

Article

Creation of Cattle Ranches, Grazing Route and Reserves as Solutions to Herders-Farmers Conflict in Northern Nigeria

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Abstract: In order to address the violent disputes between herders and farmers in Northern Nigeria, this article looked at the establishment of ranches, cattle routes, and grazing reserves. It also looked at how conflict is a social reality that exists in all human social systems, whether they are in cities or rural areas. It observes that disagreements are a common cause of conflict, particularly between the two opposing factions, the "herders," who are primarily Fulani and Muslim migrants seeking better pasture for their livestock, and the crop farmers, who are primarily from agrarian backgrounds. For data gathering, the paper used secondary sources such as books, journals, articles, newspapers and other internet sources. The study discovered that there are a number of reasons why farmers and herdsmen in Northern Nigeria clash. Climate change badly executed government policies, illiteracy, a lack of a solid Alternative Dispute Resolution Mechanism (ADRM), anger and hostility brought on by the loss of life and property, and so forth are a few of these. The report suggested that pasture areas, livestock routes, and ranches be established in order to settle the disputes. The report also suggested that in order to stop the threat, the Federal Government of Nigeria should set up a practical ADRM and make sure that policies are implemented effectively. Additionally, it recommended a broad education campaign to inform the opposing sides of the risks their ceaseless fighting poses to Nigeria's progress as a developing nation.

Keywords: Conflict; farmers; herders; ranches; grazing; reserve

Introduction

In every human community, whether it be in a city or a rural one, conflict is both prevalent and unavoidable. The depletion and scarcity of natural resources are inextricably linked to the trajectory of conflict in all human social contexts. These factors frequently give rise to violent conflicts worldwide, which serves no useful purpose (Adenkunle and Adisa, 2010; Moore, 2005). Thus, time out of mind is frequently blamed for the conflicts between farmers and herders. Mayhem (2018) claims that the long-standing rivalry between the two farming communities has intensified in violence. Nonetheless, there has long been conflict between farmers and herders, and as a result of climate change, tensions between the two groups are growing. Ismail (1994) claims that the Fulani Herdsmen are herders who live nomadic lives, primarily raising livestock. Their ancestry may be traced back to the Futa Jalon Mountains of West Africa.

Resource-based conflicts, however, are typically more volatile and intense when the opposing groups or resource users are members of different ethnic nationalities with disparate religious beliefs and sociocultural values, as is the case in Nigeria with crop farmers and cattle herders, and vice versa. This may help to explain

why there are fewer herder-farmer disputes in the Centre of Northern Nigeria than in other regions of the country, particularly North-Central and Southern Nigeria. Water scarcity, desertification, climate change, long-standing frustration and aggression, porous national borders, the ongoing conflict between Nigerian farmers and herders is caused by a number of factors, including intrusion on grazing reserves and routes, nomadic lifestyle, lack of knowledge about grazing laws and routes, crop damage from cattle, politicisation, misinformation in the media and fake news, rural banditry and cattle rustling, insecurity in the Sahel, spread of small arms, retaliation, insufficient government responses, phobia, and hate speech. (Blench and Dendo, 2003; Fasona and Omojola, 2005; Adenkunle and Adisa, 2010; International Crisis Group, 2017; Umoh, 2017; and Chukwuemeka, Aloysius and Enah, 2018).

The desired peace required for the sustainable socioeconomic growth of rural and national economies would remain elusive and a mirage, according to academics, as long as the government(s) and important players do not address or eliminate the core causes of the conflict between farmers and herders (Okeke, 2014; International Crisis Group, 2017). A number of solutions to lessen or end the crisis have been put forth by academics, religious institutions, ethnic communities, public figures, political parties, and the global community as a consequence of the federal, state, and indigenous governments being acknowledged as significant players in the peace process. The ranching and anti-open grazing bills were the two suggestions that were made. The federal government of President Muhammadu Buhari has shown a preference for ranching, but several state governments in the middle belt and south have given the no-open grazing laws major importance.

According to the federal government, ranching could restrict the movement of cattle, encourage sedentary settlements by herders, enhance cultural integration, and generate a market where farmers could sell cattle feed and herders could sell cattle manure. It could also attract businesses that provide support services for livestock, such as veterinary hospitals, research centers, abattoirs, leather, and dairy factories. On the other hand, the state's anti-open grazing bill is based on the need to protect the lives, crops, and properties of native farmers as well as prevent the Fulani tribes' alleged herding-related Islamization of Nigeria's Middle Belt and South-Eastern States. Since then, both the Federal Government of Nigeria and the impacted states have started enforcing the no-open grazing rule and ranching, if approved by any state government. Confusion, mistrust, anxiety, and fear have all seemed to have increased in the country because of this apparent lack of a consensual answer. Objective of this article is to discuss on the establishment of ranches, cattle routes, and grazing reserves. Besides that, this article also attempts to discuss conflict is a social reality that exists in all human social systems, whether they are in cities or rural areas.

Literature Review

1. Reasons for the Conflicts Between Farmers and Herdsmen in Northern Nigeria

Numerous academics have pinpointed numerous elements that contribute to disputes between Nigerian farmers and herders. For example, Musa (2014) cited variables such as the host communities' theft of cattle, the devastation of farms and farmlands, and the influence of traditional rulers. Land-related disputes, particularly on grazing pastures, are the main causes of conflicts between herdsman and farmers, according to Abbas (2009). These conflicts account for the majority of the conflicts. According to Okello's (2014) research, the country's declining natural resources and land availability have played a major role in the escalation of confrontations between farmers and herdsman in recent years. According to Alexander and Ugwu (2019), citing Ingawa et al. (1999), the following factors are the main causes of violence between herders and farmers in Northern Nigeria: (a) shifting rights to access resources, whereby arable farmers' individual tenureship is obstructing their traditional rights to communal water resources and grazing; (b) the quantity of livestock feed resources available has significantly decreased, especially in the Northern States, due to inadequate grazing resources and/or poor management of grazing reserves (c) Decline in social cohesiveness and internal discipline as a result of the traditional rulers' power and the grazing periods' observance being broken. Additionally, it was discovered that grazing resources, such as grass and water, are distributed throughout the year in different locations, necessitating the cattle herders' ongoing mobility in order to take advantage of

resource opportunities. They interact with landed settled farmers as a result, which leads to rivalry and disputes (Alexander and Ugwu, 2019).

To Hoffman et al (2008) however, herdsman farmers conflicts is mostly caused by poor government policy and programmes. Conflict arises, for example, when the size of the current reserve decreases as a result of encroachment and government-approved farming development. Water locations and stock corridors end up becoming farmlands as a result. Bello (2013) cited in Alexander and Ugwu (2019) submitted that

destruction of crops by cattle and other property such as reservoirs, irrigational facilities and infrastructure by the herdsman; burning of range lands, fadama and blockage of stock routes and water points; increasing rate of cattle theft which is often accompanied by violence; antagonistic perception and beliefs among farmers and herdsman as well as age long frustration and aggression could compound conflict situation between the warring groups, especially due to failing institutions and fierce competition for resources.

Pourton (2016) contended that one of the main causes of conflict between farmers and herders is still neglect of the relationship between the groups. In a similar vein, Otouku and Isife (2009); Ofem and Inyang (2014) noted that carelessness included failing to provide more room for grazing, disregarding traditional authority, failing to pay taxes on local products, and destroying farmland. However, Mayaha et al. (2016) discovered that in the majority of Nigerian communities, conflicts between farmers and herders are caused by large-scale raids and attacks against the host community.

2. Consequences of Farmer/Herders Conflict

It is worthy to note that disputes in Nigeria between farmers and herders have disrupted and threatened the peaceful co-existence of different ethnic groups and have also halt socio-economic development in Nigeria (Sani, Musa, Bamidele, Ali, Muhammad, Raji, Abubakar, 2021). Albert (2010) identified some socio-economic consequences of herders Fulani conflict as:

Loss of Lives and Property

During clashes between herders and farmers many lives and properties were lost, the consequences of which led to reprisal attacks between the two conflicting groups. These attacks subjected many into sustaining injuries of various degrees; reduce some women into widow status; and the reduction of labour force in the affected area.

Displacement of Communities

This is another major consequence of conflict. When conflict occur, many people within the conflict area flee to other communities to seek asylum and survival. Such displacement has become liability to another communities as the Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) would have to seek shelter from them. This situation has often reduced people into vicious cycle expose people in such community.

Poverty, Hunger, and Disease

Conflict exposes people into untold hardship and severe socio-economic conditions such as poverty, hunger, disease and exposed to abuse such as female child abuse (rape) and so on. For a male child, he could be exposed into joining criminal gangs as a result of poverty and hunger just to get a means of livelihood and survival.

Security Challenges

Frequent conflict between herders and farmers has forced many communities to establish local security forces (vigilante) to seek protection against external and unexpected attack by the opposition groups (Albert, 2010). Also, it has forced the government to appropriate huge sum of money to buy arms and ammunition to check the situation. This is due to spontaneous increase of attacks within the conflict communities.

v. low agricultural production

A lot of farmers lost their farmlands as a result of conflict. This spelt reduce yield which translated into low production and income. This has negatively affected and discourage farmers to produce food for urban dwellers which in turn affect food supply in urban markets.

3. Theoretical Consideration

There will always be conflict in any human social structure. Conflict is a social phenomena that occurs throughout species, eras, and civilizations, according to De Dreu and Gelfand (2008). It is a dispute or argument that occasionally breaks out between or among individuals and ethnic-racial groupings. Conflict is therefore inevitable but controllable. In a similar spirit, Brauch and Scheffran (2012) defined conflict as an exchange of competing goals and methods between two or more actors (individuals, societal groups, states, or groupings of states) over limited and sought-after material and immaterial assets. Comparably, conflict was defined by Adetoye and Omilusi (2015) as a type of competition and battle for tangible and intangible items that people and organisations value. "Adversarial social policy, involving two or more actors with the expression of differences often amid intense hostilities," is how conflict manifests as a behavioural outcome (Jeong, 2010:3). In this context, conflict refers to the right or wrong action of one party that triggers the right or wrong response of another party as a way of expressing discontent, disagreement, or rejection, which often escalates into violence.

In line with Rahim (2010), conflict can be defined as an interaction process that manifests as discord, incompatibility, or disagreement inside or between social activities. Conflict can be understood as a process that starts when one person or group perceives opposition and disagreements with another person or group on resources, beliefs, values, or practices that they find intriguing, according to De Dreu, Harinck, and Van Vianen (1999). According to Nicholson (1992), conflict arises when aware beings—individuals and groups—wish to carry out actions that are mutually contradictory with respect to their needs, goals, or commitments. Gillin and Gillin (1949) made it clear that conflict may be a natural human process in which people or organisations pursue their goals by openly confronting the opposition with violence or the threat of violence. As per the findings of this study, conflict emerges when two or more entities (people, groups, communities, or countries) mishandle their disagreement on differences in their individual, social, cultural, political, and economic goals, ambitions, or wishes. Conflict can also result from cultural factors like conflicting values and non-secular faith, social problems like poverty and income inequality, economic factors like competition for limited resources and high percentages, and psychological factors like envy and mistrust. The reasons behind conflict have been explained by a number of hypotheses (Lumumba-Kasongo, 2017). First, the state-centric state, also known as the classical theory of conflict, holds that it is a state's duty to uphold and defend its autonomy and sovereignty, which frequently leads to conflicts, particularly with internal secessionists or external aggressors. In multiethnic communities, conflict can also occur when a single or limited number of ethnic groups hold the majority of governmental posts and authority. But according to Waltz (1979), power division among different ethnic groups can prevent war. Because foreign Fulani herders are encroaching on farmlands owned by other ethnic groups in North-Central and Southern Nigeria, and because the government is clearly unable to stop them, ethnic nationalities in Nigeria are forced to defend themselves. This has resulted in a situation where people's lives and property are in danger. Both sides' invasion (aggressive or offensive) and defensive stance are to blame for the continuous war between sedentary farmers and Fulani herders throughout most of Nigeria and beyond.

Second, the classical liberal theory of conflict holds that nations that have institutionalised capitalism—in which private individuals own the means of production—and liberal democracy—in which political authority is acquired through elections and popular vote—experience durable peace as opposed to conflict if the opposite were true. Consequently, efforts to impede involvement in the political process may result in hostilities between the oppressor (the government) and the oppressed (the people). Marx's social conflict theory holds that the proletariat and capitalists engage in a category struggle as a result of capitalism's excesses and constraints, which include wage labour, capital accumulation, competition, externalities, and unequal opportunities. The affluent and richer capitalists, and consequently the poor and poorer workers, are the two social classes that are typically created when capitalists take advantage of workers through unfair

compensation and unfavourable working conditions. Conversely, it is common for employees to band together, stage protests, and call for improved working conditions and pay increases. On the other hand, the feminist theory of conflict asserts that in the majority of global societies, gender inequality has given men greater power than women. It asserts that women in societies are said to have the same rights and benefits as males overall, but in reality, women's rights and benefits are frequently restricted, leading to problems in the job, in marriages, at home, and in politics. The discussion around post-colonialism theory centres on how colonialism entails the dominance, oppression, and enslavement of a weaker group by a stronger one. On the other hand, decolonization—the process of disobedience, resistance, treaties, protests, and military combat against colonial authorities—usually comes before post-colonialism, or political independence. According to Lumumba-Kasongo (2017), there is an ongoing confrontation between colonialism—a system of oppression—and independence—a system of freedom.

Methodology

The data for this work was gathered via secondary sources, such as books, journals, articles, essays, desk research techniques at libraries, and internet sources. Authors did not restrict the secondary sources on type of publications because the authors want to get the data widely enough. Content analysis was used to source and examine these materials. "Any technique for creating inferences by methodically and objectively identifying specified characteristics of messages" is what content analysis is defined as (Holsti, 1968:601). It's widely used to describe the characteristics of communication (Frankfort-Nachmias and Nachmias, 2009). The information was acquired in order to address the topic of this study. A thematic analysis was used to analyze the data descriptively. The researcher developed several themes based on the objectives of this article. Example of the key findings are conflict among farmers-herders were established a long time ago and it affects the social life of these group of peoples. More details on finding are discussed in more detail in the findings and discussion section that follows.

The Findings and Discussions

The "dialogue and conflict resolution" approaches at the local level are the most strongly advised solution for resolving the herders-farmers dispute. In particular, seventeen (17) respondents, or 60.7%, suggested using this strategy. Conflict is unavoidable in all human settings, but as the incidents of herder-farmer confrontations in Nigeria demonstrate, conflict can be prevented from escalating from individual to group to communal and beyond levels by properly detecting and managing it early on. In the past, violent disputes between farmers and herders have resulted in the destruction of both tangible and intangible farming assets, such as mutual trust and business relationships, as well as the depletion of human capital, the most valuable business and economic asset. Tangible farming assets include crops, cattle, and produce stores. The accumulation and preservation of company assets for profitable and commercial activities, along with its numerous benefits—such as job creation, revenue production, profit maximisation, apprenticeship training, and poverty alleviation—are undermined by this trend. Retaliation, disorder, bloodshed, and anarchy on the land are actually the alternatives to the well-established customary way to conflict settlement between herders and farmers, and these outcomes are inimical to a favourable economic environment. According to Okeke (2014), disputes between Nigerian farmers and herders can only be settled when the consequences of not doing so become too great to overlook; at that point, the conflict becomes a threat to the peace, stability, and unity of the country.

This indicates that the majority of rural farmers and herders lack formal education and are unaware of the laws, policies, and programmes of the government that are designed to prevent peaceful coexistence. A mean herder is illiterate and has neither an Islamic nor a western education, therefore this is frequently the one aspect that opponents of the ranching system and those who spread Fulani phobia must consider when making their analysis, predictions, and judgements. According to Aliyu's (2015) estimate, 75% of livestock herders were not formally educated. The question now is, given their lack of ability to attempt so, how can the illiterate pastoralists spread Islam over North-Central and Southern Nigeria? In addition, the Fulani herders find it challenging to find time for the spread of Islam due to the strain and rigours of their work grazing livestock.

One wonders if Fulani pastoralists are also involved in the swift expansion of Islam in Europe and, by extension, the USA.

1. Ranching

The states that make up Nigeria's agricultural economies would see quick advancement along the livestock farming industry's value chain if investors and the federal government provide the necessary backing for ranching policy to be implemented successfully. First, ranches can be constructed by investors, who can then rent them to herders to produce steady income. Second, crop growers would have more productive farming with a bountiful harvest as a result of the cessation of crop damage caused by humans, which can raise yearly revenue from the sale of farm products. Third, the leftovers of the harvest would not be regarded as a free gift from nature for the cattle of the herders to graze freely. Ranch farming's permanent nature increases consumer demand for crop leftovers, or animal feeds, which gives the farmers even more substantial supplemental revenue. Fourth, cattle dung can accumulate and be gathered thanks to ranching, which makes it possible to use it as an excellent source of organic manure that raises crop yields and soil quality. To take advantage of the barter option, producers can really exchange cattle waste for fodder.

Ranching or cattle colonies may attract basic physical and socioeconomic infrastructure, such as tarred roads, water systems, veterinary hospitals, health centres, abattoirs, schools, research institutes, dairy and skin markets, among other things, to benefit members of the sedentary cattle migrants and indigenous farmers' settlements. Sixth, Section 15(3c) of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (1999 as amended) Constitution states that "the state shall encourage inter-marriage among persons from different places of origin, or of various religious, ethnic, or linguistic association or ties." This could serve to foster national unity and cultural integration with the indigenous communities. Additionally, Fulani tribes may control the majority of the state's ranches. Seventh, there is a strong chance that ranches would grow to become the centre of a tourism attraction. This would offer several benefits, including employment prospects for labourers, a booming hotel sector, food alternatives, and transportation services. Eighth, it could also stifle the spread of diseases from people to cattle, particularly when nomadism, open grazing, and cross-country travel are involved. Ninth, ranching could cut down on the amount of time spent herding, freeing up labour hours for the majority of herders to acquire the literacy and vocational skills they need for their jobs. According to research by Afuoku and Isife (2010), seventy percent of Fulani herders in the Niger Delta were not educated in the west. The agricultural herders may use these extra hours of work to produce crops, which would allow them to see firsthand the hardships, hazards, and sacrifices associated with manual or labor-intensive crop farming. Tenth, ranching and business loss frequently improve protection against cattle rustling.

2. Grazing Reserves

Similar to ranching, which confines cattle to fenced areas while obtaining feed from outside sources, grazing reserves can be characterised as gazetted green spaces set aside for the production and rearing of animals. In Nigeria, it was initially created in 1965 after the "Grazing Reserve Law of Northern Nigeria" was passed. Following that, it was incorporated into the nation's second, third, and fourth National Development Plans, which covered the years 1970–1985, as stated by Babalobi (2016). That so, the number of cattle rose to almost 19.5 million in 2016 (Premium Times, 2016) entails setting up the newest grazing reserves in the event that cattle movement must be restricted in order to reduce or completely eradicate ongoing violent conflicts and fatalities. The commercial ramifications of more grazing reserves are nearly identical to those covered under ranching previously. The proactive steps taken in business information collecting, proper police training, appropriate equipment, and employee motivation in the safety staff. Reactive measures encompass the timely response of law enforcement and cooperating security services to distress calls received from pastoralists or cultivators, the apprehension of suspected assailants, and the proper prosecution of these attackers. By In the end, if the ranches are eventually accepted by everyone and diverse, cow grazing paths may also be less emphasised. In the meantime, maintaining the existing grazing routes and constructing new ones will not only provide unrestricted traffic flow on the highways but also lower the frequency of accidents and other dangerous incidents.

3. Other Solutions

Other controversial but significant recommendations found in the sampled research include encouraging herders to settle in sedentary ways (10.7%) and amending the right to land use acts (10.7%). Additionally, all nine of the following recommendations—a legislation prohibiting open grazing, regulated farming and grazing, cattle census and tracking, border security, mitigation of drought and desertification, grazing guard creation, provision of a water reservoir, complete opposition to herders' land use, and inclusion of herders and farmers in policymaking—have an equal frequency count of two, or approximately 7.4%. Greater livestock and crop production will significantly improve the farming business environment and investors' confidence as a result of the state's proactive approach to security threats, border security, tracker registration for cattle, and grazing guard creation. The recommendations made by this panel, which have a one percent weight, include raising cattle, stock reserves, fodder banks, and fair media reports.

Conclusion

Owing to glaring differences in religion, ethnicity, and politics, the Federal and State Governments' attempts to resolve the herders-farmers dispute on a long-term basis have barely received recognition. This investigation examined the suggestions of previous studies the researchers had conducted in an attempt to ascertain the objectively based solution to the seemingly unsolvable conundrum. Based on the aforementioned results, the study comes to the conclusion that the use of conflict resolution techniques, widespread orientation and teaching, and confining cattle rearing to ranches and grazing areas are still practical ways to address the persistent issues associated with violent conflicts between herders and farmers. Additionally, this article suggests that in order to restore normalcy in any crises involving farming and herding, both official methods—the police and courts—and informal methods—traditional leaders—of resolving disputes between farmers and herders should be investigated. Farmers and herders need to be widely oriented and educated on the current no-open grazing laws in some states, grazing routes, and grazing reserves. This will discourage trespassing by either party, which usually starts a conflict, and encourage compliance with the law. To address the long-term worry of land usurpation, ranches should be established and leased to herders as a symbol of non-ownership of land. In addition, rather than dismissing the ranches completely without conducting any kind of testing, the Federal Government of Nigeria should pilot them in a few of the impacted states so that we can assess their true potential. Lastly, the report supported Nwobi's (2018) assertion that "the best of solutions for solving farmers herders conflict in Northern Nigeria are the creation of ranches and grazing reserves."

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