

URBAN VIOLENCE DIMENSION IN NIGERIA: FARMERS AND HERDERS ONSLAUGHT

ALUKO OPEYEMI IDOWU*

Abstract: Nigeria is a deeply divided multiethnic state par excellence. Every ethnic group has its unique socio-cultural and political economy patterns. As humans interact daily, there are clashes in some interactions due to uncoordinated and divergent interests of the involving parties. The farmers' and herders' clashes are dimensions of such interaction in Nigeria. In recent times, the rate of clashes among the herders and the farmers had become alarming. It had cost the country a fortune in terms of socio political and economic stability. Farmers had abandoned fertile farmlands due to cattle invasion which destroys tender crops. The resultant responses include cattle rustling and killing of trespassing animals by farmers while the herdsmen invade communities to kill everyone possible. Community members had become internally displaced and the social contract with the state is in jeopardy. The question the paper seeks answer to is does the agricultural sector of Nigeria have a viable policy prospect with the frequent farmers and herders' clashes? Conflict theory will be use to explain farmers-herdsmen clashes phenomenon. Conclusion and recommendations are premised on good neighbourliness and respect for the rule of law.

Keywords: conflict, internal displacement, farmers-herdsmen, rule of law, Nigeria, urban violence

INTRODUCTION

Nigeria is a deeply divided multiethnic state par excellence. Every ethnic group has its unique socio-cultural and political economy patterns. However, there are three dominant groups in Nigeria social policy. These include the Yoruba group, the Hausa/Fulani group and the Igbo group. The Yoruba group is predominantly in the Western part of the country, the Hausa group is domiciled in the Northern part of the country while the Igbo group is domiciled in the Eastern and Southern part of the country. The primary occupation of the Yoruba's

* Aluko Opeyemi Idowu (✉)

Political Science Department, University of Ilorin, Kwara State Nigeria
e-mail: opealukoheavenprogress@gmail.com

is farming, while the Hausa/Fulani groups are predominantly farmers and herdsmen. The Igbo groups are predominantly industrialists and fishermen.

Due to the fact that humans cannot do without interactions across all spheres of life, the Hausa/Fulani herders migrate to the western southern and eastern part of the country to find pastures for their cattle. The population of the cattle cannot be stopped from sporadic increases and at the same time, the population of the humans is on a progressive increase streak. This no doubt increases the claims on the land usage per person. The dilemma is that the land mass is not expanding and the productivity in some quarters is decreasing yearly. The Yoruba, Hausa and Igbo famers who specialize on shift rotation of land for fallowing reasons and good output of farm inputs sees the invasion of fallowing grounds and other farmlands by the Fulani herders' cattle as direct incursion on their livelihood. These interactions in most cases result into clashes in some quarters due to uncoordinated and divergent interests of the involving parties. The violence has uprooted more than 100,000 people in Benue and Enugu states, and many are staying with relatives or in makeshift internally displaced person's camps. The bursts of violence have displaced 400,000 people in the last five years while many are still struggling to rebuild their lives.

The Fulani herders claim there is freedom of movement- of man and cattle, interaction and association in the country why the farmers see the farmland invasion as not acceptable and infringement on their personal and communal properties. The farmers' and herders' clashes are result and dimensions of such interaction in Nigeria. In recent times, the rate of clashes among the herders and the farmers had become alarming. The crises was previously domiciled in the north and north central geopolitical zone of the country but it had spread to the western and core southern part of the country. This had cost the country a fortune in terms of socio political and economic stability. Farmers had abandoned fertile farmlands due to cattle invasion which destroys tender crops and wastes farmers' efforts and resources. The resultant responses include cattle rustling and killing of trespassing animals by farmers while the herdsmen invade communities to kill everyone possible as a retaliating measure.

Community members had become internally displaced and the social contract with the state is in jeopardy. The objective of this paper is to examine the extent of the viable policy prospect agricultural sector of Nigeria have for national development amidst of the frequent

farmers' and herders' clashes. Considering the diversification prospect from oil dominant to agricultural diversification; the question the paper seeks answer to is does the agricultural sector of Nigeria have a viable policy prospect for development with the frequent farmers' and herders' clashes? Conflict theory will be employed to explain the reasons and prospects of conflict in human communities which include the farmers-herdsmen clashes dimensions.

CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATION

Fulani herdsmen

The Fulani, also called Peul or Fulbe are people of obscure origins, expanded eastward from Futa Toro in Lower Senegal in the 14th century. By the 16th century they had established themselves at Macina (upstream from the Niger Bend) and were proceeding eastward into Hausa land. Some settled in the 19th century at Adamawa (in the northern Cameroons). Many of the Fulani continued to pursue a pastoral life; some, however, particularly in Hausa land, gave up their nomadic pursuits, settled into existing urban communities, and were converted to Islām. A primarily Muslim people scattered throughout many parts of West Africa, from Lake Chad, in the east, to the Atlantic coast. They are concentrated principally in Nigeria, Mali, Guinea, Cameroon, Senegal, and Niger. The Fulani language, known as Fula, is classified within the Atlantic branch of the Niger-Congo language family.

Interaction of the widely dispersed Fulani with disparate other groups has produced a variety of socioeconomic patterns. The Fulani were originally a pastoral people, and their lives and organization were dominated by the needs of their herds. The pastoral Fulani today enjoy greater prestige than town and sedentary agricultural Fulani as the most truly representative of Fulani culture. Interaction with other groups has sometimes resulted in a considerable degree of cultural absorption. This is most notably the case in northern Nigeria, where perhaps half of the Fulani have adopted the Hausa language and culture and where, as a result of a series of holy wars (1804–10) purporting to purify Islam, they established an empire, instituting themselves as a ruling aristocracy (Encyclopædia Britannica 2012a).

The urban Fulani are the most ardently Muslim; pastoral Fulani are frequently lax and sometimes even non practicing Muslims. The pastoralists also exhibit a much greater variation of physical traits. They wander in nomadic groups, making temporary camps of portable

huts. Some of their dairy products are exchanged at markets for cereal foods; cattle are rarely killed for meat. Many sedentary Fulani, who frequently have become sedentary as a result of the depletion of their herds, also own cattle, but they rely principally on cultivation.

The social structure of the pastoral Fulani is egalitarian, in marked contrast to that of other Muslim groups, such as the Hausa, and to most sedentary Fulani. The influence of Islam on kinship patterns is evident in the general preference for cousin and other intralineage marriages. Most men are polygynous, the typical household unit comprising the family head, his wives, and his unmarried children.

In the 1790s a Fulani divine, Usman dan Fodio (1754–1817), who lived in the northern Hausa state of Gobir (northeast of Sokoto) quarrelled with its rulers. Accusing the Hausa kings of being little more than pagans, he encouraged the Hausa people to revolt. Joined both by Hausa commoners and by Fulani pastoralists alike, the jihad, or holy war, swept through Hausaland and, repulsed only by the eastern empire of Kanem-Bornu, engulfed Adamawa, Nupe, and Yoruba land to the south (Encyclopædia Britannica 2012b). After the invasion by the Fulani of the northern provinces of the Oyo, the emirate of Ilorin to the northeast became the base from which Islām was to spread among the Yoruba. Usman, who was more a scholar than a statesman, ceded the practical direction of the eastern part of the empire to his son Muḥammad Bello, who settled in Sokoto, and the western (with its capital at Gwandu) to his brother Abdullahi. All three continued the Fulani denunciation of Bornu.

The empire reached its zenith under Muḥammad Bello, who, like Usman, administered it according to the principles of Muslim law. The decay of this system was to aid the establishment in the late 19th century of British rule over what was later to be known as Northern Nigeria. Therefore, ripple effects seen today is a continuation of the historical warfare and domineering tendency of the Fulani groups who were permitted by the communities to reside in the suburbs of their community. Their traditional warfare prepared mind is a major factor contributing to the impudent act of destruction of farmlands and lives of their farm lords.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Conflict Theory

Conflict theory explains the basis of violence in any sector be it an organized sector or unorganized sector. Conflict theory generally

surrounds the idea that most struggles in society happen because of conflicts between different social classes or groups. Each group struggles to attain more resources and because resources are scarce, they must struggle with other groups. Groups try to protect their own interests, therefore blocking the progress of other groups. Individuals have aggressive impulses and these impulses are expressed in all relationships, especially close relationships such as Love and Hate. Outside influences influence our emotions and cause conflict with those around us. From such conflict comes social change such as the American Revolution and the Civil Rights (1960's). We often mistake conflict as always being a dividing factor; it can instead have quite the opposite reaction. When two groups are pitted against one another, the bonds between members of each group within itself become much closer.

Functions of social conflict are numerous. The following are germane to conflict theory. Social conflict creates boundaries between different groups, which in turn create a strong unity between the individual group members of a group. Social conflict promotes cohesion and promotes coalitions and associations with outside groups. Social conflict creates an increase in cohesion inside a group and among several groups which would not normally unite. Conflict serves as an important agent in establishing full ego identity, autonomy, and differentiation of personality from the outside world. A group is bound together by the individual members' similarities and the reinforcing of group awareness of such similarities. Conflict helps to create and maintain group cohesion. A high level of conflict comes with a high level of group cohesion. Each group relies on conflict for its identity. Therefore, conflict is essential to a society.

Conflict in many cases has hostile influences on the individual and the community. Social conflict cannot be accounted for by drives, impulses, and isolated instances of behavior; rather, it is explained by a pattern of interaction. Aggressive behavior is related to a group's structure of interactive relations. The structural variable linked to direct aggression is the degree of group cohesion. Coser (1913-2003) defined direct aggression as "aggression expressed toward members of the group" Therefore, high group cohesion leads to high amounts of aggression.

Hostility in close social relationships is inevitable forms of manifestation of conflicts. Love and hate are intricately linked. This idea is most accurately linked to close, intimate relationships rather

than all social relationships. The closer the relationship, the greater the investment, which leads to suppressed, rather than expressed, hostile feelings. The suppressed feelings are due to the fear of putting the relationship in danger. As hostility continues to be suppressed, these emotions accumulate and intensify. This intensity could lead to direct aggression. Therefore, the love-hate phenomenon found in intimate relationships helps to support Coser's contention that the high instances of direct aggression are found in highly cohesive groups.

Conflict has impact on group structures such as the enhancing of close relationships which may exhibit tendencies toward the suppression of conflict. If conflict occurs despite suppression, it tends to be disruptive toward the relationship because of the intensity expressed. This intensity is attributed to the total involvement of the personality and the accumulation of hostility. Therefore, it is accurate for the participants to fear conflict because of the effects it might have on the relationship.

Conflict with another group usually defines group structure hegemony in most cases. When conflict occurs between groups, the members of each group become more cohesive. Groups in conflict expect their individual members to be entirely involved. A group engaged in continued struggle tends to be intolerable of individual deviations within the group. A member of a threatened group may be allowed only limited departures from group unity. Those who choose to deviate must either volunteer or be forced to withdraw from the group.

The American sociologist C. Wright Mills tied many of the theories on conflict to the American society and economy. In a time of suppressed speech because of the Cold War, Mills was outspoken and often targeted because of his criticism on American society. Ralf Dahrendorf (1929) believes that social order is maintained through coercion by those at the top (in Mills' case, the power elites). Tension is a constant in society and radical social change is likely at any point in any given society.

Sociological and social science theories can be divided into two parts: Concentrate on issues of consensus and concentrate on issues of conflict. There cannot be issues of conflict unless some consensus has already been established. Disagreed with Marx about economic forces being the sole determinant of conflict; instead he thought unequal distribution of political power was a major contributor to conflict.

Dahrendorf maintained that those who have power and authority hope to maintain the status quo, while those who lack them hope to obtain some portion of them. Power implies the coercion of some by others but also said that in some organizations power meant legitimate authority. He had same view of definition as Weber: power is essentially tied to the personality of individuals, whereas authority is always associated with social positions or roles. Dahrendorf was most interested in studying authority. When someone has authority in one setting, that authority does not extend to other social arenas: a boss holds legitimate authority at work but outside of the work setting they cannot legitimately tell people what to do.

According to Randall Collins, “Whatever else may be going on in social life, human actors are deeply involved in relational issues of control and dominance (power) and of acceptance and positive association (status)”. There are three basic principles to Collins’s conflict approach: People live in self-constructed subjective worlds. Other people may have the power to affect, or even control, an individual’s subjective experience. People frequently try to control the actions of others, who oppose such attempts of control; result is often interpersonal conflict. Collins believed that sociology should be aimed at solving concrete problems in the world: planning and evaluation.

However, there are three primary criticisms of conflict theory. Conflict theory tends to ignore the many areas in which most people arrive at the same consensus about important values of life. Both the rich and the poor usually tend to admire hard-working, courteous people. Conflict theorists tend to side with the people that lack social power: critics say that this violates scientific objectivity. Finally, the focus on economic factors is the sole criteria for all conflict in society. However, most conflict theorists today take into account gender, race, ethnicity, age, sexual orientation, and other factors that lead to conflict. Notwithstanding, the Relevancy of Conflict Theory is inevitable to the study of urban violence and intergroup relations. The following are brought to bear. Power relationships exist everywhere. Physical power has given away to “legal” and “economic” power. Physical power does, however, still exist within the contexts of gangs and prison populations. Now instead of a physically strong person taking a physically weaker person’s land as before, the owner of the land is the person who has legal claims towards the land. Most of the people in most of the time, act in their own best interests. Therefore there will

always be conflict, and a good reason that Conflict Theory will always be relevant.

FARMERS-HERDERS ONSLOUGHT IN NIGERIA

Clashes between different groups of Fulani herders and farmers have killed thousands of people in Nigeria over the past two decades. In 2014, more than 1,200 people lost their lives, according to the most recent Global Terrorism Index. This made the Fulani the world's fourth deadliest militant group. The 2016 February's massacre of some 300 people in central Benue state and April's raid in southern Enugu state, where more than 40 were killed, caused outrage across Nigeria (Mikailu 2016). Properties were destroyed and thousands of people forced to flee their homes (Aremu and Aluko 2015). This led to growing anti-Fulani sentiment in some parts of the country however considering the President Muhammadu Buhari, himself a Fulani man.

The fighting is about some disagreements over the use of essential resources such as farmland, grazing areas and water between herders and local farmers as the major source of the fighting. Fulani herders travel hundreds of miles in large numbers with their cattle in search of pasture. They are often armed with weapons to protect their livestock (Aluko 2014). They frequently clash with farmers who consistently accuse them of damaging their crops and failing to control their animals. The Fulanis on the other hand say they are being attacked and their cattle stolen by bandits.

The Fulani herdsmen respond that they are being attacked by gangs from farming communities who try to steal their cattle and they are just defending themselves. The clashes used to be confined to Nigeria's central region, with the mainly Christian Berom farming community in Plateau state engaging in retaliation killings with Muslim nomadic herders. But the continued effect of climate change on grazing lands has pushed the Fulani herdsmen further forward south in search of graze land and water. This has widened the scope of the conflict with deadly incidents being increasingly reported in southern parts of the country, raising fears that the violence could widen ethnic chauvinism and threaten the brittle unity that exists among Nigeria's diverse ethnic groups (Aluko and Sayuti 2016).

There have been at least 370 clashes involving herdsmen and farmers in Nigeria in the last five years, compared to just 20 in the 15 years before that, according to data from the Lagos-based research firm SB Morgen. The prospect of rebuilding farms and spending extra on

security is a concern for many farmers whose land has been raided twice in the last three years. From the current economic atmosphere in Nigeria, building a small farmhouse, employing someone stay at the farm permanently, buying a motorcycle and paying for their food and other necessary logistics costs about 200,000 naira (\$1,000) each year.

The federal lawmakers proposed to introduce a Grazing Commission Bill to address the burning issue. However, the Pan-Yoruba socio-political group (Afenifere) described the bill as anti-people. The bill proposes the establishment of the National Grazing Commission which will preserve and control the national grazing reserves and livestock routes and other matters related to it. The bill which will empower the commission to acquire any land anywhere in the country would violate the subsisting Land Use Act and traditional means of land holding if enacted (Guilbert 2016). The Afenifere opines that the bill was being proposed allegedly to favour the business of the Fulani herdsmen at the expense of the farmers whose farms were always destroyed by the Fulani's cows in some other parts of the country. Also, they believe the bill is an offensive bill. It attempts to do would rob the citizens of their possessions and award to another set of citizens which is against the principle of natural justice.

However, the Nigerian government has made several attempts to mitigate this problem from the root. The government earmarked the sum of N10 billion for the operation of the Great Green Wall Programme (GGWP), in an effort to boost the fight against desert encroachment, a major factor that has driven pastoralists from the far North to the North-Central region of Nigeria in search of grazing fields. Notwithstanding, there are gross irregularities in the level of commitments set on this project by the federal government and other concerned state and local governments.

Nigeria Agricultural Sector Grazing Reserves Commitment

From 2011-2014, an analysis of the agriculture ministry's capital budget shows inconsistent allocation to the development of grazing routes and reserves. In 2011, the agriculture ministry allocated N31, 404,899,584 for capital projects. It channeled N310, 489,185 for its National Grazing Reserves and Pasture Development Programme that year. In 2012, the ministry has N45, 009,990,000 for capital budget, a total N930, 000,000 was allocated to the development of grazing reserves, stock routes (1140km) and resting points across Nigeria. In 2013 the ministry allocated N130, 582,000 from its N50, 808,871,428

capital budgets for nationwide grazing reserves development. In 2014 the ministry allocated N100, 130,000 from its N35, 151,172,583 capital budgets for nationwide grazing reserves development. The 2015 Budget Agriculture and Rural Development was N39, 151,988,128 while the total budget for the Federal Ministry of Agriculture 2016 was 47,001,125,634. The percentage allocated for grazing reserves maintenance and creation further witness a decrease. The table I and figure I below further simplify the presentations of the dwindling commitment to grazing reserves in Nigeria Agricultural sector.

YEAR	MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE’S BUDGET (N—IN NAIRA)	TOTAL ALLOCATION FOR GRAZING RESERVE (N—IN NAIRA)
2011	31, 404,899,584	310, 489,185
2012	45, 009,990,000	930, 000,000
2013	50, 808,871,428	130, 582,000
2014	35, 151,172,583	100, 130,000

Table I Source: Researchers Compilation (2016)

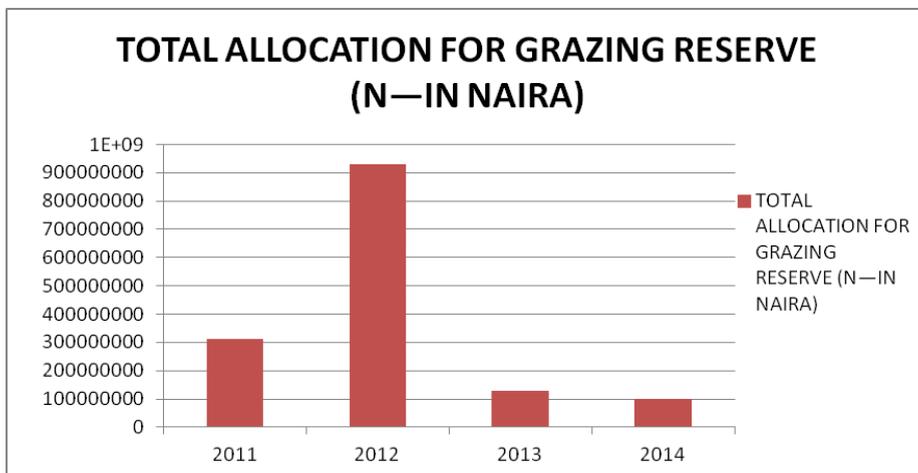


Figure I Showing the inconsistency in the Agriculture Ministry budget percentage for Grazing Reserves

The figure I shows a drastic rise and a dramatic continuous fall in the budget total allocation for grazing reserves in Nigeria for four years (2011-2014). The dramatic fall of allocated amount for the provision and maintenance of grazing reserves across the country from 2013 to 2014 account for some of the reasons for the clashes of the herdsmen and farmers in the country.

From the above fiscal analysis, the bloody clashes between the herdsmen and farmers continue to occur in several parts of the country. The Nigeria government's response to the violence tends to oscillate between the use of military force and mediation by eminent persons at a crisis point. The latter are engaged to hold consultative meetings in conflict situations or appointed into peace commissions of inquiry. When military forces are deployed to contain particular spikes in the violence, the treatment of the civil population has itself become a critical political and security challenge (Hoffman 2014). The accounts of excessive use of force, extra-judicial killings and other human rights abuses cannot be overemphasized. The duo efforts have failed as clashes have continued unabated over the years.

Furthermore, between 2002 and 2010, the federal government appointed four commissions to investigate the violent conflict (largely herdsmen/farmers) around Plateau, Nasarawa, and Benue States: Justice Okpene Judicial Commission of inquiry into communal conflicts in Benue, Nasarawa, Plateau and Taraba states in 2002; Presidential Peace Initiative Committee on Plateau State, headed by Shehu Idris, Emir of Zazzau, May 2004; Federal administrative panel of inquiry into the 2008 crisis, headed by Major General Emmanuel Abisoye; and Presidential Advisory Committee on the Jos Crisis, headed by Solomon Lar in 2010. However, there has not been any strong political will to implement the reports of the several commissions of inquiry.

The herdsmen/farmers clashes have attracted international attention. Human Rights Watch (HRW) in December 2013 said clashes in central Nigeria had killed 3,000 people since 2010, accusing Nigerian authorities of ignoring the violence. According to official figures, in Nigeria, more than 35 per cent of land area of 923,768 square kilometres is threatened by desertification affecting the livelihoods of more than 40 million people (Eromo 2016).

In recent times, this ongoing tension in Nigeria has witness dramatic escalation to include attacks, kidnappings and killings by the nomads.

To this extent the global index (2015) had ranked the Fulani herdsmen as one of the five deadliest terrorist groups in the recent times.

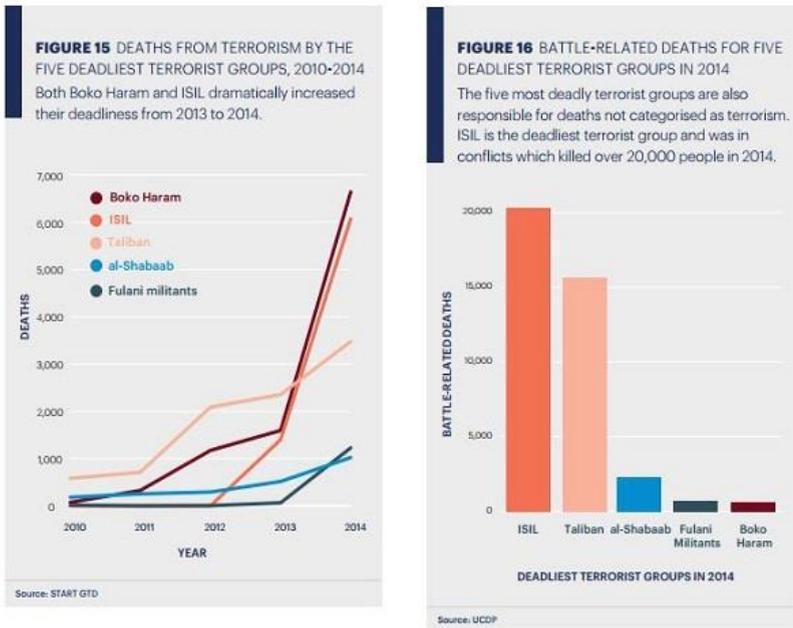


Figure II: Fulani Militancy growth Rate Source: Global Misery Index 2015

From the figure II, the Global Terrorism Index of 2015 states that over 90 percent of the attacks carried out by the group are on private citizens, accounting for 81 percent of deaths in the area. And these attacks have mainly been through armed assaults, killing an average of 11 people per attack. The Fulani militants are ranked just after the al-Shabaab in terrorist attacks.

METHODOLOGY

This paper adopts a primary data collection method with purposive sampling technique. Data collected are restricted to Benue State as a focal point for Fulani herdsmen and farmers feud in Nigeria. Although, the trend of the violence had transcended the Middle-Belt in Nigeria to the western and Southern part of Nigeria, the choice of Benue State justifies the central place where the crises initiated and is most rampant. As the state is usually called the “food basket of the nation” does the agricultural sector of Nigeria have a viable policy prospect for development with the frequent farmers’ and herders’ clashes? Timeline

of attacks are collected from the daily account of the incidences and verified from repository data sources. Four years (2013-2016) are focused as a time bound for the data collection. This is important so as to be able to make a guarded comparative analysis of the trend of the violence along the trend of its occurrence.

The data are presented in a regular and coherent timeline approach. These are therefore reshuffled into a single table to show the vivid glimpse of the occurrence of the Fulani herdsmen and farmers feud in Nigeria using Benue State as a focal point. Descriptive method of data analysis is employed using periodic division of the year into the three divisions. These represent January to April, May to August, and September to December respectively. The percentage net death per each year is also analyzed while bar chart graphical presentations will also be utilized. The incidence of farmers-herders conflict across Nigeria and a focus on Benue State as a major state where the onslaught takes effects and at its peak is a major expedition.

PRESENTATION OF DATA

The data below shows the timeline of Fulani herdsmen and farmers attacks in Benue state 2013 – 2016. Note: “LGA” is the acronym for Local Government Area, a subdivision of Nigerian state government:
2013

1. April 23: 10 farmers killed in Mbasenge community, Guma LGA.
2. May 7: 47 mourners killed in Agatu while burying 2 policemen killed in neighbouring Nassarawa town.
3. May 12: 83 killed by Fulani herdsmen in the Okpanchenyi and Ekwo communities of Agatu.
4. May 14: 40 killed as over 200 herdsmen stormed Ekwo-Okpanchenyi, Agatu LGA.
5. June 11: 1 killed, by Fulani rubbers. Also, over 40 cattle belonging to the Catholic Church Otukpo were led away. A number of people were injured. Ichama Village, Okpokwu LGA, Benue State.
6. July 1: 40 people killed Fulani gunmen attacked in Okpanchenyi village.
7. July 5: 60 killed following clashes between Tiv farmers and herdsmen in Nzorov, Guma, LGA.
8. July 28: 8 killed as herdsmen invaded 2 villages in Agatu LGA.
9. Sept 29: 15 killed in Agatu by Fulani herdsmen.
10. Oct 13: 15 killed in Oguch by Fulani herdsmen.
11. Oct 13: 15 killed in Agatu by Fulani herdsmen.

12. Nov 7: 7 killed, 6,000+ displaced when attackers struck Ikpele & Okpopolo communities, Agatu LGA.

13. Nov 9: 36 killed and 7 villages overrun in Agatu LGA.

14. Nov 20: 22 killed and lots of properties destroyed in an attack in Guma LGA.

2014

15. Jan 20: 5 soldiers and 7 civilians gunned down in an attack, in Agatu LGA.

16. Jan 20: 3 killed in attack on Adeke village

17. 20-21 Feb: 35 killed, 80,000 displaced, 6 villages sacked following an attack in Gwer West LGA.

18. Feb 24: 8 killed following an attack on a Tiv community along Naka road, Makurdi.

19. March 6: 30 killed, 6 villages sacked in Katsina/Ala and Logo LGAs.

20. March 12: 28 killed in a raid on Ukpam, in Guma LGA. Yam barns and farms burnt.

21. March 10: the convoy of ex-Governor Suswam attacked at Umenger. He managed to escape.

22. March 12: 22 slaughtered in an attack on Suswam's village, Logo LGA. The entire village sacked.

23. March 23: 25 killed, over 50 injured following an attack in Gbajimba, Guma LGA.

24. March 25: 7 killed following an attack on Agena village.

25. March 29: 19 killed in attack on 4 villages in Agatu LGA.

26. March 29: 15 killed in a suspected use of chemical weapons on Shengev community, in Gwer LGA.

27. March 30: 19 killed in Agatu LGA.

28. April 10: 6 killed and many properties destroyed as 100+ assailants stormed 4 villages in Logo LGA.

29. April 15: 12 killed in attack on Obagaji, Headquarters of Agatu LGA.

30. Sept 10: Scores dead when herdsmen attacked 5 villages in Ogbadibo LGA.

31. Dec 14: 10 killed in Benue State by Fulani Herds men.

2015

32. Jan 27: 17 killed in attacks on Abugbe, Okoklo, Ogwule & Ocholoyan in Agatu LGA.

33. Jan 30: 9 killed as 100+ assailants stormed 5 villages in Logo LGA.

34. March 15: 90+ killed, including women and children, properties destroyed in Egba village, Agatu LGA.
 35. April 27: 28 killed in attack on 3 villages in Mbadwem, Guma LGA; houses and farmlands razed.
 36. May 11: 5 killed & 8 wounded as herdsmen invaded Ikyoawen community, Turan Kwande LGA.
 37. May 24: 100 killed in an attack on villages & refugee camps in Logo LGA.
 38. July 7: 1 killed and others injured following an attack on mourners in Imande Bebeshi, Kwande LGA.
 39. Nov 5: 12 killed, 25 others injured in Buruku LGA following an attack by suspected Herdsmen.
- 2016
40. Feb 8: 10 killed and 300+ displaced in clash between herdsmen and farmers at Tor-Anyiin and Tor-Ataan in Buruku LGA.
 41. Feb 21-24: 500+ killed and 7,000 displaced in an attack on Agatu LGA, over 7 villages razed.
 42. Feb 29: 11 killed in Edugbeho, Agatu LGA, including a police inspector.
 43. March 5: many properties burnt in Agatu as security forces prevented killings.
 44. March 9: 8 killed in attacks on Ngorukgan, Tse Chia, Deghkia and Nhumbe in Logo LGA.
 45. March 10: 2 killed in attack on Obagaji, Agatu LGA.
 46. March 11: Convoy of Senator David Mark attacked, but he managed to escape.
 47. March 13: 6 killed in an attack on Tarkaa LGA.

Data on Fulani herdsmen and farmers attacks in Benue state 2013-2016

PERIOD/YEAR	2013	2014	2015	2016
January to April,	10	241	69	537
May to August,	232	0	106	
September to December	110	20	12	
Total Deaths	352	261	187	537
Net Death	1337			
Percentage (%) from Net Death	26.33%	19.52%	13.99%	40.16%

Table II Source: Researchers Compilation (2016)

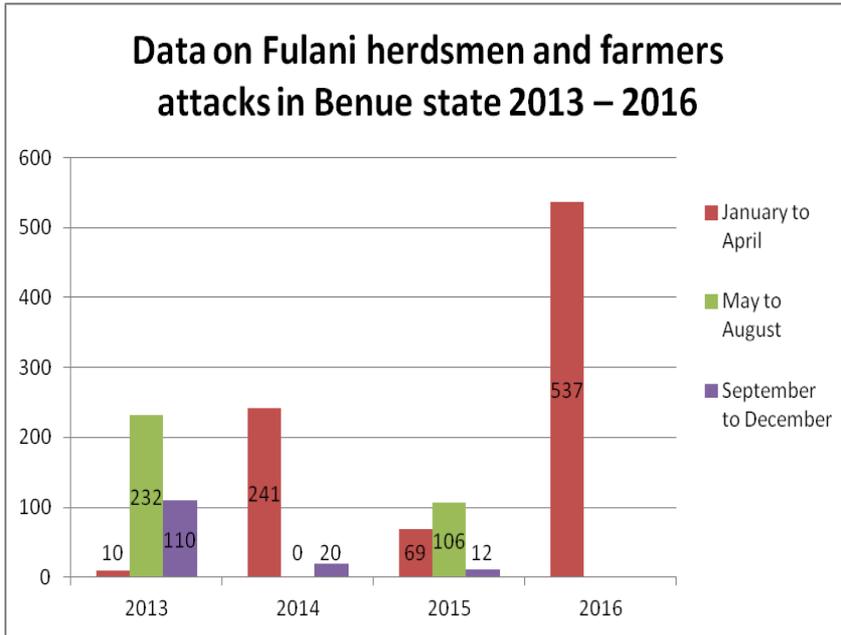


Figure III The Number of Death recorded during Farmer-Fulani Herdsmen Conflict

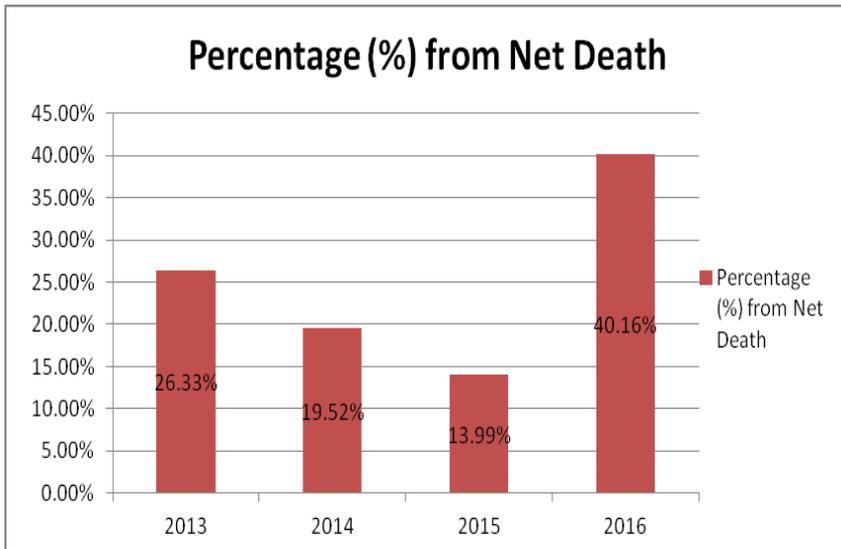


Figure IV Percentage of Net Death for 2013-2016

ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS

From the table II figure III above, it is observed that in 2013, 10 people were killed at the opening of the year (January to April) in the Fulani's militia attack on Benue state. This figure sky rockets to another 232 deaths in the mid year (May to August) while the trend of militia led to 110 deaths at the late period of the year (September to December). However, the total death recorded at this year from Fulani herdsmen and farmers' violence was 352. From the figure IV, this accrued to a percentage net death of about 26.33% of the four years under consideration.

At the opening of the year (January to April) 2014, the trend of violence was at a record high to two hundred and forty one death. These almost halve the total number of death in the whole year of 2013. There was no record of such violence at the mid year (May to August) under consideration. At the close of the year (September to December), there was a gradual rise in the violence again which result into 20 people's death. The overall trend of killings from Fulani herdsmen and farmers' violence was 261. From the figure IV above, this accrued to a percentage net death of about twenty percent (19.52%) of the four years under consideration.

The dwindling in the attack from the Fulani herdsmen and farmers' violence at the mid of 2014 and the gradual rise of the violent attack towards the end of 2014 witnessed a momentum rise in the following year 2015. At the opening of the year (January to April) 2015 the death toll rose to 69 while it almost double it occurrence at the mid year (May to August) to record death of 106 people in Benue State. The violence killing reduced a lot but the tempo is still sustained till the close of the year (September to December) which recorded 12 deaths. The overall death Fulani herdsmen and farmers' violence was one hundred and eight seven (187). From the figure IV above, this accrued to a percentage net death of about fourteen percent (13.99%) of the four years under consideration.

The wave of the violent attacks from the Fulani herdsmen and farmers' witnessed in Benue State at the opening of the year (January to April) 2016 is far above the figure of all the first three years opening of the year records. It also surpassed the individual death recorded per period of each year. The figure rose to an all time record of 537 deaths. The total deaths recorded from the Fulani herdsmen and farmers' violence for the period considered was therefore 537. From the figure

IV above, this accrued to a peak percentage net death of about forty percent (40.16%) of the four years under consideration.

RECOMMENDATION

The federal government should formulate a Cattle Rearing Permit Tax as part of property taxation. If this is imposed on nomads, it will reduce the penchant of herdsmen to invade Nigerian communities at will. Cattle Rearing Tax on the nomads will make them to stay in a place for grazing because as soon as they transcend to another state, another Cattle Rearing Tax will be incurred. The Federal Government could achieve this by directing states to impose the tax.

The federal government should also consider an upward review of the grazing reserve allocation. Before this is done, it is pertinent for the government to set up a monitoring task group for the implementation and investigation of the mishap practices in the budget allocated. This implies that there will be a reduction in the rate of farmers-herdsmen feud when the grazing reserves and budgetary allocations to preserve it are well handled. This is evident in the 2013 allocations and the afterwards decline in 2014 till 2016 and a resultant rapid increase in the death resulting from farmers-herdsmen feud.

The state government should be ready to support farmland insurance policy. The policy will readily give the farmers peace of mind to invest on their farm because both the farmer and his crops are insured partly by the government and the farmer contributing a quota to the insurance policy. Therefore, there should be modalities and criteria for the selection and the incorporation of a farmland and the farmer into the scheme. It may be the size of the farm, the economic viability of the crop or the nature of the crop planted.

The cattle herdsmen should adopt viable cattle which are specialized breed for economic purposes such as abundant milk and beef production and do not need roaming the jungles before they can survive. This will reduce the time spent on each animal and the frequent clashes with the farmers will be reduced. Therefore, the Fulani herdsmen must be educated on the need to advance in the agriculture technology of cattle production.

Finally, the residential areas should be devoid of cattle rearing. The community leaders should have a joint policy of safeguarding their environments. This should be followed with operation no cattle rearing in residential areas. This will protect the herdsmen from cattle rustling

and the farming community from communal clashes with the herdsmen due to farmland invasion and destruction.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

This study had shown that Nigeria's deeply divided multiethnic state par excellence is not a full blown benefit to the country. Every ethnic group with their unique socio-cultural and political economy patterned ways of life seeks to be domineering on one and the other. Due to the fact that humans cannot do without interactions across all spheres of life, there are clashes in the interactions. The farmers and herders' clashes as discussed in this paper are dimensions of such interaction in Nigeria. The rate of clashes among the herders and the farmers had become alarming. This paper shows that in 2014, more than 1,200 people lost their lives, according to the most recent Global Terrorism Index. This made the Fulani militia the world's fourth deadliest militant group. The 2016 February's massacre of some 300 people in central Benue state and April's raid in southern Enugu state, where more than 40 were killed, caused a wide outrage across Nigeria.

The question the paper answered is does the agricultural sector of Nigeria have a viable prospect with the frequent farmers' and herders' clashes? The paper focused its methodological design on Benue State as a pivot point for the crises. It therefore revealed that Benue State usually called the "the food basket of the nation" had been under a serious siege by Fulani militias. A percentage net death of 26.33% was recorded in 2013 while a percentage net death of 19.52% was recorded in 2014 constituting 352 and 261 deaths respectively. In 2015, a percentage net death of about fourteen percent (13.99%) was recorded and in 2016, a peak percentage net death of about forty percent (40.16%) constituting 187 and 537 deaths respectively.

This phenomenon has cost the country a fortune in terms of socio political and economic stability. Farmers had abandoned fertile farmlands due to the cattle invasion which destroys tender crops. The resultant responses include cattle rustling and killing of trespassing animals by farmers while the herdsmen invade communities to kill everyone possible. Community members had become internally displaced and the social contract with the state is in jeopardy. The purported diversification of the economy from oil to agriculture as opined by the government of Nigeria is becoming a mirage rather than reality.

The Conflict theory used explained farmers-herdsmen clashes phenomenon as a social interaction between two divergent people with different interests. In such interactions, conflicts are inevitable. Good neighbourliness and respect for the rule of law might be an option but the governmental policies of ensuring good neighbourliness as recommended in this paper are essential. The policy prospect of Agricultural sector in Nigeria must be strong enough to curtail ethnic bigotry and encompass the whole stakeholders in a developmental approach to national unity and sustainable development.

REFERENCES:

- Aluko O. I. (2014). "Gang Mores in Nigeria: The Prospect and Challenges". *Developing Country Studies* Vol.4, No.23.
- Aluko, O. I. & U. Sayuti (2016). "Visiting the Hippopotamus: National Integration Issues in Nigeria". *Romania Journal of Regional Science: The Journal of The Romanian Regional Science Association*, Vol. 10, No.1: 67-83.
- Aremu, F.A. & O. I. Aluko (2015). "Tension in the Paradise: A Paradigm Shift in Urban Violence in Nigeria". *Studies in Politics and Society - Thematic Edition Nigeria Political Science Association*, Vol. 3, No. 1.
- Encyclopædia Britannica (2012a). Fulani. *Encyclopædia Britannica Ultimate Reference Suite*. Chicago.
- Encyclopædia Britannica (2012b). Fulani Empire. *Encyclopædia Britannica Ultimate Reference Suite*. Chicago.
- Eromo, E. (2016). *Nigeria land disputes fuel surge in herdsmen violence* <http://uk.reuters.com/journalists/eromo-egbejule> [accessed in 2016]
- Hoffman, E. (2014). *Methods for Evaluating Conflict Prevention*. The Canadian International Institute of Applied Negotiation (CIAN), www.cian.org.
- Guilbert, K. (2016). *Farmers and Herdsmen Conflict in Nigeria*. Retrieved from Thomson Reuters Foundation, news.trust.org.
- Mikailu, N. (2016). "Making sense of Nigeria's Fulani-farmer conflict". *BBC News*, Africa Section, 5 May.