



Research Article

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Cross Border Relations and Insecurity in North West, Nigeria, 2015-2022

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Abstract

For over two decades, North West has been embroiled in tension and insecurity. It has been hot bed of banditry, cattle rustling, killing and kidnapping. Road users and farmers are kidnapped, slaughtered and burnt daily. Some say the challenge has degenerated as a result of the influx of criminals into the country. The existential threat posed by rural banditry in the North West, Nigeria has left many in doubt about the capacity of the Nigerian State to perform its constitutional responsibility of providing security for lives and property. The impression is that the State has become overwhelmed by the activities of armed bandits and has lost grip over their activities. Therefore, this paper seeks to explain how cultural affinity between Nigeria and her neighboring States induce insecurity in the region. This study is anchored on routine activity theory and argued that cultural homogeneity between Nigeria and her neighbors induce rural banditry in North West, Nigeria. The study relied on secondary data whereby data were gleaned from books, newspapers, and government official documents among others. The data were analyzed using content analysis. The finding revealed that cultural affinity between Nigeria and her neighboring States induce banditry in North West, Nigeria. We recommend stringent migration laws that would take records of every entry and exit of migrants in order to checkmate criminals who would leverage on the porous borders to perpetrate heinous crime in the country.

Keywords: Rural banditry, cultural affinity, killings, insecurity, SNigeria

1. Introduction

The State in the post-colonial periphery, such as Nigeria, is a capitalist type of state, though to a considerable extent, differs from the state in advanced capitalist formations (Ekekwe, 1986:12). In developing countries, there are multiple interpretations of the nature of state formation, including the post-colonial state, the bureaucratic-authoritarian state, the development state, and so on (Haque, 2008). Haque argues that since the early 1980s, the diversity in state formations has been replaced by a globally standardized state model based on neo-liberal assumptions and policies. The connotation and composition of reforming the state in Nigeria is inseparable from the nature and formation of the state. This is because the Nigerian state is an imposed and peripheral variant of the capitalist type. This has implications for security, stability and development.

Consequently, in retrenching the State, as canvassed by the Washington Collective, the state also rolled itself away from providing the most basic of its functions, the security of citizens and development, among others. As such, there tends to be a decisive swing in the development of security strategies away from government initiatives on public security to private ownership and market-based allocation of resources and remote-based security provisioning (Mbah, 2014:36). This has primarily undermined the commitment of resources to general security policies for the country. Security of lives and property of the people has continually assumed a vital responsibility of the state from time immemorial till date.

It is believed that the primary impetus for State formation, according to the social contract theorists, was to save society from existential threats occasioned by inordinate human tendencies. However, the nature and character of security and how a state secures the citizens' lives and property have broadly been called into question. This paper attempts to explain the interface between the Nigerian state and security challenges in Nigeria, especially rural banditry in Northwest Nigeria. Security problems in contemporary Nigeria have become a big concern because of the various forms of carnage, brutality, pogroms and even genocide. The ongoing rural banditry in North West Nigeria came into existence due to the struggle between Hausa crop farmers and migrant Fulani pastoralists from neighbouring countries over scarce land and other natural resources. This has put Nigeria under serious security threat. Most problematic in the existent development is the hostility ranging from cattle rustling, kidnapping for ransom, raids on villages, markets and communities, raped, killing and destruction of means of livelihood associated with this violence. However, security situations have increasingly deteriorated due to dynamic human ecology, decreasing natural resources, climate change, and identity politics brought about by social inequality, economic marginalization, and political exclusion (Nnoli).

Consequently, re-occurring attacks by bandits have continued unabated and become a disturbing attribute of socio-cultural and political life in North West Nigeria. Combined with the nationwide challenges, poverty, illiteracy, depleted livelihood options and unemployment, the Hausas and Fulanis' struggle for scarce resources has profoundly polarized the two groups. Therefore, the present violent dynamic in the Northwest, apparently in rural banditry, started when the vigilante groups of Hausa ethnic extraction known as 'Yan Sakai' extra-judiciously killed some Fulani pastoralists as hospitality mounted from growing struggle between the two groups over land and natural resources which has coincided with an increased in cattle rustling in the region by armed criminal syndicate as the effects of climate change often descend into cycles of retaliatory attacks based on ethnic identity. This hostility between the two groups, which degenerated into rural banditry, has implanted a gridlock and caused the Nigerian security apparatus to be bolted in a perpetual security standoff.

The Northwest region is home to different vast and most frequented global transhumance routes in West Africa and the Sahel, playing host to the migration of thousands of alien Fulani pastoralists who follow seasonal patterns along traditional and statutory migration routes (AFDB, 2015). North-West, Nigeria, which is made up of seven States that include Jigawa, Kaduna, Kano, Katsina, Kebbi, Sokoto and Zamfara, is also homogeneous in terms of religion, ethnicity and language

except the southern Kaduna and parts of Kebbi State. It is equally characterized by hardy forest lands seated astride porous borders across State frontiers that bandits have colonized and made heavily ungovernable. The forested landscape, which has remained ungovernable where statehood is either absent or at best fitful, has become a shelter for bandits who desperately seek an operational bridgehead in the area that makes it difficult and impossible for the Nigerian security forces to penetrate (Ojewale, 2023).

Similarly, the policing system in rural communities and villages in the region is indigent, and even more so, arms proliferation in the West Africa sub-region, which is aggravated by the collapse of the Libyan state in 2011, made it possible for small arms and light weapons to illicitly be at the disposal of bandits that have continued to make rural communities and villages vulnerable to persistent attacks by the bandits (Barnett and Rufai, 2021). The Nigerian state, to combat rural banditry and control insecurity in the Northwest, deployed military forces under the tactical operation known as “Operation Harbin Kunama” (‘Scorpion Sting’) in 2016, which further worsened the crisis and forced the bandits to relocate, reorganize, and also aided the bandits in the recruitment of the disgruntled locals due to collateral damages produced by the military offensive (Brenner, 2021). In the same vein, poor knowledge of the rural communities and terrain, especially without the use of modern technology for intelligence gathering, compelled the Nigerian security forces to frequently rely on the rural dwellers or the vigilante groups who often harbour their grievances and preconceptions for intelligence (Ojewale, 2021). Party politics has also affected the utility and efficacy of the Nigerian state’s response and mechanisms of traditional institutions to combating and controlling insecurity. Consequently, the ineffectiveness of the role of traditional institutions as mechanisms for managing and controlling rural insecurity and other forms of social vices has contributed to the increase and spread of rural banditry in the North West region of Nigeria.

Banditry could be defined as the incidences of armed robbery or allied ferocious crimes such as cattle rustling, kidnapping, and raids on communities, villages or markets. It involves using force or threat to intimidate a person or group of people to rob, assault, rape or liquidate such a person or group of persons (Okoli & Okpaleke, 2014). Uche and Iwuamadi (2018) defined banditry as the practice of marauding and assaulting a vulnerable person or group of persons by members of an armed group, whether or not premeditated, using weapons of offence or defence, especially in semi-organized groups to overpower the person and obtain loot or achieving some political goals. Such bandits are usually perceived as outlaws, desperate and lawless marauders who do not have a definite residence or destination but roam around forests and mountains to avoid being identified, detected and arrested.

On the other hand, cross-border relations means the relationship or cooperation between one or more member nation-states and one or more third countries and territories along the external borders of a union. Cross-border relations means any act or policy aimed at promoting and strengthening good-neighborly relations between border populations, territorial communities administrations or other stakeholders within the jurisdiction of two or more nation-states, including the conclusion of agreements valid for the purpose. Therefore, in light of the increasing attacks by bandits in North West Nigeria, this paper seeks to explain the cross-border relations dynamics of rural banditry in the region 2015 to 2022.

2. Cultural Affinity and Rural Banditry

The power of culture to impact the state of human life cannot be overemphasized. It influences society and is also affected by it. This is because people are not only influenced by culture but also influence culture and its dynamics through geographical location, religion, science and politics. Culture is accountable for most people's enlightened behaviour as individuals and equally govern societal standard or norms on spousal relationships, sex, childbearing, and other different issues of life. The impacts of culture on individuals are not only behavioural but also have a cognitive and psycho-dynamic effect on individuals. Culture is the beliefs, values, orientations, ideas, behaviours,

attitudes, and traditions within large groups, usually of a common language, history, religion, family, or something similar. These beliefs, values, attitudes, ideas, orientations, behaviours and traditions are transferred from one generation to another and are maintained, revised and improved through education and socialization. On the other hand, cultural homogeneity is one aspect of national identity which implies a consciousness of pride in one's culture, nationality and common heritage with fellow nationals. It is defined as a state, society, or group having only a singular or similar primary culture (Leach & Worden, 2008).

Societal security, the cognizance of security derivable from cultural homogeneity, explains why the nation-State, since its development in the eighteenth century, is based on a narrative of cultural and ethnic homogeneity (Jamali, 2020). However, migration and ethnic heterogeneity threaten this position, and the growth of multicultural societies poses major challenges to national identities (Castells, 2001). Similarly, the inclination to development of multinational societies is a further challenge to the nation-state. This is because contemporary means of transportation and communication make it possible for migrants and their posterity to keep long-term connections with their ancestral country of origin or with diaspora groups across the globe (Sharma & Haldar, 2021). Consequently, the absorption of migrants has been part of the myth of nation-building for many countries. However, countries that place a shared culture at the heart of their nation-building process have found it difficult to resolve this contradiction (Cindy, 2009). This applies to many Western nations, including numerous post-colonial nation-States such as Nigeria. Therefore, societal security derived from cultural homogeneity is not likely in multicultural, diverse, plural societies like Nigeria. The argument here is that in as much as cultural homogeneity is valued, along with a strong identity and certainty in the continuance of traditional patterns of language, custom, value, lifestyle, and norms of life, migrants may be seen as interlopers and foreigners who are capable of threatening the existence of nation-states (Jamali, 2020). In the same vein, since the cardinal mechanisms of globalization are trans-border flows and multinational networks, the flows of people are understandably as important as flows of goods and services, ideas, and finance. However, while nation-states welcome the flows of goods, services, ideas and finance because of the economic benefits, states are always wary of migrants, whom states perceive as threats to national culture and identity, and hence as a major factor challenging the security of nation-states.

Scholars such as Kuna and Ibrahim (2016) identified factors which trigger rural banditry to include environmental and climate change, constant displacement of the human and livestock population, expansion in non-agricultural use of land, weak state capacity and the provision of security, proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALWs); rise of criminality and insecurity in rural areas; and weakening or collapse of informal conflict resolution mechanisms. However, Kuna and Ibrahim (2016) did not establish a connection between porous or ungoverned borders and rural banditry. Egwu (2016) attributed the underlying causes of rural banditry to a deteriorating state of human security, poverty, unemployment, the fallout of ethno-religious conflict, desperate desire for primitive accumulation of wealth, armed robbery and mental issues as well as the problem of small arms and light weapons (SALW) that have found their way into the hands of non-state actors. However, Egwu (2016) did not explain how consistent human population displacement could trigger rural banditry.

Momale (2016) argues that the changing methods of animal husbandry, especially as it relates to pastoralism which involves movements of both people and livestock in search of feeds, water and pleasant grazing regions, failures in the institutional capability of the State to tackle the problems of insecurity; joblessness and chronic problem of poverty are causes of rural banditry. Notwithstanding this excellent line of argument, Momale (2016) failed to attribute the reason for rural banditry to greed and psychological needs. Ibrahim (2014) associated the phenomena of rural banditry with the failure of the State to provide security of lives and property as well as essential services to the general populace. Ibrahim (2014) did not see the collapse of informal conflict resolution mechanisms which could resolve social group conflicts leading to banditry as a factor responsible for rural banditry. Kusa and Salihu (2016) argued that rural banditry occurs due to the availability of motivated offenders

whom cattle, goats and sheep attract because of their high economic value, the availability of suitable targets which represent the unprotected citizens, and the absence of authority (state) to prevent the attack from taking place.

Nevertheless, Kusa and Salihu (2016) ignored how the chronic problem of poverty and unemployment could trigger rural banditry. Mohammed and Alimba (2016) posit that uncontrolled or poorly governed rural environments and the availability of vulnerable populace citizens in rural areas and along the highways and roads are factors responsible for rural banditry. Nonetheless, Mohammed and Alimba (2016) did not look at the proliferation of small arms and light weapons as a driver of rural banditry.

Sztompka (1993 in Mohammed & Alimba, 2016) asserts that rural banditry mainly occurs in periods of social conflict when accepted ways of life, rules and laws are sabotaged, governing elites are not respected, and customs are jilted. For Sztompka (1993), rural banditry has a bearing on the internal dynamics of a state occasioned by social instability, poverty, politics, corruption, economic crisis, and environmental challenges that often precipitate rural banditry. Sztompka (1993) further posited that these internal dynamics directly undermine a state's security and stability, enabling a plurality of criminal activities across the state.

Ibrahim and Dabugat (2016) submit that the intense struggle over scarce tillable land and water resources between crop farmers and pastoralist Fulani herders, which often leads to conflict, and the seemingly weak capacity of the state to effectively exercise control and authority over its territory evidently in the absence or lack of security forces as well as the apparent lack of infrastructural facilities gives room for the rise of rural banditry. Kwaja and Abdul (2016) linked rural banditry to the nomadism crisis involving colossal losses for pastoralists, weak policing and poor justice administration. They further see economic greed, poverty, unemployment, and the proliferation of small arms and light weapons in a state, which indicates a tendency in the denationalization of aggression that has resulted in a situation whereby non-state actors own weapons beyond state control as drivers of rural banditry. For Kwaja and Abdul (2016), there is an organic connection between rural banditry and livelihood rather than social grudges. In contrast, Jumare and Surma (2016) argued that rural banditry is caused by the problem of inter-state boundary security, unemployment, abject poverty, violent conflicts between sedentary crop farmers and nomadic Fulani pastoralists resulting from either grazing on crops or incessant cattle rustling by those herdsmen who lost their cattle.

Scholars such as Gaye (2018), Olaniyan and Yahaya (2016), Suleiman (2017) and Mustapha (2019) have advanced different factors responsible for preponderance of rural banditry in Nigeria, including the vulnerability of the Nigerian state, weak institutions of the state, particularly the security agency, accessibility of total ungoverned territories, weak leadership porous borders, corruption, chronic poverty, unemployment, and arms proliferation. Gaye (2018) argues that inaccessible forested areas and inadequate presence of security operatives are motivators of the rise in criminality like rural banditry. Olaniyan and Yahaya (2016) asserted that collusion of nationals, lack of sophisticated weapons, and poor motivation of the state security forces promote rural banditry in Nigeria. Okoli and Ugwu (2019) posit that the existence and preponderance of an avalanche of 'ungoverned', 'under-governed' and 'ungovernable' spaces within a territorial area have provided a tremendous opportunity for rural criminality. \

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

Accordingly, The Humanitarian (2018) stated that small-scale, illegal and non-industrial mining in states like Sokoto and Zamfara has provided an abiding material inducement for criminals, including bandits who occasionally booty mining sites into stealing gold and cash.

Okoli and Lenshie (2018) assert that the ailing regulated livestock production has resulted in its attack by criminals, manifesting in the increased rustling of leading to banditry. Akanle and Omobowale (2015) argued that the goal of integration of the people of the ECOWAS member-nations in the ECOWAS Charter, which allows for the free movement of persons, goods and services, promotes banditry in the West African sub-region. However, Akanle and Omobowale (2015) did not link economic depression to banditry in the West African sub-region.

Mohammed and Abdullahi (2021) emphasized that rural banditry in Nigeria is economically driven by the desperate desire among unemployed youth to accumulate wealth and politically motivated by the quest to intimidate and kill a person or group of persons for political and ideological reasons. Thus, Mohammed and Abdullahi (2021) did not see the issue of identity politics and inter-group relations as drivers of rural banditry. Abdulrahman (2020) maintains that the weak capacity of the state, poverty, unemployment and failure of leadership drive rural banditry in Nigeria. However, Abdulrahman (2020) did not look at the ECOWAS protocol on the free movement of persons, goods and services as a contributory factor to explaining rural banditry in the West African region. Osamba (1998), in his study on the sociology of insecurity: cattle rustling and banditry in Kenya, identified politics of cattle warlordism, ecological impediments, drought, famine, state repression and marginalization of the pastoralists as drivers of armed banditry.

Notwithstanding this near-excellent argument, Osamba (1998) did not try to establish a connection between poverty and banditry. Ademola (2021) enumerated poverty, conflict over depleted land resources between farmers and pastoralists, inequality, weak security forces, arms proliferation, the failure of local justice, and ethnic division as motivators of criminal activities such as rural banditry. Nonetheless, Ademola (2021) did not see the politics of cattle warlordism as an explanatory variable that promotes rural banditry. Suleiman (2019) argues that the effects of climate change, which result in decreasing amount of rainfall, scarcity of arable land and pasture, de-industrialization, abject poverty, porous borders, collapse of state institutions and conflict over illegal gold mining in Sokoto and Zamfara as causes of the rise in criminality and banditry in North West Nigeria. However, Suleiman (2019) ignored how the failure of local justice and ethnic division could drive crime like banditry. According to the report of the United Nations Office for West Africa and Sahel (2018, cited in Olapeju & Peter, 2020), the struggle over water resources, pasture and animal feeds accounts for the spread of banditry in Mauritania. The UNOWAS report, as quoted in Olapeju and Peter (2020), also stated that weak state institutions, insurrection, and anarchy compelled pastoralists into religious extremism, leading to banditry in Northern Mali. Olapeju and Peter (2020) submit that bad governance, acute unemployment problems, weak security system, poverty and arms proliferation are promoters of rural banditry. Nevertheless, Olapeju and Peter (2020) did not view scarcity of land, pasture and de-industrialization as factors responsible for rural banditry.

3. Methodology

The study is predicated on how cultural homogeneity between Nigeria and her neighbours induce armed banditry in North West, Nigeria. The study adopted qualitative approach through rapid review of available security reports, reports of international development agencies, and other secondary literature on cultural homogeneity and armed banditry in Nigeria. The participants in FGD were community and youth leaders/victims of kidnapping and robbery incidence. The FGD were conducted in order to have an in-depth grasp of the impact of cultural homogeneity on rural banditry in North West, Nigeria. Each of the FGD comprised 5–10 persons. Hence, there were a total of 104 participants in the FGD. The FGDs were adopted to glean information on how cultural homogeneity between Nigeria and her neighbours induce rural banditry in North West, Nigeria. Data were collected between January and June, 2022. The final manuscript was subjected to check by the co-

authors in order to improve the credibility and validity of qualitative interpretations.

3.1 *Theoretical Framework*

This paper was anchored on Routine Activity Theory propounded by Cohen and Felson in 1979. The theory was expanded and popularized by scholars such as Maxfield (1987), Garafalo (1987) and Samonas (2013), among others. The Routine Activity theory is the outcome of a conscious attempt by scholars to explain forms and rising tendencies of predatory criminal events in the historical context of a dynamic economy (Hsieh & Wang, 2018). At the heart of the routine activity theory is the assumption that crime is likely to occur when there is a spatial-temporal occurrence of three essential elements of crime, including a motivated offender, an attractive victim, and the absence of capable and effective guardianship. Proponents of this theory see driven or motivated offenders as individuals or a group of individuals who are capable and willing to commit a crime. At the same time, an attractive or suitable victim could be a person or group of objects considered vulnerable or attractive. In interfacing the theory with our study, we explain the nexus between cross-border relations/migration and rural banditry in the North West, Nigeria is explained in line with the basic assumptions that bandits (motivated offenders) took seemingly advantage of their capability and availability of vulnerable victims (attractive targets) due to the absence of capable guardianship (the Nigerian State) that could effectively discourage or prevent crime, to attack the vulnerable people and destroy means of livelihood in North West Nigeria. Indeed, under the circumstance of homogenous cultures such as common language, religion, occupation and common ethnic identity.

4. **Discussion and Finding**

The mere fact that Nigeria and her neighbouring countries, such as the Republic of Niger, Chad and Mali, shared common cultural identities such as similar religious beliefs (Islam), languages (Hausa, Fulani and Fulbe), common occupation (pastoralism) and shared ethnic identity account for the increased in rural banditry in North West Nigeria. This is because the states in the North West, our focal area, are more homogeneous regarding religion, language and ethnicity. For instance, the Republic of Niger, which borders Nigeria from the North West, has the Hausa and Fulani as the largest ethnic groups. The Hausa represents 54.1%, while the Fulani represents 9.2% of the Republic of Niger population, constituting the major ethnic group in Northern Nigeria, especially the North West. Therefore, if there is a strong religious affinity between Northerners and the bandits and terrorists threatening Nigeria's security, as General Tukur Buratai, former Nigerian Chief of Army Staff, would want to make us believe, then it is logical to argue that there is a nexus between cultural homogeneity and the rural banditry threatening the North West security which is evidence in the alarming incidences of attacks on villages, communities and markets, sexual assault of women and girls as well as destruction of means of livelihood. For instance, between 2011 and 2018, over five hundred (500) communities and villages, thirteen thousand (13,000) hectares of land have been devastated, and two thousand eight hundred and thirty-five people lost their lives to bandits attacks, and over two hundred thousand (200,000) people have been internally displaced (Suleiman, 2019).

Furthermore, from 30th October to 5th November 2022, Nextier reports that the bandits rampaged North West and had the second highest casualties by region, with 15 deaths, representing 21.4 per cent of the casualty toll for the week (Nextier, 2022). Similarly, between March 31, 2018 and January 2022, over 7000 cattle were rustled across the five hot-spot states of bandits' attacks. For example, in Zamfara state alone, on 9th January 2022, bandits attacked Rafin Danya, Barayar Zaki, Rafin Gero and Kurfa villages of Anka and Bukkuyum Local Governments Area of the state. They rustled about 2,000 cattle, killing over 140 people (This-Day, 2022). Therefore, it is common sense to believe that it would be very difficult if not impossible, for bandits seen as alien Fulani to rustle such many cattle without the collaboration of the local Fulani. Therefore, the common preoccupation with cattle rearing between Northerners and Nigeriene Fulani contributed to the spread of cattle rustling

in North West, Nigeria. Table one below shows major attacks by bandits in North West, Nigeria.

Table 1. Reported Incidences of Major Bandits Attacks in North West, Nigeria, 2018-2022

S/N	Place/ LGA of attacks	State	Dates	Casualties	Daily
1	Bawan Daji village of Anka LGA	Zamfara	March 31, 2018	30 people killed	The Punch
2	Kawaye village in the Bagega community of Anka LGA	Zamfara	March 1, 2019	21 people killed 40 Others kidnapped	The Nation
3	Klahu, Tsage and Geeri Communities in Rabah LGA	Sokoto	June 9, 2019	25 people killed	The Punch
4	Kankara and Danmusa LGA	Katsina	July 4, 2019	11 people killed	The Punch
5	Tsayu village of Jibiya LGA	Katsina	August 19, 2019	Four persons killed	The Nation
6	Babban Rafi village in Gummi LGA & Makosa village of Zurmi LGA	Zamfara	January 17, 2020	31 persons killed	The Punch
7	villages in Igabi and Giwa LGA	Kaduna	March 2, 2020	50 people killed Many injured	Tribune
8	Kankara, Danmusa, Dutsinma, Masawa & Safana LGAs	Katsina	April 18, 2020	40 persons were killed, several others injured	The Punch
9	Kurechin Atai, Kurecin Giye, Kurechin Duste, Makauwachi and Daule Villages	Kastina	April 20, 2020	47 people killed in all the attacks	The Punch
10	Akwunakwo, Kabirasha and Damba villages in Chikun LGA	Kaduna	April 24, 2020	7 persons killed, 1 person Abducted	The Nation
11	Villages in Danmusa, Dutsinma & Safana LGAs	Katsina	May 2, 2020	36 people killed, 3 abducted, several others injured & property worth millions of naira destroyed	The Punch
12	Faskari and Sabuwa LGA	Kastina	May 6, 2020	5 persons killed, 1 abducted & a DPO shot	Tribune
13	3 villages in Tsafe LGA	Zamfara	May 20, 2020	12 people killed & several cattle rustled	The Punch
14	Maru & Talata-Mafara LGA	Zamfara	June 5, 2020	12 persons killed	The Punch
15	3 villages of Jema'a & Kaura LGA	Kaduna	July, 26, 2020	10 people killed	The Nation
16	Zamfara community in Batsari LGA	Kastina	Aug. 9, 2020	2 persons & 8 Bandits killed	The Punch
17	Udawa farming village	Kaduna	Sept. 13, 2020	16 persons were Kidnapped	Vanguard
18	Police Station in Tangaza LGA	Sokoto	Sept. 18, 2020	DPO, 1 Inspector Were killed & 2 Women kidnapped	Vanguard
19	Kaduna-Abuja highway & Gidan Zaki, Zangon Katarf LGA	Kaduna	Nov.17, 2020	8 ABU students abducted, District Head & son killed	Vanguard
20	Kanoma District, Maru LGA,	Zamfara	Nov.23, 2020	11mam,17worshipers abducted	Vanguard
21	Tashar Bama, Dogun Muaze & Unguwar Maigayya communities in Sabuwa LGA	Kastina	Dec. 1, 2020	8 people killed, 30 others kidnapped	Vanguard
22	Kasuwan Magani town in Kajuru LGA	Kaduna	Dec. 5, 2020	1 person lost his life	Vanguard
23	Government Science Sec. Sch (GSSS) in Kankara LGA	Katsina	Dec.11, 2020	about 344 students were kidnapped	Guardian
24	Villages in Idasu, Giwa LGA	Kaduna	Feb. 24, 2021	18 persons killed	Premium Times
25	3 villages in Danmusa LGA	Katsina	Feb. 25, 2021	20 people killed Several others injured	Premium Times
26	Govt. Girl Sec. School Jangebe, Talata Mafara LGA	Zamfara	Feb. 26, 2021	317 students were Abducted	Guardian
27	Federal College of Forestry Mech. Afaka, Igabi LGA	Kaduna	March 11, 2021	39 students were Kidnapped	Daily Trust
28	Greenfield University,	Kaduna	April 20, 2021	20 students & 2 staff	Vanguard

	Kasarami village in Chukun LGA			were abducted	
29	Koro, Zutu, Kimpi, Gaya Dimi, Rafin Gora & Iguenge villages in Danko/Wasagu LGAs	Kebbi	June 3, 2021	88 people killed	Vanguard
30	5 villages of Zurmi LGA	Zamfara	June 11, 2021	50 people were killed, and over 1000 persons were Displaced	Blueprint
31	Fed. Govt. College Birni Yauri	Kebbi	June 14, 2021	1 policeman killed, 80 students abducted	Guardian
32	Bethel Baptist High School, Damishi village in Chikun LGA	Kaduna	July 5, 2021	121 students were Kidnapped	Vanguard
33	Goran Namaye village of Maradun LGA	Zamfara	Aug. 23, 2021	4 persons killed, 50 others kidnapped	This-Day
34	Sabon Garin Tsaskiya village in Safana LGA	Katsina	Nov, 12, 2021	11 villagers abducted several others injured	Vanguard
35	Gidan Duka village, Kankara LGA	Katsina	Nov, 14, 2021	Several domestic animals rustled	Premium Times
36	Geba, Gidan Kaura, Kura, Bayauri, Gana & Duma Villages, Gusau LGA	Zamfara	Dec. 27, 2021	33 people abducted Hundreds of villagers were displaced	Vanguard
37	Rafin Danya, Barayar Zaki, Rafin Gero & Kurfa Villages in Anka and Bukkuyum LGAs	Zamfara	Jan 9, 2022	Over 140 people killed, about 2000 cattle were rustled	This-Day
38	Dankade town in Danko, Wasagu LGA	Kebbi	Jan 14, 2022	17 people killed Several others were Abducted	Premium Times
39	Guya village & Galadima Community, Bakori LGA	Katsina	Feb 8, 2022	8 persons killed, 4 injured, village Head & 30thers kidnapped	Guardian
40	Kaduna bound train	Kaduna	March 28, 2022	8 persons killed, 168 others kidnapped	Vanguard
41	Damri, Kalaha & Sabon Garin villages of Bakura district	Zamfara	May 8, 2022	48 people killed	Vanguard
42	Dogon Noma, Ungwan Sarki & Ungwan Maikori villages of Kajuru LGA	Kaduna	June 10, 2022	32 persons murdered	The Nation
43	Kango & Dangulbi communities in Maru LGA	Zamfara	July 10, 2022	18 people were killed & several others displayed	Premium Times
44	Mosque in Ruwan Jema town, Bukkuyum LGA	Zamfara	September 24, 2022	15 persons killed	Reuters
45	Shantalawa village in Dutsin-Ma LGA	Katsina	October 16, 2022	15 people lost their lives, 6 injured & 191 others displayed	Daily Trust

Source: Compiled by the researcher with data generated from Nigerian Dailies (2022)

From the data generated for this study, it could be deduced that between 2011 and 2018, over 1,100 people lost their lives to several bandits' attacks in the North West. Similarly, between March 1, 2019 and February 8, 2022, about 4180 people were killed by bandits in five states of the North West: Kaduna, Katsina, Kebbi, Sokoto and Zamfara. Similarly, between 2011 and December 27, 2021, over four hundred and forty-eight thousand (448,000) people have been internally displaced, and more than 3,560 cattle were rustled across North West states. Again, Zamfara, Sokoto, Katsina and Kaduna recorded the higher incidences of bandits' attacks in the North West region.

The prevalence of attacks in Sokoto and Zamfara could be attributed to the forested lands that make it difficult to penetrate, poor governance, and high poverty rate, rendering many unemployed youth vulnerable to recruitment by bandits groups in the region. In the case of Kaduna and Katsina states, the frequency of bandits' attacks is attributable to porous borders between the states that make bandits flee from Sokoto and Zamfara in search of haven. In another development, in Kaduna state, bandits' attacks have mainly occurred in Chikun, Giwa, Birni-Gwari, Igabi and Kajuru local government areas. In Katsina state, attacks have occurred mainly in Kankara, Dutsinma, Faskari, Masawa, Barsari, Safana and Danmusa local government areas. In the case of Sokoto state, most attacks have occurred in Goronyo, Gada, Isa, Sabon Birni, Tureta and Rabah. While in Zamfara state, bandits were more offensive in Anka, Maru, Maradun, Bukkuyum, Talata-Mafara and Zurmi local government areas.

5. Conclusion

The attacks by bandits on the Nigerian state have continued unabated and have become a disturbing attribute of socio-cultural and political life in the North West. The hostility ranging from cattle rustling, kidnapping for ransom, raids on villages, markets and communities, raped, killing and destruction of means of livelihood associated with the violence is most troublesome. The increasing humanitarian crisis arising from the rural banditry in the North West left many in doubt about the capability of the Nigerian state to control insecurity in the country. This has led to poor deployment of security surveillance and personnel by the Nigerian state in managing insecurity in the country, leading to rural banditry in the North West. Therefore, this paper found that cultural homogeneity between Nigeria and her neighbours induced rural banditry in North West, Nigeria.

The paper concludes that, Nigeria as a post-colonial capitalist State, lacks the decisive swing in the development of security strategies away from government ingenuities and public security to private ownership and market-based allocation of resources and private-based security provisioning which has undermined the commitment of resources to public security policies for the nation. We recommended the formulation and enforcement of the stringent policy on migration by the Nigerian State to check the influx of migrants, which encourages groups to promote and uphold their cultural identities, leading to organized crime such as rural banditry.

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