

BOOK REVIEW

Olukayode A. Faleye, Innocent Moyo, and Richard Olaniyan, eds. *Transborder Pastoral Nomadism and Human Security in Africa: Focus on West Africa*. London: Routledge, 2023. 123 pp. Illustrations. \$52.95. Paperback. ISBN: 9781032138428.

Transborder Pastoral Nomadism and Human Security in Africa delves into the dynamics of the friction between nomadic Fulani and farmers in the context of transhumance and human security. The book, edited by Faleye Olukayode, Innocent Moyo, and Richard Olaniyan, is in three parts, with each part containing essays that analyze, using different methodologies, this enduring friction.

Part I engages three sub-topics and this section of the book draws examples from Nigeria in terms of the ethnoreligious dimensions of the conflict, population growth that has reduced arable land, the proliferation of small arms, the case of ineffectual government, as well as the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) transhumance protocol which allows free movement between West African states, as important influences exacerbating the conflict. While the factors sustaining the altercation appear in the multitude, this segment of the book proposes an inclusive conflict resolution mechanism that would consolidate the influence of traditional institutions, as well as address environmental issues of climate change and resource scarcity that have continued to compound the problem.

Similarly, Part II titled, “Focus on Nigeria,” is divided into three sub-topics of short essays. This section of the book paints an apocalyptic scenario of a fragile Nigeria under severe national threat because of the continuous clashes between Fulani nomads and agrarian communities, as well as a country grappling with severe degradation of democratic tenets. Further, this section deconstructs how poetry, which at one point had been used to celebrate the lives of Fulani nomads, is now used to decry their murderous activities.

Part III, under the sub-topic of “The Drivers of Labor and the Migration of Fulani Nomads to Ghana,” divides Fulani coming into Ghana into three categories based on their movements: the sedentary Fulani; the Yaligonji or Jerigonji or temporary migrant Fulani who are accused of destroying crops and absconding after such destructions; and the job-seeking Fulani migrants who come to Ghana to herd other people’s cattle. Part III argues for categorizing job-seeking Fulani under the International Labor Organization’s classification of labor migrants.

The book’s adoption of short essays is ingenious, and it is effective in capturing a wide range of viewpoints on the topic discussed. Although the collection of short essays accommodates a diverse perspective, it likewise can be understood as a major weakness, given the lack of depth in terms of points covered and analyses done, particularly in the context of proposed solutions to the lingering conflict. These short essays also create a disjointed and often repetitive narrative as

opposed to a structured discourse. For an intricate and multifaceted issue of persistent confrontation between Fulani nomads and agrarian communities, a more in-depth analysis would have complemented the tapestry of interdisciplinary approaches adopted, and thereby enriched the book's overall narrative. A common theme across the book is discussions of proposals for solutions to the protracted conflict. The proffered solutions, notably, are not properly explained, and often they are framed in abstract and vague terms; hence, they do not necessarily provide practical and pragmatic recommendations for human security.

For example, on page 24, the book proposes a political-economic solution as a way to arrive at a civil settlement. This political-economic settlement is described as a solution that is averse to the wastage of human, economic, and political resources on a community in the hopes of bringing about peace. In place of wastage, a political-economic solution would ensure peace and justice. Likewise, on page 28, the authors stressed the importance of demographic representation that would include women and youths in conflict mediatory processes. Nonetheless, the book falls short of explaining the kinds of mediatory roles that these demographic categories will play and, likewise, why their inclusion would engender a considerable change towards peace, as the authors had claimed. Hence, the use of generic and abstract terms that seemed idealistic rather than practical in identifying and discussing potential settlements to an enduring problem could be strengthened by a more in-depth analytical discourse that would evaluate realistic solutions that can engender durable peace. This would offer more practical and explicit recommendations to policymakers.

There is no gainsaying that several conflicts in Africa have ethnoreligious facets to them. The ethnoreligious dimension of the nomads' and farmers' clash, as touched upon in the book, raises certain questions about the depth of analyses performed. On page 35, the authors articulated that given that Fulani nomads are mostly Muslims, and due to the reality that religious buildings often come under attack during violent altercations, there is an ethnoreligious aspect to the clashes. The ethnoreligious argument in this regard supposes that Fulanization and Islamization are ideological components of the conflict. Nonetheless, such a supposition of an agenda to Islamize the south by marauding Fulani nomads does not represent a general view and the authors could have engaged in comprehensive analyses to support such a claim.

The proposal for the supplantation of nomadism by ranching as discussed on pages 43 and 76 especially is a laudable recommendation that could ease tensions and reduce confrontations between Fulani nomads and agrarian communities. However, a critical shortcoming in this regard is the lack of a comprehensive analysis and assessment of the socioeconomic and ethnic challenges that may stifle such proposals when applied to the Nigerian context where ethnic mistrust may prove a stumbling block to allocating state resources to what could be regarded as a private business of cattle ranching.

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