



**NEAR EAST UNIVERSITY**  
**INSTITUTE OF GRADUATE STUDIES**  
**DEPARTMENT OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS**

**The Root Causes of the Upsurge in Farmer-Herder Conflict**  
**Case Study on Middle-Belt Nigeria**

MA Thesis

Prophecy Moses Yamusa

Nicosia

January, 2022

**NEAR EAST UNIVERSITY**  
**INSTITUTE OF GRADUATE STUDIES**  
**DEPARTMENT OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS**

**The Root Causes of the Upsurge in Farmer-Herder Conflict**  
**Case Study on Middle-Belt Nigeria**

MA Thesis

Prophecy Moses Yamusa

Thesis Supervisor

Assoc. Prof. Dilek Latif

Nicosia

January, 2022

### Approval

We certify that we have read thesis submitted by **Prophecy Moses Yamusa** titled “**The Root Causes of the Upsurge in Farmer-Herder Conflict: Case Study on Middle Belt Nigeria**” and in our combine opinion it is fully adequate, in scope and in quality, as a thesis for the degree of Masters of International Relations.

Examining Committee	Name-surname	Signature
Head of Committee:	Assoc. Prof. Dr Şevki Kıralp	.....
Committee Member:	Dr Zehra Azizbeyli	.....
Supervisor:	Assoc. Prof. Dilek Latif	.....

Approved by the Head of Department

...../...../ 20...

.....

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Sait Akşit

Approved by the Institute of Graduate Studies

...../...../20...

Prof. Dr. Kemal Hüsnü Can Başer

Head of the Institute

### **Declaration**

I Prophecy Moses Yamusa, hereby declare that this thesis titled “The Root Causes of the Upsurge in Farmer-Herder Conflict: Case Study on Middle-Belt Nigeria” has been prepared by myself under the guidance and supervision of Assoc. Prof. Dilek Latif in fulfillment of the Near East University, Graduate School of Social Sciences regulations and does not to the best of my knowledge breach and Law of Copy rights and has been tested for plagiarism and a copy of the result can be found in the Thesis.

Prophecy Moses Yamusa

...../...../.....

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This research is dedicated first and foremost to the Lord God almighty for the innumerable blessings, wisdom, and possibilities he has bestowed upon me in order for me to complete this research. Secondly, this research is dedicated to all victims from the farmer-herder conflict in the middle-belt and Nigeria at large.

Aside from my efforts, the completion of this thesis is heavily reliant on the support and assistance of several others. I'd like to take a moment to thank everyone who were involved directly and indirectly in the completion of this thesis.

My deepest gratitude goes to Assoc. Prof. Dilek Latif, my thesis supervisor. I can't thank you enough for your unwavering support and assistance and each time I receive your reviews, I am motivated and inspired. You have not only been patient with me, you have also tirelessly and carefully instructed me all through this process in spite of your congested and busy schedule. Thank you very much, hocam, and may God forever reward and bless you. This thesis would not have been possible without your encouragement and guidance. I am also extremely grateful to the International Relations faculty members, as well as the Directorate of the Graduate Institute of Social and Administrative Science, Near East University, Nicosia, KKTC, for their unwavering help and support through this whole master's journey. It has not been easy, and I will be extremely thankful for the mentoring and assistance I have received during the course of my study.

To my parents, Dr. Moses Yamusa and Mrs. Mercy Yamusa, I don't know the words to use to express how grateful I am for the prayers, unending financial and emotional support, unconditional love, encouragement, and for making my stay in Nicosia as pleasant as possible. May the Almighty God bless and keep you. I will be forever thankful to you, daddy and ma'a, and I will do my best to make you proud. I am also truly thankful to my uncles and aunts, MR and Mrs Enebi Abalaka, Auntie Maggi, and Uncle Dan Jatau, for their love and support during this master's journey. To my siblings Njire, Nsasure and Abiregi thank you so much for your never-ending prayers, love, support, and encouragement. To my fiance' I am extremely grateful, thank you for all of your love, support, care, and advice throughout this journey, cuddles, all I can say is I love you so much.

In Nicosia, I met friends and colleagues who provided me with invaluable support and assistance: to my friend Atong Agwom, you are more than a friend or a roommate to me; you are a sister. You have been a support system, a family away from family and throughout our educational journey from undergraduate to master's level. Your humble demeanor and assistance in shaping my thought process cannot be overstated. Beno thank you for all of your assistance during my stay in Nicosia. To my other friends Jessica, daddy jay, Sandra uweh, Juanita, Anita, Jake, and Simi I appreciate you all for the encouragement when needed. I cannot stress enough the importance of my church's prayers and support here in Nicosia. Lefkosia protestant church especially Pst. Andrew and mummy Daphne, Pst James and mummy Racheal, Pst Philip and mummy Dian thank you very much.

Prophecy Moses Yamusa

## **ABSTRACT**

### **The Root Causes of the Upsurge in Farmer-Herder Conflict Case Study on Middle-Belt Nigeria**

**YAMUSA Moses Prophecy**

**MA, Department of International Relations  
Supervised by Assoc. Prof. Dr. Dilek Latif**

**January 2022, 77 pages**

This research aims to examine the root causes as well as the effect of the farmer-herder conflict especially in the Middle Belt region of Nigeria. It also pays special attention to the ethno-religious differences of the herdsmen and farmers. It highlights how they contrast to each other especially in their practice of farming, transhumance and nomadism in the Middle Belt. The aim of this research is to enable understanding on how to deal with these causes and find possible solutions to the conflict. This research uses a qualitative method, analyzing written documents like article journals and news outlets to further understand the conflict and its causes. This research is important because the farmer-herder conflict has affected the general growth of the Middle Belt and also peaceful relations between people of different ethno-religious backgrounds. Not only in the middle-belt but the country at large faces the risk of poor ties among various ethnic or religious groups, as people who used to enjoy being involved are afraid of traveling to the state of their enemies. And the rising number of deaths toll heightens the already raging religious tensions, as the majority of Fulani herdsmen are Muslim and the majority of farmers are Christian. Thus suspicion and hate keeps growing within these regions causing unrest and insecurity. That is why it is important to tackle this crisis.

***Keywords:*** Nigeria, conflict, farmer herder, transhumance, nomadism.

## ÖZ

### **Çiftçi-Çoban Çatışmasının Temel Nedenleri Orta Kuşak Nijerya Vaka Çalışması**

**YAMUSA Moses Prophecy  
MA, Uluslararası İlişkiler Bölümü  
Tez Danışmanı: Doç. Dr. Dilek Latif  
Ocak 2022, 77 sayfa**

Bu araştırma, Nijerya'nın Orta Kuşak bölgesindeki çiftçi-çoban çatışmasının temel nedenlerini ve de bunun nedenlerini derinlemesine incelemeyi amaçlamaktadır. Ayrıca, çatışmaya dahil olan çobanların ve çiftçilerin etnik-dini farklılıklarına dikkat çekmektedir. Özellikle, Orta Kuşak'taki çiftçilik, yaylacılık ve göçebelik uygulamalarının birbirleriyle nasıl zıt düştüklerini de vurgulamaktadır. Bu araştırmanın amacı, çatışmaya yol açan nedenlerle nasıl başa çıkılacağına anlaşılmasını sağlamak ve çatışmaya olası çözümler bulmaktır. Bu araştırma, çatışmayı ve nedenlerini daha iyi anlamak için akademik dergiler, makaleler ve haber kaynakları gibi yazılı belgeleri analiz ederek nitel bir yöntem kullanmaktadır. Bu araştırma önemlidir, çünkü çiftçi-çoban çatışması Orta Kuşak'ın gelişmesini, ekonomik büyümesini ve ayrıca farklı etnik-dini geçmişe sahip insanlar arasındaki barışçıl ilişkileri etkilemiştir. Sadece orta kuşakta değil, genel olarak ülke, çeşitli etnik veya dini gruplar arasında zayıflayan bağlar ve çatışma riskiyle karşı karşıya kalmaktadır. Fulani çobanlarının çoğunluğu Müslüman ve çiftçilerin çoğunluğu Hıristiyan olduğu için, artan ölüm sayısı mevcut dini gerilimleri artırmaktadır. Dolayısıyla, bu bölgelerde şüphe ve nefret artmaya devam ederek, huzursuzluk ve güvensizliğe neden olmaktadır. Bu nedenle bu krizle mücadele etmek önemlidir.

**Anahtar kelimeler:** Nijerya, çatışma, çiftçi çoban, yaylacılık, göçebelik.



## Table of Contents

Approval.....	1
Declarations.....	2
Acknowledgement.....	3
Abstract.....	5
Öz.....	6
Table of Contents.....	7
List of Figures.....	10
List of Abbreviations.....	11

### CHAPTER 1

Introduction.....	12
Background.....	12
Statement of Problem.....	13
Aim of the Study.....	13
Hypothesis of the Study.....	14
Research Questions.....	14
Significance of the Study.....	14
Methodology.....	15
Limitation of the Research.....	15
Thesis Structure.....	16

### CHAPTER 2

Historical Background.....	17
----------------------------	----

The Middle-belt.....	19
Root causes of the conflict.....	21
Parties/ Actors involved in the Conflict.....	22

### CHAPTER 3

The Literature Review and the Conceptual/Theoretical Framework of the Study...	26
Agriculture - A Conceptual Discussion.....	28
Sedentary Farmers.....	28
The Arable Cropping System in Nigeria.....	29
The Fulani Herding System in Nigeria.....	29
Conflict/Crises.....	30
Farmer Herder Conflict.....	31
Happenings of the Farmer-Herder conflict.....	32
Theoretical framework.....	34
Conflict Theory.....	34
Frustration Aggression Theory.....	35
State Failure Theory.....	36

### CHAPTER 4

Cases of Farmer-Herder Clashes in the Middle-Belt.....	39
Farmers and herdsman clashes in Benue State.....	39
Farmer-herder clashes in Taraba State.....	43
Farmer herder clashes in Plateau state.....	45
Farmer-Herder Clashes in Kaduna State.....	48
Socio-Economic Impact of the Conflict.....	51

Internally Displacement of People.....	51
Loss of lives/Animals.....	52
Security threat.....	53

## CHAPTER 5

Findings and discussion.....	55
Measures Taken by The Government in Solving Farmer-Herder conflict.....	59
Conclusion.....	63
References.....	67
Appendices.....	74

## **List of Figures**

<b>Figure 1 Map showing states in the middle-belt with high incidences of farmer-herder casualties [international crises group 2020].....</b>	<b>33</b>
---	-----------

**LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

AFAN	All farmers association of Nigeria
FCT	Federal capital territory
GDP	Gross domestic product
ICG	International crisis group
ICIR	International center for investigative reporting
IDP	Internally displaced people
IR	International relations
L.G.A	Local government area
MACBAN	Miyetti Allah cattle breeders association of Nigeria
NSCDC	Nigeria security and civil defense Corp
OSH	Operation safe haven
RUGA	Rural grazing area
STF	Special task force

## CHAPTER ONE

### Introduction

#### Background

The Sahel Region has been pulled into a cycle of ever-increasing violence, fueled by a combination of jihadist groups and lengthy rural resentments and farmer-herder conflict is one of reasons for the increase in violence. Since the establishment of the Fourth Nigerian Republic in 1999 the rising amount of human needless deaths, internally displaced people, and military exercises has been enormous. In the recent years that is from 2010, topics attributing to farmer-herder conflict in Sub-Saharan Africa especially in Nigeria, has recently increased in the news, papers, social media, and academic literature and because of that, the presumed degree and acceleration of the conflict, have sparked international concern. Nigeria being the focus point, has dealt with a variety of security threats since its return to democratic rule in 1999. And over the last few years, the outbreak of violence, which has primarily occurred in the north-central states of Benue, Taraba, Plateau and Kaduna, has been attributed to conflicts between herders and farmers. This violence as cause an upsurge of insecurity in the region causing unnecessary death and lateral displacement of thousands of people. According to Amnesty International, nothing less than 3,641 people were killed as a result of herdsmen-farmer clashes from January 2016 to 2018 and over a thousand people fled their homes [Amnesty International 2018]. This sudden surge has thereby drawn many people's attention with different responses and reports on the crises, especially focusing on the reasons why these clashes occur, and the causes of the conflict.

The Farmer-herder dispute also has an effect on the country's economy and food security. Nearly 60% of Nigeria's protein comes from Fulani herders. Meanwhile, 90% of farmers are smallholders who produce the majority of the country's farm production, which accounts for nearly 27% of GDP. As a result of the destruction of these items, there is a shortage of these goods, resulting in a price increase. Therefore, it is important to take a multifaceted approach in finding the trigger for the conflict, resolving this crisis and also for the government to provide a lasting solution by setting up a neutral body that oversees the affairs of herders and farmers that is, a law where the farmers are being kept safe from

harassment, crops not destroyed by cattle and the Fulani herders also protected from cattle, provided allocated places to graze and also a neutral force that makes sure these laws are followed to the fullest regardless of ethnicity or religious background,

### **Statement of the Problem**

Farmers-herdsmen conflict in Nigeria especially in the Middle Belt region, has not been a new occurrence but for it has since intensified especially in 2015. These conflicts have had significant humanitarian repercussions with so many internally displaced people spread out around the country. Between January 2016 and October 2018, at least 3,641 people were killed, 406 people were injured, 5,000 homes were destroyed, and 182,530 people were displaced with 57% of all these occurring in 2018 [Amnesty International, 2018: 6].

Furthermore, the farmer herder crisis has also a large amount of economic disadvantage to the states affected and even the country at large. Benue, Kaduna, Taraba, and Plateau lost 47% of their internally generated revenue and every year, the federal government of Nigeria loses \$13.7 billion in revenue to this conflict. The Nigerian government and various literatures have tried to find the root cause of this conflict such as environmental factors, scarcity of land etc. so as to be able to tackle the violent crises. But these root causes appear not to be the major cause and so have yielded no results in tackling the conflict as killings and destruction of properties is still on the rise. This research therefore examined another dimension of the cause of the conflict. That is instead of climate change, the research focuses on the negligence of the Nigerian government as the root cause of the upsurge in the conflict.

### **Aim of the Study**

With the increase in the Farmer-herder crises, little is said to address the Nigerian state which plays a vital role in the upsurge of this conflict. Therefore the aim of this study is to understand the root causes of the farmer-herder crises and its effects from both perspective and the role the Nigeria government played in resolving the conflict and also fill the void that the Nigerian government and various literatures have not addressed.

### **Hypothesis of the Study**

The rapid rise of the farmer-herder crisis seriously deprives Nigerians of the opportunity for a healthy, normal growth and development, as the conflict typically results in major destruction of the livestock most especially cattle, deprivation of food, land, and damaged human life. It is evident that this causes a significant loss for the region, as people are scared of their lives in that region and because of that, development cannot take place in these conflict-affected areas. Therefore, if the federal government of Nigeria can look past the religion and ethnic background of the conflicting parties and be just and fair in treating both Fulani herdsman and farmers with equality and without a bias by punishing both parties when they break the law (either by killing each other, or stealing cows or harassing and damaging people's crops). Then there will be a drastic decline in this conflict.

### **Research Questions**

In this study, the following research questions are addressed.

1. What are the causes of the farmer and herdsman crises and how common or frequent is the farmer herder conflict in the Middle Belt?
2. What key role does the Nigerian government play in tackling the conflict?
3. In the long run, what can be the socio-economic impacts of the conflict?

### **Significance of the Study**

Intellectuals have attempted to identify the root causes of the conflict and propose solutions to address it. However, there is a serious gap because the federal government responds to the conflict, especially its lack of fairness in handling the conflict, the ethno-religious prejudice of the government which has not been mentioned or discussed. Hence, this research helps to bridge the gap, and also ways in which the crises can be curtailed and managed.

This research therefore is crucial because it shows how a conflict occurring in one part of the country, in this case the Middle Belt, can have an adverse effect on the whole



country economically and can also pose a severe security threat to the country at large. As a student of international relations, this research gives an insight on how a crisis occurring in a small region can pose a security threat to not only the country but also the world at large.

### **Methodology**

This research focuses on the inhabitants of these conflict areas particularly those from the Middle Belt. Due to the pandemic, the research data is collected from secondary data such as online sources and news outlets, reading various articles, journals, it also uses qualitative method because it deals and analyzes data from people's experiences, interviews by news outlets, and written documents without a need for testing the collected evidence therefore qualitative method is most suited for this research. While analyzing the data collected, statistics is also collected from Amnesty International to highlight the numbers of casualties of the conflict. This study is expected to take three to four months to complete.

### **Limitation of the Research**

The main restriction of this research is that it had to rely on secondary sources to conduct this research because most times, victims do not survive to recount their individual experiences, and official authorities, such as the police and the media, have been criticized for involvement and partiality. There is so much doubt and confusion surrounding this issue especially the fact that actual casualty statistics are either denied or deliberately down played or reduced. Another constraint is the scarcity of scholarly written texts. The reason of this issue is the fact that there are safety measures placed especially on transits due to the pandemic. Therefore there are no recent visits allowed into the regions for case studies; instead there is reliance on secondary sources. Since this study is relying on secondary sources and not interviews or other primary sources, the study only focuses on the causes of the conflict and the impact.

### **Thesis Structure**

This study is categorized into 5 chapters. Chapter One is a general introduction to the study, background, statement of the problem, literature review, aim of the study, hypothesis of the study, research questions, significance of the study, methodology, timeline, limitation of the study, and thesis structure. Chapter Two consists of historical background, the general history of Nigeria, history of the Middle Belt, causes of the conflict and finally the actors involved in the conflict. Chapter Three includes literature review on the conflict, the conceptual and the theoretical framework of the study. Chapter Four covers the cases of the conflict in the Middle Belt and the socio-economic impact of the conflict. Chapter Five is the final chapter of the Thesis that covers contribution to knowledge of the conflict, and draws conclusions and references.

## CHAPTER TWO

### Historical Background

Nigeria's recurring herder-farmer conflict has a relatively long history. Territorial disputes between nomadic pastoralists and farmers are not new. However, it has evolved with time and has become a catastrophic and hostile conflict since the start of the twenty-first century [Egbuta 2018:40]. Nigeria is a large country, and the land is one of the essential factors as around 70 per cent of the population especially those living in the Middle Belt, are dependent on agriculture, therefore making both the climate and land, a major elements in Nigerian citizens' lives [International crisis group 2017]. Nigeria, before the colonization, was made up of different ethnic groups, with different languages, living in different towns, villages as a unit and they all had a harmonious atmosphere with lots of inter-trade, co-existence and even intermarriages. Each of these different constituencies were independent of the other, they had their way of governance, with different religion, traditions and regulations to abide by. All of these working organized system or way of life of these different units was disrupted with the coming of the Colonials who disorganized and separated them before finally having total control of the people and the land and then amalgamated it again [Cynado, 2019].

Before the amalgamation, the British colonials set up various administrative systems in various regions under British colonial rule, and the British colonial leadership divided the country into three parts: respectively the West, North, and East. The Eastern and Western regions were governed using the direct rule system, while the North had a different system. They were governed through the indirect ruling system; that is to say, the British colonial administration ruled the North through their traditional northern leaders which was an advantage because it gave them more political dominance and experience. The cost of handling separate protectorates that were very close to each other, through dividing finances and human resources, was too overwhelming for the colonial administration and so for the British economic gain, they made amalgamation the goal especially because the North was not generating much revenue and also because the Northern part of Nigeria is landlocked and has no shoreline, which was to the disadvantage of the colonials. Even though it was apparent that the regions were

absolutely different from each other. As a matter of fact the British colonials admitted to the differences by saying the two regions were as far apart in terms of government, customs, and general perspectives on life, both in this world and in the next, as England is from China [Teniola, 2021].

The historical amalgamation of Nigeria's northern and southern protectorates unfolded through historical processes, which started with Lagos and other ethnic groups in the east and west of what is called Nigeria today being invaded in 1851 by the British Navy and then colonized in 1861. The invasion and the annexation of the East and the West came to an end in 1902 and in 1906, there was an amalgamation of Lagos colony and protectorates of the southern part of Nigeria by the British, to form one British colony. By 1905, the entire central Sudanese states were conquered easily and incorporated into a northern protectorate, and Lord Lugard served as its very first governor. In 1912, Lord Lugard was appointed as the Governor General of the two protectorates of the northern and the southern protectorates. During his time as the governor, he orchestrated the most remembered event in the history of Nigeria. In 1914, Lugard merged the southern and northern protectorates into a single geopolitical entity, which is known as Nigeria today. Notwithstanding the long history of coexistence, the numerous ethnical groups occupying different regions and based on distinct cultural backgrounds, religious affiliations, and political creeds were merged by Lord Lugard as protectorates, without their consent or input into the nature of such existence.

The most remarkable aspect of the amalgamation of Nigeria was how the British colonials gave no second thought to the long-term consequences of joining regions with absolutely nothing in common. As a matter of fact, the arrival of the Christian missionaries in the South and other regions did little to help the matter; instead, it brought about a significant change in the region's religious life, as the Western-educated personnel in the other regions were eager for independence, the North had the littlest interest in a union with the other regions that were so different in religion and ideology. The introduction of a Christian convert population and the setting up of missionary hospitals, schools, and churches in non-Muslim towns and cities mostly outskirts of the North that is referred to as the Middle Belt now, aided in the formation of a shared religious identity the Middle Belt

has with the southern and other regions. With the exposure of Christian religion and the shift in the religion beliefs of the Middle Belt, the north is changed because of exposure to the Christian religion, it fed into conceptions of a social identity that was seen in the Middle Belt, which is that the Middle Belt is distinct from dominant Islamic patterns in northern Nigerian political society and this conception wasn't acceptable to the north. But with all these details and differences, as a means of stabilizing the country. The British did not consider dividing the country into territorial areas based on ethno-linguistic regions; they insisted on the amalgamation and brought the country into one administration.

However, after Nigeria got its independence in 1960, damage control was made through division of the various regions to smaller states, all in hope of reducing the dominance and power advantage the north has over the other protectorates. Nigeria experienced numerous changes as a result of its independence, especially in terms of leadership. The effort to create a modern state structure did not produce the desired results. The country experienced a civil war, many military coups and assassinations, which also interfered with the establishment of long-term state institutions.

### **The Middle -Belt**

The Middle Belt region's history may be tracked back to pre-colonial times that is the period before colonization. the region is located in the central area of Nigeria, and because of its geographical location, it is prone to dominance and control by Hausa/Fulani, and thus was once considered that the Middle Belt region needed to be created in order to have its own area of authority, similar to the South West and South East regions. The Middle Belt is a fairly large geographical area with a complicated multi-ethnic religious background, encompasses all of Nigeria's geographical regions such as Benue, Taraba, Adamawa, Plateau, Nasarawa, and the Federal Capital Territory., occupied primarily by minority ethnic groups, as opposed to the Hausa — Fulani and Kanuris of the extreme north. Since before the pre-independence period, the territories have been pushing for a territory distinguished by independence from Hausa Fulani and Muslim dominance. Several non-Islamic chiefs in the Middle Belt territories prior to the political demands for the formation of the paramount chiefs, made a request in 1908 for the separation of their

regions of power from Fulani and Islamic leadership. These petitions, however, were made in the framework of a separate cultural identity that was designed to reestablish indigenous sovereignty over the affairs of the communities, rather than a middle-belt identity or regions. Although the petition was taken over by tribal unions that had arisen as a result of Christian missionary efforts that had gained social and political consciousness and with this consciousness, the petition turned into violent demonstration and rioting in the 1940s. This was the case with the Sayawa in Lere districts' desires for independence from the Emir of Bauchi, and the Madagali from the Emir in Mubi, Higgi, Kilba, Chamba, and Batta under Fulani local chiefs, centered on the Emir of Yola in Adamawa Region. In 1958, the Kilba and related factions gained independence from Yola following northern Cameroon's refusal to join Nigeria in a vote. Demands for independence from the Fulani and Islamic leadership in district heads among the Kataf and other allied non-Islamic communities such as the Karekare and Lafia districts were also met with protest and political hostility.

The idea or the concept of a Middle Belt area were of Dr. Karl Kumm, a German Christian Missionary who was with the British Sudan United Mission (SUM), in 1907, where he proposed a Benue region to the Christian and British administrations in Nigeria as a Territory for non-Islamic communities and cultural minorities in the north. This got the attention of the British administration's government even before the development of a full-fledged political group that advocated for the formation of a Middle Belt region, came from E.D Mirel. Mirel, was a well-known journalist in London and the editor of one of the British African mails. He proposed the establishment of a central region [Middle Belt] in the north for non-Muslim whom he referred to as pagans, and ethnic minorities in 1911, in the unique and specific context of the projected amalgamation of Nigeria's Northern and Southern protectorates under a single government. There was a lot of proposition in 1919 for the subdivision of the protectorate into more sections from British political officials who were in the service of the administration of the British Administration in Nigeria. These proposition, were mainly focused on the north as a remedy to the issue of non-Islamic group incorporation. For instance in the 1920s, British commanders who had served in non-Islamic parts of the north presented many recommendations for the separation of the North and the whole of Nigeria into more

governmental regions. However, as these events came to the notice of public servants or policymakers, there was a rapid explosion of cultural nationalism within the Middle Belt minority, and desire in political independence from Islamic society was temporarily suppressed during the decade after 1940.

### **Root causes of the conflict**

In 1960, Nigeria gained its independence from Britain and has since been in and out of military rule up until 1999. In 1999 it transitioned into a democratic state whereby there is an existence of rule of law, protection of lives, equality amongst citizens, and also a constitution to govern the affairs of the state. Nigeria has dealt with a variety of security threats since its return to democratic rule in 1999. Furthermore, over the last few years, the outbreak of violence, primarily in the north-central states of Benue, Plateau and Nasarawa, has been attributed to conflicts between herders and farmers. This violence has caused an upsurge of insecurity in the region, causing the unnecessary deaths and lateral displacement of thousands of people. According to Amnesty International, 168 people were killed due to herdsman-farmer clashes in January 2018, and over 168 people fled their homes. This sudden surge has drawn so many people's attention to different responses and reports on the crises, especially the primary reason these clashes occur and the causes of this conflict.

Ecology and environmental causes or climate change, have also been the most popular and addressed causes of the overriding cause in the rise of the frequent occurrence of conflicts in the Middle Belt. There is also a fusion of other environmental forces in Nigeria, especially desertification with various issues like lack of rainfall or drought. In fact, the rainy season is identified as the most intense period of confrontations between nomadic farmers and land farmers. Other activities such as the movement of herders from one part of Nigeria to the other, also called transhumance, and even the flock of herders due to desertification from border countries like Niger into Nigeria creates scarcity of land. As a result, competition between the farmers and the herders based on land is created to cultivate and pastureland for the animals because of limited land. Urbanization as well been a contributing factor has buildings are being erected causing a reduction in land for pasturing and farming.

In as much as general causes have been discussed, there are other important root problems that are yet to be addressed. One of the significant root causes is the rise in the circulation of small arms and guns. In this context, the herders have access to modern and improved firearms, and any form of hostility or confrontation sparks violence, destruction of lives and properties. Another primary reason that is not paid much attention to, is the prohibition of open grazing that is the enforcement of the anti-grazing law, especially in Benue and Taraba state. The anti-grazing law, which was enacted by some states in Nigeria to help combat or bring a final end to the clashes between the farmers and the herdsman [Agwu and Wilson 2019] as instead, become a cause and an instigator to the clash. The ban on open grazing was based on the conviction that the many violent conflicts between farmers and herders tend to result from uncontrolled cattle grazing, which led to the destruction of farmer's farm produce. Basically, anti-grazing law means that the cows are not allowed to roam around and feed anywhere but instead in a specific place in order to avoid cows trespassing into people's farms. This free grazing that is banned is what the Fulani herders have been practicing for decades. Therefore that naturally brought agitation and tension between the two factions involved, that is, the farmers and the herders.

### **Parties and Actors involved in the Conflict**

There are a few parties and actors involved in Nigeria's ongoing violent conflict between herdsman and farmers. Until the last 20 years, disputes between herders and farmers were usually settled through negotiations, with the heads of villages and herder communities agreeing on simple solutions such as a herder must pay compensation for the damage in a farm if he is unable to control and restrain his animals from damaging the growing crops.

The conflict between farmers and herders also has an ethnic and religious element. In Nigeria, there is an ethnic group called the Fulani, and well over 90% of northern Nigeria's nomadic herders are from this ethnicity. Majority of these Fulanis are Muslims, and they are primarily pastoral herders [International Crises Group 2017]. In several parts of Nigeria, and most ethnicities, regard Fulani herders as occupiers or foreigners, because Fulanis immigrated from the Arabian Peninsula and because of their large numbers in animal husbandry, they are a major conflict party in clashes with farmers



[Olaniyan, Yahaya, 2016]. Even though there are two different categories of Fulani, that is the urbanized Fulani and the nomadic Fulani, they both speak the same language 'Fulfulde', practice the same religion, they are classified differently. According to Maiangwa, The urban Fulani are seen to be wiser and preeminent politically [Maiangwa 2017], while the nomadic Fulani are widely linked to various aggressive and hostile behaviors like kidnapping, arson, and the horrific killing of their victims. For example, as reported by Nigeria monitor, three women who encountered fulani nomads in Ketu area of Ogun state, were severely injured and beaten with sharp objects because they refused to be raped by the nomads.

The origin of Fulani herders in Nigeria is dark, but it is believed that they actually started migrating to the region between the 13<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> centuries. After Uthman Dan Fodio's jihad, which ended up winning over the Hausa Kingdoms and creating an Islamic Caliphate in Northern Nigeria in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Fulani, particularly the urban Fulani, became politically powerful in Nigeria. Furthermore, due to Uthman Dan Fodio's jihad and the creation of the Islamic Caliphate in the Northern part of Nigeria, the Hausa-Fulani became more politically powerful and politically involved than any other residents in that region. To further make matters worse, British administrators during the colonization era ruled the Northern parts of Nigeria primarily through the Hausa-Fulani upper class, strengthening the group's political authority in the region, and also throughout the country. The victory of the jihad, combined with the indirect rule policy enforced by the colonial era via urban Fulani and Hausa upper class, resulted in the marginalization of many non-Muslim locals in the northern part of Nigeria. The residents of these communities are mostly made up of farmers who consider themselves to be indigenous in their lands. They are, however, considered as minorities in the region in comparison to the dominant Hausa-Fulani group. Although these local communities constitute the majority in their respective regions,

In Nigeria, Christianity and Islam have nearly the same number of religious believers. The majority of people living in the northern part are Muslims, while the majority of people in the south are Christians. The difference complicates the farmers-herders conflict because it occurs mainly in the Middle Belt, between north and south.

The middle region is a buffer zone for both religions and nomadic and sedentary ways of life. Since the start of Nigeria's first democratic rule in 1999, there have been numerous violent clashes between farmers and herders in Nigeria's northern and southern region, resulting in many deaths and the destruction of private property. These clashes have been widespread in Nigeria's Middle Belt and northern states, with recent conflict incidents in Taraba, Benue, Plateau, and Kaduna states gaining more attention. The Farming communities in the Middle Belt identify as victims in relation to Fulani herders and the dominant Hausa-Fulani political elite, whom they see as long-term oppressors. At the same time, the Fulani herders also feel victimized and marginalized, partly due to alleged cattle theft by farming communities and as a result of them feeling like they are being treated as non-indigenous and second-class citizens. In other words, both factions claim to be the victim while the other is the oppressor. The dispute between the farmers and the herders has been going on in these states for several years without tangible responses from the state or federal governments. This act has fueled feelings of being victims and marginalization and a sense of defensiveness among farmers. Furthermore, many local minority populations in the state as the farmers think the government does not protect them. The government favors the herders and so have to protect their land or any form of domination. Local farmers also play a key role in this conflict. Because of the effects of environmental and economic changes, farmers are expanding their farming practices to the north, particularly in places where there was no prior cultivation. Regrettably, most of those places served as grazing grounds for nomadic herders from the north. As a result, conflicts arise when two of these parties meet on the same piece of land and attempt to protect their respective interests. The states of Taraba, Plateau, Kaduna, Nasarawa and Benue, in the Middle Belt of Nigeria have suffered the highest amount of fatalities as a result of violent clashes between farmers and herders in these transitional zones between Nigeria's north and south [International Crisis Group, 2017]

The secondary actors in the conflict are the Federal and state Government of Nigeria, the Nigeria Police Force, and the Nigerian Army. Though most of the time, security forces are unable to prevent disputes. Some evidence and witness testimony indicate that some officers are crooked and they work with the attackers. Instead of being a reliable organ of the state that serves to protect its general public [Amnesty International,

2018], People in some states like Kaduna, Plateau, Benue and Taraba that have been subjected to numerous attacks, no longer trust the state or the officers and so formed their own defense mechanisms, like vigilante groups [Olaniyan, Yahaya, 2016]. The Nigerian Federal and State government are not the only secondary actors others like regional civil society organizations for instance Miyetti Allah Cattle Breeders Association of Nigeria (MACBAN) and the All Farmers Association Nigeria (AFAN). These entities attempt to defend their respective groups' interests in the conflict, and they also participate in negotiations and mediation trainings [Clingendael, 2019].

## CHAPTER THREE

### **The Conceptual/Theoretical Framework of the Study**

The root causes of farmer-herder crises, is viewed by different writers showing that there are different factor that influence or are a trigger to these farmer-herder rises. This conflict which has caused a lot of insecurity in the country especially the middles belt and some part of the northeast, as picked the interest of analyst and scholars thereby prompting a lot of literature and research on what the root causes of the conflict is and how best to handle it. Even though these literature often agree with each other, especially in choosing the best -suited method of research which is in this case, a qualitative research, they sometimes view or analyze the case using different factors which is why sometimes they have disparities in their point of view.

Ogbeide [2017] used the theory of conflict to understand the root cause of this theory. He says that ‘Conflict theory states that tensions and conflicts arise when resources, status, and power are unevenly distributed between groups in a society and that these conflicts become the engine for social change’ [Cole 2016]. The theory further says core cause of conflict is unequal sharing of wealth, political positions and power among people in a state, either caused by human intervention, or using force. Ogbeide, linking this theory to determine the cause of the farmer herder crises, reported that the Fulanis are of the school of thought that they are the minorities and that their host society may be hostile to them at any given opportunity. These are some of the lessons that they have brought with them throughout their lives as a survival tactic. Therefore because of this lesson they had to always be alert and ready to fight back especially for the sole purpose of protecting their cattle which is a top priority to the herders.

The author Ogbeide further pointed out another cause which is global warming or climate change. He made emphasis that with climate crises and desertification which affects places where pastoralism is being practiced, the burden on the resource on which the herdsmen depend will be much greater in the future. And with him establishing the fact that a Fulani or a Fulani herder can do anything to protect his cattle. Knowing that the Fulani do not have the mind to watch their cattle die, they would travel a very long distance from the north with their cattle to the south in search of pasture, armed with

firearms to defend their livestock. These herders often migrate from the north with their flock to the south in search of greener pasture, putting a strain to the supply of resources of any community to any place they transfer their livestock for grazing. This movement brings herdsmen into conflict with community farmers over the usage of vital resources like farmland, grazing areas, and water.

To compare to Ogbeide's work, [the observer 2020] agreed with Ogbeide's research on the fact that one of the causes of the farmer herder crises is climate change which drives the herders to travel in search of greener pasture. Although in the observer's research, he included not just climate change but also added increase in population as a root problem declaring that, the places that use to be just a pastoral route, due to the increase in population and the pressure mounted on farmers to provide or cultivate more in their to food and other agriculture products, are being used as farmlands. Thereby when these herders come around with their cattle they meet with farmlands and farmers who are not ready to have their field destroyed. Unlike the other two researchers, Egbuta [2018], looked at another dimension of the conflict. He addresses the issue with the point that there is an increase in this violence or the main trigger to this conflict or crises availability and the circulation of firearms and other weapons. Emphasizing that these groups of people that is both the Fulani herdsmen and the farmers, having access to these firearms instigate the conflict because any minor disagreement or hostility perceived by any of the group, weapon is used instead of a peaceful way of resolving dispute which causes a lot of people to lose their lives and even be displaced. The literature didn't stop there it also second with environmental changes that is desertification as a very important cause of the conflict.

These articles have done well in highlighting the sources of these farmer herder clashes but at the same time haven't explored other sources of these conflicts. Sources like the influence of Religion in the conflict. My research will explore this source of the conflict, especially seeing how the Middle Belt part of Nigeria has a high record of religious crises and also the fact that most of the clashes between the farmer herdsmen happen around that region.

In conclusion, these articles have given a great insight on the major source of the conflict which is beneficial to the research. Some of the sources such as environmental causes, in flow and circulation of firearms and also increase in population were mentioned. Therefore, with this knowledge, makes finding a possible solution to the conflict possible and very much achievable.

### **Agriculture - A Conceptual Discussion**

As defined by Amoo [2017:7], Agriculture entails the plowing of land, the raising and rearing of animals for food, animal feed, and raw materials for industries. Cropping, livestock, forestry, fishing, processing, and marketing of agricultural products are all part of it. Therefore, agriculture can be divided into crop production, livestock, forestry, and fishing. Agriculture has some links with other sectors, such as industrial sectors and for this reason, Agriculture is regarded as the backbone of Nigeria's economic activity

According to Bello [2013], despite the presence of other mineral resources, agriculture is the main source of income for the people of the Middle Belt. Agriculture's sustainability in the Middle Belt necessitates a strategic balance of environmental and socioeconomic activities, as well as political factors. In this area, Rainfall occurs season to season with a distinct dry season and this Season to season rainfall and a prolonged dry season causes ecosystem dynamics and not so good relationships, resulting in a sharp divide between Fulani herdsmen and farmers.

### **Sedentary Farmers**

Agriculturers or farmers as popularly known, are people who work in agriculture and raise animals for food or raw materials. The term farmers, therefore refers to people in general who raise field crops, orchards, vineyards, poultry, or other livestock. In fact, Farmers are also herdsmen who herd or keep livestock such as cattle, goats, and sheep, as well as crop farmer according to the above definition. But for the sake of this research, farmers, will represent crop farmers that is, those who raise field crops.

### **The Arable Cropping System in Nigeria**

As stated by Lambrou and Laud [2007], Only 12 plant species and five animal species produce 75% of today's food. Humans use only 200 of the 10,000 edible plant species, and only three plants which are rice, maize, and wheat contribute nearly 60% of the calories and proteins obtained from plants. Arable crops have a tremendous global dominance, playing important roles in the socioeconomic lives of rural and urban people respectively. Some of these Arable crops include a diverse range of primary crops such as rice, maize, cassava, sorghum, millet, wheat, soybeans, melon, yam, and vegetables, among others. Therefore the production of arable crops is the most significant feature of agricultural activities in Nigeria especially because small-scale arable crop producers on a rural scale, dominate Nigerian agricultural production. In fact, majority of Nigerian farmers, grow one or more arable crops.

### **The Fulani Herding System in Nigeria**

Herdsman are nomadic or in some cases semi-nomadic pastoralists of which their primary occupation is commercial livestock raising and in Nigeria, the Fulani tribe dominates cattle herding almost entirely. According to Iro [1994] and Abbas [2012]. Iro [1994] also stated that Herding is a difficult task, and contrary to popular belief, it is not a favorite pastime of the Fulani; they herd out of necessity rather than choice. As Iro [1994] documented, the Fulani herders maintain a workable species diversity of cow rearing that includes milkers, beefers, breeders, carriers, and stock beautifiers with a female to male ratio of 4:1 that is, each herd type has sixty to seventy-three percent female species. The benefits of this is that a herd dynamics simulation shows that the rate of growth of the herds peaks when female calves dominates. The herd size is usually eighty to hundred. After centuries of raising livestock, the Fulani have developed a herding system that can withstand time, seasonal changes, social reform, and government interference.

Despite the fact that the Fulani herders do not have a retirement age which makes them continue herding past the middle age, the very aged pastoral Fulani who cannot keep up with the strenuous herding work, hands over the herding to his male offspring. That is to say the Youths are in charge, while elderly family members make the majority of

grazing decisions. However Iro [1994] also revealed that the herders have excellent way of communicating with the animals and through Cane use, sign language, and verbal commands they control the movement of the herd with the front row occupied by faster animals. The Fulani's movement over time has resulted in a pastoral calendar in which the Fulani's location and grazing habits can be predicted. A typical herd of several family units moves in a column up to five meters wide and two kilometers long during migration. That being said, majority of the Fulani herders migrate because they do not possess a land big enough for their animals to graze therefore, their relocation from one place to another is paramount.

Recounting the Fulani annual pastoral calendar, Iro mentioned that the pastoral or herding season begins in October to December with the herd moving south along rivers and stream valleys, which signals the end of the rainy season and the start of the dry season. The dry or harmattan season, lasts from January to February with an extreme dryness as relative humidity approaches zero and there is a decline in the availability of water, and animals lose a lot of weight. Unpredictability of food and water requires longer grazing hours, herd splitting, and frequent visits to fixed water sources, to such a degree that there is an upsurge in Southward migration. The months of March and April are the most scorching and hardest for the Fulani herders. The animals' condition is less than ideal especially when The Fulani have reached their southernmost point. Fires raging across the range exacerbate the pasture situation. And herds no longer have the luxury of choosing grass, but instead manage the grass that is available.

### **Conflict/Crises**

The above terms which has been used interchangeably in the course of this research, are words that are the total antonyms of peace and they certainly represent a problem in today's society. According to Zamoum and Gorpe [2018], the term crises consist of so many definition depending on the field of study and also geographical location. Therefore there is scholarly debate on what the ideal definition of crises is. Hermann [1968] defined crises as a situation characterized by extreme levels of threat, tension, and unexpectedness while Philips and Rimkunas [1978] defined crises as critical decisions that are violent or prone to violence. Crises has been referred to as both the



actual events leading up to conflict or war. Conflict on the contrary, is defined by Nicholson [1992] as a social activity that occurs between conscious, but not necessarily rational, beings. He further says a conflict is determined by the parties' wants, needs, or obligations that are involved.

Kestemer and Ray [2002] Consider conflict to be when two parties that is, individuals, groups, or states are involved and attempting to achieve goals that can only be attained by one party, or when one party wishes to use inappropriate means to reach a specific goal. This therefore entails clash in getting dominance of scares commodity, religious dominance or demand for power. In such a way, a conflict is defined as a disagreement or difference of opinion about how to achieve certain goals. In fact there is really nothing inherently wrong with conflict and no developing society can do without it. Except if the conflict escalates to claiming of lives property and destabilizing the peace of a society, then causes of the conflict can analyzed and position way of solving and preventing further damage can come to play. Hence, a mishandled conflict has the potential to escalate into violence or destruction. It has the potential to devolve into a crisis and when a conflict lasts for an inordinately long period of time and appears to defy easy resolution, it is said to be a crisis. In as much as there are different meaning to conflict, in the course of this paper Kestemer and Ray definition is more ideal in explaining the farmer-herder crises.

### **Farmer-Herder Conflict**

Farmer-herder conflict has been in occurrence for a long time but gained more attention 8-10 years ago [klatli & toulmin 2020] because of how in recent years, the conflict has assumed a more dangerous path. Conflicts between farmer-herders according to Okoro [2020] occur between farmer or cultivators and nomadic livestock keepers. Hagmann [2003], stated that there are distinctions between 'herder-herder' and 'farmer-herder' conflicts. Herder-herder conflicts are typically disputes between nomadic or transhumant livestock keepers, that is keepers for seasonal movement of livestock, over their territory's resources and incoming groups looking for water and pastures, as well as cattle banditry. Further to that, herder-herder conflicts include conflicts that arise as a result of cattle rustling and competition among pastoralists for a scarce herding

environment. Meanwhile farmer herder conflict is a fight between sedentary farmers and herders or pastoralists.

Paying attention to the above concepts, it provides explanation to the way of life of different groups of people, that is the herders and the farmers, which are applicable to our understanding of the causes of the Farmers-Herdsmen crisis in the Middle Belt. For instance, in every heterogeneous community, there are people who have different beliefs and traditions, thereby resulting in two groups of people with conflicting interests, and usually these various -groups assemble themselves into organizations or just stick together in order to protect their obvious interests. Therefore when these opposite groups find themselves in a close space especially competing for space, these groups are bound to be constantly at odds with each other on whether one group has to change and accommodate the other or everything should just remain the way it was.

### **Happenings of the Farmer-herder Conflict**

The farmer-herder conflict in the Middle Belt Nigeria, did not just start of late as stated before. This conflict has been ongoing for a while although after the 2000s, the conflict shifted dramatically and erupted into a disastrous conflict because the herders and the farmers no longer seek mediation as a form of settling their dispute, they instead take laws into their hands. . Periods before the 2000s, there was a traditional way in which farmers and herders co-exist that is to say, anytime herders find themselves on a land their animals can graze on especially in harmattan or dry season or even raining season, they seek permission from the landowner or the leader of that community who stands as a middle man between the herder and the farmer. Sometimes herder give compensation to the landowners of the land their cattle graze on. Although sometimes, the herdsmen use grazing routes that is owned by no one. In any case where the herders are unable to control their animals and they wonder into farms and destroy crops, the problem is resolved through negotiation, with the herdsmen responsible for the destruction, and the owner of the land Abbas [2012]. An explanation to why there is an upsurge in this conflict is the fact that, when these herders bring their livestock into non-Fulani territories or villages, and the livestock destroys famers and don't pay or compensate, the farmers are forced

into a form of defense from future destruction. Some of these defense mechanisms are either a blockage or barricade to prevent the animals from accessing farmlands, killing of animals/stealing of animals or even poisoning the fields. As a result, the herdsmen launch lethal attacks on rural farmers or villages. Instead of attempting to have a peaceful talk with farmers, armed herders who are supposedly Fulanis attack them, burn down their homes and communities, rape women, and seize their belongings. These herdsmen assault communities with firearms and kill farmers. According to reports from various central and northwestern Nigerian districts though there is no documentation or public notification as to where these herders obtain their firearms. In most cases where this attacks occur, some of these attackers do not retreat and go back to the place they came from. Instead, they inhabit the farms and houses of the farmers they have assaulted and killed Okeke [2014].

According to the International Crisis Group, some of the assailants are not Fulanis from Nigeria. These individuals came from neighboring nations like Niger and Cameroon. Other rising reasons in this crises include illicit weapons in the region and a loss of border control between Nigeria and its neighbors [International Crises Group 2017].



*Figure 1: map showing states in the middle-belt with high incidences of farmer-herder casualties*  
 [international crises group 2020]

. *States in the Middle Belt with high incidence of herder-farmer casualties* [States in the Middle Belt with high incidence of herder-farmer casualties, 2020]

### **Theoretical framework**

As established before, farmer herder crises is a very challenging and complex conflict with diversity of participants, causes, and patterns. And because of that, mixture of theoretical ideas is required to explain and understand the causes of these conflicts.

The research is based on conflict theory as agreed by Ogbeide [2017] and frustration-aggression theory and state failure theory. The ideas are appropriate, topical, and appear to best explain the current causes of conflicts between herders and farmers in Nigeria.

### **Conflict Theory**

In understanding the root causes of the farmer-herder crises, the conflict theory or theory of conflict as mentioned by Ogbeide [2017], is adopted. In fact the basis of this theory is of two groups of people fighting for scarce commodities. That is why Conflict theory states that tensions and conflicts arise when resources, status, and power are unevenly distributed between groups in a society and that these conflicts become the engine for social change' [Cole 2016]. The theory further says the core cause of conflict is unequal sharing of wealth, political positions and power among people in a state, either caused by human intervention, or using force.

Karl Marx [1848] who is the father of conflict theory, centered on the cause and effects of class struggle. The theory focuses on the distribution of natural resources which are unequally allocated. Marx sees society as a collection of people with varying wants and interests who have scarce funds to satisfy those wants. This leads to inequality in this society, which also results in conflict and social change. Each group seeks to get or acquire more resources, and due to scarcity, competition in the form of a clash between them is unavoidable. As the competition intensifies, one group becomes greedy, impeding the progress of the other in acquiring the resources. Land resources like agricultural lands,

crops, grass, water sources, are in high demand in the Middle-belt and are required by both farmers and herders for the sustaining of their varied forms of source of income or food. Conflict would arise not just between herders and farmers competing for these resources, but also when one of the groups seeks to infringe on or abuse another's previously acquired and previously gained resources. Conflict is likely to erupt if farmers in need of agricultural lands trespass into grazing areas, or if robbers in host communities try to steal livestock from the herders for economic gain. Vice versa with the herders. They could also allow their cattle to graze on farm crops, Stream pollution and intimidation of female farmers which could lead to confrontation Ofem and Bassey [2014].

### **Frustration Aggression Theory**

Frustration–aggression theory, often known as the frustration–aggression hypothesis was first proposed by Miller et al [1939], however, Berkowitz significantly modified it in 1969. The theory states that, the appearance of violent conduct always implies the presence of frustration, and vice versa, the presence of frustration inevitably leads to some kind of violence [Miller et al 1939] as cited in Breuer and Elson [2017]. Frustration in this context is seen as an interference with the occurrence of an induced goal-response, rather than as an emotional reaction, as opposed to the use of the word in ordinary English. In other words, frustration is characterized as an occurrence rather than a subjective state Miller et al [1939]. This hypothesis was rephrased and stated that aggressiveness does not arise in the absence of some type of previous dissatisfaction, and the statement that frustration "always leads to some form of violence" implies that aggression is a guaranteed result of any form of frustration and therefore Frustration causes violence, but it is also not the only sort of incitement that it may cause Miller et al [1941:339]. The hypothesis goes on to say that irritation produced by interruption in purpose driven activities creates a quickness for aggressiveness, which, when instigated, might lead to a violent reaction. The cause may be a little aspect of behavior, such as a simple joke, attitude, or little comment that would ordinarily be disregarded, but to the individual with frustration who is already looking for a chance to express his dissatisfaction, it could cause a violent response or revenge.

Linking this theory to this study, there are two groups of people with two different goals or aim. The farmers and the herders or herdsmen. The goal of farmers In the middle-belt is to cultivate land grow healthy crops in other to sell that is commercial purpose or for consumption purpose while the herders goal and aspiration is to provide a healthy green grazing field and clean water for the herds so they can grow, fatten up and be ready for consumption of be sold out. The case whereby the farmers land or crops are damaged, water contaminated or other farmer's especially female farmers are harassed, there is tendency of the farmers acting in an aggressive way. Vice versa with the herdsmen. If the water they are supposed to direct the herds to drink is contaminated, and or if the herd keeps getting smaller due to theft then aggressive response from the herders can be unavoidable. And with these aggression comes conflict and clash.

### **State Failure Theory**

The previous theories are helpful in finding and explaining the root cause of the farmer herder crisis but the one that is most appropriate and will be used in the course of this study is the state failure theory.

According to Max Weber [1946], the state is defined as a human society that effectively claims the monopoly of the lawful use of physical force within a certain region. Following the definition of state by Weber, shows that state have certain functions to perform. A situation whereby the state's essential duties are not capable of providing the services for which it was created then it said that the state has failed Zartman [1995] as cited by Eriksen [2010]. Nation-states, as Rotberg [2003] stated, collapse because they are racked by internal conflict and can no longer provide genuine political goods to their citizens. The policymakers lose legitimacy, and the very nature of the nation-state itself loses legitimacy in the eyes and emotions of a rising number of its inhabitants.

The two scholars view the state in a different way and both have different understanding of the services state should render to its people and some of these services are safe guarding and the lives and properties of its citizens, education, good health system etc. Rotbert [2003] states that Security is the most essential service that states give, because security is a prerequisite for the provision of all other services. He further says that the decline of a state is a continuous process and not just a one-time thing therefore it

is important to separate the weaker states who are on the verge of declining or who have already declined from the strong stronger ones that are still standing. To that end, A state is seen to be a failed state the moment it is not able to properly retain all or part of its basic traits. Failed state refers to a state that has become powerless and is unable to implement its laws consistently, protect its sovereignty or provide basic amenities to its citizens as a result of upsurge in crime rates, insurgency, severe political corruption, military interference in politics, and situations for which traditional leaders possess more power than the state over a ceded territory.

Following these understanding of states especially from the perspective of these scholars it is clear or evident that the state failure theory is very relevant to the understanding of the root causes of the farmer-herder conflict. According to Hamzat [2015] in one of his publications, said Nigeria has a sovereign government, has lost control of its territory and borders, allowing individuals to freely enter and exit the nation with no supervision or restriction. In fact the government of Nigeria has repeatedly demonstrated its inability to ensure the safety of its citizens and a regular check on most news outlets around the country, corroborate how unsafe the country is, and how its civilians are being massacred on a regular basis by what are now being referred to as mysterious gunmen, Fulani herdsmen etc Hamzat [2015]. He further said that Nigeria appears to be a guaranteed breeding ground for corruption and criminal conduct, with government officials embezzling public cash with confidence, with the knowledge of the fact that they are fully shielded and protected under the law of impunity. This law is an unwritten rule that compels the political elite to be completely loyal to the country's present leadership.

The Nigerian Constitution in chapter 2 subsection 14b stated that “the security and welfare of the people shall be the primary purpose of government” with emphasis on the security, the Nigerian government duty is providing security for its security as stated above and security in this context is protection from attacks terrorist groups or armed men attacking and killing civilians, protection of properties. With the above declaration, and the irony in the Middle Belt presently, with people being displaced and homeless due to the clash between herders and farmers, shows that the Nigerian government was unable to fulfill their obligation of providing security, maintenance of peace and therefore can be

declared as a failed state. In addition, President Muhammadu Buhari stated when chatting with Archbishop of Canterbury, His Grace – Justin Welby, in London, that the murderous herdsmen were schooled and militarized by Gaddafi. "The problem is far older than ourselves," he says. It has always existed, but it has been intensified by the inflow of armed gunmen from countries like Niger chad etc, into other regions of the West Africa [Ogundepi 2018]. He also added that when Gaddafi died, the gunmen fled with their weapons. This statement by the Nigerian president, shows Nigeria as a failed state, based on the government's failure to control its territories or borders and also losing its monopoly on the use of force.

As a result of Nigeria being a failed state, the farmer herder crises as turn bloody and these murderous Fulani herdsmen, have continued to kill unrestrained. For example, Benue State Governor, Samuel Ortom, has lamented the state's constant killings, claiming that over seventy people had been slain in the state's Makurdi local government area in the last two weeks. He also mentioned that if the federal government had been more proactive, the regrettable situation may have been avoided Olufemi [2021]. Also mourning the massacre is the people of Atyap land of Zangon Kataf Local Government Area of Southern Kaduna saying that in a period of six days, armed Fulani herdsmen have slaughtered at least 100 Atyap residents. According to the people, around 24 villages were also burned, Sand hectares of farmland with growing food crops were severely damaged.

Base on the research conducted by various academics in relation to the farmers and herdsmen crisis in Nigeria, we discover that the majority of the scholarly work mentioned the numerous likely reasons of the conflict, some of which include crop damage and animal pollution of streams, cattle trespassing into farmlands, harassment of women farmer etc. Furthermore, these academics cited theories that help explain further what could be the trigger or the cause of this conflict although all these still doesn't cover the Root causes of this farmer-herder conflict. Hence this study seeks to address a gap in the literature by investigating the reasons why this devastating crisis occurs and its effect on the country at large.



## CHAPTER FOUR

### **Cases of Farmer-Herder Clashes in the Middle Belt**

The farmer-herder conflict are exacerbated by successive Nigerian governments' inability to encourage pastoralism and agriculture, foster harmonious local relations, and assist control access to water source, farmland, and pastureland. And since the government is unable to handle these issues, it places the cohabitation of herders and farmers in jeopardy. As a matter of fact this conflict sometimes combines both inter-ethnic and religious violence, and it occasionally spills over from a past election. Thus, has become extremely difficult to resolve mainly because of enormous amount lives lost as thousands of people have been murdered in recent years in these battles, resulting in a breach of trust amongst communities.

The farmer-herder conflict in the Middle Belt, has been marked by violence, resulting in the loss of lives, property, and sources of income not only for the people involved, as well as for people in the community in which the incidents occurred. Included in this chapter are the states with the most conspicuous examples of violence between Fulani herders and farmers in the Middle Belt region, as recorded in media and other sources.

#### **Farmers and herdsman clashes in Benue State**

Benue state is home to about four million people, situated in the southern borders of the Middle Belt. The state is blessed with so much fertile land that there is abundance of food items and because of these significant amount of agrarian items such as yam, cassava, grains like corn, millet, and also different types of fruits, Benue state is widely called or known slogan is food basket of the nation. The state is endowed with good agricultural land and various water bodies especially the Benue River, which enable agriculture and rearing of animal for food and commercial purposes. Those latter favorable agrarian characteristics encouraged migration of herders mostly from northern part of the country, as well as from bordering countries throughout the Lake Chad area, in pursuit of adequate pasture and freshwater for their own herds. Amidst the blessing of fertile land, Benue State is also amongst the state worst impacted by violence resulting from confrontations involving farmers and herders due to the fact that the two ethnicity

which are Tiv and Idoma ethnicities make up the bulk of the population in the state, and both are Christian farmers and regarded indigenes, while the majority of the herders are members of the minority Fulani ethnicity, largely Muslim and they are considered non-indigenous. From the last decade, violent clashes involving largely indigenous farmers who are majorly Christians, and herders who are mostly Muslims, have killed many people and forced more than 80,000 others to flee their home town and even the state.

Fulani herdsmen raided a Local Government area of Benue State called Agatu on January 1, 2018. In broad daylight, the Fulani herdsmen raided multiple towns and farming communities, killing children, women, men, and the old equally. In the initial killing spree, over 300 villagers were reportedly killed, with severe deaths recorded in areas including Aila, Okokolo, Akwu, Adagbo, Odugbehon, and Odejo Maya, [2018]. One among the eye witness accounts to the violent ties between Agatu farmers and Fulani herdsmen, Mr. Shaibu Ahmadu, a former police officer, according to Maya [2018], narrated in the Otukpo IDP camp that the mass killing that occurred in January 2018, was the high point of a territorial expansion agenda by the Fulani's that began years ago in Nassarawa State. According to the former police officer, Aila, one of the settlements in Agatu L.G. A, has long been desired by Fulanis due to its highly fertile lands. So the herders opted to first attack and conquer the Okokolo village in order to reach this desired objective. It is worth noting that villages like Tom-Anyiin, Tom-Ataan, Mbaya, and Tombu in the state's Buruku Local Government Area had already succumbed to the Fulanis. The Fulani invaders arrived at Okokolo by boat after crossing the River Benue from Nasarawa State. It was a battle. They marched on Akwu, Adagbo, and eventually Aila after burning down Okokolo. It was difficult opposing them since we were only regular farmers who only have hoes and cutlasses while the Fulanis were equipped with AK-47s, Ahmadu added.

In Addition, Maya claimed that Agatu Local Government is not the first in Benue State to be assaulted by herdsmen. Between 2011 and 2014, alleged herdsmen raided several more villages in the four LGAs of Guma, Gwer-East, Buruku, and Gwer-West, many times. Worrying about these Fulani herder attacks is the structure of attack that is being implemented. Unlike before, when Fulani herdsmen assaulted, murdered, and

withdrew, the Agatu incident have shown a Fulani herdsmen occupation plan. The destroyed communities had been taken over by Fulanis who had come in with their cattle from Nasarawa. As a result, the fleeing locals were unable to return to conduct mass burials to the bodies that littered their communities and farms. Meanwhile, residents of the Agatu Local government area, who have resettled in the IDP camps [Internally Displaced People] of Otukpo, Ojantele, Ataganyi, and Ugbokpo said that a chopper assisted the Fulani herdsmen by dropping ammunition and food supplies to the attackers. Similarly, the inability of Nigerian troops stationed in Agatu to apprehend any of the assailants has fanned accusations of security officers' participation in the attack.

In July 2015, alleged Fulani herders assaulted Adeke, a village on the outskirts of Makurdi, the state capital. Six people had been slain and by December at Idele village, Oju local government district. Three Fulani herders were slain and decapitated in a retaliatory strike by communal youth. Following the Oju killings, a retaliatory assault was carried out also in January 2016 at Ucha Nyiev community. In February 2016, Fulani herders allegedly murdered approximately ten people in Tom-Anyiin, Tom-Ataan, Mbaya, and Tombu in Benue State's Buruku Local Government Area. In February 2016, ten people were slain in the same area, and more 300 became homeless Alu [2017]. According to a government source, 71 people were murdered during a week of conflict in Benue State in 2018 that is from January 1<sup>st</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup>. The attacking Fulani herders were alleged to have assaulted the villages of Gaambe-Tiev, Ayilamo, and Turan in Logo LGA on New Year's Day, as villagers were heading back to their houses from the church after the New Years' service [Charles and Dada 2018]. In that same 2018, Benue State recorded around 20 incidences of armed assaults between December 2019 and February 2020 as a result of the invasion of cattle and Fulani herdsmen into various areas of the state particularly at border settlements of Nasarawa and Benue State. On January 28, 2020, Ortom the Governor of Benue, narrowly managed to evade Fulani herdsmen ambush as he was fired at during his visit to his farm in Adeke, along the Makurdi-Naka Road [Nawaz 2020].

The attack on the farmers in Benue state is indeed still on the rise and lots of Nigerians took to social media to express their displeasure on the happenings [Olufemi

2021]. As a matter of fact, march 2021, around 200 individuals are said to have been massacred in Benue. And as reported by premium times, in early May, alleged herdsmen stormed Katsina Ala a Local Government Area of Benue, slaughtering more than hundred locals as well as displacing several more [Olufemi,2021]. August 25<sup>th</sup> 2021 was another black night for the people of Yelwata where 8 people, including a lady and her 4 children, were reported slaughtered by heavily armed Fulani herdsmen on Tuesday night. Yelewata is a border village connecting Benue and Nasarawa states in Benue's Guma Local Government Area Duru [Olufemi 2021]. The death toll from herdsmen killings in Benue State is estimated at over 1,269 people, 1.8million internally displaced people .some of the towns that have been invaded by the Fulani herdsmen have been seized and occupied by them. The herdsmen seized 14 of the state's 23 local government districts.

These attacks on villages and farmers by the Fulani herdsmen is said to be largely caused by the growing population but what further triggered the sudden surge in the conflict is the imposing of anti-open grazing law. This law entails that the herdsmen will no longer roam their cattle into a random or open field instead an allocated place will be given to the herders or a ranch system will be implemented for the herders. The restriction placed on herders pertaining grazing, was intended to encourage herders who are majorly of the Fulani ethnicity to transition from nomadic pasturing to ranching, so as to minimize or avoid deadly land disputes with sedentary farmers. According to Yikwabs, et al [2020], there was an interview that took place with one of the farmers staying in one of the IDP camp about the anti -open grazing law, and he said that the growth in sedentary farming does not allow for open grazing because there are no more available fields for the animals to roam around grazing, implying the necessity for the regulation to allow sedentary farmers to carry out their respective work. He went on to argue that because the population is growing, farmers can no longer allow the animals to roam freely, and obstructing farmers from completing their lawful work. But contrary to the farmers' reaction and acceptance when the new regulation was issued, the Fulani herders immediately opposed it through their association which is called Miyetti Allah Cattle Breeders Association of Nigeria (MACBAN), an advisory body of Fulani herders in Nigeria. They said the law was unfair and it also abolishes traditional lifestyle [Agency Report 2018]. They interpreted the law that, contrary to the stated purpose, the resolution

was designed to drive them out of the Benue community. The herders see the regulation as a plot or tactic to force them to leave the state on the grounds that they are not indigenous to the state. they further explained that the law was aimed at alienating them considering the fact that the Fulani are the ones who often the keep an enormous herds of cattle, as opposed to other ethnic groups who keep only 10 or even less cattle, so ranching two or three cattle is perfectly feasible, but ranching an enormous herds of cattle like theirs is almost impossible given the cost.

### **Farmer-herder clashes in Taraba State**

Taraba state is a diverse community split by religion, ethnicity, culture, and language. It is also one of the Nigerian states most hit by the conflict between sedentary farmers and herders. The state is located mostly in the center of Nigeria and has an uneven environment filled with highland and lowlands characteristics. The Mambilla Mountainous area of the state offers a tsetse fly-free grassland terrain which is very ideal for livestock farming and the Mambilla-Plateau is said to be one of the locations in Nigeria with the largest concentration of animals [Oruonye, Ahmed, Fatima 2020]. Conflicts between Fulani herdsmen and sedentary farmers have been a recurrent phenomenon in some areas of Taraba State, particularly the Mambilla Plateau, and this conflict may have its origins that can be traced over 200 years ago. Nevertheless, there has been an increase in the intensity of this crises in the previous 20 years [Saleh 2018], notably in the Mambilla Plateau. According to Oruonye and his colleagues, the farmers-herders disputes in the state have affected 363 villages and 16,776 cattle. And just like Benue state, the conflict is comprehensible given that there is diversity between the herders and the farmers as around 90% of livestock herders are of Muslim religion with Fulani ethnicity, whereas the bulk of sedentary farmers are of Christian religion with various ethnicities like Jukun, Kuteb, Mumuye, mambila etc. in early 2012. Over 23,000 Fulani herdsmen ran to Cameroon from Taraba as a result of fatal conflicts with farmer areas. Many Fulani settlements mostly in remote and difficult-to-reach regions of Taraba State's Mambilla Plateau were supposedly attacked by armed individuals thought to be from the Mambilla tribe for more than four-days that is from June 17 to June 20, 2017. According to media

accounts, 732 persons were slain or disappeared. Despite the leaders of the Fulani raised alarm on what was actually going on, it took several days before stories of the assault to reach the news. In January 2018, another fulani community in Leme, a locality in Taraba State's Mambila Plateau, was invaded by individuals or groups believed to be Mambila clan. An old man of 75 allegedly slain by the individuals that invaded the settlement during this incident [Amnesty International 2018]. The night of April 12 was not a pleasant one for the people of Dori and Mesuma as another attack was carried out by the Fulani herdsmen which caused the death of over fifteen people. According to news live, in 2018, five people were murdered in an ethnic confrontation between the Mumuye and Fulani tribes in Taraba State's Yorro Local Government Area. The conflict, which reportedly involved three villages which are Malali, Dila, and Yaladi-Depo, allegedly started by rumors of the killing of a Mumuye man while he was on his farmland by Fulani herders and when word of the Mumuye man's death reached the village, Mumuye men gathered together and attacked the Fulani communities in the vicinity as retaliation [ news live 2018]. In the case of Taraba, different things constitute the cause of the conflict especially in the Mambila Plateau. The main cause though is said to be land dispute. The contested area of the Mambilla Plateau was initially owned by farming groups that is the indigenes of the village, but they sold it to herders as early as 1982 therefore giving herders' legitimacy to graze. And in recent times, Individuals of farming areas turned to assaulting Fulani herder communities, especially because they know that if the issue of landowner is presented in court, the result will be favorable to the legal landholders which are the Fulani given that their evidence of being the owners of the fields is available and binding. Also, having a Fulani president too has given Fulani herders the political power needed and with this political power, they have gradually stripped farmers of their farms, and the farmers are now limited to isolated tiny enclaves, Therefore causing retaliation from the farmers. Another dominant factor is that the population of the state increased drastically, and so did the population of cattle and herders. This fast development especially in human population, along with an increase in animal population and the diminishment of grazing grounds and water supplies as a result of climate change, has resulted in greater rivalry and conflict between pastoralists and farmers in this region [Saleh 2018].

### **Farmer herder clashes in Plateau state**

Plateau state is a cultural and multi religious region of the Middle Belt Nigeria with Jos as its capital city. There exist approximately 30 ethnicities that are deemed indigenes or natives of the Jos Plateau and close to 50 considering the entire Plateau State. These ethnicities are divided by language, culture, and territory. Furthermore, there is also a mixed populace of new residents from various regions of Nigeria that came in with their religion and practices. Due to this diversity of the state especially in terms of ethnicity and religion, Plateau state has seen its share of cohabitation and dispute amongst the two major religions in the region the Muslims and Christians, as well as farmer-herder conflict, particularly in rural regions. Unlike the other cases, clashes between the farmers and herders in the plateau was initially not a norm as a matter of fact, Farmers and herdsmen on the Plateau were interdependent, which was usually beneficial to both parties. Pastoralists, for instance, profited from gaining entrance into farms post-harvest, and while the animals fed on plant remnants and stalks, they enriched farm land through their feces, enhancing the fertility of the soil thereby benefiting the farmers. In several aspects of public life, the Fulani herdsmen were sociologically incorporated with the Berom and other Plateau communities so much so that Fulani herdsmen and Berom kids often used to go feed the animals side by side, and the Berom lads sometimes get employed as contract herders by the Fulani herders and rewarded in animals on a half a year or a yearly basis, helping the children to eventually grow their own animals. In certain areas like Mangu and Langai districts in Mangu Local Government Area of the Plateau state, some Fulani herdsmen ditched their animals and ventured into farming, or practice both farming and herding. However there still exist few evident divides due to differences in religion. In response to the Jos crisis that occurred in 2001 between the Christian and Muslim, a segment of the Berom society mobilized against the Muslims who lived among them which are basically Fulani herders, was what sparked the bloodshed and the conflict between the farmers and the herders. This triggered retaliatory violence from Fulani agro-herders in days, months, and years following 2001, as well as on a wider level in 2010. Much of the large-scale violence that occurred after 2010, was directed towards Berom villages, with the majority of it perpetrated by Fulani herdsmen.

According to Vanguard news in 2012, 50 people including women and children, were burned inside the home of a church pastor, where they had sought sanctuary after an attack on fourteen villages by alleged Fulani herdsmen. Mass burial was organized in Maseh Riyom L.G.A for the victims but According to reports, the gunmen invaded the event and started fire on everyone there, killing several people including two Representatives [Vanguard 2012]. There was another attack in 2014 by gunmen suspected to be Fulani herdsmen In Kuru in the Jos south local government area of Plateau state which claimed the lives of four persons [Vanguard 2014]. In October 2017, alleged armed Fulani herdsmen attacked 6 villages in Plateau State's Bassa L.G.A, killing 50 people, in which the state administration agreed to enforce a curfew in the LGA. Without regards to the curfew, shortly after the killings by the herdsmen, there was another by the same armed Fulani herdsmen. The gunmen killed 27 residents in Nkiedowro Village inside a classroom at a school used as a base for Operation Safe Haven. According to a survivor's testimony as stated that,

They blocked all the escape routes [from the school], then they started shooting, killing almost all the people in the classroom. I was one of the few people that survived. I was shot three times in both my left and right arms. When they shot me I just lay on the floor, pretending to be dead. After shooting everyone, they started checking to see if anyone had survived. They stepped on me but I pretended to be dead, then they left. I dragged myself out of the classroom to check if the soldiers were around so they could help take us to the hospital. I didn't see any soldiers around. I checked around and even went to the bush to see if they were lying there but I didn't see anyone. I then went to an uncompleted building and that was where I found some villagers hiding [Amnesty International 2018:28]

In addition, on the 27<sup>th</sup> of January, 2020, the Kwatas community in Plateau State's Bokkos local government area was attacked, by unidentified gunmen suspected to be Fulani herdsmen and ten people were murdered. 20 days after the Kwatas community attack, an army jeep was cornered by suspected Fulani herdsmen in Barkin-ladi local government area of Plateau State, murdering two soldiers and injuring one. This attack however, prompted a retaliatory attack by the Nigerian Military that included the razing



of more than hundred houses, the majority of which belonged to Fulanis, and arrest were made. In April of the same year there was yet another attack on Hurra Village in Plateau State's Bassa LGA, which resulted to the death of at least 9 people and the burning of more than 20 houses [Nawaz and Fassi-Fifri 2020]. On August 2021, according to vanguard armed men believed to be Fulani herdsmen attacked small villages in Miango Plateau State's Bassa Local Government Area, killing seven people. Numerous people also, have been wounded in the incident, and almost 275 houses were burnt following the attack [Nanlong 2021]. On November 26<sup>th</sup> 2021, On a Friday, attackers believed to be Fulani herders invaded a village in Plateau State, displacing 700 people and destroying crops that were already harvested but still on the farmlands. They went further to burned the crops that were not destroyed, and then completely burned the farms. According to Sahara reporters, nothing less than ten people were killed, some of them were injured as a result of the attack and many of the inhabitants' homes were also set on fire by the armed men. The attack took place at Zowrru, a prospective location for the National Film City in Plateau State. Zowrru is in the Bassa Local Government Area of the state, in the Te'egbe community [Sahara Reporters 2021]. The conflict between the farmer herder in Plateau state especially in the rural Berom area though grew intense because of the spillage from the crises in the city of Jos, is said to have its root cause on land ownership and Indigeneship. The plateau people, are very aware of their status as ethnic minorities in the significantly bigger Context of Nigeria, therefore primarily responsible for promoting indigenous politics in the state. With the upsurge of people all around the country into the state, the indigenous Christian majority of the state have sought to control root privileges to the state and also prevent unnecessary political dominance by the non-indigenous people trooping into the state, particularly Hausa-Fulani Muslims [Higazi 2016]. Land ownership is very important to the people of this state because they believe it is their ancestral heritage and therefore shouldn't be dominated or taken over by non-indigenes, instead they should have control over it. In fact the fact that they no longer have control of some of the land either because the indigenes sold the land to strangers particular the Muslim threatens them especially because there is more population of the Fulani than there was before therefore causing competition over the land. The people of Plateau, especially the biroms, feel the Fulani are now arrogant and entitled; they no

longer obtain consent from the indigenous people living in the community before settling on a certain land, as they once did. Instead, they have seized land with the use of force in recent times. The Biroms think the Fulani have no regard for their Chiefs or the Gwoms anymore that's why the Fulanis attack them. In the other hand, the non-indigenes mostly the Fulanis, feel a sense of discrimination by the people of Plateau state because they are not indigenous, and their religion differs from the Biroms, so the Birom intend to practice Islamophobia. As a consequence, they are refused access to forms that will confirm them as indigenes of the state thereby, thereby preventing their children from benefiting from equal opportunity like scholarship, acceptance to schools, and job opportunities. Therefore they feel their entire existence is being threatened hence the need to protect their properties in this case, land acquired and animals, and children. They also belief that The Birom plan to take over the plots of land that the Fulani had already purchased. Hence their attack on Biroms.

#### **Farmer-Herder Clashes in Kaduna State**

Kaduna State is among Nigeria's diverse states. It is home to approximately 25 ethnicities that are native of the state but also morally and culturally different. The population of Kaduna state is around 6 million and the state is situated in Nigeria's northwest. It is divided into 23 local governments. The state is also a settling place for many Nigerian ethnicities and religious people, from all around the country living in either villages or towns areas and practicing a wide range of career fields and businesses. The Hausa, as well as immigrants from other parts of the country, are Muslim by religion, whereas the large percentage of persons in the southern LGAs which is part of the Middle Belt, are Christians. Kaduna's Muslim population is estimated to be 60%, while the Christian population is estimated to be 40% [Thematic Report 2017]. As a result of the stats diversity, a very complicated inter-group interaction occurs across villages and metropolitan parts of the state, which at times escalates into hostile ethnical and ideological conflicts. Inter-group interactions between all the state's populations became defined by two-sided distrust, agitation, and uncertainty, presenting itself both in rural and metropolitan politics. And hence, there is an existence of religious and ethnic division between the cities population, which stands as a reason for a continual conflict. The conflicts prompted by disagreements among farmers and herders, as a result of cattle

feeding on peoples farms, combined with cattle rustling and banditry in several parts of the state, particularly in villages influenced by the migration of herders, sparked crisis all over the state. The repercussions of these violence include the loss of both farmers' and herders' socio - economic activities, the loss of lives and property, and a big impact to the agricultural production of the state. The focus of this case will be in the southern part of Kaduna since majority of the attack takes place in that region. The conflict between sedentary farmer and herder erupted around 2012 and 2013, then escalated around 2013 to 2019, before re-emerging with ferocity and with many losses in 2020. Because of the blurred line around ethnic or religious beliefs, the dispute in the State took on ethno-religious scope. On the 14<sup>th</sup> of March 2014, a group of armed persons came in to Kaura a once peaceful agrarian settlement of Kaduna state and killed nothing less than hundred people. Though the official statement said that the identity of the armed group is unknown, the residents of the community insisted that they armed group that attacked and murdered them are Fulani herdsmen [BBC News 2014]. Similarly, another attack took place on 15<sup>th</sup> October 2016 in southern Kaduna, in a Christian settlement called Godogodo village. The attack was said to have started with gun men believed to be Fulani herdsmen attacking a military station just before the village of Godogodo before proceeding into the village. The attack claimed the lives of over 40 persons. According to watch world monitor, one of the survivors who lost three of his children testified that the Fulani herders arrived about 9 p.m. on Saturday. They broke into our households after attacking a guard post he said. They were equipped with advanced firearms, cutlasses and daggers. Immediately they arrived, they began firing their guns randomly, and we began fleeing in various directions. My four children were shot to death. And as we fled for our lives, they burned our houses [World Watch Monitor 2016].

In the month of February 2017, another violent attack took place in Zilian village of southern Kaduna. One of the survivors, a middle age woman according to Amnesty International, said she narrowly escaped although she lost her husband and her daughter was badly burnt and she also was shot on the leg. In July 2017, there were reports of conflicts between farmers and herders in Kajuru village, 50 kilometers outside Kaduna. 37 people lost their lives in the conflict, according to reports by vanguard, the reignited conflict began when youths in the area of Kajuru supposedly murdered a herdsman, whom

they claimed was known for his bad conduct of terrorizing the region. Quickly, there was a retaliatory attack Fulani herdsmen, who attacked Ungwan Uka. The incident attack by the herdsmen, sparked another attack, with Kajuru youths mobilizing and attacking Fulani communities, razing their tents and killing them [Agande 2017]. In 2019, new violence erupted in the Maro community of the same Kajuru local government, killing 16 people. The armed herdsmen launched their attack around 4:00 a.m., invading the Karamar village in Kajuru's Maro district [Akhaine and Alabi 2019]. They burned down houses and started shooting residents randomly as they fled. Gidan Zaki District in Zangon Kataf Local Government Area, which has relatively peaceful relations with Fulani and no history of conflict with them or any neighboring tribe, was attacked by Fulani herdsmen on July 10th and 11th, 2020. The Fulani herdsmen attacked the communities of Chibob and Sabon Kaura, killing lots of people and looting their property, and the residents fled the town in fear. According to one survivor interviewed by the International Center for Investigative Reporting, instead of going after those who killed innocent villagers in their sleep, said the survivor, the government of Kaduna and law enforcement apprehended and locked up community leaders. In the second week of July 2021, suspected Fulani herdsmen have killed at least 40 people in Atyap, Magata, and other villages in Southern Kaduna State. As reported by Sahara News [2021], seven more people were killed on Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> July. During one of their violent attacks in Magata village of Zangon Kataf LGA of Kaduna State, the Fulani herders killed a man and his son, burned down a Catholic church, and destroyed 8 houses after which they attacked the area for 6 consecutive days. The assailants then proceeded to another village, Magori, but found it abandoned. They held back and slowly, looted the village, packed their loot into their vans they, and then set fire to all 19 of the small village's residences. The assailants returned to Makarau, which had been attacked earlier, and set on fire the ECWA and Anglican Churches. In a clash that occurred on 25<sup>th</sup> October 2021 in Jankasa, Zangon Kataf LGA, four individuals were murdered and three more were injured. In a statement issued by Samuel Aruwan, Commissioner, Ministry of Internal Security and Home Affairs, Kaduna State, validated the news. According to reports his report, the conflict took place along a cattle paths in the neighborhood and then spiraled out of control into a shootout between the two farmers and herders before police and army showed up and

brought the calm the situation [Vanguard 2021]. In the farmers' perspective, the main cause of the conflict is the sporadic shooting that is done by the herdsmen, slaughtering, and murder of innocent civilians. Farmers stated that the Fulani herdsmen walk about carrying lethal weapons like AK-47s, gunning down or wounding defenseless farmers especially when these farmers call them out for letting their cattle destroy their farms. The herdsmen agreed with what the farmers said they also added that some farmers are to be blamed as they farm very close to water source or close to where the herdsmen are camped. They herdsmen further mentioned the influx of foreign herders who purposely lead their animals into people's farm [Kazzah 2018]. Generally, the farmer-herder crises in Kaduna state may be caused by the ethno-religious difference of the residence of the state but looking at the root cause of the problem, the conflict is linked to the population growth of mainly herdsmen armed groups and the sudden increase in the number of small arms in the region. Attacks by Fulani herdsmen who are looking for pasture lands for their cattle or animals have prompted retaliatory attacks by village youths looking to safeguard their farmlands, prompting another reprisal by the herdsmen. This vicious back and forth has become even worse and more frequent as land in the region is becoming scarce due to increase in population in the area. As Farmers and farming communities are enlarging into new farming areas to plant, so are herders searching further for a suitable grazing area for their animals. This development has sharply heightened competition for scarce land thereby prompting conflict.

### **Socio-Economic Impact of the Conflict**

The lethal clashes between herders and farmers is one of Nigeria's most serious security issues, ranking first in civilian death rate overtaking the Boko Haram insurgency [International Crises Group 2018]. The farmer-herder conflict has manifested itself through the patterns of deadly clashes, invasion by one group and reprisals by the other. These vicious circle have had social-economic consequences, like;

#### ***Internally Displacement of People***

The Middle Belt conflict has internally displaced a lot of people, people from both communities. the two communities that is the Farmers and herders in early 2018 experienced the problem of internal displacement and economic hardship since many farmers have lost their farmland, and houses permanently and many herders too had to

forcibly relocated to another area due to conflict in their communities. Some internally displaced farmers had to leave their villages and stay in camps in another community, and these camps most of the case are schools, churches or some made up tent in an open field. The host villages too in the other hand get mounted both educationally as some of the schools are used as a refuge for the IDPs and economically as they share their food, water etc. with the displaced people. As recorded by international crises group, 300,000 people residing in the Middle Belt left their homes and livelihood and are displaced because of the crises [ICG 2018]. The displacement caused by conflict between different populations groups, especially farmer-herder in the Middle Belt region has the highest impact on Benue and Plateau.

According to [Tade 2021], Benue alone 62,000 people have been displaced from 2010-to 2015. In October 2019 according to International organization for migration data, approximately 160,000 people were displaced in Benue, about 96,000 in Plateau, and 20,000 in Nasarawa, As a result, the farmers found themselves trapped in a cycle of poverty. Some Fulani herders too had to flee to Cameroun due to the conflict between them and farmers in Taraba state. It is recorded by humanitarian news and analysis that 23,000 of them fled leaving behind their source of livelihood.

### **Loss of lives/Animals**

The majority of these conflicts between herders and farmers results in tragedies and loss of human lives. For example in 2018, following an attack on Gumi local government of Benue state, 120 people lost their lives but only 73 bodies were found and buried with help from the governor and security agents[Amnesty International 2018]. According to a report by This Day, Fulani herdsman carried out 654 attacks, brutally murdered 2,539 persons, and abducted 253 around 2017 and 2020. Fulani herdsman attack that were once unplanned and surprise attacks on villages, have evolved into clearly intentional and organized attacks which now claims roughly six times as many civilian lives as the Boko Haram insurgency. Therefore Farmer-Herder conflict is said to be deadlier than Boko Haram. In Taraba state following the attack on Fulani herdsman, nothing less than 96 herdsman lost their lives and 17,000 cattle were lost. Also, both young and old victims have been badly wounded or mutilated. As a result, some female farmers

have been taken to the social position of being widows. All of these mutilation, deaths, has resulted in a significant reduction in working population or agriculture labor force in the region [Ofuoku and Isife 2009].

### **Security Threat**

Farmer-herder disputes in Nigeria pose a very troubling picture of Nigeria's national security; a picture by way of explanation, more complicated than the Boko Haram insurgency, primarily due to the fact that the farmer herder-herder conflicts spreads and involves almost every field. Fields like economy, cultural political etc. Not to mention Fulani herders evolved into wielding advanced and powerful weapons that they use to attack the people they regard as a threat to them at any given time without the police or army being able to stop them due to the fact that most times the herdsman carry weapons more sophisticated is a national security concern. With that said, Fulani herder's attacks, and causes the desolation of villages, kidnap politicians or local leaders, burn churches, brutally murdered police officers, rape, loot, amongst other things. They committed horrific acts, farmers cannot longer go to their farms because it is unsafe and too dangerous and the Nigerian government have done very little to address the issue. This in itself poses a huge risk to security. Another aspect of security this conflict affects is in terms of food security. Farmer-herder dispute has led to food shortage due to destruction of farmlands by the Fulani herdsman, burning of farmers houses which led to farmers leaving their community and going into IDP camps. This movement or displacement of the farmers from affected areas has resulted in a significant reduction in agricultural output. This is seen by the limited supply of farm produce in middle-belt rural and urban markets [Tyomlia 2020] which led to general price hike of commodities. As reported by vanguard in 2018 about a yam seller in one of the biggest market in Makurdi the conflict has pushed market price beyond availability of the average person. She stated that she trades in yam, rice, corn, melon, and garri, all of which was produced in massive amount in Benue state, however the circumstances changed due to the herdsman crisis. Majority of the farmers who farm these crop varieties had to escape their towns and farmlands to take refuge in IDP camps, because of that there is barely any goods to be bought in local markets [Vanguard 2018].

The story is the same in Taraba, Kaduna and Plateau state. For example, in several agricultural communities in Plateau North and Central Senatorial zones crops like carrot, cucumber, broccoli, strawberry, sour-sop, lemon, sesame, cabbage, grape, asparagus, hot pepper, soya beans, Irish potatoes, sweet potatoes, acha (hungry rice, etc. are cultivated commercially but farmers have horrifying stories of how their farm produce worth a lot of money is lost due to the conflict. The Fulani herdsmen incidents have had a very negative impact on market prices and availability of crops.



## CHAPTER FIVE

### Findings and Discussion

Over the last decade, the farmers-herder conflict in the Middle Belt of Nigeria has worsened and also extending to different areas, posing a threat to national security. Vast numbers of civilians have been murdered, villages have been destructed, and plenty farmers and herdsmen have died or lost their possessions in an ongoing cycle of brutal murders and damages that destroys sources of livelihood and undermines national unity. This chapter discusses the report on secondary source findings. Furthermore, discussions centered on the aim of the study include; the root cause of the farmer-herder crises and the role the Nigeria government played in resolving the conflict.

Different causes of the farmer-herder crises have been discussed throughout this thesis. In the course of this study some of which are ethno-religious issues, climate change, circulation of small arms and anti-open grazing. In as much this causes are a contributing factor to the conflict, the identified cause and the reason behind the escalation of the conflict is that Nigeria or the government of Nigeria have lost control and Nigeria has become a failed state. Although this can be contested, as earlier mentioned in this study, one of the basic functions of the state is to provide security to its citizens by protecting them from foreign threats, safe guarding the borders while also keeping them safe inside their territory. But the Nigerian government has failed to achieve that basic requirement of a state which is to protect its citizens. Nigeria as a sovereign state, has lost total control of its borders thereby making smuggling of arms easier and at the same time causing a proliferation of arms in the country. As agreed by Egbuta [2018], proliferation of arms is a root cause of the escalating farmer herder conflict. In fact weapons used mostly by the Fulani herdsmen in the conflict, is said to be the same type of weapons used by the al-Qaida in a reports shown by premium times [Sanni 2020]. According to the Report, advanced weapons are mostly smuggled into Nigeria from Turkey. Weapons, such as hand guns designed and made in 2014, are snuck by sea through the Lagos harbor. Therefore even the proliferation of arms in the country especially the middle-belt is because the Nigerian government is unable to control its border thereby making it easy for smugglers to bring the arms into the country and for the armed Fulani herdsmen to

have access to these sophisticated weapons which in turn is used by them to commit organize attacks on farming community.

Apart from the smuggling of arms, The Nigerian border is very exposed and penetrable by just any one. Nigeria borders four countries which are Cameroon in the East. Niger in the North, Chad in the northeast and Benin Republic in the West. Three out of these four border countries have a majorly nomadic Fulani population, and share border lines with eight northern states which are Taraba, Katsina, Jigawa, Yobe, Borno, Yobe, Sokoto and Gombe. These Fulani herders from the border countries troop into the country and because of the lack of supervision by immigration service and also because the borders are exposed and easily penetrable they come in with their herds in large numbers and in the process cause more competition for land with the farmers. In fact the governor of Kaduna state Nasir El-Rufai in one of his interviews acknowledged that some of the Fulani herdsmen carrying out attacks on farmers are from Niger, Cameroon, Chad, Mali and Senegal [Vanguard 2016].

The farmer-herder conflict though a conflict between herders and sedentary farmers, has escalated into a full blown one sided attacks, and the sedentary farmers have been on the receiving side notwithstanding the fact that sometimes there is a reprisal attack by the farmers to the herdsmen. Section 1 subsection 3b of the Nigerian constitution states that “For the purpose of promoting national integration, it shall be the duty of the State to secure full residence rights for every citizen in all parts of the Federation” [Nigerian Constitution 1999]. Every citizen is to be treated equally with no citizen more Nigerian than the other. Yet the middle-belt have been suffering from numerous attacks by the Fulani herdsmen day in day out but no perpetrator has been caught, nobody is being punished, no accountabilities on behalf of the victims, just statements by the Nigerian government condemning the act.

The government of Nigeria has demonstrated utter inadequacy, in safeguarding the lives of its citizens and putting a stop to the escalating violence between herders and farmers. Because of the authorities' inaction, the killings has flourished and the massacres have circulated to different parts of the country, causing even more hardship on the country at large The state that promised to protect its citizen, no longer care about the

citizens and the citizens no longer have faith in the government or security agents to protect them as they feel the government is partial in its dealings with the conflict and reacts only when it concerns the other side of the conflict. Amnesty International discovered that 57% of the 3,641 documented victims that died in 2018. Security personnel were frequently stationed near the attacks, which went on for hours or even days, but they were reluctant to respond. In other cases, security personnel were given advance notice of an impending attack yet failed to stop or prevent the murders, plundering, and house burnings [Amnesty 2018]. According to Amnesty International findings, these Fulani herdsmen attacks are well orchestrated, and arms such as machine guns and AK-47 are used. Despite this, law enforcement agencies have done hardly anything to prevent, detain or prosecute, despite the fact that knowledge about the alleged perpetrators was readily available [Amnesty 2018:7].

Titus Dauda leader in Kafuna village Kaduna state, when interviewed by Los Angeles times claimed that state government were more responsive to the Muslims population and reluctant to take serious measures during attacks on Christian agrarian areas. Muslim people, he claims, have overwhelming advantage [Mahr 2019]. An anonymous source interviewed by international center for investigative reporting said the Muslim population are of the advantage because the government of Kaduna sympathizes, defends and justifying the reason why the Fulani herdsmen attack southern Kaduna whereas The Kaduna state government and law enforcement agencies had been informed thereby in the know of armed Fulani herders moving into southern Kaduna. Several organizations and people notified them, and yet no action was taken until there were attacks on dozens of community then the law enforcements arrested community leaders yet no perpetrator was arrested. During an attack by the Fulani herdsmen, security officials normally do not respond, but whenever they respond, victims are the ones who are apprehended, especially the youth that attempt to try to protect their communities with small weapons like bow and arrows against the armed herders said another victim interviewed by ICIR. Government and law enforcement agencies that citizens are supposed to trust and rely on instead have created doubt on its citizens that they no longer have faith in them. The reluctant reaction of the law enforcement has bred mistrust and suspicion between the two conflicting groups who are mostly of the two main religions in

the middle-belt. The lack of arrest and prosecution of perpetrators of the violent attack has fueled the conflict and the unity and integration, safeguarding lives and properties, treating every citizen with justice, equity and fairness irrespective of religion, ethnicity or political background the Nigerian government promised to uphold in its constitution yet again has failed.

The Nigerian government has made quite a number of effort to resolve the crises which hasn't yielded much fruit. In fact one of the first proposed solution by the Nigerian government to address the root causes of the conflict between farmers and herders was the enacting of grazing reserve in 1965 [Ingawa et al 1989] which was aimed to settle the herders that is, make them sedentary pastoralist and improve their method of herding into a modernize one, but due to the indifferent attitude of the government of Nigeria in the administration and application of its programs, the law yielded no result. The legislation or law, on the other hand, gave an incentive for the authorities in the north to create approximately 415 grazing reserves in the northern states which includes the Middle Belt [Vanguard 2021].

When responding to hostile conflicts, the government seemed to prioritize the deployment of security agents in conflict regions. Making deployment of armed forces and police another approach, which is majorly a temporal act taken by the government to address the security issues that comes with the farmer herder conflict. Responding to the Middle Belt growing conflict, the Nigerian government started four key military operations in the Middle Belt to subdue violent behavior and criminal behavior caused by farmer-herder conflict. Included in this operation are Special Task Force (STF) operations such as Operation Safe Haven (OSH), Harbin Kunama (Scorpion Sting) I and II, AyemAkpatuma (Cat Race), and Whirl Stroke (OWS). These operations are intended to be part of a larger foundation for the government's answer to security challenges and internal conflict, which falls under the purview of a highly specialized joint operations protocol called Special Task Force (STF). It was founded in 2010. The STF is a military response that brings together various services within the military services, which includes the Army, Navy, and Air force, and many other security services like the Nigeria Police, Nigeria Security and Civil Defense Corps (NSCDC), and the DSS.

The primary objective is to use their various skills, experiences and resources to solve the farmer-herder conflict. But even with the presence of special police and military in the middle-belt for an extended duration, the conflict and security challenge continue to remain. In fact, according to Amnesty International, some eye witness testified that prior to attack on their village by herdsmen, they informed the authorities stationed in the community of suspected herdsmen mobilizing themselves close by but the authorities did nothing to help the situation while others said that sometimes the military response to the community under attack is very slow which has caused huge number of victims [Amnesty International 2018]. With this many STF the safety of the Nigerian citizens in this case farmers is still not guaranteed, the farmers have no option but to rely on the security of the local vigilante formed by the farming community to defend them from the herdsmen attack. It's indeed saddening how no credible efforts have been made by state legislatures of Middle Belt to ease the lengthy conflict between farmers and herders until recently, when some state like Taraba and Benue prohibited all open grazing in their respective states. The FCT too prohibited animal rearing in metropolitan areas.

### **Measures Taken by The Government in Solving Farmer-Herder conflict**

Local authorities across Nigeria, especially in regions in which farmer-herder conflict is extremely common, have been making efforts and intervening to keep the conflict under control. One of the conflict management approach taken was by Benue state government and then subsequently other states like Taraba, is the declaration of the Anti-Open Grazing law and the Creation of Ranches. Although the declaration harbors mixed feelings especially by the herders who believe the law is anti-Fulani herders, marginalization, and a discrimination directed to send them out of the host community, the law has been a little effective according to the farmers. But almost every conflict resolution strategy that isn't a win-win solution is doomed to fail and have far-reaching repercussions. In the case of Benue more attacks by the herdsmen on the farmers.

Around July 2018, the Government of Nigeria officially confirmed its intention to launch a Rural Grazing Area (RUGA) settlement program as a current perfect solution to the ongoing farmers-Herder conflicts. The RUGA is a word which means cow settlement in the Hausa language and at the same time an acronym which stands for Rural Grazing

Area (RUGA) [Vanguard 2019]. This program allows the construction of ranches, in locations assigned specifically by the federal government only. This same program further aims to procure 15000 hectares of land in all the 36 states of Nigeria and for the plan's execution, every state is however required to contribute to the funding of the RUGA Project, implying that the little funds the state has is going to be divided and some put into the program. RUGA main focus on migratory herdsmen that is those who come in and out of host states, being the main recipient, which implies that there will be a rise in the number of Fulani in every part of Nigeria once the RUGA Policy is effectively adopted [Nation 2019]. However, given the plan's socioeconomic and political implications, it quickly became contentious and also abandoned. Several state government insisted on not having any prior knowledge concerning the RUGA ruling. Therefore most of the governors rejected the plan and that led to the failure of the plan. According to Obaze [2019], public policies are made with the public's and the collective's best interest at heart. Primarily, policy analysts believe that public policy is a procedure rather than a one-time occurrence. He further said when a policy is devised to push sectorial or special interests, it completely fails to be in the public interest. And that is precisely where Nigeria is with the contested Rural Grazing Areas (RUGA) herdsmen settlement. Making people doubt the sincerity of the policy and so conclude that the policy is highly contested.

As stated by Obaze [2019] The RUGA policy fails to follow the path a policy takes before it becomes an established policy. He said this because the issue of the farmer-herder conflict and how to solve it has been a topic of discussion in recent years and for the Federal government to come up with RUGA as the only solution without going through the due process of agenda setting, policy formulation, adoption, implementation and evaluation [Benson and Jordan]2015. This policy maneuvering didn't inspire assurance from the general public. Instead it eroded trust and made them ask questions and also reject it. To further complicate things, the federal government did not hold town hall meetings to evaluate public response to the controversial public policy, or request memos from the general public or relevant individuals involved, such as public policy analysts. To put it bluntly, the policy formulation was not collaborative.

Another reasons why the plan failed according to Obaze [2019] is because RUGA only benefits people who are into the cattle rearing part of the agricultural sector, and because the plan only addresses giving land for the herders in all the 36 states of Nigeria to dwell in, there was no obvious notion of how or ways it would fit or be beneficial to the farmers who are the other party involve in the clash. The benefit does not also include other industry or trade or even the structured private enterprises. Therefore making the plan a contested and a bias policy imposed by the president that would have solely represented a marginalized and factional well-being of specific people at the cost of the public. For this reason the plan lacked the support of the locals or grass root and state governments in which the colonies were to be located.

Lastly, the eminent domain law which means the power government has to procure private land for public purpose [Alegimenlen and Garuba 2015] and the Land Use Act which states that “An Act to Vest all Land compromised in the territory of each State (except land vested in the Federal government or its agencies) solely in the Governor of the State , who would hold such Land in trust for the people and would henceforth be responsible for allocation of land in all urban areas to individuals resident in the State and to organizations for residential, agriculture, commercial and other purposes while similar powers will with respect to non-urban areas are conferred on Local Governments” Damilola [2020] could not be used to implement RUGA because it is like taking a piece of land for public use then use it for private profit use which defeats the whole idea of government use of land for public use or the use of public resources allocated to the development of private cattle breeding and rearing businesses as a reward for attacks on farmers and killing innocent rural dwellers by herdsmen, while the affected farmers and villages are left to wallow in sorrow (over the loss of their loved ones), hunger and poverty.

In 2019 after the wide rejection of the RUGA policy, The Nigerian Government initiated another plan a 10years National Livestock Transformation Plan this time after consulting with key parties likes state governors, leaders of farmers association and also herders association and international donors. Unlike giving Fulani herdsmen land to freely graze in all the states as aimed by RUGA the objective of this plan is to reduce cattle

herding, increase animal agriculture by introducing a framework that motivate herders to transition to ranching and other sedentary livestock farming and most importantly end the deadly farmer-herder conflict for Good. The Nigerian government try to achieve this through government funding, investment firms, and foreign donations. The foundation of this livestock reform plan is to set up different types of ranches in grassland set aside for grazing and revamp service quality by guaranteeing irrigation water for the grassland and food for the animals round and about the established ranches. Even though this strategy's focus is on cattle herding, the Nigerian government envisions it being beneficial to both herders and sedentary farmers by encouraging them to cultivate crops as feed for livestock. The Plan speculates that setting up ranches would therefore minimize competition for land and water resources, thereby avert any forthcoming farmer-herder conflict.

The Plan originally had drafted seven states, which are Benue, Kaduna, Nasarawa, Plateau, Taraba, Adamawa and Zamfara, to setup ranches in community grassland set aside for grazing. The initial regulations for carrying out the project expected that every one of the seven proposed states should allocate two proposed areas, with three or four ranches set up at every proposed site making a total of 56 ranches. furthermore to the 56 ranches envisaged, the forum of Northern States Governors established in Kaduna state after a discussion that every state in the north be regarded as an important entity for the application of the plan, a declaration that was later supported mostly by National Economic Council. The Council encouraged the rest of the 36 states to join adopting the Plan on a national scale.

In addition to the plan's objective, it set goals to be achieved and also supervisory mechanisms in place to track progress. It also outlines the crucial areas that stand in need of immediate action. areas like settling conflicts between farmer-herder; providing better approach to fairness or justice and tranquility; helping the victims of the conflict with basic services, while also tackling other concerns like gender, youth etc. this plan assumes that the key goals are critical to building a favorable conditions for the transitioning from herding to a modernize ranching system that gives rise to peaceful coexistence.



This plan seems to be a very good plan with a chance of success because it involved the opinion and acceptance of every important party involved in this conflict that is the Fulani herdsmen, the farmers and the major sponsors of the plan the Nigerian government. It also highlights the economic gain both parties could benefit from which is enticing to both farmers and herders. The plan however has some challenges that could hinder its success. Like previously mentioned in this study, herders come in to the country from the bordering countries legally and illegally but the strategy ignores the part that numerous non - resident herders who keep moving their animals into or out of the country as the weather changes and these migrants may have lack of interest in being confined in a ranch and if foreign herders should continue to march their animals freely, convincing the local herders to stay in ranches and grazing reserves will be an almost impossible task. Furthermore, continuous wandering of foreign herders and their animals may cause further tension with farm owners, undermining a major goal of the Plan. Furthermore, with the public worries concerning the foreigners active participation in the farmer-herder conflict as well as other criminal act in several other states, concerns on if the government should continue to tolerate them coming into the country or if to ban them completely.

Another challenge the plan faces is the common rumors about the plan's intent. As reported by Guardian [2019], an academic Dr. Uwasomba, who revised the official document of the plan said though the government speak of the benefit the of the plan to the farmers, however, based upon the official documents for the plan, it will be hard persuading Nigerians that the policy is not solely for herders. Meaning the documents mostly tackles what the herders need not what other farmers need too. Thus making the document appear to be a restructured RUGA agenda. He further said though the official title of National Livestock Transformation Plan implies wider and more universal scope, its policy document and execution parts specifically indicates another RUGA project.

### **Conclusion**

The persistent farmer-herder conflict in Nigeria particularly the middle-belt as resulted to so many casualties, lives and properties lost, citizens displaced from their

homes and also huge economic decline. This research used the Nigerian 1999 constitution which is still being used till date and also materials from international crises group to analyze the root cause of the sudden upsurge in the conflict, was able to draw a conclusion on the reason behind the conflict.

Following the objective of this research that is identifying the root cause of the sudden upsurge in the farmer-herder conflict which is, the negligence of the Nigerian state and its failure in performing its duties, the first chapter gives a brief background of the conflict, a brief literature review of the root causes of the farmer-herder conflict, the aim of the study, significance of the study, methodology and limitation of the study. Chapter two focuses on the colonial era. How the country was divided, into protectorate and later amalgamated as one country. It further examines the conceptualization of middle-belt and its history, causes of the conflict, actors involve is also reviewed in this chapter. Chapter three of this study provides in-depth definitions of basic terms used throughout the study, it also highlights the happenings of the conflict and theoretical ideas used to understand the root causes of the conflict. Chapter four of this study tackles the various cases in the middle-belt particular Benue, Taraba, Plateau and Kaduna state. The socio-economic impact of the conflict was also highlighted. Chapter five addresses the main root cause of the upsurge of the conflict according to the finding and also the measures the Nigerian government have taken to solve the conflict.

In summary, sedentary farmers, while once in a while engaged in launching attacks or retaliatory attacks against Fulani herdsmen, are seen to be somewhat affected the most. They have more casualties and record more loss than the herders. Notwithstanding, the study concludes that even though climate change, is one of the causes of the sudden upsurge in the conflict it is not the root cause and as long as the root cause remains, the conflicts between the two factions continues. The study emphasis Nigeria being a failed state as a root cause of the conflict. The failure of the Nigeria government to keep to its promises and role by treating citizen equal, safe guarding lives and properties by keeping conflicts between Fulani herdsmen and sedentary farmers in the middle-belt Nigeria from escalating, and punish perpetrators is a major cause in the upsurge of the farmer-herder crises.

Loss of human and animal lives, displacement of people, destruction of properties, farms, and crop yields, and resentment amongst herders and sedentary farmers are all the socioeconomic consequences of the farmer-herder conflict in Nigeria. Also, agriculture, being the cornerstone of the Nigerian economy that contributes substantially to employment and again a means of basic survival for the country's growing population, is under threat as a result of the conflict.

In addition to the facts and circumstances, the research highlighted that the upsurge in farmer-herder conflict in the middle-belt is more as a result of the government incompetence than the climate change. The driver and trigger of the conflict is the fact that there is no form of accountability by the government to the perpetrators or the government in protecting its citizens which can be better handled via rational intergovernmental approach in which the Federal government, State government, Local governments, and other important community representatives cooperate to come to fair and win=win solution to the conflict. This cooperation would necessitate a series of policy changes and control strategies.

One of the steps that should be taking is that, effective tribunal saddle with the responsibility of sanctioning perpetrators of violence, assaults or crime in Nigeria especially the middle-belt should be created and these culprit should be adequately punished by the Nigerian state in order to prevent future crimes and discourage people from committing any criminal offence. The federal government should also make proper provision for the resettling of sedentary farmers and indigenous people who have lost their houses and means of livelihood to appease their wrath, that being said, herders who have lost their cattle should be compensations. The government should also enhance the power of the traditional society [rulers] as they are directly link to the grassroots, to function as mediators when there is conflict in the society and to also identify and prevent anything that can cause conflict. This will aid in the establishment of peace and trust between the herders and their local community.

In additional, the government should be prudent in its initiatives to improve National Reconciliation awareness and campaigning to facilitate farmers and herdsmen in participating in peace building activities that are effective. They should also develop

forums for frequent interaction among both sedentary farmers and herdsmen which will increase faith and collaborative resource use as a process of attaining balanced and productive social economic growth that improves rural areas' living conditions.

Furthermore, a National Commission on Small Arms Control is required in Nigeria. The commission should be in charge of formulating methods and ways to keep small arms and weapons under control in the country. Similarly, the committee should ensure that every arms control programs are coordinated for effective application. Local gun manufacturing should be tightly controlled to the point where they have inscription so as to make tracing the arms back to the manufacturer possible. Strict laws should also be enacted to guide the manufacturing of local firearms, and individuals associated with the process should be officially registered for regulation sake and propriety in the industry. Security agencies to be given advanced equipment to help them fight arms proliferation. Lastly, border security should be sufficient and sensitive. Partnership with bordering countries like Chad, Cameroon, Niger, and Benin, must be treated seriously in terms of improving security in the borders, because that is critical for the country's arms control, and the influx of Fulani herdsmen from other regions.

## REFERENCES

- Abbass I.M. [2012] No Retreat No Surrender Conflicts for Survival between Fulani Pastorist and Farmers in Northern Nigeria. *European Scientific journal*, vol.8 No1
- Agande B. [2017] Scores Killed in Renewed Southern Kaduna Violence. Vanguard Nigeria.
- Agency Report [2018] Benue: Death Tolls from Herdsmen Farmer Clashes reaches 80. Punch |news.
- Agwu S.K., Wilson O.C.E., [2019] Human Right Considerations to Anti-Grazing Laws in Nigeria: The Way Forward. Available at SSRN:<https://ssrn.com/abstract=B619127>.
- Akaine S. Alabi A. [2019] Suspected Fulani Herdsmen, others killed 32 in Kaduna, Sokoto. The Guardian Nigeria news.
- Akinloye B. [2020] Report: FULANI Herders Killed 2539 Nigerians In 654 Attacks.
- Alegimenlen O.A & Garuba O.J [2015] Taking with the Right Hand and Giving Out with the Left: Government Acquisition of Public Land for Private Sector use in Nigeria. *South East Asia Journal of Contemporary Business, Economics and Law*, Vol. 8, Issue 4 (Dec.) ISSN 2289-1560.
- SAlu A. [2017] Fulani Herdsmen in Ekiti, Their Many Attack, Attempted Solution
- Amnesty International [2018] The Harvest of Death: *Three years of Bloody Clashes between Farmer-herders in Nigeria*.
- Amnesty International (2019) harvest of death: three years of bloody clashes between farmers and herders in Nigeria
- Amoo Z.O., [2017] Nigerian Agriculture. *National Open University of Nigeria*.
- BBC News [2014] Nigeria Attacks: 100 Killed in Attacks on Village in Kaduna.

- Bello A.U., [ 2013] Herdsmen and Farmer Conflict in North Eastern Nigeria: Causes, Repercussions and Resolution. *Academic Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies* Vol2 No5.
- Benson D, Jordan A [2015] Environmental Policy: Protection and Regulation. International Encyclopedia of the Social & Behavioral Sciences, 2nd edition.
- Breuer J. & Elson .M. [2017] Frustration Aggression Theory in p. Sturmy(ED). *The Wiley Handbook of Violence and Aggression*, pp1-12.
- Charles J., Dada p. [2018] Death Tolls in Benue. Killings Hits 71-Ortoms Aide. Punch news.
- Clingendar [2019] Training as an Intervention for Peace in Nigeria. Retrieve from, Clingendael Annual Report, Netherland Institution of International Relations.
- Cynado .E. [2019] Bristish Conquest, Colonization and Administration in Nigeria.
- Damilola A. [2020] Land Use Act in Nigeria – Explained. <https://www.propertypro.ng/blog/land-use-act-in-nigeria-explained/>
- Dollard .J. Miller N.E., Doob .L.W., Mower .O.H., & Sears.R.R [1939] Frustration and Aggression. New Haven, C.T, Yale University Press.
- Duru .P. [2021] Mother, her four children, three others killed by armed herdsmen in Benue. Vanguard news. Accessed November 17<sup>th</sup> 2021,
- Duru p. [2021] Benue Humanitarian Crises Worsens as IDP Camps Swells to Over 1.8 million. Vanguard, Arewa voice. Accessed November 17<sup>th</sup> 2021.
- Egbuta .U. [2018] Understanding the Farmer-Herder Conflict in Nigeria: *Journal Conflict Trends*, vol3, pp40.
- Eriksen .S.S. [2010] State Failure in Theory and Principle: The Idea of the State and the Contractiveness of State Formation, *review of international studies*, vol35, pp229-247, DOI:10, 1017/3026021051000409.
- Hagmann .T. [2003] Mitigating Violent Resource Conflicts in the Somalia Region of Ethopia.

- Hermann .F.C., [1969] *Crises in Foreign Policy: A Stimulation Analysis*, pp234.
- Higazi A. [2016] Farmer pastoralist conflict on the Jos Plateau, central Nigeria: security responses of local vigilantes and the Nigerian state: *Conflict Security and Development*. 16:4, 365-385, Doi: 10.1080/14678802.2016.1200314.
- Ibiroga F. [2019] National livestock plan is RUGA in disguise, Nigerians warn. The guardian news outlet. <https://guardian.ng/features/agro-care/national-livestock-plan-is-ruga-in-disguise-nigerians-warn/>
- International Crises Group [2017] *Herders Against Farmers Nigerias Expanding Deadly Conflict*. Africa Report No252, pp1. Available at: <https://www.refworld.org/doad/59c2a454:html>. [Accessed 6/9/2021].
- International crises group [2018] Stopping Nigeria's Sporalling Farmer-Herder Violence.
- Ingawa SA, Tarawali C, kaufmann R V [1989] Grazing reserves in Nigeria: Prospects and policy implications. vol 22.
- Iro .I. [1994] *Grazing Reserve Developement: A Ponacea to the Intractable Strife Between Farmers and Herders*
- Johnson J. [2017] Taraba killings: FULANI Group Calls for State of Emergency, Deployment of Troops. Global Sentinel
- Kesterner .B.P., & Ray .L. [2002]. *The Conflict Resolution Training Programme Leaders Manual*. U.S.A. Jossy Base.
- Kratti .S, & Toulmin .C. [2020] *Farmer-Herder Conflict in Sub-Sahara Africa*: <http://pubs.iieduorg/102011FD> ISBN: 976-1-78431-828-4.
- Lambrou .Y. & Loub .R. [2007] *Gender, Local Knowledge and Lessons Learnt in Documenting and Conserving Agrobiodiversity*:
- Maiangwa .B. [2017] *Conflicting Indigenecity and Farmer- Herder Conflict in Post-colonial Africa*. *Peace Review a Journal of Social justices*, vol29, pp282-288.
- Marx .K. & Engels .I. [1848] *The Communist Manifesto*.

- Mahr K.[2019] Guns,religion and Climate change intensify Nigeria's deadly Farmer-herder clashes. Los Angeles times.
- Mayah E., [2016] Special Report: Inside Agatu Kiling Field, Blood on the Street, charred Bodies everywhere. Premum times.
- Nanlong M. [2021] Gunmen attack Plateau Community, killed 7, and razed over 275 houses. Vanguard news. <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2021/08/gunmen-attack-plateau-community-kill-7-raze-over-275-houses/> .
- Nawaz .S. [2020] Transforming Farmer-Herder Conflicts and Promoting Freedom of Religion and Beliefs in Middle-Belt Nigeria. Annual report, search for common goal.
- Nicholson .M. [1992] Concept of Conflict: *In Rationality and its Analysis of International Conflict*, pp 11-24. Cambridge University Press. <http://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511598739.004>.
- Obaze O.H [2019] Folly and Falsities of RUGA settlements. Business day Nigeria new outlet, <https://businessday.ng/opinion/article/folly-and-falsities-of-ruga-settlements/>
- Ofem .O.O. & Basseyy .I. [2014] Livelihood and Conflict Dimension among Crop Farmers and Fulani Herdsmen in Yakum Region of Cros River State.www
- Ofuoku A.U, Isife B. [2009] Causes,effect and resolution of farmers-nomadic cattle herders conflict in Delta state, Nigeria. International journal of sociology and anthropology vol. 1 (2) pp. 047054. Available online <http://www.academicjourney.org/ijsa>
- Ogundipe .S. [2018] Buhari Blames Gaddafi for Killing across Nigeria: Premium times.
- Okeke .O.E. [2014] Conflict btween Fulani-Herders and Formal in Central and Southern: *Discourse on Proposed Establishment of Grazing Routes and Reserve*. Vol 3(1), S/No 9, ISSN 2227- 5452(online).



- Okoro .J.P., & Toulmin .C. [2020]. Herders Farmer Conflict: *Implication on National Devolopment( Nigeria in Perspective)*. International Journal of scientific and Engineering Research, vol 11, ISSN 2229-5518.
- Olaniyan .A. & Yahaya [2006] Cows, Bandits and Voplent Conflict: Understanding Cattle Rustling in Northern Nigeria. Africa Spectrum, vol 51, pp 93-105.
- Olufemi .A. [2021] Governor Ortom Says Nigeria does not have a Government.
- Olufemi .A. [2021,] Benue under Attack: Nigerians Express Outrage over Violent Killings in Benue. Premium times. Accessed November 15<sup>th</sup> 2021
- Oruonye E.D., Ahmed Y.M., Fatima A.Y. [2020] The Impact of Farmer-herder Conflict on Food Security in Nigeria: A Case Study of Taraba State. DOI: 10.36347/sjahss.2020.u08i03.006. Accessed November 19<sup>th</sup> 2021.
- Phillips .W. & Rimkunas .R. [1978] The Concept of Crises in International Politics: *Journal of Peace Research*, vol 15(3), pp 254-272. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/423055>.
- Rotberg I.R. [2003]. State Failure and State Weakness in a Time of Terro. Brookings Institution Press. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/107864/j.ctobd8j54>.
- Sahara Report [2021] Death Tolls Hits 40 in Southern Kaduna as Herdsmen Attack more Communities.
- Sahara reporters (2021) update: Plateau Attack: 10 killed, 600 Displaced, 275 houses, farms burnt During Friday's Invasion by Suspected Herders. <http://saharareporters.com/2021/11/28/update-plateau-attack-10-killed-690-displaced-275-houses-farms-burnt-during-friday%E2%80%99s>
- Saleh O., (2018) The Conflict between FULANI pastoralists and CULTIVATORS in Taraba State, Nigeria: the case of the Mambilla plateau. Journal of multidisciplinary studies, vol 1, page 93-112, issued: 2682-6194
- Sanni K.[2020] weapon used in Nigeria Killings also used by Al-Qaeda in Malu-Eport. premium times

- Tade O. [2021] Farmers Displaced by Conflict in Northe Central Nigeria share their coping strategies. Relief Web. The conversation.
- Teniola .E. [2021] The British, Nigeria and the Mistake of 1914: The Premium Times.
- The nation [2019] Why we rejected RUGA policy, by Plateau natives. <https://thenationonlineng.net/why-we-rejected-ruga-policy-by-plateau-natives/amp/>
- This Day Live [2018] Five Killed as Mumuye Youths, Fulani Clash in Taraba. <https://www.thisdaylive.com/index.php/2018/05/24/five-killed-as-mumuye-youths-fulanis-clash-in-taraba/>
- Tyomlia J.I [2020] Farmers-Herder Clashes and the Quest for Food Security in Nigeria: A Beam on Agatu. International journal of scientific research in educational studies & social development. p-ISSN:2579-1052/e-ISSN:2579-1060, Vol 4 number 1
- Vanguard [2011] Tragedy in plateau: Senator, house leader, 50 others killed. [vanguardngr.com/2012/07/tragedy-in-plateau-senator-house-leader-50-others-killed/](http://vanguardngr.com/2012/07/tragedy-in-plateau-senator-house-leader-50-others-killed/)
- Vanguard [2014] 4 killed in night attack in Kuru near Jos. [vanguard.com/2014/05/4-killed-night-attack-kuru-near-jos](http://vanguard.com/2014/05/4-killed-night-attack-kuru-near-jos)
- Vanguard [2016] We've paid some Fulani to stop Killings in Southern Kaduna – El-Rufai. <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2016/12/weve-paid-fulani-stop-killings-southern-kaduna-el-rufai/>
- Worldwatch Monitor [2016] 40 Killed as Suspected Fulani Herdsmen Raided Christian Community in Nigeria.
- Yilkwabs p., Kayode B.M, Gambo N.S[2020] Farmers herders conflict and the consequences of the Open Grazing Prohibition and Ranches Establishment Law in Benue State Nigeria. vol 2(1), ISSN online: 2714-2868. [www.fuijsd](http://www.fuijsd)

Zamoum .K. Gorpe .T.S. [2018] Crises Management:*Historical and Conceptual Aproach for a better Understanding of Todays Crises.*

Zartman .W. [1995] Collapsed State: The Disintergration and Restoration of legitimate Authority.

## Appendices

### Appendix A Ethics Committee Approval

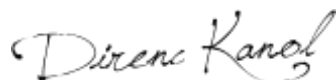
17.02.2022

Dear Prophecy Moses Yamusa

Your project **“The Root Causes Of The Upsurge In Farmer-Herder Conflict Case Study On Middle-Belt Nigeria”** has been evaluated. Since only secondary data will be used the project it does not need to go through the ethics committee. You can start your research on the condition that you will use only secondary data.

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Direnç Kanol

Rapporteur of the Scientific Research Ethics Committee



## Appendix B Turnitin Similarity Report

2/21/22, 12:13 PM

Turnitin Originality Report

### Turnitin Originality Report

Thesis by Prophecy Yamusa  
From Prophecy Thesis (Phiscie)



- Processed on 21-Feb-2022 10:56 EET
- ID: 1767455158
- Word Count: 23197

#### Similarity Index

13%

#### Similarity by Source

##### Internet Sources:

10%

##### Publications:

6%

##### Student Papers:

7%

#### sources:

- 1% match (Internet from 10-Feb-2022)  
[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/347948827\\_Farmers\\_Herders\\_Conflict\\_in\\_Nigeria](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/347948827_Farmers_Herders_Conflict_in_Nigeria)
- 1% match (publications)  
[Benjamin Maiangwa, "Conflicting Indigeneity" and Farmer-Herder Conflicts in Postcolonial Africa", Peace Review, 2017](#)
- 1% match (Internet from 11-Mar-2019)  
<https://www.amnesty.org/download/Documents/AFR4495032018ENGLISH.PDF>
- < 1% match (Internet from 12-Dec-2021)  
[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/318814675\\_Integrated\\_threat\\_theory](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/318814675_Integrated_threat_theory)
- < 1% match (Internet from 16-Nov-2020)  
<https://www.vanguardngr.com/2012/07/tragedy-in-plateau-senator-house-leader-50-others-killed/>
- < 1% match (Internet from 28-Sep-2020)  
<https://www.vanguardngr.com/2018/09/terrorists-herdsmen-attacks-food-shortage-imminent/>
- < 1% match (Internet from 18-Jan-2022)  
<https://www.vanguardngr.com/2021/08/gunmen-attack-plateau-community-kill-7-raze-over-275-houses/>
- < 1% match (Internet from 04-Oct-2020)  
<https://www.vanguardngr.com/2014/05/4-killed-night-attack-kuru-near-jos/>
- < 1% match (Internet from 30-Jan-2022)  
<http://docs.neu.edu.tr/library/6689355198.pdf>