

HERDERS-FARMERS CRISES IN THE NORTH CENTRAL NIGERIA: RESOURCES SCARCITY AND UNREGULATED CATTLE MOVEMENT

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ABSTRACT

Quintessential for understanding Nigeria's prime malady, insecurity, is yet presumed to be a generalized misperception among pollsters and intelligentsia in the Society. The sustained pattern of insecurity, rampaging Northern Nigeria, vastly heading towards the south in content and context, has defiled purported proclivities for ending it. We can see this in the extension of herder-farmer crises in Nigeria. It's a known fact that herders and farmers, hitherto, have always lived and co-existed together, occupying an essential part of the Nigerian National Economy *i.e.* the Agricultural Sector. What remains a puzzle is an unexplained, stumbling co-existence, fueling the crises in the region, with heightened conflict of interest resulting from competition for the scarce resources and the legal deprivation of herdsmen's traditional nomadic cattle circulation. In understanding the incessant clashes between farmers and herders, this study scrutinizes the precursor of herder-farmer crises in North-Central Nigeria, the current reality of the inherent challenges the region face and empirically examines the unexplained two problematic factors, *i.e.* resource scarcity and unregulated cattle circulation in the region, despoiling peaceful co-existence for National Integration and development. Adopting a cross-sectional research design and using a structured questionnaire, the study surveyed 400 respondents from three (3) randomly selected states from the region. Data analyzed reveals, amongst others, that the quest for grazing land by herders to rear their cattle is responsible for the growing frustration-aggression crises among farmer/herders in North Central Nigeria and in minimizing these crises, particularly during the dry season, the herders now look towards the southern region of Nigeria for green fields to rear their cattle thereby, facilitating speedy southern encroachment. Policy recommendations were provided.

Keywords: Herders-Farmers, Scarcity, Insecurity, Conflict, Cattle Movement.

INTRODUCTION

The herdsmen-farmers crises in Nigeria's recent history had become a powerful discursive tool in the National Integration issue and one that has attracted

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both national and international audience (Gbade, 2018). There are probably very few other issues that have aroused more national concern regarding the relationship between ethnic groups in Nigeria than the issue of herdsmen-farmers crises. More so, in a democratic dispensation where state policies are determined by collective efforts, the impact of herdsmen-farmers crises on national security further poses a significant threat to the continuity of the nation's democracy and even history (Fayose, 2018; Ediri, 2018, Emmanuel, 2017). Herdsmen and farmers belong to the same sector of the national economy. That is, they are both involved in agricultural production. In essence, they are both farmers. However, for the sake of this study, the two groups are named as such for ease of identification. The roles of farmers and herdsmen are collectively significant for the growth of any nation's economy, particularly in the third world countries like Nigeria, where sedentary cattle rearing and domestication still form a huge part of the nation's developmental provision through taxation and other different economic duties (Dong, 2016, Wen, Zhu, Lassoie, Yan, Shrestha, Pariya, Sharma, 2009, Daud, 2018, Clifford, & Chukwumezie, 2018, Dele, 2018).

In Nigeria, the perennial crises and insurgency such as the farmer-herdsmen crises have been partly blamed on the scarcity of herder's resource to care for their herds and the movement of herdsmen and their herds – because this movement is completely free and without any meaningful restriction, thereby destroying farmer's crops without impunity and causing public disorder (Chimaobi, 2018, Dapo, 2018, Dennis, 2018, Enogholase, 2018). Unlike the developing countries, the government of the developed countries provides ranching regulations, regarding where herds are kept – thus restricting the movement of herdsmen to a confined area of grazing, in order to avoid the destruction of farmer's crops, public properties and them constituting public nuisance (Adisa, 2012, Azimazi, 2017, Adeniran, 2018).

Nigeria has experienced a considerable increase in natural resource crises over the years. Herdsmen-farmers co-exist in relative peace since the independence. Such relative peace has taken a new dimension of fomenting crises and hatred plunging into killings, destructions of personal and national asset, causing the problem of disintegration (Ikokuwu, 2017, Bukola, 2018, Chimaobi, 2018, Dirisu, 2018). Scarcity of resources may have resulted in the unmanageable social tension between herdsmen and farmers that translates into the high level of killing and destruction of properties worth millions of naira (Jide, 2018, Johnbosco, 2018, Kingsley & Joseph, 2018). The problem of desertification occasioned by climate change in Savannah belt may account for the exodus of the scarcity of resource where herdsmen have no option than to migrate with their cattle from the Northern part to the Southern part of Nigeria where there are enough water, grasses and land for grazing their cattle, thus causing an unregulated cattle movement to the south and destroying the crops of farmers which remain without their livelihood (Nwokoro & Olaoluwa, 2017, McGregor, 2017, Lekan, 2018, Nwafor, 2018). This

social pattern of relations create war-like tension plunging into crises where farmers resist herders encroachment and herders feel deprived of their economic rights of grazing in any part of the Nigeria.

Past and present killings resulting from this crises have mostly occurred in wetland areas of the Middle Belt, the North Central States of Nigeria and particularly in Adamawa, Benue, Nasarawa, Plateau and Taraba; the herdsman-farmer crises has however recently spread to nearly all parts of Nigeria such as Bayelsa, Delta, Rivers, Edo, Enugu, Ekiti, and Lagos states amongst others, with a phenomenon challenging Nigerian national security (Onifade, 2013, Okoli, 2017, Odoma, 2018, Olusola, 2018). Herdsmen-farmer crises have resulted in disunity among Nigeria and exposed every Nigerian, especially the vulnerable groups such as women and children, to killings without impunity, while the killers were not prosecuted even when brought before the law (Adisa, 2012, Rose, 2018, Onyadongha, 2018). The socio-economic and cultural tension created by these killings and its implications on Nigeria are unimaginable, with deep wounds left in the mind and heart of the people, many children deprived of education, and with food insecurity due to high prices – and also loss of jobs by some parents (Otite & Albert, 1990, Omawumi, 2016, Ogbe, 2018). It is against this backdrop that this study attempts to examine the effect of resource scarcity and unregulated cattle movement on the herder-farmers crises in the North Central region of Nigeria. Addressing this objective, this study formulated a hypothesis that the scarcity of resource and the unregulated cattle movement are partly contributing factors that sustain the herders-farmers crises in the North Central Region of Nigeria.

Since 2015, when the current administration took over the leadership of Nigeria, there has been a growing manifestation of these herders-farmer crises in the nation (Onyia, 2018, Rose, 2018, Junaid, 2018). The Fulani herdsmen, who are the centre of attraction, fomenting these crises, may have likely seen the enthronement of this current leadership as the wake of a new dawn for them to own their possession. Substantiating this claim, there have been endless killings in the North-central states of Adamawa, Benue, Kaduna, Nasarawa, Plateau, Taraba and Zamfara among others, by Fulani Herdsmen to acquire more grazing land without impunity (Johnbosco, 2018, Jide, 2018, Gbade, 2018, Fayose, 2018). Defiling all potent efforts to curtail the crises, this challenge has remained one for the 21st century's national and international scholars to debate how lasting peace can be achieved – hence this study that seeks to provide a modest contribution to the existing security literature and in addition to available policy options on the issues of the challenges of herder-farmer crises in Nigeria and the global pattern of social tension. Though herdsmen-farmers crises have occurred in so many states in Nigeria since 2012–2020, the study was restricted to the North-Central States, which includes Benue, Nasarawa, and Plateau; these are the locis of this study and the crises and may be seen as becoming uncontrollable in this part of Nigeria.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study is anchored in the Relative Deprivation theory and Frustration-Aggression theory. The two theories are examined in this study as follows; however, Frustration-Aggression theory is chosen as most suitable or applicable in this work, due to its relationship with the study.

RELATIVE DEPRIVATION THEORY

Based on the works of Runciman (1966), Stack and Braithwaite (1980), Relative Deprivation Theory explains what occurs when a person or group is denied an object or condition that he or she believed he / she deserves. Relative deprivation transcends mere envy, because the person does not just covet the item or the experience, but believes he or she should have what he / she desires by all means. The wanted item could be a consumer product, a degree of wealth or the ability to engage in certain experiences, such as a lavish vacation. Relative deprivation is the lack of resources to sustain the diet, lifestyle, activities and amenities that an individual or group are accustomed to or that are widely encouraged or approved in the society to which they belong. It is a term used in social science to describe feelings or measures of economic, political or social deprivation that are relative rather than absolute. The concept of relative deprivation has an important consequence on both behaviour and attitudes.

FRUSTRATION-AGGRESSION THEORY

Frustration-Aggression theory is based on the works of psychologists Dollard (1939) and further developed by Miller (1941) and Berkowitz (1969). Frustration clarifies the feeling of tension that occurs when the efforts of someone to reach a goal are blocked or truncated. When this happens, it produces feelings of anger and aggressive behaviour. According to this theory, aggression is the result of blocking or frustrating a person's efforts to attain a goal. All aggression, state these scholars, is a result of the feeling of being frustrated – which they defined as any event or stimulus that prevents an individual from attaining some goal. These theories have been used to explain why crises and violent behaviour have existed over time in society. The herdsmen perceived that they are being deprived and prevented from achieving the goal of cattle grazing, which informed the likelihood of their frustration turning to aggression.

Frustration-Aggression theory has been applied in different contexts and has been found virtually useful and relevant in some areas in the academic field. The Frustration-Aggression theory meets the condition under investigation and we

consider it relevant to this study. The relevance of this theory is hinged on the fact that both farmers and herdersmen feel frustrated in the strained contractual relationship permeating tension. The herders, when prevented in the course of leading their cattle for grazing, become frustrated and aggressive because they felt they are being deprived of their economic benefit of grazing their cattle for survival.

METHODS AND MATERIALS

This study adopted a Cross-Sectional research design which relied on survey research method using both primary and secondary sources of data. It is a study in which the researchers seek to understand by establishing the facts concerning the past and current events and their impact on the present situation like the herdersmen and farmer's crises in Nigeria. The population of this study comprises of all adults between the ages of 20–69 years from the three selected states of the North Central Geo-Political Zone of Nigeria. These are: Benue State, having a population of 1,730,768 in 2006, with a projected growth rate of 3.2% annually, estimated at 875,828 making a total of 2,606,596 in 2019. Nasarawa had a population of 779,613 in 2006, with a projected population growth rate of 3.2% annually, estimated at 394,505 making a total of 1,174,118 in 2019. While the population of Plateau in 2006 was 1,369,934 with a projected population growth rate of 3.2% annually, estimated at 693,202 making a total of 2,063,136 in 2019 (National Population Commission, 2006). The total adults' population size of the three states estimated 5,843,850. This figure is made up of both male and female comprising the herdersmen, farmers, traditional rulers, community leaders and civil servants within the above age range living in urban and rural areas. The sample size of the respondents selected for this study was drawn from the study population namely: Benue State 178, Nasarawa State 80 and Plateau State 142, making a total of four hundred (400). The respondents were selected from the total population of each state using Yamane (1967) formula to determine the sample size. Data for the study was collected from the primary source, using the questionnaire method supported by some other field data obtained through key informant interviews and observation. However, the researcher also selected local personalities in the chosen research area of Benue, Nasarawa and Plateau States. These include herdersmen, traditional rulers, community leaders, civil servants and farmers especially those who were victims and survivors of herdersmen attacks. Qualitative data were collected from publications, journal articles and periodicals (newspapers and magazines) of various years till 2019. Herdersmen and Farmers crises and National Integration Questionnaire (HFCNIQ) developed by the researcher was used for the study. For accuracy and to avoid an unnecessary threat to reliability, items in the instrument were subjected to Cronbach Alpha Reliability test using 40 respondents, representing 10 % of the sample size surveyed from residents in Abuja (location

within North Central Nigeria). The reliability α value of 0.89 was obtained after the test which implies that the items raised were reliable and suitable for the study. Data collected via questionnaires were analyzed with both descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics such as tables, simple percentages (%), mean (\bar{X}) and standard deviation were used in the interpretation of data. The required mean of 3.00 was used to affirmed and disaffirmed respondents response when they are above and below the mean respectively. The hypotheses formulated for this study were tested using Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) statistical technique, under the 95% confidence level. This whole statistical process was conducted using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 22.

RESULTS AND FINDINGS

A total of 400 questionnaires were administered to respondents of selected residence from Benue, Nassarawa, Plateau and other States who have witnessed the crises. Out of the 400 questionnaires administered to respondents, only 392 questionnaires were returned completely and accurately filled while the other 8 questionnaires, though returned, were not accurately filled. It was based on the 392 questionnaires that the researcher compiled the data and discussed the findings of the research.

Table 1

Socio-demographic characteristics

		Total	
		N	%
Age	20–29 years	108	27.6
	30–39 years	148	37.8
	40–49 years	93	23.7
	50–59 years	34	8.7
	60–69 years	9	2.3
Gender	Male	167	42.6
	Female	225	57.4
Marital Status	Single	108	27.6
	Married	253	64.5
	Others	31	7.9
Religious Affiliation	Christianity	138	35.2
	Islam	247	63.0
	ATR	7	1.8
Educational Attainment	No formal education	96	24.6
	Primary	215	54.8
	Secondary	44	11.2

	Tertiary	37	9.4
	Student	87	22.2
	Artisan	73	18.6
Occupation	Farming / Cattle Rearing	201	51.3
	Public / Private Sector	20	5.1
	Others	11	2.8
	Benue	172	43.9
	Nassarawa	78	19.9
	Plateau	138	35.2
	Others	4	1.0
	Benue	154	39.4
	Nassarawa	97	24.7
	Plateau	102	26.0
	Others	39	9.9
	Less than 20 years	172	43.9
	21–40 years	65	16.6
	41–60 years	58	14.8
	More than 60 years	97	24.7
	Total	392	100.0

Source: Field work, 2020

Table 1 shows the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents based on the age, gender, marital status, religion, educational qualification, occupation, state and residence of origin and finally, the length of time they have lived in their current location. Respondent distribution age shows that majority of them were younger than 40. Specifically, 108 of them, representing 27.6% of the respondents were between the ages of 20–29 years, 148 representing 37.8% of them were 30–39 years, and 93 representing 23.7% of them were 40–49 years. Others were older than 50, such as 8.7% of them in 50–59 years and 2.3% of them in 60–69 years. The choice of these age bracket was informed by their activeness in dealing with and responding to conflict-related issues.

On gender differentiation, respondents were mainly female, accounting for 57.4% as against male who accounted for 42.6%. Marital Status of the respondents shows that 64.5% of them are married, while 27.6% were still single. Other gender variation accounted for 7.9%. The differentiation in religious affiliation shows that 63% of the respondents were Muslims, 35.2% were Christians, while 1.8% were worshippers of African Traditions. Education was used to explain the level of awareness of respondents on the current crises in the North-Central part of Nigeria. The survey shows that 215 persons, accounting for 54.8% of the respondents have attained primary education, 44 persons, accounting for 11.2% of them have attained secondary education, while only 37 persons, accounting for 9.4% have attained tertiary education. 96 persons representing 24.6% of them had no formal education. This does not mean that they were not knowledgeable in ongoing crises in the region. Occupational distribution reveals that 51.3% of them were farmers /

herders and 18.6% of them artisans. Student population accounted for 22.2%, while those working in the public / private sector were just 5.1%. Other occupation not classified above accounted for 2.8%.

The state of origin and state of residence of the respondents were also surveyed. Benue, Nassarawa and Plateau states were included in this study. Respondents surveyed claim they are from Bunue (43.9%), Nassarawa (19.9%) and Plateau (35.2%). Only 1% claimed they are from other states in Nigeria. On the current state of residence, majority of the respondents were from Benue State (39.4%) followed by Plateau State (26%) and Nassarawa State (24.7%). Respondents living in other states accounted for 9.9%. The length of years respondents have lived in the region was also surveyed. 43.9% of the respondents claimed they have lived in their current location for less than 20 years, while 24.7% of them claimed living in their current location for over 60 years. 16.6% and 14.8% admitted to have lived in their current location for 21–40 years and 41–60 years respectively.

Table 2

Mean and standard deviation scores on scarcity of resources as a factor of herdsmen-farmers crises in the North Central Nigeria

	Mean	Standard Deviation
Herdsmen-Farmers Crises is fuelled by the quest for grazing land by the Fulani herdsmen	4.26	.71
Seasonal variation in rainfall and sunshine affects the available resource of Herdsmen to cater for their cattle	3.56	.92
The quest for cattle survival and business sustenance drive Fulani herdsmen to look south for green field	3.37	.73
Scarcity of resources is a major driver of herdsmen-farmer crisis in Nigeria	3.67	.91
The issue of scarcity of resources and its use is partly responsible for political group desire to control resources at the state level	3.38	.73
Weighed Mean	3.65	.80

Source: Fieldwork, 2020

Criterion Mean = 3,00

Table 2 shows the mean and standard deviation scores on the factor of the scarcity of resource as promoting herdsmen-farmers crises in North Central Nigeria. The survey shows that respondents believe the quest for grazing land by the Fulani herdsmen in North Central Nigeria is partly responsible for fuelling the herdsmen-farmers crises. The scarcity of grazing land is directly linked to the seasonal variation in rainfall and sunshine responsible for the cultivation of grazing crops herders use for rearing cattle in the region. The respondents agreed that cattle survival and cattle business sustenance is predicated on the herdsmen looking towards the south for green fields, leading to an intrusion into the cultivated fields in the Central Nigeria. Respondents agreed that scarcity of the resource is a major driver of the persistence herdsmen-farmer's crises in Nigeria. Going even further,

they agree that political divides have fed on this scarcity of resource, leading to an invasion onto the uncultivated territories in Nigeria like in the North Central and to controlling the state's resources. In essence, herders-farmers crises have continued to prolong its existence as a result of the growing scarcity of a resource in the region.

Table 3

Mean and standard deviation scores on unregulated cattle movement as a factor of herdsmen-farmers crises in North Central Nigeria

	Mean	Standard Deviation
Preventing Herder's cattle from grazing in restricted community lands trigger the violence crisis between herdsmen and farmers	3.52	.71
The unrestricted grazing of Fulani-herders destroying farmland and cultivated food crops is the main host of violent crisis in Nigeria	3.37	.73
The right to free movement of citizens across Nigeria is giving the herders the right to an unregulated cattle movement in Nigeria	3.37	.72
The anti-grazing law currently being implemented by states is anti-economical to cattle rearing	3.14	.55
The uncontrolled cattle movement have heightened herdsmen-farmers crises causing National Integration problems	3.17	.69
Weighed Mean	3.31	.68

Source: Fieldwork, 2020

Criterion Mean = 3.00

Table 3 shows the mean and standard deviation scores on the factor of unregulated cattle movement as promoting herdsmen-farmers crises in North Central Nigeria. The survey shows that respondents agreed to the fact that to the herders and their cattle, there no such thing like restricted community lands or areas in any part of the country. This is because of the historical antecedence that posits that the herders are never confined in one location. Preventing them from grazing in unrestricted community or areas triggers violent crises between herdsmen and farmers. Respondents also agreed that the unregulated cattle movement has caused harm to Nigerian food production and cultivation, since farmers are afraid of going to the farm and the Fulani herdsmen capitalized on that to destroy their farm produce. Economically, there is a shortage of farm produce to consumers. The unrestricted grazing is destroying farmland and cultivated crops is the main host of violent in Nigeria. Herders, claiming their right to free movement with the constitution, continue to gather momentum to graze in any part of Nigeria. The respondent agreed that the anti-grazing law currently being promoted in the country cannot stop unregulated cattle movement as the law is anti-economical to the cattle business in Nigeria (acting against the interests of cattle growers). Respondents strongly believed that these uncontrolled cattle movements have heightened herdsmen-farmers crises.

TEST OF HYPOTHESIS

This study tested the hypotheses formulated using a. the correlation coefficient, in order to measure the existing significant relationship between variables and b. the coefficient of determination, to determine the extent of the relationship between these variables. Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) was employed to measure the relationship. Below is the presentation of research analysis.

The scarcity of resource and the unregulated cattle movement are partly contributing factors sustaining the herders-farmers crises in the North Central Region of Nigeria.

Table 4

Test of Significant relationship between the scarcity of resources and unregulated cattle movement as factors of herdsman-farmers crises in North Central States of Nigeria

Variable	N	Df	r-cal	r-crit.	r ²	P-value
Scarcity of Resources	392	390	0.754	0.087	0.567	0.000
Farmer-Herdsman Crises	392					
Unregulated cattle movement	392	390	0.816	0.087	0.666	0.000
Farmer-Herdsman Crises	392					

Source: Fieldwork, 2020 Significant Level (p<0.05)

Table 4 shows the test of hypothesis on the significant relationship between the scarcity of resource and unregulated cattle movement as factors promoting herdsman-farmers crises in the North Central State of Nigeria. Using correlation coefficient, the calculated r-value of 0.754 was greater than the critical value of 0.087, with a probability value of 0.000 indicating that the test is significant. The strength of this relationship was measured using the coefficient of determination (adjusted r-squared) value = 0.567, which implies that 57% of the variance in the herdsman-farmers crises is explained by the variance in the scarcity of resources. Therefore, the Null hypothesis is rejected and the alternative hypothesis accepted. In answering the research hypothesis, the study reveals that there is a positive and strong significant relationship between the scarcity of resource and herdsman-farmers crises in the North Central State of Nigeria.

Also showing in *table 4* is a correlation coefficient of the calculated r-value of 0.816, greater than the critical value of 0.087, with a probability value of 0.0000. This indicates that the test is significant. The strength of this relationship was measured using the coefficient of determination (adjusted r-squared) value = 0.666, which implies that 67% of the variance in the herdsman-farmers crises is explained by the variance in unregulated cattle movement. The Null hypothesis is rejected and the alternative hypothesis accepted. In answering the research hypothesis, the study reveals that there is a positive and strong significant relationship between

unregulated cattle movement and herdsman-farmers crises in the North Central State of Nigeria.

Discussing the findings above, firstly, the study reveals that the scarcity of grazing land is directly linked to the seasonal variation in rainfall and sunshine responsible for the cultivation of grazing crops which herders will use for rearing cattle in the region and that therefore affect cattle business survival and sustenance. The quest for grazing land by the Fulani herdsman in North Central Nigeria is partly responsible for fuelling the herdsman-farmers crises, because the herdsman look towards the south for green fields, hence, encroachment is a fundamental strategy for survival. The study further reveals that scarcity of resources is responsible for the unguided control of resources in the north-central part of Nigeria, by the state. Successive government has capitalized on giving out territories to herdsman to get hold of some state resources. The works of Ikokwu (2017), Bukola (2018) and Chimaobi (2018) support these findings.

Secondly, the study reveals that herdsman know no such thing like “restricted community land or area” and that they have never been confined to any one location. The continuous prevention of the herdsman cattle from grazing is critical to understanding the crises in North Central Nigeria. Aside from understanding the crises, the study has also accounted that the perennial shortage of food supplies in Nigeria is a consequence of the unregulated herdsman grazing and destruction of arable farm crops in the North Central. The anti-grazing law currently being promoted in the country cannot stop unregulated cattle movement as the law is anti-economical to the cattle business in Nigeria, thereby causing the problem of national integration. Corroborating this findings are the report from Nwokoro & Olaoluwa (2017), McGregor (2017), Rose (2018), Junaid (2018), Lekan (2018) and Nwafor (2018).

Over the years, there has been a mutual co-existence between and among the Fulani herdsman (who divides task by gender, allowing the men to manage the herds by finding grazing sites, building tents and camps and providing security through knives, bows and guns, while the women were milking the cows, weaving and marketing the mats and sourcing for food) and the sedentary farmers (who practice agriculture in one place in which fields are not rotated and farm the same place continuously in contrast to shifting cultivation) (Chimaobi, 2018, Dirisu, 2018). One thing that is common among these farmers is poverty, with a limiting factor to ownership of several plots of land for shifting cultivation, thus increasing their hunger, anger, desperation and vulnerability to being killed by the herdsman.

The herdsman-farmers crises could not be regarded as conflict or clashes because some basic conditions that must be met for a prolonged conflict to be established are not met. Conflict exists when there are recognized opposing interests between parties in a zero-sum situation, a belief by both sides that the other is acting or will act against them and is justified by the actions taken, and a process that developed from their past interactions. Looking at the above, the

problem between the farmers and the herders does not satisfy the criteria or qualify to be referred to as a conflict. There is no conflict anywhere and it is because of this wrong diagnosis leading to the wrong management of it, with a poor prognosis that has made the problem intractable till today. The closer we are to correctly diagnose this problem, the closer we are to the solution. What we have between the farmers and the herders is trespass and reverse aggression – hence the Frustration-Aggression theory as a framework for the study. Trespass by the herders against the farmers and reverse aggression between the two groups. From the legal point of view, trespassing is a criminal offence divided into three phases: trespass to the person, trespass to chattels and trespass to land. As trespass to the person, we have a threat, assault, battery, injury, mayhem and false imprisonment / kidnapping. As trespass to chattels, we have goods and personal property, while as trespass to land, we have interference with possession and an unauthorized entry upon the soil of another (McGregor, 2017, Lekan, 2018, Nwafor, 2018). The farmers own the land, the sub-soil and airspace and the herders move their cattle from one place to the other. We could establish the fact that the crises between herders and farmers are a trespassing crisis, with reverse aggression as we shall see soon in the discussion of the findings. Aggression is a feeling of anger resulting in hostile or violent behaviour leading to readiness to attack. Aggression and reverse aggression between the farmers and the herders led to mutual hostility and reverse-violent attacks, sometimes with or without provocation, thus satisfying the above. In essence, without trespassing against the farmers by the herders, there won't be any reverse aggression; therefore the farmers are the victims, having suffered *ab initio* from the aggravating factor of trespassing on their lands, resulting in reverse-aggression. It is not fair on the farmers that we call it a conflict, since the farmers have not moved from where they are farming legally, rather it is the herders who came to meet them where they are and hence it is correct to refer and deal with this problem as trespassing rather than as a conflict (Dollar, 1939, Miller, 1941, Onyia, 2018, Rose, 2018, Junaid, 2018).

Traditionally, the herders grazed around the Northern regions partly due to the environmental conditions that limit the amount of land available for agriculture and therefore the herders have no competitors for land. Over time the random movement started due to recurrent droughts in the region, leading to unfavourable environmental development in the region. The climate change has reduced the Lake Chad Basin, leading to a Southern Migration of the herders to the down central and thereafter to the rain forest in search of pastures. This led to trespassing against the Farmers and a reverse-aggression between the two (Otite & Albert, 1990, Omawumi, 2016, Ogbe, 2018). The idea of using cattle colony and the RUGA settlement to resolve the unregulated cattle movement is thus illegal because it violates the land use act, transferring ownership of land officially to state and legally conferring the issuance of Certificate of Occupancy to citizens by the State Governments.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

From the above summary of findings, it is instructive, as a prognosis (solution), to posit that achieving mutual co-existence between the Fulani herdsman and the farmers in North Central Nigeria will be more of a dream than a reality. This owes to the fact that as the environment continues to change causing scarcity of resources, the random movement of herdsman not regulated due to the politicization of the cattle business and the federal government stronghold to control state resource, the crises will continue with several intended and unintended consequences both on national integration and development – such as limiting the amount of land available for agriculture, the southern migration of the herders, the social dislocation / human displacement / IDPs, loss of lives, unemployment / under development, reduced life expectancy, political instability / tribal rivalry / tribal killings / genocide / civil war / disintegration of Nigeria. This study recommends that, as part of restoring grazing land for the herdsman, effort should be made to revive deserted lands through irrigation and using modern mechanized approach towards cattle farming. Those efforts should be made by both the Government, herders and the farmers to restore the land through conscious planning of making the land productive; also, state resource control and management should be encouraged because this is the only way high-security checks can be guaranteed. The ranching system or the RUGA settlement currently being sponsored and supported by the federal government and North leaders is not in any way a solution to the herdsman and farmer crises. The Government should pass into law the Anti-grazing regulations, because cattle business, like every other animal rearing venture, is a profitable business. Its current practice in Nigeria operates at zero-cost, making returns on investment 100%.

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