

## Emerging Challenges in Nigeria's National Security in the Twenty-First Century: The Fulani Herdsmen Menace

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**ABSTRACT:** *'Frustrated and landlocked nations can go to war because of water.'* Violent conflict is the major hindrance to national development in the 21<sup>st</sup> century; it leaves in its trail, human suffering through death, destruction of livelihood, detailed economic challenges, constant displacement and insecurity. As human populations are battered, scarce veritable energy and resources are flagrantly diverted into servicing the conflict. Shamed, to be designated by the United Nations in November, 2015, as the world's third largest terror habitat, Nigeria is a reliable reference point to international terrorism. Nigeria, as a multi-religious/ethnic nation, has managed to remain afloat on a patron-clientele, ethno-politico-religious manipulation, staved by struggle for accessibility to, and control of power, resources and other values which shape the destiny of a people. The atrocities of the Boko-Haram group in Nigeria, which is centered on politico-religious indoctrination may be confirmed a child's play, if an in-depth reassessment is made of the smoldering volcano of the Fulani intransigencies. This has direct bearing on the delicate issue of land and food security. The deep and complex social cleavages inherent in Nigeria are central in the analysis of identity construction, conflict flows and settlement. Protracted conflicts and attacks, which have turned several urban and rural locations into killing fields, have continued and grown in propensity some two years ago in Nigeria. Investigative history has fingered the Fulani ethnic group in Northern Nigeria as the consensual belligerent. Recent developments have proved that just as no place in the country may be impenetrable to them; quite also, no one may be outside their reach. Graduating from the use of clubs, sticks, machetes and poisoned spears, they have proven their digital perfection in modern warfare, through their application of sophisticated weapons and tactics. Successive incidents have proved that their resolve to their vision and mission is daft, while their logistics remain intact and intelligence-driven. At this stage of Nigeria's chequered strides, putting into consideration the constancy and multiple effects of these conflicts involving Fulani herdsmen, and other Nigerians, added to the ubiquitous pastoral variegated settlements of the Fulani within the country. Adopting the eclectic research approach, this paper examines the Fulani herdsmen menace across Nigeria and argues that a historical reflection may very well provide the needed clue to guide community and governmental policies towards lasting conflict resolution and management.

**Keywords:** Violence, Grazing Right, Drought, Cattle rustling, Transhumance

### INTRODUCTION

For more than fifty-five years, Nigeria has thrived as an independent country, though devoid of the tumultuous optimism and strong conviction held by many at Nigerian's independence, that the nation would evolve into greatness, considering its ubiquitous human resources and national wealth. Culturally diverse, and with a projected population estimation of more than 170 million, Nigeria has toyed with unitary system, military governance, romanticized with that of confederation, while switching over to the presidential system, starting from the second republic. Polarized between the predominantly, Islamic North and the Christian South, ethno-religious sentiments still shadow its political climate. Great citizen cynicism in the country is buttressed by the existence of internationally highly-rated corruption, unemployment, crime, poverty, human rights abuse and terrorist acts.

Since May 1999, when the country transitioned to a democratic civilian rule, Nigeria has been a theatre of violence conflicts. Though there are varying figures: one source has it that between 1999 to 2002, the country has witnessed over forty ethno-religious and communal clashes.<sup>1</sup> While another source pegs it at fifty-three, between May 1999 and May 2003<sup>2</sup>, even as a leading weekly, **The News** magazine made reference to an official police record of over 200 clashes in 1999 alone nationwide<sup>3</sup>. Regardless of the complete difference in execution and timing of such clashes and those perpetuated by the *Boko Haram* terrorists, the spatial dimension of these conflicts have not exonerated any geo-political zone free from this orgy of violence.<sup>4</sup> Between January 2014 and November, 2015 alone, the expansion of the specter of communal and ethnic based violence and destruction has assumed a galloping proportion and worrisome development this is simply antithetical to the proper democratic ethos. Though, the primordial causes of most of these conflicts could

masquerade into injustice, oppression, despair, religion, into native / settler dichotomization and citizenship question. It is no more the eco-terrorism of the Niger Deltans, the *Odi* and *Zaki-Biam* imbrioglio, or the *Ombatse* escapades in Nasarawa state. The recalcitrant nature of violent conflicts pitching the Fulani herdsmen at different times with their indigenous local hosts in different parts of Nigeria is becoming on security enigma. The scenario presented by this development may be one of putation and disbelief for mostly peoples of the South East and West Nigeria.

When the drumbeats of war were sounding in Adamawa, Plateau and Benue areas, little did people in the South realize that their turn would come fast, no thanks to the emergent harsh realities of global weather and environment changes and variations, as witnessed in Nigeria and other parts of sub-Saharan Africa. Desert encroachment, accompanied by severe droughts in the North have denied herdsmen arable grazing grounds for their animals, hence changing their designation towards the Southern parts of Nigeria, where some lush green vegetations could easily be assessed.

On the other hand, rising unemployment in the face of massive population explosion in Nigeria, compounded by long years of inept leadership and its attendant 'management of poverty' by a great member of citizens, have reawakened and redirected the populace on the importance of agriculture (whether land cultivation or animal husbandry). The importance of land in such venture is not in doubt. Economic exigencies, in the line of ethnic duties and responsibilities (natural engagements), in the face of social needs and demands, on both the Fulani pastoralists and their various host communities nationwide, have drawn a line-divide which is conflictual. This is in fact, adding salt to an already open sore. Since the Nigerian security debacle is still running riot, shooting sprees, burning and looting, rape, kidnapping, cattle rustling and poisoning of grazing grounds and water outlets, have become a resentful tradition. Most times, security personnel are either deliberately absent, or remain helpless.

The depth of Fulani engagement in Nigeria's political equation and development, cannot be questioned at this stage, the commitment, doggedness and involvement of the pastoralist stock to their engagement is not in doubt: the ethnic rights of indigenous citizens to their farms and facilities is not equally under contention. However, for chaos and confrontation to be put in check, conformity must be orderly engaged by rules, checks and balances. Frustration and aggression would give way to symbiotic co-habitation, when the Fulani delineate domination identity ego, hence the social resolution of transformational and natural fallouts.

## THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The wish of this paper is to succinctly apply historical thesis and synthesis on not the Hausa-Fulani, but definitely on the Fulani pastoralists in particular in order to properly position the iron on the anvil, with the aid of the **structural conflict theory, Frustration/Aggression theory, Relational, Human needs and Relative deprivation theories**, the delicate inter-face between the ideal and reality would expose man in historical changes and transformations.

The transformative reactions of individuals, groups, cultures, institutions and societies to change is reflected in their incompatible interests based on competition for resources, which in most cases are assumed to be scarce, hence resulting to social conflicts and violence. Karl Marx, in his 'historical materialism, present conflicts as mostly tied to economic structures and social institutions<sup>5</sup>. Explaining further, Ross opined that when social, political, economic and cultural processes are monopolized by a group, it creates the condition that makes people to adopt adversarial approaches to conflict<sup>6</sup>. Structuralists are of the opinion that most of time, destructive conflicts could emanate from even ethnic factors (demography and physical geography, economic underdevelopment, including un-integrated social and political institutions. The emphasis is on material interests; hence this could explain the intensity, duration and outcome of these conflicts. Though the all important factor of psychological recognition may not be overlooked, or may be tempted to re examine the absurd status of power which colonial governance in Nigeria arrogated to the Hausa-Fulani *vis-a-vis* the other ethnic nationalities. Underestimating or overlooking any group by another would not help, since the natural needs of the Fulani pastoralists may elicit solution and understanding, and not subjugation from other culture groups to be solved.

However, one cannot totally rule out the part played by man's naked pursuit of selfish power and elevated status, as explained by realists like Morton, Morgenthau among others. Walt believes that a high degree of competitive genetic defect is inherent in human nature, which leads individuals, countries and even nations to struggle for interests and power, hence leading to conflicts<sup>7</sup>. Be that as it may, one must not doubt the reactionary consequences of man's action, when he is really frustrated, unable to fulfill needs, hence pushed to the wall. The gap between the want- get-ratation, expected need satisfaction and actual need satisfaction, the tendency is for people to confront those they hold responsible for frustrating their ambitions<sup>8</sup>. Anger leads to violence; most especially when possible channels of negotiation are overlooked, or simply seen as an abject sign of cowardice.

On the part of the Fulani pastoralist, his existential horizon centers on his perfection of his trade as

herdsman. Such entails leading and providing for his herd; in addition to protecting and catering for their welfare. In this delicate task of trans-humane, the Fulani age long tradition is kept alive, and such serves their **human identity need**. So long as there is no relative deprivation, conflict and violence remain relegated.

### NATIONAL SECURITY

The vital responsibility of any good government is the protection of lives and properties of its citizens: suffice it then to state that security is vital for meaningful development to thrive in any country. Security may then be described as the sum total of the national interest of a country. Since a country is made up of individuals, it would not be wrong to state that security starts from the individual to his immediate environment, onwards to the larger society. Basic freedom from threat (tangible or intangible, material or immaterial), and the assurance of future well-being, could very well pass as a definition of security. The need for security is to maintain order, life and the progress of basic human society.

National security demands the protection of values, previously acquired by the individual, the state and its external possession, rights and privileges, by a country or nation. On the other hand, kolodeznj views national security in the eyes of the beholder, which could justify suspending civil liberties, making war, and massively re-allocating resources, during the last fifty years<sup>9</sup>. Lippmann, on the other hand goes further to prove that it would demand the capability of a country to protect its core value, in terms that would not require sacrificing its core value in avoiding war<sup>10</sup>. Nevertheless, Imobighe cautioned that national security demands more than the maintenance of a plethora of security apparatus, but includes linkages between resource allocation, utilization and management<sup>11</sup>. Security challenges are a global phenomenon, and are predicated towards development and progress.

National security cannot be worn like a garb; neither can it be imposed on, or assumed. It goes and rises systematically within the rank and file of any sovereign entity, Under instituted and evolved guidelines, it grows from inside to outside, to ensure stability, dynamism and robustness, hence it is able to operate within an interplay of the individual ,national and international, under a congratulation of social-economic, political and environmental activities in a state.

### THE FULANI PEOPLE

For over a thousand years the Fulani have remained an established feature of West African ecology, its sociology and its history. The remarkable role of the Fulani in the history and development of West Africa has continued to remain controversial, hence eliciting attention. Today, about 20million Fulani inhabit West Africa, distributed in about ten countries in this ratio – Nigeria [7million], Guinea

[4.7 million]. Cameroon [700,000], Mali [2.8million], Niger [1.5million], Sudan [90,000], Chad [138,000] Senegal, Gambia and Burkina-Faso<sup>12</sup>. Found even in Egypt and parts of the Central African Republic, they remain minorities in these countries, except in Guinea, where with 49percent of their population, they are the largest single ethnic group. Their language is the **Fula**, though as one of the most widely dispersed and culturally diverse people of Africa, they could speak French, English, Hausa, Arabic, Bambara and Wolof. Changing situations, social – politically, ethno – economically have continued to impact on them, leading to a sizeable proportion streaming into and inhabiting the heavily forested zones to the South in countries like Nigeria , Sierra Leone, Cameroon, Democratic Republic of Congo , Guinea and the Central African Republic. Historical accounts trace their original abode as Tekrur (Tukulor).<sup>13</sup>

The Fulani are undoubtedly the largest pastoral nomadic group in the world, herding goats, carmel, sheep, horse, mule and cattle. Islam is their religion, though their patience, self control, discipline, prudence, modesty, wisdom, forethought, personal responsibility, courage and hardwork are woven around their traditional caste system/code of conduct - *Pulaaku*. Today the Fulani try as much as possible to at least marry within their serological encasement, be it the nomadic (Mboro) or the town stock.

It may be recalled that two existing Fulani identities of today were the product of the over a century infiltration of the autochthonous dark skinned Fulani inhabitants of the middle Senegal valley, by the pastoral Berbers from the North, since there was enough room for grazing in the well watered lands up to the South and West, into the Futa Toro Plateau (Tukular State). Isolated geographically from their kinsmen to the North, and politically subject to the Tukular State, (Berber trap), the visitors intermarried with their dark-skinned hosts and adopted their language. Symbiotically, an economic relationship developed with the pastoralists relaxing in an excellent place for grazing their cattle, while the dark-skinned indigenous sedentaries took their chance to replace their lumpless cattle with the humped *zebu* breed from the North<sup>14</sup>. This miscegenation and working relationship produced the Fulani (tall, slim, light-skinned, thin nose, long curly hair) and the *Rimaybe* (stocky, dark-skinned, flat squashed nose, short kinky hair and they tend towards corpulence).

Beginning from the 19<sup>th</sup> century onwards, increased population and prosperity triggered –peaceful expansion of the Fulani Southwards and Eastwards from the Senegal, through the Cameroons into Nigeria. Since they filled an apparently unoccupied place in the economic life of their host communities, the advent of the Fulani rather than cause alarm, they were welcomed. They exchanged



their milk and butter for agricultural products of the peasants, tended the livestock of their host, and fertilized their fields by grazing cattle on them after harvest. Accordingly, the light-skinned pastoral Fulani were often accompanied in their migration by their dark-skinned sedentary kinsmen (urban or town Fulani), who were generally better educated as individuals, more dynamic as politicians, and were fanatical and versed as Muslims than the former. When the pastoralists did encounter local opposition to their encroachments, the sedentaries provided the requisite political and military strategy for resistance, and when the sedentaries felt the need for socio-religious cleansing (a jihad), the pastoralists provided the rank and file of the fighting forces. West African history is replete with the history of where the Fulani successfully subjected their former hosts militarily and politically, but ended up becoming racially and culturally immersed and lost amongst such people.

Starting from the 16<sup>th</sup> century, many Fulani communities settled in the highlands of Jos - Plateau, the Western high Plateau of Benin, Adamawa, which measures up to 8,700 feet above sea level. As soon as it was noticed that this place harbored a temperate climate conducive for cattle rearing, the *Fulbe* population settled there in waves of migrations, even into Bauchi, Gombe, Taraba, Kaduna, Burkina-Faso and Southern Chad. Just as these migrations continued to be dictated by mostly economic, ecological and socio - political factors, increased trends of conflicts between these pastoralists and their host communities (farmers) in the areas already mentioned, including the Jukun, Tiv, Chamba, Bamileke and the Hausa farmers equally escalated.

Life for the Fulani pastoralist revolves on his nomadic horizon, hence his exceptional attribute remains- stoic endurances, supported by strength, courage and adversity in order to withstand the vicissitudes of life. His traditional life identity revolves on the **cattle**, hence wealth is counted by how large one's herd of cattle is, one's ability to care for the herds. Amongst the pastoralist, a tradition exists whereby a special cow (**habbanaya**) is loaned to another, until the cow calves. The habbanaya is given a name, and transferred to the loaner during a special ceremony. This highly- prized animal is returned to the owner, once the calf is weaned<sup>15</sup>.

## REFLECTIONS

Nigeria losses about 2,168 square kilometers of cattle range land and cropland every year to the Sahara desert encroachment<sup>16</sup>. This is posing a serious threat to the people, hence recurrent drought have meant that a lot of traditional herding families have been forced to give up their nomadic ways of life, thereby losing a serious sense and pattern of their identity in the process. Some Fulani who have given up their nomadic life, are settled in urban areas like Birni Kebbi, Gombe, Yola, Jalingo

and Mubi. Here they have permeated the ruling class<sup>17</sup>.

Increasing urbanization has also meant that a lot of traditional Fulani grazing lands have been taken for developmental purposes, or forcefully converted into farmlands. These actions often result in violent attacks and reprisal follow-up between the Fulani, who feel their way of life and survival are being threatened, and the other populations (host or not), who often feel aggrieved from the loss of their farm produce. Sometimes, mere sighting the Fulani with his herd on barren and uncultivated lands, may re-awaken past distasteful incidents possessing ethno-religious sentiments and connotation.

Conflicts between pastoralists and farmers have been in existence since the beginning of agriculture. Increase in herd size due to the improved conditions of the cattle and increased human population; have made pastoralists to look for more grazing fields, and equally for the people to put more pressure on land. Recourse to agriculture in Nigeria has continued with increased momentum, sequel to a number of factors stemming from - the dwindling realities of the nation's mono-reliance on crude oil sales *vis- a- vis* global price fluctuations, galloping unemployment in the face of rapid population growth, over - dependence on imported products (including food) among others. As an agrarian society, many farmers are not only dwelling now in the rural areas, but are equally falling back on both private and government loans to eke out a living.

The issue of Fulani herdsmen invading farmlands and destroying crops, most especially during the dry season, has remained a recurrent decimal in Nigeria, most especially within the states of the North - West and Middle belt. The spectacular difference now is the rapidity and the scale of the occurrence, including follow up reprisals. Such harrowing experiences are now slowly eluding the middle belt region of Nigeria, and meted out to the South Westerners and South Easterners, just as environmental drought is engaging the Southern vegetation / environment, after dealing with the North. According to Bolarinwa *et al*, Nigeria recorded several violent conflicts in many rural communities, since 1999 till 2012. Conflicts that have resulted to over 10,000 deaths and the internal displacement of over 300,000 Nigerians have been recorded<sup>18</sup>. In 2003, Okaka town, an agrarian community in Itesiwaju Local Government Area of Oyo State was at the receiving end of this menace. During the locust - like invasion, cattle destroyed several farmlands in the community leading to widespread fear of hunger among the populace.

Those who narrated their ordeal in that incident include the Nigerian Cassava Growers Association, which lost 97 hectares of cassava, estimated at about 20 million naira; two individuals in the community also lost 60 hectares respectively, while another Lagos-based farmer lost over 100 hectares.

Another described how he lost over 300,000 naira worth of yam seedlings, which he had prepared and covered up as he is used to, only to discover to his chagrin that all was gone. Resolved to stop this widespread ravage of their community, and equally filled with retaliatory passion and frustration, the farmers sprayed Di hydro-Dipheny-Tricloroethene (DDT) on their farms, which led to the death of several cattle. This recourse to self help by the people, further heightened tension between the community farmers and herdsmen, who waited to avenge the death of their prized possession.

In Jigawa state alone, more than 70 cases of conflicts have been recorded since the beginning of the 2015 farming season. These cases bordered on encroachments into farms by cattle, and farmers misuse of cattle routes. The situation is not different in Nasarawa and Benue states (the food basket of the nation), as Fulani herdsmen persistently engage farmers in feuds that often result in serious casualties on both sides<sup>19</sup>. However, most worrisome in the present development is the pillaging, raping, killing and now kidnapping by the so called herdsmen. Stories are dotted the national dailies on daily basis of how these shepherds strategically attack several communities at their houses, with sophisticated assault guns- AK-47.

For their rustic constitution, one may not be wrong to ask where such weapons came from, if not from the wealthy owners of the cattle, who not only have the where withal and the connections to obtain and ferry such across to robust Fulani herdsmen hit-squad. Equally begging for answers are the issues of the Rape of women and that of kidnapping with

ultimate intent for ransom. This issue came to a crescendo with the recent kidnapping of Chief Olu Falae, the former Secretary to the Government of the Federation, by the Fulani herdsmen, with whom he has been engaged in running battles, in his farm for the past three years. What of the other dimension of heightened cases of cattle rustling, which is fast turning to a traditional crime, except for the daring application and use of sophisticated weapon to achieve their objectives. Early in November, 2015, the Anglican Bishop of Jos, was completely robbed and denied of his herd of cattles, from his ranch by rustlers, who had previously written to him, frowning at his capability and audacity to run a ranch, knowing that he is not of Fulani stock. While being interviewed by a private television station, he lamented the depth of Nigeria's descent to ethno-religious polarization, even to the extent of obtaining permission for one to engage in cattle ranching: he had wanted to know whether it is the exclusive natural and national reserve of the Fulani to posses and herd cattle<sup>20</sup>. It is even on record that in many states in the North, the Nigerian soldiers have often assisted in countering the attacks of these digital cattle rustlers, hence leading to the recovery of numerous cattles.

To a lot of analysts, it still challenges their imaginations, to assume that the harmless-looking Fulani herdsman, with a waist dagger, with maybe a staff for directing the herd of cattle, a small sized powerful shortwave radio set, and occasionally, a bow and arrows, could step up overnight to embark on all these atrocities.

**Table 1 some documented Fulani herdsmen attacks with location/casualty and destruction**

S /N	LOCATION AND DATES	CASUALTY AND DESTRUCTION	CONFLICT RESO. COMMITTEE
1	Agatu and Gwer Local Govt. Areas in <b>Benue State</b> on Tuesday 25 <sup>th</sup> March, 2014.(two) days after, at Gbajimba headquarters of Guma Local Govt Area . April 12 <sup>th</sup> , 2014-Kula settlement in Gwer West L.G.A.	More than 60 killed and many houses burnt, prompting Gov. Suswan to seek help from the army. About 55 were killed at Gbajimba with many houses destroyed. over 52,000 internally displaced people at camp established by the Catholic Diocese of Makurdi, 2 were killed in Gwer West L.G.A.	The army skeletally interfered. Agatu community is constantly up-dating their conflict resolution scheme as at Nov.4 <sup>th</sup> ,2015
2	29 <sup>th</sup> March,2014.3 villages in <b>Kaduna State</b> (sankwai,takum,marchek) about 250 kilos South of Kaduna metropolis	More than 200 people were killed, while the people managed to kill some of the Fulani herdsman who wore army camouflage uniforms.	
3	5th March,2015 Riyan local govt. area of <b>Plateau State</b>	10 people were killed with more than 100 houses burnt	Irked by the upsurge of attacks and killings by the Fulani herdsmen, most especially in the Middle Belt, on Thursday March 20th 2014, mandated it's Committee on Security,

S /N	LOCATION AND DATES	CASUALTY AND DESTRUCTION	CONFLICT RESO. COMMITTEE
			Intelligence, Defence, Army and Police affairs to investigate the incidents
4	6 <sup>th</sup> March 2015, Buwa village in Ibi Local Govt. Area at 11:15am <b>Plateau State</b>	many people were killed and many houses burnt	
5	Suwa, Bwukulu in Lamurde Local Govt. Area of <b>Adamawa State</b>	many people were killed in the densely populated settlements, while over 200 huts got burnt	
6	<b>Ogun State</b> Oja Adan Area (Asa village)	Mrs. Ayesi Balogun was allegedly raped and killed by Fulani herdsmen.	
7	<b>Ogun State</b> at Oja Adan Area	Rampaging Fulani herdsmen killed a farmer and injured many others. The farmers Agbaose Sewoten was killed because he contested the invasions of his farm.	
8	<b>Jigawa State</b>	More than 70 recorded cases of conflict since the 2015 planting season	
9	<b>Anambra State</b> in Ayamelum L.G.A, and Awka north L.G.A	A total of 4 people were murdered in these two areas, while farmlands were destroyed.	
10	<b>Enugu state</b> (Ezeagu L.G.A)	Many people have been reported injured, and many farms destroyed.	

**Source: Fulani herdsmen attacks in Nigeria Google: Wikipedia, Retrieved 30/11/2015**

Reactions have continued to come from numerous quarters on both the existing and impending motives for these attacks. To the ordinary Nigerian citizen, the herdsmen are goaded by their age long culture and belief in their right to graze land, and water their herd without limitation or boundary<sup>21</sup>. Again, some view this in different parts of the country as a grand design to force their will on the people who may not allow their cattle to graze on their farmlands, in order to see the need for a national grazing land policy, whereby grazing lands would be mapped out in all states and protected for the use of Fulani pastoralists. Accordingly, this outright rubbish is intended, so that they would colonize everywhere, preparatory to over-running the entire country<sup>22</sup>. From a related pedestal, and quite aware of the complexities dictating the Nigerian project, the horrendous atrocities of these herdsmen could agitate the southern Christian to see the Fulani Muslim herdsmen as simply foot soldiers of the caliphate who are bent on actualizing what their forebears naively nurtured in their infantile mind – that Allah has given them Nigeria, as the ethnic nationalities in the middle belt would be their willing tools, while the entire south would be overrun.

This study may want to succinctly reflect on the complex areas of concern for the 21<sup>st</sup> century

Nigerian nation, that is exposed to the desperadoes of the 5<sup>th</sup> Generation wars, as launched by the dreaded *Boko Haram* extremists – the security implications and the challenges of nationhood, the problem of food security under the present change mantra of internal dependency - all these in the face of a seemingly well orchestrated and tactically robust Fulani herdsmen offensive. What of the indefatigable problem of the **internally displaced persons** (IDPs).

Considering the gargantuan task which global terrorism has placed on the rest of the developed nations, including Nigeria recently, a stable minded Nigerian security personnel, quite aware of the historical adversities inherent, would wish to handle and temper reported cases of these Fulani herdsmen infiltrations and attacks with commonsense and equity. In the face of mounting suspicion and the eclipse of fraternal confidence growing on daily basis, law enforcement agencies within the country are seriously challenged to prove whether these herdsmen are partners in crime with the insurgents and the terrorist, as reported in the *Niche newspaper* of 25<sup>th</sup> October, 2015, where account was given how Fulani herdsmen disguise sophisticated weapons among their cattle, and courier them transnationally from Mali (lawless hub of illicit weapons trade), to rebels, international

bandits and *Boko Haram* elements in Nigeria<sup>23</sup>. One could understand the ambit through which the above ascertainment could be probed. It is on record that trans-border sale and transport of illicit light and heavy weapons have continued to thrive in West Africa, unabated, even with several machineries put in place to checkmate it. Again, it is not yet engraved within the psyche, practices and operational manual of many federal security agencies in Nigeria, to embark on conducting random search on the pastoral Fulani either in their temporary habitats in the bush, or while mobile with their herd, heading towards a destination.

In the light of this perceived obstructive and foot dragging antics of the various security agencies in the country, one is bound to refer to what Femi Falana, a human rights lawyer retorted after a Department of State Security (DSS) official (Abdulahi Garba) did parade the suspected abductors of Chief Olu Falae, as mere criminals, who did not target him 'as a Yoruba.'

However, it must be said that this DSS drama took place, after the Nigerian police had earlier shown to the public some totally different persons, as the suspected kidnappers of Chief Olu Falae<sup>24</sup>. Be that as it may, both groups of suspects openly confessed to the crime, hence awaiting court process. Weeks after these arrests, one wonders why their trial is still elusive, or as Falana's suspicion of a subterfuge becoming a reality? To the security personnel, not accosting, searching, and apprehending these Fulani herdsmen, even when an overwhelming proof exists which lend credence to such, is the beginning of wisdom, after all, believe it or not, the long arm of their masters must reach and deal a devastating blow on any that is reported, hence the untutored Fulani herdsmen though of calm disposition, is highly unforgiving and unforgettable so long as any incident revolves around in his 'cattle-rearing identity and stewardship.'

Recorded and repeated cases of herdsmen attacks with sophisticated weapons, clad in army uniforms are not just fairy tales or mere fabrications, but existing testaments which may not only see the Nigerian project as favorably titled to serve the Northern Hausa – Fulani interests, but also searing indications which tacitly confirm what General Yakubu Gowon said, when he retorted that 'there was no basis for the unity of this country, because our world-views are diametrically opposed to each other.' If such is so, one may have to enquire thus- where then lies this hush hush towards nationhood and development. Many a times, it is now quite confusing to the security personnels to decipher the brain behind each recorded attack- either the Fulani herdsmen or the *Boko Haram* terrorists, since large scale application of sophisticated weaponry, coupled with massive burning, killing of targeted indigenes occur. If the Fulani herdsmen could be transporting weapons to ready users and

buyers, what prevents them from trading intelligent information's to end users? All these developments infringe on Nigerian's national security.

The depredations of Fulani herdsmen sometimes degenerate into outright criminality, when they engage in forcefully breaking into fenced and locked plots of land with their herds, unsuspectingly stealing and spoiling lots of personnal effect, all in the name of pasturing their animals, after all 'they are not the dreaded local thieves and armed robbers.

The perennial feud between Fulani herdsmen and farmers in Nigeria could have serious implications for food security in the country. This position was recently reiterated, based on the enormous damages already done to most farms in the Middle Belt area of the country. Apart from this, the issue of environmental degradation in the form of soil erosion, overgrazing and climate change (leading to increasing drought, flooding), is becoming a growing challenge. These require a shift in crops and farming practices, which may not be easily accomplished.

No thanks to the high level poverty streak and unemployment ravaging the country today, at least many youths are back to the farms, engaging in the production of basic food crops – yam, cassava, tomato, garden egg, millet and soya bean. When such clashes remain the order of the day, where lies the impetus to continue such reasonable and engaging ventures for cumulative national growth.

Many farmers have resolved to taking the risk of sleeping in their farm lands, at least until after harvest, so as to secure and at least ward off these pastoralists, who often invade such farms late at nights.

It remains a sad sequel if proper stock is taken on account of the numerous numbers of displaced helpless Nigerians, who end up suffering severe hardship and lack of basic amenities, just because they engaged in farming as part of national growth and development. The great numbers of displaced persons in Nigeria are not merely products of the *Boko Haram* terror inferno. Well across the Middle Belt, the South East and South West of Nigeria, internally displaced persons abound, and grow by the day, as long as pastoralist -farmers imbroglio continue. The National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) may venture towards providing some level of needs and services, nevertheless home is home. While visiting one of those IDP camps in Guma Local Government Area of Benue State, on March 9<sup>th</sup>, 2014 the then Governor Suswan was targeted and attacked at *Tse Akenyi*, on his way to *Torkula* village, openly by a good number of armed Fulani fighters. This was repulsed by his security details, while public national reactions followed suite. By the weekend of the same month, precisely on 23<sup>rd</sup> March, 2014, Abdusalam Muhammed, the North central zone



NEMA coordinator visited the over 52, 000 IDPs at camps established by the Catholic Diocese of Makurdi, sequel to the clash between Tiv youths and Fulani herdsmen, some days ago, in which about 55 people lost their lives.

A strong divide has continued to subsist between the Fulani herdsmen and the farmers throughout Nigeria. This emanates from their separate and distant understanding, perception and human relationship. Take the case of what happened sometime in Ayamelum Local Government Area of Anambra State for example – as the dry season was approaching, while farmers were ready to harvest their crops, herdsmen who were drought-driven came along with their herd and ended up destroying the crops, including the vegetable farms along the water side, as they ventured to water their cattle. When the farmers complained and reacted with threats, the herdsmen rather than showing remorse, felt intimidated, and so returned with both threats and claims to lawful and constitutional rights to graze whenever and wherever. In some other cases, the farmers would equally complain of the destruction of irrigation equipment and infrastructure by the pastoralists, while on their own part, the herdsmen could cite the burning of range land, blockage of the stock route and water points by farmers<sup>25</sup>. Even as farmers may lay claims to fight and defend their land and farm crops, pastoralists are often left with almost no other option than to do all that is humanly possible, (irked by his stubborn traditional pastoral

formation) to protect and see to the wellbeing of his herd, since this is not only his **operational identity**, but his stock in trade. The line divide between the farmer and the pastoralist revolves on lack of understanding, accommodation, egocentric disregard and disorderliness, ignorance and over reaction, after all, both need each other's products to maintain and sustain life.

In the Middle Belt region of Nigeria, a somewhat symbiotic relationship had existed – previously, when the pastoralists had served as a means of transportation for daily goods, as well as providers of manure to fertilize the field for farmers: the herdsmen in turn obtained grains and other farm products from the farmers.

But later, sequel to the expansion of farming activities which invariably led to huge land demand, coupled with the urbanization / industrialization grab on land, grazing land got drastically reduced, hence flocks of cattle become frustrated into encroaching on already cultivated fields, to the chagrin of farmers, leading to unending friction between the two. If not checked, curtailed and contained, from all intents and purposes, relying on available historical evidence and data, the propensity and spread could not only assume a multiplier dimension, but is bound to take on the delicate garb of ethno-religious conflagration. Undoubtedly, agricultural development is already being marginalized within the country.

#### CUMULATIVE EFFECTS OF PASTORALIST / FARMERS VIOLENCE

Table II

Variables	Mean	Std. Deviation
Loss of social relationship	1.26	0.568
Loss of crop yield	2.53	0.833
Loss of income	2.37	0.791
Loss of life and injuries	1.33	0.638
Farm destruction	2.17	0.959
Loss of soil fertility	2.38	0.859
Job abandonment	1.00	0.00
Sleepless night	1.00	0.00
Loss of stored products	1.03	0.159
Home displacement	1.00	0.00
Environmental pollution	2.49	0.698

**Source:** Field survey 2015, culled from “The Effect of farmers conflicts with Fulani herdsmen on agricultural development in Ayamelum L.G.A, Anambra State, Nigeria,” by Udemezue, J.C and Anedo, E.N in Igbo scholars International Journal, Volume 2, No.1, June, 2015 pp. 169 -181

Figures in table II indicate the perceived effect of conflict on agricultural development. The effects were categories into very effective, effective and not effective. Loss of cropping yield with a weighted mean of 2.53, environmental pollution with a weighted mean score of 2.49, loss of soil fertility (2.38), loss of income (2.37) and farm destruction with a weighted score of 2.17 were the perceived effect of the conflicts for agricultural development. This finding is in line with Rashid's findings which stated that ‘loss of income and crop

yield were the effects of conflicts between farmer and Fulani herdsmen in Kwara State<sup>26</sup>.

However, it has been observed that between 1990 to 2014, conflicts between farmers and Fulani herdsmen in the study area have claimed several lives, wounded over 300 people, destroyed many properties, and also displaced a lot of pastoralists from their temporary abode. Whatever the causes of farmer-herdsmen conflicts maybe, it is evident that conflicts have been of great negative effects to



mankind. These range from economic effects (loss of income / resources / yield) to physical (home, farm destruction, body injury or death of family members) and socio-psychological effects, such as emotional exhaustion and job dissatisfaction<sup>27</sup>.

In concluding this section, this study cannot overlook the issue of the many accidents which the Fulani herdsmen cause on Nigerian roads. The list is that of a gory tale of maimed and dead citizens, including inestimable losses. Depending on the herd number, the herdsman may either be inexperienced in controlling the cattle, or be unaware when some of them stray to the wrong side of vehicular movement. Some drivers, who survive the ordeal, may await the Fulani dagger or machete, so long as any of his cattle is either injured or killed. Major highways in Nigeria are always littered with visible cow dung. How this impacts on the foreigner who just visited Nigeria for the first time, may not be to the nation's interest.

### CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conflict is a continuum in the affairs of man, and as long as human societies continue to exist, opportunities of misunderstanding and conflict would always provide the needed balance and basis for ascribing power and status, tendering better explanations, correcting perceived wrongs and furthering dynamism in human relations. However, protracted conflict tends to impair inter-personal and communal relationship, in that confidence, mutual trusts, peaceful-coexistence and social harmony are dealt a great blow. Such conflicts have given rise to fear, suspicion, mistrust, bitterness, anger and mutual antagonism, hence the **relocation syndrome** that have been witnessed in some flash

points like Kaduna and Jos. Such are the demographic shifts from the so called perceived unsafe areas to safe areas<sup>28</sup>. But considering the unfolding trend in the country today, whereby Fulani herdsmen have seemingly found relative easy to attack even locations in Southern Nigeria, where lies the justification for the so called safe - havens. The penchant for violence may not be a genetic endowment, but rather an acculturate attributed as supported by history, hence the endangered resisting extermination, and the superior –inferior complexes, as evidenced in the arrogance of the Hausa- Fulani oligarchy in dealing with those outside their group in Nigeria<sup>29</sup>.

On the thorny issue of Fulani herdsmen and famers violent clashes, at least, historical evidence has not only traced the genesis, but has equally reflected on its projected continuation on a larger scale, unless several drastic measures are taken. Resolving such conflicts through the application of naked force is simply counter- productive. Again, the Federal Government have made concerted efforts to contain this through several administrative and judicial panels of enquiry. In the words of Dowus, 'such have even failed on the stand that either the panels were not competent or courageous enough to examine the cause of the disputes<sup>30</sup>, and apportion blames. Whatever recommendations that may come from this study must be hinged on a dynamic consensus of natural negotiation and orderly checks and balances, based on certain coping strategies for conflict management already applied with good returns in some places in Nigeria. This study is quite aware of numerous conflict resolution schemes already setup to curtail this problem in various states of the federation.

TABLE III

Variable	Mean	Std. Deviation
Increase farm size	1.05	0.22
Relaxation of farm	1.23	0.424
Borrowed money	1.04	0.194
Early harvesting	2.81	0.514
Supplementary occupation	2.50	0.818
Staying late on farm	1.09	0.288
Help from union/ friend	1.00	0.00
Use of traditional ruler	2.51	0.802
Use of police and court order	1.05	0.22
NGOS support	1.06	0.295
Use of physical fight by farmers	2.69	0.690
Setting up panels of enquires	1.04	0.194
Use of security Agents	1.04	0.194

**Sources:** Field survey 2015, culled from-“ The Effects of farmer's conflicts with Fulani herdsmen on agricultural development in Ayamelum L.G.A ,Anambra State, Nigeria , by Udemezue J.C and Anedo, E.N in Igbo Schools International Journal, volume 2, No1, June, 2015 pp.169-181.

The coping strategies were grouped into always used, sometimes and not used. Early harvesting with a weighted mean score 2.69, use of physical fight by farmers (2.51), application of

supplementary occupation (2.50) were accepted by farmers as their major option for conflict management in this study area. Moreover, conflict actors and affected farmers have adopted some

better coping strategies that included early harvesting, use of security agents and even resulting to supplementary occupation to adapt. Even at this, the bloodletting, the constancy and the destructions have taken a dangerous momentum in the country. In as much as some of the above enumerated coping strategies may still appear resolutely relevant, the following recommendations may prove more realistic:-

In the 21<sup>st</sup> century Nigeria, the feudalistic social stratification which still allows the predominant Muslim North as a matter of policy to deny the Fulani herdsman and his family education, hence wandering in the bush, trekking alongside animals for thousands of kilometers to make money for his master, hence attaining a traditional enviable height, is simply unacceptable. For a civilized Nigeria to move from growth to development, all hands must be on deck: no section of the country should be left behind, and no group should assume a divinely designated mandate to move at its own pace, all to the complete detriment of the others. When almost half of most Northern State's annual budgets are utilized to fund pilgrimages and archaic institutions, what should be the fate of **education**, which would re-awaken and reactivate dormant instincts against unfair practices, and imbue in the populace the gains emanant in complementary socialization, in a culturally - diverse society like Nigeria. Education would reorganize the resort to the primitive gambit of rape, kidnapping, burning and looting in conflict resolution, to dialogue. Through education, and a professionally re-branded animal husbandry, the Fulani herdsmen and farmers could borrow a leaf from the practical transformations which the Zimbabwean farmers are exhibiting at Shonga Farm Holdings limited (SFH) in Ogun State, Nigeria. It is engaged in mixed dairy and poultry farming, and equally produces commercial crops, such as maize, rice, cassava, ginger, and soya bean milk and poultry meat. As an independent entity, it is separate from the State Government; amongst other food supplied include 250 liters of raw milk daily to WAMCO, producers of Peak milk. (Source: Field survey, November, 2015)

In the light of this, education could go a long way to introduce modernity to both the farmers and the herdsmen. The government could help towards drawing up and putting in place necessary modalities that would spur the wealthy owners of the cattles to put up ranches across the country, as is obtainable in other developed countries. Such ranches may not be strictly located within the state of the owners. One could buy land even in Southern Nigeria and follow necessary guidelines, to erect viable ranches. It is just that the ethnic Northerner appears not to have found the justification for buying land and investing in the South, while the reverse is the case for the South Easterner.

Infact the Fulani have often requested for the development of exclusive grazing reserves and cattle passages to curb conflicts, and this has always been the cardinal promise of Governorship and Presidential candidates, who aim at getting the pastoralist votes. concerted efforts should be made by the government of Bauchi, Gombe, Adamawa, Taraba, Plateau and Kaduna, who posses large populations of Fulbe Fulani to include in their development plans, the reactivation and preservation of grazing reserves under the care of Grazing Reserves Committees. Such reserves would boost livestock production, lesson herding difficulties, reduce seasonal migrations and so enhance interaction among farmers, pastoralists and the rural dwellers.

There is the need for a compulsory registration of all Fulani herdsmen operating in any particular Local Government Area. By so doing, an orderly multi-stage conflict/security framework is put in place. Because the pastoralists are always on the move, here lies the justification to involve them in community and Local Government statutory committees, where they are opportuned to meet and liase with farmers in that area. Registration would help and assist the host communities and security agents in monitoring of the herd size and the number of the herdsmen.

Since Fulani herdsmen do not possess the right to land, hence relying generally on open cultivated and uncultivated land to graze and water their cattle, there lies the great need to educate them and the farmer on the principles and practices of land use. The way by which people perceive land culturally may be instrumental positively in helping resolve the persistent Fulani and farmer's conflict. The application of early harvesting by the farmers is still a portent solution, in order to nip possible areas of friction from the bud. The importance of local leaders and traditional rulers in such conflict management is not in doubt, after all, with good diplomacy, they could douse tension and calm incidents which could blow out of proportion.

All in all, one thing is clear, the 21<sup>st</sup> century Nigeria Fulani herdsmen are still ecologically and drought -driven towards the Atlantic coastlines, though backed by complex complications and resisted by socio-economic implications. Accounts that appeared like folklore in historical annals have today broken the borders of impossibility, as the Fulani drift continue, and intermingle with other ethnic groups in diverse formulas. Herein lies the detailed demands of providing national security to aid social cohesion, conviviality and inter group relations. The meeting point of pastoralists and farmers usually occur in communities and settlements that are mostly inaccessible due to difficult terrains, hence lacking in telecommunication networks and signals. Police posts are nowhere to be found hence giving room to complete pandemonium, whenever such crisis

occur. There is the dire need to recruit more hands into the security agencies (the police and the civil defence) and train, equip them to secure lives and property. The availability of such people at the onset of such crisis situations, could deter its degeneration into full –blow conflict.

On the other hand, this study welcomes several sincere positive conflict resolutory moves made in recent times throughout various parts of the nation towards removing steam from these precarious eruptions. Such include the 18<sup>th</sup> October, 2015 emergency meeting between leaders of the Fulani community and some South Western representatives held at Ibadan, Oyo State, the 4<sup>th</sup> of November 2015 State Government sponsored meeting involving some Fulani representatives and Agatu elders, held in Agatu, Benue State; the previous State Government sponsored conflict

resolutory committees already in *situ* in Enugu, Anambra and the states of the North Central geopolitical zone. Again, a cue must be taken from some recent engaging efforts of the Kano state government towards stamping out cattle rustling in that section of the country. Over 1,800 cattles, including a large number of goats and sheep, a cache of sophisticated arms, ammunitions and charms were recovered in a daring police operation, which began from December 1<sup>st</sup> 2015. Many Fulani bandits were arrested in this exercise. It must be observed that, when such actions and sincerity are exhibited by some core Northern States towards cubing the menace, a strong message of non-collusion dawns on the agitated keen Southern States: hence the need to separately and constructively deal with this Fulani herdsmen national onslaught decisively.

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