

Original Paper

Insight into the Dynamics and Menace of Cattle Rustling: A Case Study of Lake Chad Basin Area in Northern Nigeria

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Abstract

The violent phenomenon of contemporary cattle rustling has in recent times constitute a menace which unabatedly continued to threaten peace and development among rural communities around the Lake Chad Basin and Northern Nigeria in general. More worrisome is the trends and dynamics of extant transformation of rustling from its tradition form to violence accentuated by militarized weapons, ruthless brutality and deadly crime and criminality. With the recent involvement of “Boko Haram” armed pundits in rustling led to several losses of human lives, destruction and displacement of several rural communities, and thousands of cattle rustled. Consequently, this development is also accompanied by security threats and anxiety among the inhabitants of the Basin. However, the primary focus of this paper is to provide an insight into the root causes, trends and dynamics of contemporary rustling and its implications on peace and development. The paper conclude that rustling in its current violent form gradually becomes militarized using illegally acquired arms prejudiced by actor rustlers insatiable desire for wealth accumulation at all cost syndrome. The paper explored and utilized content analysis of the existing literatures and Focus Group Discussion (FGD) with some herdsmen victims of rustling in the study area.

Keywords

cattle, rustling, banditry, violence, insurgency

1. Introduction and Focus of the Paper

The Nigerian state did not wage any war before gaining its independence in 1960. However, since independence Nigeria has been bedeviled with several crises of political instability, military coups and counter coups, Niger Delta crisis, indigene-settler problem, corruption, kidnapping and hostage-taking for ransom, farmer-herdsmen crisis, arm banditry, cattle rustling, raids among others, has been some of the major challenges of Nigeria's aspiration for achieving sustainable peace and development. Despite Nigeria's return to democratic rule in 1999, most of these challenges remain an extant recurring decimal that continued to threaten the unity and corporate existence of Nigerian nation. This development presupposes the feeble nature of institutions for protecting lives and property of Nigerian public particularly in remote rural communities (Miangwa & Ahmadu, 2007). Cattle rustling phenomenon is a global malady which has gradually manifested both in dimension and veracity across nation states. For instance, in Scotland, 300 cattle were reported to have been rustled by the end of 2013, which led to the declaration of national emergency on cattle rustling by the Scottish government (*Daily Trust Editorial*, cited in Okoli & Okpaleke, 2014). In North-western Kenya massive death of cattle due to outbreak of diseases led to raids as one of the options for replenishing the depleted stocks (Osamba, 2000). The current global dynamics and sophistication of cattle rustling as well as its apparent degeneration, has been associated with spiral violence in different parts of the world today (Okoli & Okpaleke, 2014).

Since last two decades, Nigeria has been witnessing an upsurge of violent recurrence of cattle rustling and other forms of rural banditry particularly in Northern Nigeria as the epicenter where farming and cattle rearing or breeding are the agricultural main stay and predominant sources of livelihoods and survival for many rural dwellers. For instance, reports by Miyetti Allah Cattle Breeders Association of Nigeria (MACBAN) revealed that approximately about 7,000 cattle were rustled across Northern Nigeria between October, 2013 and March, 2014 (Bashir, 2014). While in 2016 about 30,000 rustled cattle were recovered by the Joint Security Task Force fighting the menace in Katsina state (Tauna, 2016). Apparently, the phenomenon of cattle rustling and banditry becomes common and widespread across Northern States and probably among the list of top knotty security challenges that is bedeviling Nigeria in the 21st Century. According to Olaniyan and Yahaya (2016), "Virtually all of the states in Northern region of Nigeria are affected by cattle rustling".

The existence of cattle rustling as a conflict phenomenon is not in question but the unprecedented transformation of contemporary rustling from hitherto traditional and cultural norm especially among Fulani herdsmen for displaying bravery and prowess, to violent and deadly warfare among several groups in form of organize crime involving killings, maiming and destructions to lives and property, using modern and sophisticated weapons as the case with "Boko Haram" involvement in rustling to enhance their financial strength (Okoli & Atelhe, 2014). Contemporary rustling has been recently

associated with “Boko Haram” terrorist group who resort to cattle rustling as additional means of raising fund in support of their operations (Okoli, 2014; Okoli & Iortyer, 2014). Most a times rustlers destroy communities, kill and maim herders, in some cases Kidnap and rape women and girls before dispossessing them of their herds (Akowe & Kayode, 2014; Adeniyi, 2015; Yusuf, 2015). Traditional morality has collapsed following decadence in the gamut of social relationship on which people’s lives were predicated (Markakis, 1993). More critical to this development is the climax of a new trend and dynamics towards increased use of illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) in cattle rustling by rustlers and other non-state actors across the borders of Lake Chad Basin Countries of Nigeria, Cameroun, Chad and Niger Republic. Central to this, is the insatiable economic and primitive desire for accumulation of herds-wealth through rustling, banditry and other forms of criminality.

Despite the fact that herding has existed for centuries in Nigeria, yet there is paucity of academic research on the contemporary dynamics of cattle rustling as well as its associated violence. The dominant literatures that flourished in the last two decades focuses on analyzing the narratives of farmer-herdsmen clashes in several parts of Nigeria (See for instance, Shettima & Tar, 2008; Ahmadu, 2011; Abbas, 2012; Bello, 2013; Baidoo, 2014; McGregor, 2014; Muhammad, Ismaila, & Bibi, 2015; Ezeonwuka & Igwe, 2016; Fasona et al., 2016; Chinwokwu, 2017; Ahmadu & Ayuba, 2018). The few scholarly articles on cattle rustling that surface, are descriptive in nature (Kwaja, 2014) and their analysis principally derived from East African experience (Okoli & Okpaleke, 2014; Olaniyan & Yahaya, 2016) though commendable as they are (Olaniyan & Yahaya, 2016) but contemporary rustling saga requires more scholarly attention in order to better understand the current trends, dynamics and the trajectory of violence that is associated to it in recent times. Against this background, this paper seeks to explore some of the major triggers, trends, dynamics, trajectories and implications of violence that is associated to contemporary rustling in the Lake Chad Basin Area in Northern Nigeria. This forms the *locus standi* for the paper. In doing so, the paper seeks to answer the following questions:

- 1) What are the major drivers of cattle rustling
- 2) What are the trends and dynamics of contemporary cattle rustling
- 3) To understand the trajectory of “Boko Haram” involvement in cattle rustling
- 4) What are the implications of violence associated to rustling on peace

2. Brief Description of the Lake Chad Basin Area

The area called Lake Chad basin region is located between latitude 6 and 24 degrees north, longitude 7 and 24 degrees east. The conventional basin covers an area of 3,500 square kilometers, 42 percent in Chad; 28 percent in Niger; 9 percent in Cameroon and 21 percent in Nigeria (Oyebande, 1997). Historically, Lake Chad basin is believed to be the remnant of a former inland sea, which has grown and shrunk commensurate with changes in climate. Over the last three decades the Lake has been

susceptible to the increasing climatic variability and human impacts (Onouha, 2008). Lake Chad is now Africa's fourth largest lake (GIWA, 2004). The Lake and its hinterland is potentially rich and congenial for agriculture and pastoralism, it has since become the point of convergence for particularly farmers, pastoralists and fishermen. The basin became susceptible to cattle rustling due to intense pastoral activities. There are many pastoral groups in the Lake Chad region but the predominant groups includes, *Fulbe* related groups, are the largest pastoral community in the world widely spread across Africa over the last one thousand years and probably entered Nigeria in the fourteenth century (Blench, 2003). There also exist the *Koyam-Kanuri* related group, *Shuwa Arab* and few *Tubu-Arabs* who have confined themselves around the Lake-Chad Basin area. Available estimates revealed that the basin has earlier covered an initial area of 400,000 square kilometers prior to 1960 (GIWA Report, 2004). During the early 1960s, it receded to 26,000 square kilometers. Between 1966 and 1997, it further shrunk from 25,000 square kilometers to just 532 square kilometers losing about 90 percent of its original size in 1960s (GIWA Report, 2004; Masari, 2006).

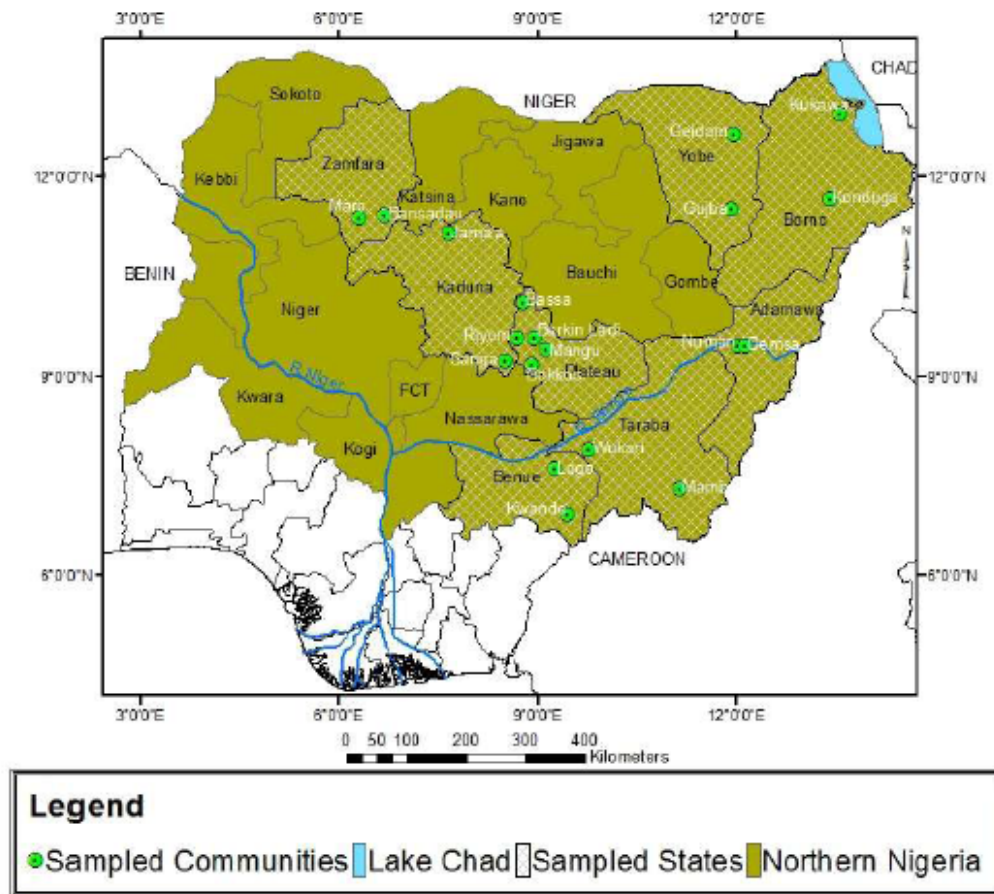


Figure 1. Map of Lake Chad Basin

Source: Digitized in GIS Laboratory, Department of Geography, University of Maiduguri, Nigeria.

3. Theoretical Basis

In order to have theoretical understanding of the dynamics and the trajectory of socio-economic variables in analyzing the menace of cattle rustling in the Lake Chad basin area, two theories have been adopted. First, the Theory of Eco-violence and second is the Frustration Aggression Theory. Exponents of eco-violence theory from Toronto group notable among them Homer-Dixon (1999) has earlier predicted that eco-violence arising from the “shrinking resource pie” may in the near future trigger violence due to climate related degradation including violence associated to farmer-pastoralists clashes as well as cattle rustling in Sub-Saharan Africa. The receding Lake Chad basin is one of the evidences for explaining the complexities of resource degradation arising from climatic changes. Lake Chad is described as the major wetland in the semi-arid Sahel corridor supporting some over 20 million people (including farmers, fishermen and pastoralists among others) who directly depend on the lake and its hinterland for their livelihood (FAO, 2004 cited in Shettima & Tar, 2008). Today most of the people who largely depend on the Lake have lost their source of livelihood support due to increase in the

population of resource users chasing shrinking resources arising from over-dependence and over-reliance on critical resources such as cropland, freshwater and vegetation which ultimately creates vulnerability and trigger conflicts including cattle rustling and other forms of rural banditry.

Frustration Aggression Theory—the theory was first popularized by a group of researchers led by John Dollard in a monograph published in 1939. Their analysis focused on how frustration provokes aggression and aggressive behavior can be translated into anger and annoyance which thereafter manifest into violence. They explained “frustration” arise when some body’s goals are been thwarted by another party or circumstantial in a behavior sequence, response to such thwarted goals can be expressed through anger and annoyance which most a times leads to conflicts (Van der Dennen, 2005). Ordinarily pastoralists whose livelihood and survival is been threatened by both natural and human factors may out of frustration engage in rustling and rural banditry as an alternative way of replenishing lost herds.

4. Meaning, Trends and Dynamics of Cattle Rustling

The term “Rustle or Rustling” means to steal livestock especially cattle or horses (Microsoft Encarta Premium, 2009). Cattle rustling refer to the stealing of grazing cattle (Okoli & Okpaleke, 2014). In most cases the term “rustling” and “raid” are used interchangeably to refer to arm attacks by one group on another with the intention of stealing livestock and not necessary territorial expansion (Markakis, 1993). Raid is a general term for violent attacks on both pastoral and non-pastoral individuals, groups or communities. For instance several non-pastoral communities are raided by rural bandits who are not rustlers. While rustling as a concept is specific and peculiar to cattle raids. However, a raid encompasses both rustling and other forms of rural banditry. Rustling is as old as pastoralism, but the hitherto purpose, intention and dynamics of rustling remain traditional, primitive guided and regulated by the sanctity of culture and tradition especially among the Fulani pastoral communities. Cattle rustling among Fulani pastoralists for instance are regarded as a socio-cultural practice for exhibiting bravery, perseverance and prowess regulated and sanction by their elderly kinsmen (Joshia, 2000). Cattle rustling during the primitive days are localized, seasonal, customary and non-militarized using traditional spears with less associated violence (Olaniyan & Yahayam, 2016). To further justify this practice, during our Focus Group Discussion (FGD) with Fulani pastoralists, the most elderly man among the discussants named Ardo Nyori age 82, has been a victim of both traditional and contemporary cattle rustling revealed that:

“Cattle rustling during the traditional days take place at unique periods especially after circumcision rites of young teenagers must have been completed marking the age of their maturity. Newly inducted young men will have to engage in raids for purposes of

not only fulfilling the traditional rites but also prepare them in terms of bravery and prowess. On the contrary contemporary rustling is militarized using sophisticated weapons accompanied by violent brutality, killings, kidnapping, rape and other nefarious atrocities that are inconsistent with extant traditional values of our people”.

Traditionally, even child teenagers among pastoral communities are obliged to embrace not only skills and braveness required for pastoralism but also develop the courage and enthusiasm to aggressively, defend their herds from raids and attacks (Ahmadu & Ayuba, 2018). More importantly is the promotion of cultural bravery and warrior tradition, generational contests and unforgiving, revenge-seeking venture (Olaniyan & Yahaya, 2016). This development must have influenced the traditional means of primitive accumulation of cow-herd for subsistence and commercial pastoralism (Blench, 2003). The hitherto criminal intent to expropriate cattle for purposes of meat, milk and other dairy products must have been the common traditional metaphor for cattle rustling in Northern Nigeria (Okoli & Okpaleke, 2014).

The unprecedented gradual transformation of cattle rustling from its traditional setting to the current contemporary violent form is a reminiscent of larger unresolved issues of the Nigerian political economy, in terms of food security, human and national security as well as decay in inter-group social relationship and harmony among the diverse ethnic nationalities in Nigeria. The feeble nature of the Nigerian state in addressing some of these challenges has transited cattle rustling from ordinary raid to deadly weapon-driven organized criminality. Currently cattle rustling have assumed an unimaginable violent proportion with militarized, brutal and ruthless killings, maiming, rape, kidnapping and hostage taking for ransomed, burning of entire communities and sources of livelihoods, displacement of people among others. Taking advantage of the feeble institution of the state, cattle rustling became lucrative business, profit-oriented, highly commercialized and internationalized across borders of the Lake Chad basin countries. This was motivated by readily available market for cattle due to increase demand for meat and other dairy products and uncontrolled movement of cattle across the borders of the Lake Chad basin countries. More diverstating is the contemporary cattle rustling links to terrorism in the basin being the epicenter of “Boko Haram” violent activities. The involvement of “Boko Haram” terrorists in cattle rustling has been economically motivated to improve their financial strength.

Proceeds accruing from cattle rustling are been utilize in funding their deadly activities (Ogbeche, 2016 cited in Olaniyan & Yahaya, 2016). Paradoxically, the involvement of “Boko Haram” in rustling has also exacerbated the veracity and magnitude of violence associated with cattle rustling because violence and destruction to lives and properties has been the character and orientation of terrorists worldwide.

5. Major Causes of Cattle Rustling

There is no one single factor that is solely responsible for cattle rustling in Nigeria, rather the interplay of several factors such as climate change, absence of security in remote rural communities, spread and proliferation of illegal small arms and light weapons, the insatiable desire for cow-herds-wealth among others are covertly or overtly responsible for the widespread incidences of cattle rustling phenomenon. Climate change induced factors—the vulnerability of the Lake Chad basin to climate change related complexities cannot be over emphasized because is practical and real. Already the Lake has been susceptible to desertification, land degradation and the looming recession of the Lake water thereby causing millions of resource users (pastoralist, farmers and fishermen) fast losing their source of livelihoods support and their survival in jeopardy. This development has further created competition, contestation and tensions over available limited resources in terms of access and right to ownership and usage particularly between pastoralists and farmers. Those whose source of livelihoods are affected or threatened by the shrinking “resource pie” easily engage in cattle rustling as an alternative means of replenishing their lost herds. Emphasizing on the impact of the receding Lake Chad waters on people’s livelihoods, President Muhammadu Buhari since assumption of office in May 29, 2015 has at different international forum vociferously advocated for international support and collaboration to revamp the Lake Chad in order to save people from losing their livelihoods and consequently mitigate anticipated conflicts associated to it.

Lack of security presence in remote rural communities—Nigeria has 774 Local Government Areas comprising thousands of villages, small settlements and large expanse of forest reserves that are not secured because of absence of security operatives. Some of these forest reserves include Sambisa, Yankari, Falgore, Kamuku, Kiyabana among others all located in Northern Nigeria. All these reserves provide congenial colonies for cattle rustlers, bandits and other criminals to perpetrate their crime without hindrance. According to Olaniyan and Yahaya (2016), “Most rustling activities takes place in State own reserves. The forest offer perfect location for the criminals to hide out from security forces”. However, in the case of the Lake Chad despite the large expanse forest there are small creeks and islands around the main basin that harbors such criminalities because of lack of security presence. Some of these reserves are gradually becoming ungoverned spaces due to lapses in the Nigerian security architecture which recently generated clamor for the establishment of state police as a panacea for curbing rustling and other forms of rural banditry.

Proliferation of illegal Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW)—The crisis in Libya, Mali and other Sahel region led to the inflow of illegal arms into Nigeria through the unsecured porous borders around the Lake Chad area. These illegal arms get into the hands of criminal syndicates including cattle rustlers and bandits. As a result of the spread of these arms in the hands of non-state actors particularly rustlers and bandits, cattle rustling saga becomes more sophisticated organized crime and deadly. Based

on the evaluation survey project jointly conducted in February, 2016 by United Nations Regional Center for Peace and Disarmament in Africa (UNREC) and the UNDP Sub-Regional office for the Sahel and West Africa, revealed that there is paucity of current, accurate and reliable data on the number of illicit arms in the hands of non-state actors in the Sahel states. However, what is evidently clear is the role of these illegal arms in fuelling violent crimes and criminality in the Sahel and West Africa. For example, Bartolucci and Kanneworff (2012) (cited in Nicholas, 2014) undertook a thorough examination of the relationship between SALW and criminality. Their findings revealed that there is causal link between SALW, criminality and state fragility. We have also seen how the inflow and circulation of illegal SALW in Liberia contributed to the conflict in neighboring Sierra Leone (Kinsella, 2005 cited in Nicholas, 2014). For the Sahel countries, the fall of Gaddafi's regime in Libya in 2011 has not only exacerbated the inflow and circulation of illegal SALW in Niger, Nigeria, Chad, Mali among others, but it has also made congenial grounds for easy access to sophisticated and modern arsenal in the hands of many non-state actors. The Sahel States particularly the Lake Chad Basin countries have since been grappling with the impact of these illicit SALW. The veracity of these violent conflict and organized crimes associated to farmer-pastoralists clashes, cattle rustling and rural banditry, armed robbery and kidnapping, insurgency and terrorism among others in Nigeria today have been attributed to the spread and inflow of illicit SALW in the hands of non-state actors. Considering the negative consequences of the proliferation of SALW in the Sahel and globally, UNO identified it as a target to be achieved in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) 2030 in order to enhance peace and security in the region. Since early 1990s, illegal arms especially AK-47 rifles have become common weapons of choice for cattle rustlers and other criminal syndicates, replacing traditional and less deadly weapons.

The insatiable economic desire for cow-herds-wealth—traditionally when herds are depleted or completely lost due to natural disasters such as outbreak of animal diseases or due to human factors like theft, raids or rustling, ordinarily pastoralists finds a means of replenishing the lost herds because economically their livelihoods and survival is inextricably tied to the cattle. In most cases pastoralists engage in cattle rustling to replenish their lost herds with the aid of easy access to modern small arms and weapons. Because of the economic value attached to the cow-herds-wealth in rural communities, the larger the number of herds a herder may possess the larger the economic influence and power he enjoys from his fellow herders. Therefore, pastoralist desire for cow-herds-wealth is primarily accentuated by the economic influences leading to rustling as the fastest means of replenishing their lost herds devoid of all legal encumbrances.

6. The Trajectory of “Boko Haram” Involvement in Cattle Rustling

North-eastern Nigeria where the Lake Chad basin is located has been the epicenter of “Boko Haram” activities since 2009. When “Boko Haram” was dislodged from their strong-hold in the cities of Maiduguri and other major towns by the combine efforts of the Nigerian Security Forces and Civilian Joint Taskforce (CJTF) compelled them to shift their base to remote forest and other rural communities which brought them in close contact with pastoral communities who are originally domiciled in rural areas. Cattle’s rustling was traditionally a “Predatory Enterprise” for small herd owners who are desperate to restock their cattle from the pool of large owners of cattle especially among Fulani pastoralists as earlier observed by (Fleisher, 2002 cited in Olaniyan & Yahaya, 2016). The sudden involvement of “Boko Haram” pundits and other non-pastoral syndicate into the cattle rustling saga has obscured another dimension to the problem with syndicated criminality accentuated by highly commercialized cattle rustling becoming lucrative “business enterprise” which Kwaja (2014), summarized as the “underground economy” which is tied to the political economy of most agrarian communities. Olaniyan and Yahaya (2016) describe the situation as the “Shadow economy” which serves as an outlet for stolen cows and bring in a lot of cash.

The link between “Boko Haram” terrorism and cattle rustling has been established as one of their sources of funding around the Lake Chad basin general area. Governor Kashim Shettima base on intelligence reports linking Boko Haram and cattle rustling quickly announced ban on the sale of cattle to Butchers and other cattle merchants in major markets in Maiduguri and its environs in order to prevent “Boko Haram” rustling cartels from patronizing cattle markets. In the words of the Governor:

“Our security agencies have reasonably established that most of the cattle being traded at the markets [in Borno State] were the direct proceeds of cattle-rustling perpetrated by insurgents [and] were sold at prohibitive costs to unsuspecting customers through some unscrupulous middlemen who use underhand ploy[s] to deliberately disguise the transactions as legitimate. The money realized from such transaction[s] would then be channeled to fund their deadly activities (Ogbeche 2016 cited in Olaniyan & Yahaya, 2016, p. 98)”.

However, the involvement “Boko Haram” terrorist in rustling was inspired and motivated by several factors. First, is the desire of the insurgents to increase their source funding in order to sustain their activities? Second, cattle rustling became the most viable option for additional funds around them in the rural areas because there is large concentration of cattle around the Lake Chad basin areas. Third, there is readily available market for quick disposal of stock because the cattle markets are translocational and transnational in character across the borders of the Lake Chad basin countries and

the Sahel as earlier revealed by (Alemika, 2013; Okoli & Okpaleke, 2014). The fourth factor is the Boko Haram's overwhelming fire power, they camouflage in military uniforms, armored cars carrying along with them sophisticated weapons which they use in rustling cattle from their victims, after the must have either kill, maim or scare them away. Fifth, the porous nature of borders within the Lake Chad countries made movements of Boko Haram rustling cartels with the rustled herds easier, unchecked and without hindrance. Hence the above factors motivated "Boko Haram" insurgents and non-pastoral syndicates to engage in rustling business because is highly commercialized and as a fast money making venture.

7. Overview of Prevalence of Cattle Rustling in Northern Nigeria

The prevalence of violent conflicts associated with cattle rustling is currently among the greatest security challenges facing Nigeria in the 21st Century. It has become a recurring decimal which thrives easily where cattle rearing constitute the dominant occupation in almost all Northern Nigerian states. In the North-east being the epic-center of Boko Haram crises, the specter of cattle rustling was not only exacerbated by farmer-herder conflicts but was further militarized by the recent Boko Haram links to cattle rustling. However, there is paucity of reliable and discrete statistical data on cattle rustling figures and casualties involved. But there are some incidences reported by security agencies and the media. For instance, on October 8, 2017 spokesman of the Nigerian Army fighting Boko Haram insurgency and terrorism in the North-east Colonel Timothy Antigha revealed that, they ambushed and arrested Boko Haram cattle rustling syndicates with rustled cattle from Lingir village in Monguno Local Government area on their way crossing into Maiduguri to dispose the rustled cattle (www.nigerianews.net). Another three suspected Boko Haram members were arrested attempting to sell cattle believed to have been stolen by their commanders elsewhere and brought to Maiduguri cattle market (Olanrewaju, 2016). According to reports by the Commandant of the Nigerian Security and Civil Defense Corps (NSCDC) Borno State Ibrahim Abdullahi, revealed that, "Boko Haram often transport rustled cattle to markets in major towns through their agents who serve as middle men in the cattle business. The agents buy off these cattle and settle the insurgent-rustlers cash to enable them raise money to buy food, drugs and even arms" (www.nigerianews.net). Insurgent-rustlers are so ingenious that they inscribe permanent marks or signs on the bodies of the cattle for people to believe that the cattle belong to them (www.nigerianews.net). On Sunday 11th November, 2018 Boko Haram insurgents attacked Bale Shuwa village in Jere Local Government of Borno State. After killing and injuring several people, they burnt 65 houses, rustled 200 cows, 300 sheep and goats (www.nigerianews.net).

In North-western states particularly Kaduna, Katsina and Zamfara are still grappling with the menace of violent attacks and reprisal attacks by cattle rustlers and rural bandits. Several villages across the three states have been under siege and attacks from cattle rustlers who freely unleash terror on helpless

herdsmen and farmers alike (Akowe & Kayode, 2014). For example, a breakdown of the statistics obtained from the secretariat of the Katsina state Government standing committee on cattle rustling shows that from July-December 2015 about 11,989 animals were recovered out of which 9, 221 were returned to their rightful owners (Abdullahi, Victor, & Binta, 2017).

In central states like plateau and Benue happens to be the major flash-points heavily affected by the menace of cattle rustling. Eight out of the seventeen Local Government Areas of Plateau state (Mangu, South, Bokkos, Langtang, Barikin Ladi, & Shendam) have been ravaged by the crisis linked to cattle rustling and farmers-herdsmen clashes (Abimaje, 2014 cited in Olaniyan & Yahaya, 2016). For instance, reports by Security Special Task Force (STF) set-up by the Federal Government in response to the security challenges in Plateau state confirmed that within couple of months 160 attacks were launched by gun men suspected to be rustlers resulted in 2,501 cows rustled and 260 people lost their lives (Adeniyi, 2015 cited in Olaniyan & Yahaya, 2015).

8. Socio-Economic and Security Implications of Cattle Rustling

The socio-economic and security implications of cattle rustling and its associated violence on peace and development in the Lake Chad Basin area and Northern Nigeria as a whole cannot be over emphasized. It is discernibly clear that the emergence of cattle rustling as a criminal enterprise perpetrated by both pastoral and non-pastoral actors, as oppose to the hitherto traditional norms and purpose of rustling which has impacted negatively on the livelihood of many people. However, the nearly one decade of Boko Haram relentless violence and hostilities in the north-east particularly their involvement in rustling has further attested to the increase impetus to extant criminality in contemporary rustling. This led to colossal damage to lives and properties as well as displacement of millions of people. Herders by virtue of their rural livelihood become the first line victims of rustling and rural banditry from the hands of Boko Haram dissidents. Without exception millions of people particularly herdsmen, farmers and fishermen had to lose their source of livelihood and abandon their traditional ecological zones in the Lake Chad for safety elsewhere. This consequently led to the current mass unplanned pastoral migration to the southern part of Nigeria and other safer areas across the Sahel.

Social implications—the hitherto traditional and cultural traits associated with cattle rustling particularly among Fulani herdsmen as a traditional means of displaying prowess and bravery against threats has been eroded by the recent involvement of Boko Haram and other criminal elements. However, modern rustling gradually turned to be militarized, weapons-driven and violent characterized by killings, kidnapping, maiming, rape, arson and several other criminal impunity. Hence the phenomenon of cattle rustling is no longer restricted to herdsmen as a tradition but has assumed a wider dimension involving criminality perpetrated by non-pastoral syndicates.

Economically, the menace of modern cattle rustling, especially with the involvement of Boko Haram insurgents has completely stalled economic and agricultural activities in the Lake Chad Region. The region which provides source of livelihood to millions of people positively contributing to Nigeria's food security is now a ghost of its own. The area becomes not only inaccessible but hazardous to herdsmen because of brutality and violent attacks from Boko Haram cattle rustlers. Millions of cattle rustled and their owners killed while some survivors were left with no single cattle and ultimately become Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in camps across the North-eastern region for safety and survival. Over two million people including herdsmen were displaced due insurgency as reported by National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA, 2016). Furthermore, in Borno State for instance, those whose trade and business linked to cattle had to temporarily abandon their businesses because of the closure of cattle market by the state government in response to the increasing illegal trades in rustled cattle from remote rural areas.

National security threats—the gradual climax of insurgency and criminality in rustling phenomenon has obscured unprecedented apprehensions and threats to Nigeria's peace and security. For instance, Governor Abdulazeez Yari of Zamfara state publically relinquish his constitutional position as the chief security officer of the state because of the menace of cattle rustling and rural banditry that has bedeviled the state in the last three years. Besides, the growing clamor and agitations for restructuring and constitutional amendment that will provide for state police, in order to tame the increasing threats of cattle rustling, farmer-pastoralists conflict and rural banditry is not unconnected with the reactive and feeble federal response to some of these security challenges.

9. Conclusion

The recent links and juxtaposition of cattle rustling menace with Boko Haram insurgency and other criminalities constitute a threat to the security of not only the Lake Chad Area but the Nigerian state in general. However, the existence of cattle rustling in its traditional form is purely socio-cultural particularly among Fulani pastoral society. What remains a threat to national security is the inflow of illegal arms getting into the hands of non-state actors who are mostly criminals. With the aid of these illegal arms they perpetrate heinous acts at will with little or no state response. Consequently, the socio-economic lives and livelihood of many Nigerians who solely depend on the Lake Chad for survival are in jeopardy. Therefore, there is the urgent need to tame the menace of cattle rustling and its associated violence in order to achieve peace and development. Investment in education, security, poverty reduction, job creation, de-radicalization, rule of law may be among the immediate panacea for ending the menace of cattle rustling and rural banditry in Nigeria. In addition, Nigeria's approach and orientation to conflict management need to be changed from highly re-active to a more proactive oriented approach. Finally, the paper recommends for further in-depth analysis on the relationship

between insurgency and cattle rustling with particular reference to the recent Boko Haram involvement in rustling.

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