

CONFLICTS BETWEEN HERDERS AND FARMERS AND THEIR IMPACT ON NIGERIAN NATIONALISM

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this systematic review is to determine how farmer-herder conflicts affect Nigerian nationalism. The goal was to gather relevant information on the reasons of the conflict between farmers and herders in Nigeria, how that conflict affects the nation of Nigeria, and any potential solutions. The frustration-aggression theory provided support for this inquiry. The secondary qualitative methodology was used for data collection and analysis. According to the analysis, a decline in internal social cohesiveness, a lack of respect for customs, interference with livelihoods, and inadequate grazing resources were the main causes of the conflict in Nigeria between farmers and herders. Another judgment indicates that the herders/farmers conflict had serious negative repercussions on Nigeria's nationhood, including negative social, economic, and socio-economic ramifications. The war also had an immediate impact on Nigerians' livelihoods and means of subsistence. According to the report, there has been a significant human cost associated with the herders/farmers conflict in various areas of Nigeria. There have been several fatalities, large-scale displacements, and destruction of various types of property, including crops, livestock, homes, and automobiles. It was suggested that an effective government and NGOs were required to handle the challenges farmers and herders faced, notably in the areas of education, resolving conflicts, and improving living conditions. Nongovernmental groups ought to support livelihoods centred on livestock, such as herding cattle, in order to influence favourable national policies and support community-based innovations in addition to crisis mitigation.

Keywords: herders, farmers, conflicts, threat, Nigerian, nationhood.

Introduction

Conflicts can be described as actions made with the objective of blocking another person from reaching their goals. Conflicts can arise from any personal difference in interests between individuals or organizations. Conflicts can occur in a variety of places, such as the home, the job, a moving car, the government, and other areas of daily life. While conflict may be easy to recognize, it can be challenging to resolve. Conflict will therefore always arise in any organization or human endeavour that is striving. Conflict can turn disastrous if it is not addressed or managed. Every time individuals or organizations encounter emotional hostilities that produce friction in social settings due to substantive disagreements, conflict will inevitably result (Okoro, 2018).

Conflicts resulting from resources, such as rights to grazing, farming, and hunting, as well similar to reserves is made up of land, water, trees, crops, crude oil, diamonds, and gold are examples of issues of substance. The majority of disputes resulting from the aforementioned

problems are, nevertheless, referred to as resource disputes. According to Blench (2010), there are two types of resource conflicts: point resource conflicts and ecological zone disputes involving grazing, hunting, and water disputes mines, farms, and reserves. Conflict over resources is not infrequent and may even be natural in human ecosystems. Conflict in and of itself is not negative; in fact, it may be necessary for the growth and evolution of human groups. However, arguments are unhealthy, counterproductive, and progress-threaten when they turn into violent and destructive altercations.

According to Okoro (2018), conflicts between herders and farmers appear to be sparked by the fight for survival and protection of sources of income (such as farmland, crops, and livestock) in many communities in Nigeria. Additionally, delay on the part of the government frequently leads to attacks and counterattacks between these vulnerable groups in rural areas. People start using the law to protect themselves since they believe their governments have abandoned them. Some even leave their farms and move to urban regions in an effort to improve their quality of life. Cattle herders claim that fights over Land use is the "most important" issue they deal with in their area of work, claim Van'tHooft et al (2005). During the height of the rainy season, which is characterized by higher milk production, fewer grazing hours, and conflict between herdsman and farmers, cattle herding has a substantial impact on the production of arable crops. The increased rivalry for arable land that has emerged in various places of Nigeria has frequently led to notable instances of social tension and hostility between the two user groups. The wars have not only exacerbated levels of insecurity but also demonstrated a major potential to deepen the food crisis in Nigeria and other affected nations due to the destruction of farm life, livestock, crops, and other properties (Cotula et al., 2004).

Accusations of malicious injury or unlawful activity frequently serve as the catalyst for disputes between the two groups. Herders' animals are allegedly poisoned or stolen by farmers or locals of the host community. Farming communities, on the other hand, accuse herders of allowing herded animals to roam into their farmlands in an effort to spoil and destroy developing crops. These assertions or truth actions themselves often lead to violent attacks and retaliation. Nevertheless, it is anticipated that efforts to resolve conflicts would be made to reduce confusion and promote social order (Daramola, 2005). Examining Nigeria's herdsman/farmers conflict and how it affects the integrity of the country is crucial.

The amount of violence and financial costs involved with conflicts between herders and farmers pose a severe danger to Nigeria's national security. The herders/farmers conflict has caused various degrees of property loss, human casualties, and population displacement throughout the nation's six geographic regions. Agricultural and herdsman disputes that are violent also directly affect the availability of food. According to estimates, the conflict costs Nigeria a \$13.7 billion loss in potential income every year. Herder attacks have also started to be linked to terrorism, according to the 2015 Global Terrorism Index published by the Institute for Economics and Peace. In order to understand the causes, intricacies, and implications of the herders/farmers conflict, researchers have generally looked at it from agrarian, environmental, socioeconomic, and ethnic religious viewpoints. Adisa and Adelakun, et al. (2015), Adekunle (2010), Abugu and Onuba (2015), Blench (2010), and Genyi (2014) are a few of the researchers who belong to this group.

Numerous lives have been lost as a result of this conflict along with farms and animal products, as well as social, economic, and political activity across the country. This has created numerous problems and presented hurdles to the agricultural industry. More so, numerous conflicts between farmers and herders in Nigeria have claimed not only human lives but also agricultural products that endangered national security. To support this claim, Emphraim (2014) notes that numerous states in Nigeria have seen enormous loss of lives and property, with the majority of these losses being agriculture products and human lives. This report provides information on the origins, effects, and potential solutions of the Nigerian war between farmers and herders. As a result, this presented a problem to the Nigerian government, the general public, the Nigerian Agricultural Associations, and the Nigerian Miyetti Allah Cattle Association (MACBAN).

Aim and Objectives of the Study

This study's aim was to determine the herders/farmers conflict and the threat to Nigerian Nationhood. The following were the objectives:

1. To identify the primary reasons behind Nigeria's farmers and herders conflict.
2. To assess the impact of the herders and farmers' disputes on the unity of Nigeria.
3. To determine a potential resolution to the conflict in Nigeria between farmers and herdsman.

Literature Review

Herders and Farmers Conflict

Since the beginning of human history, farmers and herdsman have been at odds. Notably, Cain and Abel, the first man's children, was where it all began. According to the Bible, Abel was a shepherd, while Cain farmed, and while on the field, Cain murdered Abel because he was envious. Herdsman and farmers conflicts also known as herder-farmer conflicts, according to Okoro (2018), are disputes between peasants or subsistence farmers and herders. Hussein, Sumberg, and Seddon (1999) defined farmer-herder conflicts as including a wide range of conflicts, such as ethnic conflicts, interest conflicts, resource disputes, political action, evictions, killings, livestock raids, and cattle rustling. Since the beginning of agricultural practice, there has been tension between pastoralists and farmers. Due to a lack of resources, namely land, there is conflict. Increasingly with a great deal of casualties and displaced people all throughout the affected states, the situation has recently become more unstable. The severe loss of animals, crops, and priceless valuables will have an impact on food and animal goods if the conflict is allowed to worsen (Ikezue&Ezeah 2017). The incidences of disputes that resulted in fatalities between the two groups were not as frequent as they are now, notwithstanding the fight over the limited resources of the land, between farmers and herders. As stated by data available, between 1997 and 2011, select regions in the states of Plateau, Nasarawa, and Benue in the middle belt experienced a disproportionate amount of the conflict between herdsman and farmers, while sporadic incidents were reported in a small number of other states. Although there have historically been disagreements on property ownership in Plateau State between the Berom and Fulani populations of Jos. This clarifies why, on March 7, 2010, individuals thought to be Fulani herdsman ruthlessly massacred more than 500 people and left many others injured in three villages in Plateau State, Nigeria's north-central geopolitical zone which includes Jos South and Barakin Ladi local government districts (Higazi, 2016).

Theoretical Framework

Leonard Doob, Orval Mowrer, Neal Miller, John Dollard, and Robert Sears in 1939 proposed the "frustration-aggression-displacement theory," which is also frustration are well-known aggressiveness hypothesis. Later, Leonard Berkowitz in 1961 and Neal Miller in 1941 refined it. The idea is that when someone's efforts to accomplish a goal are thwarted or frustrated, violence results (Friedman, 2014). The original formulation of the concept claimed that aggression is a certain outcome of anger and that anger always precedes aggression. However, Miller and Sears revised the theory two years later to contend that while anger prompts a need to react, aggression is one possible conclusion. Therefore, the revised hypothesis claimed that while anger may or may not lead to violent behavior, all aggressive behavior is the product of anger, making anger not only a required but also a sufficient condition for aggression (Zillmann, 1979). It makes an effort to explain the root of violence. Aggression is described as "an act whose goal-response is injury to an organism (or an organism surrogate)," whereas frustration is the "condition which exists when a goal-response suffers interference." In keeping with the theory, anger results in aggressiveness, but when the anger's origin cannot be addressed, the rage is focused towards a scapegoat who is an innocent victim. Additionally, this theory is used to explain riots and revolutions, both of which are said to be the result of more underprivileged and impoverished groups of people who may use violence to let out their pent-up resentment and rage (Zillmann, 1979; wordpress.com).

According to the study and this hypothesis, desertification frequently aggravates herdsmen frustration; forcing them to migrate against their will and encountering a number of challenges along the route that only serve to increase their resentment. Similar to how farmers who have worked hard to produce farmland become frustrated whenever herds of cattle trample their crops. The goal of the herders' terror is to neutralize, injure, or exterminate the host people in order to secure their cattle. It is a conflict over values and claims to scarce resources. The herdsmen's aggressive behaviour is the result of an accumulation of frustration's lingering instigating effects. The herdsmen's terrorist acts can be linked to desertification, which has reduced their access to grazing land or made fodder for their animals scarce, both of which have a long-term negative impact on their ability to make a living. Due to the loss of his source of income, a herdsman may become frustrated if he loses due to the drought and water shortage. Since he cannot direct his aggression against the natural causes resulting from this reality, he may eventually channel it toward anything that prevents him from getting to a safe place, whether it be a person or an organization. When herdsmen's livestock stomp on farmers' land to consume their crops, it infuriates both farmers and the host communities in Nigeria. They become hostile and direct their anger onto the ranchers and their cows as a result of feeling irritated as well. Confrontation and conflict are unavoidable as a result of this fact.

Methodology

The study adopted qualitative approach with secondary data. The information was gathered from publications on the internet, including books, daily newspapers online, clips, and journals. Nigerian farmers and herders are at odds with one another were the subject of the study's data, which was analyzed using a thematic technique of data analysis.

Results

Root Factors of Conflict between Nigerian Herders and Farmers

Most herders as visitors have no regard or lack respect for traditions, customs and agreements defining the herders' mode of operation in host communities. One of the main reasons why herders and farmers fight is because of this. Conflict was brought on by people remaining on farms without the farmers' permission and thinking that they had the right to graze anywhere (Ukamaka et al, 2017). With the excuse that the area is a community property, the herders also showed scant respect for conventional grazing practices (Ukamaka et al., 2017). The primary reasons for conflicts between farmers and herdsmen, according to Adebayo and Olaniyi, who were quoted by Ukamaka et al. (2017), include soil damage, grazing on harvested crops, and herders taking farmers' harvests. According to Abbas (2009), a study of the primary reasons why farmers and herders argue over land, particularly grazing areas, shows that these issues account for the bulk of disagreements. Additionally, Okello (2014) emphasizes that the country's ongoing growing conflict between ranchers and farmers has worsened in recent years as a result of declining access to natural resources and land.

According to Ingawa et al (1999), one of the underlying factors behind conflicts between farmers and herders in Nigeria is the individual tenure ship of arable farmers, which hinders traditional rights of access to communal water and grazing. Particularly impacted by this is the historic trek routes, which are well-liked cropping locations because of their increased soil richness and concentration of the animals' travelling excrement. The crop patches' dispersed design in the FADAMA zones makes it more challenging to keep animals out of them. (a) The availability of livestock feed resources has significantly decreased, especially in the Northern States due to insufficient grazing supplies brought on by increased crop production (and greater sale of unsold crops) and poor grazing area management. (b) The National Fadama Development Programme (NFDP) introduced valuable crops, such as tomatoes and onions, with nearly little agricultural waste for animal grazing. (c) A decline in social cohesion and internal discipline as customary laws governing grazing times and the authority of traditional rulers are no longer followed. The necessity for ongoing mobility among cattle herders for opportunistic resource usage, which is another contributing cause, is that grazing supplies, such as grass and water, can be found in many places and at various times of the year. They come into contact with the landed farmers as a result, which leads to competitiveness and disputes. According to Tonah (2006), pastoral herds' southerly migration One of the causes of farmers/herders' conflicts is the extension of farming operations into regions that were once utilized as pasture land, aided by the efficient control of the threat posed by disease, the availability of veterinary medication in a wide range of settings, and the growth of farming activities into humid and sub-humid zones.

The herdsmen therefore destroy the farmers' crops on their field. In accordance with Adisa (2012), the ownership of land was considered to be a contributing factor to the conflicts. In the majority of Nigerian communities, farmers are seen as the landowners who control how the land is used, whereas Herdsmen are perceived as a group of people without their own land to live on and construct a base on. Hoffman et al (2008) claim that government policies may also contribute to disputes between ranchers and farmers. Conflict arises, for instance, as the size of the current reserve decreases as a result of encroachment and government-approved farming development. Water points and stock pathways become cropland as a result of this.

Bello (2013) listed the following as the primary reasons of confrontations between herdsmen and farmers: (1) the biggest direct cause, according to the farmers, is the herders' destruction of infrastructure (such as reservoirs, irrigation systems, and infrastructure) and crops by their animal's cause of disagreements. (2) Important direct causes listed by the ranchers are burning of range lands and crop encroachment blocking stock paths and water sites. (3) An increase in cattle theft, which is frequently violent in nature. (4) Conflict situations could be exacerbated by farmers' and herdsmen's opposing perceptions and attitudes, particularly in light of collapsing institutions and severe resource competition. According to Tukur (2013), the following factors contribute to Conflicts by farmers-herders in Nigeria, includes the urination of animals in public places, the lack of grazing on public lands, the defiance of regional traditional authority, the abuse of women, and the harassment of nomads by youth from host towns.

Effects of Herders and Farmers Conflict to Nigerian Nationhood

According to Chukwuma and Ateli (2014), conflicts between farmers and herdsmen have a terrible impact on society and the economy as outlined below:

Social effects: The conflicts have also caused the many parties engaged to develop tense and explosive intergroup connections. Mutual mistrust and ill-placed hatred are how this manifests itself. The herders' collective existence and future are threatened by the established farmers, and the opposite is also true. As a result, societal stability, security, and peaceful cohabitation are put at risk due to the culture of mistrust and ongoing conflict that is fostered. Misanthropy's negative effects Farmers and herdsmen have engaged in conflict, resulting in fatalities, population shifts, injuries, and a crisis of livelihood. Effects on people's minds: The conflicts have made people feel under mental siege and terrified, endangering the peace and tranquillity of the public. Cumulative effect: In general, the disputes have led to undesirable outcomes that obstruct long-term societal peace and progress.

Economic effects: Losses resulting from destruction of household goods, farms, community resources, and dwellings property can be used to measure the conflict situation's financial effects. The majority of farmers typically avoid travelling to their farms during conflict seasons out of fear of being attacked. This has the implication that the following harvest season would have low agricultural yield. Additionally, the battles have caused substantial amounts of field damage and agriculture produce. On the other hand, it has also caused the farmers to kill cows. All of these damages correspond to actual, measurable material losses.

Socio-economic effects: The stark level of rural poverty and despair in the hinterlands is indicative of the socio-economic implications of the conflicts. Conflict-related intergroup violence has a tendency to make hunger and human insecurity worse. This does not portend well for the country's sustainable socioeconomic progress. From the perspective of national security, disputes involving farmers and herdsmen, any attempt to use the concept of indigene/settler calculation, the Nigerian citizenship legislation prohibits violating anyone's right to a legal abode and a means of subsistence in any area of the country. Second, the conflict scenario also augurs poorly for long-term stability and advancement in Nigeria. It would be obvious to say that such a situation is an enemy of sustainable development in both

the afflicted areas and Nigeria as a whole given the severity of the crisis and the bloodshed that have come to characterize herders-farmers conflicts (Ajayi&Allagenyi, 2001).

National Security: The nation's security is also threatened by the herdsmen/farmers disputes because of the extreme levels of intolerance among them, which have led to countless civilian deaths (Ingawa&Erhabor, 1999; Akinkuolie, 2018; Ajayi&Allagenyi, 2001) There has been an increase in the number of peasant farmers. Keep in mind that these violent episodes directly affect everyone life and livelihoods and result in the displacement of the community's economically productive population. Cattle's destruction of crops during these constant, violent fights typically results in a decrease in the productivity and crop growers' earnings. The majority of farmers were compelled to flee their farms in order to escape being killed by heavily armed herders and losing all or part of their crops, which resulted in low income for the farmers who consider farming as their main source of income. This typically has a detrimental impact on their ability to save money and repays debt, as well as the economic people of urban areas who rely on these farms for their food supply to feel safe and have access to food. Therefore, it deters farmers and stifles the growth of rural areas and agriculture (Adekule&Adisa, 2010). According to studies conducted by Mercy Corps in the attacks have a significant impact on food security and resulted in a loss of \$14 billion over three years. According to two studies conducted between 2013 and 2016 examines the reasons for and consequences of recurrent conflicts between herders and farmers in Nigeria by the British Department for International Development (BDID). These crises have detrimental impacts on trade, crop output, farmer displacement, loss of life and property, destruction of stored goods, and harm to both public and private property infrastructure, in addition to significantly hampering the country's economic growth. The attainment if nothing is done to address this terrible situation, the goals of food security and sustainable development become a mirage (Akinkuolie, 2018; Ajayi&Allagenyi, 2001). Farmers and herders dispute has disrupted and threatened West Africa's pastoral agricultural and crop production (Ifidon&Ahiauzu, 2005).

These crises undermine social standing, threaten food security, and deepen vicious cycles of extreme poverty and famine. In a vast country like Nigeria, they primarily impact the most defenceless citizens, such as mothers and children, host farmers. Conflict causes many people to avoid travelling to far-off fields, especially women and children, for fear of being assaulted by nomads in the neighbouring wilderness (Blench &Dendo, 2003; Blench, 1994; Blench, 1984; Blench, 2010; Ajayi&Allagenyi, 2001; Daniels, 2006). Nomadic herdsmen are forced to leave their home communities. When forced to rely on neighbouring farms to provide them with food for themselves and their families, such displaced farmers have turned into a liability. Due to the vicious cycle of poverty that has resulted, many communities are now experiencing extensive relocation and developmental hurdles in addition to a negative influence on children's education. As a result, some rural women now hold the status of widows. The labour force employed in agriculture in these areas has considerably dropped as a result of all of these reasons, which poses enormous challenges for Nigeria's population, which is constantly growing. It is believed that during these crises, small arms and ammunition spread widely because the ranchers and the local farming people viewed one another as mortal enemies. This goes against Nigeria's philosophy of peaceful coexistence and assimilation of tribal or ethnic groups (Adisa, 2012).

Possible Solution to Nigeria's Herders and Farmers Clashes

To lessen the effects of the farmers and herders clashes on Nigerian nationhood, the possible solution according to Obasammi and Enoma (2021) includes:

1. All levels of government should work to maintain peace between farmers and herdsmen in order to prevent a food catastrophe. There is need for another method of feeding cows. Ranches should exist. According to statistics, just 141 grazing reserves in Nigeria were gazetted and fewer than 20 of those had tools for pastoralists. Other agricultural experts believe that farmers will be able to produce food that the nation can consume and export if the National Grazing Route and Reserve Commission is established to encourage the acquisition and management of properties throughout Nigeria's 36 states to provide pastures for cattle.
2. To better control and sanction offenders who violate the state's laws governing farmer/herder interactions, the state should strengthen its conflict resolution mechanisms.
3. The federal government must address the drought and desertification, and funds must be invested in programs that will halt it. Although this may be a lengthy project, there should be some hint to begin it.
4. Economic development and expansion do not involve a fire brigade strategy but rather a methodical production planning procedure. In order to do this, both agricultural farmers should be registered with the government and cattle farming should be organized. In the country, open grazing should be gradually converted to ranches through soil mapping.
5. The requirements of a contemporary economy force the abandonment of pastoralism. In a time when farmers are struggling to find enough arable land, the Fulani herdsmen can no longer depend on the whim of the farmer to exist. There is no more space left to set aside as grazing reserves or herding zones. The legal system governing property ownership forbids forced cattle ranching even when it appears to be for the benefit of the public. Cattle owners need to rethink their strategy for doing business. This presents a strategic difficulty.
6. The sanctity of human life should be effectively instilled in herders and farmers, and they should be taught how to communicate their problems without resorting to violence by using better channels of communication. Any sort of aggressiveness brought on by a past issue or issues should be discouraged, and anyone found to be lacking in that regard should face legal action. The above has the implication that the proper authorities must meticulously look into the current rise in the despicable acts of herders.
7. It is important to stress that, as with other similarly complex security concerns in the nation, military or police intervention alone may not be sufficient to fully resolve the herdsmen's difficulty. It is necessary to acquire enough information to fully comprehend their goals, sponsors (if any), and grievances. It has been asserted that miscreants from nearby nations are driving the herdsmen's resurgence. If this claim is confirmed to be true, the appropriate steps must be done.
8. Sadly, none of these responses are really conclusive. If we build cow colonies, the community advocate loses. The Fulani advocates lose if private ranches are made mandatory. In addition to being zero-sum situations, the binary view of the deadly battle ignores its most significant aspect. The main argument against ranching as a solution is that it is unsuitable for their species of cattle and detrimental to the Fulani way of life, the Fulani are herders. With its use of violence and conquest, pastoralism is a type of feudalism. In a period when property

rights are no longer dependent on the landlord-vassal relationship, a pastoral lifestyle is improper. A pastoral economy is incompatible with Nigeria's current democratic legal and constitutional framework and existence's topography has shifted. The herdsmen's itinerant lifestyle cannot be accommodated by reserving an adequate area of meadows. Due to the abundance of land and the ability of colonial officials to designate unclaimed territory as grazing reserves and grazing routes, there were previously few conflicts between herders and farmers. Herdsmen and farmers had much too few and uncompetitive interactions. This maintained their storied hospitality toward one another.

Conclusion

Herdsmen /farmers conflict has caused a lot of related human loss in several Nigerian states. There have been several fatalities, large-scale displacements, and destruction of several property, including crops, livestock, homes, and automobiles. However, the farmers have on occasion carried out retaliatory attacks against the herdsmen and have been perceived as being primarily on the receiving end of hostilities in which they suffer more casualties than the herders.

The study does find that retaliation or retaliatory attacks, disagreements over the destruction of farmland, agricultural crops, disagreements over grazing rights, a long history of violent conflict over access to land resources, Cattle rustling, responses to the anti-grazing law in Benue State, and herdsmen's violent tendencies were the main causes of the conflict. Loss of life, forced migration, IDPs, home devastation, crop destruction, mistrust, unemployment, threat to Nigeria's unity and threat to food security were all consequences of the conflict. Since in order to protect themselves and their property against alleged adversaries many Nigerians increasingly resort to self-defence since the Nigerian government and security institutions have not yet responded to the perilous impasse that led to the break-up of law and order between farmer-herders.

Recommendations

It is therefore, recommended based on the foregoing as follows:

1. To manage farmer/herdsmen issues, particularly in the areas of education, resolution, and amelioration, an effective government and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are required. Non-governmental groups ought to support livelihoods centred on livestock, such as herding cattle, in order to influence favourable national policies and support community-based innovations in addition to crisis mitigation.
2. Efforts should be made to emulate the best pastoral/farmer relations strategies that may be seen in countries like Chad, Ethiopia, and Niger where farmer-herders coexist peacefully, thanks to formalized and efficient methods for preventing and resolving disputes between farmers and pastoralists.
3. When making and carrying out decisions, the government should be firm and just. Traditional and local leaders should play significant role in resolving herdsmen-farmer conflicts. The local leadership must be represented on the committees mentioned above.

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