



# MANAGING HUMAN AND TRANSHUMANCE MIGRATION FROM THE SAHEL REGION: IMPLICATIONS FOR NIGERIAS' NATIONAL SECURITY

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## Abstract

Migration whether human or transhumance is one of the defining global issues of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. This is essentially because individuals and their animals are constantly on the move more than any time in human history, with the attendant Socio- economic and Security implications on the source, transit and destination countries. The paper therefore examines the human and transhumance migration from the Sahel region. It is noted that, Transhumance livestock production is a source of conflicts between crop farmers in the host countries and the pastoralists from the Sahel, because of pressure on the shared natural resources. The paper relied on qualitative data collected from secondary sources. Some of the secondary data used include peer reviewed journals, unpublished papers, regional instruments such as ECOWAS protocol on Free Movement of persons, goods and services (1979) and ECOWAS protocol on the regulation of transhumance (1998). Findings in this paper reveals among others, lack of harmonization of the ECOWAS protocol on free movement of persons, goods and services (1979) and ECOWAS protocol on the regulation of transhumance (1998), leading for example to lack of synergy between agencies of government. This constitutes a big challenge in managing transhumance migration. The paper recommends for a sub- regional intervention by the ECOWAS in order to establish transhumance joint border patrol and control posts as well as to review the protocol regulating transhumance movements in the Sahel region.

**Keywords: ECOWAS Protocol, Migration, National Security, Regional security complex theory, Transhumance.**

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## Introduction

From time immemorial, man by his nature is highly mobile, always searching for better and more sustainable environment for himself and his animals. Similarly, man migrates in search of work, or other forms of economic opportunities or to study, or for the purpose of joining his family. Other people migrate in order to escape from political persecution, insurgency/terrorisms, or human right violations. Many more migrate in response to adverse effects of climate change, natural disasters or other environmental factors. In such adventure man find himself in contact with other people who inhabit and settle in an environment that supports their livelihoods elsewhere in the world. According to International organization for migration, world migration report (2020, P.21):

The estimated number of international Migrants has increased over the past

five decades. The total estimated 272 million people living in a country other than their countries of birth in 2019 was 119 million. More than in 1990 (when it was 153 million and over three times the estimated number of 1970 (84 million) while the proportion of International migrants globally has also increased over this period, it is evident that the vast majority of people continue to live in countries in which they were born.

Similarly, information from the United Nations High commission for Refugees (UNHCR) office in Dakar cited in United Nations office for West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS) study report (2018, P. 14) revealed that; "it is estimated that 62,000 persons were internally displaced in Nigeria in 2017 as a result of farmer/herder



conflicts, and 3,000 persons in the northern part of Benin (country) in June/July 2018 for the same reasons”. Transhumance migrants on the other hand migrate in response to among other reasons, adverse effects of climate change. They are forced to move around in search of greener pasture with their animals. “This cross-border mobility is compelling, especially in the savannah and Sahel, because of the dry nature of the region and especially in the dry season, no area can support the livestock all year, unless the herds size is very small or there is plenty rainfall. Sustaining livestock production in the region would require heavy investment in infrastructure, water, and animal feeds”(UNOWAS, 2018, P.21)

The movement of transhumance migrants brings them into contact with some other people, especially the sedentary farmers sometimes resulting into conflicts. According to Lawal, (2018,p.1):

Sometimes relationship gets bad especially when animals stray into the farms and they are caught on the act. Arising from the soured relationship man is confronted with various forms of challenges including conflicts. Most of the conflicts that characterized movement within the corridors of the Sahel region are resource-based conflicts, in other words they are conflicts that are characterized by struggle over space. This form of migration as well as other forms involving massive refugee movements constitutes what is described as migration crisis. Migration with the humongous figures of international migration flows can be described as one of the defining global issues of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. This is predicated on the premise that people are constantly on the move more than anytime in human history, with the attendant socio-economic and security implications on the source, transit and destination countries.

The conflicts between pastoralist and crop

farmers have been quite worrisome over the years. In order to address these conflicts regional/sub regional intervention was necessary. In this regards Salihou (2016, p.1) revealed that, “the various countries in Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) have formulated and passed legislation and legal texts, but these have not been put into operation”. Example of such legal text is; Decision A/DEC 5/ 10/ 98 of the twenty first conference of heads of states, relating to the regulations on transhumance between ECOWAS member states. Conditions for movement of animals across national borders are clearly spelt out in the document. These conditions are expected to regulate movements of pastoralist and their animals, as well as stopping the incidence of animals straying into farmlands and thereby reducing conflicts. For example, Articles 7 and 8 of Decision A/DEC 5 /10/98 are instructive to the extent of restricting transhumance herds to follow routes defined by member states and not to cross borders during the night. The objective of this paper is to explore the impact of national and regional interventions in the management of human and transhumance migration aimed at enhancing Nigeria's national security.

### **CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATION**

In the light of the issues raised in the introduction, it becomes pertinent to clarify the concepts and the context they are being used in this paper. This is necessary in order to avoid conflict/misunderstanding of this paper especially with a highly politically controversial topic of this nature. Concept clarification is also necessary, especially coming from the background that, defining social science concepts like terrorism, migration, and transhumance amongst others is not only impressionistic but also pejorative.

### **MIGRATION**

At the international level, no universally accepted definition for migration exists. Even under UN definition –many including the EU commission do not consider “Movements for shorter periods” migration. Migration dictionary define the concept as a movement to another place, often of a large group of people or animals. Oxford



dictionary define migration as – a seasonal movement of persons and animals from one region to another. International organization for migration (IOM) [2021, P.137) defines migration as the movement of person or group of persons, either across an international border, or within a state. It is a population movement, encompassing any kind of movement of people, whatever its length, composition and causes, it includes migration of refugees, displaced persons, economic migrants, and persons moving for other purposes, including family reunification. Lee (1996)cited in Kallio (2016, p. 6)provides a definition that considers both the temporal and the spatial dimension of migration. He defines migration as a change in permanent or semi-permanent residence. Regional and other international organizations like the AU and the EU equally contributes to the definition of the concept of migration. African Union (AU) report(2006, P.1) describe migration flows occurring essentially within the continent of Africa as well as “towards Europe, North America and some middle east countries... And could be voluntary(as a result of pull factors in destination countries) or involuntary/forced (Due to push factors in countries of origin). These movements could be legal or undocumented and encompass all social categories, including refugees, internally displaced persons, nomads migrating in search of pasturelands, young and women setting off from the country side in search of job opportunities in the city, employment seekers, and, increasingly, qualified persons, women and children under the age of 18”.Official European Union (EU)website(2021, P.137) provide the description of migration as;“movement of persons either across an international border (international migration) or within a state (internal migration) for more than one year irrespective of the causes, voluntary or involuntary, and, the means, regular or irregular, used to migrate”.

### **Human Migration**

Human migration is the most common and it occurs at varying scales and with different dimensions and individual volition. Kallio (2016, p. 5) described this form of migration that:

... Entails all movements of people and occurs at local or global scales. It is a demographic event that has both temporal and spatial dimensions. In addition, one way to characterize migration is by the degree of volition involved. For example, migration typically implies are relatively high degree of volition, with individuals motivated by economic factors or family reunification, whereas refugee flows [one of the subsets of migrants] are characterized by low volition and short or longer term displacement owing to national disasters, or armed conflicts.

Bilsborrow et al.,(1997) and Fussell et al.(2014),cited in Kallio (2016, p. 6) simply define human migration as the movement of people. In more specific terms, it is a demographic event that has both temporal and spatial dimensions.

### **Transhumance**

Salihou (2016, p.2)describe transhumance, as an animal production practice characterized by regular seasonal movements between complementary ecological areas, whereby a few individuals accompany the herds while the largest part of pastoral group remains sedentary. The herds generally live in disequilibrium environment where, pasture has become scarce and moves toward areas that appear to have abundant pasture. In this context, transhumance in West Africa may be considered as a form of adaption to these environments, making good use of ecological complementarity between the Sahelian and Sudanian Zones. According to Diop et al,(2012, p. 160)transhumance is the seasonal movement of livestock herds supervised by herders. In Sahelian countries, transhumance is an adaptation strategy geared towards optimizing livestock access to water and grazing of sufficient quality to ensure the herds' annual production.

### **Sahel**

According to Hiernaux et al. (2006)cited in Garba, et al. (2012, p.8),the Sahel is located in the



climatic transition area between the Saharan zone in the north and the Sudanian zone in the south. It extends from the Atlantic Ocean to the red sea. The average annual rainfall in this biogeographical region ranges from 150 to 600 mm. It is sub-divided into three sub zones: Northern Sahelian, typical Sahelian, and southern Sahelian. Hiernaux et al (2006) went further to say:

Over the last four decades, the Sahel has undergone several deficit rainfall periods, resulting in major droughts (1968-1974, 1983-1984, 2002-2003, 2005, 2009), which have had a serious impact on human and animal populations.

It is therefore clear from the geographical description of the region above the pastoralists cannot survive with their herds without moving around in search of pasture.

According to Wikipedia, (2022):

The Sahel part of Africa comprise of the following countries namely: Extreme south of Algeria, Southern Mauritania, north to eastern parts of northern Senegal, central Mali, Niger, northern Burkina Faso, Extreme northern Nigeria, central Chad, central and southern Sudan, the extreme northern Cameroon, central African republic, Eritrea and the extreme northern Ethiopia. Historically, the western part of the Sahel was at one time referred to as the Sudan region.



Source: [www.researchgate](http://www.researchgate)

## National Security

National Security like most social science concepts also suffers from lack of consensus in its definition. However, Richard (2012) cited in Lawal (2015, p.14) views National Security from the perspectives of "...Articulation of security priorities and concerns put forward by the political leaders." A proponent of non-military school of thought, McNamara (1968) cited in Lawal (2015, p.15) focus primarily on the imperative of socio-economic development over military strategic consideration, while Zabadi (2013) cited in Lawal (2015, p. 15) emphasize that; National Security is about national interest and basic values as food, shelter, health, peace and prosperity that keep the community together as well as advancement in quality and quantity of life available to individuals. Using the analogy of realist school of thought in describing what a state should do in order to maintain its core values and to achieve victory in war, Lippmann (2006) cited in (Lawal 2015, p. 14) defined National Security as; The ability of a nation to maintain its core values and avoids war and if challenged, its ability to maintain such core values by victories in war. An online dictionary simply defined National Security as the ability of a country to protect itself from threat of violence or attack. An elaborate definition/description of national security is provided by Nwolise in his book Nigeria's Defense and security system today. Nwolise (2008) cited in Lawal (2015, p.15-16) described National Security as:

A country may have the best armed forces in terms of training and equipment, the most efficient police force, the most efficient customs men, the most active secret service agents, and best quality prisons but yet be the most insecure nation in the world as a result of defense and security problems, with bad government, alienated and suffering masses, ignorance, hunger and unemployment.

Nwolise's definition is only short of being comprehensive, by not including the immigration service (NIS). Its inclusion in such definition is





important because of its border security functions. (Border security is generally seen as the weakling of national security). However, the definition is apt in view of the security situation in some states in the Northwest (Banditry, kidnapping for ransom, Pastoralists and farmers conflicts etc.) and the northeast (Boko Haram Insurgency) as well as the socio- economic indices in some of the states in both regions, such as high illiteracy rate, unemployment rate, high poverty rate etc. (National Population Commission (NPC) demographic surveys, 2008).

### **Theoretical Framework**

#### **Regional Security Complex Theory (RSCT)**

The paper derives inspiration from the regional security complex theory in order to analyze the character of the threats posed by human and transhumance migration from the Sahel region on Nigeria's national security. The theory is relatively new in international relations. Barry Buzan was the first to introduce the theory in his work, *people, states and fear* conducted in 1983. Subsequently, some other works such as Nnoli (2006), Waever and Wilde (1998) among others have contributed to the advancement of the theory. The theory was developed to reflect the complex nature of international system in post-cold war era. The position of the theory is that, military elements alone should not be the only basis of conceptualizing security. This, according to Buzan et.al (1998) cited in Nwangu and Enyiazu (2009, P.6) is also the position of policy makers, and the academia. According to Nnoli (2006, P.17), “security demands military power sufficient to dissuade or defeat an attack, but so many non-military elements are required to generate effective military power”.

The theory is applied in this paper in line with some of its basic assumptions. For example,

- a. Security is a national, regional and global phenomenon, and understanding the security dynamics of one country would be much easier when you put it into a broader context. Impliedly, managing human and transhumance migration from the Sahel is a complex security phenomenon that would require both national and regional

approach.

- b. The theory also assumes that, the best way of approaching security problem is through cooperation and integration of various security agencies. In this sense, managing human and transhumance migration would require the contributions or collaboration of different border security agencies and other stakeholders like the federal ministry of Agriculture.

In the final note, the theory is important for the analysis of the nexus between human and transhumance migration and the Nigeria's national security because it identifies some basic units of analysis like security agencies, the state and other stakeholders. Federal ministry of Agriculture and Nigeria immigration service including the ECOWAS that provides the platform for regional cooperation, collaboration and interventions are the critical stakeholders.

### **Methodology**

The paper relied on secondary sources and collected data from related secondary documents such as journals, unpublished papers, on line resource on migration as well as regional instruments such as ECOWAS Protocol on Free movement of Persons, Residence and Establishment (1979) and ECOWAS Protocol on the Regulation of Transhumance (1998) documents. The method of data collection was found to be suitable for a non- survey and non-experimental qualitative study. The data collected were analyzed descriptively to realize the objective of the paper.

### **Regional Instruments for Managing Human and Transhumance Migration and the Responses of Government**

The permeable nature of Nigerian borders that are characterized by illegal routes amongst others remains one of the greatest challenges of border management and indeed national security. However, in spite of the challenges as it relates to managing Human and transhumance migration in Nigeria as well as the divergent opinions about the activities of herdsman, the need to ensure effective monitoring and control through the



instrumentality of ECOWAS Protocol on free movement of persons residence and establishment (1979) and the protocol on the regulation of transhumance (1998) is imperative. This is in addition to other cross- regional instruments and high level regional security meeting platforms, such as the community of Sahel Saharan states (CEN-SAD), Convention on mutual assistance in security, the platform for meetings of ministers of Immigration and Internal Security and meetings of Ministers of Defence of the CEN-SAD member states.

According to the report of International organisation for migration(IOM), International centre for migration and policy development (ICMPD) and the Community of West African States (ECOWAS) On the project “Support to free movement of persons and migration in west Africa, FMM West Africa”, (2019, p. 1):

...With the adaption of the ECOWAS Protocol on the Regulation of Transhumance (1998) and supporting regulation (2003), ECOWAS member states recognised cross border pastoralist transhumance as a viable economic activity and defined a regional regulatory framework for cross border transhumance based on the ECOWAS principle of free movement of persons, goods and services.

The ECOWAS Protocol on Free Movement of Persons, Residence and Establishment (1979) and the ECOWAS Protocol on the regulation of transhumance (1998) provides the pastoralist from the neighbouring West African Countries the right to free movement as well as access to grazing rights in other countries in the ECOWAS zone including Nigeria. This explains why community citizens/ Pastoralist from Niger, Burkina Faso or Mali for example can be found grazing their animals in Nigeria or a Nigerian Pastoralist grazing his livestock in Togo, Benin, or Ghana. However, the right of entry and grazing is not without conditions.

### **Conditions Relating to the Right of Entry of a Community Citizen**

Conditions relating to the right of entry of a community citizen constitute partly some of the measures put in place to manage human and transhumance migration. In this regard therefore, miscellaneous Provisions Paragraph 1 and 2 of article 3 of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) protocol on free movement of Persons, Residence and Establishment clearly spelt out documents such as a valid travel document and international health certificate that must be possessed by anyone operating under the treaty and the conditions attached to the period of stay not exceeding 90 days. Enter into the territory of a member state through official entry point, free of visa requirements. Member states are also required to provide their citizens with valid travel documents, grant community citizens the right of residence and employment, ensure appropriate treatment of persons being expelled and to limit ground for individual expulsion to reasons of national security, public order, morality, public health and non fulfilment of an essential condition of residence.

### **Conditions Relating to the Entry of Herdsmen and Movement of Animals**

The conditions relating to the entry of herdsmen and movement of animals as contain in chapter iii, article 5 of the decisions of Heads of State relating to the regulations on transhumance between ECOWAS member states include among others, the followings: Possession of ECOWAS International transhumance certificate. The certificate contains details such as: Composition of the herds, Vaccination given, the itinerary of the herds, the border posts to be crossed and the final destination. Other conditions include; No crossing of borders during the night, Transhumance livestock must be under constant guard, both while on the move and during grazing, Headsmen must be in possession of identity papers duly issued by the competent authorities in their countries of origin. Stray animals will be apprehended impounded by the relevant authorities. Each host country shall fix the period during which migrating livestock may enter into



and depart from its territory and inform other states accordingly. (Any dispute between farmers and nomadic herdsmen shall first be judged by an arbitration Commission on the basis of information gathered by the said Commission. The Commission shall be composed of representatives of the herdsmen, farmers, livestock and Agricultural officers, officials of ministries of forest and water resources and local political and administrative authorities. In the event that, an amicable settlement is not reached, the dispute may be resolved in the Law Courts in conformity with the rules governing settlement of contentious issues. It is clear from the conditions listed above, if enforced by Member states, all activities of pastoralist within the corridor of the Sahel and the Ecowas would have been fully regulated and most conflicts likely averted.

### **National Responses In Managing Human and Transhumance Migration**

Considering the challenges of migration on the source, Transit and Destination Countries, Nigeria is responding appropriately to these issues through international partnership, Legal responses, deployment of technology at the borders and Federal and State governments policy /operational responses.

#### **1. Legal Response**

Nigeria is a signatory to many international legal instruments / conventions relating to control and management of migration. These instruments include: Protocol Against the Smuggling of Migrants by land, Sea and Air, supplementing the United Nations convention Against Transnational organized crime. The protocol was domesticated by Nigeria in the immigration act 2015. With this, Nigeria can now leverage on the provision of the new legislation to prosecute smugglers of migrants. This is an important achievement for Nigeria because before 2015 there was no legislation that was available to prosecute such offenders. This is again important, as it will serve as deterrent to offenders especially because, fear is considered as one of the most important ingredients of social control. Other legal responses include, National Migration Policy, (2015), multilateral(ECOWAS, FRONTEX) and

bilateral agreements and memorandum of understanding (MOU) on migration matters with a number of destination countries aimed at managing migration.

#### **2. Technical Response**

With the technical supports from countries like Germany, Switzerland, Japan, Netherlands, UK, and European Union (EU) among others, Nigeria immigration service has since deployed technology at the Air, Land and Marine borders, such as; Electronic Passenger Registration System- [PaRS] and Migration Information Data Analysis System (MIDAS). The technology of MIDAS is used by the Nigeria immigration in acquiring, storing, analyzing and retrieving migration data. Such data is important in the management of migration and by extension enhancement of National security.

Regional border management institute was established in Tuga, Kebbi State, Nigeria. The aim of the institution is to train Nigeria immigration personnel and other agencies with border security mandate and by extension draw participants from amongst border security agencies in the West African sub region. The idea is to create synergy among border security agencies in Nigeria and in the sub region. Introduction of Biometric in the ECOWAS TRAVEL certificate for intra- ECOWAS travel, Introduction of Biometric Visa, Foreigner Registration in Nigeria, NIS leadership role of the Integrated Border Management Standing Committee (IBMC), comprising all agencies with border security mandate, as enshrined in the National migration Policy 2015 are also part of the technical responses. This is to create synergy among security agencies with the view to managing the borders properly, Continuous collaboration with partners and stakeholders both local and international in migration management, Awareness campaigns, highlighting the risks in irregular migration e.g I am Priceless Campaign, Passport to Safe Migration Campaign, The Missing Steps (Nollywood movie) Campaign are important awareness strategies for the management of migration.



### **3. Federal and State Governments Responses**

Over the years both federal and state governments in Nigeria have taken several measures to address the escalating clashes between herders and farmers in Nigeria. In 2014, the federal government established inter- Ministerial Committee to recommend measures for the restoration of grazing reserves. A committee was again set up in 2015, by the federal ministry of Agriculture with the terms of reference of formulating a comprehensive livestock development plan. The committee recommended inter alia, the development of grazing reserves as a means of reducing the conflicts between herders and farmers in Nigeria.

#### **Some Identified Gaps in the Legal Instruments**

In spite of all efforts put in place by Nigeria in the management of migration; yet, some gaps are identified in the instrument relating to the management of transhumance. One important gap identified in the management of transhumance is the lack of a clear Nexus between the ECOWAS Protocol on Free Movement of Persons (1979) and the ECOWAS Protocol on regulation of Transhumance (1998). For example, there are nowhere agencies of member states responsible for emigration and immigration are mentioned in the transhumance protocol document, in terms of what such agencies should do in the implementation of the Protocol on the regulation of transhumance. In Nigeria for example, the Nigeria immigration (NIS) is statutory responsible for the control of movement in and out of Nigeria. As it is now, locating NIS in the context of implementation of the protocol would only mean applying the ECOWAS free movement protocol to the responsibilities of NIS in its implementation.

#### **Recommendations and Conclusion**

Migration through the Sahel (Human and Transhumance) is inter- regional and legal because it is covered by the instruments of ECOWAS Protocol on Free Movement of Persons, Residence and Establishment(1979) and ECOWAS protocol on the regulation of Transhumance (1998). The paper noted that,

Transhumance livestock production and movement is a source of conflicts between farmers and herders. Human migration within the corridors of Sahel region on the other hand has its security challenges on Nigeria, essentially because of the criminality that is associated with some seasonal migrants. However, even those events and fatalities occasioned by the conflicts between farmers and herders in Nigeria could have been averted if the ECOWAS legal instruments relating to protocols on free movements (1979) and regulating Transhumance (1998) were put into operation and the identified gaps are addressed through review of the legal instruments. This is supported by Salihou (2016, p. 1) as indicated in the paper thus, "...The various countries in Economic community of west African states (ECOWAS) have formulated and passed legislation and legal texts, but these have not been put into operation. In the final note, Although Nigeria had done well technically and operationally in responding to the issues of Migration on one hand, and on the other hand, this paper recommends that, the ECOWAS Protocols on the Regulation of Transhumance [1998] should be reviewed by ECOWAS Member states in order to harmonize it, with the ECOWAS Protocol on Free Movement of Persons, Residence and Establishment(1979). Nigeria should create an appropriate memorandum of understanding (MOU) for the NIS to work with the Ministry of Agriculture and other stakeholders. Provision of necessary infrastructure is important for joint operations. In this regards Nigeria should champion a move to create a sub regional intervention through the ECOWAS in order to build a joint transhumance border patrol bases for the control of transhumance migration between neighboring countries. The protocols for the management and regulation of transhumance movement should be put into operation by the ECOWAS member states. The domestication and full operationalization of the protocols relating to the regulation of transhumance movements would reduce to the barest minimum the incidence of animals straying into farmlands, which is the source of conflicts between farmers and herders in Nigeria for decades with the attendant



consequences on National security.

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