansion of public infrastructure and the acquisition of land by large-scale farmers and other private commercial interests. Accordingly, both population growth and increasing commodity production have led to the extension of farmlands to grazing reserves, thereby increasing the tension and conflicts between these land users in many parts of the world (Fratkin, 1997).

Third, other studies focus on the contributions of insecurity within the Lake Chad Basin to the worsening relationship between transhumant herders and their host communities in the savannah belt of Nigeria (Fabiyi & Otunuga, 2016; International Crisis Group, 2017). For instance, the members of Miyetti Allah Cattle Breeders Association of Nigeria (MACBAN) reportedly lost over one million cattle and other livestock to Boko Haram insurgency and cattle rustling in the North-East (Okogba, 2017). The prevalence of insurgency and cattle rustling in Lake Chad (see Figure 1) has forced nomadic herders into the savannah belt where high population growth has already heightened pressure on farmland, thereby increasing the frequency of disputes over crop damage, water pollution, and cattle theft.

While extant studies on this subject are very instructive, they have paid scant attention to the transnational character of the conflict. These studies are yet to give sufficient attention to the place of regional conventions in the conflict between nomadic pastoralists and sedentary peasant farmers. Some of such conventions/frameworks by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) are: the *ECOWAS Transhumance Protocol* of 1998, the *ECOWAS Protocol on Free Movement of Goods and Persons in West Africa,* the *Regulations of Transhumance between ECOWAS Member-States* of 2003, and the *ECOWAS Strategic Plan for the Development and Transformation of the Livestock Sector*. These frameworks tend to allow herders to move across borders in search of pasture upon fulfilling the conditions laid down in the protocols. The tendency to exploit the loopholes in these protocols by these pastoralists has led to the progressive deterioration of human security in the region. Hence, promoting security cooperation and networking of relevant regional bodies with the civil society could be a panacea for the tension-soaked relationship between the herders and peasant farmers.

Transhumant Pastoral Crisis: Insight from Regional Security Complex Theory

In analysing the transnational character of the threats posed by transhumant pastoralism, this paper employs the Regional Security Complex Theory (RSCT). This is informed by the fact that analyses in extant scholarly discourses have revolved mainly around resource-use and environmental

scarcity, especially within the intellectual tradition of neo-Malthusianism (Homer-Dixon, 1994; Hussein, Sumberg & Seddon, 1999; Moritz, 2010; Percival & Homer-Dixon, 1998). However, the reductionist character of this analytic perspective has posed serious theoretical and methodological problems in certain formations where the conflict has become a regional contagion. The RSCT is a relatively new approach in international relations. It was originally introduced by Barry Buzan in 1983 in his work: *People, States and Fear* but later presented as a grand systematic theory in Buzan & Waever (2003). Other studies that have contributed to the advancement of the theory include Buzan (1991), Buzan (1998), Buzan (2008), Buzan, Waever & Wilde (1998), Nnoli (2006), Wolfers (1962), among others.

RSCT was developed to reflect the complex nature of international security in post-Cold War era. It questions the primacy of the military elements alone in the conceptualisation of security. According to Buzan, *et al*. (1998), this questioning has come from diverse sources rarely coordinated with each other. Some have come from the policy side, representing organisations (including the state) trying either to achieve recognition of their concerns or adapt themselves to circumstances. Other questions have come from the academia: peace research, feminist scholarships, international political economy, and security and strategic studies. RSCT balances the realist and the constructivist views of security. The theory maintains that the realist view of security as a derivative of power reduces the complex nature of security to a mere synonym for state power (Buzan, 1991). The realist scholarship, which has dominated the international system, evolved from the Westphalia state system after 1648. This view is mostly relevant during the World Wars where states were in constant struggle for power. In the post-Cold War era, however, the concept of security became much more multifaceted and complex (Buzan, 2008; Buzan & Waever, 2003; Nnoli, 2006; Nwangwu & Ononogbu, 2014; Stone, 2009; and Wolfers, 1962). Thus, RSCT is a counterpoise to the overwhelming influence and dominance of the orthodox state-centric conceptualisation of security (Nwangwu, Ononogbu & Okoye, 2016; Ononogbu & Nwangwu, 2018). It surveys the debate between the traditional and dynamic approaches to security studies, with emphasis on people-centred security, also known as human security (Ugwueze, 2017). It therefore follows that the theory emphasises human empowerment, promotion of the entire gamut of human rights (including economic, social and cultural rights), equal opportunities, and good governance.

The complex nature of security stems from looking at various sectors of the security architecture so as to identify specific types of interaction that guarantee effectiveness in security management. According to Nnoli (2006:17), "security demands military power sufficient to dissuade or defeat an attack; but so many non-military elements are required to generate effective military

power that a concern for security can never be restricted solely to the final military end product". In this view, the military sector is about relationships of forceful coercion; the political sector is about relationships of authority, governing status and recognition; the economic sector is about relationships of trade, production, and finance; the societal sector is about relationships of collective identity; and the environmental sector is about relationships between human activity and the planetary biosphere (Buzan, *et al.*, 1998).

There are three components of essential structure in a security complex analysis. The first is the arrangement of the units and differentiation among them. The second is the patterns of amity and enmity; and the third is the distribution of power among the principal units. According to Buzan, *et al.* (1998), major shift in any of these components would normally require a redefinition of the complex. This approach allows one to analyse national, regional, or international security in both static and dynamic terms. RSCT contains elements of neo-realism and globalism, but gives priority to a lower level of analysis (Buzan & Waever, 2003). In this theory, the logic of territoriality continues to operate strongly. However, non-territorial connections are also possible and permissible. RSCT is particularly useful because theory-based scenarios can be established on the basis of the known possible form of, and alternatives to, regional security complexes. This opens the space for theoretical application of regional security complex in line with the following basic assumptions of the theory:

❖ Security is both a national, regional, and global phenomenon, and it will be very difficult to comprehend the security dynamics of one country without inserting it into a broader context and without grasping the conflicting or cooperative patterns that define the foreign policy of that country with its neighbours. By implication, therefore, the theory assumes that security is a complex phenomenon and must be addressed as such, if solutions are to be found.

❖ The theory assumes that the best way of approaching security problems is through cooperation and integration of various security architectures, including the civil society.

❖ It also assumes that approaching security problems holistically entails taking both the traditional military and non-military strategies into consideration. This presupposes that security problems will remain in an environment where only military strategies are prioritised in fighting violent crimes.

❖ The theory assumes that modern security approach to terrorism goes beyond direct military bombardment of the terrorist and their base to include addressing all the conditions that give rise to terrorism including poverty, poor governance, human rights violations, political exclusion, religious intolerance, and a host of others.

❖ Finally, the theory assumes that security is no longer the business of the state alone. It therefore follows that where the state is the only institution responsible for managing regional security, insecurity will continue to assume prominence.

The RSCT is significant for the analysis of the nexus between nomadic pastoralism and human security in Nigeria for many reasons. It identifies some basic units of analysis like the state, security agencies, and other critical stakeholders within the security architecture (including the civil society), as well as the treatment of regional security as a complex phenomenon that is not only far- reaching in impact and geography but requires the collaborative participation of different transnational stakeholders. No doubt, the threats of transhumant pastoralism in the country can hardly be addressed conclusively without the organic integration of both military and non-military strategies. This involves the effective integration of forces in managing regional security concerns as well as cooperation of groups within and beyond territorial boundaries given the contagious nature of the security situation.

ECOWAS Protocols, Nomadic Pastoralism, and Human Security in Nigeria

Nomadic pastoralism is a very important livestock production strategy in West Africa where the practice has spanned several centuries. It is also a veritable source of food security in the region. Transhumant pastoralists have remained an integrating factor in a culturally diffused and disparate region like West Africa. Despite this integrative role and centrality of pastoralism to food security in the region, many African states have favoured the development of crop growing over agro-pastoralism as reflected in their policies/programmes and legal systems (Bennett, 1991; Moritz, Scholte & Kari, 2002). According to Moritz (2006), pastoral usufructs over grazing land have generally not been recognised in state laws as legitimate forms of land use because what are usually described as "vacant and ownerless" lands were considered public lands to be administered by the colonial government during the heyday of colonialism. For instance, the implementation of the *Land Use Act of 1978* in Nigeria allows the state the right to lease land, and also gives indigenes the right to apply and be given a Certificate of Occupancy to claim ownership of their ancestral lands. This places the pastoral Fulani in a difficult position because recurring transhumant movements will inadvertently lead to encroachment on the properties of others. Although the Nigerian government designated some areas as grazing routes, it has not reduced clashes between nomadic pastoralists and peasant farmers in places like Adamawa, Benue, Enugu, Kaduna, Kogi, Nasarawa, Plateau, and Taraba States. It is noteworthy that this bias in favour of crop farmers does not presuppose that states have always supported them in their conflicts with herders. Instead, this predisposition has become a colonial hangover in many West African states. With the exception of Mauritania and Chad (where pastoralists are represented in government), Côte d'Ivoire (where the government has been supportive of pastoralists by creating a livestock development agency), and Niger (where the government created pastoral and agricultural zones by drawing a cultivation limit at latitude $15^010'$), state policies have generally been detrimental to pastoral rights over land (Moritz, 2006).

The vast majority of countries in West Africa are experiencing cross-border transhumance either as countries of origin, or as host or transit countries. Depending on the season, two types of routes can be distinguished: (a) the north-south routes (more numerous) which indicate the transhumant movements of the dry season in the starting zones, and (b) the south-north route (less numerous) which materialise during the wet season transhumant movements (FAO/ECOWAS, 2012). As hinted earlier, the prevalence of Boko Haram insurgency and cattle rustling in Lake Chad (see Figure 1) has forced nomadic herders into the savannah belt where high population growth has already heightened pressure on farmland. This has correspondingly increased the frequency of disputes over crop damage, water pollution, and cattle theft.

Figure 1: States with highest incidence of Boko Haram insurgency and cattle rustling in Nigeria

Source: International Crisis Group (2017)

As part of its recognition of the pre-eminent place of livestock production in food security and economic sustainability in West Africa, ECOWAS has created the enabling environment for livestock breeding through the formulation of harmonious regulations on transhumance within the Community. Among others, the *ECOWAS Transhumance Protocol* of 1998, the *ECOWAS Protocol on Free Movement of Goods and Persons in West Africa,* the *Regulations of Transhumance between ECOWAS-Member States* of 2003, *the ECOWAS Strategic Plan for the Development and Transformation of the Livestock Sector*, and the 2005 *ECOWAS Agricultural Policy* (ECOWAP), have been ratified by the member-states of the Community. According to Article 3 of the *ECOWAS Transhumance Protocol*, "all animals of the bovine, caprine, cameline, equine plus asinine species shall be allowed free passage across the borders of all member-states, under the conditions set out in this Decision" (ECOWAS, 1998:4). Article 5 of the Protocol further states that "all transhumance livestock shall be allowed free passage across points of entry into and departure from each country on the condition that they have the ECOWAS International Transhumance Certificate".[3] Similarly, the *ECOWAS Strategic Plan for the Development and Transformation of the Livestock Sector in West Africa* also harps on the creation of a favourable environment for the development of the livestock

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[3] The certificate is issued by the livestock department through the local administrative authorities in the country of origin. The certificate contains details on the composition of the herd, the vaccinations given, the itinerary of the herds, the border posts to be crossed, and the final destination. The aim of the certificate is to enable authorities to monitor the herds before they leave the country of origin; to protect the health of local herds; and to make it possible to inform the host communities of the arrival of transhumance animals.

sector. This includes the promotion of intra-regional trade in animal products, provision of security, and facilitation of trans-border movement of livestock.

The foregoing provisions of *ECOWAS Transhumance Protocols* notwithstanding, the complexity of pastoralism in West Africa is such that nomadic pastoralists have leveraged the general ineffective enforcement of these protocols to perpetrate acts of criminality in the sub-region. The transnational and regional character of this conflict, and indeed, the spatial and geographical spread of the Fulani ethnic stock who have predominated herding business in the region, have further exacerbated the situation. Commonly found across many West and Central African states, the spread of the Fulani presupposes that any major confrontation between them and other groups could have regional repercussions, drawing in fighters from adjoining states. Thus, the protracted attacks often launched by armed herdsmen on various communities have endangered human security in the sub-region. The attacks, which often assume a scorched earth approach, have engendered an unprecedented humanitarian crisis; thereby making the area a leading storehouse of one of the worst humanitarian conditions in Africa. The increase in frequency, intensity and geographical spread of the attacks, often with illicit firearms,[4] has exacerbated existing humanitarian and economic conditions in West Africa. An estimated 10,000 pastoralists-related deaths have been recorded since 2005 in different farming communities within the sub-region. While West African states of Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, and Senegal have had their fair share of the onslaughts, Nigeria has remained the hotbed of the attacks. According to the Global Terrorism Index (2017), between 2010 and 2016, Fulani extremists were responsible for 466 terrorist attacks and 3,068 fatalities in four countries, with 92% of fatalities taking place in Nigeria (see Figure 2).

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[4] Most of these arms are either produced locally or smuggled in from other countries, especially Mali and Libya, because of porosity of borders and complicity of state security forces.

Figure 2: Total incidents and fatalities from Fulani extremists in four countries
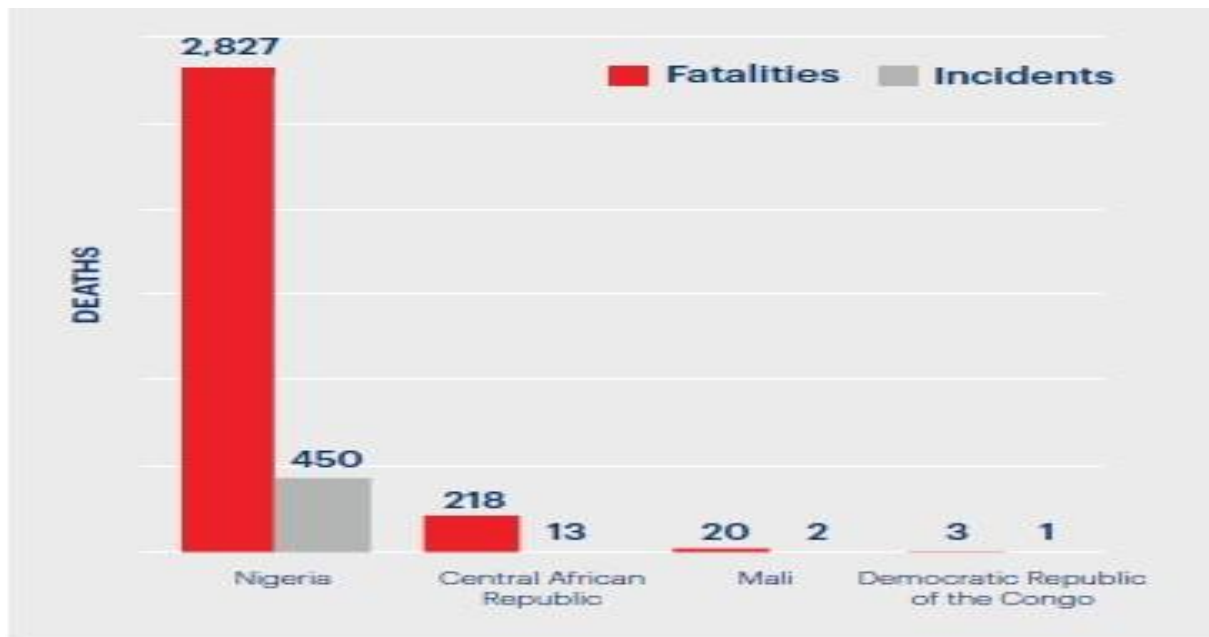
Source: Global Terrorism Index (2017).

Most regional bodies established to tackle insecurity in West Africa, as well as treaties and/or memorandum of understandings signed by ECOWAS countries, have adopted or emphasised the strategy of regional trans-border cooperation. As argued by Ifesinachi & Nwangwu (2015), the transnational character of most security challenges has made trans-border cooperation a necessity for the mitigation of such criminal activities the world over. However, the political will by ECOWAS member-states and other adjoining countries to commit to effective regional trans-border cooperation is poor. This has exacerbated the vulnerability of the countries concerned. Thus, Adibe, Nwangwu, Ezirim & Egonu (2018) posit that this non-committal stance of some member-states can be attributed to the imbalance in the effect of insecurity on their various domestic economies. The capacity of the regional bodies to effectively coordinate strategies aimed at promoting human security is severely undermined. While insecurity in West Africa affects economic activities and development in the short term, no country in the region is completely immune from the long-term effects of undermining the national security of their respective states. While various regional protocols and bodies that emphasise free movement of persons and goods as well as commitment to trans-border cooperation have been signed and formed in the region, lack of cooperation and the absence of serious involvement by the member-states of regional institutions, especially ECOWAS, have made peace and security too difficult to achieve.

The longstanding clashes between herders and farmers in Nigeria have increased exponentially since 2015. The lethality and scale of the offensives by armed herders accounted for the ranking of Fulani militant herdsmen as the fourth most dangerous terror group in the world, after

Boko Haram, ISIS, and al-Shabaab (Global Terrorism Index, 2015). Report by the International Crisis Group (2017) suggests that fatalities reached an annual average of more than 2,000 between 2011 and 2016, often exceeding the toll from Boko Haram insurgency. By the same token, Assessment Capacities Project (2017) reports that about 2,500 persons were killed nationwide in 2016 in various coordinated attacks on farming communities by armed herdsmen. It also notes that tens of thousands have been forcibly displaced, with property, crops and livestock worth billions of naira destroyed, at great cost to local and state economies. These attacks are very pronounced in about 22 states of the federation drawn mainly from Southern Nigeria and the Middle Belt.[5] Figure 3 shows the states in the Middle Belt that are most adversely affected by these attacks. Particularly in 2016, no fewer than 800 people were killed in Southern Kaduna, and 1,269 in Benue State, where at least 14 of the 23 Local Government Areas (LGAs), including Agatu LGA, were invaded (Egbejule, 2017).

Figure 3: States in the Middle Belt with high incidence of herder-farmer casualties

Source: International Crisis Group (2017)

The offensives by these militant pastoralists are characterised by large-scale destruction of farmlands and property, rape, robbery, abduction, and internal population displacement of peasant farmers. As reported by Soriwei, Adetayo & Egwu (2016), the pastoralists are often found with pump action gun, cartridge dane guns, cartridge ammo, cutlasses, jack knives, sticks, torch lights, certificate of occupancy, assorted charms, and hard drugs. Although herders argue that they carry weapons to defend themselves and their herds against heavily armed rustlers and other criminal gangs in farming

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[5] Middle Belt region of Nigeria mainly comprises Adamawa, Bauchi, Benue, Borno, Gombe, Kogi, Kwara, Nasarawa, Niger, Plateau, Southern Kaduna, Taraba and Yobe States as well as the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja. According to Harnischfeger as cited in Umoh (2017), this region is indeterminate because the presence of numerous minority groups gives it a heterogeneous multi-cultural, multi-ethnic, multi-religious, and multi-linguistic colouration that warrants clear distinction between it and the principally Islamic North.

communities (International Crisis Group, 2017), the increasing prevalence of unlicensed weapons has amplified the threats to human security. One of the landmark attacks by the militant herders took place on 21 September 2015, with the kidnapping of Chief Olu Falae, former Minister of Finance and a chieftain of Afenifere (a pan-Yoruba socio-cultural organisation) by seven herdsmen from his farmland in Ondo State. Other major incidents perpetrated by armed pastoralists include: the February 2016 attack on 10 villages in Agatu LGA of Benue State; the Ukpabi Nimbo Massacre in Enugu State on 25 April 2016; the August 2017 gang-raping of a 72-year old grandmother, Victoria Akinseye, on her farm in Ore, Odigbo LGA of Ondo State; attacks in the Numan District of Adamawa State on 20 November 2017; 1 January 2018 New Year killings in Benue State; killings in Lau LGA of Taraba State on 5 January 2018; and attacks of 24 June 2018 on no fewer than 11 villages in Plateau State.

The economic toll of the protracted attacks has been very overwhelming. According to Mercy Corps (2015), Nigeria was losing US$13.7 billion in revenue annually because of herder-farmer conflicts in Benue, Kaduna, Nasarawa, and Plateau States. The study found that the average annual loss in internally generated revenue of these states stands at 47%. Corroborating the above report, the Federal Government states that Nigeria loses about US$14 billion annually to the herders-farmers conflict in the country (Adeyemo, 2018). In March 2017, Governor Samuel Ortom of Benue State asserted that attacks by herders coming from more northerly states as well as other adjoining countries like Cameroon, Chad, and Niger, had cost his state about US$634 million between 2012 and 2014 (Agabi, 2017; Uja & Ehikioya, 2017). The loss of large cattle herds and crops (due to population displacements and damage to irrigation facilities), as well as increase in transport and labour costs in post-conflict environments, tend to increase poverty and undermine food security in the country.

Beyond the State: Towards a Collective Action against Herders-Farmers Crisis in Nigeria

Although herders-farmers' crisis in Nigeria has been an age-long problem, the responses from relevant federal authorities have been uncoordinated and tokenistic. Under the administration of former President Goodluck Jonathan, the Federal Government inaugurated an Inter-Ministerial Technical Committee on Grazing Reserves, with the mandate of ending the conflicts. Concurrently, the government set up a Committee on Grazing Reserves which recommended ranch construction and the recovery and improvement of all grazing routes encroached upon by farmers. However, the defeat of Goodluck Jonathan in the 2015 Presidential Election interrupted their implementation.

Since May 2015 when President Muhammadu Buhari's government was inaugurated, attacks by armed herdsmen have become more frequent, coordinated and sophisticated, and comparable only to the conflicts in Western Sudanese region of Darfur in which the Sudanese government-supported Janjaweed militia murder, rape, mutilate, plunder, and displace local populations. Beyond intermittent words of condemnation, the government has failed to formulate effective strategies to address the attendant dangers of nomadic pastoralism in the country. Soon after assuming office in 2015, President Buhari directed the Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development to formulate a comprehensive livestock development plan, including measures to curb farmer-herder clashes. In August 2015, the ministry recommended short-, medium- and long-term strategies, including the development of grazing reserves and stock routes (International Crisis Group, 2017). On 25 January 2016, the president announced his government's intention to present a plan to the Nigerian Governors Forum to map grazing areas in all states as a temporary solution for cattle owners until they could be persuaded to embrace ranching (*Premium Times*, 2016). No doubt, persuading herdsmen to embrace ranching is an undisguised avowal that the president has a soft spot for the nomadic pastoralists. Little wonder most states in the Middle Belt and Southern Nigeria vehemently opposed the plan because of its bias in favour of Fulani herders.

The federally-controlled Nigeria Police Force, the Nigerian Security and Civil Defence Corps, and the Nigerian Armed Forces, are thinly deployed in rural areas and often lack early- warning mechanisms. Even when community and civil society groups get involved, the response to distress calls is often late. The more typical response has been to deploy the police, and sometimes the army, after clashes had taken place. For instance, President Buhari ordered the Inspector General of Police, Ibrahim Idris,[6] to relocate to Benue State following the gruesome New Year Day attacks and killings of 73 persons in Logo and Guma LGAs of Benue State by armed herdsmen (Channels Television, 2018; Gesinde, 2018). By the same token, the military reluctantly deployed its still-birth special force code-named *Exercise Ayem A Kpatuma* (*Operation Cat Race*) in February 2018 in affected communities in the Middle Belt who had already resorted to self-protection and the formation of ethnic militia (Ojewale & Appiah-Nyamekye, 2018). Unlike other sectarian uprisings and movements like Boko Haram insurgency, Islamic Movement of Nigeria, and the Indigenous People of Biafra, Nigerian government's responses to coordinated attacks by armed herdsmen have been lacklustre and uninspiring. Accordingly, President Buhari is often accused of deliberately

failing to stop herder aggression because of his pastoral Fulani background and his position as the

[6] An order the IGP flagrantly disregarded. This was acknowledged by no lesser a personality than President Buhari himself during a belated visit to the herdsmen-ravaged Benue State on 12 March 2018.

life patron of MACBAN (Igata, 2016). While the incidents of attack in other West African social formations are not totally dissimilar from Nigeria's situation, they have been largely proactive by strengthening their relevant security and early-warning apparatuses to confront the clashes between these two groups of land users. A typical case in point is Ghana under President Nana Akufo-Addo. Although largely based on ad-hoc security arrangement, the deployment and reinforcement of *Operation Cow Leg*[7] has significantly addressed the 'pastoralist question' in the Asante Akyem North District of Ashanti Region by reducing the frequency/lethality of attacks by armed herdsmen.

Beyond the responses by relevant state authorities, the transnational character of the clashes between these land users has attracted varied responses from relevant civil society organisations. For instance, ethnic- and community-based groups defending farmers' interests typically have organised press conferences and protests, seeking to draw global attention to their plight. Thus, the Movement Against Fulani Occupation (MAFO) has instituted legal actions at the ECOWAS Court in Abuja, demanding a compensation of US$1.6 billion from the federal government because of its failure to protect its citizens (International Crisis Group, 2017). Others, such as Afenifere, have set up arrangements to monitor both herders and cattle thieves (Dada, 2017; Makinde & Dada, 2017). Conversely, livestock producers' groups and pastoralists' organisations vigorously defend herders' interests and are of the view that media reports of incidents are often lopsided and politically motivated (Kayode-Adedeji, 2016; Leme, 2017). Pastoralists' umbrella groups such as the Confederation of Traditional Herder Organisations in Africa (CORET), MACBAN, and Miyetti Allah Kautal Hore, also tend to downplay herders' involvement in the violence.

Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and international development partners have been more conciliatory and constructive in their response to the clashes between these land users. The leading ones among these partners and NGOs are the British Council, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the German Embassy, Nigeria Reconciliation and Stability Project (NRSP), Interfaith Mediation Centre (IMC), Mercy Corps, Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue, and so on. They have focused on post-conflict reconciliation and peace building, improving early-warning, and strengthening relations between communities and security agencies. Some of these bodies have encouraged herders-farmers' dialogues through various local initiatives.

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[7] The operation is part of government's attempt to implement the 2012 Kumasi High court order for the eviction herdsmen in the Ashanti Region. A full operation was launched after that order in 2012 to drive the animals from nine villages mentioned in the court order. They were moved to an area beyond the villages to an area on the Afram plains border between the Ashanti and Eastern region called Asomasu.

In June 2016, for instance, the British Council-sponsored NRSP supported the Bayelsa State Peace and Conflict Management Alliance in organising a dialogue between farmers and herders (Odiegwu, 2016; Punch, 18 June 2016). Similarly, on 27 April 2017, the USAID sponsored and hosted a conference on herder-farmer dialogue, involving the All Farmers Association of Nigeria (AFAN), MACBAN, the IMC, Mercy Corps, and Research for Common Ground (Ujah, 2017; US Embassy and Consulate in Nigeria, 2017). The conference, among others, recommended that the Government of Nigeria should curb illegal weapons, modernise agricultural practices, enforce demarcation of farmland and grazing reserves, utilise new technology to reduce cattle rustling, improve systems of conflict resolution, and above all implement new policies acceptable to both groups.

Concluding Remarks

This paper investigated the link between nomadic pastoralism and human security in Nigeria. It argued that the nomadic pastoral crisis in the country is mainly propelled by the imperatives of transnational cum regional socio-cultural and economic integration in West Africa. This argument differs from existing explanations of the conflict in academic literature which hold that climate change, population growth, and insecurity are implicated in the origin and escalation of the conflict. Overall, the increase in the spate of these attacks and the scale of human and material casualties underscore the urgency of coming to a better understanding of how they escalate and combine with religious, ethnic, and political conflicts to undermine human security in the country and beyond. Relying on Buzan and Weaver's RSCT, the study found that the dangers of nomadic pastoralism in Nigeria have festered because of a prevailing climate of weak state-centric enforcement of relevant provisions of ECOWAS conventions. The state authorities enforce these protocols without recourse to the complexity of the crisis which is often muddled in ethnicity, religion, and politics.

In the light of the foregoing, this study puts forward the following recommendations for policy formulation and implementation:

1. The complexity of transhumant pastoral crisis in Nigeria should be tackled from a holistic and multi-sectoral standpoint. In other words, the transnational character of this conflict presupposes that a regional approach be adopted towards redressing the menace. Relevant regional platforms such as the ECOWAS, Lake Chad Basin Authority, and the Mano River Union should synergise and step up action in the interest of regional security. This is because the promotion of human security should not be left to national governments alone, especially following revelations that foreign herders were involved in some of the attacks on farming communities in Nigeria.

2. As a corollary, the Nigerian government should engage the governments of Cameroon, Chad, and Niger, as well as the ECOWAS Commission, to strengthen existing relations and to agree

on how to collectively monitor and regulate international transhumant pastoralism, in accordance with relevant conventions, including ECOWAS protocols.

3. The member-states of ECOWAS should work together, taking immediate steps to shore up security for both peasant farmers and herders, strengthening conflict-resolution mechanisms, and initiating longer-term efforts to reform livestock management practices, address negative environmental trends, and curb trans-border movements of both cattle rustlers and armed herders.

4. The movement for promoting human security should not be limited to government-based organisations alone as it requires the collective and interlocking participation of the civil society. Hence, the civil society should increase public enlightenment, peace building initiatives, early-warning mechanisms, and remain a virile watchdog of human security.

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