



Governance and the Challenges of Rural Insecurity in North Central, Nigeria, 2010-2022

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Abstract

This study investigated the link between governance and the challenges of rural insecurity in North Central, Nigeria. In recent time, North Central Nigeria has witnessed unprecedented security challenges such as communal conflicts, herder-farmer conflicts and banditry among others. These security challenges have resulted in massive loss of lives and property worth millions of naira. Therefore, the study examined how lack of broad-based national policy on grazing reserve induce rural insecurity in North Central Nigeria. The study collected data from secondary source relying on journal articles, newspapers, magazines, and books etc., observation and interview were equally deployed and data were analyzed using content analysis. The study appropriated the basic propositions emanating from social conflict theory. The paper revealed that lack of broad-based national policy on grazing reserve induce rural insecurity in North Central Nigeria. Accordingly, the study recommended a holistic national policy on grazing reserve, this will keep livestock at bay and reduce frequent clash between herdsmen and farmers.

Keywords: Governance, rural insecurity, herder-farmer conflicts, banditry, grazing reserve policy Nigeria.

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Introduction

Ideally, government as an embodiment of the State is established for the main purpose of providing security and welfare through the implementation of people-driven development policies. This is because the most fundamental need of man is security; in fact, it was in the quest for human security that man exchanged some of his rights with the State. Since then security becomes the function of the State (Ezeibe, 2010). However, the Nigerian State has failed to secure both lives and property of its citizens and other groups. Hence, various groups continue to settle differences by recourse to violence. The earliest expression of this was the outbreak of the



civil war which lasted for three years from 1967 to 1970. Again, between 1980 and 2009, more than 50 religious crises occurred in Nigeria with consequent economic and sociological implications (Abimboye, 2009 cited in Ezeibe, 2010). Since then Nigeria has continued to be rated as the most terrorized country in the world and now classified as a failing State. Meanwhile, Ikelegbe (2013), sees governance as mechanisms, processes, and institutions for determining and managing public affairs and society. More specifically, it refers to how societal problems are identified and addressed; resources extracted, allocated and utilized, it refers to how policies are made and implemented and how societal progress and development are managed ((cited in Igbinoia, 2016)..

In Nigeria however, while considerable progress has been made in the area of personal freedoms and liberties, flash points of ethnic, communal, religious, political and resource conflicts persists across most States hence, the latest manifestation of these conflicts are the formation of various ethnic militia groups in agitation for one demand or the other, thus we hear of Movement for the Emancipation of Niger Deltas (MEND) in the South-South, a group in the oil rich region who feel marginalized in the exploration of oil by the federal government therefore seeking to gain independent control of the resources (oil) within their own territory, also, Movement for the Actualization of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB) in the Southeast, a group seeking self-realization through secession, Movement for the Survival of Ogoni People (MOSOP), the Odua People's Congress (OPC) in the West, Boko Haram insurgency in the Northeast, a religious extremist that attacks government structures and institution in a desperate bid to foist their reign on the Nigerian State among others. (George-Genyi Euginia, 2013).

According to Omakoji, Mabe & Mbah (2024), rural insecurity is seen as a situation whereby a person, group of persons in the rural areas are intentionally inflicted with death, robbed, raped, kidnapped, or injured. It connotes kidnapping, banditry, killings, rapping, and robbery, among others, in the rural area. It is also concomitant with armed banditry, especially in the circumstances of a fragile State. Rural insecurity in the 21st century is beyond mere rural gangs or groups. The complexity and the capacity to compete with the authorities of weak and failing States is something not to underestimate. For instance, the attacks on government-owned structures by Boko Haram in the North East, the killings and destruction by bandits in the North West and North Central are a



vivid example. Most often, they leverage the ungoverned paces to carry out these attacks. The forested landscape, which has remained ungoverned where statehood is absent, has become a shelter for bandits who desperately seek an operational bridgehead in the area that makes it difficult and impossible for the Nigerian security forces to penetrate (Ojewale, 2023). Consequently, the study examined the nexus between governance and the challenges of rural insecurity in North Central, Nigeria and explained variables that are responsible for the rising insecurity in the region.

Policy formulation and rural insecurity

According to Mlekwa (1976), public policy is an official statement issued determining the plan of action or what the government intend to do. It is seen as the basic principles by which a government is guided. It is the declared objectives that a government or party seeks to achieve and preserve in the interest of a nation or community. It is government action or proposed action directed at achieving certain desired goals or objectives (Ikelegbe, 2006 cited in Imoh 2017). In the advent of a given societal problem, public policy guides and determines present and future public decisions as well as private individual or private business institutional actions, decisions or behaviour. Therefore, grazing reserve policy is the declared objective or action of government on areas of land demarcated, set aside and reserved for exclusive or semi-exclusive use by pastoralists. The overall objective of grazing reserves was to settle pastoralists with a view of reducing conflicts, providing access to improved fodder and social facilities, improving animal health and husbandry practices, active participation of the pastoralists in the national economy, wealth creation and increasing incomes among others (Mohammed-Baba & Mohammed, 2015).

As was seen in pre-colonial Nigeria, such sites were located near farmlands around cities and towns and utilized to graze such as to obviate damage to crops. In the formal sense, especially since their establishment by the colonial state, unsustainable 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. However, because there is no such policy in place in Benue State the result is a violent conflict between herdsmen and farmers in the rural areas because herdsmen and their cattle freely encroach and invade the farmland and damaging crops and other



community's sources of livelihood and farmers become reactive (Mohammed-Baba & Mohammed B.T, 2015).

However, because such policy were not sustained by successive military and civilian government that was in power herder-farmer conflicts has become rife. This conflict is more in North Central Nigeria because the region presents a home for pastoralism and the people are predominantly farmers. Crop destruction is the major cause of conflict between crop farmers and cattle herdsman. While crop farmers often accused the herdsman of negligence and indiscipline, the herdsman often maintained that farmers blocked their grazing routes and that it was never their intention to lead cattle into people's farms. They claim that, in some instances, a few cattle stray into farms and feed on crops without knowing, admitting that it is very difficult to control cattle especially when the grasses are tall. According to the herdsman, cattle can easily hide behind the grasses and later go into people's farms (Abubakar & Yakubu, 2014). Yakubu, (2014) did not explain how regional treaties such as ECOWAS free movement of persons and goods have intensified migration within the ECOWAS region.

Scholars and analysts have interrogated this phenomenon from a variety of analytical prisms. Exegeses of some of these contributions are germane to situate the subject matter in a sound analytical frame. According to Egwu (2015), the lack of a broad-based and holistic national policy on the development/management of grazing reserves and transhumant routes has brought herdsman and crop farmers into regular contact and friction. Different States have taken their destiny into their own hands through policy formulation and implementation in a bid to reduce the crisis, for example, in the case of Ekiti and Benue States, where an Anti-grazing Law has been enacted. The laws prohibit grazing outside designated places and times, as well as with firearms, which has been seen by the pastoralists Umbrella body Miyetti Allah Cattle Breeders Association (MACBAN) as an anti-Fulani policy, alleging that the policy has no federal backing and was targeted at making life difficult for herdsman.

Over the years, the herdsman-crop farmers' conflict has aggravated rural insecurity in North Central Nigeria. The Fulani herdsman invade farmlands during the process of trying to feed and care for their cattle during the terrible dry and rainless months of the year; they only find solace



in the green fields found in the central parts of Nigeria and down south. The major problem that arises from this decision to move their cattle to these green fields is that these pastures are also dominated by farmlands and farmers tend to become very nervous when herds of cows approach their previous sources of livelihood thus leading to frequent clashes between the Fulani herdsmen and crop-farmers. These clashes have taken on a life of their own, occurring all over the country with the use of increasingly sophisticated weapons and tactics of modern warfare by the herdsmen and indeed the host communities. The simple issue of finding feeds for cattle on one hand by the Fulani and the preservation of croplands and crops by the farming communities has spiraled into a very serious security problem in Nigeria.

The failure of the Nigerian State to deal with the transhumance challenge has exacerbated the level of insecurity experienced in the north-central zone of Nigeria, especially in Benue State. This is exemplified in the vacuum created by the lack of effective policy and legal frameworks to regulate the practice. Worrisome also is the Land Use Act of 1978 which does not provide traditional pastoralists with any legal rights over land; hence, they are still at the mercy of their host communities” (Hoffman, 2004) (cited in Okoli, 2015). 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).

In the absence of established avenues and instruments for legal redress and recompense, pastoralists often resort to taking laws into their own hands when their interests are threatened. This is in line with (Tukur, 2013), unprotected by law, and times victimized by agents of the law, some pastoralists are forced to resort to revenge missions with devastating consequences on poor rural populations. This has been the case in Benue State where the pastoralists ‘have been engaging the local communities in fierce gun battle over common disputes”. The cattle herdsmen have have violent even when crops are damaged. Odoh & Chilaka observed that, “herder-farmers conflicts become intensified during the rainless period when the animals are taken to the low



lands destroying crops beyond redemption such as vegetables cultivated in the river valleys” (Odoh & Chilaka, 2012, pp. 12-37). Therefore, herder-farmer conflicts pose a serious problem to the people and affect rural development negatively, many people in the affected communities are displaced which results in the abandonment of farms (Van, 2005). Though the herdsman practice transhumance to avoid overgrazing, the practice should be done based on the rules of engagement without hampering the other resource users.

The failure of the Nigerian State to develop grazing reserves and routes in North Central Nigeria has created a conflict situation between crop farmers and herdsman. The creation of grazing reserves has been constrained by impediments arising from land tenure and land use legal regimes (Ezeomah, 1985; Landan, 2004; Iyochia & Dura, 2014; and Ndukwe, 1987 cited in Egwu, 2016). The lack of government policy on grazing reserve poses serious conflict tendencies between herdsman and crop farmers. This is because North Central presents a favorable land for pastoralism and the people of this region are predominantly farmers. There is an increasing rise in the population of people and herds and land is inelastic so this has brought farmers and herdsman into constant friction as a result of the struggle for survival and livelihood. The colonial administration attempted to establish a grazing reserve in Northern Nigeria but the successive military and civilian governments failed to build on the initiative (Muhammed & Mohammed, 2015).

Discussion on banditry in Nigeria will not be complete without tracing it to the emergence of herder-farmer conflicts. However, the argument among scholars is that, security shares conceptual space of the people-centred approach to human development postulated by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). Central to the idea of insecurity, as espoused by the 1994 Human Development Report are first, freedom from fear intended to vindicate from violence, and freedom from want, which is intended to indicate freedom from poverty (Egwu, 2016). However, Egwu (2016) fail to interrogate how lack of modern automated security gadgets in rural areas induce rural insecurity in North Central Nigeria.

Scholars view the deteriorating security situation as governance failure. However, Ceccato & Ceccato (2017) hold that the trigger ranges between communal contestations over identity



politics, power-sharing, resource control, chieftaincy struggle, etc. this is admissible however, Ceccato & Cecacato (2017) did not identify how hunger, unemployment and the widening gap between the rich and the poor are aggravating rural banditry in North Central Nigeria.

According to Okoli, (2016) livelihood pursuits amidst the crisis of livelihood in the instance of an ever-diminishing environmental space, characterized by resource inadequacy, population explosion, and resource contestation are factors that have occasioned rural security in the region. Although these scholars only informed us on the causes of insecurity in Nigeria but failed to explain how the failure of government to moderate resources among groups induce rural insecurity in North Central, Nigeria. Meanwhile, the incidence of insecurity is invoked further in the instances of Southward expansion of the nomadic herdsmen who sees the land as common property and sees the region as conducive for their cattle, bandits see the region as "Safe haven" for robbery and kidnapping.

Scholars such as Kuna & Ibrahim (2016) identified factors which trigger rural banditry to include environmental and climate change, constant displacement of 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. However, Kuna & Ibrahim (2016) did not make a link between porous or ungoverned borders and rural banditry. Egwu (2016) attributed the underlying causes of rural banditry to a deteriorating state of human security, poverty, unemployment, the fallout of ethno-religious conflict, desperate desire for primitive accumulation of wealth, armed robbery and mental issues as well as the problem of small arms and light weapons (SALW) that have found their way into the hands of non-state actors. However, Egwu (2016) did not explain how consistent human population displacement and migration could trigger rural banditry.

Momale (2016) argues that the changing methods of animal husbandry, especially as it relates to pastoralism which involves movements of both people and livestock in search of feeds, water and grazing regions, failures of the institutional capacity of the State to tackle the problems of insecurity; joblessness and chronic problem of poverty as causes of rural banditry.



Notwithstanding this excellent line of argument, Momale (2016) failed to attribute the reason for rural banditry to greed and materialistic tendencies. Ibrahim (2014) associated the phenomena of rural banditry with the failure of the State to provide security for lives and property as well as essential services to the general populace. However, Ibrahim (2014) did not see the collapse of informal conflict resolution mechanisms. Kusa & Salihu (2016) argued that rural banditry occurs due to the availability of motivated offenders.

Nevertheless, Kusa & Salihu (2016) ignored how the chronic problem of frustration resulting from unmet needs could trigger rural banditry. Mohammed & Alimba (2016) posit that uncontrolled or poorly governed rural environments and the availability of vulnerable populace or citizens in rural areas and along the highways and roads are factors responsible for rural banditry. Nonetheless, Mohammed & Alimba (2016) fail to look at the proliferation of small arms and light weapons as a driver of rural banditry. Hobsbawm (1969 in Mohammed & Alimba, 2016) enumerated two primary conditions essential for the existence of rural banditry including social situation established by a 'traditional peasantry' and a 'pre-industrial' geographical area.

This explains why Mburu (1999) argues that societal collapse is a permanent stimulant for rural banditry in a State. Mburu (1999) also opines that the motivation for present-day rural insecurity is the pauperism of people living in an unpleasant physical environment. Sztompka (1993 in Mohammed & Alimba, 2016) asserts that rural insecurity mainly occur in periods of social conflict when accepted ways of life, rules and laws are sabotaged, governing elites are not respected, and customs are jilted. For Sztompka (1993), rural banditry has a bearing with internal dynamics of a State occasioned by social instability, poverty, politics, corruption, economic crisis, and environmental challenges that often precipitate rural banditry. Sztompka (1993) further posited that these internal dynamics directly undermine a State's security and stability, enabling a plurality of criminal activities across the State.

Meanwhile, scholars such as Olaniyan & Yahaya (2016), Suleiman (2017) and Mustapha (2019) have advanced factors responsible for the preponderance of rural insecurity such as banditry in Nigeria to include the vulnerability of the Nigerian State, weak institutions of the State, particularly the security agency and the judiciary, accessibility of total ungoverned territories,



weak leadership, porous borders, corruption, chronic poverty, unemployment, and arms proliferation. Olaniyan & Yahaya (2016) asserted that collusion of nationals, lack of sophisticated weapons, and poor motivation of the State security forces promote rural banditry in Nigeria. Okoli & Ugwu (2019) posit that the existence and preponderance of an avalanche of 'ungoverned, 'under-governed' and 'ungovernable' spaces within a territorial areas have provided a tremendous opportunity for rural criminality.

They also argued that a feasible but assailable rural economy based chiefly on animal husbandry, crop production and informal mining such as cattle, cash, and treasure, provides enormous convenient crime targets. Okoli & Ugwu (2019) further argued that the crime environment is not only a motivating factor but also enticement for criminality to thrive. For them, under this condition, crime deterrent takes flight, and all forms of marauding crime persist. Other scholars such as Blench & Dendo (2005) and Okoli & Atelhe (2014) expressed that ethno-communal hostility complicated by the faultiness of identity conflict encourages crime committal like banditry. Arguing from the perspective of criminological undercurrents of terror, McGregor (2014) and Olayoku (2014) see the predatory wanderers as offenders entirely driven by criminal intents.

Okoli & Lenshie (2018) explained that the ailing regulated livestock production has resulted in its attack by criminals, manifesting in the increased rustling leading to banditry. Akanle & Omobowale (2015) argued that the goal of integration of the people of the ECOWAS member-nations in the ECOWAS Charter, which allows for the free movement of persons, goods and services, promotes banditry in the West African sub-region. However, economic depression is linked to banditry in West Africa sub-region which Akanle & Omobowale (2015) did not make a link to. Mohammed & Abdullahi (2021) emphasized that rural insecurity in Nigeria is economically driven by the desperate desire among unemployed youths to accumulate wealth and politically motivated by the quest to intimidate and kill a person or group of persons for political and ideological reasons. Thus, the views put forward by Mohammed & Abdullahi (2021) is admissible however, they fail to make a link to how political elites sponsor banditry to achieve to political ends. Abdulrahman (2020) maintains that the weak capacity of the State, poverty, unemployment and failure of leadership drive rural insecurity in Nigeria. However,



Abdulrahman (2020) did not look at the ECOWAS protocol on the free movement of persons, goods and services as a contributory factor to explaining rural banditry in the West African region.

Theoretical Framework

This study adopts the proposition from social conflict theory. The theory sees social life as a competition and focuses on the distribution of resources and power which are not evenly endowed by nature. Proponents of this theory view society as a gathering of people of diverse needs and interests with limited resources to meet their needs. This creates inequality that generates social conflict and social change. Karl Marx is considered the father of social conflict theory. Social conflict theory basically looks at struggles for power and control in society as a major causal factor of conflict. Conflict occurs when two or more actors oppose each other in social interaction, reciprocally exerting social powers in an effort to attain scarce or incompatible goals and prevent the opponent from attaining them. The quest for dominance and power becomes the currency rather than consensus. Based on this premise, governments at local, state and federal levels have not been able to address the contending issues between herdsmen and farmers or assist them in reaching some consensus. The major proponents of this theory include: Max (1818-1883); Weber (1864-1920); among others (Nte, 2016). Hornby (1995); Odoh-Alan (2012); and Sears (2008) Conflict approach is one of the major theoretical approach in sociological thought. In general, the conflict perspective assumes that social life is shaped by groups and individuals who struggle or compete with one another over various resources and rewards. It draws attention to power differentials, such as class conflict and generally contrast historically dominant, ideologies, it is therefore a macro level analysis of society. Karl Marx is the father of the social conflict theory, which is a component of the four paradigms of sociology. Certain conflict theories set out to highlight the ideological aspects inherent on traditional thought (cited in Nte, 2016).

According to Nte (2016) this theory claims that society is in a state of perpetual conflict due to competition for limited resources. It holds that social order is maintained by domination and power, rather than consensus and conformity. Conflict theory has been used to explain a wide range of social phenomenon, including wars and revolution, wealth and poverty, discrimination



and domestic violence. It ascribes most of the fundamental developments in human history, such as democracy and the coin/rights to capitalistic attempts to control the masses rather than to a desire for social order. The theory revolves around concepts of social inequality on the discussion of resource and focuses on the conflict that exist between classes. The traditional definition of conflict is struggle over values and scarce resources in which the aim of the opponent is to neutralize, injure, or eliminate their rival Coser (1995).

In interfacing the theory to our subject, it becomes imperative to appreciate that the persistence in herder-farmer conflicts, the movement of herdsmen and subsequent clashes with farmers and host communities lead to insecurity in Nigeria, particularly in the North Central region and by extension in other parts of the country. The driving force of the clashes is the competition for scarce resources, especially grazing land. For instance, the grazing law enacted by the Benue and Ekiti States has execrated the herder-farmer conflicts in the region this is because it lacks national outlook and backing to operate effectively, this has intensified conflicts among resources users.

Methodology

The study was carried out in North Central Nigeria. Nigeria is situated in the West Africa sub-region. It is believed to be the largest and the most populated nation in the sub-Saharan Africa with over 200 million people. It is a multi-ethnic, multi-lingual, multi-cultural and multi-religious society. Most of its people live in rural areas and the major occupation of the people in the rural areas is farming. The country is divided into six geopolitical zones. They are North East, North West, North Central, South-South, South East and South West. The North Central Nigeria comprised of six States including FCT Abuja they States are Plateau, Nasarawa, Niger, Kogi Benue and Kwara States.

The study adopted a qualitative approach through a rapid review of available national, policy documents, reports of international development agencies, and other secondary literature on security in Nigeria. The respondents were the major stakeholders in security sector including village heads, kidnap victims, leaders of communities and security agents in the region including Benue, Plateau, Nasarawa, and Kogi States, where rural insecurity has been most predominant.



The FGD were conducted in the most conflict-affected local governments within the study area. Each of the FGD comprised 5–11 persons. Hence, there were a total of 104 participants in the FGD. The FGDs were adopted to glean information on how lack of broad-based national policy on grazing reserve induce rural insecurity in North Central, Nigeria. Data were collected between April and December, 2022. Data were analysed using content analysis. The final manuscript was subjected to check by the co-authors in order to improve the credibility and validity of qualitative interpretations

Findings and Discussions

After a thorough examination of the data generated from rough interviews to determine how the lack of modern automated security technologies accounts for rural insecurity in North Central, Nigeria, and all evidence shows that over 80% of responses categorically show the lack of broad-based national policy on grazing reserve induce rural insecurity in North Central, Nigeria. Let us therefore examine how the lack of government policy on grazing reserves triggers rural insecurity in North Central Nigeria using a combination of the variables of the result:

- Lack of policy on the development and management of cattle ranches.
- Lack of policy on designated pastoralist transhumance routes.
- Improper implementation of ECOWAS free movement protocol

First, in many countries, open grazing is no longer acceptable that is why the ranching system has been properly implemented in such countries and that has gone a long way in ameliorating the herdsmen-farmers conflict. When adequate ranching is provided it keeps the animals in a settled place where they are fending for. A ranch is an area of land, including various structures, given primarily to the practice of ranching, the practice of raising grazing livestock such as cattle or sheep for meat or wool. The word most often applies to livestock-raising operations in Mexico, the Western United States and Canada, though there are ranches in other areas. People who own or operate a ranch are called ranchers, cattlemen, or stock growers. Ranching is also a method used to raise less common livestock such as elk, American bison or even ostrich, emu, and alpaca. Ranches generally consist of large areas but may be of nearly any size.



Fulani herdsmen pursue survival in regions where land is contested; due to a lack of policy on grazing reserve and designated routes for free passage of cattle. The Fulanis' way of life is becoming increasingly difficult or nearly impossible for lack of access to land in the face of degrading grazing resources, conflicts arise as a result of farm encroachment and lack of policy support to protect grazing routes." Fulani herdsmen have indicated that conflict arising from land use is the most important problem that they encounter as pastoralists, and land rights and tenure lie at the heart of this problem. Insecure land tenure impedes fair resource management -- which could lead to conflict." The issue of land tenure about pastoralists revolves around the fundamental differences in ideas of land ownership; private ownership of land is something foreign to the pastoralist society and has "been serious and catastrophic on pastoralist societies" due to restriction of movement throughout the country.

The survivalist worldview of the nomadic Fulani is explicit in the following statement (cited in Okoli & Chukwuma (2015, p. 401) "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 fields and routes by farmers is a call to war (Abbass, 2010 cited in Okoli & Chukwuma, 2015). Our interactions with one of the herdsmen in Benue State in Gwer-west local government, we were told that the major issue is "that land reserved for our cattle to feast has been taken over by farmers... It has become difficult for our herds to move and graze without veering into crop fields On the part of the farmers, the complaints are similar. One farmer from Nasawa State had this to say: "In the past, the migration used to be more in the middle of the dry season and after harvest but nowadays it is throughout the year. Worst of all during planting season, they (Fulani herdsmen) walk on seeds planted, and in most cases, a lot of the seeds fail to germinate. This has caused a huge loss to us. The damage is usually the cause of our conflicts with the Fulani herdsmen. It is a yearly battle between us."

Secondly, the absence of designated transhumance routes for the free movement of herders is yet another major source of conflict and insecurity as herders move with their cattle; they are often involved in violent confrontations with farmers. In the words of a herder interviewed:



...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.

There have been violent confrontations by the Fulani herdsmen in their host communities which have been occasioned by the destruction of farm crops and spread of diseases by the cattle in the rural areas wildshoot killings and frequent clashes between Fulani herdsmen and farmers. This has been attributed to the lack of designated transhumance routes. The traditional grazing routes have disappeared due to farming expansion and so when the Fulani herdsmen migrate, their cattle wander into farmlands destroying farm crops and leading to violent confrontations in the rural areas. Between the years 2010 and 2016, there have been reported cases of violent confrontation between the Fulani herdsmen and the indigenes of the areas they migrate to. It is an indisputable fact that livestock mobility maximizes livestock production because livestock is moved from areas of scarcity to areas of abundance by so doing, they feed fat and become robust, however, herd mobility has caused more harm than good to the environment this is because they move they defecate on road, spread cattle related diseases and block traffic causing delays and even accident on our high ways.

Lastly, on the ECOWAS transhumant movement protocol, the objectives of the protocol have been abused by some unscrupulous elements who paraded as herdsmen due to a lack of proper monitoring of movement at the borders which continues to engender cross-border crime and instability in the sub-region, illegal weapons and contraband goods continue to flood the sub-region daily. Former vice president Prof. Yemi Osibanjo had established a link between the protocol and the spate of killings by herdsmen, suggesting that Nigeria might opt for a review. Former Governor of Benue State Governor Samuel Orthom, who's State has witnessed massive massacres by the herders, also corroborated the view noting that the pact was undermining internal security (Accessed 23 September, 2018 from <http://www.guadiannewspaper.com>)

**Table 1: January 2018, Regional Data Map (Herdsmen attacks)**

Region	Attacks	Deaths	Percentage
North Central	36	233	64%
North East	9	101	27.7%
North West	5	27	7.5%
South-South	3	5	1.5%
Total	54	366	100%

Source: Adopted from CDD, Abuja Conflict Mapping Database, (2018).

The above table shows the distribution of herdsmen attacks in Nigeria by region. The figures indicate that North Central has the highest number of attacks 36 and death casualties of 233 (64%) within the period followed by North East having 9 attacks and 101 deaths (27.7%). North West 5 attacks and 27 deaths (7.5%) South-South has 3 attacks with 5 deaths (1.5%) respectively.

Conclusion/Recommendations

The study revealed that lack of broad-based national policy on grazing reserve induce rural insecurity in North Central, Nigeria. It expressed that the inability of the Nigerian State to formulate grazing reserve policy did not only arise from its inefficiencies in terms of capacity as it where rather lack of political will to do so. Insight from the above, the insecurity in the country has become rife because the security personnel appear overwhelmed and incapable in terms of penetrating the community and rural areas. This provided criminals especially bandits and kidnapers leverage to continually cause mayhem in the country. The criminals most often use the ungoverned spaces to commit crime and evade arrest. The study therefore held that the level of security of lives and property in North Central has deteriorated in recent due to unhealthy rivalry between herdsmen and farmers. The study therefore recommended a holistic national policy on grazing reserve, this will allocate land for livestock rearing and demarcate livestock production from farming activities and this will reduce constant clash between herdsmen and farmers in the rural areas.



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