

‘LAND BANDITS’ OR ‘LAND GRABBERS’: FULANI HERDSMEN AND LOCAL FARMERS INCESSANT BLOODY CLASHES IN NIGERIA

Seun Bamidele¹

Introduction

Incessant bloody clashes between the Fulani herdsmen and local farmers in Africa have resulted in deaths and displacement. Different parts of Africa including Nigeria have experienced clashes between the Fulani herdsmen and local farmers throughout the colonial periods in Africa and even beyond (Abubakar 2012). The dire need for Fulani herdsmen to increase the productivity of their livestock farming in the midst of unfavourable climatic conditions have necessitated the search for adequate pasture for cattle grazing. In Africa, the Fulanis are about twenty million in number; they are one of the most widely dispersed and culturally diverse people scattered across Nigeria, Guinea, Mali, Niger, Cameroon, Chad and Sudan. The Fulanis, also known as the “Fula people or Fulbe” are the largest pastoral nomadic group in the world with root in West Africa, Northern part of Central Africa and Egypt (Adisa and Adekunke 2010). The common business of Fulanis is livestock production, they move from one region to another for grazing purposes. Livestock account for one third of Nigeria’s agricultural Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and contributes 16% of agricultural GDP; it is an important component of general agriculture and a key contributor to economic growth and development of any nation (Ojiako and Olayode 2008, 114).

Moreover, farming is a common occupation of Nigerian citizens, despite the reliance on oil as an elitist business venture and the mainstay of the national economy. It still plays a dominant role in the survivability of many rural dwellers in Nigeria, as a source of subsistence to many families

¹ Institute of Peace, Security and Governance, Ekiti State University, Ado-Ekiti, Nigeria. E-mail: oluwaseun.bamidele@gmail.com.

in villages and towns as well as a large-scale profitable venture for others. Majority of food crops in the urban market today is the productive effort of rural communities in Nigeria. Currently, agriculture as a whole contributes 24.18% to Nigeria's GDP, a marginal leap from 23.86% in the fourth quarter of 2014 (CBN financial Watch 2016). This is because local farmers in many of the rural communities are working hard to boost the productivity of agricultural products and food crops despite unfavourable climatic conditions.

However, recent developments have seen farmlands cultivated being invaded by armed Fulani herdsmen with the excuse of cattle grazing. Several invasions have been carried out by Fulani herdsmen in the past two years of the constituted administration of President Muhammadu Buhari, a Fulani man (Opejobi 2016). In Nigeria, clashes between the two parties became intensified after the state governments approved the anti-open grazing law. The country's security situation has become very acute and there is a growing attention for incidents of incessant bloody clashes between the Fulani herdsmen and local farmers in Nigeria. This development has become a subject of security concern and public debate. The federal government of Nigeria has responded by deploying security operatives to search and neutralize the forces of the armed Fulani herdsmen (Opejobi 2016). Although this policy response has recorded some success, the root causes of the clashes have not been sufficiently addressed.

The failure of the government policy on grazing reserve has left Fulani herdsmen to their fates, in determining where and how to raise their livestock. Amidst this situation, some medium and large corporate livestock farms have emerged, while many other Fulani herdsmen maintain their nomadic lifestyles. The latter live a sort of jungle life, characterized by self-help, in the search of grazing fields across the states, trying to protect their lives and properties from wild animals and cattle rustlers. These, among other things, have led to Fulani herdsmen being armed with dangerous military weapons like AK 47 and other dangerous ammunitions, which in turn have led to series of incessant bloody killings involving the Fulani herdsmen and local farmers in different rural communities across the country.

Previous studies in various states report that there have been massive Fulani herdsmen invasions on the local farmlands which have triggered violent land use conflicts (Aliyu 2015). Other scholars have provided generalised information by focusing on land scarcity caused by climate change, population growth as well as ineffectiveness of land tenure systems (Bello 2013). Such scholars do not explain the shift in the politics of land control and allocation among Fulani herdsmen and local farmers' in rural communities. Moreover,

none of scholars has addressed changes and continuity in the nature of land use conflicts between local farmers and Fulani herdsmen in many states in Nigeria. The above scholars also do not assess the implications in delay responses in resolving land grazing conflicts. Therefore, the proposed study aims to add on the existing literature by addressing such gaps.

Methodology

This study used qualitative approach. The study also employed archival and secondary sources of data, which have helped to get background information on the study area, needed to strengthen the literature review and the theoretical framework. The information from newspaper collection provided some clues to the federal and state governments' interventions on land grazing matters, especially in the aspect of the Fulani colony and anti-open grazing law. This method provided an understanding of violent land grazing-related conflicts land grazing, from the rural point of view. Generally, this information was used to address the forms and magnitude of incessant bloody clashes between the Fulani herdsmen and local farmers. The data also provided an understanding of the incoherence of the of federal and state governments' policy in resolving violent land grazing conflicts, and reasons for the persistence of the incessant clashes between the Fulani herdsmen and local farmers. This analysis has helped to address the efficacy of the responses of both the federal government and the local people, addressing such conflicts between the Fulani herdsmen and local farmers. Through this method, the paper critically examines the root cause of the incessant bloody clashes between the Fulani herdsmen and local farmers coupled with the contradictory policy blueprints on how the current government tries to resolve this emerging threats posed by armed Fulani herdsmen. The root cause of land conflicts during the period under review and the efficacy of mechanisms used to resolve them are also important factors discussed in the research work.

Theoretical discourse

This article is anchored on the modernization and the resource scarcity theory. It used more than one theory because many related issues, on the incessant bloody clashes between the Fulani herdsmen and local farmers in Nigeria, cut across different dimensions and contexts, therefore, a single

theory would not suffice for rigorous analysis (Gyong 1998). The major premise of the modernization theory is that the traditional societies were developed as they adopted more modern practices (Okoli and Atelhe 2014). There are different terms used in explaining the level of incessant clashes between herdsmen and farmers, from the perspective of alleged trespass on farmlands for grazing purposes which destroys crops and deprives local farmers of high productivity and projected profits. The theoretical approach has its origin in the link between internal conflict and the processes of statebuilding. The resource scarcity theory was also used to understand incessant bloody clashes between the Fulani herdsmen and local farmers who are now under pressure from different actors such as owners of lands, local farmers and armed Fulani herdsmen and the state agencies in Nigeria (Olayoku 2014).

The modernization theory is a good testing ground to address land use clashes between the Fulani herdsmen and local farmers, because from the colonialists' point of view, the traditional land use and tenure systems practices among the Fulani herdsmen and local farmers were considered primitive, unproductive and needed to be transformed and "modernized" (Audu 2013). It is from this perspective that colonial and post-colonial governments introduced a number of interventions including resettlement programmes, destocking, new land tenure systems and land policies, strengthened by the present state governments in the form of the open grazing law, which in turn has triggered incessant bloody clashes between Fulani herdsmen and local farmers. The modernization theory as attributed to anti-colonial campaign on land alienation favours the settlement, re-settlement and open grazing of Fulani herdsmen on any land as well as the attendant impacts.

Another theory employed is the resource conflicts theory. Clashes between the concerned parties often occur as a result of land scarcity caused by climate change, population growth and the ineffectiveness of land tenure systems on the part of the government (Baca 2015). Such causes both parties to harbour grievances. However, internal conflicts always put pressure on society to produce norms to govern violent conflicts. These norms include laws and policies which are used to handle tension. In addition, federal and state governments have developed various means to handle incessant bloody clashes between the Fulani herdsmen and local farmers. However, if the established organs dealing with incessant bloody clashes between the Fulani herdsmen and local farmers are challenged by poor implementation of their resolutions, the violent conflicts over resources will remain inevitable.

The resource conflict theory addressed land scarcity and violent conflicts between the Fulani herdsmen and local farmers because the local communities are inhabited by both the Fulani herdsmen and local farmers, and each group has different interests over land use, thus, making violent conflicts inevitable. From this point, the paper established the triggers of violent land-related conflicts and incessant bloody clashes between the Fulani herdsmen and local farmers during the period under review, and the efficacy of mechanisms used in the attempt to resolve them.

Triggers of herdsmen crisis in Nigeria

The triggers of the incessant clashes between Fulani herdsmen and local farmers are often based on alleged trespass on farmlands for grazing purposes which destroys crops and deprive farmers of high productivity and projected profits. Such triggers can generally be categorized into two: the external and internal causes. In Nigeria, the internal causes of incessant clashes between Fulani herdsmen and local farmers pose major challenges to socio-economic development than the external causes of the clashes. This article, therefore, focuses on the internal causes of incessant clashes between Fulani herdsmen and local farmers in Nigeria and considers the incessant clashes as self-inflicted and not externally determined.

Incoherence of the government policy

The clashes between Fulani herdsmen and their host communities have given room for conflicting claims and arguments on the constitutional rights to land ownership and the establishment of grazing reserves. How has the dissatisfaction with state governments' anti-open grazing orientation fed the frustration and thirst for nihilistic violence? Through the politicking of Fulani lawmakers and the powers of Fulani lobbying, the Grazing Bill is being pushed in the national assembly, and thus, will forcibly dislocate people from their lands (Onwubiko 2017). The Minister of Agriculture earmarks billions for the purchase of Brazilian grass for Fulani herdsmen. Such a sentimental disposition points not only to the possibility of the herdsmen going scot-free with wanton killing and destruction, while the federal government proposes withdrawing from state treasury to tend to private-owned business (Onwubiko 2017). Audu Ogbeh, the current Minister of Agriculture, once suggested that the attacks were as a result of the failure of successive governments to pay attention to Fulani herdsmen and cow farming. He stated further

that the national outrage was about the refusal of the federal government to bring those Fulani herdsmen responsible for the killings to book (Onwubiko 2017). However, at other times, Audu Ogbeh has been quoted to give out contradictory policy blueprints on how the government is resolving the emerging grave threats posed by the Fulani herdsmen (Onwubiko 2017). He stated that establishment of ranches for cattle is been explored, while adding in another forum, that the federal government was demarcating grazing lands in some states (Dimelu; Salifu and Igbokwe 2016). Constitutionally in Nigeria, federal-instituted grazing reserves are not realistic because land rights and license insurance reside with the state governments right from colonial period down to contemporary times, in line with the land use Act of 1978 (Folami 2010). On the issue of ranches in the country, it is yet to be known how the federal government intends to deploy public funds to establish ranches for private herd owners, when entrepreneurial groups such as local farmers have never been put under consideration for funding support from the federal government.

According to Section 42 (1) of the Nigerian Constitution, the policy of using public fund to set up ranches for Fulani herdsmen breaches the constitutional provision against discrimination (Ehiabhi 2012), though the private ownership of ranches is in itself a good practice in the world today. There have been a lot of challenges for the country's continuous experimentation with incoherent and unclear policy goals in the aspect of resolving the incessant bloody clashes between the Fulani herdsmen and local farmers. Sapru (2012) stated that

[...] if policy goals are unclear or are not specified in any measurable form, to determine the extent to which they have been achieved becomes a complex and cumbersome task, while officials such as legislators and administrators who are in different positions in the policy system may be uncertain about the accomplishment of the programme [...] even when the goals are clear, specifying such goals and putting them into effect would require further political action within the organizations (Sapru 2012).

The specification of goals may also lead to the division of responsibilities (Sapru 2012). The country operates a dysfunctional incoherent policy system due to the zero-sum nature of local politics. Moreover, the new wave of Fulani herdsmen violence can be considered a premeditated strategy for the federal government, given its current stance of inaction in the face of obvious massacres and land grabbing, aimed to intimidate sections of the population from posing any challenge to the revived wave of Fulani herdsmen

hegemony in the Nigerian state (Higazi 2016). The federal government is, therefore, compelled to end the administration of public policy incoherence, in order to effectively stop the land bandit group of armed Fulani herdsmen and bring them to face the criminal law. Some scholars have stated that the macro level of checking the blood thirsty herdsmen is the total absence of a coherent public policy to deal decisively with the grave phenomenon of armed Fulani herdsmen while at the micro level, some state governments like Ekiti, Oyo, and Ondo state have enacted and enforced laws to check the extremism of armed Fulani herdsmen, while other state governments have experimented a distorted form of policy of appeasement which to a large extent has not worked because any society that appeases violent elements will live to regret such miscalculations (Hart 2016).

Many states such as Benue and Kaduna have experimented with an appeasement policy to cushion the effect of the clashes with the armed Fulani herdsmen but that does not bring an end to Fulani herdsmen invasion and destruction of local farmlands. Hundreds of local farmers and thousands innocent citizens have been displaced as a result of the activities of Fulani herdsmen in Benue and Kaduna state alone (HRW 2013). Benue appeasement of affected local farmers has been in the form of the donation of substantial grazing land near the destroyed rural communities in the Idoma ethnic group, while that of Kaduna has involved financial compensations to affected parties. However, the appeasement strategy and execution by these two states administration is classical case of organized confusion (Ibrahim 2014). The federal and state governments' incoherent policies of appeasement have proved grossly inappropriate and thus, can also generate more incessant killings in the country.

Human insecurity

Human insecurity is a critical issue in development processes. In a country with acute poverty and related problems of hunger, social unrest and chronic development problems are factors, according to HRW (2013) investigations, responsible for the rage that fuels incessant bloody clashes between the Fulani herdsmen and local farmers. Simply put, the Fulani herdsmen and farmers in rural communities are victims of grinding poverty, as they can neither live in good houses, afford to feed properly, access educational opportunities, nor help their backwardness.

Insecurity poses serious threats to the sustainability of rural and urban livelihoods, as the inhabitants affected by the bloody clashes are usually determined minorities and dominant ethnic groups in the North-Central

region (Idegu 2015). Security experts also raise queries as to the requirements for social services in the concerned rural areas. Also, the increase in the demand for social amenities often necessitates the diversion of funds from productive investments to the provision of social infrastructures (Kabir 2016).

When proper rechanneling of funds to infrastructural development is not done, the inhabitants, of the North-Central region, experience social unrest, acute poverty and more herdsmen attacks. Several studies in Nigeria have identified inadequate means of supporting human capital and participation in the design of development, as well as poor maintenance grazing and farming culture as key factors, as leading to chronic developmental problems, social unrest and the growth of acute poverty in the place of inhabitants in the region (Majekodunmi; Fajinmi; Dongkum; Shaw and Welburn 2014). In fact, some of these studies assert that there is the need to evaluate the issue of clashes between the Fulani herdsmen and local farmers, as such is often the genesis of social unrest and domestic violence in the region.

Nigeria is beset with serious security predicaments. On a serious note, Marietu and Olarewaju (2009) warned that 'the collapse of a state can hardly occur spontaneously, or at once. If and where it happens, it is likely to be initiated by violent clashes ridden processes of deterioration, decline and erosion of functions'. Nigeria has provided a more fertile ground for insecurity through the nature of the society and the inability of the federal and state governments to effectively meet ethnically-based demands. Without doubt, the plans of the Fulani herdsmen, who kill and maim their hosts in the guise of grazing, stand as a threat to Nigeria's national security and survival. Nigeria's rising security threat, especially in the concerned aspect cannot be combated by spending large sums of money on military hardware. In fact, the increase in federal budget of defense is quite unnecessary and wasteful.

Nigeria's insecurity can be best combated through social security tactics. Federal and state governments can be responsible and sincere in tackling the issue of corruption in order to demonstrate their willingness to support the herdsmen with grazing reserves and local farmers with enough resources. The return of democracy was preceded by high expectations that some of the problems besetting the country, chief of which is official corruption, will be addressed. However, contrary to expectations, the new democratic order has been plagued by corruption, that surpasses even the military era (Odoh and Chigozie 2012).

The consequences of such failure are evident in the gross underdevelopment of the Nigerian state, economic instability, violence, dearth of good governance, pauperization of the Nigerian people, as well

as a threat to the country's fledgling democracy. Specifically, the culpability of corruption to the general problem of the country has elicited a number of efforts, which include constitutional engineering, as well as institutional and legal approaches, by the Nigerian state to curb its occurrence. Security must be patterned in a way that all ethnic divisions and tribes are the primary focus in security policy formulation.

Proliferation of small and light weapons

The proliferation of small and light weapons has exacerbated violent rural crime, such as armed Fulani herdsmen killings, cattle rustlers cum ethnic violence and general insecurity outrage. Generally for the country and specifically with regards to the herdsmen situation, the discovery by the federal government of a thousand four hundred and ninety-seven illegal routes along the Nigerian border is important information. Even so, this discovery is not as important as how the government react to it. The porosity of the Nigerian borders poses a great challenge to combating the incessant killings between Fulani herdsmen and local farmers, based on trespass on farmlands for grazing purposes. The Governor of Kaduna state had once raised a peace committee and successfully traced the herdsmen to locations outside Nigerian borders (Premium Times 2017), but still, the porosity of the borders remained yet unaddressed.

Nigeria's security institutions are very loose, and weak to check the infiltration of foreign visitors who are mercenaries in Nigeria's incessant herdsmen-perpetuated killings, especially regarding the involvement of the nationals of neighbouring countries such as Sudan, Mali, Niger, and Chad (Shettima and Tar 2008). In addition to our weak borders, Nigeria does not have any special forces guarding these areas spread across the nation. Recent reports of kidnap and robbery, by alleged nomads, of citizens travelling through forest regions is a pointer to why Nigeria needs special policing at our forests and mountains. In most cases, the countries mentioned are escape routes for the armed Fulani herdsmen, when they are aware of the military presence.

Violence between herdsmen and sedentary population across Nigeria

It has been stated that between 2010 and 2017, the activities of herdsmen have posed existential threat to various local Nigerian communities (Kingdom News 2017). Over 5,000 lives have been lost with over 100,000

internally displaced people through the attacks of Fulani herdsmen in the North-Central region (Kingdom News 2017). Many rural communities have been dispersed and their inhabitants thrown into confusion, thereby, breaking the cohesion of the communities and threatening the survival of the local population. It has also been stated that Fulani herdsmen, after attacks, occupy the lands from which they violently and murderously evict the local farmers, and that security forces and the government thereafter, take steps to secure the Fulani possession of the occupied lands (Ojomoyela 2016; Kingdom News 2017).

There is by all accounts a pattern in the poor administration of such emergencies. In the prompt previous administration of President Goodluck Ebele Jonathan, for instance, the Jos emergencies continued regardless of the nearby and worldwide clamor (Okeke 2014). From 1996 to 2006, around 121 individuals have lost their lives in Bauchi and Gombe States alone because of such clashes. On thirteenth July, 2014, 10 people were murdered in conflicts between neighborhood ranchers and Fulani herders in the Pilagani Street of Langtang, North Local Government of Plateau State (Ovuakporie and Agbakwuru 2016). What is more, on the fourteenth of July, 2014, more than 50 individuals were accounted for dead in Pilagani region of Marakun Local Government Area, Zamfara State in a related clash (Premium Times 2016). In May, 2015, likewise, finished a hundred people have kicked the bucket in towns and outcast camps situated in Ikura, Benue State, from assaults by presumed herders. Since the start of this current year, more than one hundred neighborhood ranchers and blameless occupants have been slaughtered by Fulani herders (Opejobi 2016).

In 2015, the fierce Fulani herders were positioned the fourth deadliest brigand aggregate on the planet by the Global Conflict Index. In spite of this and the various individuals murdered, the government has neglected to take intense activities (Stein 2016). In Benue state for instance, the Miyetti Allah Cattle Breeders Association of Nigeria expressed that the assaults on their nearby ranchers is a type of striking back for the taking of one hundred bovines by individuals from the rustic groups that have been under assault. Moreover, in 2016, more than 1,042 inhabitants have been murdered in Benue State because of the ceaseless bleeding conflicts. In 2015, around seven towns were invaded by Fulani herders in Agatu Local Government, seven famers executed in Ikpele and Okpopolo regions of the state and uprooting more than 6000 inhabitants" (Stein 2016).

About 15 Local government areas out of 23 in Benue including Agatu had been invaded by the herdsmen, killing thousands of residents, destructing

homes and farmlands, and raping the wives and daughters of men in these communities (Opejobi 2016). Another notable hotspot of Fulani herdsmen invasion is Ukpabi-Nimbo Community in Enugu State, about 300 herdsmen invaded this community with guns and machetes, shooting sporadically, killing people, setting houses and vehicles ablaze (Mikailu 2016).

Other notable hotspots of Fulani herdsmen invasion include Plateau (Berom Community), Lagos (Agege), Ekiti (Oke Ako Community), Taraba (Gashaka), Ibadan (Lagelu), Delta (Ossissa community), Kwara (Lagun, Iyana Offa, Offa communities), Akure, Nasarawa, Abia and Imo state to mention but a few. The Mercy Corps (2015) puts Fulani herdsmen as the most deadly militant group in Nigeria with a record killing of 1,229 people in 2014, which is a steady rise from 63 in 2013. The Fulani militants accounted for 97% of all deaths in 2014 as against 67% recorded by Boko-Haram (Mercy Corps 2015). Out of 163 countries analyzed in the “2015 Mercy Corps”, Nigeria ranks 149th on the list Global Conflict Index. This further showcases the dilapidating state of peace in Nigeria (Mercy Corps 2015). A recent report by Mercy Corps (2015), a global humanitarian organization funded by the British Department for International Development (DFID), puts the endless conflict between local farmers and Fulani herdsmen across the country, especially in the North-Central, as costing Nigeria \$ 14 billion in potential revenue annually”.

Table 1: Selected Cases of incessant bloody clashes between Fulani herdsmen and local farmers in Nigeria

Name of community attacked (State)	No. of people killed	News Source / Date
Beye and Beryen, Beron, Tusung-Barkin, Mazah, Tarok, Riyon-Barkin Ladin, Bokkos, Dogo na Hauwa, Riyom, Barkin Ladi, Jos North, Jos South, Jos East, Mangu, Bassa, Kwata, Kuru (Plateau State)	657	March, 2010 and December, 2015
Gowen, Guma, Tiv-Guma, Tse Abatse and Tse Yoo, Tarok-Wase, Barkin-Ladi, Eguma-Agalie, Agatu, Guma, Tiv, Soja Patali, Amenbo village, Agatu, Buruku, Guma, Gwer- West, Logo, Kwande, Gwer-East, Katsina-Ala, Odugbeho Agatu, Idele, Guma, Gwer-East, Buruku, Gwer- West, Ucha Nyiev, Ega Adapati, Ikpele, Okpopolo (Benue State)	Over 2000	February, 2011 and January, 2018
Akpanaja Ondori Rukubi-Doma, Udeni Gida, Doma, Eggon, Eggons, Tivs, Alago, Agatu (Nasarawa State)	Over 205	February, 2011 and August, 2016
Jukun, Wukari, Majehuku and Zandukwu, Dori and Mesuma, Gasaka, (Taraba State)	97	January, 2013 and April, 2016
Egbe (Kogi)	5	April, 2013
Tiv (Benue and Nasarawa Border)	23	May, 2013
Ketu (Ogun)	1	October 2013,
Atakar and Zandang, Kirim, Zagar, and Zandyan, Ambie Village, Paa Village, Unguwan Dauda (Kaduna State)	Over 400	October, 2013 and December, 2017
Uzouwani, Ukpabi Nimbo, Uzo-uwani, Nimbo Ngwoko, Ugwuijoro, Ekwuru. Ebor, Nimbo, Umuome, Ugwuachara (Enugu)	Over 622	June, 2013 and December, 2016
Uzuakoli, Ebem (Abia)	23	October, 2015
Nta Obu, Ikpanya (Akwa Ibom)	100	July, 2014
Akoko South-East (Ondo State)		July, 2014
Tse Chia, Tse Nhumbe, Deghkia, Ngorukgan (Abuja)		September, 2015
Fufore, Girei, Demsa, Manassah Nayangom (Adamawa State)	Over 125	March, 2016 and December, 2018
Oflagbe, Isoko North, Matokun, Pategi (Delta State)	4	June, 2015 and February, 2016
Ayamelum (Anambra State)	2	February, 2016
(Ekiti)	5	October, 2017

Source: From Author's Journal.

The implications of Herdsmen and local farmers Crisis in Nigeria

In actual fact, the Fulani herdsmen attacks have raised security concern involving all the states of the federation. Nigeria has become a bandit's stricken country and is regarded as the hotbed of killings. It must be noted that not only does Nigeria's national security predicaments make life more perilous for the inhabitants, they also drain the federal and state governments' resources, inhibit the delivery of public services, unsettle government strategies, discourage potential investors, affect rapid economic growth and hinder political development. The impact is multifaceted as it affects the social, political, economic and environmental spheres. The implication of the current clashes between Fulani herdsmen and local farmers is evident on prospective and existing business enterprises. While potential foreign and local investors are deterred from making actual investments because of the high security risk, already existent ones are unsure of the safety of their investments. In addition, existing businesses are affected in their inability to do well in their functional areas (production, finance and marketing, among others). The resultant effect of these crippling factors is that the productivity of businesses will be receded, poverty will be more manifest, social dislocation and population displacement as well as the disruption of family and communal life, will become more pronounced, all of which will inadvertently increase crime rates.

Another implication in the clashes between herdsmen and farmers is the destruction of lives and farmlands, which has become a major threat to the nation's food production. Some of the food-producing states in Nigeria experiencing this sort of clashes have experienced heavy loss of lives and property. Such loss of lives has adversely affected farming activities and other related businesses and socio-economic activities, resulting in a drastic reduction in farm outputs, and thus, heightening the fear of hunger. Already, most farmers in the affected states have abandoned farms and schools for the fear of being attacked by the Fulani herdsmen. For once predominant farming communities, the agricultural occupation is no longer a business as usual. Too many farmers have been displaced and dispossessed of their farms by armed Fulani herdsmen.

Agricultural development experts are unanimous in their predictions that the gains recorded in the agricultural sector of the economy, especially in the area of food production, may suffer a serious setback as a result of the negative effects of clashes with Fulani herdsmen. Currently, virtually all states

in Nigeria have been affected by the rampaging Fulani herdsmen. The effects of the sustained Fulani herdsmen crisis in the affected localities have led to farmers' reluctance to go back to their farms, even as the current farming season goes on. Local farmers have fled, leaving their farms unharnessed and fallow, thereby subjecting farms to unwarranted grazing by the Fulani herdsmen.

In all the clashes, heavy casualties in human lives and properties are recorded on both sides. While the local farmers count losses in terms of houses and farm produce, the Fulani herdsmen are counting theirs in terms of cattle. Farms and schools in the affected areas have been overtaken with weeds and those that were ready for harvesting have been left unattended to (Opejobi 2016). According to the Governors Forum, "this will negatively affect food supply of local farmers to all parts of the country, since most of the local farmers have moved to safe places where they are not farming and are staying idle" (Opejobi 2016). While the conflict between the sedentary local farmers in Nigeria and the Fulani nomadic cattle herdsmen is decades old, the present escalation into a full-blown crisis between the Fulani herdsmen and the local farmers is a recent phenomenon. As the killings continue on a higher proportion, security agencies appear to have been overwhelmed by the sophisticated nature of the arms used by the mercenaries. The killing of men, women, and children, and the destroying of farm crops and animals have become a trademark of this war, which has chased people out of their ancestral abodes into intolerable situations as internally displaced person.

Conclusion

In spite of numerous examinations in Nigeria which depict brushing conflicts as herders' attack of farmers' property and state an area, this investigation of land utilize/touching clashes of different Nigerian states will be exceptional on the grounds that it concentrated on herders' intrusion of nearby agriculturists' region. Accordingly, it has been noted from this article arrive utilize conflicts between nearby farmers and herders, in Nigeria and the world everywhere, by featuring the flow of brushing conflicts and building up the adjusted appraisal on the triggers and ramifications of the conflicts. The article contributed fundamentally to the advancement of normal asset utilize touching conflicts. It is important to understand all these because land use or grazing conflicts between local farmers and herdsmen in Nigeria have contributed not only in destabilizing peace and security of the nation but also in stagnating the development of agricultural and livestock

sectors in Adamawa, Benue and many other states and Nigeria at large. The article provided a stimulus for interested parties and scholars to carry out further research. Creating and recreating the future is the mission and the challenge of strategy. Strategy deals with interaction of local population. It means the adjustment of a plan to the anticipated reactions of those who will be affected by it. For governments at all levels, it is necessary to know that insecurity caused by clashes between herdsmen and local farmers is usually born out of feelings of weakness and despair. Therefore, the federal and state governments should give attention to the missing links of grazing reserves, importation of Brazilian grass, and also provide avenues to sensitise citizens on the need and values of security consciousness and awareness. Every citizen must bear in mind that life must be secured before one can think of how to feed, clothe, and shelter oneself and then, probably engage in political, cultural and ideological activities. There is absolute nothing that gives meaning and essence to life like security. The major security threat to Nigeria lies in its fragile political and economic unity and the play and display of spoilt politics. This is aggravated by the twin factors of widespread poverty on the one hand and an abundance of oil in the territory on the other hand, both of which factors lead to an intense competition for resources among the six geo-political zones in Nigeria. The internal security posture in Nigeria is highly frightening; the country is basically threatened more by internal threats rather than externally related ones, especially in the north-central region, with the many attendant ethno-religious conflicts and communal clashes. The article examined the state of the nation focusing on the security problems in Nigeria. It argued that Nigeria has reached a near “breaking point” in its security dilemma with no end in sight. It also noted that the country still lacks the strategic vision to address the security crisis in the state, making future security issues inevitable.

REFERENCES

- Abubakar, Muhammed. 2012. *Sociological assessment of nomadic pastoralist and sedentary farmer conflicts in Katsina State*. (M.Sc. Thesis), Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, Kaduna State, Nigeria.
- Adisa, Solagberu. R. and Adekunke, Adekunle O. 2010. Farmer-Herdsmen Conflicts: A Factor Analysis of Socio-economic Conflict Variables among Arable Crop Farmers in North Central. *Nigeria Journal of Human Ecology*, 30 (1), 1-9.

- Aliyu, Aliyu Sheu. 2015. *Causes and resolution of conflict between cattle herders and crop farmers in katsina state*. (M.Sc. Thesis), Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria
- Audu, Sunday Didam. 2013. 'Conflicts among farmers and pastoralists in Northern Nigeria induced by freshwater scarcity', *Developing Country Studies*, vol. 3, no. 12, pp. 25-32
- Baca, Michael W. 2015. *Farmer-herder clashes amplify challenge for beleaguered Nigerian Security*. <http://theglobalobservatory.org/2015/07/farmer-herdernigeria-buhari-abuja-fulani/>
- Bello, Alhassan Usman. 2013. Herdsmen and Farmers Conflicts in North-Eastern Nigeria: Causes, Repercussions and Resolutions. *Academic Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies*, 2(5), 129-139
- CBN financial Watch. 2016. Financial Stability Report December 2016 - Central Bank of Nigeria
- Dimelu, Mabel Ukamaka, Salifu, Edward Danjuma, and Igbokwe, Edwin M. 2016. Resource use conflict in agrarian communities, management and challenges: A case of farmer-herdsmen conflict in Kogi State, Nigeria. *Journal of Rural Studies*, 46, 147-154
- Ehiabhi, Victor. 2012. *Senate passes law to halt Fulani, Farmer's conflict*. <https://www.naij.com/434292-senate-passes-law-to-halt-fulani-farmersconflict.html>
- Onwubiko, Emmanuel. 2017. "Policy Incoherence Fuels Herdsmen Attacks", *National Daily*. <http://kingdomnewsng.com/articles/417-policy-incoherence-fuels-herdsmen-attacks>
- Folami, Olakunle Michael. 2010. Climate change and inter-ethnic conflict between Fulani herdsmen and host communities in Nigeria. In *Conference on Climate Change and Security, organised by the Norwegian Academy of Science and Letters, Trondheim, Norway*
- Gyong, John. 1998. *Conflict Management: Traditional Methods from Pre-colonial Times to the Present*. Paper presented at the conference on enhancing peaceful co-existence in Nigeria. Organized by the centre for peace and conflict resolution National War College Abuja
- HART. 2016. "Herdsmen-Farmer Conflict in Nigeria: An Ongoing Legacy of Division and Mistrust". *Humanitarian Aid Relief Trust*. <http://www.hartuk.org/blog/herdsmen-farmer-conflict-nigeria-ongoing-legacy-divisionmistrust/>
- Higazi, Adam. 2016. 'Farmer-Pastoralist Conflicts on the Jos Plateau, Central Nigeria: Security Responses of Local Vigilantes and the Nigerian State', *Conflict, Security & Development* 16(4): 365-385

- Human Rights Watch. 2013. *Leave Everything to God. Accountability for Inter-Communal Violence in Plateau and Kaduna States, Nigeria*. Human Rights Watch. https://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/reports/nigeria1213_ForUpload.pdf
- Ibrahim, Haliu. 2014. Team nabs 16 cattle rustlers in Plateau. Daily Trust, <http://www.dailytrust.com.ng/news/general/team-nabs-16-cattle-rustlers-inplateau/38032.html#4UFLufEjxDoRljBg.99> (20 March, 2018)
- Idegü, Yusufu Aminu. 2015. "Why does blood flow in Berom?" *The Nation*. <http://thenationonlineng.net/why-does-blood-flow-in-berom/>.
- Kabir, Muhammed M. 2016. 'Roles of surveyors in conflict resolution and peace building in farmers – herdsman perennial resource clashes in Nigeria with special reference to Katsina State, Nigeria (7974)', *Recovery from Disaster*.
- Kingdom News. 2017. Communiqué of the Conference on Herders and Farmers Conflicts in Central Nigeria, organized by the Centre for Research Management, Benue State University, Makurdi, held at the Auditorium 1 of the College of Health Sciences, Benue State University from 13th – 16th March, 2017 Christened. <http://kingdomnewsng.com/news/412-fulani-herdsmen-attacks-makurdi-declaration-2017>
- Majekodunmi, Ayodele O, Fajinmi, Akinyemi, Dongkum, Charles, Alexandra P M Shaw; Susan C Welburn; 2014. 'Pastoral Livelihoods of the Fulani on the Jos Plateau of Nigeria', *Pastoralism* 4(1): 1.
- Marietu, Tenuche S. and Olarewaju Ifatimehin. 2009. 'Resource conflict among farmers and Fulani herdsman: Implications for resource sustainability,' *African Journal of Political Science and International Relationships*, 3(9): 360-364.
- Mercy Corps. 2015. Conflict Between Nigerian Rural Communities Takes Enormous Economic Toll. Press Release <https://www.mercycorps.org/pressroom/releases/mercy-corps-conflict-between-nigerian-rural-communitiestakes-enormous-economic>
- Mikailu, Naziru. 2016. Making sense of Nigeria's Fulani-farmer conflict, BBC News <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-36139388>
- Nicholas, Ibekwe, Nicholas. 2018. Soyinka berates Buhari over government's failure to rein in Fulani herdsman <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/headlines/255149-soyinka-berates-buhari-governments-failure-rein-fulani-herdsmen.html>
- Odoh, S. I and Chigozie, Chilaka Francis. 2012. 'Climate change and conflict in Nigeria: A theoretical and empirical examination of the wors-

- ening incidence of conflict between Fulani herdsmen and farmers in Northern Nigeria', *Arabian Journal of Business and Management Review* 2(1):110-124
- Ojiako, Ifeanyi. A. and Olayode, G. A. 2008. Analysis of trends in livestock production in Nigeria: 1970-2005. *Journal of Agriculture and Social Research*, 8 (1), 114-120
- Ojomoyela, Rotimi. 2016. Fayose Threatens Reprisal Over Herdsmen Attacks in Ekiti. *The Vanguard*. /<http://www.vanguardngr.com/2016/05/fayose-threatens-reprisalherdsmens-attack-ekiti/>
- Okeke, Okechukwu Edward. 2014. Conflicts between Fulani Herders and Farmers in Central and Southern Nigeria: Discourse on Proposed Establishment of Grazing Routes and Reserves. *AFRREV IJAH: An International Journal of Arts and Humanities*, 3(1), 66-84.
- Okoli, Chukwuma. and Atelhe George Atelhe. 2014. Nomads against natives: A political ecology of Herder/Farmer conflicts in Nassarawa State, Nigeria. *American International Journal of Contemporary Research*, 4(2), 76-88
- Olayoku, Philip Ademola. 2014. Trends and patterns of cattle grazing and Rural violence in Nigeria (2006 – 2014) Nigeria watch project. <http://www.ifra-nigeria.org/IMG/pdf/>
- Opejobi, Seun. 2016. Buhari has no solution to Fulani herdsmen/farmers crises – Zakari. Daily Post. <http://dailypost.ng/2016/07/20/buhari-no-solution-fulaniherdsmenfarmers-crisis-zakari/>
- Ovuakporie, Emman and Agbakwuru, Johnbosco. 2016. Herdsmen More Dangerous Than Boko-Haram, *The Vanguard*, <http://www.vanguardngr.com/2016/04/herdsmen-dangerousboko-haram-akpatason/>
- Premium Times. 2016. Fayose vows to equip Ekiti hunters for war with Fulani herdsmen. *Press Release*. <http://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/topnews/203970-fayose-vows-equip-ekiti-hunters-war-fulani-herdsmen.html>
- Sapru, Radha Krishan. 2012. *Public Policy: Formulation, Implementation and Evaluation*, New Delhi: Sterling Publishers
- Shettima, Abba Gana and Tar, Usman A. 2008. 'Farmer-pastoralist conflict in West Africa: Exploring the causes and consequences', *Information, Society and Justice*, 1(2): 163-184.
- Stein, Chris. 2016. "Farmer-Herder Conflict Rises across Nigeria". *VOA News*. <http://www.voanews.com/a/farmer-herder-conflict-rises-acrossnigeria/3326151.html>

ABSTRACT

Countless of needless deaths have occurred due to the incessant clashes involving Fulani herdsmen and local Nigerian farmers. The security situation in the country is bad enough without this menace, which involves the simple, innocent and hardworking grassroot people. Nevertheless, the authorities appear clueless as to the appropriate angle, from which to tackle the issue. The wealth of scholarly discussions on the subject matter have also overlooked the conflict in relation to grazing and land use laws. This research, therefore, investigates the Fulani herdsmen perpetuated slaughter in the light of multi-dimensional factors, which are also subject to an ever-changing political landscape. The research is qualitative and employs archival and secondary sources of data. Discussions are based on the Modernisation theory and the Resource Scarcity Theory, which enable engaging the clashes from varying angles. The study identifies the incoherent policies on appropriate and peaceful land use and the problematic appeasement scheme at the various levels of the Nigerian government as one of the triggers for the clashes. Also, the poor social security package of the populace can be traced to the incessant bloody fights. As proper structural development plans are not made to construct grazing reserves for the nomadic merchants, they have decided to expand their enterprises by force – an option that readily addresses their need in a security handicap nation. Again, the porosity of the nation's borders is also a major factor considered in this research, as evidence abounds to prove that most of the perpetrators of the senseless killings have their hideouts in border nations, from where weapons are transported into the country to carry out their activities. Lastly, the study discusses farmland takeovers, as a finishing of the massacre of the Fulani herdsmen. After destroying a village, the culprits confidently occupy the land, sometime with military assistance while the original owners scamper for safety. This security challenge is tantamount to economic, social and political retardation, as it leads to loss of lives and properties, delayed and probably denied foreign and local investments, the destruction of fertile arable land, reduced food supply and ultimately shortened overall productivity. If the government does not rise to the occasion through drastic security measures, future occurrences will remain most likely.

KEYWORDS

Nigeria; Fulani Herdsmen; Local farmers; Bloody Clashes.

*Received on April 2, 2018.
Approved on December 14, 2018.*