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**DEBATING POLICY OPTIONS FOR
NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

**EVERYWHERE AS GRAZING
LAND: INTERROGATING THE
PASTORALIST QUESTION IN
NIGERIA**



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EVERYWHERE AS GRAZING LAND: INTERROGATING THE PASTORALIST QUESTION IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

Transhumance pastoralism has been a long practice in Nigeria. It involves the movement of herders with their herds from one location to the other in search of pastures and water. In the course of the movements, herders have increasingly been coming into contact with sedentary farmers. Such encounters have largely been acrimonious with tales of destruction and killings on daily basis. And this has continually affected orderliness and peaceful coexistence of people in the country. Perhaps, the most pressing problem in the country in the recent time is how to address the pastoralist issue. Due to the rampancy and the spread of the conflicts associated with the pastoralists, this study situates the pastoralists issue within the context of national question in Nigeria. The study argues that the frequent grazing conflicts have often been interpreted with the coloration of ethnic, regional and religious sentiments; and the foundations upon which the ethno-religious interpretations are erected are faulty. As an alternative to the faulty interpretation, this study locates reasons for migration and recourse to violence in unrestrained grazing practice, state failure, presence of small arms and light weapons, poor understanding of the problem at hand and lack of political will on the part of government to tackle the incidents. It therefore makes policy suggestions on how to address the pastoralist question in the country.

Introduction

This is my first time across the Niger to the East. I am glad I am in this fascinating area of our country for the first time for intellectual engagement. I am an unrepentant optimist when it comes to the African situation. I am well convinced the solutions to the myriad problems confronting the continent will be found through the powers of the brain with which we are popularly and prodigiously blessed. It has been said that answers to all problems are lodged inside the pages of books. Thus, for us to move out of the quagmire we have found ourselves, Africa must turn to its intellectuals not only in the Ivory Towers, but equally in the corporate world and Public Service. I must therefore express my gratitude to and commend the forces behind this Institute for their service to humanity. I should as well thank the organizers for the invitation extended to me to be here. I feel as much honored as favored to be in the midst of such great personalities as we have gathered here now to share my thoughts on a very burning issue, one that crisscrosses the realms of politics, economics, environment, security and the continued survival of our country as a corporate entity.

I have in consequence segmented the thoughts I intend sharing with us into five compartments or sections. The first, the Introduction, situates the problem and what I have set out to do. In the second compartment, I try to correct some misconceptions. The next seeks to engage in a theoretical argument, situating the hard, even if somewhat tormenting discourse, in the realm of theory to enable us position the entire effort within relevant

socio-political theories. In the fourth part, I examine the consequences of free grazing on the larger society. The final section tries to make some policy suggestions and draw conclusions.

Before and Now

When I was growing up in the village, cattle herders were common features. They were usually decked in their traditional hats, roaming freely about our area with big-headed sticks. Cases of farmland destructions were quite unknown. We never heard of killer herdsmen. In our house then, our father would buy calves from the herdsmen and then entrust them (the calves) in their (the herdsmen's) care. I can recollect vividly that at times the herdsmen would go for a long time, sometimes up to a year, and then suddenly resurface again with grown up cows. I noticed the trust between their camp and my own; the coexistence and the love. There were then several cases of settlements by herdsmen in different communities across the southern parts of our area. But nowadays, the story is different. The peaceful coexistence of yore has given way to antagonism and deep-seated mistrust, destructions, killings and deaths. Isaac Asabor shares similar experience:

One could recall with nostalgia how Fulani Herdsmen were almost inspiring the children in the 70s that children were wont to playfully imitate them by herding goats with long sticks in their hands amidst the scream “Kai, Kai, Kai” at the herd of goats. Also, the “Abokis” as they were then called, were very friendly. Even the ones that usually come to our

village's 4-day interval market to buy various food items always rent a room and stay in the village for some days before going back to the north. They were friendly even with their passable English. However, at a point, still in the 70s, children began to dread them by derogatorily calling them "Ogudada". For the sake of clarity, "Ogudada" simply means ritual killer. But the mutual suspicion did not result to any conflict as much as I can recall. Then, when called Ogudada they would jovially respond with the same derogatory word in a retaliatory manner. If I may ask, how come are the Fulani Herdsmen no more friendly and no more value the lives of the people that have been hosting them and their Cattles for ages? ... There is no more love lost between the farmers or better still the rural dwellers and the Abokis. Where did we get it wrong?¹

I can make out four major facts in the foregoing. One, there was a time we had free, unfettered grazing everywhere. Two, the grazers were not indigenous to the areas where they grazed their cattle. Three, there was cordial interaction between the itinerant grazers and the locals. Four and finally, the relationships are no longer smooth and cordial. We can then say that the contemporary specter of farmer-herdsmen clashes is a case of

¹ Isaac Asabor (2016): "Has human live become as cheap as cattle?", *The Nigerian Observer* August 13, online: <http://www.nigerianobservernews.com/2016/08/has-human-life-become-as-cheap-as-a-cattle/> (09 September 2016).

transformation of relationships from cordial to adversarial, and as reports indicate, the consequences have been catastrophic in the number of human and material fatalities. Report by the Institute for Economics & Peace Global Terrorism Index 2015 indicate disturbing rise in the number of killings linked to grazing conflicts in Nigeria. While the number of casualties stood at 80 in farming communities across the country between 2010 and 2013, the number rose to 1,229 in 2014. Since 2015, there has been a further rise both in number of occurrences of the conflicts and human and material loses.

In recent times, grim images and reports of herdsmen on killing expeditions are rife. Farmers are hacked to death in bizarre manners and their farmlands destroyed. Women are raped, sometimes in the presence of their husbands and children. Communities are razed down in an orgy of bestiality, as perhaps never witnessed before. Villagers live in constant fears of possible attacks in the hands of herdsmen, while motorists plying roads across the country equally fear likelihood of similar attacks. In a way, people live in constant fear and mere sight of someone with a flock of cattle immediately sends signals that death might be near! Herdsmen equally narrate tales of woe and losses. But the fact, according to findings, is that they (the herdsmen) are often the aggressors/the offenders in cases involving them and communities where they graze their cattle! The reports of killings and destructions by the herdsmen have remained frightening as ever. Let me cite few instances: On April 20, 2016, herdsmen attacked five communities in Lagelu Local Government Area of Oyo State and a number of people were killed in the process. In the recent time, Enugu State seems

to be the hardest hit and virtually all the 482 communities in the state have practically been under siege of suspected herdsmen. On Monday, April 25, 2016, armed herdsmen attacked Ukpabi Nimbo community of Enugu State killing over 50 people that are mostly farmers². To me the highpoint of the cruelty was the killing of Tamgbo Ogueji, an 85-year old farmer in Eke community, Udi Local Government Area of Enugu State by people suspected to be herdsmen³. On January 20, 2016, Okozie Okereofor, the Divisional Police Officer, in charge of Vunokilang Police Station in Girei Local Government Area of Adamawa State was killed alongside 30 other people in an attack by suspected herdsmen who were said to be on revenge mission. The herders were reported to have raided and set ablaze four villages of Demsare, Wunamokoh, Dikajam and Taboungo in the process⁴.

Agatu people of Benue State have sad tales to tell. Between January and February 2016, the United Nations High Commission on Refugees (UNHCR) reported the death of over 300 people and the displacement of an estimated 7000 people during clashes between herders and Agatu

² Jamiu Esho (2016): "Killer herdsmen and Nigeria Existence", *The Punch*, 12 May, online: <http://punchng.com/killer-herdsmen-nigerias-existence/> 11 September 2016

³ Emmanuel Uzodinma (2015): "Tension in Enugu community as herdsmen killed 85 year old man", *Daily Post*, 20 March, online: <http://dailypost.ng/2015/03/20/tension-in-enugu-community-as-herdsmen-kill-85-year-old-man/> on 13 September, 2016

⁴ *Premium Times* (2016): "How I plan to end Fulani herdsmen, farmers clashes", 25 January, online: <http://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/headlines/197340-how-i-plan-to-end-fulani-herdsmen-farmers-clashes-buhari.html> on 12 September, 2016

farmers in Okokolo, Akwu, Adagbo and Aila communities of Benue State⁵. Zamfara State has its own share of the violence. On 4 February, 2016, a gang of bandits identified by the Police to be herdsmen stormed Kwanar Dutse community under Maru Local Government Area in a night raid and by day break 50 corpses were counted⁶. On 4 March, it was the turn of two villages of Madada and Ruwan Tofa to be visited and at the end of the bloody visitation, seven people had been murdered. Few days later, on 19 March, another gang invaded Faleko village and killed nine people. On 1st December, 2015, herdsmen invaded Polalido-Kandilan village in Billiri local government area of Gombe State; killed one person and burnt 40 houses⁷. Oke-Ako community in Ikole Local Government Area of Ekiti State suffered similar fate when people suspected to be herdsmen invaded and killed two people on 21 May 2016⁸. The *Eagles Newspaper* reported

⁵ Leo Dobbs (2016): "UNHCR urges dialogue to end herder, farmer clashes in Nigeria". Retrieved from <http://www.unhcr.org/news/latest/2016/5/572ca8af6/unhcr-urges-dialogue-end-herder-farmer-clashes-nigeria.html> on 12 September, 2016. See also Peter Duru (2016): "7000 persons displaced in Fulani herdsmen, Agatu farmers' clashes in Benue", *Vanguard*, 29 February, online: <http://www.vanguardngr.com/2016/02/7000-persons-displaced-in-fulani-herdsmen-agatu-farmers-clash-in-benue/>

⁶ *Breaking News* (2016): "Fulani herdsmen kill 50 in Maru LGA, Zamfara", 09 February, online: <http://www.thebreakingtimes.com/fulani-herdsmen-kill-50-in-maru-lga-zamfara-state/> 12 September 2016

⁷ Ali Galadima (2016): "Fulani herdsmen attack Gombe village, kill 1, burn 40 houses", *Leadership*, 2 December, online: <http://leadership.ng/news/479880/fulani-herdsmen-attack-gombe-village-kill-1-burn-40-houses> 12 September 2016

⁸ Odunayo Ogunmola (2016): "Two killed as herdsmen invaded Ekiti community", *The Nation*, 22 May, online: <http://thenationonlineng.net/fulani-herdsmen-kill-two-ekiti-community/> on 12 September 2016.

the killing of 90 people by herdsmen in four communities of Mararabar Maigora, Kura Mota, Unguwar Rimi communities of Katsina State⁹. On Friday September 10, about 3000 women farmers in Ishiagu, Ebonyi state staged a protest against the wanton destruction of their farms by herders¹⁰. On July 20, 2016, the assassination of Lazarus Agai, the paramount ruler of Bokkos community in Plateau State alongside his son, daughter-in-law, and a Police aide was blamed on Fulani herdsmen, which immediately sparked an unrest that resulted in the burning of Fokkos, Danan and Kwatas Fulani settlements¹¹.

A lesser known fact is also that the herdsmen have consistently come under severe attacks from the rustlers who seem better armed and better organized. Reports of bandits with automatic weapons storming herdsmen's settlements and farms with the mission to kill and pillage cows are rife. According to Ahmadu Suleiman, chairman of the Kaduna State chapter of the Miyetti Allah Cattle Breeders Association of Nigeria, between October 2013 and March 2014 about seven thousand cattle were rustled from both

⁹ Segun Adewale (2016): "Fulani herdsmen kill 90 in Katsina", online: <http://theeagleonline.com.ng/fulani-herdsmen-kill-90-katsina/> on 12 September 2016

¹⁰ *Premium Times* (2016): "3000 women farmers protest against herders", 10 September, online: <http://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/more-news/210189-3000-women-farmers-protest-herdsmen.html> 11 September 2016

¹¹ Hir Joseph & Lami Sadiq (2016): "Plateau monarch killing sparks unrest", *Daily Trust*, 20 July, online: <http://www.dailytrust.com.ng/news/general/plateau-monarch-s-killing-sparks-violence/156105.html> on 14 September 2016

commercial livestock farms and traditional herders in northern Nigeria¹². In most cases, the rustlers not only kill and maim the herders, they equally rape their women before dispossessing them of their cows¹³, and in some instances, even kidnap innocent girls or women in the process. The Special Task Force (STF) set up by the Nigerian security forces in response to the security challenges in Jos, Plateau state, for instance, confirmed that within a period of six months, 160 attacks by gunmen resulted in 2,501 cows being rustled and 260 herders lost their lives in the process¹⁴. In most cases, the rustlers wore military camouflaged uniform, and showed considerable experience in herding; and in some other instances cattle were ‘kidnapped’ with the rustlers asking for money afterwards¹⁵. Virtually all the states in the northern region are affected by this menace.

¹² Misbahu Bashir (2014): “Hopes for an end to cattle theft”, *Daily Trust*, September 4. Retrieved from <http://www.dailytrust.com.ng/daily/feature/33468-hopes-for-an-end-to-cattle-theft> on 21 February, 2016.

¹³ Tony Akowe and Kayode Bodunrin (2014), Cattle rustling: A northern nightmare, in: *The Nation*, 30 March, online: <http://thenationonlineng.net/cattle-rustling-northern-nightmare/> (30 August 2016)

¹⁴ Taiwo Adeniyi (2015): “Why incoming FCT Minister must act fast on cattle rustling”, *Daily Trust*, 1 July, online: <http://www.dailytrust.com.ng/daily/index.php/city-news/58662-why-incoming-fct-administration-must-act-fast-on-cattle-rustling> (29 August 2016)

¹⁵ Taiwo Adeniyi (2015): “Why incoming FCT Minister must act fast on cattle rustling”, *Daily Trust*, 1 July, online: <http://www.dailytrust.com.ng/daily/index.php/city-news/58662-why-incoming-fct-administration-must-act-fast-on-cattle-rustling> (29 August 2016)

What we deduced from the foregoing is that the conflicts related to grazing and cattle are neither ethnic-bound nor region-specific. They have been a pan-Nigerian phenomenon. However, the issue has assumed an identity-based problem and the killings interpreted in ethno-religious terms. Even the term ‘killer herdsmen’ have been coined to capture the situation. Specifically, the rampancy and national spread of the crisis make it eligible to be listed as a national question in Nigeria.

But let me make a little digression. The concept of ‘killer herdsmen’, in a way, presents a troubling historical and spiritual contradiction. Herders are not supposed to be human hunters. Tenders of animals have historically been known to be leaders of men or intercessors for men. Thus, Abraham, Moses, Lot, Noah, Jesus, Prophet Mohammed, and all the numerous prophets mentioned in the Holy Books were either entirely in their live times or at some points in their lives herders. The Holy Books, and indeed historical records, show clearly that human beings, at the beginning, lived entirely either as tenders of land or animals. Of the two, tenders of animals often feature more prominently in discourses related to leadership. Thus, Moses, David, Solomon, Amos, who were leaders of their time, as recorded in the Holy Writs, belonged to the class of animal tenders. And they were great leaders too. So, herders are supposed to be human tenders,

not destroyers! But, Roger Blench¹⁶ reminded us how Cain (the herder) slew Abel (the farmer), and how the desire to keep marauding herders at bay partly forced the Chinese Emperors to build the Great Wall. What we also get from historical records is that herding is a profession that is as old as humanity. But, most of humanity have moved beyond the profession to the extent that only a handful of people are today still engaged in it; and we have them all over the world. Humans have remained inescapably connected to cattle, not only as a major source of protein for nourishment, but also for cultural, traditional and religious purposes.

In Nigeria, cattle play crucial role both for business and ceremonial purposes. The country is said to have an estimated 19.7 million cattle and the highest consumers of meat in West Africa, with Lagos regarded as having the largest livestock meat market in the sub continent¹⁷. Studies show that transhumance pastoralists are responsible for large percentage of cattle supply and therefore play major a role in the chain. We can create a scenario here: we need meat for nourishment and for ceremonies. Herders provide bulk of the cattle for the meat supply. For them to make the cattle available all the time, they have to take them around; feeding them freely

¹⁶ Roger Blench (1995): *The transformation of conflicts between pastoralists and cultivators in Nigeria*, London: Malam Dendo

¹⁷ Jinaidu Maina (2016): "Pastoralism in Nigeria", *Daily Trust*, 3rd May, online: <http://www.dailytrust.com.ng/news/tuesday-column/pastoralism-in-nigeria/145039.html> on 11 September 2016

across communities. But in the process they encounter people, mostly farmers, who are the owners of the land and whose source of livelihood is to till the land and plant edible crops. On several occasions, the encounters have been bloody. There then is a problem of national significance. We must therefore start talking about the pastoralist question within the ambit of the generic national question in Nigeria.

The national question has to do with the manner of engagement of relationships among groups of people living in a state, in their bid to find solutions to socio-political and economic problems they are confronted with. Since no country is ever free of such problems, national question is always multi-pronged, complex and ever shifting. It always warrants a continuous dialogue since the resolution of one issue usually leads to another. Whether a country is able to resolve its national problems as they emerge is often contingent on several factors that have to do with ideological orientations of the dominant elites, the political system, socio-cultural forces, as well as the political culture of the citizens.

Given the importance of the pastoralists to the society, the recurring specter of violence associated with the practice in recent times, and the near national spread of the predicament, I admit there is what we can call the pastoralist question. It is evidently part of the problems with the Nigerian state that has to be interrogated.

The first step in interrogating the pastoralist question as a national question is to know who the pastoralists are. Studies show that there are about 14

ethnic groups in Nigeria that are involved in pastoralism. Out of these, however, the Fulani accounts for over 90% of available herds in the country¹⁸ to the extent that when we talk of pastoralism in Nigeria, the group that readily comes to mind is the Fulani. It is the Fulani group that has expanded its herding activities beyond their natural abode, far more than other pastoral groups like Shuwa and Koiyam that have largely remained ensconced in their territories¹⁹. Again, the trajectory of Fulani pastoralists in Nigeria is historically rooted in competition for access to land and resources, making it quite distinct from what obtains in other African countries, as well as quite problematic²⁰. From a socio-political understanding of the Nigerian state, the issue of violent herders became rather emotive because Fulani ethnic group is at the center. To this extent, we can capture the discourse as the Fulani pastoralist question in Nigeria. The Fulani pastoralists are of two major hues: the transhumance and the agro-pastoralists. Transhumance is the technical word for the nomads that move their herds from one place to the other in search of green pastures. These are the ones that we can say make everywhere a grazing land, so to say. The agro-pastoralists are the *sedentarized* cattle breeders. However, in respect of the nomadic type, to which much of the violence is attributed

¹⁸Heko Koster and John de Wolff (2012): *Dairy Development Programme in Nigeria - Baseline Report: Key Findings and Recommendations*, Alabama: IFRC

¹⁹ Roger Blench (1995): *The transformation of conflicts between pastoralists and cultivators in Nigeria*, London: Malam Dendo

²⁰ Roger Blench (1995): *The transformation of conflicts between pastoralists and cultivators in Nigeria*, London: Malam Dendo

and which warrants national interrogation, there are some misconceptions that need to be dismantled and clarified.

Correcting some misconceptions

The first misconception is to say that the herders represent ethnic, regional and religious interests. The popular representations of the crisis border on ethnic or religious interpretation. They also reflect the north-south fault lines; making it into a case of north versus south. The most recent example is the reaction that followed the abduction of Chief Olu Falae in his farm. Following the abduction, Afenifere, a Yoruba Cultural Group, issued a statement that reflected ethnic sentiments:

We have in the interest of the stability of the country refrained from making strong statements that could incite our people hoping these criminals would see reason and let him go. We do not imagine that some Yoruba traders would go and abduct Maitama Sule or Adamu Chiroma in the North and there won't be a festival of blood on the streets within hours. We therefore call on the leaders of the north to reach out to these herdsmen to release Chief Falae immediately. Nobody can predict the consequences IF anything untoward happening (sic) to Chief Falae in the custody of the herdsmen. WE HAVE WARNED!"²¹

²¹ *National Accord* (2015): "Buhari condemns Olu Falae's abduction, as Afenifere issues warning to northerners", 23 September, online:

<http://nationalaccordnewspaper.com/2015/09/buhari-condemns-olu-falae-abduction-as-afenifere-issues-warning-to-northerners/> 6 September 2016

Few days later, Yoruba Council of Elders had an emergency meeting at Ibadan on the matter and issued a more historically-nuanced communiqué and warning. It reads in part:

From the 18th century, the Fulani jihadists' onslaught against the Yoruba through the travails of Chief Obafemi Awolowo through the June 12 saga with the latest wars declared on our people, we have always risen above board as we strive to make our neighbours see the need to deal justly and fairly not because we are cowards but because God created us to fight only as a last resort...The return of the herdsmen is a declaration of war on the Yoruba, Falae's abduction is a continuation of attacks which these herdsmen have unleashed on our people over the years²².

The Yoruba elders went further to threaten secession if the Fulani herders did not move out of Yoruba land. These responses gave insinuation of tacit support of northern elders to the abduction of the Chief and that herders are on religious mission. Nothing could be further from the truth. When Chief Falae's abductors were arrested, their confessional statements indicated a case of robbery²³. When we further discovered that similar

²² Kemi Olaitan (2015): "Yoruba leaders threaten secession over Falae's abduction", *National Mirror*, 09 October, online: <http://nationalmirroronline.net/new/yoruba-leaders-threaten-secession-over-falae-kidnap/> on 13 September 2016

²³ See: *Sahara Reporters* (2015): "We kidnapped Falae to get money celebrate Salah", 12 October, online: <http://saharareporters.com/2015/10/12/%E2%80%98we-kidnapped-falae-get-money-celebrate-alah%E2%80%99-suspects> on 13 September 2016. See also Oluwole Josiah (2015): "How I was abducted, tortured and released - Falae", *Premium Times*, 28 September, online:

cases of abductions and killings took place in several locations in the same north, it became obvious that the issue at hand is indeed a national problem that requires better understanding and articulation. Therefore, to reduce it to regional, ethnic or religious matter by ethnic entrepreneurs reflects the situation of our country. At any rate, cattle herding is a form of occupation and an economic activity pursued by some people. The fact that they belong to a particular ethnic group or share same religious belief does not make them representatives of millions of other co-ethnics that do not engage in that line of commercial activity. Not all Fulani are herders.

The second one is to assume that all acts of violence are perpetrated by herders. Have we forgotten that some criminal elements could hide under the premise and perpetrate violence? Here I want to align with Leena Hoffman on the possibility of some groups or persons “exploiting the context of insecurity and instability to strengthen their position”²⁴

Third is that we often assume that all Fulani herders are from Northern Nigeria. This is an assumption that is not grounded in contemporary pastoral practice. Some studies have established the presence of several non-Nigerians among the herders. Even if most of the herders speak Hausa

<http://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/headlines/190728-how-i-was-abducted-tortured-released-olu-falae.html> 9 September, 2016.

²⁴ See Conor Gaffey (2016): “Nigeria’s herdsmen and farmers are locked in a deadly, forgotten conflict”, *Newsweek*, 4 August, online: <http://europe.newsweek.com/nigerias-herdsmen-and-farmers-are-locked-deadly-underreported-conflict-450293?rm=eu> 12 September 2016

language, we should know that the language is not restricted to the northern region of the country. With the ECOWAS Protocol on Transhumance, herders move across boundaries.

Four, we tend to see herders as inherently evil people. This is obviously borne out of bitter experiences in the hands of some of them. The evilness of some of them should not preclude us from examining some of the positive things they have done, particularly in the fact that they contribute to food security. The fact is that not all herders are violent.

The dismantling of what I call misrepresentations does not absolve the herders involved in the violence being perpetrated. There have been several arrests and reports to establish the facts of their involvement. However, the problem looks more of case of criminality. The level of criminality is aided by the unrestrained free grazing that has been adopted. Obviously, what is more of criminality and sometimes disputes over access to resources have been framed in religious and political terms²⁵. The question of criminality is complicated by state failure as evidenced in the inability of the security forces to rise up to myriad of security challenges facing the state. In essence, the herders move their cattle around without the presence of security surveillance. In the absence of such security cover, both the herders and the public are at risks. More often than not, they resort to self help.

²⁵ Roger Blench

This raises another question: why do herders roam about? A fuller explanation of this question will have to be situated within the context of political economy of pastoralism in the Nigerian state, which will be partly explained in the historical and theoretical analysis that follows.

Transformation of Transhumance in Nigeria: Historical and theoretical explorations

Extant literature on pastoralism in Nigeria shows clearly that seasonal migration of livestock by herders in search of green pasture for their livestock is as old as the herding business. However, the southward migration of herds gradually crept into the equation not quite long ago. Historical records show that the Fulani ethnic group inhabits a vast area of the semi-arid zone of Western and Central Africa, stretching from Senegal to Ethiopia and from the Sahel to the Sudan zone²⁶. The migration of the Fulani to northern Nigeria dates back to the 12th century. Scientists made us to understand that the savannah climatic zone is the most conducive area for cattle grazing, stemming from the abundance of grass and absence of tsetse fly at some point in time. Therefore, for a long time, what we can call free movement of grazers was taking place between the Sahel and Savannah ecological zones. However, in relation to northern and southern Nigeria, a velvet climatic demarcation had made it quite difficult for the

²⁶ Mirjam de Bruijn, Kiky van Oostrum, Oka Obono, Amadou Oumarou Dodo Boureima (2011): "New mobilities and insecurities in Fulbe nomadic societies: A multi-country study in West-Central Africa (Niger-Nigeria)" ASC Working Paper 96 / 2011, Leiden: The Netherlands

herders to traverse. Eventually, the demarcation could not hold for ever and so by the 1950s, the southern penetration began. Quite a number of reasons have been adduced for the eventual possibility of the penetration to happen. The most recent is that of climate change. Proponents of climate change have located the migration of herders away from the traditional grazing zone in the growing harshness of the northern region of the country, consequent on climate change. A major manifestation of the climate change was the Great Drought of the early 1970s, which resulted in severe rainfall shortage. The severe rainfall deficit had spiral effects on the availability of grass for livestock for a long time, and the memory still lingers with the herders. Not only that, there was serious alteration of the rainfall regimen in the region ever since. The consequence has been increasing dryness and scorching heat that have turned several parts of the region into fast growing arid environment, resulting in massive depletion of the amount of water, flora and fauna resources on the land. One of the manifestations is the drying-up of Lake Chad since the last 50 years to the extent that the once huge body of water has shrank by over 90% from its erstwhile size of 25,000 square kilometers to less than 2,500 square kilometers. The effect on herdsman has been catastrophic. It has triggered the displacement of over 60 million herds and affecting nearly 30 million people²⁷. The major consequence of this development is a forced migration

²⁷ See *Kapital FM* (2016): “Resolving the farmer-herder conflicts”, retrieved from <http://www.kapital929.fm/resolving-the-farmer-herdsmen-conflict-by-chidi-odinkalu-and-mohammed-bello-tukur/> on 14 September 2016

of cattle herders of the region to the lush wetter parts towards the south, in desperate search for grazing spaces.

Roger Blench²⁸ however offered a different position. To him, the factors are located in what can be captured as three revolutions: Veterinary Revolution, Demographic Revolution, and Economic Revolution. The development of *trypanocides* in the 1950s represents a major revolution in veterinary medicine and livestock development/ management. The development led to improved animal husbandry that saw tremendous increase in the number of cattle, which later proved to be more than what the local markets could absorb. There then arose the need for market beyond the locality of the herders in the north. In addition, the vaccines succeeded in shattering the hitherto existing climatic dichotomy between the north and the south in such a way that the tsetse flies that abound in the southern forests could no longer pose mortal threats to the herds. In the area of demography, increase in population has resulted in more demands for meat, particularly in the south; hence the expansion of meat market. More people took to the business of animal butchery, particularly in the south-west of the country. Lastly, the oil wealth of the 1970s resulted in sharp improvement in the disposable income of the people, which also led to more demand for meat consumption. The argument here is that even

²⁸Roger Blench (2005): *Natural resources conflict in north-central Nigeria*, Cambridge: Mallam Dendo

without climate change, there would have still been migration of herders to the south.

But that is not to neglect the factor of climate change. Indeed, several studies have identified climate change as a major trigger of migration²⁹ with Kniverton, Smith and Wood³⁰ arguing that migration remains one of the best strategies adopted by humanity to cope with the challenges of climate change. But migration needs not necessarily result in conflicts and violence. We have to find recourse to violence in another narration entirely.

Recourse to violence

There is no shortage of literature on the issue of Fulani pastoralists. Rafael Reuveny considered the flow and size of the migration. He explained that a small and slow flow of migrants give possibility of easy absorption by the host communities, something that will be difficult to achieve in the event of high and fast flow³¹. In the case of Nigeria, can we say the herders have been coming in much high number than farmers can cope with? No doubt, there has been an upsurge in the number of herders coming to the south in recent times. This is one of the contributors to the conflict. But the angle of climate change is also plausible. Studies by scholars such as

²⁹ See J. Scheffram, E. Marmer, and P. Sow (2012): "Migration as a contribution to resilience and innovation in climate adaptation: social network and community development in northwest Africa", *Applied Geography*, 33: 119-127.

³⁰ D. Kniverton, C. Smith, and S. Wood (2011): Agent-based model simulations of future changes in migration lows for Burkina Faso, *Global Environmental Change*, 20(1): 34-40

³¹ Reuveny, Rafael. (2007): "Climate change-induced migration and violent conflict", *Political Geography*, 26(6): 656-673

Homer-Dixon³², Nwebaza and Kolze³³, Olaniyan and Okeke-Uzodike³⁴, Sayne³⁵, Brown et al³⁶, Ofuoku and Isife³⁷, Holmberg³⁸, and Obioha³⁹, have established a strong nexus between climate change and security threat. The explanation is that substantial and sustained variations in climatic condition create erratic rainfall regime; which in turn results in resource scarcity. Struggles over such scarce resources often lead to various forms of conflicts by competitors⁴⁰. In this wise, we can locate the shrinking grasses in the north as leading to migration and eventual conflicts with the host communities. But why should there be conflicts in the southern part of Nigeria where there are abundance of grasses?

³² Homer-Dixon, Thomas (1991): "On the threshold: environmental changes as cause of acute conflict", *International Security*, 16(2): 76-116

³³ Mwebaza, R and Kotze J L (2009): *Environmental governance and climate change in Africa, Legal perspectives*, Pretoria: Institute for Security Studies.

³⁴ Olaniyan, Azeez and Ufo Okeke-Uzodike (2015): "Desperate guests, unwilling hosts, climate change induced migration and farmer-herder conflicts in Saki, Nigeria", *Conflict Studies Quarterly*, 10(1): PAGE RANGE?

³⁵ Sayne, A. (2011): *Climate change, adaptation and conflict in Nigeria. Special Report 274*, Washington: United States Institute for Peace

³⁶ Brown, O, Hammill, A and McLeman, R (2007): "Climate Change: the new security threat", *International Affairs*, 83(6): 1141-1154

³⁷ Ofuoku, Albert U & Isife, Benjamin I (2009): "Causes, effects and resolution of farmers-nomadic cattle herders' conflicts in Delta state, Nigeria", *International Journal of Sociology and Anthropology*, 1(2): 047-054

³⁸ Holmberg, J (2008): Natural resources in sub-Saharan Africa: Assets and vulnerabilities, *Current Issues 39*, Nordiska Afrikainstitutet, Uppsala

³⁹ Obioha, E (2008): "Climate change, population drift and violent conflict over land in northeastern Nigeria", *Journal of Humanity and Ecology*, 23(4): 311-324

⁴⁰ Hussein, Karim., Sumberg J. & Seddon D. (1999): "Increasing violent conflict between herders and farmers in Africa: claims and evidences", *Development Policy Review*, 17(4): 397-418.25.

It is in this wise that researchers like Peter Gleditsch dismissed the climate change theory as speculative and inadequate⁴¹, Corine Scoch⁴² castigated the proponents, and Bettini Giovanni outrightly described the climate change exponents as mere alarmists, making apocalyptic predictions⁴³. Philippe Le Billon argues that abundance, rather than scarcity, is responsible for conflicts⁴⁴. To him, people only fight for what is available. Using this perspective, it can be argued that clash between herders and farmers in the south have little to do with scarcity or abundance. It has to be located elsewhere.

Some studies have identified the presence of small arms in the society as a factor. The argument here is that the availability of small arms in the society made it possible for the herders to be in possession of dangerous weapons that can be used as defensive tools against possible attackers. This is quite important because herders are regarded as militaristic, owing largely to the nature of their occupation. Herders are faced with the possibility of attacks by thieves, rustlers, or even wild animals. In that wise, it is natural that they protect themselves, particularly in an environment

⁴¹ Gleditsch, Peter N (2012): "Whither the climate? Climate change and conflict", *Journal of Peace Research* 49(1): 3-9

⁴² Schoch, Corine (2011): "Rethinking climate change as a security threat". *Sustainable Development Opinion*, London: International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED)

⁴³ Bettini, Giovanni (2013): "Climate Barbarism at the gate? A critique of apocalyptic narratives on 'climate refugee'", *Geoforum* 45(03): 63-72

⁴⁴ Philippe Le Billon (2001): "The political ecology of war: natural resources and war", *Political Geography*, 20: 561-584.

that is considered hostile to their sustenance⁴⁵. But this argument still does not explain why herders have to attack people and defenseless farmers in their farms. It is here that the argument of Olaniyan, Francis and Okeke-Uzodike finds some relevance. In their study on the herder-farmer clash in Ghana, they argued that “the aggressive behavior of contemporary herders and farmers in the wetland areas are due to high level of frustration. Here, the frustration is two-way: the herders are fleeing their traditional arid zones towards wetter places and are frustrated by dwindling pastures that sustain their means of livelihood. As argued by them, “upon reaching the wetter regions, their cattle consume the crops of farmers, who in frustration, respond by attempting to kill the destructive animals or drive out the newcomers. Revenge missions of grazers result in circles of violence”⁴⁶. However, there are reported cases of people suspected to be herders attacking and kidnapping those who did not touch their cattle. Here is an example: Mariam Popoola, a woman farmer narrated her ordeal thus:

The herdsmen open up our barns while their cattle eat up the maize and cassava we keep in the barns. Even the planted ones are uprooted and trampled on in the process of grazing. If we ask questions, they draw their guns and shoot at us⁴⁷

⁴⁵ Okoli, Al-Chukwuma and George Atelhi (2014): “Nomads against Natives: A Political Ecology of Herder/Farmer Conflicts in Nasarawa State, Nigeria”, *American International Journal of Contemporary Research*, 4(2): 76-88

⁴⁶ Olaniyan, A, Michael Francis and Ufo Okeke-Uzodike (2015): “The cattle are ‘Ghanaians’ but the herders are strangers: Farmer-herder conflicts, expulsion policy and pastoralist question in Agog, Ghana”, *African Studies Quarterly*, 15(2): 56-???

⁴⁷ Ojo, Hannah (2016): “Pastures of blood”, *The Nation*, September, 3, retrieved from <http://thenationonline.net/pastures-of-blood/> on 3rd September, 2016

In the same vein, the 85-year old man that was killed in his farm in Enugu was never reported to have attacked any herder. The burning of 40 houses in Gombe and the killing of a retired Police Officer in my hometown earlier this year cannot be rationalized on the basis of frustration. These are clearly cases of criminality mentioned heretofore.

The dimension of Boko Haram was introduced by the General Buratai, Chief of Army Staff and it makes a strong linkage. The upsurge in the cases of killer herdsmen coincided with the period of massive onslaught on the insurgents in their Sambisa hideout. It is not unlikely that the ranks of the herdsmen have been infiltrated by the fleeing insurgents; or rather, the displaced insurgents are posing as herdsmen to plunder and wreck havoc on unsuspecting members of the public. Governor Kashim Shetima, acting on security report, has established a link between Boko Haram bandits and increasing level of cattle rustling in the north. According to him,

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 which were sold at prohibitive costs to unsuspecting customers through some unscrupulous middlemen who use underhand ploy to deliberately disguise the transactions as legitimate. The money realized from such transaction would then be channeled to fund their deadly activities⁴⁸.

⁴⁸ See Danielle Ogbeche (2016): "Borno: Governor Shettima claims Boko Haram now sell stolen cattle to fund terror campaigns", *Daily Post*, March 5, retrieved from

The same fear was expressed by Abdurahman Dambazzau, the current Minister of Internal Affairs, when he avers that “indications are also that there are (sic) criminal angle to this conflict, in the nature of cattle rustling, armed robbery and kidnapping”⁴⁹. The point here is that if Boko Haram elements are involved in cattle rustling, it means they can easily pose as herdsmen to launch attacks on the people.

Free grazing, herder-farmer violence and intergroup relations

The extent of damage done by violence linked to herders on intergroup relations in Nigeria is summed in the online message that went viral sometimes this year. The message reads: “for every Yoruba life lost, 10 Fulani must be killed”. The message looks like a call to genocide but it is symptomatic of problems inherent in the Nigerian state. As argued heretofore, the crises involving the herders have been interpreted in ethno-religious terms and it is a major problem for the Nigerian state. The declaration is consequent on the frustration experienced by the people in the hands of some herders who have been linked with killing of innocent people. Jimoh Esho puts in a better perspective when he submits that:

These herdsmen are frustrating other people’s comfort in order to create comfort for themselves. I can’t measure the magnitude of frustration that will be felt by a farmer who has worked tirelessly on his farm under the

<http://dailypost.ng/2016/03/05/orno-governor-shettima-claims-boko-haram-now-sell-stolen-cattle-to-fund-terror-campaigns/> on 6 February, 2016.

⁴⁹ Joshua Odeyemi (2016): “Dambazau: Boko Haram using herder/farmer crisis as cover to attack Nigerians”, *Daily Trust*, 14 April.

scorching sun for months or years just to get to the same farm and see that the crops he is looking forward to harvesting and selling in order to earn a living have been destroyed by the people who sought refuge in his own land. With what is currently happening in the nation, the frustrated farmer has two options; to either accept his fate or challenge the unfortunate farm destroyer and get killed⁵⁰

More often than not, the farmers often take the second option identified by Esho by challenging the killers, thereby resulting in more bloodshed. To a large extent, the situation validates our theoretical statement on frustration (from whichever of the two) as responsible for the cycle of killings witnessed in the farmer-herder imbroglios.

The crises have further led to humanitarian problems. Many have been rendered homeless and their economic base destroyed. In a country without insurance and government social welfare protection, it becomes quite hard for people to make good living. UNHCR reported the displacement of over 7000 people in Agatu area of Benue State early this year. There are cases of similar displacements across the country.

What we can even regard as the greatest effect of the crises is the widening of existing cleavages in the country. The emergence of Nigeria as a state

⁵⁰ Jamiu Esho (2016): "Killer herdsman and Nigeria Existence", *The Punch*, 12 May, online: <http://punchng.com/killer-herdsman-nigerias-existence/> 11 September 2016

and the socio-political cum economic dynamics shaping its operation after independence created fundamental cleavages bordering on ethnicity, religion, and region. More often than not, the fault lines are parts of the banes of fostering unity amongst the various groups in the country. As argued heretofore, the issue of nomadic pastoralists has been colored in ethnic, regional and religion terms; thus making it a major widener of already existing cleavages. The evidence can be seen from the responses coming from both the opponents and defenders of the parties involved in the crises. For examples: Chief Olu Falae was abducted and his ethnic group issued warning against the northern leaders. The Sultan of Sokoto issued press statement to exonerate the herders from accusation of attacks. When Governor Fayose placed a ban on open grazing in Ekiti State after legislation by the Ekiti State House of Assembly, he was immediately supported by Afenifere group; but was roundly condemned by groups from the northern region. Similarly, victims have in some occasions accused President Buhari of shielding the herdsmen by not acting because he is a Fulani man and also a cattle herder. What this boils down to is that the issue of herder-farmers violence has succeeded in widening the regional, ethnic and religious fault lines in the country. A similar evidence of negative effects is reflected in the reactions to a suggestion for the creation of grazing zones across the country. Reactions have reflected ethnic, cultural and religious lines. We have loudest support of the grazing bill from parts of the northern region while the greatest opposition is coming from the southern region. All these indicate widening of fault lines.

Answering the pastoralist question

Series of attempts and suggestions have been made as responses to the herder-farmer crises in the country. They have been made by both individuals and governments.

a. Create a corridor across West Africa

In 1998, West African Heads of State adopted the ECOWAS Transhumance Protocol of 1998 and the ECOWAS Protocol of Free Movement of Goods and Persons in West Africa. The ECOWAS Transhumance Protocol allows herders to move across borders in search of pasture upon fulfilling the conditions laid down in the Protocol. This is one of the sub-regional responses to the pastoralist question. The deal practically carved out a passage through West African countries for movement of cattle. The endorsement of transhumance by ECOWAS leaders was born out of four realities. The first is the reality of large presence of itinerant pastoralists in West Africa. Second is the realization that transhumance pastoralism is about the main mode of cattle production in West Africa. Third, it is a form of adaptation to climate change. Four is that ranching, which is the prevalent practice in the western world, has not proved successful in the sub continent⁵¹. The decision was therefore an attempt to restrict grazing to designated places in the region. However, the decision was not followed as proposed. Therefore, it could not solve the

⁵¹ Jinaidu Maina (2016): "Pastoralism in Nigeria", *Daily Trust*, 3rd May, online: <http://www.dailytrust.com.ng/news/tuesday-column/pastoralism-in-nigeria/145039.html> on 11 September 2016

problem. Rather, it seems to have aggravated it in the sense that herders still move across boundaries, citing the ECOWAS protocol but not along the designated routes and definitely without following the rules. Even, the routes have not been clearly mapped out. There hasn't been total support for the initiative by member countries. In essence, the idea has not solved any problem.

b. Attack and kill the herders in return

Various responses of the people, particularly from the south, go in this direction. A very recent example came from Ekiti State when, following the killing of two persons by people suspected to be herdsmen, the governor gave out cash and ammunition to local hunters and vigilante groups with a directive to attack and kill herders in return. This directive was immediately hailed by Afenifere Group. Based on our recent example of the centrality of vigilante groups like the Civilian JTF in the war against Boko Haram insurgency, the Fayose initiative looks attractive. Based on their knowledge of the local terrain, the local hunters and vigilante groups could ward off herders as well as criminals. However, I see the initiative as a call for murder. While the Civilian JTF of Borno State has the Army to control them, the Fayose vigilantes operate on their own and not accountable to anybody. What assurance do we have that innocent victims would not be killed? Two wrongs do not make a right. It is a very bad way to do security.

c. Evacuate the herders

Following the killing of 40 people of Nimbo community in Uzo-Uwani Local Government Area of Enugu by people suspected to be herders, the Ohaneze Youth Council issued a three-day ultimatum for all herders to leave the entire south-east. Also, shortly after the abduction of Chief Falae in his farm, there was a meeting of Yoruba Elders in Ibadan where they also demanded all herders to leave the Yoruba land, failure to which they threatened to secede from the country. Similar evacuation directives were given by people of Benue, Nasarawa and several places across the country. These calls were borne out of frustration with the herders' activities. But are they solutions to the problem? Who is going to enforce the evacuation? If the government is not going to enforce it, and people resort to self-help, will there not be anarchy and rounds of bloodshed? If the herders are said to be armed, can the people easily send them away? What about constitutional freedom of movement that is allowed citizens of this country? Surely there are lots of problems associated with the evacuation option.

d. Killer herders are foreigners

The Nigerian government officials were reported to have said that the killer herders are non-Nigerians. This is also the position of the Sultan of Sokoto, who argued that Fulani pastoralists only carry their traditional sticks. According to this logic, any herder that carries gun must be a foreigner; and that Nigerian herders are not violent and have always been peaceful. This may not be entirely true. I don't think herders will inform the Sultan before they start carrying weapons. There could be infiltration of criminal foreigners posing as Nigerian herders, but to say that there are

no armed Nigerian herders is far from the truth. Given the fact that the Sultan is himself a Fulani, he seems to be defending and exonerating his people. Some of the arrested herders have been confirmed to be Nigerians. Again, it is an indictment on the security arrangement if foreigners can easily invade our country and unleash mayhem on innocent people. The fact that the defense is coming from the Sultan fuels the ethno-religious sentiments that have been driving the narratives. The response is a little bit insensitive to the people who lost loved ones.

e. Use the law - Ekiti model

After the initial impulsive response to the killing of two people in Ekiti State, the government, as a response to the pastoralist problem, made a law titled: “Prohibition of Cattle and Other Ruminants Grazing in Ekiti, 2016”. The law criminalizes grazing in some places within the state and outside certain period in the day. It also prohibited carriage of any kind of weapon by herdsmen, with the charge of terrorism hanging on the neck of flouters. It restricts grazing to specifically allotted land, and makes grazing on portions of land not allotted by government punishable. The law also seeks to confiscate cattle being moved around and such cattle will be taken to government ranch. The law also protects farmers by making herders pay for destroyed farms. The law makes a provision of six months jail for offenders. The law has been praised as a bold attempt to address the problem through the instrumentality of law. It is actually one of the ways to go. However, in the contention of the herders as represented by their lawyer, the law is too sweeping and could conflict with the Nigerian constitution, particularly in the area of free movement and the

determination of what constitutes weapon. But I think there are lots of merits in the law. Grazing must be restricted and the idea of making everywhere grazing area cannot be sustained. However, the Ekiti State government has not made provision for grazing area and the state-owned ranch it presents is too small, it cannot sustain the meat demand of the state; and the people will still patronize the herders. This means that eventually, the enforcement of the law may not be sustained.

f. Create grazing zones all over the country

The latest response from the Nigerian government is the proposal to establish grazing areas in the country. The bill before the National Assembly titled “An Act to provide for the establishment of The National Grazing Reserve (Establishment and Development) Commission for the preservation and control of National Grazing Reserves and Stock Routes and other Matters Connected Therewith”, was sponsored by Senator Zainab Kure from Niger State. The bill proposes the establishment of grazing reserves and stock routes for cattle herders in each of the states of the federation. Part of the provisions of the bill is establishment of a Commission that will be empowered to acquire and hold land for the use of grazing in each of the federating units. It has a provision for punishment of offenders or flouter of the law. In the first republic, the Ahmadu Bello administration in northern Nigeria had created about 415 grazing areas in the region as a response to the herder’s issue. However, following the collapse of the republic, subsequent governments abandoned the project

and the lands were appropriated by powerful interests⁵². Thus, the newly proposed bill is more or less a redefinition of Ahmadu Bello's plan, this time with coverage all over the country. The meaning is that government will take land in each state and give to herders. The bill, if passed into law, will succeed in reducing the radius of grazing activities of the herders. In other words, it will prevent everywhere from becoming a grazing land as we have it now. Interestingly, this is one of the decisions at the 2014 Confab.

To me, the idea of creating grazing zones in each of the states is problematic. In fact, it is a very poor response to the pastoralist question. It fails to take into cognizance the cultural peculiarities of the Nigerian people in terms of attachment to land. Land has deep cultural and historical meaning than can be imagined. If passed into law, the implementation will lead to dispossession of some people's land to satisfy some other people. You cannot take my ancestral land and give to some people to advance their economic interests. It is a policy that will create more crises than it can resolve. Already, it has generated controversy with stiff opposition coming from the southern and central zones of the country.

How to resolve the pastoralist question: Policy suggestions

⁵²See *Kapital FM* (2016): "Resolving the farmer-herder conflicts". Retrieved from <http://www.kapital929.fm/resolving-the-farmer-herdsmen-conflict-by-chidi-odinkalu-and-mohammed-bello-tukur/> on 14 September 2016

The centrality of the pastoralist question to food and human security in Nigeria necessitates the adoption of pragmatic policies. There is the need for a workable policy on pastoralism in the country.

i. Adopt the report of 2014 Confab on pastoralism

I think one of the ways to go it is to take the 2014 Confab report as a working document. The pastoralist question was interrogated at the 2014 Confab and a thorough recommendation was made. The report talked about settling the herders and preventing them from itinerant existence. It recommended establishment of ranches equipped with modern technology such as fodder development, abattoirs, and creating businesses around the livestock chain. It also recommended establishment of grazing reserves. Although we may disagree with the motive of the convener of the parley, it shouldn't prevent us from utilizing some of the beautiful recommendations that came out of the place.

ii. Change the narratives of the grazing conflicts

One of the major things that have to be done is to change the narrative of the pastoralists-farmers conflicts from being a regional, ethnic, or religious problem to a national security issue that requires concerted efforts. The role of the media in this regard constitutes an issue of major concern. The media have most times sensationalized serious national phenomena by infusing ethnic, regional, and religious colorations to them. The criminalization of all Fulani by the media in their reportage is wrong. And,

instead of calling them Fulani herdsmen, why not call them cattle herdsmen?

iii. Secure borders and monitor herders

Studies show that not all herders are Nigerians and that quite a number of them are from other countries. The implication is that Nigerian borders are too porous, and this gives room for free entry and exit. The existence of ECOWAS Protocol on Transhumance should not prevent the security operatives from monitoring who comes in and out. By now, all the herder routes into the country ought to be mapped and manned. Details and biometrics of foreign herders ought to be captured and documented. This will enhance proper monitoring of their activities. As a fact, there ought to be biometrics for all Nigerians.

iv. Create Special Forces

The time has come for the government to create special security forces in each state as an interim measure to deal with the issue. If the Police can create a Special Force to address cattle rustling, definitely one is needed to protect human beings that have become easy targets in their farms. But for the special force to be meaningful and effective, the Criminal Justice System must be very effective to dispatch cases quickly and justly. It is injustice for people to be killed and the killers will never be brought to justice. Crimes proliferate when offenders are never brought to justice. Of course, punishments serve as deterrent.

v. Create grazing zones in the traditional areas of the herders

Cattle must be taken off the roads and streets. The idea of herders moving aimlessly about must stop. No sane society allows cattle to roam freely. Everywhere cannot be made a grazing land. Cattle must be reared in designated grazing zones. The idea of creating grazing zones in each state by federal fiat is something that can never work. States must be left to decide whether to establish grazing zones or not. It is suggested that states that establish so can decide to impose some forms of taxation on herders willing to use the place. States that have traditional herders will have no choice than to establish the areas. Interestingly, there are reports that some states have already started in this direction.

vi. Encourage purchase of land by herders

Since herding is an economic enterprise, it is incumbent on the herders to invest in land. It is not advisable to live off other people's land to advance one's business. The herders must be made to see the need to invest in land acquisition wherever they think their raw materials are available. It is unthinkable that a businessman will be thinking of taking raw materials free of charge. Owners of the raw materials will definitely react. This is at the heart of the matter.

vii. Educate the herders

It is doubtful whether the nomadic education that was put in place several years ago has had much impact on the herders. Herders need education on modern way of cattle husbandry. They need to be enlightened on the bleak future of transhumance pastoralism. It is evident that people will continue to resist incursions into their territories.

viii. *Pursue modernization of pastoralism*

There are very good lessons that can be learned from advanced countries in the area of cattle management and husbandry. It is a known fact that the advanced countries have taken their cattle off the streets several years ago. Yet, they are leading in the areas of dairy and meat production. It is instructive to know, however, that some forms of transhumance pastoralism still exist even in advanced countries of the world. Transhumance sheep in UK are transported in trucks between rough grazing on highland areas and lowlands for grazing. In USA there are still winter and summer ranches. Other developing countries like Oman and Saudi Arabia still support transhumance by providing vehicles at subsidized rates to pastoralists to assist with animal transportation between grazing lands⁵³. Nigerian government may think along this line but such movement must be within grazing zones.

ix. *Encourage agro-pastoralism*

There have been several cases of agro-pastoralism, a sedentary form of pastoralism in Nigeria. . This means that there are several instances of herders settling down and/or even acculturated with the locals in the southern region. I am aware of a number of such in Ilesha, Ekiti, Saki and

⁵³ Roger Blench as cited by Jinaidu Maina (2016): "Pastoralism in Nigeria", *Daily Trust*, 3rd May, online: <http://www.dailytrust.com.ng/news/tuesday-column/pastoralism-in-nigeria/145039.html> on 11 September 2016

I am sure they exist in some other places. The settled herders always live in peace, purchase lands for their herds, and engage in farming. In the course of my research in Saki, I discovered that several instances of violent behavior are perpetrated by new arrivals, called the *Bororo*. The settled ones even see them as problems. I think such communities should be encouraged. It promotes inter-group interactions and is capable of fostering unity.

Conclusion

Nigeria is in serious security challenge, and in recent times, the pastoralists have consistently featured as one of the major contributors to the problem. In the foregoing pages, I have highlighted some of the issues surrounding transhumance pastoralism in the country. Owing to the centrality of the business activities of the pastoralists to the society, and the violence that have come to be associated with them over time, the pastoralist question must be addressed as part of national question in Nigeria. Although some attempts have been made to address the question, some of the recommendations are problematic and will rather exacerbate the problem. Part of the problem is the set of related misconceptions about the pastoralists. If the country is to overcome the problem, the issue must be seen as a national challenge rather than from ethno-religious prisms.