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Abstract

This study critically examines the management of farmer-herder conflict from policy perspectives. This is because several policy proposals were initiated by the Federal Government in an attempt to ameliorate the fierce conflict between pastoralists and sedentary crop farmers in Nigeria. However, it is quite disturbing that these proposals, such as cattle colony, Rural Grazing Area (RUGA)), retrieval of defunct grazing route recovery, and reserves were all components of the National Livestock Transformation Plan (NLTP) aimed at managing conflicts between farmers and herders. However, all these policies were received by Nigerians with disdain, mistrust, and other associated mixed feelings along with ethnic, regional, and religious divides. More often, states government challenged the proposals from the point of view of the Land Use Act of 1978 which vested all lands in the hands of the state governors. Thus, any policy aimed at carving land for cattle grazing is viewed as a ploy to confiscate ancestral lands of the natives in the affected states to Fulani pastoralists, who were often alleged to be foreigners or at best settlers. These struggles for policy acceptance have to a large extent endangered the age-long harmonious relationships between farmers and herders in Nigeria which more often than not resulted in wanton destruction living the landmark of horrendous humanitarian effects on innocent and defenseless citizens. To this end, Karl Marx's theory of historical and dialectical materialism was used as a framework for analysis. The theory explains the existential conflicting contestation for land and resources between farmers and herders. Thus, the study discovered that there is a high level of mutual distrust, mistrust, and suspicious which often takes the form of North Vs South, Muslims vs. Christians, majority vs Minority, We vs them, Christian farmers vs. Muslim herders among other fault lines confronting the cooperate existence of Nigeria as a corporate entity. It is given this sense of disunity and mutual suspicion the study recommended as follows; government at all levels should do much in gaining the trust and confidence of its citizens in policy formulation and decision making, and government should key into modern ways of animal husbandry (ranching), the government should adopt the bottom-top approach to policy formulation and implementation to entrench the culture of community participation, especially in matters relating to religion, ethnic or region in the federation and both religion, traditional and the civil society community should be incorporated in the policy formulation and implementation in an attempt to gain the confidence, trust, and cooperation of the various interest groups in a matter such as this.



Keywords: Policy, Management, Farmers, Herders, Conflict

Introduction

One of the long-standing security issues in Nigeria today is farmer-herder clashes. The management aspect of conflicts has often time-generated security threats to lives and property. There is no gainsaying that, the management policies of farmer-herder conflict have further explored the fragility of Nigeria's federation. Evident from the previous government policies such as Rural Grazing Area (RUGA), Cattle Colony, Carving Grazing Reserves, etc generated heated debates and verbal/media war along with ethnic, regional, and religious identities capable of disintegrating the already fragile and vulnerable Nigeria State.

What is central to this study is to critically examine the government's farmer-herder management strategies and their associated intrigues and challenges in Nigeria. It is on this note, that the study cross-examined the widespread reactions of Nigerians concerning government approaches to managing the conflict between pastoralists and sedentary crop farmers across the country.

Consequent to this, it could be viewed that the failure of the government to surmount the farmer-herder crisis boils down to weak consultation of people at the grassroots by the government to nip in the bud the prolonged security threat confronting the peace, unity, and progress of Nigeria and its development cum prosperity.

Theoretical framework

Marxist Theory of Historical and Dialectical Materialism

The Marxist theory serves as the theoretical framework of this presentation, particularly its Dialectical and Historical Materialism. Karl Marx's theory about society, economics, and politics are collectively known as Marxism. It holds that human society progresses through class struggle. That is a conflict between an ownership class that controls production and a dispossessed labor class that provides the labor for production.¹

Marxism is built on a materialistic understanding of societal development, taking as its starting point the necessary economic activities required to satisfy the material needs of human society. Dialectical *materialism* gives primacy to material conditions, particularly economic factors, in the explanation of other aspects of life; political or otherwise. This is because the economic need is man's fundamental need and as the economic activity is man's primary activity. That is, the primacy of work (economic productivity) is the corollary of the primacy of economic need. In short, man must eat to live but man must work to

¹Nadeem Malik, "Karl Marx's Dialectical Materialism: A Philosophical Analysis" Al-Hikmat: A Journal of Philosophy, Volume 39, 2019. p 2

eat.² In another perspective, man must not live by bread alone, but it is more" fundamental that man cannot live without bread.³

Dialectical materialism is the world outlook of the Marxist - Leninist party. It is called dialectical materialism because of its approach to the phenomenon of nature, its method of studying and apprehending them is dialectical, while its interpretation of the phenomenon of nature, and its conception of these phenomena, in theory, is materialistic.⁴ Dialectics comes from the Greek *dialego*, to discuss, to debate.

Hence, this theory aims at arriving at the truth by disclosing and discussing the contradictions in the ongoing debates on the farmer-herder perennial conflicts in Central Nigeria. According to Vaaseh,⁵ *dialectical materialism* maintains that conflicts result from man's consciousness of himself and material conditions existing in the society, that man attaches great importance to what he owes or possesses or what he can call his own in the society.

From another perspective, Karl Marx dominates the social class theory of conflict, which can be adopted and applied to this study. This approach does not only see conflict as inherent in social formation but also sees it as a historical driving force for social change. The basic principle of conflict theory is that the natural evolution of societies is described as a series of clashes between conflicting ideas and forces that at the end of each clash, a new and improved set of ideas emerges, that change needs conflict to be facilitated.⁶ This is known as the dialectical process.⁷

It is imperative to put that, the defining feature of any society from a conflict perspective is injustice inequality, and greed. This argument reflected the view of Olufemi and Samson; thus, Marxists, for example, argue that economic inequality is at the heart of all societies.⁸ Thus, in basic terms, some people will have more than their fair share of society's economic resources and others will consequently have less than their fair share. This implies that inequality, injustice, and greed is the major precursor of conflicts in any human society.⁹

2 Nadeem Malik, "Karl Marx's Dialectical Materialism: A Philosophical Analysis" *Al-Hikmat: A Journal of Philosophy*, Volume 39, 2019, p 2-3

3 Bello, K. Who is a Nigerian Citizen? Being the 15th Inaugural Lectures Delivered at the National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN) Headquarters in Abuja, 4th October 2019. P. 4

4 Vaaseh, G.A "Indigene's Or Settlers?: The Geo-Politics of the Tiv-Jukun Conflict

5 Vaaseh, G.A "Indigene's Or Settlers?: The Geo-Politics of the Tiv-Jukun Conflict.

6 Olufemi, F.J, Samson, A.O "Climate Change, Environment and Conflicts in Nigeria" *British Journal of Arts and Social Science* Vol 6. No. 1 2012. Retrieved from <http://www.bjournal.co.uk/BJASS.aspx>

7 Olufemi, F.J, Samson, A.O "Climate Change, Environment and Conflicts in Nigeria" *British Journal of Arts and Social Science* Vol 6. No. 1 2012. Retrieved from <http://www.bjournal.co.uk/BJASS.aspx>

8 Olufemi, F.J, Samson, A.O "Climate Change, Environment and Conflicts in Nigeria" *British Journal of Arts and Social Science* Vol 6. No. 1 2012. Retrieved from <http://www.bjournal.co.uk/BJASS.aspx>

9 Olufemi, F.J, Samson, A.O "Climate Change, Environment and Conflicts in Nigeria" *British Journal of Arts and Social Science* Vol 6. No. 1 2012. Retrieved from <http://www.bjournal.co.uk/BJASS.aspx>

Historical materialism dialectically analyses the underlying causes of social development and change in the collective ways human make their living. All constituent features of a society (social class, political pyramid, ideologies) stem from economic activity, an idea often conveys with the metaphor of the base and superstructure.¹⁰

This applies to the dispute between the farmer and the herder in Central Nigeria. Since resources in terms of adequate grazing space, and water points, are scarce and unevenly distributed and sometimes due to natural phenomena such as drought, desertification, and low rainfall, the struggle over their possession is usually characterized by fierce competition which more often than not, degenerated to violence; more so, this resultant competition or dialectics generates conflicts between the two opposing classes that arise.

From the Marxist perspective, conflicts are the driving zone of history, the economy being the key factor characterized by a class struggle between the oppressors and oppressed, the haves and the have not. Marx emphasized that; society must seek to resolve this form of unhealthy struggle if it must advance. The Marxist view emphasizes the economic factor as crucial to all societies since economic resources, especially lands, in Nigeria are scarce and competition for them brings conflicts.¹¹

The understanding of the subject matter here is a relationship-driven by conflicts and contradictions. Thus, Bello reaffirmed that the history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles between freeman and slave. Patrician and plebeian, lord and serf, guild-master and journeyman in a war, oppressor and oppressed, stood in constant opposition to one another and carried on uninterrupted hidden now open fight a fight that each time ended either in a revolutionary reconstitution of society at large or in the common ruin of the contending classes.¹²

The implication of adopting Marxian theory as the theoretical framework of this thesis is that particular attention needs to be given to the fierce economic competition involving farmer-herder in the aspect of the struggle for survival, indigene/settler dichotomy, scarce resources, identity or inclusion, access to grazing space or pasture, access to the water system, cattle rustling, and encroachment of farmlands has been the fundamental cause of conflicts among the two land users. Biologically, territorial protection and dominance have been the nature of every living thing, especially human beings and animals. Humans by nature guide jealously what they feel natural belongs to them and vehemently resist any attempt by others to invade or encroach, and Marx's dialectical materialism relates to how conflicts arise from the struggle over resources in the society.

10 Bello, K. Who is a Nigerian Citizen? Being the 15th Inaugural Lectures...

11Nadeem Malik, "Karl Marx's Dialectical Materialism: A Philosophical Analysis" Al-Hikmat: A Journal of Philosophy, Volume 39, 2019. p 2

12 Bello, K. Who is a Nigerian Citizen? Being the 15th Inaugural Lectures...

Politics of National Livestock Transformation Plan (NLTP) and Sustainable Peace between farmer-herder in Nigeria

The series of bills aimed at finding a lasting solution to the incessant conflicts caused by competition between herders and their host communities across the country have drawn wide public interest and debates. Referred to generally as Grazing Bill, legislative debates on the issue have been on the front-burner receiving impetus from increasing spates of violence between herdsmen in their host communities largely farmers in recent times. Given the awareness of its effects on security, the legislature at state and national levels has given priority to crafting legal instruments to reverse the trend of insecurity that has enveloped many communities and dampened the morale of both herders and farmers.¹³ However, while the motif of the various legislative interventions has been to ensure peaceful co-existence and regulated interaction between farmers and herders, it has been a subject of controversy.¹⁴

The debate has been to find out a sustainable legal framework for sustainable peace and harmony, According to Okeke,¹⁵ there is a bill in the Nigerian Senate, one of the two houses of the country's National Assembly, entitled "A Bill for an Act to Provide for the Establishment, Preservation, and Control of National Grazing Reserves and Livestock Routes and the Creation of National Grazing Reserve Commission and Purposes Connected therewith", sponsored by Mrs. Zaynab Kure (Niger South). There is a similar bill being considered in the House of Representatives, the other house of the National Assembly. The sponsors and other backers of the bill-legislators from northern Nigeria-are seeking that power be granted to a federal commission to acquire lands from all the state governments in Nigeria and the Minister of the Federal Capital Territory to establish grazing routes and reserves for Fulani herders. Subject to the directives of the commission, Fulani herdsmen would have a right to such lands, despite the wishes of the owners, and despite the wishes of the government of any state.

The lawmakers were sharply divided along regional lines as lawmakers from the southern zone and north-central vehemently opposed the bill in totality. This reiterates our earlier submission that issues of this nature more often than not generated unhealthy religious and political conspiracy theories; making meaningful development to address issues between the two parties more difficult to achieve in Nigeria. According to Inter Crisis Group, "conspiracy theories are forms of Jihad formed along this line; the attacks are part of a longer-term Fulani plot to displace indigenous populations and seize their land; among the Christian communities, herders' attacks are widely seen as a subtitle..." These charges are not supported by any solid evidence, but they are

13 Lare, A., Ola, A and Temitope, E.A, " Climate Change, Pastoral Migration, Resource Governance, and Security: The grazing Bill Solution to Fermer-Herder Conflict in Nigeria" Environmental Economics, Vol.8, Issue .3

14 Lare, A., Ola, A and Temitope, E.A, "Climate Change, Pastoral Migration, Resource Governance, and Security...p14

15 Okeke, V.O.S "Community Policing, Vigilante Security Apparatus and Security Challenges in Nigeria: A Lesson from Britain and Igbo Traditional Society of Nigeria" British Journal of Arts and Social Sciences, Vol.14, No. II, 2013

aggravating inter-faith distrust and undermining the country's fragile unity.¹⁶ The Sultan of Sokoto, Mohammed Sa'ad Abubakar III, spiritual head of Nigerian Muslims and a prominent Fulani has repeatedly stressed that Fulani herders who kill should be prosecuted. Several observations have been raised on both sides of the debate. On the supporting school of thought, the International Crisis Group gave a historical reflection on the loss of grazing reserves (GR), thus:

Most of the 415 grazing reserves established by the northern regional government in the 1960s have since been lost. Only 114 were formally documented or demarcated, although the government failed to back these agreements with legislation guaranteeing exclusive usage or take active measures to prevent encroachment. The rest succumbed to pressure from rapid population growth and the associated demand for farmland was overrun by urban and other infrastructure, or appropriated by private commercial interest. With the division of the northern region into 19 states, reserves straddling two or more state jurisdictions lost collective management. The cumulative effect has been to significantly reduce the availability of designated grazing reserves, forcing herders to seek pasture elsewhere.¹⁷

The current experience of farmer–herder conflicts is a negation of the vision of the colonialists concerning livestock production in Nigeria. According to Mohammed-Baba and Tukur,¹⁸ the Europeans had recognized the great potential of indigenous livestock production in terms of revenue generation, protein needs, dairy, hides, and skins. Thus, they encouraged the sedentarization of pastoralists in the randomly moving around cities and towns in northern Nigeria provinces such as Katsina, Kano, Zaria, Sokoto, etc. The main objective of the colonial masters was to make the grazing reserves a focus of livestock development in Nigeria and that was to encourage the sedentarization of the nomadic elements of pastoralists and to reduce land resource use conflicts between herders and crop cultivators. The initial set of colonial grazing reserves conversed woodlands

Unfortunately, the existing grazing reserves (GR) and routes have been marginalized and neglected by the emerging states that drive their power from the land use Act of 1978 coupled with the adaptation of the Federal System of government.

In analyzing the argument Lare *et al* stated that:

16 International Crisis Group, Herders against Farmers: Nigeria's Expanding Deadly Conflict. Africa Report No. 252. September 2017

17 International Crisis Group, Herders against Farmers: Nigeria's Expanding Deadly Conflict. Africa Report No. 252. September 2017

18 Mohammed-Baba T.A, and Tukur, M.B "The State of Grazing Reserves and their Rural Potential Capacity to absorb Pastoralist" In Kuna, J.M, and Ibrahim, J (edited) Rural Banditry and Conflicts in Northern Nigeria (Centre for Democracy and Development, 2015)

First, the herders need pasture for their cattle and since they are Nigerians, they are constitutionally allowed to reside and carry out their activities in any part of this Agreement. Second, they contend that environmental change manifested particularly through desertification has led to no drastic decline in pasture supply in the northern region... They, therefore, attribute conflict to forced migration to the south as herders are compelled by environmental and demographic forces to seek alternative sources of pasture.¹⁹

Answering the first argument, of course, Section 41 (1) of the 1999 constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (as amended) states that "every citizen of Nigeria is entitled to move freely throughout Nigeria and to reside in any part thereof, and no citizen of Nigeria shall be expelled from Nigeria or refused entry thereto or exit therefrom. Of course, no citizens under normal circumstances should be denied the right of movement. However, the promulgation of Anti-Open- Grazing laws by some states requires a constitutional interpretation of a competent court of jurisdiction to ascertain the legality of implementing such laws.

Another view of the Grazing Reserve Bill (GRB) proponents was succinctly captured by Lare *et al* :

'Lawmakers in support of the grazing reserve bill also highlight the frequent loss of herds as both a cause and often a consequence of farmer-herder conflicts. As a strategy for preventing such recurrent conflicts, the sponsors of the Bill suggest that the Federal Government designates grazing routes and reserves across the 36 states of the federation regardless of the cultural and agro-cultural characteristics of the localities. By implication, they seek rights for Fulani herdsmen to have access to take possession of lands found suitable in any part of thereof within Nigeria including those situated in non-Fulani communities for cattle grazing".²⁰

It is important to note that, the proponents of GR for the herders are nursing the opinion that pastoralists are marginalized in all ramifications of governance. Thus the argument hinges on the need for governments to help de-marginalize them. Pavanello comprehensively argues that:

"Pastoralists are the most politically marginalized group in the Horn of Africa and East Africa. There is an increasing acceptance that the major issues in pastoral development are related to policy and governance: issues such as conflicts and insecurity, livestock marketing, land rights, inadequate provision of services and infrastructure, drought, and

19 Lare, A., Ola, A and Temitope, E.A, "Climate Change, Pastoral Migration, Resource Governance, and Security...

20 Lare, A., Ola, A and Temitope, E.A, "Climate Change, Pastoral Migration, Resource Governance, and Security...p15

dependence on food aid... on the other hand, the political marginalization of pastoralists' communities is the result of long-standing governance failures, non-responsive and unaccountable institutions, and politic fans and policymakers lacking the will and incentives to include pastoralist's interest in national policy debate. However, pastoralists cannot often organize themselves and sustain the collective action required to exert political leverage in policy circles. Furthermore, the members of the pastoralist civil society groups who should represent the needs and interests of pastoralists and support their rights and voice in modern governance institutions have in some cases become detached from pastoral lives and systems. An increasingly common phenomenon in the Horn of Africa (HoA) is the emergence of "pastoral elites"; while they can be a force for good as those pastoralist representatives have gained formal education and have easier access to decision-making circles, at the same time as they have lived in urban centers for several years, some of them have become progressively alienated from pastoral settings and "may not have the interests of pastoralists at heart".²¹

Even though the Nigerian pastoralists have an organized body known as Miyetty Allah Cattle Breeders Association of Nigeria (MACBAN) and the Cattle Breeders Association of Nigeria (CHBAN), they have not been able to lobby in the whole interest of the pastoralists due to the intricacies surrounding politics of pastoralism and their host communities in Nigeria. Some constitutional issues are yet to be sorted out, such as the indigene/settlers dichotomy, freedom of movement, and land use Acts among others. It is also significant to note that, since pastoralists are predominantly Muslims and their host communities in the greener pasture areas of the North-central are predominantly Christians, issues relating to farmers/herders more often than not take a religious dimension. In the light of this, Okeke opines that;

The gradual southward expansion of the Hausa-Fulani is responsible for ongoing ethnoreligious conflicts in the central states of Nigeria, but to a greater extent in the Plateau, Nasarawa, and Benue states. In Plateau state, the conflicts between herders and farmers are coextensive with the conflicts over indigeneship in the state, especially between the predominantly Muslim, Hausa and Fulani, on the one hand, and the predominantly Christian Berom (also spelled Birom) in the area around the state capital, Jos. The latter claim ownership of the land; the former insist that they are also indigenous.²²

21 Pavanello, S, Pastoralists: Vulnerability in the Horn of Africa: Exploding Political Marginalization, Donors Policies, and Cross-Border Issues (London: Humanitarian Policy Group, 2009)

22 Okeke, V.O.S "Community Policing, Vigilante Security Apparatus and Security Challenges in Nigeria...p17

In most cases, a misunderstanding involving the Hausa of Jos North and the indigenous Berom turns bloody with destroyed properties. Such fears, anxiety, and worries get expanded to the extent of affecting the relationship between the indigenes of Plateau and the pastoralists in general. It is the position of this paper that, fear of the unknown by farming communities coupled with the violent nature of some herdsmen exacerbate anxiety and insecurity among the two contending parties in Nigeria.

In an attempt by the government of Nigeria to find a lasting solution to the protracted rift between sedentary farmers and migratory herders, the Minister of Agriculture, Chief Audu Ogbeh proposed a Cattle Colony policy. Chief Audu Ogbeh, explained "The reason we are designing the colony is that we want to prepare on a large scale, on an economy of scale, a place where many owners of cattle can coexist, be fed well because we can make their feeds; they can get good water to drink, cows drink a lot of water. We can give them green fodder".²³

However, following controversies generated by the policy twist, the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, Chief Audu Ogbeh, explained that the establishment of cattle colonies is a measure to quickly curb the incessant bloody clashes between farmers and herdsmen. The minister noted that the policy would not transfer communal land ownership to herdsmen wherever it was established, noting that there was no truth in speculations that the government was conspiring to grant supremacy over communal land to herdsmen. Cattle colonies are not using herdsmen to colonize any state. It will be done in partnership with state governments that would like to volunteer land for it. The Federal Government will fund the project, and those wishing to benefit from it will pay some fees. Although ranching is more of an individual venture for herdsmen and those wishing to invest in the livestock sector, cattle colonies are a larger project where up to 40 ranchers can share the same facility that will be provided by the government at a reduced rate.²⁴

Similarly, it is worth recalling that between 2015 and 2017 the National Grazing Reserve Bill was re-sponsored by Senator Rabi'u Musa Kwankwaso (PDP Kano Central) and tabled before the National Assembly for approval. Had the Bill been enacted, it would have empowered the Federal Government "to amass lands in the 36 states of the Federation including Abuja for the settlement of the herdsmen and grazing their cattle."²⁵

The two proposals were reviewed with a lot of dissonance from Nigeria, and the opposing voices were captured by Lare *et al.* thus:

From an opposing point of view, civil society groups and indigenous groups have been the most vocal in rejecting the

23 Obaze, O.H, "Political Economy of Cattle Colony in Nigeria" A Public Lecture Presented at Nnamdi Azikiwe University, June 2018

24 "Federal Government Proposed Cattle Colonies". Blueprint Newspaper Editorial, January 16th, 2018

25 Obaze, O.H, "Political Economy of Cattle Colony in Nigeria..."

proposals. This position has been hinged on several arguments, one is that the proposals would deprive indigenous peoples of lands that otherwise would have been used suitable for the local agricultural practices and livelihood systems. Second, critics argue that such a redistribution of land would deprive the natives of farmlands and render families landless since such lands were traditionally transferred as an inheritance from one generation to another. Others contend that the acquisition of land for grazing across the nation was a part of its effort to advance the expansionist agenda of the Fulani who are historically associated with Islamic Jihad. It is likely that once entrenched on reserves, the Fulani would seek to acquire more, and contrary to the express purpose of the proposals; more conflicts will result between herders and natives over land. It is also argued that southern Nigeria has less land than the northern region and its available land faces greater population pressure due to its higher population density compared to the north.²⁶

Similarly, Okeke maintains that the main reason for opposing these proposals is that they would deprive other people of their lands which they would like to use for other purposes, lands they would like their children to inherit. He further argues that it is conceded that desertification has crept into the northern fringes of Nigeria, but the extent has not been so substantial as to significantly disrupt farming and cattle production. There is still enough arable land in the states where the Fulanis are indigenes to rear all the cattle in the country.²⁷ The situation is not yet as grave as in Niger to Chad, which, despite having more severe problems of drought and desertification, still exports cattle from Nigeria. After all, if you force a Fulani man not to move with his cattle, you are inviting trouble.²⁸ This is likely to be true because if the government does not directly participate in the value chain of the cattle business, the sedentary rearing of cattle may be confronted with challenges in controlling the nature and character of Fulani herders who have been pasturing for more than two or three decades. After all, Okeke contends that Fulani migration and pastoralism towards central and southern Nigeria is to cut costs: to minimize transport costs by taking their cattle closer to cattle markets.²⁹

In 1965, the northern regional government of Nigeria initiated one of the first attempts to respond to the crisis of pastoralism that was linked to emerging conflicts between farmers and herders in the country. The ***Northern Region Grazing Reserves Law of 1965*** created corridors for the passage of migrating livestock and 415 grazing reserves throughout the country. These reserves were envisioned to suction off large stretches of land that would be exclusively

26 Lare, A., Ola, A and Temitope, E.A, "Climate Change, Pastoral Migration, Resource Governance, and Security...p16

27 Okeke, V.O.S "Community Policing, Vigilante Security Apparatus and Security Challenges in Nigeria...p18

28 Obaze, O.H, "Political Economy of Cattle Colony in Nigeria...p 17

29 Okeke, V.O.S "Community Policing, Vigilante Security Apparatus and Security Challenges in Nigeria...p18

used by herders to graze their livestock. Although initially considered a legislative solution, population growth, urbanization, and migration encroached on these designated areas, reducing herder access and usage of the reserves. In addition, herders were often unable to find sufficient pasture and water within the confines of the reserves due to climate change and poor maintenance culture. Keeping livestock in one place increases the vulnerability of animals to diseases and banditry, which incentivized herders to keep their herds moving outside the boundaries of the reserves.³⁰

In 2016, the National Assembly attempted to pass legislation to address conflicts between farmers and herders through the controversial 2016 **National Grazing Reserve (Establishment) Bill**, which ultimately was not passed. This is largely because the **Land Use Act of 1978** vests all powers related to the regulation of ownership, alienation, acquisition, administration, and management of Nigerian land with the state Governors. This attempt and others by the National Assembly to legislate on GR violated the **Land Use Act of 1978** and was perceived as an attempt to usurp the powers of the governors.³¹

Part of the colonial policy to address the challenges facing pastoralism was the establishment of grazing reserves. The policy was adopted and continued by the post-colonial governments of Nigeria, and to date, it remains the most important policy of the Nigerian government geared towards the development of traditional livestock production. The overall objective of the grazing reserves here is to settle pastoralists to reduce conflicts, provide access to improved fodder and social facilities, and improve animal health and husbandry practices... The Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (FMA & RD) lists 415 grazing reserves, but the number will grow if the reserves in Enugu, Oyo, and Ogun are listed and gazette by their respective states' houses of Assembly. However, currently, Nigeria has a total of 417 grazing reserves in the country, of which only 113 have been gazette.³²

Despite the inherited organized grazing reserve structures which encompass supporting facilities such as feeder roads, earth dams, boreholes, veterinary clinics, health centers, bush fire protection, milk marketing facilities, etc. Naturally, it became a huge challenge to the mobility and production of livestock in Nigeria. Such neglect could be associated with what Leo opined thus:

With the creation of states in 1966, most of the states in Northern Nigeria abdicated their responsibility to developing the agricultural sector. The end of the civil war brought a new low in the neglect of the sector, especially livestock development. The oil boom era made state governments depend more on the Federal Government for

30 Kwaja, A.M.C, and Ademola- Adelehin, B.I, Seeking Security and Stability: An Analysis of Security Responses to Farmer –Herders Conflicts in Middle Belt Region of Nigeria, A search for common ground.

31 Kwaja, A.M.C, and Ademola- Adelehin, B.I, Seeking Security and Stability: An Analysis of Security...p.23

32 Mohammed-Baba T.A, and Tukur, M.B “The State of Grazing Reserves and their Rural Potential Capacity to absorb...p40

revenue than on developing and harnessing their internal products.³³

Another livestock Transformation plan was introduced by the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development in an attempt to improve livestock production, encourage the sedentarization of pastoralists and curtail the incessant clashes between nomadic pastoralists and sedentary farmers; it is the introduction of the Rural Grazing Area (RUGA). According to Ibrahim, each state would have eight settlements that would have the provision of one hectare of grazing land per cow carved out of grazing reserves, veterinary services to improve the breed and production of the herd, boreholes, schools, and cattle markets. It was a demonstration program that would lead to the sedentarization of a few hundred thousand cows over ten years, while we currently have 20 million cows engaged in open grazing in the country.³⁴ These statistics affirm the argument of Dori thus:

The statistics of livestock in this country are close to 20 million, with so little comparative economic output. And all that is due to the parental trekking they undertake over long distances to find water and fodder without the complimentary facilities such as veterinary clinics, etc. Apparently, over time our cattle have evolved to be slow to multiply and also have very low milk yield. Nigerian cows are said to produce an average of 1 liter of milk compared to Keya's and South Africa's 10 to 18 liters per cow per day. To worsen matters, our cattle population has a higher rate of disease incidences.³⁵

For the sake of emphasis, the presidency made a pronouncement through the Senior Special Assistant to the President on media and publicity. Thus:

The Federal Government (FG) policy to establish RUGA settlement will contain ranches, grass or feed farms, abattoirs, dairy, meat, and skin/leader processing plants, housing, religious houses, schools, veterinary clinic, hospitals, water supplies, and a complete range of infrastructure required to support and sustain an ultra modern pastoralism... FG is planning the RUGA settlement to curb the open grazing of animals that continue to pose security threats to farmers and herders.³⁶

33 Leo, N.Y, "Technical Assessment of Nigerian Livestock Resource Management: Past, Present and Future Perspectives" A Paper Presented at the International Conference on Security and Development: Challenges of Pastoralists in West and Central Africa. Kaduna, 22nd to 24th June 2014

34 Ibrahim, J. "The Crisis of Pastoralism and Negative Stereotyping: From Cattle Colonies to RUGA". Daily Trust, 12th July 2019

35 Dori, G., "The RUGA Settlements Quandary" Daily Trust 9th July 2019

36 "Federal Government Proposed Cattle Colonies". Blueprint Newspaper Editorial, January 16th, 2018

Despite the comprehensiveness of the RUGA cattle scheme, the planned action of the government generated heated, unhealthy, and unfounded conspiracy theories using orthodox and social media (print and electronic) as a conduit through which the perceived propaganda and grievances of the actors are broadcast and published; it took the form of sectionalism, profiling, hate speech and stereotype along with the following categorization;

1. Private Business **versus** Government Business
2. We **versus** Them
3. 'Alien' minorities' **versus** Indigene majority
4. South **versus** North
5. Predominant Muslim pastoralists **versus** Predominant Christian farmers;
6. Minority ethnic group **versus** Minority ethnic group
7. More land in the North **versus** limited land in the South

The emergent narratives on the RUGA cattle plan, both in the media and in popular discourse, are becoming agents of conflict in Nigeria and generating uproar. Many critics and interested individuals and interest groups see the RUGA settlement proposal by the Federal Government as a land grab policy, while some actors still see the proposal as government prioritizing over evolving into private business. These gave rise to reactions from Ooni Ife, Oba Adeyeye Ogumwusi and Nobel Laureate Prof. Wole Soyinka cited to have said to have called on Nigerians across stable demarcations to defend the sanctity of their ancestral lands against the usage of RUGA cattle settlement.³⁷ The reactions were not surprising because given the cosmology of Africa; the land is intertwined with human existence.

The major centre of controversy of the RUGA cattle settlement lies in the issue of land and Federal Government involvement in "private business". Some public commentators view the policy as harmless, but the approach, publicity, and marketing or salesmanship are grotesquely misappropriated. The counter argument against those who felt that Fulani pastoralists are enjoying the patronage of Government on a private business has the following responses. According to Jega :

The government has been investing in all manner of private companies since the creation of Nigeria; why should it stop now, simply because it is the turn of pastoralists to get some investment? It is not only fertilizer that farmers chop from the public treasury. Since the 1960s, the government has been investing heavily in tractor hiring schemes, pesticides, irrigation pumps, farm implements, and a lot of money spent on agricultural extension. This is not to mention the dams, irrigation canals, water sprinklers, and whole River Basin Development Authorities (RBDAs) that the government built, with borrowed foreign money, all for the benefit of farming, which is a private business... the government set up a whole bank for farmers. It was once called Nigerian

³⁷Punch, Monday 8 July 2019

Agriculture Bank, renamed Nigeria Agriculture Cooperative Bank (NACB) then NACRDB, and right now it is called the Bank of Agriculture (BOA)... on top of that, the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) rushed in with Anchor Borrowers Program for rice farmers. This program is already having trouble recovering the loans from farmers since many of them thought it was a dash. ... Last decade, at the prodding of Obasanjo's government, CBN threw in N200 billion to revive textile industries, even though all of them are privately owned. Years before that, in the late 1980s, the Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida (IBB) regime spent billions of naira on the Accelerated Wheat production program. A lot of water, fertilizer, pesticides, and irrigation pumps were channeled to private farmers under the scheme.³⁸

These contrivances generated a lot of issues along regional lines, which threaten peace and coexistence of the nation at a point to support the government RUGA proposal despite the sudden withdrawal of the scheme by the presidency, Allgba captured the reactions of pressure groups across the regions of Nigeria;

The Coalition of Northern Groups (CNG) gave the Federal Government a 30-day ultimatum to go ahead with the scheme. It also gave an ultimatum of the same number of days for all southerners living in the North to leave their argument, which was that the Fulani are today singled out for lands and the right thoroughfare in the South and are being hunted, expelled, or slaughtered while southerners are comfortably hosted in northern cities and towns.³⁹

Allgba further observes that:

While we warn all state governors who oppose the implementation of the RUGA initiative to desist and give peace a chance, we place President Buhari and the Federal Government on notice that they must act to stop and completely stop this raging madness within 30 days starting today, Wednesday, July 3, 2019. He continues: for the avoidance of doubt, we advise the Federal authorities and the southern leaders to heed the 30-day notice failing which we would be left with no option but to consider resorting to our decisive line of action.⁴⁰

38Jega, M. Daily Trust, 12th July 2010 also source for RUGA, Daily Trust, Monday 2019.

39Allgba, A., Omanchi, M.E, and Gbakighir T.T "The Open Grazing Prohibition and Ranches Establishment Law, Benue State 2017 and RUGA Settlement Policy of the Federal Government Constitutional Implication" Benue State University Journal, 2019/2020

40Allgba, A., Omanchi, M.E, and Gbakighir T.T "The Open Grazing Prohibition and Ranches Establishment Law, Benue State 2017 and RUGA Settlement Policy of the Federal Government Constitutional Implication" Benue State University Journal, 2019/2020

The coalition of Yoruba Youth from southwest Nigeria in conjunction with the south-south youth forum equally responded to the threat announced by the Northern coalition similarly. To deepen the level of hostilities across Nigeria concerning the RUGA includes the reading of Amatu (2019) thus;

For the avoidance of doubt, RUGA represents a mischievous political weaponization of both cattle and Fulani, who maintain a historic monopoly of cattle rearing. Therefore, whatever its conceptual good intentions, the so-called RUGA, resettlement scheme was wrong in conception, suspect in intention, retrogressive in vision, and dangerous in time... A situation such as the GURA settlements which were designed to provide for settlers such amenities like housing, schools, and places of worship, water, and electricity which are not readily available to citizens in their host communities is not only discriminatory but also unfair to other citizens.⁴¹

The challenges confronting the implementation of the RUGA cattle scheme are enormous; ranging from the issue that the plan of action was not well thought out and ill-conceived given the nomenclature and timing. Largely, the marketing or salesmanship of the proposal was not done with the best of intention given the voluntary and the insecurity surrounding or associated with farmers and herders across the nation. Another challenge cannot be that government has no role to play in private business, or there is no land for the pilot scheme across the length and breadth of the nation, the issue is the target group! The negative perception of pastoralists as aliens, settlers, pejorative, and belligerent, and seems to be favored by the federal government is something the policymakers would have contained or overcome with the peculiarities of each state and local government before the proposed plan of action. Aside from that, the nomenclature seems to have overheated and undermine the general acceptability of the policy. RUGA coincidentally means with a "Hausa" word RUGA which means Fulani cattle settlement. These and many others characterized the proposed government cattle scheme. Adibe (as cited in Bello) reaffirmed this thought;

The point is not about the right of the Fulani herdsmen to live in any part of this country. Of course, their citizenship rights empower them to do so. It is about the government using state funds to build settlements for herdsmen throughout the country in an atmosphere where the suspicion of 'Fulanization' of Nigeria has become endemic in the south. Even if the scheme was conceived with the best of intention, its timing was extremely poor.⁴²

On this note, scholars, policy analysts, and many other intellectuals were of the view that the whole nomenclature should have been 'National Farmers and Herders Transformation Plans' (NFHTP), as opposed to 'National Livestock

41Allgba, A., Omanchi, M.E, and Gbakighir T.T "The Open Grazing Prohibition and Ranches Establishment Law, Benue State 2017 and RUGA Settlement Policy of the Federal Government Constitutional Implication" Benue State University Journal, 2019/2020
42Bello, K. Who is a Nigerian Citizen? Being the 15th Inaugural Lectures Delivered...

Transformation Plans'. The former seems more inclusive, comprehensive, and harmless to sedentary farmers (Host communities) and their apologists given the sensitivity, volatility, and hostility between pastoral herders and their host communities.

Government Proposed Policies

Cattle Colonies

"We have to deal with an urgent problem of cattle rearing and the conflicts between farmers and herders, and stop it... Let us do our duty by eliminating the conflict by creating cattle colonies. 'Chief Audu Ogbah (Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development). Nigerians reacted bitterly to the proposed policy asking what exactly 'Cattle Colony' is. The conceptual definition of "Cattle Colonies" in Nigeria comes from the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, Chief Audu Ogbah, who postulated that; "Colonies and ranches are the same things in many ways except that a colony is larger than a ranch... A colony is larger than a ranch. A colony of 20 to 30 ranchers can share the same colony, a ranch is usually owned by an individual or company with few numbers of cattle in a cattle colony you could find 100, 200, and 300 cattle owned by different individuals.⁴³

It was not surprising that this policy was received with sarcasm from Nigerians as the word "colony" has a frightening connotation for Africans who were colonized by Europeans in 1895. According to Obaze, the use of the term 'cattle colony' is doubly contentious and at the heart of the current fierce resistance... the wrong choice of words could lead to consequences as devastating as war... it is the federal government through a general incompetent policy or mechanism that has created this problem of Fulani herders.⁴⁴

RUGA

The federal government on the precise that, the federal government can acquire land for national interest proposed the establishment of RUGA settlement for the pastoralists. The proposal to a very large extent generated heated debates and acrimony across ethnic, religious, and regional divides. Many commentators view the proposal as a deliberate attempt by the Federal government to confiscate ancestral lands of the natives in favour of Fulani pastoralists.

Not long ago, the proposal policy suffered defeat from all angles as the court of competent jurisdiction found that '...since land in every state is controlled and managed by the government or local governments in the state, according to the Land Use Act of 1978, which authorized the states executives to issue statutory right of occupancy and customary right of occupancy, it means that any time the

43Obaze, O.H, "Political Economy of Cattle Colony in Nigeria...p 15

44Obaze, O.H, "Political Economy of Cattle Colony in Nigeria...p.13

federal government needs land in a state, it would have to go through either the government or local government'.⁴⁵

Role of the State Governors towards the Conflict

Open grazing Prohibition and Ranches Establishment Law on Farmers-Herder Relation in the Middle Belt of Nigeria. It is imperative to point out that, the Benue State government has initiated a variety of responses to the menace of violent conflict between farmers and herders in North-Central Nigeria including the law passed by the Benue State government in May 2017, which is referred to as "The pen Grazing Prohibition of Ranches Establishment Law on Farmers-Herders Relation. The law was established to serve as a guiding instrument to prevent incessant clashes between herders and farmers by confining the movement of cattle within ranching. It is also important to note that, since the implementation of the law, there has been a significant improvement in the general peace and tranquility relationship between the farmers and herders conflict in Benue State.

Another direction of the state government in managing the farmers-herders conflict was the establishment of the *Amotekun* regional security unit in the South-West region of Nigeria. Operation Amotekun (Leopard) was approved on 9th January 2020 by the six-state governors of the South-Western States of Nigeria, namely; Lagos, Oyo, Ogun, Ondo, Osun, and Ekiti State.⁴⁶ They further argued that the governor, *Amotekun* a name derived from the Yoruba word to mean leopard. This was given to serve as reinforcement to the Nigerian Police Force in curtailing and managing farmers and herder's conflict and other related conflicts within the regions.⁴⁷

The argument for State and Community Policing

It is a known fact that the NPF is overwhelmed and characterized by inadequate manpower, inadequate funding, poor crime, and operational information management, poor remunerations and poor condition of service, poor resource management, inadequate logistics, poor residential accommodation, and indiscipline among others. These are the challenges confronting the efficacy of NPF today and fueling the need to have State Police supplement the gross inefficiency of the Security Development.

The strongest idea in favor of the creation of a State Police hinges on the Principle of federalism which Nigeria is practicing. As a Federal state, it is

45 For more on this, see Maina Williams Apikins "The Federal Government of Nigeria's Rural Grazing Area (RUGA) Policy: The Demystification of the Elite's Theory?" International Journal of Advanced Studies in Economics and Public Sector Management, Vol.8, Number 1, February 2020. P 232-233

46 Olubade, O.M and Ogunnoiki, A.O, Regional Security Initiative and the Security Challenges in Nigeria: The Case of Operation Amotekun. Retrieved on 19th December: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/348437962>.

47 Regional Security Initiative and the Security Challenges in Nigeria: The Case of Operation Amotekun. Retrieved on 19th December: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/348437962>.

constitutionally clear that the power of the Federal Republic of Nigeria is shared between the central government called the Federal Government and the regional units called the 36 states of the federation. There is another constitutional backup to that effect. "The 1999 constitution (as amended), section 2(2) states that;

'Nigeria shall be a Federation consisting of states and a Federal Capital Territory.'

More so, the executive powers of the federation are by Section 5(11) (a) (b) and (2) (a) and (b), thus subject to the provision of this constitution, the executive power of the federation –

- (a) Shall be vested in the President and May, subject as aforesaid and to the provisions of any law made by the National Assembly, be exercised by him either directly or through the vice-president and Ministers of the Government of the Federation or officers in the public. Service of the Federation; and
- (b) Shall extend to the execution and maintenance of this constitution, all laws made by the National Assembly, and all matters for which the National Assembly has, for the time being, power to make laws.
- (2) Subject to the provisions of this constitution, the executive powers of a state;
 - (a) Shall be vested in the Governor of that state and may, subject as aforesaid and to the provisions of any law made by a House of Assembly, be exercised by him either directly or through the Deputy Governor and commissioners of the Government of that state or officer in the public service of the state; and
 - (b) Shall extend to the execution and maintenance of this constitution, all laws made by the House of Assembly of the State, and to all matters for which the House of Assembly has for the time being the power to make laws. It is pertinent to emphasize that in as much as the exercise of these executive powers on both sides extends to the execution and maintenance of the constitution and all laws made by either the National or State Assemblies, as may be appropriate, the constitution is crystal clear that such power vested in the president should have a corresponding authority on the governors of the states.

In a similar view, one of the advocates of state police is the former Governor of Lagos State, Babatunde Fashola. He argued that "every state that has the power and can give judgments through its state high courts and magistrate and make laws through its state assemblies and legislators must have the concomitant powers to enforce its law and police its state.⁴⁸ Thus, federalism is not complete without the existence of state police. For instance, the American federal system has the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), and state police establishments and parks have their police outfits. A critical analysis of the constitutional provisions mentioned in this point reveals that each of the states constituting Nigeria is meant to be a complete government on its own with powers to make laws, enforce them, and punish offenders through the

⁴⁸Aleyomi, M.B. "Is State Police a Panacea to Security threat in Nigeria?" Afro Asian Journal of Social Sciences Vol. 4, No. 42 quarters II.2013.

judicial arm. However, under the Nigerian legal system, the only institution saddled with the responsibility of enforcing the law is the Nigerian Police Force, a federal agency.⁴⁹

Even local governments should be allowed to have local police, but what needs to be done is to review our criminal laws to differentiate between state crimes and federal crimes, so that each level of community police, state police, and federal police should have their jurisdiction... I believe the large percentage of security issues begins with the community, if you make communities secure, you are less likely to have crime at state and federal levels. I think in a federal system, we must disaggregate some functions to state because most security challenges are local issues and they are best addressed locally

The fact that section 215(4) empowers the governors to give lawful directives to the state Commissioner of Police which CP complies with or causes them to be complied with, has not in any way enhanced the authority of the Governor, because the CP can request the matter to be referred to the president of the Minister of Police Affairs/Interior irrespective of the urgency. In any case, the CP has the legal issue of lawfulness to play around with, if there is a similar motive. It may not be preposterous or stretching the imagination too far, but rather, stating the obvious that a CP or Assistant Inspector General of Police (AIG) of a zone can intentionally refuse to carry out the instruction from the Governor because he is not answerable to him as Section 214(1) without equivocation makes the management and control of the existing police organization in Nigeria an exclusive preserve of the Federal Government, hence the inclusion of the police and other security services establishment law in the Executive Legislative List, as could be seen in item 45, part 1 to the second schedule of the 1999 constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.⁵⁰ Proponents of state police view such provision as outright trespass of the state government's sovereignty. Many state governors since the inception of the fourth Republic have had a reason(s) to query the functionality of such provisions in the constitution accusing the breakdown of law and others leading to violent conflicts, especially between crop farmers and pastoralists across the nation basically on the inability of the police to speedily tackle the conflict situation on time on the guise that orders had to be sought from higher authorities before swinging to action, instead, the Governor who is the Chief Security Officer (CSO)S of the state to mobilized forces with the CP to ensure that there is no breakdown of law and order in their states. Thus, the debate has been that the NPF is not in any way under the control of the Governor. Memories are fresh of how the Fulani herdsmen massacred innocent and defenseless citizens in Logo and Gume communities in Benue state. It took a long bureaucratic channel before the Police and the Military subsequently came to the rescue of the farming communities. The Governor of Benue State, Mr. Samuel Ortom largely blamed the situation on his lack of control over the police outfits in his state.

49Aleyomi, M.B. "Is State Police a Panacea to Security threat in Nigeria?" Afro Asian Journal of Social Sciences Vol. 4, No. 42 quarters II.2013.

50Egunjobi, A.A. "The Nigerian Federal Practice and the Call for State Police"International Journal of Advanced Academic Research. Vol. 2 Issue 7. 2016www.ijaar.org

Central to the inability of the Nigerian Police to efficiently perform their statutory duties of maintaining law and order and securing the lives and property of Nigerians, the problem could be said to revolve around the over-centralization of the police force in Nigeria. This has to do with the situation where a police officer, who may be from the north, is posted to the eastern part of Nigeria where he/she does not have ground knowledge of the geography, culture, or economics of the place; he does not understand the language nor does he appreciate the culture. These are some of the impending factors making centralized policing extremely difficult in Nigeria. Another similar argument in support of state police is that Nigeria is too large and heterogeneous for its security matters to be over-centralized. In a country that is characterized by unnecessary bureaucracies, the police often waste time on simple matters like the deployment of troops to tackle social uprising. Similar action was done in respect of the 41 maim civilians in Zamfara state on 17th February 2018 which took the president three (3) days to write in security response to arrest the activities of the bandits.

Reacting to this situation, former chairman of the Nigerian Governors' Forum (NGF), Hon. Chibuike Rotimi Amaechi, reading a communiqué issued at the end of their meeting on June 25, 2012, called for the amendment of the 1999 constitution to include the provision for the creation of state police. Specifically, the Governors sought the amendment of section 214 of the constitution that would prohibit state commissioners of police from taking orders from the IGP and instead, receive instructions from the state governors.

Conclusion and Policy Recommendations

From the foregoing discussions, it is apparent that farmer-herder clashes have taken different dimensions capable of tearing the unity and progress of Nigeria as a political entity. This is evident from the various reactions from various quarters to government policies and programmes meant to manage farmer-herder clashes in Nigeria. It is imperative to note that most if not all policies regarding farmer-herder conflict management were developed with little or no grassroots consultation, and these poor consultative approaches gave birth to negative reactions and subsequent policy summersault. Needless to say, the worsening prevalence of farmer-herder clashes across the country is a testament to its centralized policy and decision-making process by the federal government without the imputes of the federating units who are the host/custodians of the pastoralists and the farmers. To this end, to avoid further subsequent policy summersault and continuous violent conflicts between the two land users; the following policy recommendations are prescribed.

1. Government should adopt a bottom-top approach to policing and decision-making against the centralized method of policy formulation and implementation plans that more often than not suffer backlashes and setbacks from the recipient communities.
2. Government should invest more in local peace-building initiatives/structures that are capable of building trust, confidence, and resilience among the pastoralists and their host communities.

3. Government policies and programmes should as much reflect the current realities of the 21st century. This implies that a modern system of animal husbandry in form of ranching is stocked with modern state-of-the-art facilities such as hospitals, artificial insemination units, water points, markets, and adequate security among others. This approach would help cattle genetic improvement to boost meat, and milk production.
4. Government should endeavor to treat and handle issues surrounding religion, ethics, and heritage/inheritance with the sensitivity required. This can be buttressed by the fact that many viewed the majority of the pastoralists are Muslims while most of the farming communities are predominantly Christians, hence the widespread sentiments across the divides.
5. Traditional rulers, religious leaders, relevant Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), opinion leaders, and leaders of thought should be co-opted in the policy and decision-making process and implementation. This would help to capture the peculiarities of various communities of interest groups in the matter and would ensure the acceptability and sustainability of the policy.