

**GEOGRAPHICAL ISSUES IN NIGERIAN ARMY'S INVOLVEMENT  
IN GRAZING LAND RESOURCE CONTESTATION, PUBLIC  
PACIFICATION AND CATTLE PROTECTION**

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**ABSTRACT:** This paper explores ecological issues that manifest in the involvement of the Nigerian army in grazing land resource contestation, conflict that arise therefrom and the need to pacify the public and protect cattle production enterprise. Through literature review, the paper showed that the Nigerian army has been involved in resource wars and divisions of the army have largely been formed as a response to resource protection challenges/needs. It found such issues of geographical importance in the army's place in grazing land resource wars as (1) the army's acquisition of special pastoral spaces (2) remoteness of rural pastoral conflict theatres from regular policing (3) security variegation of pastoral spaces (4) streamlined land use (5) expansion of military-controlled spaces. It sees geographical features affecting army's roles in public pacification; in creating safe havens, and in providing new settlement roles for military zones. It also found to be of importance, geographical issues such as trans-boundary dimensions of cattle rustling in the army's involvement in cattle protection. The paper suggests a review of legal frameworks, a review of spatiality of policing, recognition of limitations of military solutions and application of the power of markets to reduce the reliance on the army in grazing land resource wars and negotiating peaceful pastoral production.

**Keywords:** Army, Grazing land, Resource war, Public pacification, Cattle Protection.

### **Introduction**

One irony of the breakthroughs and landmarks recorded in science and technology with particular reference to materials science and engineering is civilization's apparent fixation with vanishing environmental resources: mineral ores, fossil fuels, water etc. In the twenty first century, water resources have become more conflicted than at any other time in history (Solomon, 2010). International waters such as the Nile and Niger have turned out quite contentious with diverse issues of appropriation, testing the capacities of existing international multi-lateral and bilateral basin commissions. This is the nature of resource challenges the world is currently experiencing. Many are quick to challenge the pessimistic position of Neo-Malthusians on populations' sustenance citing how the earth that barely provided for a billion persons can comfortably provide for higher population, while predicted population limits have been broken time and again (Kucharski, 2015). There is a romantic appraisal of technology and its elasticity which has not recognized increasing squabbles around the world for dwindling natural resources. Natural resources are rendered less resilient in the wake of global change:

climate change, social upheavals, and governance issues. The coming together of diverse factors of growing natural resource need and increasingly depleted supplies has given rise to resource wars (Klare, Lery & Sidel, 2011). Wars hardly stick to conventional niceties despite pretensions and have the component of enemies battling over a trophy in a winner-takes-all situation. The effect can be very devastating. One area of resource war in the world today is war over grazing land.

Whereas transhumant pastoralism has persisted in the face of modernization; environmental resources, otherwise referred to as natural capital in Gladwin (2002) that should maintain this production system, are highly imperilled in today's world. Natural changes initiated by climate scenarios and social changes such as revolution towards urbanism, have changed the pastoral game. Transhumance has become a highly marginal livelihood option in the wake of land rights contestation across the world from Poland (Sendyka & Makovicky, 2018) to Nepal (Gentle & Thwaites, 2016); Kenya (Triche, 2014) and Nigeria (Azuwike, 2010; 2016). Violence is the ultimate expression of the conflicted relationship. Victims are dislodged from their legitimate occupations and internally displaced creating humanitarian crises. Environmental refugees pile pressure on societies and the cost in human lives is proving exorbitant. For the fact that securing space for itinerant pastoral activity has become a serious security concern, security agencies are increasingly drafted into the fray to counter the militancy of both pastoral groups and that of their irate host communities. Hence the Nigerian army has responded with a plethora of interventions. The army in Nigeria has set up and planned cattle rearing spaces across Nigeria following a decision reached in July 2018 to secure spaces for cattle and demonstrate what sustainable practices are possible in Nigeria's context under the Nigerian Army Farms and Ranches Limited (NAFARL) (Gavrilova, 2020). The geographical contexts concerning Nigerian Army's involvement in grazing conflicts should not be lost on the army or other security agencies. The increasing role of the army in public pacification and cattle protection are responses to geographical situations, as well as producers of new geographies of land use, settlement and agriculture.

### **Resource Wars**

Resource wars are real and have transcended Hollywood Blockbusters. In the movie, *Water World*, survivors would trade anything for a mythical dry land in a totally submerged earth; fierce battles were fought in the movie over mere insinuations of its existence. As history, particularly that of the 20<sup>th</sup> century shows, the age of scarcity is the age of contests and war. John Bruce and Karol Bourdeaux recounted how land and minerals access contestation produced wars in Liberia and in Sierra Leone (Bruce & Bourdeaux, 2013). They also flashed back to Sri Lanka where for 25 years war raged over the eminent domain of a minority group.

Resource wars are emblematic of vulnerability. Michael T. Klare has therefore associated resource-based conflicts with poverty, weak governments and foreign dominance (Klare, 2001). These factors tend to predispose a people to a do-or-die pursuit of physical natural resources. The point also has to be made that the pride of place accorded natural resources comes from the usual corollary of paucity of human capital development. The seeming antithetical relationship between natural resources and human resources has to be noted. The relationship between

resource wars and other vulnerabilities are essentially dialectical. Where poverty and other deficiencies drive resource wars; the wars produce further destitution. The United Nations Development Programme's Human Development Report, 2003 put the number of people facing hunger due to conflicts globally at 14 million (United Nations Development Programme, 2003). The number has no doubt increased since then due to escalation of conflicts. The figure is put at 88 million people by end of 2020 (United Nations, 2021). The problem can therefore be self-reinforcing. The effects can be very far-reaching in terms of social upheavals. A few cases are note worthy. Land distribution and redistribution crisis marred the last parts of Robert Mugabe's government and social life in Zimbabwe; much economic destabilization came with changes in land access (Moyo, 2001). Using the case of tenant evictions in South-central Ethiopia which ushered in her revolution that overthrew the Monarchy in 1974, John Bruce and Karol Bourdeaux demonstrated how much of political capital can be made by exploiting fears of land loss and accompanying loss of livelihood (Bruce & Bordeaux, 2013). A land concession granted Daewoo of South Korea for biofuel production over a third of Madagascar's prime land generated riots that consumed the Madagascar government in 2008 (Bruce & Bordeaux, 2013).

Large demand for land by foreign interests in Africa fuel destitution and is being resented (Azuwike, 2020). Also, in 2013, the government of Recep Tayyip Erdogan of Turkey was almost removed over public insistence on governments' retention of Gezi City Park marked for commercial development (Public Radio International, 2013).

All around the world, there are wars over resources. Instances of these abound for fresh water: dispute over water in Nile Basin, water shortages in Yemen, Turkey, Syria and Iraq, conflict over the Euphrates-Tigris, conflicts between Afghanistan and Iran over Helmand and the Harirud, dam projects and disputes in the Mekong River Basin, Cauvery Basin in India, web of droughts, livestock and conflict in Somalia, Turkey-Armenia, growing water scarcity in Egypt and tensions over water privatization in Cochabamba, Bolivia (Detges, Pohl & Schaller, 2017). There are also conflicts over fisheries (Glaser, Derlin, Lambert, Villegas & Poinsette, 2018), conflicts over minerals (Global Policy Forum, 2016) and at times, conflicts over very marginal resources. China and Japan had been in conflict over a few rock outcrops in the East China Sea referred to as Senkaku Islands (Roy-Chaudhury, 2016) or Diaoyu Island. Much armament had been deployed in protection of claims of both China and Japan over the uninhabited islands of less than 7km<sup>2</sup>. Resource wars can be seen to be military and non-military in nature and also very pervasive.

### **Grazing Land Resource Wars**

The point of grazing land negotiation becoming the stuff of wars is not far-fetched. A statement credited to Lord Ashdon and reported by Alex Kirby expressed that "in both the UK and the US, military leaders are aware of the growing threat from climate change and expect to be ordered to react to its effects" (Kirby, 2015). Militarization of the contentions in resource appropriation is evidently very real. The reality is also more profound with increasing climate pressures. The United Nations Regional Humanitarian Co-ordinator for the Sahel, Robert Piper had while acknowledging the Sahel region of Africa as an area prone to droughts, observed progressive change in drought cycles from 10 years to 5 years and "only a couple years" (Piper, 2015). This

evidence increased scarcity of natural resources. Wars are highly related to scarcity and loss. It is such that wars cause scarcity while scarcity predisposes to wars. Grazing land scarcity has been instrumental to grazing land resource wars.

In the United States, efforts are being made to guarantee grazing space. Groups are able to acquire federal lands for grazing through buyouts in a form of free-market environmentalism (Regan, 2014). Most parts of the developing world have not kept up with such innovativeness. All pastoral groups in Africa are battling for grazing space with communities, local administrations and central governments; the Karamojong of Northeastern Uganda (Wandera, 2018); the Maasai of Kenya (Elliot & Sher-Mei, 1997); the Woodabe of Niger (Le Meur, Hochet, When & Toure, 2006) and the Fulani of Nigeria (Voice of America, 2018). The expectation is that pasture has to be secured outside the market whereas increasingly taken-for-granted, open access resources are being commoditized. It is surely a recipe for conflict. In these areas, the military and related forces are drafted in to quell conflicts and pacify communities. Uganda had to create an entire federal ministry to take care of the Karamojong Affairs (Republic of Uganda, 2017) while Nigeria has developed military outfits dedicated to pastoral challenges.

### **Nigerian Army in Resource Wars**

A history of Nigerian Army formations is largely a history of resource wars. There is for instance a link to resource security in the establishment of most divisions of the Nigerian Army. The 1<sup>st</sup> Division Kaduna having in its fold, 1<sup>st</sup> mechanized Brigade, Sokoto, 3<sup>rd</sup> Brigade, Kano and 31<sup>st</sup> Artillery Brigade, Minna was established in 1967 to secure Northwestern region and borders. The 2<sup>nd</sup> Division Ibadan was established in the same year to protect the Southwest flank of Nigeria while the 3<sup>rd</sup> Division, Jos was also established in the same 1967 having the 21 Armoured Brigade, Maiduguri, 23 Armoured Brigade, Yola, 33 Artillery Brigade, Bauchi, to protect Nigeria's Central parts and North East. The earliest Divisions may not have projected the resource protection interest as much as the later divisions. The 82 Division Enugu was established in 1975 to secure resources of the Southeast and also those of the Niger Delta following the Nigerian civil war. Along the same line, 81 Division, Lagos was established in year 2000 to secure economic and commercial spaces of Lagos, Ogun and the borders. The motive of 7<sup>th</sup> Division Maiduguri established in 2013 is not different. It was to free Northeastern territories, land and resources from armed bandits and terrorists. The establishment of 6<sup>th</sup> Division, Port Harcourt in 2016 was done to protect oil and gas facilities while the 8<sup>th</sup> Division, Sokoto was established in 2017 to stem the diffusion of BokoHaram terrorists to Northwest states and to secure the resources of the area. On that note, resources have had strategic appeal for Nigerian forces throughout their history, largely because the political economy has been largely natural resource based.

### **The Nigerian Army in Cattle Rearing**

The fact of Nigerian army's involvement in cattle rearing goes beyond the civil engagements armies are usually involved in at peacetime such as civil engineering, Medicare, and education. It is in itself an effort at pacification through demonstration of what is considered sustainable

pastoral activity. It is a war effort that is however subject to various interpretations. The Nigerian Army Farms and Ranch Limited is part of a larger army agricultural programme.

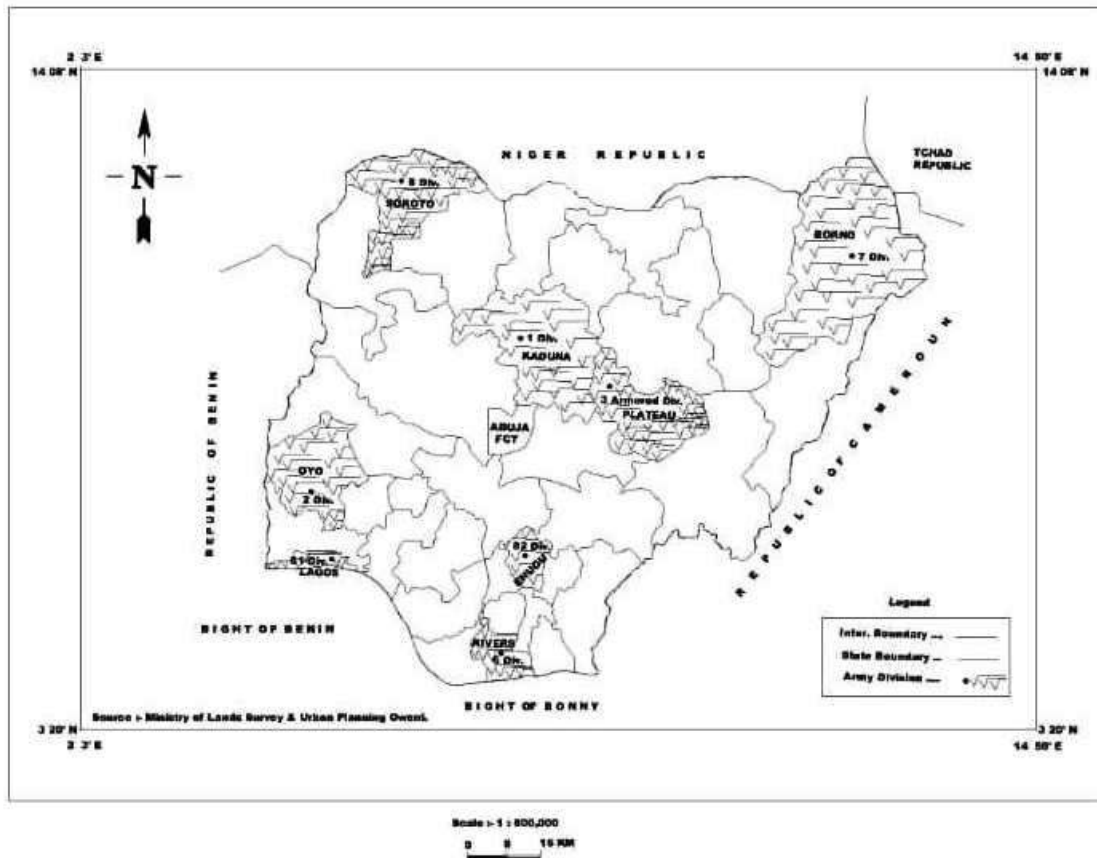
With ‘1000 heads of cattle within the Nigerian Army Barracks and Formations’ as acknowledged by Nigeria’s Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development (Agronigeria.com, 2018) it is clear the army has the goal of securing production spaces for cattle. Under the Barracks Investment Initiative Programme (BIIP) the army has acquired 436,000 hectares of land in Nasarawa State as Pilot for its integrated farming project (The Scoop.com, 2018).

The vision of wide geographical spread of these activities is given by the Chief of Nigerian Army Logistics Maj. Gen. Patrick Akeem thus, “the Army would be raising up cattle ranches in such a manner that in almost all the divisions and all the brigades, cattle will be reared (Adeseun, nd). The divisions and brigades are incidentally comprehensively distributed across Nigeria as shown in Table 1 and Figure 1.

**Table 1: Brigades of the Nigerian Army**

	<b>Location</b>	<b>Geographical Zone</b>	<b>Army Structure</b>
1	Calabar	South East	13 Brigade
2	Ovia, Benin	South West	4 Brigade
3	Kano	North West	3 Brigade
	Ohafia	South East	14 Brigade
4	Abeokuta	South West	32 Art. Brigade
5	Maiduguri	North East	21 Armoured Brigade
6	Yola	North East	23 Brigade
7	Bauchi	North East	33 Art. Brigade
8	Ikeja	South West	9 Brigade
9	Port Harcourt	South East	2 Brigade
10	Obinze Owerri	South East	34 Art. Brigade
11	Sokoto	North West	7 <sup>th</sup> Infantry Brigade
12	Baga, Borno	North East	5 Brigade
13	Ilorin	North Central	22 Brigade
14	Sokoto	North West	1 Brigade
15	Akwabom	South East	2 Brigade
16	Bayelsa	South East	16 Brigade
17	Delta	South West	63 Brigade

\*Geographical zones are purely geographical and do not conform to Nigeria’s political definition



**Fig. 1. DIVISIONS OF THE NIGERIA ARMY.**

The reasons for such envisaged geographical spread have been subjected to much media controversy with conspiracy theories being bandied about. One of the most popular is the theory of a grazing subterfuge which supposes the army's involvement in the enterprise as more of a military maneuver than an economic engagement. An article in *Point Blank News* sees designation of army grazing areas as "clearly a method designed to circumvent the resistance of the country to the establishment of ranches throughout the country for the benefit of a single ethnic group"(The Reporter, 2016).

There is apprehension about budding cultures of distinct emergent societies around the enclaves to be formed by military cordons in communities. There is worry that such settlements will not be a melting pot integrating cultures in peaceful coexistence but they are rather about projecting a parochial cultural wave alien to surrounding areas and a recipe for strife and conflict. The prospects of new settlements spread wide across the country could pass for the largest ever proliferation of new themed settlements in the world. Their potency as growth poles makes for apprehensions regarding a cultural revolution with unpredictable outcomes. Hence there is palpable ambivalence about their emergence.

**Issues of Geographical importance in the Army's Place in Grazing Land Resource Wars**

1. **Special Cattle Spaces:** The Nigerian Army is currently acquiring its own pastoral spaces. This is also a major bulwark against resistance or pockets of it. With the near invincibility of military might and the reputation that goes with it in underdeveloped democracies in Africa, the tendency is for the army to homogenize all spaces of potential pastoral appeal in a no-holds-barred access. Spaces traditionally variegated along the lines of sacredness and profanity, which is an important element in acceptance of cattle invasion of these spaces or otherwise, may lose that variegation to bland treatment under military force.

Exporting pastoral practice to new spaces has to be subject to land availability. The army template interestingly has not provided for pastoral activity in all divisions and brigades. Perhaps the geographical differences in site and situation attributes among divisions and brigades are being factored. A one-size-fits-all approach that neglects the varying geographies of various military formations is not sustainable and will not deliver on the objectives

2. **Remoteness factor in Pastoral Crisis:** Traditionally, forces deployment and personnel allocation in security services favour high density population areas and areas of strategic infrastructure. These are hardly rural backwaters. Incidentally pastoral strife is to be seen largely in the rural backwaters. These are areas of minimal human influence and therefore good enough greenery and water for cattle (Azuwike, 2016). Since trouble breaks mostly in the remotest of areas without much police presence, the army readily comes either as reinforcement or the only force in such outlandish areas. The pastoral challenge for Nigeria demands a counter-intuitive model as alternative to the traditional policing bias for population centres. The current state of things in Nigeria's most challenged spaces is an altered situation of human flows. There are diurnal movement cycles that see rural people move in droves in evening flights to more urbanized centres to survive the troubled nights and return to the rural base the next day only to repeat the cycle. This is the trend in much of Nigeria's middle belt and it is something of geographical interest. It is some modular form of refuge arrangement.

State governments in Nigeria tend to expend the greatest effort in securing their most important centres. The frontiers which are boundary areas in the context of inter-state relations within Nigeria therefore remain marginally protected. They are also not choice areas for investment as they suffer the geographical disadvantage of a compromised proximity to population centres. A halo-effect keeps them underdeveloped and green, making the herdsmen prefer them as major grazing bases. Hence Nasarawa State has some of her worst crises on the frontier with Benue in areas such as Keana, while Imo State has her worst crises on the frontier with Rivers State in parts of Ohaji/Egbema. The army fills the security gap providing patrols in such areas that have "no-man's-land" outlook.

3. **Space Variegation along Security Lines:** Safe corridors for grazing across army's spaces indicate that in, a sea of insecurity as has been shown; there can be islands of suspensions of such attributes for the sake of livelihoods. Where pacification of entire regions is not feasible, enclaves can be created and efforts made to secure them against the general prevalent trend. This addresses one vestige of military dominance of Nigeria's recent polity and society that finds spatial expression: *Military zone, keep off*. Nigeria's spaces are in no way of equal access. Certain spaces across Nigeria are marked out for military use and there is no uniform surface in terms of an isotropic plane. Some spaces and their perception therefore reflect access denial in enforcement of appropriation rights that may be parochial, legal or otherwise.
4. **Streamlining Land Use:** There is a potential for ending mixed land use that generate conflicts in the new Army Ranches and grazing zones. The conflicts on the grazing trail are usually about collateral damage, particularly of farm crops. In the event of space appropriation that allocates use to the army, crop farming ceases to be a distraction to pastoral activity and the conflict from crop damage by cattle will cease to exist. Mixed land use which is a strong feature of Nigeria's country sides will not exist in the envisaged geography of Nigerian Army's pastoral spaces.
5. **Emerging Geography of Military Engagement:** Perception of the army's place in grazing land resource wars varies. People who are very much at home with the army's traditional role of engaging primarily external forces seem not to understand the Army's seemly meddlesomeness. There has been suspicion of a military bias in favour of invading herdsmen. The army has not turned out the way victims particularly expected. Gen. T.Y. Danjuma speaking on militant herdsmen's bloody campaign in Nigeria's middle belt held that "the armed forces are not neutral; they are conniving with armed bandits that kill people, they facilitate their movement. They cover them" (Viashiwa, 2018). Perhaps more of such apprehensions are to be expected in the coming years. Alex Kirby has identified a 'direct and controversial role for military forces in the near future – not simply in fighting these [resource] wars, but also in controlling refugee flows' (Kirby, 2015). The reality of permanent war and excessive military involvement in civil life seems to be dawning. In *How Everything Became War and the Military Became Everything*, Rosa Brooks showed how times have changed and issues that engage the military have dovetailed and mutated (Brooks, 2017). This development sees the military meddling into virtually all aspects of life and getting dangerously bloated in the effort. It is hardly possible to identify any development that is not of a military and war importance in the present world. That is how it came about that "only a small minority of military personnel has combat-related jobs in 2015 (United States) ... only 14 percent (Brooks, 2017:159). An expanded role for the military appears to be part of the emergent geography of military engagement. No space and activity is free from military touch at present.

### **Issues of Geographical Importance in the Army's Public Pacification Efforts**

There is some sort of crisis of definition of Nigerian Army's role in the whole grazing crisis. Former Minister of Interior, Lt. Gen. Abdulrahman Bello Dambazau (retired) had stated while opposing calls for an all out military campaign against killer herdsmen,



‘This [Fulani herdsmen killings] is a non-military issue that borders on law and order. It is not every security issue that you call in the military (sic). It is the responsibility of the police to maintain peace. I believe that if we put the police in proper position in terms of discharging its functions, then there would be no need for military option’ (Solubo, 2016).

The army’s role is not clear. Between apprehending, and providing deterrence against, killer herdsmen and creating safe corridors for herdsmen within hostile communities, it is not clear when and where to draft in the army which authorities such as quoted above, consider as outsiders to primary police roles.

### **Geographical Features affect Manoeuvrability**

1. **Space Reordering and Pacification:** The army itself has come under militia herdsmen attacks, resulting in injuries and deaths (Toromade, 2016). The army is regularly boxed into a corner in which situation the altruism in its role becomes questionable. For instance the 1 Div. of Nigeria Army killed 74 cows used as shield by bandits at Riyawa in Sabon Birni area of Kaduna on November, 17 2018 (Sahara reporters.com, nd). Space as a factor of warfare, terrain characteristics and features on the surface as maneuverability challenges are exploited by both parties in this war. Many of these events where the Army inadvertently injures public interests do not win the Army admirers among civilian populations. Commercial spaces are not spared; to the discomfiture of the public. Army’s recent closure of Maiduguri cattle market to deny *Boko Haram* funds from livestock sales, for instance, produced shocking meat scarcity (Reuters, 2016). Pacification of the public comes at a cost which may include inconvenience of space re-ordering executed through military fiat.
2. **Barracks as Safe Haven:** At times, the military’s efforts in providing spaces for the de-escalation of pastoral conflicts through providing temporary refuge in barracks is publicly misunderstood as aiding and abetting crime through protecting criminal elements. There are interpretations of complicity in a biased programme of ethnics’ protection. Barracks as refuge zone was seen in Jos in 2001 (Abdulsalami, 2001) and in Enugu in 2016 (Ekweremadu, 2016).

Spaces of safety within the mosaic of land uses and security compromises have become imperative for the sustenance of livelihoods and public peace. Without this role of barracks as spaces of safety, the humanitarian cost of pastoral conflicts would have been too heavy on communities. In all these, there is moral justification in the army not closing her doors to civilian populations in these crises. The civilian populations have been caught up in the web of military conflicts. The geography of today’s conflicts leaves no fronts. *Safer World* holds that 90 percent of people killed in conflicts since end of cold war are non-combatants (www.saferworld.co.uk, 2016). In a changed geography of war in which there is multiple rather than one front, it becomes guaranteed that non-military persons would be caught in the crossfire.

The army is enabled in the humanitarian duty of providing safe haven barracks by the sheer extent of distribution of these facilities. The facilities are comprehensive of Nigeria's space and the logistics involved in their utilization is not therefore, too prohibitive in most cases.

In some cases however, the barracks has an urban location whereas pastoral crisis, as has been pointed out, usually breaks out in remote rural areas, sometimes in excess of 100km away. Traversing space in a crisis situation to get to these safe havens is a daunting challenge for victims. New army formations have arisen such as 14<sup>th</sup> Brigade Ohafia, Abia State to break the wide intervening distance and provide greater military access to communities.

- 3. New Settlement Roles for Military Zones:** With increasing insecurity in Nigeria, barracks are emerging major settlements in their own right as people are attracted by relatively better security of these spaces. Populations gravitate towards them. Businesses and residential housing are increasingly located around military formations in a changing geography of land use. Obinze in Owerri West currently has varied land uses: livestock markets and dormitory areas all around the 34 Field Artillery Brigade Headquarters. Public pacification comes at the price of changing geography due to the importance of security. Recent experiences of Nigeria on terror indicate that security is emerging the greatest issue in land use evolution into the near future.

### **Issues of Geographical importance in the Army's Cattle Protection Efforts**

Many have made light, Nigerian Army's roles of tracking cattle and recovery of stolen herds. While these efforts may be dismissed as pedantic, true to the enlarged definition of military roles, they are no less important security issues. There are important geographical issues that play out in the army's cattle protection programmes.

#### **1. Nexus of Terrorism Space and Cattle Rustling Space**

A special operation code named *KaraminGoro* launched by the 1 Div of Nigeria Army, Kaduna is to tackle among others, cattle rustling in parts of Kaduna and Niger States (Punch Newspapers, 2018). The nexus of terror and cattle rustling makes cattle rustling a crime of special interest to the army. Cattle theft and sales fund terrorist activities and also sustain fighting forces and their hostages. Hence the killing of three BokoHaram terrorists by Nigerian Army in December 2017 went with the recovery of some 200 cattle in the North East of Nigeria (Obafemi, 2018).

On March 27, 2018, thirty rustled cows and a slaughtered cow were recovered at Serti, Nyongo village, Sardauna Local Government Area of Taraba State as confirmed by Army Director of Public Relations ([www.army.mil.ng](http://www.army.mil.ng), 2018). Also the 1st Division under operation *Whirl Punch* has arrested a suspected cattle rustler and recovered 49 cows in Gwagwalada village, Chikum LGA of Kaduna State in August 2018 ([thenationonlineng.net](http://thenationonlineng.net), 2018). Whereas a report estimated that in 2013, more than 64,750 cattle were stolen and at least 2991 herders killed in States across the North-central zone (International Crisis Group, 2017), the Commander of 1 Brigade, Sokoto

claims his Brigade is recovering ‘an average of 500 cattle from the rustlers weekly’ (guardian.ng ).

## **2. Trans-boundary Dimensions of Rustling**

Rustling appears to be a pandemic. Meera Selva shows that Kenya’s northern borders are becoming a battleground as local warriors and soldiers fight pitched battles with hundreds of Ugandan and Ethiopian cattle rustlers trying to steal livestock and weapons (Selva, 2005). The case is the same within border regions of Niger, Chad, Nigeria and Cameroon. Rustling is enabled by its trans-boundary tendency relying on the awkward application or failure of jurisdictional authority in trans-boundary situations.

Interrogating the value of military interventions in controlling rustling, Duncan E. Omondi Gumba and Nelson Alusala noted that “success has not been registered with indiscriminate force and incentives to disarm’ (Gumba & Alusala, 2018). International co-operation across regional lines is becoming very imperative. In confronting problems that are footloose such as cattle rustling, the world needs to invent functional regional formats and expanded geographies of jurisdictional authorities. Geographical issues as can be gleaned from the foregoing, are diverse in the army’s work against cattle rustling. The space available for rustling is very vast while the logistic challenge of tracking cattle in wilderness areas is daunting. International cross border banditry shows the limitations of imposed international boundary lines on an otherwise contiguous pastoral space, where these boundaries are not recognized by pastoralists and rustlers alike and are not respected.

## **3. Cattle Market Spaces**

The special place of cattle markets as exchange points and their significance in terrorism financing, makes them spaces of surveillance and at times, spaces fit for lockdowns. The army has supervised such lockdowns in the past.

## **4. Cattle Loss and Security**

Livelihoods involved in cattle production and ownership is of great security importance. If cattlemen lose their cattle, the stability of the zone is lost. Destitute former cattle owners are readily available for terrorism. The *Maitatsine* uprisings, for instance, came after displacements in rural settlements as noted by Shettima (1997). This displacement of rural populations by increasing urbanization had impoverished former cattle owners through cattle die outs.

## **5. Terrain Challenges**

Terrain challenges in the usual zones of cattle rustling, negate chances of success of regular policing, necessitating the involvement of the army with proven better navigational abilities in forbidden terrains.

### What to Do

Nigerian army's involvement in resource wars has met with levels of success across time and space. While the involvement pacifies, it is also capable of eliciting apprehension, resentment and backlash. Getting the best from the army's involvement will require a number of efforts.

1. **A look at Nigeria's Legal Frameworks:** There is a certain conflict of administrative templates arising from a distribution of faiths vis-à-vis distribution of legal jurisdictions. A *Nairaland* blog post ([www.nairaland.com](http://www.nairaland.com), 2018) came up with an interesting poser on Benue's moral leave to destroy cows if Nigerian society countenances Kano *Hisbah*'s destruction of alcoholic drinks. *Hisbah* is the *Sharia* police that implements *sharia* prescriptions. It has been on a campaign against certain issues considered vices in *sharia* legal system that usually pass as legal enterprise in secular Nigeria. The army's role may be misunderstood in the context of the extant geography of laws (local, regional and national) in Nigeria. Army protection of cattle herding activity in Benue for instance, against the currents of popular local agitation, may be deemed partisanship where the army has not opposed *Hisbah* in Kano with equal vehemence.
2. **Focus on Spaces:** When bandits killed some 71 people in the village of Gwaska in Kaduna State, Campbell (2018) writing in a Blog Post saw it as coming from exploitation of ungoverned spaces by bandits. This is for the fact that the nearest police station was far away. In Nigeria's security arrangements, under-policed spaces abound, with only 334,000 policemen in Nigeria (Godwin, 2018) overseeing 932,768km<sup>2</sup> of territory. This implies a single policeman taking charge of 2.77km<sup>2</sup> of territory. The standard police population ratio of 1:450 or 225 police officers for every 100,000 people is also outstripped by Nigeria. At a population of 186 million, (World Population Review, 2018), the police population ratio is 1:557 people. Areal coverage is poor. The police stations do not exist at the right density. Perhaps if the appropriate density is attained, the army would not have to get involved in some of the resource wars.
3. **Military Solutions have Limitations:** Researchers should keep on interrogating the value of military interventions. It is not every development that requires a military intervention. Philippe Le Billon and Eric Nicholls demystified military interventions in peace building, noting that greater success had been achieved with sanctions and sharing agreements than military efforts in resource war situations (Le Billion & Nichols, 2007). Can the penchant for a military solution in all situations which is considered abuse of military powers be checked in Nigeria? The challenge is to develop a relationship between herdsmen and the public that will not depend on externalization of grazing disincentives. Creating markets that formalize the budding commoditization of hitherto open access, free resources that have become contentious, and resuscitating formal and informal adjudication instruments and processes may yet reduce the resource war burden on the Nigerian Army.

### Concluding Remarks

Human populations in different parts of the world are faced with the reality of change: global ecological change and change in the socio-economic sphere. Resource contestation is a product

of this change, as more population is forced to survive on a dwindling resource base. Wars have emerged as extreme manifestation of this contestation. Resources however are hidden elements in virtually all wars. If the liberty of a hyperbole is allowed, it can be concluded that all wars are resource wars. Grazing land is contentious. It was thought that spread of civilization would address the pastoral needs of aboriginal groups. However, the challenge has remained a universal one. In Nigeria, the conflict looms large and the Army is involved in diverse ways in ongoing resource wars over grazing land. The army's involvement in resource wars is through diverse means.

The army is involved in cattle rearing, cattle protection, refuge provision and public pacification. In doing these some geographical issues arise. There are geographical issues involved in creating special cattle spaces by the Army; location attributes of pastoral conflicts necessitating the Army's intervention, space differentiation along security lines according to the Army's intervention, creation of peaceful pastoral enclaves as realistic reductionism under a broad areal coverage of insecurity; military intervention as a way of streamlining land use. Army's performance and the efficiency of her logistics in confronting rustling are affected by geographical features. Barracks as safe havens and military zones as comfort zones in a security sense indicate what positive roles the military can play in checking escalation of resource based conflicts.

There is a certain nexus of terrorism space and the cattle rustling space that makes even the cattle markets spaces of surveillance that have to be managed to deny terrorists funding opportunities. Cattle loss given these considerations becomes a security issue, one that can feed terrorists' efforts, as well as enhance individual's vulnerability and jeopardize public peace. As it is in other wars, terrain challenges abound to favour or disfavour the army against the enemy or vice versa. With the experience of the Nigerian Army, Nigeria has to work beyond military solutions to grazing challenges and resource wars by incorporating issues of review of extant legal conditions, shift of focus to spaces and application of powers of the market in dousing the tension of war lest more war, begets greater war.

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