

Terrorism Financing: A Study of Boko Haram in Cattle Rustling in the Lake Chad Basin

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Abstract

Cattle's rustling is a phenomenon that precede Boko Haram escapade. Their recent involvement in this trade has not come as a surprise considering the necessity to finance the movement and its ideological feat. This paper explores some predisposing factors that aid the group engagement in cattle rustling which include, large concentration of herdsmen around the Lake Chad basin; ungoverned forest spaces; illegal arms trade; porous borders; availability of market that support stolen items among others. It is the argument of this paper that there is a nexus between cattle rustling and Boko Haram continuous terror campaign in the Lake Chad Basin. A combination of historical/expository techniques that relied on secondary data for its analysis as well as internet web materials and media reports on syndicated cattle rustling violence was used to give explanation for the argument. It is thus revealed that Boko Haram cattle rustling posed socio-economic and security challenge to the Lake Chad Basin general area and to Nigeria in particular which consistently remains the epicenter of the conflict and serves as the largest market for rustled animals. The study framework is anchored on criminal conspiracy theory that perceived cattle rustling activities as a phenomenon that undermine state authority.

Keywords: *Cattle-rustling, Boko Haram, Terrorism-financing, Lake-Chad, Security*

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Background to the Study

The menace of terrorism financing has been a global malady and fast-growing epidemic among nation-states. The threat of terrorism financing is not peculiar to Nigeria alone it has also infiltrated most countries of the world (Jason, 2016). In September 11, 2001 multiple attacks on the World Trade Centre and Pentagon in the United States has not only elicited concerns over the threats of terrorism but embellished the euphoria and passion for strong global alliance against terrorism and methods of financing. Africa also support the international conventions for the suppression of the financing of terrorism mainly to smash and frustrate the finance of well established terrorist groups like Al-Shabab in the Great Lake region, Al-Qaeda in the Maghreb and Boko Haram group in the Lake Chad Basin as well as Al-Qaeda and Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) that have acquired notoriety in the Middle-East.

In Nigeria for instance, the well known terrorist organization (*Jama'atu Ahlis-Sunnah Lidda'awati Wal Jihad*) popularly referred to as Boko Haram which means “Western education is forbidden” has existed and hitherto maintained its operations within the Northeastern region for over a decade. The group has expanded its scale of violence and influence to the entire fringes of the Lake Chad Basin general area (Cameroun, Chad, Niger and Nigeria). Despite its long existence there is a paucity of consensus on the precise date of its origin and sources of funding among scholarly literature that flourished in recent years. For instance, Muraina, et al, (2014) traced its origin to 1995 before the ascension of Mohammed Yusuf who himself took over from his predecessor (Lawan Abubakar) who proceeded for studies in Saudi Arabia. According to Congressional Research Service, (2018) Boko Haram emerged in the early 2000s as a tiny Islamic sect in Nigeria (cited in Ahmadu, 2019). Meanwhile some local and international media suggest 2002 as its origin, the year late Mohammed Yusuf took over the leadership of the sect. Deducing from the expositions above, the exact date of Boko Haram origin remains an open and contested debate as argued by Shola, (2015). What remain discernibly clear and unambiguous is that the evolution of Boko Haram as a violent extremist organization may be traced to 27th July 2009 when the group clashed with the Nigerian Military in Maiduguri city which led to brutal killing of their leader (Mohammed Yusuf) by the Nigerian Police. This was an action that formed local and international headlines and major discourses from different quarters. By and large, the violent outing of the group in 2009 has not only brought the sect's activities to a limelight but profile it as a violent and deadly extremist organization in Nigeria. The main concern in this paper is to explain how the group persistently creates resilience to survive and flexibility to escape military onslaught and prosecute its violent agenda in countries around the Lake Chad Basin. This is related to some questions which we shall be answering in the later part of the research. For example, what are the factors responsible for Boko Haram cattle rustling in the Lake Chad Basin? What are the implications to the collective security and survival of the Lake Chad Basin?

Since 2009 the violent activities of Boko Haram escalated they consolidated their bases in the Northeast and advanced beyond the Nigerian borders covering Northern Cameroun, Southern Niger and Eastern Chad. Their continuous hostilities have led to colossal loss of lives and property as well as mass displacement in Northeastern Nigeria more than any other

country around the Lake Chad Basin. Based on some available estimated figures from International Organization for Migration (IOM) in 2011 to 2017 it was alleged that Boko Haram have gruesomely killed more than 15,000 people with 2.4 Million displaced mostly from Northeast Nigeria, and are currently taking refuge in about 45 Internally Displaced Camps that spread across twelve states in Nigeria (Borno, Yobe, Adamawa, Taraba, Gombe Bauchi, Kano, Nasarawa, Plateau, Kaduna, Zamfara and Benue while the Federal Capital Territory hosts about seven Internally Displaced Camps) (Innocent and Chibuike, 2016). Institute of Economics and Peace, (2015) reported that on average Nigeria has lost an estimated 255 people monthly with the highest number of 2000 people killed in January, 2015 during the Baga massacre. Amnesty International estimates also revealed that the sect abducted more 2000 women and young girls in 2015 alone. More than seventy-five per cent of these women and young girls were forced to carry out suicide attacks (Innocent and Chibuike, 2016).

While the atrocities orchestrated by Boko Haram gestate and lingers for several years, the overwhelming questions which often seek answers are their sources of fund. However, there are divergent analyses over Boko Haram's sources of funds. Unlike AL-Qaeda, ISIS, Al-Shabab among other international terror organizations whose main sources of funds are easily traced, Boko Haram source of funding was hitherto unclear mainly because the people that constitute the organization are not known (United Nations Security Council, ZAMUN, 2015). Yan St-Pierre, CEO of the Counter-Terrorism Modern Security Consulting Group, believes Boko Haram relies on resources within Nigeria and West Africa to fund its activities. While Linda Thomas Greenfield, the U.S. assistant secretary for African affairs, stated in 2014 that Boko Haram is surviving off sophisticated criminal activities that depend heavily on kidnappings and uses courier to move cash from within Nigeria as well as from neighbouring countries across Nigeria's borders. In 2012, Nigerian media reported that the president of Nigeria received intelligence that Boko Haram had received Forty Million Dollars for the first time from AQIM (Rock, 2016). Most dominant literature uphold that Boko Haram has sustained itself financially through micro-financing, membership fees, external funding, extortion, bank robberies, kidnappings for ransom, and illicit trafficking (Rock, 2016; Enobi, et al 2016; Kingsly, et al 2015). Based on the above pieces of evidence it is clear that Boko Haram financing is not from a single source but a combination of external and internal sources. This paper is interested in interrogating the internal funding regime of the group and how it continues to assist the violent drive and challenge the security architecture and suffocate the agrarian economy of the Lake Chad Basin region.

The sudden involvement of Boko Haram pundit and other non-pastoral syndicates in cattle rustling business has added another dimension to the problem with syndicated criminality accentuated by highly commercialized cattle rustling becoming lucrative “business enterprise” which Kwaja (2014) described as the “underground economy” which is tied to the political economy of most agrarian communities. Olaniyan and Yahaya (2016) described the situation as the “Shadow economy” which serves as an outlet for stolen cows which has a lot of cash value. When Boko Haram was dislodged from their stronghold in Maiduguri and Damaturu cities in 2013 as a result of aggressive manhunt launched by the Nigerian Security

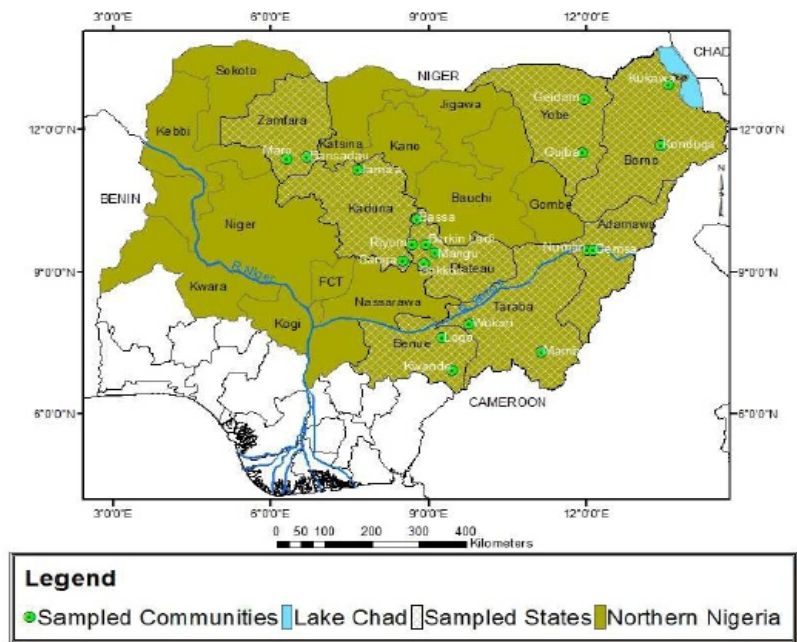
Forces and Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF) they were forced to shift their operational bases to the Sambisa forest and the creeks around the Lake Chad Basin general area. This brought them into close contact with both sedentarized and nomadic pastoralists who are originally domiciled in those areas. Because cattle are tied to the political economy of most agrarian communities in Northern Nigeria, and due to its high commercial value and easy to dispose of for cash it became a lucrative source of fund for Boko Haram terrorists in the Lake Chad Basin area. Pastoralists and fish mongers eventually became more vulnerable and first-line victims of Boko Haram syndicates. Cattle rustling is not the only source of funds for Boko Haram terrorist activities as earlier mentioned there are other sources that are well established. Boko Haram cattle rustling venture has only metamorphosed into more syndicated, militarized, criminalized and heavily weaponized trendy phenomenon that lead to killings, maiming, arson, kidnapping, rape, destructions and community raid which is responsible for the large scale human displacement in West Africa.

Generally, only a few scholarly researched kind of literature on terrorism financing exist. Some of them focused on Boko Haram micro-financing system that was used to raise funds before 2009, for instance, (Yaya et al, 2017; Jason, 2016; Enobi, et al 2016; Kingsly, et al 2015). While other literature, based their analysis on external cash flow reported by Security Organizations and other international partners (Yaya et al, 2017; Kingsly et al, 2015). For instance, Kingsly et al. (2015) listed robbery, kidnapping, drugs, trade-in illegal arms; assistance from sympathizers among others as sources of financing of Boko Haram terrorist's activities in the Lake Chad Basin. Enobi and Johnson-Rokosu, (2016) listed cattle rustling among other several local sources of Boko Haram funding but no effort made to analyze in detail factors responsible and how cattle rustling is a strong source of revenue Boko Haram in the Lake Chad Basin.

Description of the Study Area

Lake Chad is now Africa's fourth-largest lake (Global International Water Assessment, 2004). The Lake and its hinterland are potentially rich and congenial for agriculture and pastoralism, it has since become the point of convergence for particularly farmers, pastoralists and fishermen. Available estimates revealed that the basin has earlier covered an initial area of 400,000 square kilometres prior to 1960 (GIWA, 2004). During the 1960s, it receded to 26,000 square kilometers. Between 1966 and 1997, it further shrunk from 25,000 square kilometres to just 532 square kilometres losing about 90 per cent of its original size in 1960s (GIWA, 2004; Masari, 2006). Since Boko Haram infiltrated and overrun the towns and villages around the creeks and the general Lake Chad basin areas, millions of people have been forced to abandon the areas putting their sources of livelihoods and survival in jeopardy. The area referred to as Lake Chad basin region is situated between latitude 6 and 24 degrees north, longitude 7 and 24 degrees east. The conventional basin covers an area of more than 3,500 square kilometres, 42 per cent in Chad; 28 per cent in Niger; 9 per cent in Cameroon and 21 per cent in Nigeria (Oyebande, et al 1997). Historically, Lake Chad basin is believed to be the remnant of a former inland sea, which has grown and shrunk commensurately with changes in climate. Over the last three decades, the Lake has been susceptible to the increasing climatic variability and human impacts (Onouha, 2008). The map below provides a vivid picture of communities in northern Nigeria that are beneficiaries of the Lake Chad water resources and are indirectly affected by the ongoing Boko Haram crisis around the Lake Chad Basin.

Figure 1: Map of Lake Chad Basin



Source: Digitized in GIS Laboratory, Department of Geography, University of Maiduguri, Nigeria, 2017.

Theoretical Framework

The paper utilizes Conspiracy Theory as the theoretical framework for analysis because of its strength and diversity in approach and beliefs that cut across sciences, environment, health, immigration, racism, terrorism, politics and international relations. The foundation and development of conspiracy theory has been attributed to Alex Jones, David Icke and James Tracy in the 1980s. Taking inspiration from their analysis on 'Criminal Conspiracy' has been significant to explain how Violent Extremists Organizations conspired as a group to define their ideology, social formation, violent nature among other considerations. Perpetrating violence against the poor and vulnerable such as killings, maiming, destruction of property etc are a common phenomenon associated with violent groups. Criminal conspiracy theory has been closely related to prejudice, revolutions and genocide (Douglas, et al 2019). Several actors in terrorist attacks were known to be strong supporters of criminal conspiracy theory (Douglas, et al 2019). Conspiracy theories are generally an attempt to explain the ultimate causes of significant social and political events and circumstances with claims of secret plots by two or more powerful actors (Dentith and Orr, 2017; Byford, 2011). Ordinarily, conspiracy represents the true causal chain of events, while a conspiracy theory refers to an allegation of a conspiracy that may or may not be true (Douglas, et al 2019).

However, some scholars conclude that conspiracy as a concept is considered as a secret plot by powerful individuals or group of individuals whose motives are to usurp political and economic power, violate rights, infringe upon established rules, withhold vital secrets, and

threaten the state as well as its institutions (Keeley, 1999; Pigden, 1995). The repercussions of conspiracy tendencies may gradually metamorphose into what some scholars described as “conspiracy thinking” or a general “conspiracy mindset” (Imhoff and Bruder, 2014; Uscinski and Parent, 2014). This can be exemplified with Boko Haram terrorism in Northeastern Nigeria where conspiracy has taken centre stage in their thinking and the mindset from a conception that spread to violent attacks. Criminal conspiracy has always defined their ideology and character with impunity and destruction to lives and property to forcefully dominate and impose their influence over and above the state.

Trends and the Dynamics of Terrorism Financing

Incidence of September 11 2001 has precipitated more elaborate understanding of the essence and quintessence of terrorism financing different countries in the world. According to Olasupo, (2014) “terrorism financing is the provision or collection of funds with the intention of having prior knowledge that is to be used, in full or in part, to carry out acts that are associated with the support of terrorists or terrorist organizations”. The United Nations International Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism, states that the primary objective of terrorism is to intimidate individual or group of individuals or to compel a government or an international organization to do something by killing, seriously harming or endangering one or more persons; causing substantial property damage that is likely to seriously harm one or more persons; or seriously interfering with or disrupting essential services, facilities or systems (Rock, 2016).

The survival and existence of any violent extremist organization are predicated on its ability to generate funds for recruitment, logistics and general operations. No matter how extremist organization may be numerically strong and active, funds are the life sustaining-oxygen that makes it thrive and work. Colin Clark earlier noted that, financing remains the lifeblood of any terrorist organization and paradoxically its existence would be short-lived by lack of funds (Rock, 2016). Curtailing terrorist source of funding entails weakening their survival. Lessons learnt from September 11, led to more concerted efforts by the United States and other international communities to checkmate and freeze assets suspected to be meant for terrorism financing as a metaphor for combating the menace. This resulted in the freezing of over \$147.4 July, 2015 (cited in Rock, 2016). A reminiscence from the freezing of terrorist's assets led some violent extremist organizations particularly Boko Haram keeps changing their financial patterns and tactics as a strategy for avoiding the post-September 11, terrorism financing laws. Hence Boko Haram resorted to local sources of funds within their immediate environment while strictly avoiding any transaction through the normal financial institutions. Against this background, Boko Haram ventured into cattle rustling and fishing in the Lake Chad Basin and to some extent wild animal poaching around the Waza forest in the Republic of Cameroon as reported by (Kingsly et al, 2018).

To sustain their activities, Boko Haram developed a disdain for all electronic financial transfers and transactions through modern means. They heavily rely on face to face contact and physical cash transactions as an alternative way of avoiding any dealings that may lead to monies meant for terrorism financing being tracked and trapped by institutions of the state

such as the Nigerian Financial Intelligence Units (NFIU) among other relevant agencies. Because of their informal financial transactions, there exists no clear evidence that the Nigerian state had ever seized Boko Haram's funds within Nigerian Banks or any other financial institution. This is not unconnected with the nature of their operations and styles of movement. According to Sahara Reporters, Boko Haram fighters and their leaders do not hold International Passports or travel through the airports, they move on the ground in hijacked vehicles and motorcycles traversing through the unconventional routes from one location to the other (Jason, 2016). Since the Nigerian Government could not trace or freeze Boko Haram finances within the banking institutions, they resorted to denying them space to operate and thrive in carrying out their criminality optimally. In doing that, the Nigerian Government introduced different kind of military operations with all sort of code-named. For instance, in 2011, a Joint Security Task Force code named Operation Restore Order (ORO) was instituted for inter-agency cooperation among the security organs for better synergy. In 2013 several Military operations were launched to deal with Boko Haram. March, 2015 Nigerian Government sought the cooperation of its neighbours (Cameroun, Chad, Niger and Benin Republics) which led to the reactivation of the Multi-National Joint Task Force (MNJTF) to confront Boko Haram headlong. The Multinational Force succeeded in recapturing areas hitherto under the occupation of Boko Haram. This was however followed by several operations such as Operation Lafiya Dole, Operation "Safe Heaven", Operation "Last Lap" and many others meant to deny Boko Haram breathing space.

Factors that Facilitate Boko Haram in Cattle Rustling Business

Generally, cattle rustling phenomenon has gradually witnessed some transformation from its hitherto traditional disposition as a cultural norm which exist in pastoral society especially among the Fulani herdsmen and other sedentary groups in Africa. Okoli and Atelhe, (2014), Ahmadu, (2019) noted that bravery and prowess, to violent and deadly warfare in form of organized crime orchestrated by mostly non-pastoral groups using modern and sophisticated weapons as the case with Boko Haram in cattle rustling, attend new heights in many communities. Nevertheless, the following factors facilitate cattle rustling business in the Lake Chad Basin.

1. The strategy adopted by Boko Haram in trying to avoid the use of modern or electronic means of financial transaction through the Banks and other financial institutions, due to the extant International Laws on terrorism financing as well as the eagle-eye financial surveillance put in place by the United States and other international communities on funds for terrorism financing has made Boko Haram opt-out for new alternatives.
2. Cattle rustling is seen as the most viable option for additional funds in rural areas where there is a large concentration of cattle mostly around the Lake Chad Basin areas
3. Less governed or ungoverned forest areas–The large expanse of ungoverned forest spaces around the Lake Chad and Sambisa forest reserve has created a vulnerable situation for herdsmen. Their close contact with Boko Haram fighters who have shifted their operational base from urban and semi-urban centres to rural areas puts the herdsmen and their cattle at risk.

4. Boko Haram's overwhelming firepower, enable them to camouflage in military uniforms, armoured cars and carry along with them sophisticated weapons to engaged in cattle rustling.
5. Porous borders around the Lake Chad basin areas – the porous nature of borders within the Lake Chad countries made movements of Boko Haram rustling cartels with the rustled herds easier, unchecked and without hindrance.
6. Readily available market for quick disposal of stock. The cattle markets are translocation and transnational across the borders of the Lake Chad Basin and the Sahel. Therefore Boko Haram cattle rustling syndicates are motivated by high market value for cattle in these areas.

Cattle Rustling, Financing and Terrorism

The nexus between Boko Haram and cattle rustling has been established since they relocated and occupied almost all the villages and towns around the Lake Chad Basin and Sambisa forest in Borno State. As other sources of fund for the group went low new avenue to generate additional income was explored. Cattle rustling happen to be one of such sources of funding that become easily available. The former Governor of Borno State, Kashim Shettima based on intelligence reports revealed that Boko Haram is deeply involved in cattle rustling. He swiftly announced a ban on the sale of cattle to butchers and other cattle merchants in major markets in Maiduguri and its environs to prevent Boko Haram rustling cartels from patronizing cattle markets to dispose of rustled cattle. In the words of the Governor:

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

Few years ago suspected Boko Haram members were arrested attempting to sell cattle believed to have been stolen by their commanders elsewhere and brought to Maiduguri cattle market (Olanrewaju, 2016). On October 8, 2017 spokesman of the Nigerian Army (Operation Lafiya Dole) fighting Boko Haram insurgency and terrorism in the Northeast Colonel Timothy Antigha revealed that, they ambushed and arrested Boko Haram cattle rustling syndicate with rustled cattle from Lingir village in Monguno Local Government area on their way crossing into Maiduguri to dispose the rustled cattle (Ahmadu, 2019). According to reports by the Commandant of the Nigerian Security and Civil Defense Corps (NSCDC) Borno State Command, Mr. Ibrahim Abdullahi, “Boko Haram often transport rustled cattle to markets in major towns through their agents who serve as middlemen in the cattle business. The agents buy off these cattle and settle the insurgent-rustlers by cash to enable them to raise money to buy food, drugs and even arms” (Ahmadu, 2019). Insurgent-rustlers are so ingenious that they inscribe permanent marks or signs on the bodies of the cattle for people to believe that the cattle belong to them (Ahmadu, 2019). On November 11, 2018 Boko Haram insurgents attacked Bale Shuwa village in Jere Local Government of Borno State. After killing and injuring several people, they burnt 65 houses, rustled 200 cows, 300 sheep and goats (Ahmadu, 2019).

Abdulkarim, (2016) once reported that the Theater Commander of Operation Lafiya Dole, General Lucky Irabo in a press conference on March 28, 2016, noted that 30 persons were arrested in Borno State aiding and abetting Boko Haram in cattle rustling. Among the suspects were four Soldiers and two Policemen which apparently explain the complex nature of the illegal cattle business in the Lake Chad Basin. The insurgents raise money through rustling in connivance with unscrupulous security men and some members of the Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF) (ThisDay September 21, 2017). In the same vein, reports from the Borno State Police Command revealed that three persons suspected to be Boko Haram members were arrested with rustled cows after they attacked and killed people at Tolomeri village (Punch, December 11, 2019). Between July and August, 2017 Boko Haram rustled over three hundred cows in Damboa Local Government (ThisDay September 21, 2017). In early part of 2020 through the concerted effort of Miyati Allah Cattle Breeder Association many rustled cattle from Northeastern Nigeria were tracked in Lagos and some parts of Eastern Nigerian markets which ultimately justify the broader nature of the illegal business and the people involved in Nigeria.

Furthermore, not more than twelve kilometers from the Nigerian border around the Waza Wildlife National Park in far North Cameroun, there were serious allegations that Boko Haram terrorist have been engaged in elephants and lions poaching to support their operations (Pennaz, et al 2018). This was further confirmed in the investigative journalism research released by two Belgian Journalists Aureli Moreau and Melanie Wenger cited in Pennaz, et al (2018) which indicated that in Waza National Park “ivory has become a new source of income for Boko Haram and that this group also killed lions for magical practices to promote their invincibility in the battlefield”. Besides, proceeds accruing from stolen herds are more sustainable than that of poaching because cattle can be disposed of faster than wildlife animals. This illegal business threatened the security of both the people as well as the wildlife in Waza National Park.

Socio-economic and Security Implications of Cattle Rustling

The over one decade of Boko Haram hostilities around the Lake Chad Basin and particularly in Northern Nigeria, there have been far-reaching socio-economic and security implications to the unending conflict. This part of the country has witnessed by estimation the highest case of destruction to lives and properties as well as displacement of human and animals. Cattle herders by their rural livelihood are the first line of victims especially for cattle rustlers and Boko Haram. Without exception, millions of people which include herdsmen, farmers and fishermen have lost their sources of livelihood and survival they have equally abandoned their traditional ecological zones in the Lake Chad for safety elsewhere. Not only has that led to lots of instability but also responsible for the current mass unplanned pastoral migration to some parts of Southern Nigeria and other safer areas across the Sahel. The emergence of cattle rustling as a criminal enterprise perpetrated by both pastoral and non-pastoral actors as the case with Boko Haram rustling syndicate is characterized by relentless violence and hostilities. This is further linked to the general violent escalation and increase in extant criminality in contemporary rustling transaction across the West African region.

It must be further noted that the hitherto traditional and cultural traits associated with cattle rustling among the Fulani herdsmen as a traditional means of displaying prowess and bravery against threats has been eroded by the recent involvement of Boko Haram and other criminal elements. Modern rustling activities have gradually turned to a militarized and weapons-driven function defined by killings, kidnapping, maiming, rape, arson and several other criminal impunities. For this reason the phenomenon of cattle rustling is no longer restricted to herdsmen but an introduction of new dimension that involve criminal behavior with additional actors that are non-pastoral farmers.

Economically the involvement of Boko Haram in cattle rustling has affected the lives and livelihood of the agrarian communities particularly the herdsmen. Although there are no accurate statistics to establish the figures of herdsmen that fell victim to Boko Haram cattle rustling, however interviews conducted with security personnel and some displaced villagers in pastoral communities corroborated evidence of people being dispossessed of their herds and executed by either Boko Haram or their associates. And not only that, currently there are over 200 herdsmen in Internally Displaced Persons Camps in Borno State whose means of livelihood have been destroyed by Boko Haram cattle rustlers. For a while a time the closure of cattle market in Maiduguri town has caused economic hardship with multiplier effects on both the butchers and the consumers-increase in prices of meat and other dairy products have affected the income of average many people that patronize the market.

Also talking about the socio-economic condition of cattle rustling, heavy migration of Fulani and other pastoralist population to some part of North-central and Southeast Nigeria cannot be isolated in this discussion. Most tension and ethnic conflicts in some of the regions mentioned are traced to mass migration caused by Boko Haram conflict. In addition, kidnapping business which has suddenly shot to limelight in some parts of the country are carried out by mostly herdsmen who have been displaced from the Lake Chad area and have lost means of livelihood. Clear evidence of this is the protracted farmers/herdsmen clashes around Taraba, Benue, Plateau and Enugu states and the specter of cattle rustling and violent campaigns by herdsmen in Zamfara, Katsina and Sokoto states which are linked to the protracted Boko Haram conflict.

Conclusion

Cattle's rustling in the 21st Century has assumed a violent dimension which continued to threaten the security and peaceful co-existence of not only the Nigerian state but the entire Sahel and the Lake Chad Basin (Cameroun, Chad, Niger and Nigeria). More threatening is the syndication and trans-nationalization of rustling by Boko Haram extremist and other terrorist organizations in these countries. The scenario has created fear, threat and anxiety among the populace with multiplier consequences on food security as well as peace and sustainable development in the region. There is need to holistically address the issue from its root causes by providing efficacious mechanisms that can curtail contemporary cattle rustling saga that financed Boko Haram activities in the Lake Chad Basin. To achieve these objectives this paper advanced the following recommendations.

1. For strategic reasons, governments should increase security presence in areas described as ungoverned spaces around the Lake Chad Basin to curtail the flourishing of cattle rustling business.
2. Returnees in vulnerable communities should assist security agencies with vital information on markets where rustled cows are sold to finance terrorism.
3. Closing the borders might not suffice, what government need is strategic surveillance of exit routes where the movement of persons and arms should be closely monitored. Hence most countries in the Lake Chad region share a porous border, inter-agency cooperation and sharing of information among countries will reduce illegal business transaction and frustrate movement of arms and ammunition across borders which aid in cattle rustling.
4. Finally, Job creation, poverty reduction, and livelihood support should be pursued vigorously by the government to reduce youth radicalization and involvement in terrorist activities.

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