



Research Paper

Cattle Rustling and Rural Violence in Borno State in the Fourth Republic, 1999-2020

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ABSTRACT

Even when there has been isolated cases of cattle rustling and armed banditry that compounded the problem of rural violence in Borno state in the Fourth Republic; but both have not constituted serious security threat to the state. In spite of this, they remained sources of public safety concern and additional threat factors for security disequilibrium of Borno state. Apart from the loss of herds of cattle and other animals like sheep, goats and camels, both have also created turmoil and open violence that led to loss of lives, destruction of houses and property, and in some cases displacement of the affected victims. The implication of this is that cattle rustling with the attendant violence in the rural environment serve as threat to the overall national security architecture; as well as the general state of insecurity in the state. It also deprives the affected herders means of economic subsistence since that is the only source of their livelihood. It is on the basis of this that the study is embarked upon to examine the effect of cattle rustling and banditry with the resultant rural violence in Borno state. The study revealed that criminal gang activities have been responsible for this; since most of the cattle rustlers are Fulani herders that steal cattle from among themselves and even from non-Fulani herders to increase their flocks; or to sell and increase their prosperity. The study recommends that appropriate law should be enacted for the old system of 'Jangali' (cattle tax) to be restored where the census of cattle and herders will be simultaneously taken with marks given to cattle of any given Clusters of 'Ruga' (area). The herders should be compelled to pay the yearly Jangali (cattle tax). All these will make it easy to tract and trace stolen cows and thereby arrest the rustlers.

KEY WORDS: *Cattle rustling; Banditry; Fulani Herders; Jangali; Security; Economic subsistence.*

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I. INTRODUCTION

Cattle rustling has been a subsisting security problem in Nigeria since pre-historic times more especially in the northern part of the country. From the country's First Republic up to the Second Republic, cattle rustling was a rare occurrence where it majorly take place between the Fulani herders themselves either as a test of wit or as a purely criminal activity undertaken by harden criminals amongst them using rudimentary arms such as sticks, machetes and swords. At some points, non-Fulani herders also fall victims of these cattle thieves; but through active connivance and collaboration of the kit and kin of the victims. As the society became more complex coupled with improved weapon technology, cattle rustlers no longer use sticks, machetes and swords to undertake their nefarious activities; but they now wield and utilized more sophisticated weapons and arms (such as AK 47, IEDs) for their illegal business. The porous nature of Nigeria's borders serve as a motivation to cattle rustlers who steal cows and speedily crossover to neighboring countries; that makes it impossible for Nigerian law enforcement agencies to trace and recover them. The case of Borno state is made worst because it is the only Nigerian state that shares the longest and largest land/marine boundary with three countries of Cameroon (by land), Chad (by water [Lake Chad]) and Niger Republic (by land). The rustled cows (cattle) from Borno state are known to be ferried as far as to Central African Republic and by extension the Great Lake Region in order to erase any means of tracing them. The ease with which cattle thieves steal and make quick money serves as an added impetus for them to increase the intensity of the ignoble profession (cattle rustling) as well as lure gullible idle youths into it. The continuous conscription of teeming idle youths into cattle rustling in Borno state has exacerbated the problem of rural violence and expanded the frontiers of insecurity in the state. The government of Borno state has over the years, expended so much resources (finance, logistics/materials and human) in dually fighting cattle rustling and the protracted Boko Haram insurgency in

the state; yet the problems seem not to abate. In spite of the efforts of the Federal government and the Borno state government in particular to stem the tide of cattle rustling with the associated violence; the problem is on the increase in the state. It is this governmental failure to tackle the problem of cattle rustling in Borno state, which informs the motivation for this study.

II. CONCEPTUAL AND THEORETICAL CLARIFICATIONS

The concepts of cattle rustling, armed banditry, violence and realist theory are hereby defined and clarified as frameworks for the study:

Cattle Rustling –

Cattle rustling is a criminal enterprise of stealing of cows forcefully from their rightful owners accompanied by violence, fatality, destruction of property and psychological trauma. It has wider consequences on socio-economic, political, cultural and psychological spheres. It is a major threat to livelihood of legitimate herders, the cattle and national security. It is increasingly becoming a very large scale organized criminal gang activities where marauders move in their hundreds armed with sophisticated weapons to attack their victims and carry away their cows and other animals. The ruthless manner with which these armed bandits (cattle rustlers) carry out these raids often left behind fatality, burnt houses and wanton destruction of property (Olaniyan & Aliyu, 2016).

Armed Banditry –

Armed banditry is an organized crime committed by outlaws under arm involving the threat or the actual (manifest) use of violence. A person or group of persons under arm that engages in banditry is/are known as bandit/bandits who primarily commit violent crimes such as robbery, murder and forceful extortion. The term bandit can be defined as that person who is proscribed or outlawed. Hence, he can be referred to as a lawless desperate, marauder and a brigand. Armed bandits could also be referred to as organized group of thieves who are out to steal through forceful means and violence (Philip, 2014).

Violence –

Violence can be defined as an extremely complex phenomenon involving major ambiguity between destruction and the creation of order. It also involves physical injury, psychological trauma and other unlawful acts that run contrary to acceptable norms of the society. It can also be defined as the intentional application of extreme force against someone in such a way that it is destructive of objects and physically injurious to humans and animals (Apter, 1997)

Realist Theory –

The realist theory emerged as the result of the perceived failures of the Idealist's solvents against war; but specifically of not preventing the outbreak of the World War II in 1939. The Realists believed that there were laws of political behaviours by nations, and one of such laws is that states are always seeking to increase their power or to maximize it. If this is true, then nation-states must perpetually be in conflict. They then concluded that conflict is unavoidable in international relations, and that conflict and the struggle for power; characterized international relations. The second law introduced by them was that the dominant states are always pursuing their selfish national interest. The third law is that although helpful lessons can be learnt from war, it cannot be completely removed from international relations. Hans Morgenthau was the chief advocate of the Realist school. He argued that the pursuit of power explains the way states behave and that "*might take right*"; such that states are not concerned about morality, because that is defined by them in line with their national interests (Morgenthau, 1978).

Contextually, the Realist theory can be applied to this study at a microscopic level because the cattle rustlers (armed bandits) are relying on their might to take what they feel is their right since the state cannot provide for all their wants. As such, they defy all moral norms and even official laws to perpetrate their evils on their victims with accompanying violence in order to serve their selfish interests (Chesnais, 1992).

✓ **FACTORS RESPONSIBLE FOR CATTLE RUSTLING IN BORNO STATE**

The resurgence of cattle rustling and violence in Borno state of Nigeria has been attributable to post-cold war/globalization developments such as the proliferation of criminal armed gangs, armed banditry, Fulani herders-farmers conflicts and the Boko Haram insurgency. All these have exacerbated the problem of cattle rustling as one of the causes of national security disequilibrium in recent times (Daily Trust, 2014; Ekekwe, 2015; Olaniyan and Aliyu, 2016).

A traditional cause of cattle rustling among Fulani herders in Nigeria and Borno state in particular, is that it was regarded as a show of wit among some of them. For those that are engaged in it, regard it as a show

of bravery when they are able to steal cows and make away with it without being caught. Though a negative aspect of the Fulani culture undertaken by criminal elements, cattle rustling remains a vexed security problem and a most volatile source of violence in Borno state. The criminal elements among the Fulani herders engaged in cattle rustling often employ diabolical means to ensure smooth and successful operations (Bello 2013; Bashir, 2017).

Another cause of cattle rustling in Borno state is the rise of the Boko Haram insurgency where some Fulani herdsmen are classified as Boko Haram collaborators by the Nigerian military and politicians. This reveals the growing complexities of violent clashes between cattle breeders and sedentary agriculturalists across different parts of the state. The alleged involvement of camel pastoralists from the Republic of Niger in shipping arms and ammunition to Borno state for the Boko Haram insurgents informs the need to investigate the trans-national and multidimensional causes; as well as the politicization of the problem of cattle rustling with the associated violence. The formerly symbiotic relationship that once existed between the Fulani herdsmen and farmers; such as economic exchange of dairy products for grains, access to local markets and the provision of manure on arable land; while the cattle consume crop residues has been greatly distorted. In addition, the once harmonious religious and cultural relationships between Nigeria's indigenous Fulani herders has also been destroyed by the activities of foreign Fulani migrants from Niger Republic and the wider Sahelian-Maghrebian regions of North Africa. Most of these migrating foreign pastoral Fulani herders were either direct or indirect armed mercenaries (militias) of the 2011 Libyan crises. The Liaises-fair attitude of the Nigerian government towards regulating the entry of these foreign Fulani herders to Northern Nigeria and Borno state in particular has led to the upsurge in cattle rustling and other violent activities in the state (Adekunle & Solagberu, 2010; Saleh, 2019).

Other factors responsible for cattle rustling such as climate change, trespass on traditional cattle routes, the growth of agro-pastoralism, the expansion of farming on pastures as upheld by some scholars are not scientifically based; and cannot therefore be relied upon. Some factors such as invasion of farmlands by cattle, assault on non-Fulani women by herders, freshwater scarcity, bush burning cannot be causes of cattle rustling as claimed by some scholars, Rather, they can be potential causes of conflicts or violence in Borno state (Bello 2013; Adegboyega & Saleh, 2017).

✓ **EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS OF CATTLE RUSTLING IN BORNO STATE, 1999-2020**

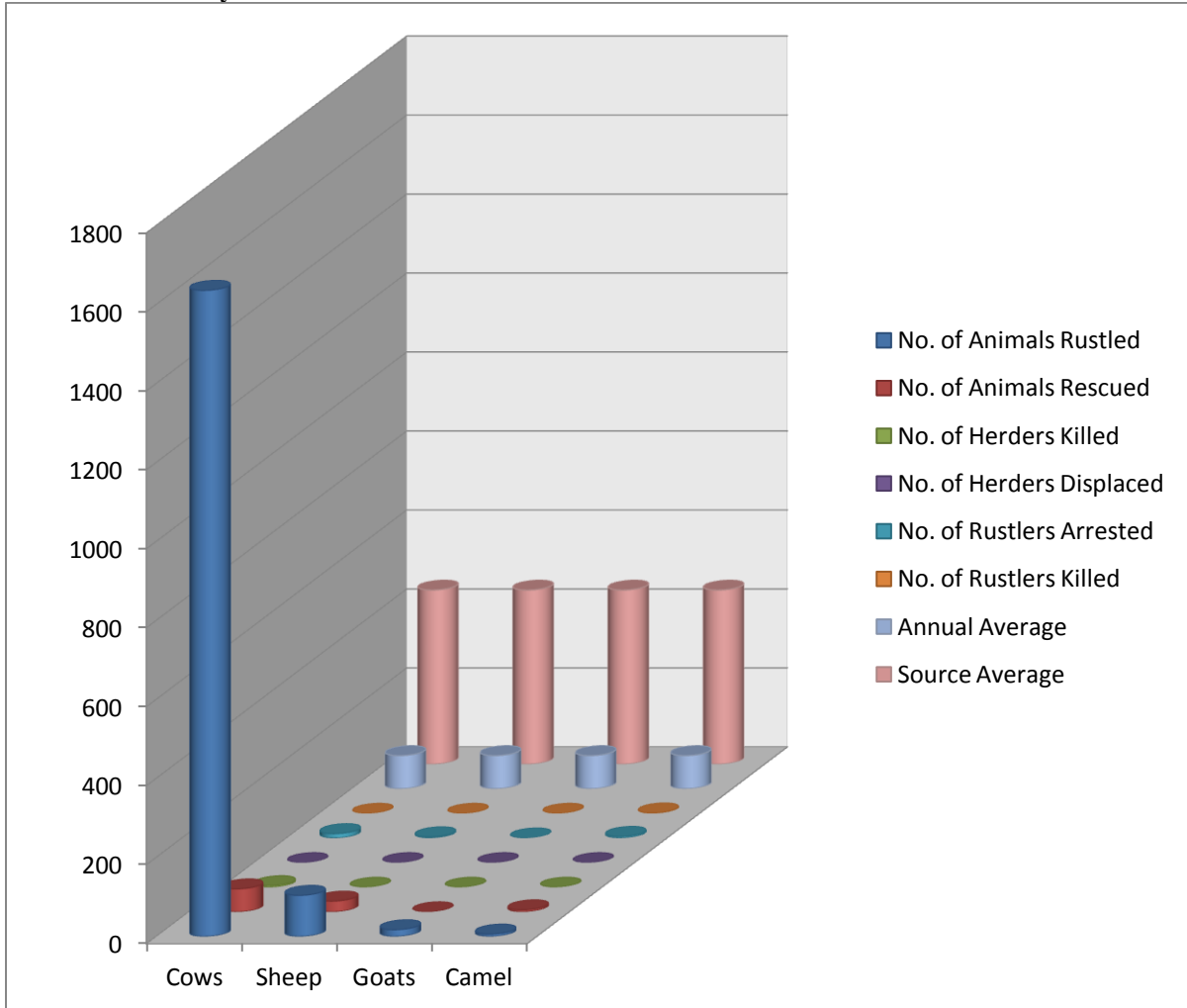
The number of cattle and other animals rustled in Borno State between 1999 and 2020 indicated that a total of 1,763 animals have been rustled within the period. Out of this total, the number of cattle rustled was put at 1,636 between 1999 and 2020, which represents 93% of the total rustled animals for the period; with an annual average of 78 cattle rustled. While the cumulative annual average of all animals rustled for the period stands at 83.95 (≈ 84); and the source average stands at 441 animals. A total of ninety (90) rustled animals were rescued representing 5% of the total numbers of animals rustled for the period leaving a balance of 1,673 (95%) rustled animals yet to be rescued (recovered). Fifty-eight (58) out of the rescued animals were cattle representing 64% of all the total rescued animals for the period of the study. A total of eighteen (18) rustlers were arrested for the period of the study; eleven (11) out which were those arrested for cattle theft; representing 61%. One (1) rustler was killed in connection with the theft of a Camel for the period of the study. Four Herders were killed in connection with cattle theft for the period. All these are as presented in Table 1 and Figures 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 below:

Table 1: Summary of Animals (Cattle) Rustled, Animals (Cattle) Recovered and Herders Killed and Affected in Borno state between 1999 and 2020

Animals	Number of Animals Rustled	Number of Animals Rescued	Number of Herders killed or Affected	Number of Herders Displaced	Number of Rustlers Arrested	Number of Rustlers Killed	Annual Average	Source Average	%
Cattle	1,636	58	4	-	11	-	83.95	440.75	93%
Sheep	104	27	-	-	3	-	83.95	440.75	6%
Goats	17	-	-	-	-	-	83.95	440.75	1%
Camel	6	5	-	-	4	1	83.95	440.75	0%
Total	1,763	90	4	-	18	1	335.8	1,763	100%

Source: Generated by the Researchers as adapted from Eleneke, 2010; Abbass, 2014; Okello, 2014

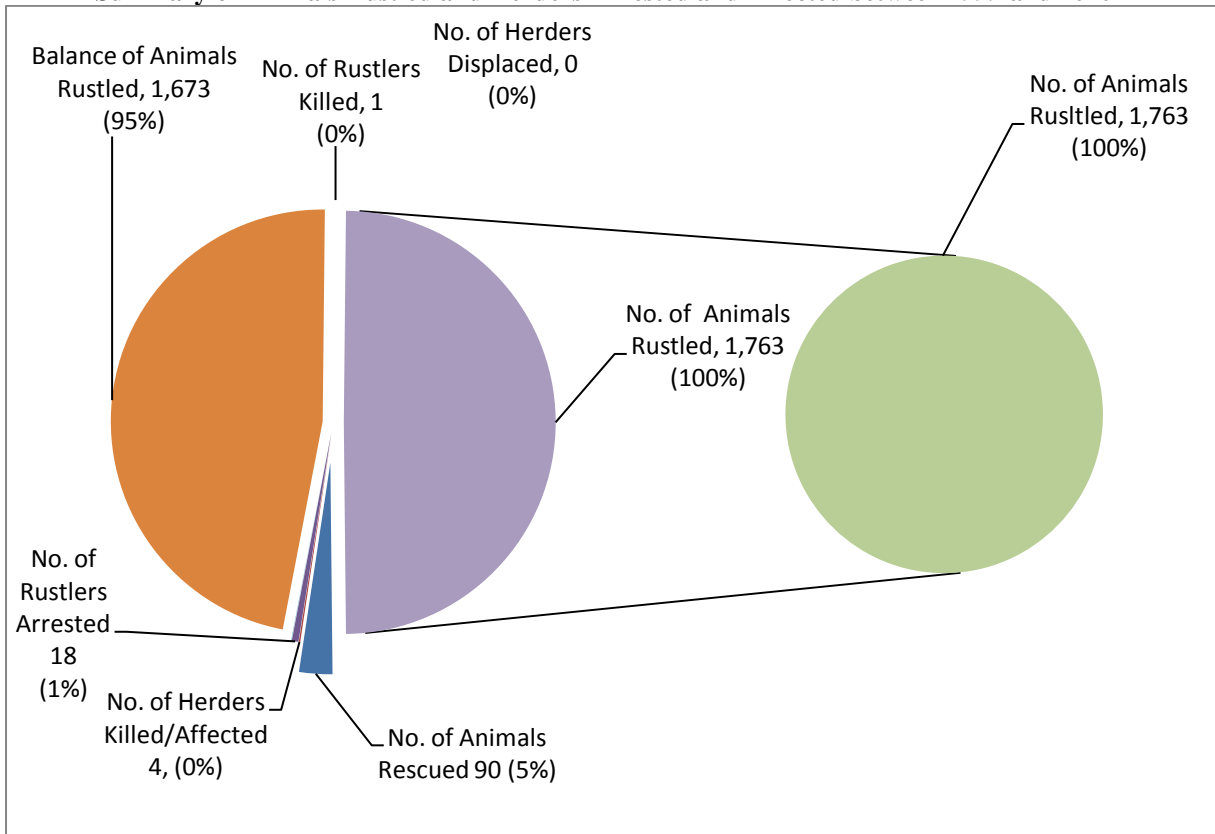
Figure 1:
Summary of Cattle Rustled and Herders Killed and Affected between 1999 and 2020



Source: Generated by the Researchers as adapted from Eleneke, 2010; Abbass, 2014; Okello, 2014

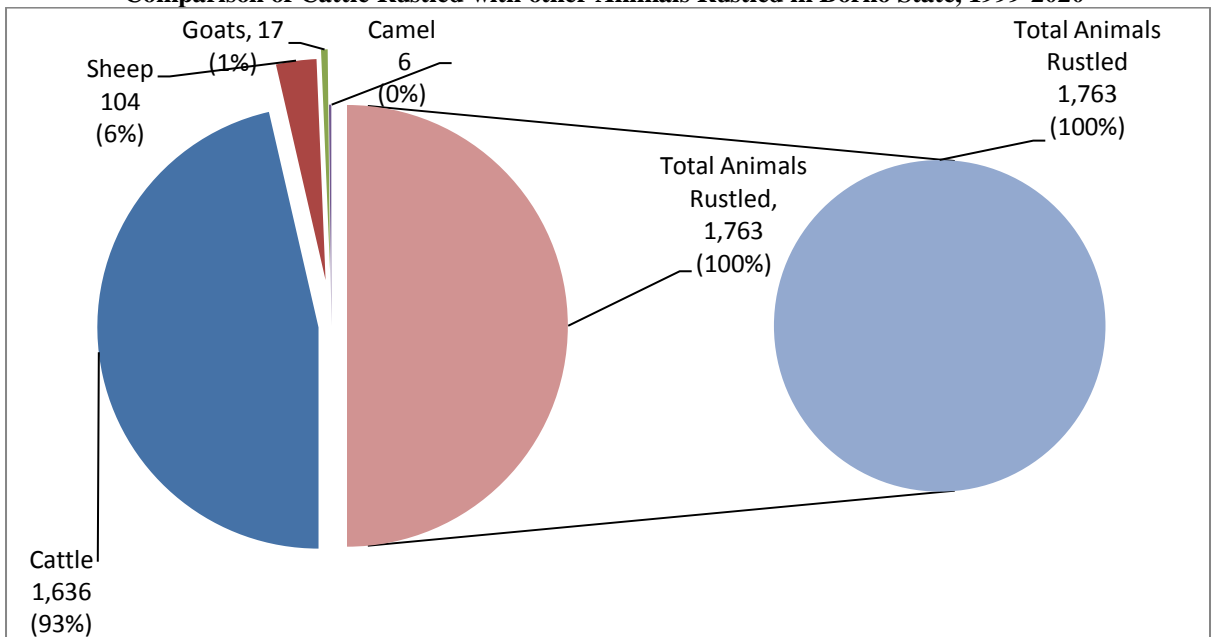
From Figure 1 above, the average cattle rustled between 1999 and 2020 in Borno state is 78 per annum. It indicates a very high incidence/rate of rustling in the state for the period of the study. This has dwarfed the combined average of the remaining three animals (sheep, goats and camel) which stands at 6 per annum. The high incidence of cattle theft in Borno state is hinged on the fact that it has the highest net benefit from ready markets and ease of disposal based on high demands (Eleneke, 2010; Abbass, 2014; Okello, 2014).

Figure 2:
Summary of Animals Rustled and Herders Arrested and Affected between 1999 and 2020



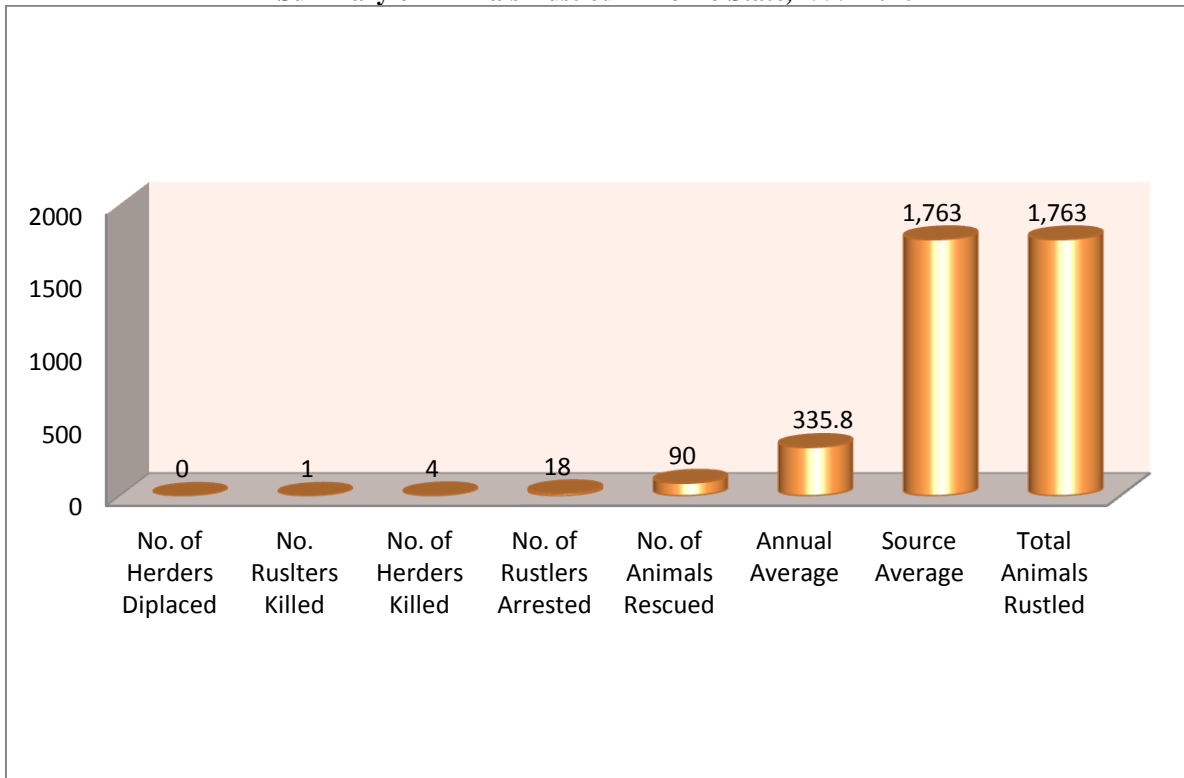
Source: Generated by the Researchers as adapted from Eleneke, 2010; Abbass, 2014; Okello, 2014

Figure 3:
Comparison of Cattle Rustled with other Animals Rustled in Borno State, 1999-2020



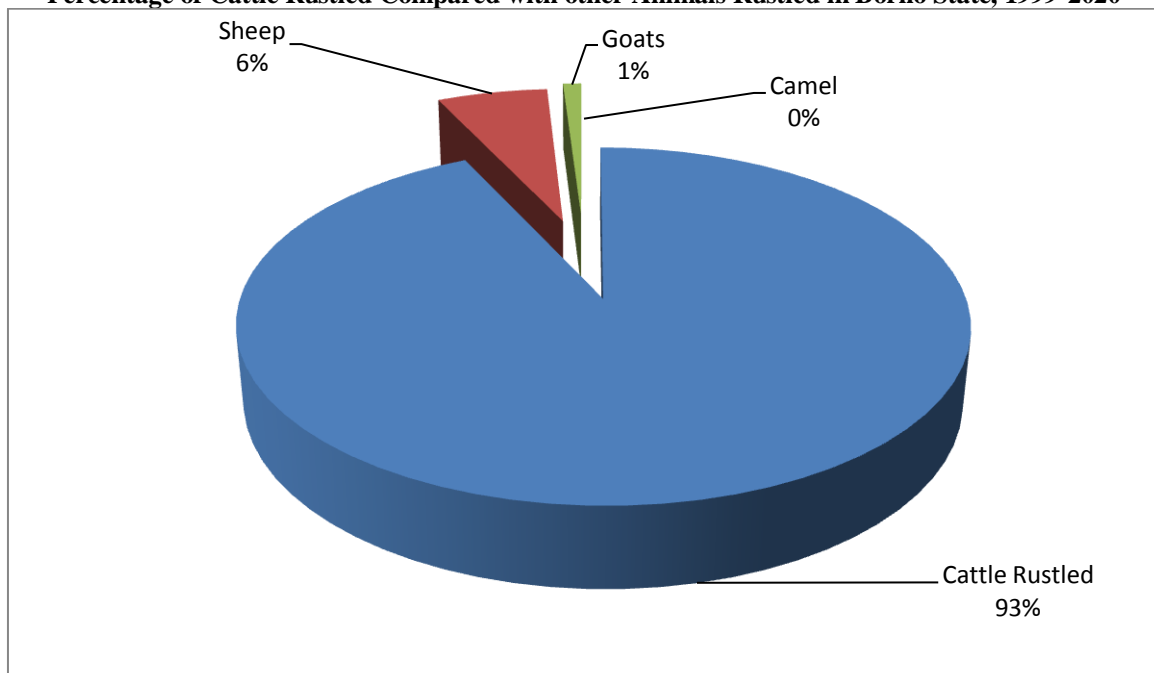
Source: Generated by the Researchers as adapted from Eleneke, 2010; Abbass, 2014; Okello, 2014

Figure 4:
Summary of Animals Rustled in Borno State, 1999-2020



Source: Generated by the Researchers in 2020 as adapted from Eleneke, 2010; Abbass, 2014; Okello, 2014

Figure 5:
Percentage of Cattle Rustled Compared with other Animals Rustled in Borno State, 1999-2020



Source: Generated by the Researchers in 2020 as adapted from Eleneke, 2010; Abbass, 2014; Okello, 2014

✓ **COMPARISON OF RECOVERY OF RUSTLED CATTLE IN BORNO STATE WITH FOUR OTHER STATES (KATSINA, KADUNA, PLATEAU AND NIGER STATES)**

Even though cattle rustling is on the increase in Borno state, the level of occurrence is low compared with four other Northern states of Katsina, Kaduna, Plateau and Niger. Result of the empirical study indicates

that Borno state is the least in terms of recovery of rustled cattle among the five states for the period of the study; where it recovered (rescued) ninety (90) rustled cattle between 1999 and 2020. This represents 0% of the total recoveries made by the five states, which stands at 68,131 cattle. In this regard, Katsina state leads where it recorded 42,000 cattle recoveries representing 62% of the total for the period of the study. This is followed by Kaduna state with 20,000 cattle recovered (rescued) representing 29% of the total recoveries made. Plateau and Niger states were placed third, fourth respectively with 3,563 cattle (5%), and 2,478 cattle (4%) recovered (rescued) for the same period. The annual average rate of recovery for Katsina state is 2,000 cattle; which is far higher than the annual cumulative average, which stands at 649 cattle, and dwarfed that of Borno state whose annual recovery is 4 cattle.

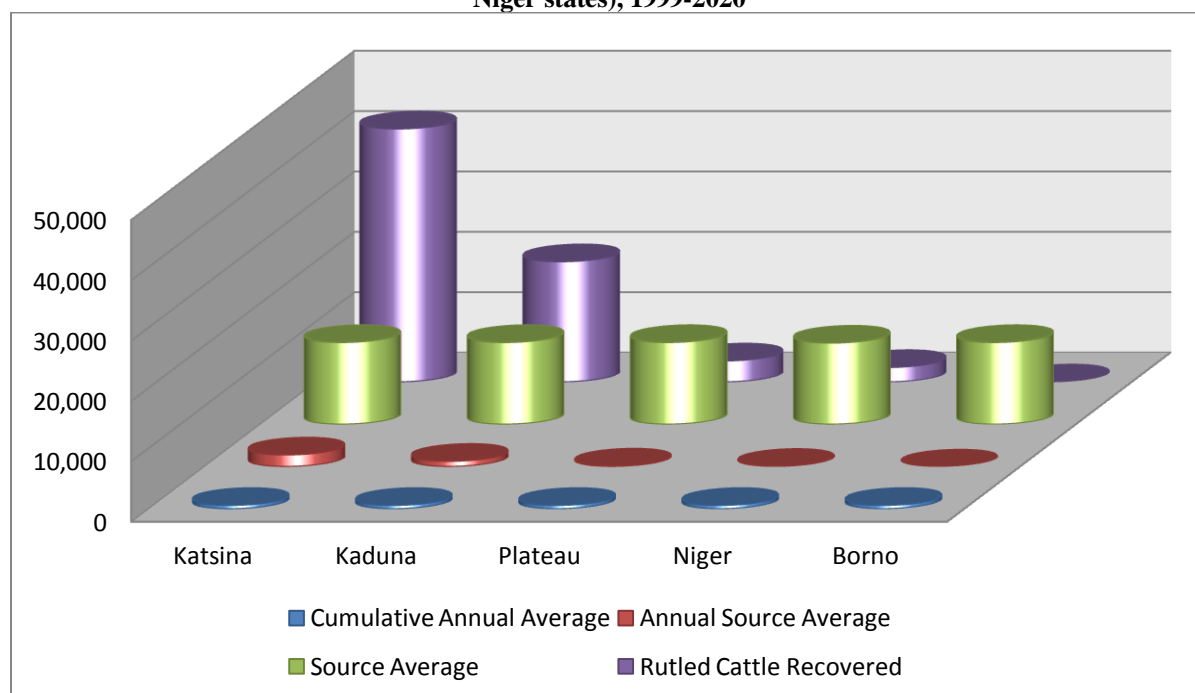
Further comparison indicates that the total cattle rustled in Borno state between 1999 and 2020 which stands at 1,763 which represents 4% of the total rustled cattle recovered (rescued) in Katsina state for the period of the study. This clearly shows that Katsina state is the epicenter of cattle rustling in the country; as well as the melting pot of armed banditry and violence in the Northern region. This explanation is as presented in Table 2 as well as in Figures 6, 7, 8 and 9 below:

Table 2: Recovery of Rustled Cattle in Borno state Compared with four other states (Katsina, Kaduna, Niger and Plateau states)

S/No.	States	Rustled Cattle Recovered	Source Average	Cumulative Annual Average	Annual Source Average	Percentage
1.	Katsina	42,000	13,626	649	2,000	62%
2.	Kaduna	20,000	13,626	649	952	29%
3.	Plateau	3,563	13,626	649	179	5%
4.	Niger	3,478	13,626	649	118	4%
5.	Borno	90	13,626	649	4	0%
	Total	68,131	68,131	3,245	3,245	100%

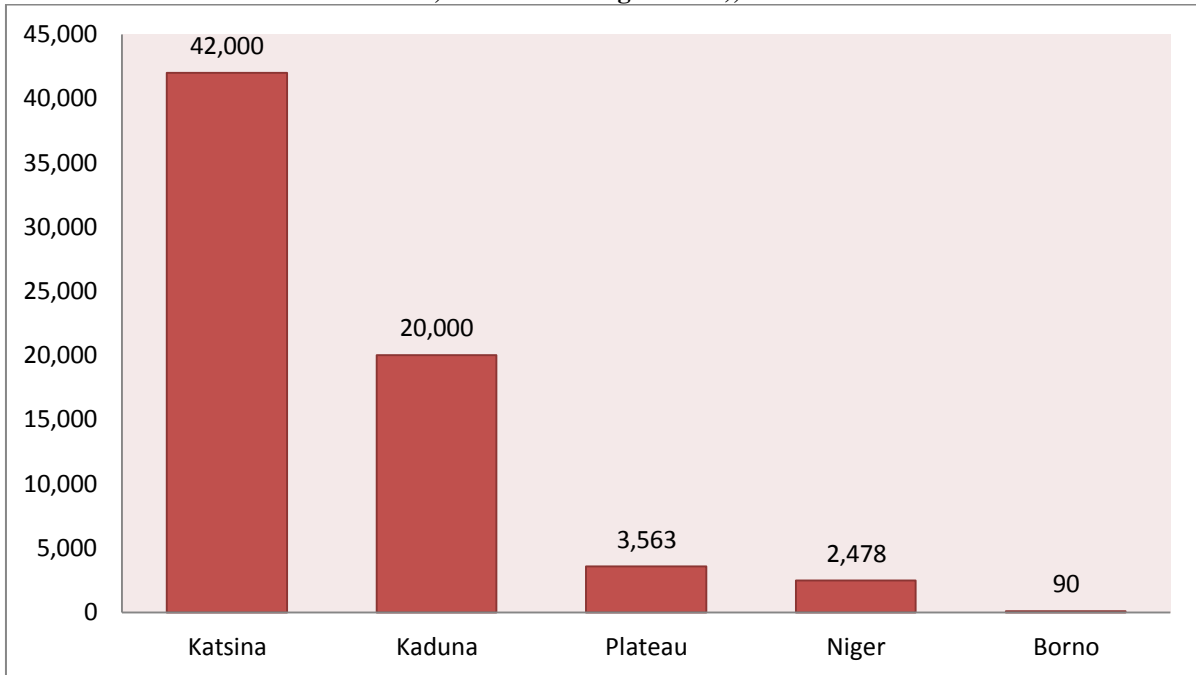
Source: Generated by the Researchers in 2020 as adapted from Daily Trust, 2014; Ekekwe, 2015; Olaniyan & Aliyu, 2016; Bashir, 2017

Figure 6: Recovered Rustled Cattle in Borno state Compared with four other states (Katsina, Kaduna, Plateau and Niger states), 1999-2020



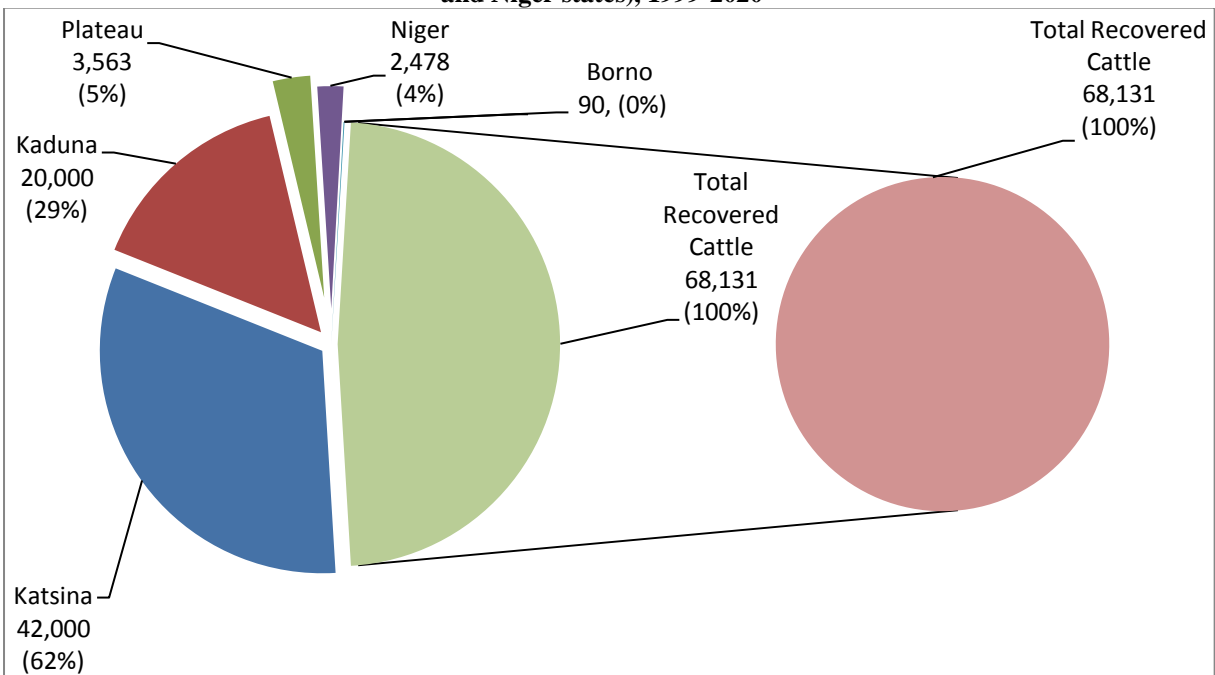
Source: Generated by the Researchers in 2020 as adapted from Daily Trust, 2014; Ekekwe, 2015; Olaniyan and Aliyu, 2016; Bashir, 2017

Figure 7:
Summary of Recovery of Rustled Cattle in Borno state Compared with four other states (Katsina, Kaduna, Plateau and Niger states), 1999-2020



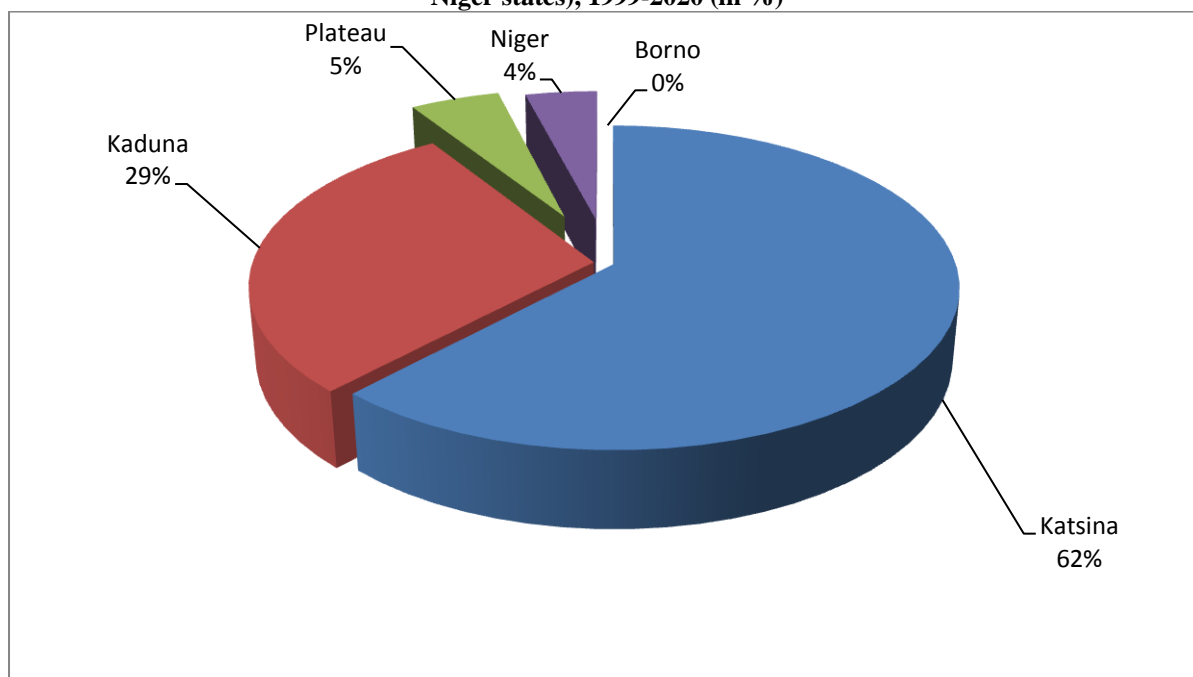
Sources: Generated by the Researchers in 2020 as adapted from Daily Trust, 2014; Ekekwe, 2015; Olaniyan and Aliyu, 2016; Bashir, 2017

Figure 8:
Recovery of Rustled Cattle in Borno state Compared with four other states (Katsina, Kaduna, Plateau and Niger states), 1999-2020



Source: Generated by the Researchers in 2020 as adapted from Daily Trust, 2014; Ekekwe, 2015; Olaniyan and Aliyu, 2016; Bashir, 2017

Figure 9:
Recovered Rustled Cattle in Borno state Compared with four other states (Katsina, Kaduna, Plateau and Niger states), 1999-2020 (in %)



Source: Generated by the Researchers in 2020 as adapted from Daily Trust, 2014; Ekekwe, 2015; Olaniyan and Aliyu, 2016; Bashir, 2017

✓ **IMPLICATION OF CATTLE RUSTLING ON SECURITY AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF BORNO STATE**

The implication of cattle rustling in Borno state between 1999 and 2020 has been so dire on both security and socio-economic development of the state. Apart from loss of lives and property as well as massive displacement of citizens from their homes, the proceeds from the sale of rustled cattle have been known to finance and fuel the perpetration and perpetuation of the Boko Haram insurgency in Borno state. Furthermore, it has serious implications on health, education and general infrastructure of the state. At a more microscopic level, cattle rustling in Borno state has deprived genuine herders their means of livelihood because most of them depends largely on the sales of the animals and their dairy products for basic subsistence and even for individual economic empowerment. It also has serious implication for subsistence farmers that have been scared from tilting their lands for the fears of the heavily-armed cattle rustlers. This negatively affects agriculture and agricultural value chains leading to severe and acute food shortage (food insecurity). Another implication of cattle rustling is that of depriving the government of revenue from taxes on the sales of these cattle and other agro-allied food products. Other implications of cattle rustling in Borno state include trauma by families that have experienced cases of rape, kidnapping and brutal killings of their loved ones. This has caused lingering psychological trauma in the affected people (victims). Some victims, in trying to overcome this trauma involve themselves in drug addiction, which further compound their psychological problems. While, others become resentful against the society (Olabode, 2010; Philip, 2014; Oladele, 2016; Bashir, 2017).

III. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

From the analysis so far, the following summary of findings have been deciphered:

1. The study has established that there was lack of an effective statutory law that will regulate the entry and movement of foreign Fulani herders in the state. This creates a lot of difficulty in the tracking of criminal elements among them.
2. The study has also established that there was no effective mechanism put in place to register and appropriately mark cattle and other animals brought into the state.
3. The study has established that there was failure on the part of the indigenous Fulani herders to educate the foreign migrating Fulani herders on the need to obey all Nigerian laws and to live in peace with their co-farmers once they enter Borno state.
4. That all the forests in Borno state are not effectively policed by security personnel which made them safe havens for the cattle rustlers, armed bandits and other criminal elements.

5. The study has established that there was little or no synergy between the Borno state government and the Cattle Breeders Association of Nigeria, Borno state branch. Hence, the Liaises-fair attitude on the part of the Association towards checking the buying and selling of rustled (stolen) cattle (cows).
6. The study has further established that there was poor intelligence-gathering system and lack of qualified trained professionals that ought to fish out criminals from black spots throughout the state.
7. The study has also established that there was failure on the part of government to carry the citizens along by getting them involve in all security matters in the state. This tends to erode the bases of the people's support for all developmental programmes including sustainable security of the state.
8. The comparative analysis has established that Borno state is the least in terms of recovery of rustled cattle among the five states analyzed.

IV. CONCLUSION

From the analysis so far, conclusion can be drawn that cattle rustling has emerged as a major security challenge to the Borno state government; where it is seen as a criminal enterprise with consequences on the socio-economic, political, cultural, and psychological spheres of society. At the economic level, it constitutes a major threat to the livelihood of the herders and those who depend on cows for survival. At the socio-political level, rustlers' activities have resulted in the destruction of lives and property, thereby disturbing peace and creating security disequilibrium. In view of the above, the Borno state government over years has expended time and enormous resources to eradicate rustling with associated violence in the state. The huge chunk of money sunk by the Borno state government in stemming the tide of cattle rustling in the state, is based on its destructive effect on citizens, economy and the eco-system. The empirical analysis has established that ninety (90) animals (comprising cattle, sheep, goats and camel) out of 1,763 rustled animals have been rescued for the period of the study. This represents just 5% of rustled animals in the state. It leaves a huge balance of 1,673 (95%) rustled animals yet to be rescued. The study has further established that 58 cattle out of the 1,636 rustled cattle have been rescued for the period of the study. This represents 64% of the rescued animals in the state for the same period. It however indicates underperformance because it represents just a mere 3% of the rustled cattle. Since rescuing rustled cattle in the state is becoming an uphill task, more efforts must therefore be expended in preventing cattle theft in the first place. The comparative analysis indicates that Borno state is the least among the five states in terms of recovered (rescued) rustled cattle for the period of the study. It recovered (rescued) 90 cattle representing 0% of the grand total (68,131 cattle) against that of the group leader Katsina state, which recovered (rescued) 42,000 cattle representing 62% of the grand total of recovered (rescued) cattle of 68,131 cattle (100%) for the period of the study. The comparative advantage of being the least in terms of cattle rustling among the five states does not in the least; seem to suggest elements of complacency for the Borno state government. Rather, political leadership of the state should brace up for further action towards stamping out cattle rustling in the state.

V. RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are proffered to curb cattle rustling and armed banditry in Borno state:

1. The Borno state government should urgently enact a law that will regulate the entry and movement of foreign Fulani herders in the state. This will make it easy for the tracking of criminal elements among them.
2. All cattle and other animals brought into the state must be registered and marked appropriately.
3. Indigenous Fulani herders should be encouraged to educate migrating foreign Fulani herders on the need to live in peace with their co-farmers once they enter Borno state.
4. The Borno state government with the collaboration of the Federal Government should deploy adequate security personnel to game reserves and forests within the state to effectively police them since they serve as hideouts for these criminal elements.
5. The Cattle Breeders Association of Nigeria, with their headquarters in Kasuwan shanu Old Maiduguri and Butchers Association must be involved in the fight against cattle rustling since they are in the business of buying and selling cattle.
6. There is the need to step-up intelligence-gathering system with qualified professionals that have been trained in the science of security and strategy that will be deployed to black spots to track and apprehend criminals.
7. Government should solicit for the support of the entire citizens of Borno state to be involved in the task of ensuring sustainable security of the state by supplying the security forces with vital information that will lead to the arrest of those suspected of cattle rustling. The confidentiality and personal security (safety) of these informants must be kept and guaranteed.
8. Even though the comparative analysis has established that Borno state is the least in terms of recovery of rustled cattle among the five states, the Borno state government should not rest on its oars in flattening the curve of cattle rustling in the state.

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