



Title of paper

INCREASING FARMER-HERDER CONFLICT IN NIGERIA: AN ASSESSMENT
OF THE CLASHES BETWEEN THE FULANI HERDSMEN AND INDIGENOUS
FARMERS IN UKPABI-NIMBO COMMUNITY ENUGU STATE

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Contents

Dedication	vi
Acknowledgement	vii
Abstract	viii
Chapter 1 Introduction	1
1.0 Introduction	1
1.1 Statement of Problem	4
1.2 Aims and Objectives	6
1.3 Research Questions	7
1.4.0 Research Methodology	7
1.4.1 Study Area	7
1.4.2 Method of Data Collection	9
1.4.3 Sample Selection	10
1.4.4 Data collection procedure	10
1.5 Justification for study	13
1.6 Conclusion	13
Chapter 2 Literature Review	15
2.0 Introduction	15
2.1 Nomadic Pastoralism	15
2.2 The magnitude of Farmers-Herders Conflict in Nigeria	17
2.3 Hired Herder and Herds Owners Factor	21
2.4 Climate Change, Migration, and Population Growth	24
2.5 Existence of Gangs and Community Vigilantes	26
2.6 Conclusion	27
Chapter 3 Nigeria History, Past Government Policy Response to Conflict, and the Land Tenure Act and Land Act.	28
3.0 Introduction	28
3.1 Brief History of Nigeria	28
3.1.1 The Pre-Colonial Period	29
3.2 Colonial Unification of Nigeria	30
3.3 Land Tenure / Land Act in Nigeria	31

3.4 Policies in Relations to Farmer-Herder Conflict	35
3.4.1 Grazing Area/ Cattle Routes	35
3.4.2 Ineffective Role of The State	35
3.5 Security Agencies	37
3.5.1 Federal Legislature	38
3.6 Conclusion	39
Chapter 4 Structural and Processual Variables to Escalation of Conflict in Ukpabi-Nimbo Community in Enugu State.	40
4.0 Introduction	40
4.1 Evidence of Existing Farmers-Herders Relationship	41
4.1.1 Historical Peaceful Coexistence Due to Constant Migration	41
4.1.2 Changes in Relationship Between Farmers and Herders	44
4.2 Causes of the Farmers-Herders conflict in Ukpabi-Nimbo Community.	46
4.2.1 Climate Change	46
4.2.2 Struggle Over Land	49
4.2.3 Hired Herders and Management of Cattle	50
4.2.4 Cattle Rustling and Criminal Impostors as Fulani Herdsmen	52
4.5 Conclusion	56
Chapter 5 Government Role in Addressing the Farmers-Herders Conflict in Ukpabi-Nimbo	58
5.0 Introduction.	58
5.1 Government Response	58
5.1.1. Inefficiency of Police and Government Peace Committee	58
5.1.2 Community Vigilante	60
5.1.3 Deployment of the Police to the community	61
5.1.4 Federal Government Deployment of Troops	62
Chapter 6 Discussion, Conclusion and Recommendation	65
6.0 Introduction	65
6.1 Discussion	65
6.2 Conclusion	68
6.3 Recommendation	70
6.4 References	72
Appendix	82

Dedication

This research work is dedicated to God Almighty who in His infinite mercies gave me the grace and provided for me to complete this research work despite all the constraint. Also, I dedicate this dissertation to the victims of farmers-herders conflict in Ukpabi-Nimbo community in Enugu state, Nigeria and the participants who gave me the audience and was very cooperative that brought about the success of this research.

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Abstract

Over the years, the manifestation of climate change has led to a wide spread vulnerability in the world, and Nigeria is not an exception. The sustainability of agriculture and pastoral production in Nigeria is been threaten by various factors leading to struggle over available resources. Thus, leading to increasing farmers-herder's conflict in Nigeria. This study focuses on the underlining factors that are responsible for the increasing farmer-herder's conflict in Ukpabi-Nimbo community, Enugu state as a case study. In a bid to investigate the structural and processual variables, in understanding the conflict. It also examines the relationships that has existed over time due to the change in the mode of interaction, and the role of government in response to the conflict. Using a qualitative research approach, the study engaged 20 participants from the farmers community and neighbouring community using interview guides, Participant observation and Focus Group Discussion (FGDs). Data acquired was analysed by describing the situations. The Findings reveal that fingers cannot be pointed to one factor causing the increase in the conflict between the farmers and the herders. The various factors responsible for the escalation of the conflict are soil-erosion caused by change in climate, destruction of farmlands caused by cattle grazing done by the Fulani herdsmen. Moreso, cattle rustling, and cattle theft done by gangs and groups called "Malaysian Boys" who are also raping and using the situation in the community to terrorize the people. It was also found that the government responses to the conflict is slow, and security forces are deployed to the community after an attack has been carried out by the said Fulani herdsmen even though there was an earlier warning prior to the attack that took place in 2016. The study concludes that the investigation into the increasing farmers-herder's in Ukpabi-Nimbo community is far beyond what the eyes can see, looking at the various factors involve for the escalations and the unclarity as to who is behind the sequences of events.

Keywords: Conflict, Farmers, Pastoralism, Climate change, Migration, population

Chapter 1 Introduction

1.0 Introduction

The occurrence of different types of conflicts (political, religion, environmental, ethnic, resource, etc.) is not an alien phenomenon to Nigeria and the West Africa region at large (Blench 2010; Abbass 2012; Okeke, 2014). There has been an increasing number of conflicts in Nigeria in recent times which is linked to the farmer-herder conflict (

Olaniyan et al., 2015; Olayoku, 2014; Okeke, 2014). It is worthy to note that in the past, agricultural farmers and the pastoralist groups had a cordial and stable relationship that enables the people to work side by side for decades. This interdependent relationship on each other is evident that both groups depend on each other for survival, and it formed the benchmark for exchange and which brought about even development (Shettima and Tar, 2008: 163). The agricultural farmers and the pastoralist have a long heritage and economic relationship, though there were sources of disagreement existing between both groups that were resolved by both groups peacefully.

According to Shettima and Tar (2008: 141), the activities of the pastoralist include the movement of their cattle to graze on farmlands which belong to crop farmers, while the farmers require from the pastoralist protein in the form of dairy products that are needed for their day-to-day consumption and manure to fertilize their fields. Similarly, Monod, (2018) noted that the survival of the pastoralist group is formed under interaction with sedentary farmers. Thus, it becomes apparent that the interdependent linkage flows as each group needs water, land, fodder and other land use for their economic activities. Unfortunately, this form of relationship that has existed centuries back has been truncated with many disputes arising across the regions that have grown into widespread violence, death, and internal displacement of persons.

However, various scholars have come up with a different plausible explanation that brings to the forefront of discourse factors responsible for the breakdown in the mutual relationship

that has now result to increase in the conflict. Many have argued that the disturbance leading to conflict between the pastoralists and the farmers can be understood from the perspective of environmental degradation (Hellstrom, 2001; Niemela et al., 2005), irregular and low rainfall that has placed constraints on grassland and grazing movement potentials, and crop production (Ifatimehin, 2008), cattle rustling (Okoli and Okpaleke, 2014a; Olaniyan et al, 2015), property rights (Berger, 2003), rapidly population surge leading to fierce competition for land and space (Blench, 1996; Adisa, 2012; Olabode & Ajibade, 2010) and globalization of the economy (Blench, 1996).

While the bulk of literature and scholarly discussion maintain that increasing conflict is connected to the activities of the herdsmen in the quest for grazing pasture for their livestock deliberately, or unaware causing damages to the farmer's crops as well as cattle theft and rustling by communities. It is still insufficient to accept that factors stated above are enough to escalate the conflicts between herders and farmers because all these factors associated with the increase in conflicts are not new. Without a doubt, there are more complexities associated with farmers-herders conflict in Nigeria. Moreso, such complexities in a conflict setting could be examined either through a structural or a processual approach. Being structural and processual means that the conflicts that involve both farmers and herders communities share certain similarities which are related to the use of natural resources (Braukamper, 2000; Bassett, 1998). For clarity, a structuralist approach focuses on the genesis and explaining the causes of farmer-herder conflicts. While on the other hand, Sandole (1999) defines a processual approach as looking at the potential outcome of disagreement or conflict between the farmers and herder which grew into a full fling conflict becomes a self-perpetuating and self-stimulating process as is the case in Nigeria. Porto (2002) in his critical analysis framework argues that the start-up conditions for the conflict are crucial in analyzing the disagreement between the groups, although, such start-ups is not a reason that a conflict will escalate.

For example, Moritz (2010; 1) argued in his work "Understanding herders-farmers conflict in West African" outlined a processual approach that we cannot underplay the role of ethnic, political, and religion variables when focusing on the increasing farmers and herders conflict in Nigeria. Moritz line of thinking flows from the continuity of herder-farmer conflict as a process

which is leading to "near mutual genocide" between the different ethnic groups which in turn has led to the death of hundreds and displacement of thousands (Moritz, 2010). This process affects the sustainability of the agricultural and pastoral production in West Africa and Nigeria at large in the long run, because the increase in conflict has affected the economy and the source of livelihood of the different groups. Furthermore, Moritz (2010) stated that structural factors contribute to farmers-herders conflicts. Nevertheless, not all form of conflicts in his framework necessarily lead to a large scale violent and ethnic clashes emerging among local communities.

It against the backdrop the foregoing analysis as regards the increased level of conflict between farmers and herders in Nigeria that this study is highly imperative to have a better understanding of why the conflict is escalating. Since no state or region in Nigeria has not witnessed herders-farmers conflicts, and it will be practically impossible during the shortest period to cover the whole country. The focus of this research is narrowed down to the once peaceful Ukpabi-Nimbo Community in Enugu state where the conflict between herders and farmers is growing over the years.

To address the concerns as regards to the increase in the conflicts a qualitative method of data collection was adopted through interviews and focus group discussions. The main focus was collecting data that will help explain the structural and processual variables that can help us to have a clear understanding as regards the conflict situation between herders and farmers in the community. In addition to unearthing the structural and processual variables connected to the conflict, the research also focuses on the questions that result in the role of the state, its agencies, civil societies and stakeholders towards ensuring peaceful coexistence among farmers and herders. However, there is a need to be explicit and to understand what the main problem is with herders and farmers relationship in Nigeria.

Going by the need to facilitate peaceful coexistence and cohabitation of farmers and the herders in Nigeria, in particular, the Ukpabio-Nimbo community, this study shows how both groups can leave in harmony by maintaining healthy relationship amongst themselves. Also, this piece will provide policies recommendations towards mitigating and curtaining this conflict has the researcher will argue that there is a need for the state to adopt a cattle ranch which is

practicable in the western society like the Dutch system of ranching, to prevent future conflict in Nigeria. However, for clarity, this study is organized into six (6) chapters with the first chapter sets the foundation of the research which focuses on the discussion around the statement of the problem, aim, and objectives, research questions, methodology and justification for the study. In the second chapter, the focus is on the scholarly discussion in regards to the structural and processual variables that can be attributed to the causes of Fulani herdsman and farmers in Nigeria. While the third chapter focus is on the discussion around the Nigeria state as a whole to give the broader picture of salient issues that are crucial towards the escalation or de-escalation of conflicts between the herders and farmers. The focus of the fourth and Fifth Chapters are on the data analysis as a whole while the last chapter is the discussion, conclusion and recommendation of the study.

1.1 Statement of Problem

The constant farmers-herders conflict in Nigeria is not a new phenomenon, most especially in the Northern part of the country. However, what it is relatively new is now the many news headlines about farmers herders' conflict in the states and regions, in particular, the South-West and South Eastern part of the country. In the past, many people have argued around the narrative of religion, land ownership rights, political power rotation, ethnicity and indigene-settlers' arguments in the Northern part of Nigeria that are dominated by Hausa-Fulani ethnic group competing with other minority groups. Such cannot be said of the Southern parts of Nigeria that are predominantly Christians. Although, in the past decades, across Nigeria most especially in the Southern part of the country, the Fulani settler and their families were accepted and permitted into the host communities due to the cordial relationship between the sedentary farmers and herders (Osaghae &Suberu, 2005; Genyi, 2014). Following the recent increase in the conflict, the relationship between both groups had deteriorated (Chigozie, 2012).

However, there has been a plethora of competing analysis by scholars on the causes of the conflicts as well as the escalation of hostility in the recent years. Many have argued that the scarcity of natural resources had led to conflict which is triggered by competition over the

meager resources available (Donald and Jo-Ansie, 2010). While the Fulani herdsmen maintained that they are free to move around the country because of freedom of movement, the farmers see this movement most especially when such movement is into their farmlands as invasion and infringement on their communal and personal properties inherited from their grandparents (Idowu, 2017).

Also, there are those that argued that climate change puts pressure on the herders to migrate to other regions leading to localized conflicts and tensions. Hence, climate change-induced rainfall shifting patterns/amount and desertification reduces croplands and grazing lands which forced the Fulani herdsmen to migrate and, in some cases, settled permanently in the South in an attempt to find pasture for their herds (Okoli et al., 2014; Odoh and Chiozie, 2012; Abbass, 2012; Muhammed and Bibi, 2015; Abugu and Onuba, 2015). While the argument of climate change appears to be a compelling narrative that explains the cause of conflict between the herdsmen and farmers, there are those that argued that conflict between farmers and herders in Nigeria could be traced to an increase in human population and growth in cattle. This is because the population of humans and cattle are increasing sporadically which in turn lead to an increase in the demand for land used by both farmers and pastoralist (Dendo, 2004; Idowu, 2017, Azeez et al., 2015).

Unfortunately, all the competing narratives as stated above have not in any way help the Nigeria government as they are struggling to find a permanent solution to the incessant conflicts between farmers and herders in the country (Opejobi, 2016; Okoli and Ogayi, 2018). This is because any attempt for the government to approach the problem from a specific narrative will not only be a narrow approach to the solution but also underplaying possible alternatives that can be adopted in solving the problem. A typical example was the government passage of a Bill in the parliament that seeks to establish grazing reserves and routes across all the states in the country. This kind of approach suggests that the Nigeria government has accepted the climate change narratives as the principal factor responsible for the escalation in conflicts between the Fulani herdsmen and farmers in the country (Okeke, 2014:70). The problem is that the decision of the government has been vehemently resisted by many Nigerians, in particular, the leaders and other ethnic groups in southern Nigeria. Scholars such

as Okeke (2014) maintained that the government approach would further exacerbate the conflict between herders and farmers because the government decision to establish grazing reserves will involve the dispossession of farmers and landowners from their land.

Regardless of whether the conflict was caused by climate change, southward movement of the herders, the competition over scarce resources, and the deterioration of relationship among farmer-herder among others which according to Moritz (2010) are structural conditions. The problem now is with increasing conflict, the farmer now seeks to protect their farmland, and herdsmen adopt violent mechanisms in safeguarding their cattle during grazing (Genyi, 2014). This has led to the proliferation of small arms and carrying of illegal weapons during grazing activities by the pastoralist in the name of self-defence against the systemic attack of cattle rustler during grazing which has led to the death of Fulani herdsmen and their cattle (Marietu & Olarewaju, 2009). However, the situation worsens as both groups continue to cause havoc to the community, endangering the lives of people (Genyi, 2014).

While the government of Nigeria has displayed lack of capability in resolving the conflict and providing long-lasting peace solution in various communities that suffered significant loss of lives and properties as a result of the conflict (Usman, 2013). It becomes imperative to critically examine both the structural and processual variables responsible for the conflict which are essential to ending the conflict to avoid future loss of lives. A case study of Ukpabi-Nimbo community in Enugu state that used to be peaceful but in recent years has witnessed's constant attacks and conflicts between herdsmen and farmers was adopted. The major decision for selecting a case study is primarily to properly investigate a particular aspect and the context within which the phenomenon is occurring and assess the impact of that occurrence on the world (Yin 1993:31).

1.2 Aims and Objectives

The goals and objectives of this study are to critically examine the underlying factors responsible for recent hostility between Fulani herdsmen and the indigenous farmer in Ukpabi-Nimbo community in Enugu State, Nigeria. The study seeks to understand the change in the

relationship between the host community and herders and to know if there has been any existing mechanism that both parties use to resolve misunderstanding in the past and why such tool is no more effective in the present day.

1.3 Research Questions

Main Question

What are the structural and processual factors that contributes to the increasing farmer-herders conflict in Enugu State, Nigeria.

Sub-question

- i. Have there been any existing relationships between farmers and herders in Ukpabi-Nimbo community?
- ii. What are the causes of the conflict between the Fulani herdsmen and indigenous farmers in Ukpabi-Nimbo, Enugu state?
- iii. What role has the government of Enugu state played in managing the conflict in Ukpabi-Nimbo community?

1.4.0 Research Methodology

1.4.1 Study Area

The research was conducted in The Ukpabi-Nimbo Community in Nigeria. Ukpabi-Nimbo community, also called Nibo, a village in Enugu state in Uzo-Uwani local government area. The village shares boundaries with other villages like Umuome, Ebor, Ugwuijoro, Ekwuru, Ugwuachara, and Nimbo-Ngwoko that have also witnessed herdsmen-farmers clashes that led to a loss of both lives and properties in Enugu State. However, Uzo-Uwani local government is one of the local government areas in Enugu state with an estimated population of 176,000, sharing boundaries with Benue and Kogi in the central north, and Anambra and Ebonyi state in the south where there is an increase in farmers-herders conflict. Although, the actual population of Ukpabi-Nimbo cannot be ascertained, what is certain is that Ukpabi-Nimbo is a

small village dominated by Christians although the majority of the people in the village is holding strong beliefs in an ancestral god called (Dimanike). They have a firm credo in their ancestors regarding the protection of lives and property, and this deity is mostly responsible for rain, good harvest, good health, and the welfare of children.

Like every Igbo community, each person has a chi (personal god), which brings fortune and guide to an individual's day-to-day activities. The Nibo indigenes are mainly occupied with agricultural production. They produce yam, cassava, garden egg, pepper, maize, and the Nimbo village Market attract patronage across the Enugu State and neighboring states. These market days are referred to by names such as Ahopabi and Apada, and they take place once every four days. Leadership (Igweship) in Nimbo community is done through election within the community.

Enugu is one of the 36 States in Nigeria, according to history derived its name from the word "EnuUgwu" meaning "the top of the hill." In 1909, the first European settlers in their search for silver discovered coal in Udi Ridge during mining (Okoro and Okoro, 2011). Enugu state was created from the old Anambra State in 1991 with Enugu city named as capital. Enugu is of historical importance to Nigeria history, in 1967, the creation of twelve states in Nigeria by the Gowon Administration made Enugu the capital of East Central State of Nigeria. Enugu state was one of the states that were carved out from the former Eastern Region. (Dixon et al., 2007). It has a total population of 3,267,837 million, female 1,671,795 and male 1,596,042 (Nigeria Bureau of Statistic). The urban areas situated in the state are Oji, Enugu, Udi, Awgu, and Nsukka. The state has seventeen local government areas Aniri, Ezeagu, Nkanu East and West, Enugu East, North, and South, Aninri, Igbo Eze South, Udi and UzoUwani, Oji River, Igbo Etiti, Nsukka, Udenu, and Isi Uzo. (enugustate.gov.ng).

Coal in a commercial quantity was discovered in the state, and this made the state to be known as "coal city." The administrative structure of the state consists of the executive state governor, who is assisted by his deputy governor and other structures like the secretary to the state commissioners, and an executive council of commissioners, with the help of special assistants and advisers for the smooth ruling of the administration. The state further has a law-making body. This state legislature is headed by the state speaker (Ibeawuchi, 1989). An

Executive Chairman heads the local government areas (seventeen) and is aided by his deputy chairman and other supervisory councillors. In some communities in Enugu state, the governing system is a gerontocracy, where a council of elders forms the government and makes decisions, with the oldest man in the community called the community head, or traditional ruler or chief. (Norman et al., 2005). The selection of these traditional rulers is written in the constitution of the various villages.

Enugu state, located in a tropical rainforest zone with fertile soil for agriculture purposes with right climate conditions all year, located about 223 meters (732 ft) above sea level (Efeoma and Uduku 2016; Refsnyder et al. 1989). With a mean daily temperature of approximately 26.7°C, it has a tropical climate, with an average night temperature of about 11°C which is cooler than other states in the regions. Relative humidity is high, most especially from March to November. The mean daily humidity is around 70 percent even in the dry season; the annual rainfall is about 2,000 millimeters (79 in) per annum, which can sometimes be very heavy during the rainy season (Egboka, 1985). The state just like every other part in Nigeria is affected by the dusty wind harmattan which always lasts for two months in December and January (National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration; 2016). Enugu state main language is Igbo, with English or mixture of both English and indigenous language which is known as pidgin as second. These languages are used due to the ethnic diversity of dialect in the state (Kenneth et al., 2008)

1.4.2 Method of Data Collection

The main form of data collection for this study was deeply rooted in the qualitative method to understand the farmer-herder conflicts in Ukpabi-Nimbo community, Enugu state. While there is the different qualitative approach of collecting data in this study. The research was conducted using a qualitative method, both semi-structured, telephone interviews and focus group discussion was adopted. The essence of the qualitative data collection is to describe, capture and further communicate the respondent's own experiences of a given situation in his or her own words (Patton 2002:47). Furthermore, the importance of qualitative design technique is to enable the researcher to adequately investigate given circumstances as well as

provide a description of an explanation of the subjective experience of the respondents including the why and how of the conflict (Rossman and Rallis 2003).

The conducting of interviews enables the researcher to ask sensible questions and have access to understanding the real-life situation and their experiences during the frequent reoccurrence of the conflict between the farmers and Fulani herdsmen. Considering the fact that the primary source of data which are the farmers and herdsmen are more likely not to be educated, interview approach of data collection was deemed relevant because the process did not require that the respondent need to be literate (McNeil and Chapman 2005) since the interview can be conducted in the local language of the respondents. Besides, the researcher can adopt the service of an interpreter if he/she cannot communicate in the respondent's local language. This approach gave the respondents to speak freely and expressed themselves.

1.4.3 Sample Selection

A total number of twenty people were selected by purposive sampling. Purposive sampling was used because not all the people in the community are farmers even though almost every household have those that engage in farming business are affected by the effect of the conflict. It is important to hear directly from those in constant conflicts with the herdsmen, so the occupation as farmers is the main criteria of selecting participants in the interview session while participants of the focus groups were selected at random. The researcher's selection of respondents for an interview was to get balanced information from both groups involved, understanding their perspectives related to the constant conflict, and to understand the dynamics and the causes of the conflict between the indigenous farmer and Fulani herdsmen. It was apt therefore to sustain the in-depth group discussion which ensures that the small group of respondents selected gave their account in detail (Clark, Burgess and Harison 1999).

1.4.4 Data collection procedure

The researcher visited the affected communities to observe the reaction of both groups toward the conflict and to understand the role played by both groups. Unfortunately for the researcher, the semi-structured interview had to be conducted with one-sided information

about the conflict due to difficulties in getting the Fulani to share their take on the issue, but the researcher was able to visit other neighboring communities where stories were told about the conflict. The research was unable to interview the Fulani while on the field. For instance, ten appointments with the pastoralist group to hear their side of the story were made to meet with the group but all effort proved in vain.

In a bid to get a balanced analysis, the researcher visited the central religious site (Mosque) in Uzuka, Enugu (the Fulani are Muslim). Thereafter, the researcher was directed by the chief Imam of the mosque, Imam Yakubu, to go to Obolo Ofa community to meet with Imam Ismailia and Imam Tahil Ungoh Jubril. Thus, when the researcher arrived at Obolo Community central mosque, she was informed that the pastoralist only comes for prayers at the mosque when it is prayer time. However, they stopped using the Mosque due to the crisis and protest against the Fulani calling for the expulsion of the group from Obolo Ofa community. The crisis took place within the period of the research and led to the destruction of the mosque and other meeting centers of the pastoralist group. To this end, the researcher was redirected to meet the head of Hausa community who is also responsible for coordinator and leader of the Hausa Fulani community by name Alhaji Ibrahim. Consequently, Alhaji Ibrahim informed the researcher that there was a security alert which they received concerning the safety of the Fulani group which will restrict them from talking. The researcher insisted on visiting the site of the Fulani hangout and this time was directed to Eagle Hotel at Obolo where the interviewer was told that some of the leaders of the Fulani group often use the hotel site for relaxation.

The researcher met with some Fulani pastoralist group in a small mosque close to Eagle hotel in Obolo community still the researcher was unable to conduct the proposed semi-structured interview as the Fulani did not talk to anybody else aside Fulani's. No doubt the security concern of the Fulani created a consciousness among the pastoralist group as they were informed by their heads that they should not disclose any information to anyone without their consent. Even when the researcher finally met with the leader of the Fulani group by name Ahalji Dogo, he was also not prepared to disclose any information to the researcher. Also, during an open-ended interview with the Igwe of Nimbo community on the 24th September 2017 the interviewer sought permission from the King to speak with the pastoralist in Nimbo

community but was warned that the herders live in the bush, he advised against going there for security reasons.

However, the researcher was then redirected to speak with Alhaji Tijani who coordinates the wing of the pastoralist group in Nimbo community. But all effort to contact Alhaji Tijani during the research proved abortive as he was not ready to speak with the interviewer. The researcher was informed that there must be a directive from the cattle owner's association known as Myetti Allah in Abuja the federal capital territory who claims that they can only speak on their behalf. Similarly, several attempts were made to talk with the Fulani suspects arrested in connection with the Nimbo 2016 Massacre during a court hearing of 28th of October 2017, but the researcher was denied access to the Fulani group who was standing trial in the Enugu high court, Nsukka.

It is also worth noting that during the field work the researcher stayed in the farmer community for the whole period of the data collection and not in the Fulani community. The reason behind the choice of the farmers' community was based on the easy accessibility because going to Enugu to stay in a hotel is not only time consuming but also not cost effective. Thus, this made the researcher to have a closer engagement, and contacts with the sedentary respondents and deeply understand their perspective on the situation which is under investigation. The researcher adopted a probing technique using open-ended questions, to give a better knowledge and sense of why the conflict is increasing, and to understand the roles played by various government agencies and security forces. Furthermore, the researcher interviewed some security forces, even though they were a bit reluctant to share valuable information and pictures due to the sensitivity of the conflict. However, interviews were conducted with both nonindigenous farmers (those from other ethnic groups from other States residing in the community), indigenous Farmers in Ukpabi-Nimbo community and other neighboring communities like Odena, Obollo, and Nsukka.

The researcher also used focus group discussion with the youth of Ukpabi-Nimbo community to get information in an informal setting as to understand the role they played in the conflict, and to get information that has been withheld by the chiefs and elders in the community. The information given by the interviewee enables the researcher to critically

analysis the conflict. To this end, the researcher utilized secondary data that include academic publications, literature with thematic analysis and newspaper and journals.

1.5 Justification for study

The conflicts between herders and farmers are increasing in Nigeria, so there are a need and concern to address this problem. With the increasing number of conflicts in different regions of Nigeria, it has become an urgent task in understanding the causes, the change in the relationship between both farmers and herders. The findings of this research will contribute to existing literature on farmers-herders conflict as the subject is very critical to the sustainability of peace in Nigeria. It will serve to add to the body of knowledge. Also, this increasing conflict, which has been a significant source of insecurity in Nigeria is gradually shifting attention from the Boko Haram rebellion. Hence, it is apt for policy experts to examine and consider possible policies recommendation towards addressing the conflict. It has been accepted that farmers-herder conflict is ubiquitous and solution to its occurrence is essential. The research will further increase the body of knowledge in the field of social science.

1.6 Conclusion

In this chapter, the focus is on the discussion around the problem of conflict escalation between the Fulani herdsmen and farmers in Nigeria. It was established that despite the robust research that focuses on the increase in conflict between two groups that used to be coexisting in harmony for many decades but have now become arch enemy against each other. In this chapter, it was argued that the surplus empirical evidence on the reasons why there is an increase in conflict appears to be insufficient without subjecting the herders-farmers conflict in Nigeria to a structural and processual approach of analyzing the conflict. With a detail discussion around the choice of Ukpabio-Nimbo community as a case study as a source of data collection, the choice of methods used in collecting the data and the challenges encountered were adequately discussed. In the next chapter of this study, the focus of this study is shifted to

the comprehensive review of the literature in relations to the herder-farmers conflicts in Nigeria.

Chapter 2 Literature Review

2.0 Introduction

For centuries pastoralism and farming have continued to evolve in Nigeria, which has in no doubt resulted in the constant struggle for resources. Nomadic pastoralism is a traditional way of life in which nomadic communities keep large numbers of animals moving from place to place in search of forage and water depending on where the rain falls. Overtime pastoralists increasingly have to adapt to climate change and increase in population, which affect the availability of water and pasture which eventually led to conflict as the competition for resources with farmers becomes fierce.

However, this chapter focus is to critically examine the literature from two sets of variables which are structural and processual factors and examine the farmer and herders conflict in Nigeria. Nevertheless, it is essential to first contextualize the term pastoralism before discussing the magnitude of the conflicts as well as the factors responsible for the escalation. Doing this will set a solid foundation for the understanding of the discussion in chapter four, five and six when we put the factors identified in this chapter to the test if they are indeed responsible for the escalation or just the origin of the conflicts will be explored. Also, bringing to the fore the magnitude of the farmers-herders conflict in Nigeria through a review of existing pieces of literature.

2.1 Nomadic Pastoralism

Throughout history and the spread of the world, many societies have a strong specialization in livestock breeding and are identified as pastoral. Some are in South America in Bolivia and Peru, the Andean herders in llama and alpaca, and some are located in the West African savanna, such as the Fulani cattle breeders (Salzman, 2002 cited Stenning 1959). Livestock, unlike land, water sources, orchards, and mineral sources are mobile because the animals can, of course, move. Pastoralism- the use of an extensive resource, the natural pasture

spread over the terrain requires that the animals move from where there is no pasture to be exploited. The movement of herdsman and their flocks is due to the need of the exploitation of pasture for their cattle to survive and dependent on factors like temperature, disease, and climate change (Salzman 2002:3).

Nomadic pastoralism is understood as a social and economic strategy predominantly based in routines (such as seasonal) migration and management of domesticated animals (Lattimore 1940, 54; Barth 1964, 4; Khazanov 1994, 17). It occurs in areas of the world, where the growth of plants is discontinuous, and only occurs when rainfall and temperature allow. However, the exploitation of seasonal pasture land can just be done through migration. Scholars have argued that the terms Nomadism and pastoralism or breeding animals (Salzman 2002: 345) are seen as meaning the same thing.

Scholars like Bernbeck et al, (2008) and (Salzman 2002: 245) use the word "nomadism" and is associated with other mobility strategies (such as hunting/foraging). Thus, "nomadic" is commonly used as a referent to movement or mobility, and "pastoralism" refers to a productive economic strategy: "raising livestock in natural pastures." Due to historical changes, there has been interactive communication with, and migration of pastoralist to other communities.

However, the strategy connected with herding has continuously changed due to risk and opportunities presented by a political, social, and economic interaction between pastoralist and the communities they find themselves. Pasturelands to the Fulani herdsman for the utilization of livestock breeding are natural in that the grasses and bushes are not planted or tended by people. Consequently, scholars like Salzman (2002:2) argued that pasturelands in some regions are planted and maintained for grazing feeds for livestock. This can, therefore, yield financial rewards for farmers who exchange their agricultural produce with herders, as in the case of sedentary crop farmers.

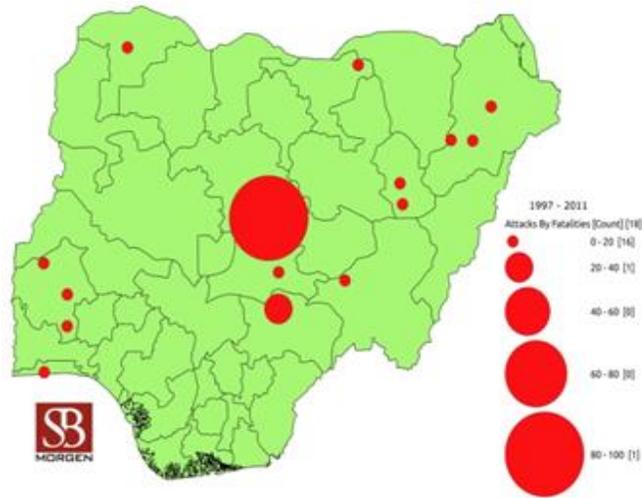
The Fulani herdsman are the breeder of livestock in West Africa savanna (Salzman, 2002), they are well known in Nigeria as a breeder because they make a living from it and are good at it. Salzman argued that there are different kinds of pastoralist based on their social

organization- tribal pastoralist they live as members of a political unit, with collective responsibility and provide protection and are obliged to each other. Individual herder, the tribe is the maximal governmental entity to which he or she has loyalty and with the rule of law and the customary law applies. Peasant pastoralists; who live in a complex society governed by an institution pays taxes and to submit to state-imposed laws and regulation (2002: 13). To Khazanov (1984) in his book titled "Nomadic and the outside world," to him, mobility is periodical and complies with pastoral economic demand within grazing territories. Specialized herdsmen handle the management of herds. It is their paramount form of economic and grazing is oriented towards subsistence and commercial needs.

2.2 The magnitude of Farmers-Herders Conflict in Nigeria

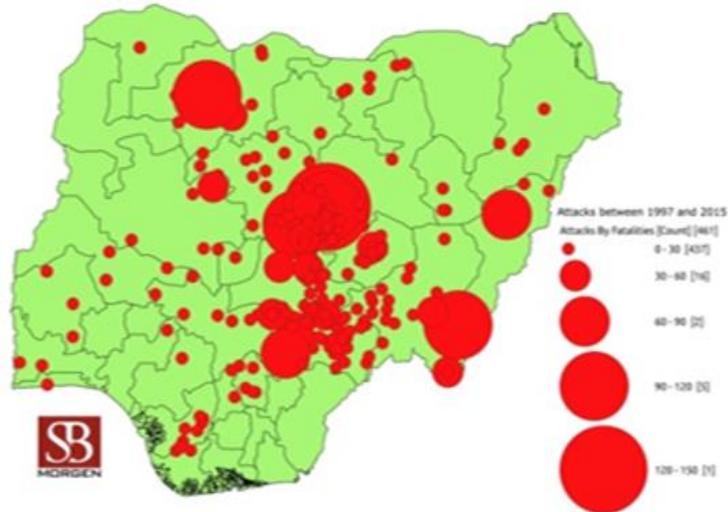
The conflict between pastoralists and farmers has been in existence since the beginning of the practice of agriculture. This conflict is as a result of scarce resources, i.e., Land. In recent times the conflict has assumed a different form of insecurity with an increase in large numbers of casualties and displaced people across the affected states. If the conflict is allowed to escalate further, the impacts will be on food and animal products because of the grave loss of animals, crops and valuable properties (Ikezue and Ezeah 2017:152).

Regardless of the disagreement between the herders and farmers over the scarce resources of land, the incidents of conflicts that lead to fatalities between the two groups were not as alarming as it is in the present day. Available statistics show that between the 1997 and 2011 the conflict between herdsmen and farmers are pronounced in specific geographical locations in the middle belt (Plateau, Nassarawa and Benue states) while isolated incidences were recorded in few other states. Although in Plateau State, there have been historical conflicts of who owns the land between the Fulani and Berom people of Jos. This explains while more than 500 people were brutally murdered and many wounded in three villages in Jos South and Barakin Ladi local government areas of Plateau State in the north-central geopolitical zone of Nigeria by persons suspected to be Fulani herdsmen on 7th March 2010 (Higazi, 2016)



Source: Source: SBM 2016 Reports: Death and the Herdsmen
<http://sbmintel.com/2016/04/28/death-and-the-herdsmen-a-report-on-spreading-pastoralist-violence-in-nigeria/>

The map above clearly illustrates that although, there were conflicts situations that involves farmers and Fulani herdsmen attacking and killing each other. However, the map below shows that the situation has escalated in the recent years and the increase in conflicts and fatalities has not only increased on a large scale but has also spread across the country and the geographical locations that have not witnessed a breakdown in the relationship between the Fulani herdsmen and farmers in the past.



Source: SBM 2016 Reports: Death and the Herdsmen <http://sbmintel.com/2016/04/28/death-and-the-herdsmen-a-report-on-spreading-pastoralist-violence-in-nigeria/>

The map above shows that the increase in conflicts incidences between 2011 and 2015 is not limited to the Northern part of the country where there is a sizable population of Fulani herdsmen but also shows that the Fulani herdsmen have moved deeper into the Southern part clashing with the indigenous people of different communities. The intensity and magnitude in which the farmer-herders conflict has escalated are no doubt worrying. The crises were previously located in the north and north-central geopolitical zone, but it had spread to the western and core southern part of the country (Aluko 2017). The widening conflict has affected the country socio-political and economic stability. While there is no recent map available to represent the escalation in conflicts and fatalities in the conflict between 2016 and 2018, there are few documented reports that describe the continuous escalation of the conflict.

The farmers-herders conflict has increased over the years (Olayoku 2014) and according to the Global Terrorism Index of 2015, the death toll of 63 associated to Fulani herdsmen killings skyrocketed to 1,229 by the end of 2014 (GTI, 2015:22). The killings continue without any sign of slowing down with more than 350 death recorded in February and March 2016 (Mikailu, 2016), 15 casualties in May 2016 (Stein, 2016), and 80 fatalities in July 2016 (Akinwotu, 2016). Most villages in Benue state have experience attacks from herders, villages

like Loggo, Katsina-Ala, Gwer West, Gunna, Makurdi, and Agatu. In the Shengev community, 200 people were killed by the Fulani herdsmen (Omoleye and Segun, 2018). Also, on the 25th of April 2016, nine villages in Uzo-Uwani local government area of Enugu state in the Southeast of Nigeria were attacked by Fulani herdsmen, and they left a carnage of destruction of over 11 lives and millions of naira worth of properties destroyed (Vanguard, 2016). The Agatu people in Benue state in north-central zone of Nigeria were not left out from the continuous attacks, killing and destruction of properties in 2017 that left more than a hundred people killed by the herdsmen (Rasaq et al, 2018). No fewer than ten persons were killed in an attack on the 5th of March 2018 in Omosu Village in Ojigo ward Edumoga of Okpokwu local government of Benue State; when armed herdsmen opened fire on civilians (Godwin, 2018). In Ogun State, on the 5th of February suspected herdsmen attacked some local communities in Ketu Local Council Development Area destroying their farmlands and resulted in 30 primary schools being shut down (Oladele, 2018). On the 28 of February 2018, 20 people were killed in Adamawa states by armed Fulani herdsmen in Fulani herdsmen clashes in Gwamba village in Demsa Local government area of Adamawa state (This Day, 2018). The magnitude of farmer-herder conflict has claim lives and properties, and this has made many people describe the Fulani herdsmen more dangerous than the Boko-Haram terrorist group terrorizing the northern part of Nigeria for years (GTI, 2015; Sulaiman and Ja'afar-Furo, 2010).

Unfortunately, the compelling account of Fulani herdsmen killings and attacks on farming community as discussed above did not in totality represent the true nature of the farmers-herders conflict in Nigeria. The statistics about the killings of Fulani and their cattle are hardly reported by the Nigeria media (Abubakar and Dano, 2018). For example, the media coverage of the December 2017 massacre where more than 800 Fulani herdsmen and their families were massacred with the destruction of their abodes in Taraba in comparison with the total media outburst on the killings of 73 non-Fulani in Benue state. This is a reflection that the media have been criminally biased in their coverage of the farmers-herders conflict in Nigeria (Abubakar, 2018). Also, on January 31, 2018, there was breaking news all over the media with a mass killing in Benue state with the headline "Bandits kill, burn seven travellers to ashes." It will take on a whole effort to read the full story to discover that the victims were Fulani and the

native Tiv militia that carried out the killings were represented as Bandits (Higazi, 2016). Balogun maintained that if the killers were Fulani, the headline would have been different.

Besides, the predominant pattern of reporting attacks on Fulani herdsmen and their cattle have always hide the identity of the perpetrators and classified them as bandits. While the bias reporting against Fulani herdsmen did not in any way insulate the Fulani herdsmen from blame of escalating the conflicts, however, the repeated representation of killer herdsmen as 'Fulani' by the vast majority of media outlets in Nigeria was implicitly suggesting that the Fulani people are nothing but criminals (Premium Times, 2018). Apparently, "the frequent use of the term Fulani by the media to describe killer herdsmen is not only a stereotype" (Premium Times, 2018), the unbalanced reporting of the conflict between the Fulani herdsmen and farmers can also escalate the conflict (Mogekwu, 2011; Adisa and Adekunle, 2010). The media shaped public opinion, as suggested by many scholars (Abdulbaqi and Ariemu, 2017; Howard and Howard, 2003) that the moment the media allocate blame by identifying a perpetrator without proper investigation, the public start to build the image of an enemy.

Be it as it may, there are from various commentators that the new prevalent phenomenon of hired herders might be responsible for the increase in conflict; as a result, the next section of this chapter will look into the hired herders and herds owner's relationship as a premise for the increase in the conflict situation between farmers and Fulani herdsmen.

2.3 Hired Herder and Herds Owners Factor

Hired herders is not an alien practice in cattle management most especially in West African where there are hired herders whose roles in the management of herds can never be underestimated (Bassett, 2010). Several studies (Blench, 1985; Bonfiglioli, 1985; Turner, 1992) have documented the usage of hired herders by wealthy Fulani of high echelon in the Middle Belt of Nigeria and the Maasina region of Mali with large cattle herds but lack the manpower to manage the herds and as a result employed herders to guard their livestock. Typically, the hired herders are from a poor background who are left with no other option to provide for their households other than to seek employment in cattle management or herding.

Bassett (2010) went further to state that even with the level and the increasing demand for hired herders in West Africa, very little is being known about them, and how this influences the management of herds. The management of herds is being entrusted to a labor surplus household, or most time there is the agreement of exchange of milk. In line with this argument, Dupire (1996: 135-140) and Stenning (1959: 103) stated that in the classical model shows that there is an imbalance between livestock owners and labor supplies among herders households. Historically, it has been shown that there has been a constant exchange between stock-rich and labor supply households. The relation between livestock owners and labor-surplus households is a long-term commitment towards caring for the cattle. Sikana and Kervan (1991: 19).

Sperling and Galaty (1990:82-90) questioned the relationship between livestock owners and herders, stating that relationship between livestock owners and pastoralist has become monetary, and can lead to a decline in the level of commitment that the herders will put in herding. Recent studies indicate that the relationship in ownership and practices of herding regarding entrusting of cattle, the numbers of herds owned by labor rich herders are determined by the level of diligence of labor cattle herders. Bonfiglioli (1985: 35) and Bovin (1990: 50) went further to argue on the relationship and practices of herding and livestock owners, stating that a decline in livestock owned by the labor-rich household, the risk of careless herding, livestock productivity, and range degradation. With the above statement, Bassett (2010) conversely assumed that when there is an increase in the number of self-owned livestock in the herd, incentives for proper management of cattle and resources increases. Arguing differently, Turner (1992: 267-269) stating that there is a different reason why self-owned cattle can be less diligent in raising cattle, not because of lack of incentive, but as a result of labor scarcity using the case of Maasina in cattle entrustment.

Besides, several studies (Lattimore, 1940; Barth, 1960; Khazanov 1994) have identified that nomadic pastoralists moves based on the quest for pastures for their livestock, from the Sahel region to the down Southern part of Nigeria. Scholars have argued that the search for pastures by the nomadic pastoralists constitutes an encroachment on the farmers' farmland, without due compensation when the property is destroyed. The discourse on containment of the herdsmen which has formed the hallmark of a reachable solution to the conflict is still resisted

by the pastoralist heads referred to as the Myetti-Allah. The Fulani claim their freedom of movement, which is guaranteed under chapter four of the Nigerian constitution. Specifically, in section 41(1) which indicate that “every citizen of Nigeria is entitled to move freely throughout Nigeria and to reside in any site therefore and no citizen shall be expelled from Nigeria or refused entry to it or exit from there.”

Consequently, the position of scholars like Bassett (2010) should be taken into the discussion of the relationship of the kind of herdsman practice which is the hired and herds' owners. Bassett identified a sharp distinction among the two groups where he maintains that the hired, who are referred to as those that have labor capacity and are responsible for the search for pastures, protect the cattle and grazing livestock. On the other hand, the owners are traditionally recognized to be persons who own the cattle, direct and manage the hired cattle herders. In assessing Bassett postulations, these two categories of persons (hired herders and cattle owners) needs a stable interface regarding social and community relations.

Unfortunately, the compensation received which allows the cattle herders to continue grazing is not well accounted for or disseminated among the farmers in the concerned affected communities. Consequently, the unawareness of the affected farmers of the compensation received by the village heads prompts the farmers to prevent further grazing on their farmland. To further prevent the herdsman from persistent encroachment, the aggrieved farmers tend to form themselves into groups to attack the cattle. In most cases, they adopt the use of traps which kills the cattle, thus, leading to aggression between the hired herdsman and farmers. Furthermore, evidence has shown that community heads encourage the farmers to build vigilante networks who are empowered with local weapons to guard their territory. On the other hand, other scholars like Aluko (2017) maintained that farmlands of indigenous farmers are continually encroached upon by the Fulani herdsman due to the growing demands of pastures for their cattle. Unfortunately, in carrying out the responsibility of providing pasture by the herdsman for their livestock, they do adopt guerrilla warfare approach by invading farmlands of farmers.

It evident that the repelling of the herdsman on the farmer's farmlands which if not done may constitute a substantial economic loss for each victim is usually countered by the hired

herdsmen through the act of violent approach to suppress the aggressor. The hired herdsmen who are most heavily armed do not hesitate to release fire on their aggressors with the ripple effect leading to the death of high numbers of victims and mass displacement of the affected persons or communities in Nigeria. However, the hired herdsmen are just one of many other factors responsible for the increase in conflict between herders and farmers in Nigeria. There are other factors such as migration, population growth and climate change that will be discussed next.

2.4 Climate Change, Migration, and Population Growth

The far north of Nigeria which is an arid and semi-arid region experiences lesser rainfall compared to other regions in the country. Meanwhile, the National Meteorological Agency (NMA) reported in 2008 that the annual rainy season dropped from an average of 150 to 120 days over the course of the last 30 years. The report also noted that in the last six decades, over 350,000 km² of the almost arid region was gradually turning into a desert, a phenomenon notified to be at the rate of 0.6km per year progressing southward. The International Crisis Group Report (2017) alerted our minds to the fact that states like Bauchi, Borno, Gombe, Jigawa, Kano, Katsina, Kebbi, Sokoto, Yobe and Zamfara, were gradually becoming deserts with 50-75 percent of the land area drying up progressively. These environmental changes according to the report have affected human livelihoods and also been a factor contributing to pastoralist's southward migration, in search for pastures for their cattle.

Initially, migration was seasonal, with herders spending December to May in the central zone before returning north (International Crisis Group, 2017). With observations from the last two decades, available pastures kept dwindling in the far north; herders have been noticed to stay in the central zone longer from December to June or July. The report by the International Crisis Group (2017) alerted our minds to the fact that more recently, some herders have chosen to graze their herds permanently in the Central and South zone of Nigeria.

This forced migration has led to the massive influx of herders in the south, which has given rise to the increase in violent clashes between herdsmen and residents of the community where they migrate to especially the farmers (Isola 2018). Tonah (2006) therefore concluded

that climate change promotes national and regional instability. Tonah (2000) maintained that "regarding migration, the influx of migrants into new areas has been a significant factor in many 'environmental conflicts'... massive migrations have at times led to violent conflict, and massive migrations may be a consequence of climate change." Blench (1986) further mentioned the attractive plains of the south with high altitude grasslands and the fact that the risk of disease was a lot lower and pastures were more palatable for the cattle.

According to Morrison (1982), the Fulbe began their southward expansion by settling in the plains around the Emirate of Bauchi and further into the grassland of the Jos plateau. Also, the movement towards the south was favored by the Fulani herdsmen because the increase in population in the south acted as an eliminator of the wild animals preying on cattle as human activities which include hunting, reduced their numbers drastically. Furthermore, the clearing of land for agricultural purposes acted as a significant factor that eliminated the tsetse fly scourge. As a result of these factors, Blench (1994) concluded that the herders began to permanently pitch their tent in the southern savannah, and even began to line the banks of the Niger-Benue system.

However, the movement towards the south is not without negative consequences as Reenberg et al., (1998) argued that the increase in population has, in turn, had drastic effects, like shortage in food, land conflict and the expansion of agriculture that give rise to competition for natural resources. Using hindsight during the decades of 1960-1990, Blench (1994) points out that new forces came into play, the expansion of cultivation in the semi-arid zone. This zone no doubt has always been more populous than the middle belt as the most critical locations for the towns central to the Hausa Emirates. This expansion of cultivation threatened the nomads who traditionally saw uncultivated bush as a shared resource. These made pastoralists seek new pastures, either going further south or to neighboring countries and the quest for pasture bring the herders into contact with sedentary farmers (Obioha, 2008 and Blench 1993).

The migrations of Fulbe during the colonial era were seasonal between the semi-arid north and the dry season pastures along the Niger-Benue system. Blench (1994) further opined that as the rains gathered momentum, the tsetse fly populations expand, and herders were forced to migrate back to the north. However, the continuous exploration of southern pastures led to

discovering new methods of staying and grazing livestock in these regions all year round. Also, with the growing population of sedentary crop farmers, the permanent stay of herders in the south has triggered disputes over land and water.

2.5 Existence of Gangs and Community Vigilantes

In a bid to provide an argument with the fact on the issues of “ungoverned space” in the Mali-Sahel periphery, Boas, (2015) argued that there is “no such thing as “ungoverned space.” In his argument, he stated that Mali-Sahel periphery is in no means an ungoverned space because there are certainly some levels of governance and order even without the presence of the state. To him, the area is overlapped with an individual with competing interests of “Big men” with networks of unofficial/ illicit trade, resistance, and governance. In a bid to operate within this networks that operate on personal power are built on the attainment of the status of big man, with actions that promote one from common herds, but into a clique of loyal men. In this area, the ability to use force and generate resource is based on power, and it differs. Analysing the Mali-Sahel periphery, in the 1990s there were groups of “Big men” in networks of Tuareg whose actions are based on criminality, resistance, and coping. In line with the above argument, Higazi in his work on “farmer-pastoralist conflicts on Jos Plateau Central Nigeria” discusses the situation where “big men” in Berom districts outside and government in most cases have a hand in arming their ethnic groups, organizing and funding crimes and attack to be carried out. The situation in Mali led to the birth of various groups rebelling against each other and the state. However, the formulation of the National Pact in 1992 to resolve the national problem created a widespread problem because different groups and Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) used the situation to their advantage to carry out criminal activity in northern Mali.

The continued insecurity in Plateau state, according to Higazi, (2016) led to the deployment of security forces and the military task force in villages for the protection of civilians. To him, different units are working side-by-side with the military and other authorities. In Nigeria, Vigilante Group of Nigeria (VGN) is an official group under the Nigeria Police force that provides

local intelligence, guards against drug abuse, and armed robbery. They are referred to as neighbourhood watch guards and are dated back to the colonial period.

2.6 Conclusion

Taken from the established scholarly argument, it is clear that the conflict, as well as the escalation in conflicts between the herders and farmers in Nigeria, is complex and multi-dimensional. This chapter has been able to establish that apart from the dominant factors such as climate change, migration, population growth, the hired herders that have enjoyed attention from by numerous scholars, the media also played a dubious role in underreporting the attacks on Fulani herdsmen. As a result, it makes the narrative of the conflict to be one-sided which is not helpful in understanding the crux of the mutual breakdown relationship that does exist between the two groups over the decades. In the next chapter, the discussion will shift the history of Nigeria, government policy concerning land tenure and the policy on intervention to abate the conflict.

Chapter 3 Nigeria History, Past Government Policy Response to Conflict, and the Land Tenure Act and Land Act.

3.0 Introduction

In understanding the various factors responsible for the escalation of the farmer-herders conflict, there is need to know the history of Nigeria looking at the three major ethnics groups, which will give light to the reason why the conflict is escalating. Also, this chapter discusses some of the past government policies as regards to the conflict and also bring to the fore the land tenure Act and land Act.

3.1 Brief History of Nigeria

Nigeria which is the most populous black nation situated in the West African sub-region covers 356,668 square miles and is bordered in the west by the Benin Republic, Niger to the north and Cameroon on the east. Nigeria stretches at an estimated 700 miles from west to east and 650 miles from the south to the north, covering an area between 30 and 150 E longitudes and between 40 and 140 N latitude. The various units that makeup Nigeria today exhibit diverse geographical characteristics, ranging from tropical to semi-arid (Falola and Heaton, 2008:2).

According to Falola and Heaton (2008), the main artery of commerce and communication in Nigeria historically has been the river Niger. Nigeria is blessed with immense natural resources from the vast deposits of crude oil to zinc, columbite, tin ore, lead, copper and also the enormous deposits of uranium. Contained within Nigeria's national boundaries are over 374 ethnic groups. Ongoing conflicts of interests between various social groups, however, have remained a setback to political and economic development (Osaghae, 1998).

The state formation process in Nigeria is traced to the colonial period, before the incursion of the British; there was no Nigerian state, what characterized the geographical area called Nigeria today were predominantly autonomous societies (Osaghae, 1998). The boundaries of

the modern day British colonial administration patented Nigeria in the late 19th and early 20th centuries (Falola and Heaton, 2008:17). The fact that the units or state that make up modern-day Nigeria were hitherto autonomous and exhibited so much distinctiveness, there was still a level of interaction between them. These states were involved in political, economic and cultural activities that linked them up (Falola and Heaton, 2008:38).

3.1.1 The Pre-Colonial Period

3.1.1.1 The Hausa/Fulani Pre-Colonial Political and Administrative Institutions.

The Hausa/Fulani pre-colonial political system in the north of Nigeria, no doubt was theocratic. The Emir served as both political and religious leader. He was vested with legislative, executive, religious, military and judicial powers (Olu, 2014). The Hausa/Fulani system was a highly centralized one, and by implication, the power of the Emir was absolute and unlimited in no small extent. However, embedded within this highly centralized political structure, the Hausa/Fulani political system still maintained a decentralized authority from the Emir who was at the head of the hierarchy of power to the Hakimi and village heads who administered law and order at the district and village levels respectively (Awofeso and Odeyemi, 2014). The Hausa states evolved kingship institutions that placed both political and spiritual authority in one person (the king or ruler). The introduction of Islam and the trans-Saharan trade rooted the growth of centralized states and advanced wealth accumulation in these states firmly.

3.1.1.2 The Yoruba Pre-Colonial political and Administrative Institutions

The Yoruba pre-colonial political system was centralized and democratic at the same time, embedded within the Yoruba institution were viable and functional checks and balances in the system. These checks and balances prevent the King from overstepping his constitutional functions.

Olu Awofeso (2014) iterated that the Yoruba political structure reveals the following;

- The Oba (King) and his senior chiefs were responsible for significant decisions and administration at the central level, that is, the empire's capital

- To ease administration, each district was placed under the administration of a senior chief in the Oba's palace.
- The Oba for administrative convenience also appointed village heads called "Baales" who in collaboration with their chief's maintained law and order settled minute disputes and collected annual tributes known as "Isa-Kole" on behalf of the Oba.

3.1.1.3 The Igbo Pre-Colonial Political and Administrative Institutions

The pre-colonial political system of the Igbo's has been described over time as acephalous, republican, fragmented and segmented. The Igbo Pre-colonial system was nothing compared to the Yoruba and Hausa/Fulani political structure. Consequently, legislative authority was not centralized; instead it was shared among various individuals and groups such as the family, the different title holders (the Ofo and Ozo title holders), the diviners, the priests, the council of elders and age grades. (Olu, 2014:22) Falola and Heaton (2008) further adverted our minds to the fact decentralized states such as the Igbos organized politically around chiefs and councils at the village and age-grade level. Taking a cue from Olu Awofeso (2014), he argues that what later became Nigeria today was a collectivity of previously autonomous political entities differently referred to as "empires," "emirates," "kingdoms," etc.

3.2 Colonial Unification of Nigeria

It took precisely forty years for the seed of colonialism to germinate in Nigeria, the first official relationship between Britain and Nigeria was in 1861 when the Lagos became a crown colony following its annexation to Britain as an area of influence under the British colonial administration. (Olu, 2014:26). According to Schwarz (1968) Europeans began to affect the Northern and Southern protectorate that would later be amalgamated to form Nigeria.

In 1826, some British nationals had adjusted themselves to trading legitimately with the locals, commodities like palm oil, ivory, etc. were the goods they sought. According to Awofeso, twelve British merchant ships were said to be stationed in the Bonny River around this period. However, worthy to note is that the acquisition of Nigeria as a British territory was not made overnight by the British. The British army used various strategies to continue her expeditions to

other parts of Nigeria, the introduction of Christianity was also employed to subjugate the people, and this was successful because Christianity was used as a tool to convince the people. But these expeditions met with stiff resistance from the locals. However, the super firepower and the advanced war techniques of the British made them victorious. In the words of Tamuno (1972), he iterated that a special committee set up in 1898, recommended that British Niger Territories amalgamated. Using hindsight, our minds would be adverted to the fact that since 1900 when the British government decided to wield her influence and to administer the whole country, they had consistently embarked on progressive amalgamation policy in the nation (Olu, 2014:37).

In 1906, the British government took another decisive step towards the unification of the whole country by merging the Southern protectorate and the Lagos Colony under the name the Protectorate of the Southern Nigeria and the Colony, while the Northern Protectorate remained intact. By implication of this, the whole country was now administered from two different administrative units as against three since 1900. The unification agenda finally breathed to life on January 1, 1914, when the British government through Lord Lugard amalgamated the two former protectorates of North and South and the Lagos Colony under a single unit of administration (Olu. 2014).

According to Awofeso (2014), Lugard had it figured it out that "centralizing the Protectorate under a single administration would be economically beneficial." More importantly, so that the actual expenses on the two protectorates would be streamlined while the use of standard infrastructure would remove unnecessary wastages.

3.3 Land Tenure / Land Act in Nigeria

Before the advent of the British colonizing Nigeria, the land tenure system was different across the country. Meek (1957) opined that apart from the land system in the Lagos colony where an English freehold system was established following its annexation in 1861, alongside the use of the customary land law system in rural areas. According to Mabogunje (2009), the freehold system was evident in northern Nigeria where land was placed under the Governor by the colonial administration. On this note, in the 19th century, the Maliki law that was operated

under the Fulani in Hausa, land confers on the conquerors of the land, all the rights to the area conquered. There are no title deeds on the land occupied by virtue of conquest, and no legal requirement for consent from the Governor, as such land use was valid for the occupants who own the land by virtue of conquest or original ownership as first settlers. According to the Land Use Act of 1978, the ordinance of 1910 allows the Governor to administer and hold the land for the benefit of this people via a trusteeship. Any native or native community lawfully using and occupying land following native law and custom enjoys a full right of occupancy with the protection of the Ordinance of 1910, and no rent is paid in respect of such rights. Mabogunje (2009) further iterated that in the case of all other persons, no title is valid which has not been conferred by the Governor, who happens to be empowered to grant rights of occupancy for fixed or unfixed terms, to impose conditions and to charge a rent.

Mabogunje (2009) mentions that in the South land was owned by lineages or extended families, individuals or persons have only right of use on such family land. The only land held at the Governor's behest was that which had been expressly acquired for public purposes as crown land.

Having seen the huge contrast between land tenure systems in Northern Nigeria and Southern Nigeria and of course not forgetting the harrowing experience in getting land for public use more especially in southern Nigeria, in a bid to address this contrast the military government in 1978 sought to bring about the nationalization of land through the Land Use Decree.

Mabogunje (2009) listed seven factors that guided the Land Use Decree of 1978, listed below are the seven factors;

1. All land situated in the territory of each state in the country is vested in the Governor of the state. For southern Nigeria in particular, this means state appropriation of land from families and communities without any compensation except for economic crops and other betterment on the land.

2. All land control and management, including land allocation in urban areas come under the Governor of each state while land located in rural areas becomes the responsibility of the

various local governments. Only the Governor can declare parts of the state territory governed by him as an urban area by an order published in the state gazette;

3. All land in urban areas is to be administered by a body known as the Land Use and Allocation Committee which has the responsibility of advising the Governor on the management of urban land; similarly, a Land Allocation Advisory Committee is provided to advise local governments in like manner;

4. All land which has already been developed remained the possession of the person in whom it was vested before the Act became effective;

5. The Governor is empowered to grant statutory certificate of occupancy (C of O) which would be for a definite term to any person for all purposes and rights of access to land under his control;

6. The maximum area of undeveloped land that any person could hold in any one urban area in a state is one half of a hectare; in the rural areas this must not exceed 500 hectares except with the permission of the Governor;

7. The consent of the Governor must be secured for the transfer of a statutory right of occupancy through either mortgage or assignment. The consent of the Local government or that of the Governor in appropriate cases must also be obtained for the transfer of customary right of occupancy. To ensure the validity of this decree it was enshrined as an integral part of the 1979 constitution and later in the 1999 constitution.

Mabogunje (2009) argues that, the Decree to a very large extent has made it easy for Governments to acquire land for public purposes, drastically minimizing the burden of land compensation and considerably reduced court litigations over land, it has, since its inception over two decades, created a new wave of serious problems for land management in the country. Nine of these are indicated below (Uchendo, 1979; Mabogunje, 2002):

i) The Decree, as it stands, represents an abrogation of the right of ownership of land hitherto enjoyed by Nigerians, at least in the southern half of the country, and its nationalization by government is inconsistent with democratic practices and the operations of a free market economic system;

ii) Many State Governments failed to establish the Land Use and Allocation Committee in their states for many years. This has hampered the steady and continuous delivery of land for building purposes;

iii) Many Governors do not give the urgent attention needed to their responsibility of granting consent for land assignments or mortgaging, thereby impeding the development of an efficient land market and housing finance institutions in the country;

iv) Equally serious is the attempt by some Governors to use the provision requiring their consent for assignments or mortgaging as a means of raising revenue for their States through imposing heavy charges for granting such consent, thereby again obstructing the development of an efficient land market and housing finance institutions in the country;

v) At least in the case of one State, the attempt of the Governor to declare all land in his state as urban land gave rise to considerable absurdities in the operation of the land market;

vi) The inconveniences and delays in securing Statutory Certificates of Occupancy have induced many land transactions among Nigerians to move to the informal market or be falsely dated as having been concluded before March 28, 1978, the operative date for the Land Use Decree;

vii) The exclusion by the Decree of the rights of families or individuals to develop private lay-outs has led to the emergence of a disjointed, uncoordinated and incoherent system of physical planning in Nigerian cities and a declining rate of housing provision in the country;

viii) The power of Governors and the Local Governments to revoke any right of occupancy over land "for overriding public interest" has been used arbitrarily in the past and helps to underscore the fragility of the rights conferred by the Certificate;

ix) In consequence of the above, there is increasing reluctance by both the Courts and the banks to accept the Statutory Certificate of Occupancy neither as conclusive evidence of the title of the holder to the land nor as adequate security in an application for loan.

Taking a cue from the foregoing, the plethora of defects embedded in the Land Use Decree of 1978 has become one of the major factors inducing Farmer-Herders conflict in Nigeria, a

situation that has been brought about by the out-dated statutory provisions of the Land Use Act and the cattle-owners lack of understanding of land possession from a legal perspective.

3.4 Policies in Relations to Farmer-Herder Conflict

3.4.1 Grazing Area/ Cattle Routes

With the increasing intensity of the farmer-herders conflict, the necessity to enact laws that would guide the day-to-day interactions between these two classes was born. In a bid to ameliorate the unpleasant situation the federal lawmakers proposed to introduce a Grazing Commission Bill in 2008 to address the burning issue. The Bill empowered the commission to acquire land in any part of the country for the purpose of establishing grazing reserves and cattle routes but unfortunately the empowerment of the commission to do so is tantamount to violation of the subsisting Land Use Act and traditional means of landholding if enacted (Guilbert 2016). The International Crisis Group (2017) mentions for example that the Afenifere (a socio-political Pan-Yoruba movement) disagreed entirely with this proposed bill alleging that the bill was to favor the business of the Fulani herdsmen at the expense of the farmers whose farms were destroyed continuously by the Fulani cows. Furthermore, they believe this bill is an offensive one. What it attempts to do according to this group would be to rob citizens of their rightful possessions and award these possessions to those who do not own these properties; this, of course, negates the tenets of natural law.

3.4.2 Ineffective Role of The State

The International Crisis Group (2017) which compiled a very elaborate report on the farmer-herder conflicts in Nigeria shows that the Nigerian government's response to the said conflict tends to swing between the deployment of military and mediation by persons with reputation at a crisis point. When military forces are deployed to contain particular bursts of violence, the treatment of the civil population has itself become a critical political and security challenge (Hoffman 2014). The accounts of the excessive use of force, extra-judicial killings and other human rights abuses cannot be overemphasized. The dual efforts have failed as clashes

have continued unabated over the years. Furthermore, the International Crisis Group (2017) reported that between 2002 and 2010, the federal government appointed four commissions to investigate the violent conflict (largely herdsmen/farmers) around Plateau, Nasarawa, and Benue States. Commission like Justice Okpene Judicial Commission of inquiry into communal conflicts in Benue, Nasarawa, Plateau and Taraba states in 2002; Presidential Peace Initiative Committee on Plateau State, headed by Shehuldris, Emir of Zazzau, May 2004. Furthermore, the Federal administrative panel of inquiry into the 2008 crisis, led by Major General Emmanuel Abisoye; and Solomon Lar in 2010 on the Presidential Advisory Committee on the Jos Crisis. However, there has not been any strong political will to implement the recommendations of the several commissions of inquiry (cited in Aluko Opeyemi: 2017).

According to official figures, in Nigeria, more than 35 percent of land area of 923,768 square kilometers is threatened by desertification this no doubt affects the livelihoods of more than 40 million people (Eromo 2016). President Goodluck Jonathan's in 2014, formed up an inter-ministerial technical committee on grazing reserves, proposing strategies to end the conflicts. Concurrently, a political committee was also set up on grazing serve, and it has been chaired by the former governor of Benue state (Gabriel Suswam). A report issued by the committee stating that the Central Bank of Nigeria should release the sum N100 billion (\$317 million) for the construction of ranches in all the 36 states in the country.

With the defeat of the then president in March 2015, the implementation was interrupted even after the proposal was approved by the National Executive Council (NEC). After assuming office in 2015, President Buhari who directed the Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (FMARD) to formulate a comprehensive livestock development plan including measures to curb farmer-herder clashes. In August 2015, an FMARD committee recommended short-, medium- and long-term strategies, including the development of stock routes and grazing reserves. According to the International Crisis Group, on 25 January 2016, an announcement was made by the government as a temporary solution for a plan to map grazing routes, as to when the herdsmen will accept ranching. Furthermore, the International Crisis Group (2017) report that most central and southern states, however, opposed the plan, which they viewed as favoring Fulani herders.

3.5 Security Agencies

The International Crisis Group report (2017) further interrogated the security agencies and judicial system in Nigeria to ascertain how they function and what methods they employ in ameliorating the farmer-herders conflict which is almost setting the Nigerian state ablaze. The federally-controlled Nigeria Police Force (NPF) and the Nigerian Securities and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC) are thinly deployed to rural areas and often lack early warning mechanisms that violence would erupt in any of the communities. We could succinctly argue that the lack of technology, the rugged geographical terrain makes it almost impossible for these security apparatuses to act swiftly. Furthermore, responses to distress were often late, and sometimes the parties in the conflict are so frustrated that both seek self-help through engaging in violence. In most cases the army and the police are deployed after the clashes have taken place. In a few cases, police have arrested and prosecuted both herdsmen and vigilantes wielding firearms. More often, however, the country's dysfunctional law enforcement and criminal justice system fail to arrest or prosecute any perpetrators that unleash this mayhem. Moreover, authorities have treated these crimes as political rather than criminal acts, arguing that sanctioning suspects could spark further violence and conflagrations. Even if commissions of inquiry are established, they typically are used as instruments to calm tensions rather than for the pursuit of justice. These responses, in the long run, create a climate of immunity to the culprits.

On 24 April 2016, Information and Culture Minister Lai Mohammed said the government was working "silently" toward ending the violence, promising in his very own words that: "In a few weeks from now, we will begin to see the result of that". Again, there was no follow up. On 15 July 2016, the chief of defense staff, General Gabriel Olonisakin, announced "Operation Accord" to stop the violence. Nothing more was heard of that campaign. Following clashes in southern Kaduna in late 2016, which killed about 200 to 800 people, the army deployed troops to the area (International Crisis Group, 2017). Still, attacks have continued unabated.

3.5.1 Federal Legislature

The International Crisis Group (2017) report also interrogated the response and action of the federal parliament, and it discovered that the federal legislature has also failed to respond adequately. In 2011, Niger state Senator Zainab Kure sponsored a bill to create a National Grazing Reserves Commission and establish national grazing reserves and livestock routes, but this bill was not passed. The back and forth plan to establish a grazing route and ranches have over the years failed, and the bill that was passed around 2015 to 2016 has not been accented to by the president

The federal legislature has no doubt been unable to enact new laws. A resolution was passed by the federal government in 2016, stating that the attacks on farming communities are carried out the Boko Haram insurgency in Plateau, Taraba, and Benue state, but there was no evidence provided to this claim.

The International Crisis Group (2017) also interrogated the response of state governments towards ameliorating this menace. In the absence of federal government responses to the conflict, the reactions from the state government vary. Several state governments have established state and local peace commissions or committees to promote herder-farmer dialogue and resolve conflicts. States like Ekiti in the south-west and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) of Abuja in the center have passed laws regulating grazing activities. In Benue and Taraba states, governments have enacted laws prohibiting open grazing. The Edo state government proposed to create fenced grazing areas where water will be provided for the cattle, and will require the herdsmen token paymemts. In May 2016, the governor of Abia state, Okezielkpeazu, revived the defunct local vigilante outfit popularly called the Bakassi Boys. He instructed all community chiefs to nominate ten youths for two-week rigorous training with "reformed" Bakassi vigilantes before deployment to rural communities within Abia state. Two months later, the Cross River state government towed this line and planned to train 3,000 people "Homeland Security Service." however, firearms will not be carried by them according to local officials, but information on the movement of herders should be provided.

3.6 Conclusion

In conclusion, the underlining factors for the escalation of the farmer-herders conflict, cannot be overemphasis. Nigeria is country blessed with vast land for agricultural production, but according to history, the government has failed in their responsibility on even distribution of resources. Nigeria is a divert country with different cultures and ethnic groups, but the three major ethnic groups are the Yoruba's in the West, the Igbo's in the South and the Hausa/Fulani in the North. The Nigeria Land Tenure and Land Act laws gave federal, state, and communal rights to lands use. The Nigeria system allows for free movement of people within the country, to conduct their business and live freely. Looking at the communal land use, land are collectively owned in those communities, and in most cases, a non-indigene of the community will have to take permission to live in those communities.

Chapter 4 Structural and Processual Variables to Escalation of Conflict in Ukpabi-Nimbo Community in Enugu State.

4.0 Introduction

Ukpabi-Nimbo community, a relatively unknown village to other part of Enugu state and Nigeria in general attracted not just the attention of the whole nation but also that of international community on April 23, 2016. What brought the global attention to this small village was not because of a discovery of any mineral resources or a scientific breakthrough. The popularity of the village was because of the killings of over 10 farmers with hundreds sustaining different degree of injuries by suspected Fulani herdsmen on April 23, 2016. Ever since them Ukpabi-Nimbo have entered the reference book of the communities that are been terrorized by the Fulani herdsmen. While Fulani herdsmen-farmers clashes that has led to the deaths of thousands of people is nothing new to the Northern part of Nigeria, the attack on Ukpabi-Nimbo was a shock to many commentators because the community has been recorded as peaceful over time. It is against this background that this chapter focus is on the analysis of data collected from the field for the purpose of answering the research questions of this study that seek to understand how best the escalation in conflicts between the herds and farmers in Ukpabi-Nimbo community can be understood from lens of structural and processual approach to conflict resolution.

In general, the analysis of farmer-herder conflicts is predominantly structural in nature (Moritz, 2010:138), and yet it is complex to comprehend (Noorduyn 2005; Bassett 1988) because the conflict is not limited to the structural causes but also the process involved in the conflict. Moritz (2010) posited that, both the structure and process are mutually inclusive to each other, therefore the farmers-herders' conflicts cannot be understood solely through the lens of either the structural or processual variables. While structural variables explain the underlying factors that contributed to the conflicts which can also be understood as the "conflict-as-startup" as suggested by Sandole (1999), the processual variables explain situations and processes that led to conflict escalation. According to Moritz (2010:140) "processual

analysis that focuses on the dynamics of the conflicts themselves can contribute to a better understanding of why and how some herder-farmer conflicts escalate and most others are peacefully resolved". Nevertheless, despite the fact that "the conflict-as-startup conditions are necessary, it is not sufficient for conflicts to escalate" (Porto, 2002: 138). Therefore, it is imperative to examine the farmers-herders conflict in Ukpabi-Nimbo community from both the structural and processual perspectives.

To understand the structural as well as the processual variables to the farmers-herders conflicts in Ukpabi-Nimbo community, three questions were proposed, 1) to explore the historical relationship between the farmers and herders and the sequence of events that lead to the escalation of the conflict, 2) addresses the causes of the conflict between the Fulani herdsmen and indigenous farmers in Ukpabi-Nimbo community.

4.1 Evidence of Existing Farmers-Herders Relationship

4.1.1 Historical Peaceful Coexistence Due to Constant Migration

The first step in understanding the reasons behind the increase in conflict between the Fulani herdsmen and farmers in the Ukpabi-Nimbo community in Enugu State, Nigeria is to look at the history of the Fulani herdsmen movement into the community so as to understand the genesis of conflict. This will help in assessing the extent of the relationship that exist between the two groups historically. The findings of this study show that farmers in the Ukpabi-Nimbo community did not come in contact with the Fulani herdsmen until the 1980s. The contact was very recent when compared to other regions in the country, in particular the South-West and the Middle-Belt that the herdsmen moved into the regions as far back as the pre-colonial era (Isola, 2018:13-13). According to Pa Uche, a 65 years old farmer that participated in the interview session, the first encounter with the Fulani people was in the mid-1980 and when they arrived with their cattle, they were welcomed without any problem into the community. Pa Uche explained further that;

"I can still remember clearly the first time we sighted Fulani herdsmen in our community, they came unto the town asking for village head so that he can give them permission to graze their herds. They were peaceful, and one will know that our community was not the first that

they have been to, definitely they were moving from one place to the other and truly, they left after six months only to come back 2 years later". (Pa Uche, 65 years old, Farmer)

Another respondent that refused to be named corroborated the position of Pa Uche on the cordial relationship between the Fulani herdsmen and the farmers in the community in the 1980s when the herdsmen first arrived in the community. The respondent was of the opinion that the difference in the relationship between the Fulani herdsmen and farmers in the past and now that led to conflicts was because in the past the herdsmen were not permanently in the community. According to him;

"The main reason that make the past relationship to be a smooth one in comparison with the present day was because when they come like that, they just stay for a brief period, 6 months, 1 years, at most 2 years and move to another place. But the case is not like today, when they come, and you think that they will soon leave as usual. But no, they continue to increase in numbers and you know that the more a visitor stay longer in your house is the chance of having issues increases (Anonymous 1, 55 years old, Farmer)

Even though the accounts of the two respondents did not reflect why there was a change in the migration pattern of the Fulani herdsmen, the viewed shared by the farmers can be best understood from my earlier argument in chapter 1 of this study that explains the effect of change in climatic condition in the North responsible for the movement of herders to the South to become longer or a permanent settlement. While the period of first contact between the two groups was peaceful, we need to know the history of conflict between the farmers and herdsmen, how they resolved it in the past considering the fact that where two or more people are co-existing together, conflict is inevitable. During the focus group discussion with the village elders in the Ukpabi-Nimbo community, it was revealed that in time past that despite the differences in culture and religion, the Fulani and Farmers had sustained a healthy relationship among themselves and have a way to resolve misunderstandings that might occur between the two groups. Mr Nwabuze maintained that what they had in the community then cannot be considered as conflicts but a normal friction in any society;

"The indigenes accepted the Fulani herdsmen, and they grazed freely, and even in cases where farmlands were destroyed, the Fulani herdsmen were willing to pay compensation for the damage done. This is a norm in the society, when you destroy other people property either intentionally or unintentionally, the rules of the society is that if the owner demand for compensation you must pay for it. So, I will not call what happened between the farmers and Fulani herdsmen conflict because if you as a farmer and you mistakenly burn the farm

of another man in the bid of using bush burning to clear your farm, you will pay. So, for me, misunderstanding is handled peacefully back then” (Mr Nwabuze, 70 Years old, Retired School Principal)

Also, Mrs Angela, a widow that one of her children was seriously injure during the 2016 massacre that left over 10 people dead and scores of others injured lamented the drastic deterioration in the cordial relationship the farmers and the community as a whole enjoyed with the Fulani herdsmen. According to her;

“I don’t know why we are in this situation of killing each other that we found ourselves now. When the Fulani first came to this community, we lived together peacefully. They will come to the village and their children will play together with our children, give free fura, that milk drink to the villagers and on many occasions when my husband was still alive I hosts some of them where we eat together. In fact, anytime they are leaving my husband always look up to the time they will come back because their cattle manure is very useful in boosting our crop yield since we don’t have access to the government fertilizer and it is expensive. But today, the case is different”(Mrs Angela, 60 years old Widow)

The comments from both the interviews and focus group discussion about the cordial relationship and conflict resolution mechanism is a common phenomenon in Nigeria and other places where there are pastoralist and farmers living together. Following history, herders and sedentary farmers had developed socio-economic relationships in the Sahel region mostly for the purposes of subsistence and these has brought about direct contact between both groups (Oyama, 2002; Adamu, 1978; Baier, 1989). Furthermore, Harshbarger, (1995) and Shinoj and Mathur, (2008) stated that due to this relationship, the cattle manure after grazing are used as compost manure by farmers to fertilize their soil for agricultural production and also to improve fertility of their soil. Several studies (Driel 1999:191; Shettima & Tar 2008:164; Tonah 2000) have documented the symbiotic relationships between the Fulani herdsmen and the farmers and these had been the routine between the farmers of Ukpabi-Nimbo community and the early Fulani herdsmen. Moritz (2010) in his writing, referred to this relationship as "Host-Client" or Host-Stranger." He went further to explain that this kind of relationship is reciprocity, where gifts are shared with each other. Sometimes, the relationship can be used to integrate the Fulani pastoralist into agricultural communities or to prevent and resolve Farmers-Herder conflict (Breusers, 1998 cit in Moritz 2010). Tonah (2006) in his research conducted in Ghana titled “migration and farmer-herder conflict in Ghana’s Volta Basin” has a similar threat as that

of Ukpabi-Nimbo community where it was stated that a symbiotic economic relationship was established between local farmers and cattle owners. However, the question now is when exactly the little misunderstandings transformed to full blown conflict.

4.1.2 Changes in Relationship Between Farmers and Herders

From the findings, it was gathered that the trend of violent confrontation started in 2005 when a new set of Fulani herdsmen that the community never saw before came to Nimbo community. Contrary to the previous known groups of Fulani herdsmen that use sticks and wooden rods to control their herds, those that came back in 2005 were wielding sophisticated weapons such as double barrel and AK47. The accounts of two middle age farmers about their experiences revealed the beginning of mistrust and hostility.

“The Fulani herdsmen that came back here around 2005 were not friendly at all, they move around as if the land belongs to them carrying AK47 and swords with them. They destroyed farms with impunity, and whenever there was a confrontation on why they destroy people’s farms, the herdsmen go berserk causing problem. The previous ones in the 80s-to early 2000s still speak little English to communicate but those that came back in 2005 don’t understand a word or pretend not to speak, they were so violent” (Christian, 45 Years Old, Farmers)

The statement of Christian was supported by Nwachuwku that the Fulani herdsmen that came into the community came to intimidate the people of the community. From Nwachuwku account;

“These Fulani herdsmen we are talking about, they don’t come into the town to seek for permission like the previous ones to graze, and they will just enter the farm brandishing dangerous weapons. They don’t even make attempt to initiate contacts. They rape women that goes to farm alone, even those with husbands were not safe from wrath of the herdsmen, and confronting them is like putting your live in danger because they will not hesitate to shoot you with their AK47 under the guise of they are protecting their cattle from rustlers” (Nwachuwku, 50 years old, Farmer)

However, from all the accounts of the respondents that participated in both the interviews and focus group discussion, the experiences of the frequent harassment by the Fulani herdsmen that started in 2005 have made the community to be on the edge. There was a communal security system in place, given that the relationship between the people in Ukpabi-Nimbo community and the Fulani had been deteriorating over the years due to constant

disagreement revolving around cattle herds trespassing into farms to destroy crops. However, the communal security system did not prevent violent confrontation, although, the violence cannot be compared to the event of 2016. However, the researcher was much interested in the accounts of various events before the 2016 event so that it will help us in understanding the reality that surrounds the 2016 massacre.

From the findings, it was gathered that a major event occurred in 2009, where a Fulani herdsman shot a farmer while he was farming because the herdsman's cattle were caught on the farmer's traps. This was the beginning of the increasing conflict between both groups. According to Ezeugwu, a 42 years old farmer.

"In 2010 there was a case of a student who was going to the farm in the evening, and he saw cattle destroying his father's farm, and when he confronted them, he was shot and died on the spot, his body was discovered by his family the next day. The case was reported to the police, and nothing was done".

Ezeugwu maintained that also in the year 2012, two young men were shot dead because they confronted the Fulani herdsman with words to leave their farm; the villagers reported the case to the police, and as usual, nothing was done to apprehend the Fulani herdsman that was responsible. Although, after the case in 2012, the Governor of the state, instructed the people to put a signpost in every boundary to prevent them from entering their communities but this did not work out well because it did not stop further attacks. Other farmers also supported Ezeugwu accounts of even and it was also gathered that in 2014, there was an incident that took place between a Fulani herdsman and a woman who went to the farm to harvest some of her farm produce.

From the farmers and the rest of the community account of events, the Fulani herdsman accosted the woman while she was in the farm and threatened to kill her if she did not allow him to sleep with her. In fear of her life, she played along and after the Fulani herdsman had undressed, put away his weapon without knowing that the woman was only feigning consent, and ready to go down with the woman. The woman grabbed him by his male organ and crushed the scrotum with a stone. The herdsman died but the woman kept the incident to herself without reporting what transpired at the farm when she got home. Unfortunately, the following day when other herdsman were grazing, they discovered the body of their kinsmen

and consequently responded with a reprisal attack to avenge the death of one of their own and at the end of the attack one person was killed with many sustaining injuries.

While the testimony that could be gathered through the face-to face interviews did not include the views of the Fulani herdsmen since I was not able to meet them during the field study.

One thing is certain, there was serious altercation between the Fulani herdsmen and farmers between 2005- 2014 even though if they did not make new headline to draw both the national and international attention. However, the April 25, 2016, was the deadliest with a death toll of over 10 people and several people injured epitomized the escalation level of hostility that is between the Fulani herdsmen and the Farmers of Ukpabi-Nimbo community. Although, the reason for 2016 attack according to the natives of Ukpabi-Nimbo Community was that the Fulani's claimed the youths of Ukpabi-Nimbo community killed an Alhaji (a cattle owner) and the attack was a reprisal to the act carried out by the youth. Nevertheless, this is not enough reason for the escalation, the escalation was a process caused by many factors over the years and these factors will be looked into in the next section of this chapter.

4.2 Causes of the Farmers-Herders conflict in Ukpabi-Nimbo Community.

4.2.1 Climate Change

Many studies have argued that climate change play a significant role in the escalation of conflict between Fulani herdsmen and the farming communities not only in Nigeria but across many countries in Africa (Busby et al, 2014; Jones-Casey and Knox, 2011; Schilling et al., 2010). The result of the climate change is the increase in the competition for resource such as water and arable land which has often led to severe manifestation of hostilities and social friction among farmers and herders (Brockhaus et al., 2003; Reuvenry, 2007; Adisa and Adekunle 2010). From the findings, climate change remains one of the major causal factors that led to the increase in hostility between the Fulani herdsmen and the farmers in Nimbo community. From the interaction with Mr Nnamdi, a 55 years old farmers, it was revealed that the desertification and irregular rainfall in the North as the result of climate change changed the migration pattern

of the Fulani herdsmen which in turn have significant effect on the increase in population of herdsmen that compete with farmers for land in the community. According to Nnamdi

“Before, you have like two groups of Fulani herdsmen coming and going out of the community, they don’t stay for long. But later the number increased to like 10 different herds, if you ask me now, the number of herds are uncountable. This have effect on the land resources because they are not only competing with farmers for grazing lands but also compete among themselves. So, it is first come first serve, as a result, those that comes late will rather graze their cattle on people’s farms which usually lead to conflict when the farmers attempt to stop them”

In an attempt to confirm the statement of Nnamdi and other farmers, the position of the one of the officials of Enugu State Government Herders/Farmers Conflict Resolution Committee that refused to be named during a telephone interview was that there is a general public misconception about all herdsmen to be Fulani. The respondent maintained that it was not until the formation of the committee that includes the representatives of Miyetti Allah Cattle Breeders Association (MACBA) Enugu State Chapter that himself and other non-Fulani people realized that there are many tribes that are pastoralists and nomads that also engage in cattle rearing in Nigeria. These tribes are also moving South because of the desertification in the North that has led to shortage of grassland for grazing. According to him;

“If the farmers said there are many herders in their communities as compared to 10 years ago, they are totally correct. But what they got wrong was that, it is not all herders they see in their communities are Fulanis, we have many ethnic groups that are predominantly nomads and pastoralist that usually don’t venture deep into the south but because of the fact that they are looking for the same thing as the Fulanis, they now move deep down south. So when the farmers sees herders trampling on their farms with cattle, they quickly spread the news to the villages and towns that Fulani herdsmen are damaging their crops which in real sense might not be Fulani herdsmen”

The argument above resonated previous studies that have documented that herdsmen in Nigeria is not limited to Fulani extractions because there are more than 12 other ethnic groups such as the Kanuri, Arab, Shuwa, Manga, Kanembu that are predominantly pastoralist, although, the Fulani are more visible due to their large population in Nigeria (Blench 2010; Braukamper 1996). The account of the anonymous respondent from the government herders/farmers reconciliatory committee also corroborated by Mr Ebuka, another member of the government Herders/Farmers Conflict Resolution Committee. He elucidated further that

the problem of climate change cannot be ignore as one of the major reasons that there is increase in conflict. He opined that harsh weather in the Sahel as forced many nomadic tribes that are not Nigerians to enter the Nigeria territory looking for pasture. Mr Ebuka maintained that;

“We also have pastoralists most especially Fulani’s that are not from Nigeria, that are also trying to escape the harsh conditions from Niger, Chad, Mali, Northern Cameroon that the farmers mistook as Fulani herdsmen. Although, we have not been able to arrest any of them here in Enugu but in neboughring state of Kogi, some of them have been arrested. These groups of herders don’t have understanding of the Nigeria terrain, they enter into people’s farm and graze on it and left so when the farmers now see innocent Fulani herdsmen they attacked them thinking that they were responsible to the damages to their farms. Trust me no amount of explanation can convince the farmers that the Nigerian Fulani herdsmen are not responsible for the damage to their farms.

From the account of the respondents above, the categories of a person labeled as pastoralist by the most people from the southern part of the country are the Fulani. The Fulani constitute one of the most diverse population groups that inhabit the West Africa region, from the "Atlantic coast" to the Red Sea. They live in more or less dryland zones, characterized by a specific climatic condition and vegetation in the Sahel region (Dinar et al, 2012). An essential distinction that characterizes the Fulani is that they are indigenous, domicile and inhabit to many states. Particularly within the Sahelian region the moved into the forest zone of the coastal states, which includes Nigeria, Benin, Ghana and Cote D’Ivoire (De Bruijn and Van Dijk, 2003). Osei-Bonsu et al, (2002: 4) noted in her identification that pastoralists are predominantly seen in the Northern part of Nigeria. They are in Futa Jallon, Futa Toro of the Senegal and Guinea and the East world of Niger and Cameroon, as well as the Macina region in Mali. The Fulani are considered to be herders because of the significant proportion of them involved in cattle handling and grazing from natural pastures. Fricke (1979) observed that due to the withering or fading away of pastures in the dry reason which is the principal compelling variable that necessitates the Fulani nomads to move southward in the dry season.

However, the impact of climate change did not only affect the Fulani herdsmen or other nomadic groups migration to the south permanently in the attempt to escape the massive land degradation that is ongoing in the north. It also affect the farmer’s food production in south-east, most especially Enugu state (Enete, 2014; Ukonze, 2012). For example, in the south east,

gully-erosion has devastated many settlement areas and farmlands (Beyioku, 2016; Ozor & Cynthia, 2011) and as a result many farmers abandon their farm lands destroyed by the erosion in search for new fertile land. By doing this, they moved into the areas that the Fulani herdsmen use to graze their herds. From the interaction with a non-indigene farmer it was discovered that the climate change have forced many farmers to go deeply into the forest or near the river banks far from the town to start a new farm. From his response he maintained that the only way to reduce the clash between herdsmen and farmers is to teach the farmers climate change resilience. According to him;

“Let me be frank with you, the conflict will continue if the government do not do anything to ensure that they reduce soil erosion and irresponsible farm practices like bush burning that affect the soil fertility. If I take you to some people farms you will wonder what they are doing in such thick forest that over the years the Fulani used to graze their cattle. But again, you can’t blame them, they have to find another land when the one they are using is no longer productive” (Anonymous, 55 years old, Non-Indigene Farmer).

The argument above is in consonant with Goulden & Few’s (2011: 37) empirical study that revealed that due to climate change and shortage in rainfall, it is a habitual practices for farmers to move away from inland region where rain can no longer guarantee the sustainability of agricultural production to the river banks which will give them the opportunity to irrigate their crops conveniently. This kind of moves by the farmers typically are met with resistance from the Fulani herdsmen that have considered such grazing spots that the farmers are moving to as a result of climate change as their right because they have for many years traditionally grazed and watered their cattle on the contested grazing spots (Bello, 2013; Chukwuma & Atelhe, 2014). Without a doubt, the effect of climate change that made farmers to move from inland to river banks and consequently encroaching on the grazing routes and the Fulani herdsmen permanent migration to the south which increase their population is a recipe for escalation of conflict (Muhammed et al., 2015: 23; Omotayo, 2010, 36)

4.2.2 Struggle Over Land

During the struggle for kingship, where election of a new king that will manage the affairs of the community is to be done, brought another face to the conflict. According to the priest of one of the catholic churches in the community, He said:

“Aside the destruction of farmland that led to this conflict in the community, the other problem is in the area of land. After the election for the kingship, the other person that did not sold land to the Fulani, most of the villages were not aware of this. Even those who are aware always want to keep it a secret. I think but I am not very sure if that is why the Fulani’s are attacking the farmers because they are preventing them from grazing” (Anonymous, 2017).

To support this claim, the researcher had a focus group discussion with the youths in the community, and according of one of them, he said:

“The chiefs are not letting us talk about the issues of who sold land to the Fulani. I came back home after holiday from Lagos, because I am studying there. I started hearing people saying that the man that lost the kingship election collected money from the Fulani head and give him some portion of land, which most of the people in the community were not aware of this transaction that took place. The present king even called an open field meeting to address this problem that greed has brought to the community. When all the disagreement where taking place, the king contacted the governor of the state and explain the selling of land to the Fulani, governor give them back their money, but that doesn’t stop them from coming to the community and grazing”.

The problem for the escalation of the conflict is not only center on climate change only, but also on land use. One big factor that had led to the selling of land to the Fulani will be greed and disunity within the community. There is division among the people in the community, sure the person that sold the land to the Fulani did not inform or seek consents from the elected king or the people in the community. This kind of act shows that communal land can be sold even without the consents of the collective people in the community. According to the land Act explained in chapter 3, where land was owned by lineages or extended families, individuals or persons have only right of use on such family land and cannot be sold without consents from the king or family head. Most of the villages who are not aware of the selling of land just go to the farm unaware and are killed in the bid to challenge the activities of the Fulani’s on their farm. This also narrates what other scholar have said in chapter 2 about the struggle over natural resources which is land in this context.

4.2.3 Hired Herders and Management of Cattle

During the interview and focus group discussion sessions with the farmers in the community, there was a unanimous believe that the shift in the handling of cattle which was a

cultural thing from generations to hired herders from poor Fulani household but labor-rich contributed to the increase in conflict between the farmers and the herders. Although, there is no evidence that suggest that cattle encourage frictions, however, the hired herders are obliged to deliver at all cost which includes providing pasture and water for the herds anywhere even if means grazing on a whole farm that belongs to another person. This implies that the ability to protect the herds from rustlers and diseases as well as ensuring substantial multiplication of the numbers of cows in the herds is a prerequisite for the herders keeping their jobs which is the main source of livelihood for their family. Adamu, a non-indigene farmer from Kogi state that shared border with Nimbo community shared his personal experience during the focus group discussion.

“I have encountered the Fulani herdsmen, or should I have called them Fulani herds-children on my farm at least 10 times in the last 3 years. I was wondering why any reasonable person will give the responsibility of managing a cow not to talk of 100 cows to children. What they do is that the adult that got the job of managing the herds will divide the herds into groups and give them to his children to control during grazing. These children don’t have experience and as a result they find it difficult to prevent cattle’s going astray into people’s farm” (Adamu, 60 years old, Farmer)

It has been understood that the increasing rate of hired herdsmen plays significant roles in the area of livestock management (Bassett, 1994:147). Wealthy Fulani herdsmen with large herds in the middle belt of Nigeria and with insufficient manpower (labor) according to Blench (1984) employ salaried herdsmen to guard and protect their cattle. Fulani households that have lost their herds or did not have a herd are forced to seek employment to earn money so as to rebuild their herds (White, 1984). One of the soldiers in the peacekeeping mission that was interviewed but preferred to remain anonymous corroborated the views of Adamu and all the farmers on the role of hired herders in the conflict. According to him;

“In those days of peaceful co-existence between the farmers and herders, the numbers of cows in the herds were not much in comparison with the present day where you can have more than 1,000 cows in the herds. Even at then you don’t see children controlling herds but now you will, children of age 10 to 14 controlling a herd of 500 to 1,000 cows. There is no way that conflict will not occur when hired herders decides to make use of his households to manage the herds rather than recruiting matured and experienced adults” (Anonymous, age 45, Soldier).

The hired herders phenomenon articulated above is not peculiar to Nigeria. Bassett (1994:147) argued that from Mali in Maasina region to central Niger, increasingly poor Fulani herdsmen are guarding cattle that belong to another wealthy household. The entrusting of cattle to a home that is labor-rich but did not have their own herds, in some cases for the exchange of milk consumption for the labor-rich house is a common practice. Therefore, due to these obligations and commitment by the labor-rich household, it encourages them to be more devoted in caring for the cattle with all means necessary.

Some studies have shown that there is a relationship between cattle ownership and herding practices. From Bassett (1994: 148) point of view, when the number of cattle owned decline, there is a great increase in the careless herding, reduction in livestock and range degradation. For Bassett, when there is the increase in the number of self-owned cattle, the stimulus for better range resources and management increases. The shift from the normal family-owned livestock activities to the “quasi-familial labor represents a lot of change in pastoralism as compared to the colonial period, whereas now labor is mobilized and compensated.

4.2.4 Cattle Rustling and Criminal Impostors as Fulani Herdsmen

Apart from the competition for natural resources (land for grazing and farming), the interaction with the non-indigenes who resided within the community revealed that cattle rustling is one of the major reason why there was increase in the hostility between the Fulani herdsmen and the farmers even though allegation of cattle rustling was refuted by the farmers and the majority of the people that the researcher interacted with. According to Mohammed, a non-indigene from Edo state, that have lived in the community for more than 20 years, the several cases of cattle theft in a nearby village to Ukpabi-Nimbo called Aku where over three hundred (300) cows were stolen and about 10 were slaughtered by unknown youth was responsible for the Fulani herdsmen attacks. Although, there was no reported cases of cattle theft in the Ukpabi-Nimbo community, the close proximity of Aku to Ukpabi-Nimbo may have made the Ukpabi-Nimbo the major target of the Fulani herdsmen in searching for their lost

herd. Also, another respondent during the interview that preferred to remain anonymous corroborated Mohammed claims.

“Sometimes one need to be fair not to blame the Fulani herdsmen solely for the increase in conflict between the Fulani’s and the Farmers. Business owners that own hotels pay the youths in neighboring community to engage in cattle rustling with the herdsmen, there by stealing their cattle and selling to them in cheaper rate. A cattle cost nothing less than #200,000, do the calculation yourself, that is over #60 million naira lost to banditry. And come to think of it, the cattle don’t usually belongs to the herders, so they will definitely go around with weapons to protect themselves” (Anonymous, Non-Indigene, Entrepreneur)

The accounts of the two respondents resonates with previous studies (Sayuti, 2016; Higazi, 2016; Dimelu, et al 2016; Okoli & Okpaleke, 2014a; Aluko, 2014) that have extensively documented attacks on Fulani herdsmen in a bid to rustle their cattle, and in some cases many of the herders were killed. Cattle rustling is pervasive in Nigeria, although, it is not common in the Eastern part of Nigeria. While there is lack of statistical data that can be used to ascertain the extent of the menace of cattle rustling, the figures put forward by Okoli and Okpaleke (2014a:12) situate the number of casualties among herders to be over 300 with over 60,000 cattles lost to cattle rustlers just in the year 2013 alone across 6 states in the Norther part of the country. However, when asked about the story of cattle rustling as a pretext or a reason for the attack on the community by the Fulani herdsmen, the farmers refuted the claims of the attack that led to the death of over 10 people on other violence perpetrated by the Fulani herdsmen prior to the attack as a fallacy. According to James, a 38 years old farmer;

“how can anybody claim that the attacks that led to the death of 11 people in this community have connection to cattle rustling. Let us even agree that people that stole their cattle resides in this community, did a 4 years old boy that suffered machete cuts and women that were shot responsible for their stolen cattle. And when they came into the community, did they find any cattle at least if they found one that belongs to them, the community can at least hold those that stole the cattle responsible for bring the disaster on the community”.

It was not only James that share the views of cattle rustling from Nimbo community as a fallacy, the vast majority were of the opinion that it will make more sense for the Fulani herdsmen if they truly want to get to the root of cattle rustling to focus more on their own community because it takes somebody with cattle rearing experience to steal a single cow not to talk of a whole herd of about 150. When asked about the story of the hotels owners that

paid some youths to rustle cattle for them, one of the respondents replied with a simple analogy

“Cattle rearing is not within our culture, to say the truth animal husbandry is not common here. Let me give you a simple analogy. I don’t understand why anybody will think that somebody that cannot drive a car will steal a car, and somebody that did not have money can pay people to steal cars for him. And when you are looking for your car that got stolen, will you attack a village that they don’t even have motorable roads” (Anonymous, age 30, Farmer).

From the discussion above, it was evident that there were cases of cattle rustling, the only argument was where the rustling took place, where the rustlers comes from, and the identity of the rustlers. Attempts to get the view of the police authority on this issue were not successful, nevertheless, the researcher was able to get the views of two of the soldiers that were stationed in the areas to maintain peace. The soldiers affirmed that cattle rustling is real in the area but this have nothing to do with the killings of innocent children and women in Nimbo community because nobody can justify killing a toddler in the name of look for a lost property.

Be it as it may, cattle rustling is a global occurrence, from Ghana West Africa (Olniyan et al., 2015) to Kenya in East Africa (Mweni, 2014) even to far away rural areas in Scotland (Evans, 2014), cattle rustling has always taken the shape of organized crime with a huge criminal tendency (Okoli and Okpaleke, 2014b; Okoli and Atelhe, 2014). As a result, the modern-day cattle rustlers “operate with modern weaponry and their operations are marked by translocational” (Alemika, 2013). There have been cases whereby cattle rustlers were apprehended and paraded, and they turn out to be members of both the Fulani and the host farming communities in the Northern part of Nigeria (Higazi, 2016). Therefore, one cannot discard the probability of having members of the Nimbo community conspiring with those in or against the Fulani community to rustle cattle.

However, there were evidences that the factors that we have been analysing in this chapter in relations to the escalation in the herdsmen and farmers conflicts in the Ukpabi-Nimbo might be a myth or ruse considering the fact that criminals in the community disguise as Fulani herdsmen to attack innocent people, rape women, and steal from the farmers. From the findings, it was discovered that there is a cult group terrorizing the community since the Fulani

herdsmen 2016 attack. One of the non-indigenes that the researcher discussed with explained that the true picture of those behind the various attacks in the community was unraveled when the police arrested the Cult groups called the Malaysian boys. He elucidate further that;

“I will not say that Fulani herdsmen don’t attack farmers in the community, but if you talking about what led to the increase, many people you talk to might not want to say the truth because they afraid of the Malaysian boys, I can tell you that, they are responsible for many of the deaths and carnage that have befall this community” (Anonym, non-indigene, trader)

Further investigation about the Malaysian boys revealed that they have turned the Nimbo Community into a Ghost town and according to reports in the media “the gang had been kidnapping, maiming and killing both indigenes and passersby in the last two years, while disguising themselves as Fulani herdsmen” (Ozor, 2018). Ozor maintained that prior to the incident of April 2016, the Malaysian boys have carried out a number of deadly attacks on innocent unsuspecting people including visitors to the community (ibid). This kind of approach from criminals to ensure that they benefit from and hostile or mistrust environment is not an alien phenomenon in a conflict setting, most especially in Nigeria. Egbeleke (2013:34-35) in his study on the root causes of the Boko-Haram crisis discovered the fake Boko-Haram syndrome that is prevalent in most of the killings, bombing, kidnappings, political assassinations, and robbery associated with the real Boko-Haram.

On many occasions just like the Malaysian Boys in Nimbo community marauding as Fulani herdsmen were criminals making statements as Boko-Haram only for the group to deny such attacks. There is plethora of evidences that revealed arrested suspected Boko-Haram members terrorizing a community turning out to be fake Boko-haram. In fact, there have been several arrests in Benue State where militias attacks villages dressing like Fulani herdsmen (Daily Trust, January 2018). The implication of the accounts of both respondents and the media reports on the increase of conflicts in the community was that the criminals are taking undue advantage of historical hostility between the farmers in the Nimbo community and the Fulani herdsmen to cover their crime so as to operate freely without hindrances.

4.5 Conclusion

In this chapter, it has been established that in the period of 1980 to 2003, there were no major herders-farmers conflicts because there was a mutual relationship between both groups. During this period, the Fulani herdsmen paid compensation whenever their cattle had trampled upon farmers' land. From the findings between 1980-2003, most conflicts were community-based conflicts and there were ways in which the community settled such misunderstanding. However, the pattern in migration of the Fulani herdsmen into the community changed in 2005. New sets of herdsmen that shared no relationship and that are alien to the culture of the community started to arrive in considerable numbers, armed with sophisticated weapons. Besides, cattle are being handled by young Fulani "herd boys" who lack physical strength to control the herds from entering people's farmland and destroying crops for consumption. The hired herders in no small measure contributed to the breakdown of peaceful and symbiotic relationships between the two groups that have existed over the years. Sometimes between 150 and 200 cattle's will be managed by a child between the ages of ten to fourteen.

The increase in the numbers of Fulani herdsmen can be partially associated with climate change that pushed herdsmen further south in search of water and pasture for their herds. This led to confrontation between the farmers that lost their livelihood to cattle herds grazing on their farms and herdsmen that suffered serial attacks from cattle rustlers. Moreover, the community cannot differentiate between other ethnic groups that also herd from Fulani and as a result blame all the loss on their farms on Fulani herdsmen. While cattle rustling play key role in the conflict, it was argued that criminals disguising as Fulani herdsmen to attack innocent's members of the community created serious animosity between the Fulani herdsmen and farmers in the Nimbo community.

Chapter 5 Government Role in Addressing the Farmers-Herders Conflict in Ukpabi-Nimbo

5.0 Introduction.

This chapter is an extension of chapter four that focused on the antecedent of the relationship and conflicts between the farmers and the Fulani herdsmen in the Ukpabi-Nimbo community as well as different structural factors responsible for the conflicts and the process at which the conflict undertook from stages to stages. However, this chapter shift attention to the role that the government played in addressing the conflict situation in the Ukpabi-Nimbo community as well as the future plan or the policy in place to make sure that both groups, the famers and herdgers restored the earlier peace and mutual respect that exist before the breakout of hostility.

5.1 Government Response

5.1.1. Inefficiency of Police and Government Peace Committee

The first priority of any government is the safety of lives of the people it governs (Heyman, 1987). Unfortunately, the Enugu state government has failed to live up to the expectation going by the accounts of all the respondents that participated in the interview and focus group discussion in the community. It was gathered that on many occasions before the April 2016 deadly attack, the farmers have always reported to the police about recalcitrant Fulani herdsmen that refused to pay compensation for farms destroyed but all to no avail. Consequently, the community was left with no other option than to set up a community vigilante forces to protect the community from further attacks. Mr Okechuwku, one of the community leaders that head the vigilante force emphasized on the lack of trust in the police force due to high level of corruption as a major factor that embolden the Fulani herdsmen to believe that they can go unpunished for any wrongdoing. He elucidated further that;

“The police are incompetent and corrupt, I personally have been able to capture Fulani herdsmen that destroyed people’s farms on six different occasions in the last 4 years and handed them over to the police. You will be surprised that on all the occasions when we

went back to the station, they will tell you that they have released them with the warning of not coming back to our village. You can see that the farmers loss” (Mr Okechuwku, 52 years old, Farmer)

Available evidence from the finding also suggest that the state government has failed in its responsibility to protect because the state only responds after the conflict has occurred and not before it begins. For example, all the participants in the focus group discussion claimed that before the April 2016 attacks, there was an early warning to the police that Fulani herdsmen were planning to attack the Ukpabi-Nimbo community. Unfortunately, the attack still took place. On the contrary, Mr Ebuka, member of the Enugu state government Herders/Farmers Peace and Reconciliatory Committee was of the opinion that the accounts from the farmers and communities leaders that suggest that the state government is doing nothing or did not respond to the conflict as disingenuous. He maintained that for the fact he is a member of the Herders/Farmers peace and reconciliatory committee shows that the government is proactive. According Mr Ebuka:

“If anybody tells you that there was an attack in the last two years, that person is lying. Yes, there were issues and misunderstanding and our committee always find a way in resolving the issue amicably. The committee comprises of farmers and herders’ representatives, community leaders, religion leaders, security operatives, representatives of NGOs and CBOs, so people with genuine complaint get justice when they come to the committee”

Comparing the account of the farmers and Mr Ebuka of the herders/farmers reconciliatory committee, it appears that the narrative that the state government lacks the effectiveness to manage the conflicts between farmers and herders is valid prior to the State government action in setting up a committee. What we cannot verify is the validity of attacks after 2016 on the community because there newspapers reports that debunk attacks by herdsmen early 2018.

5.1.2 Community Vigilante

The sequence of events that had led to the escalation of the conflict and the mistrust of the Police in responding and bring peace to the community made the community organised themselves as community vigilante to protect the people in the community. Following a focus group discussion on the youth in the community, it was known that the creation of the community vigilante was as a result of the incompetency of the police force in the community. According to one of the participants during the focus group discussion,

“we no longer have faith in the police, because they are so unprofessional in their dealings. When there is a case destruction on farmland, the police will request for money to fuel their van before they can come to the community. If we don’t have the money to pay, they will not come, and nothing will be done to investigate it. This is completely wrong, we have to protect ourselves from the Fulani.

When asked if they operate with weapons, the participants were reluctant to respond to the question directly. But they used an example to say and I quote “A man does not go to his farm without is cutlass and hoe, and a soldier doesn’t go to the battle field without his weapons” This is an indicator that the vigilante created by the community heads also operate with weapons to protect the people in the community. The researcher was unable to conduct an interview with the head of the vigilante group, because after the attack in 2016, most of the people left the community to the big cities. This will explain that after the attack on the community, the vigilante group stop functioning. As discussed in Chapter 2, vigilante groups are sub-section in the Nigeria Police, but in the case of Nimbo, vigilante groups are formed by the community themselves due to lack of competency and corruption in the Nigeria Police.

5.1.3 Deployment of the Police to the community

The attack that happened in 2016, led to the deployment of the police to the community for the protection of life and properties, although there were police forces in neighboring community, but not in Nimbo. In a bid to protect the people in the community, the police in a way played their role. There are different roles of the five (5) Arm forces in Nigeria, the police live with the people in the community to protect the people when there is internal conflict, or any disagreement. According to one of the police officers deployed to the community, he explained the role of the police and how they have been able to bring peace to the community. To him, he said:

“We were not staying in the community prior to the attack that happened in 2016, we were all in the state capital (Enugu). Due to the attack, our superiors deployed us to this place. We parade ourselves in the community, although we are just four in this community, we parade ourselves in the community, so they can see that the police are still around and there is no need to fear”. (Anonymous, 2017)

He went further to explain in detail as to the different outposts that are now converted to stations in the community and other neighbouring communities. A station according to him is manned by 200 police men. The presence of the police makes the people behave themselves, but the people in the community show must respect when there is a division instead of a station.

“The people respect a division more than a station, because they believe that a division has a lot of police also the divisional police officer (DPO) who is the head of the division will be available too. Most of the people in the community think this station is a division.”

Although the people in the community have lost trust in the police due to their corrupt nature, the evidence above showed that the police are still in a way working. But parading the community does not necessarily mean working, it is in a bid to just show to the community that they are still around in case their superiors or senior inspectors come the community can say they are present in the community. This kind of act is unprofessional of the police force and has destroyed lives and properties. The question is how do the police manage the conflict between both groups? parading the community doesn't tell how they manage the conflict, bring peace or protect the community.

5.1.4 Federal Government Deployment of Troops

Just like many other states facing farmers/herders crisis, the Federal government intervened by mobilizing the Nigeria military to the state to restore law and order. The emergence of violent conflict in Ukpabi-Nimbo community led to the deployment of the military to the area to bring about peace and to protect both groups in the absence of trust in the police by the people. The military so far had stood as a peace mediator when there is a case of destruction of farmland by the Fulani herdsmen, according to the interviews conducted for farmers in the community. Mr Solomon, a farmer and part-time teacher expression during interview session shows that the people in the community have strong confidence in the Military to put an end to the killing. According to him

“The soldiers posted to this village since the 2016 attacks have really done a good job to the extent that the Fulani herdsmen always want to avoid you reporting them to the soldiers that your farm has been destroyed by cattle. The soldiers don’t take nonsense and will ensure that they pay compensation if arrested. The only problem is that the Fulani herdsmen are mobile, so it is on rare occasion that they get arrested. But one thing is certain, if they are arrested they will pay not like the police”

Madam Vivian, the women leader in the community which is also a farmer supported Mr Solomon’s claims of the Military efficiency. According to her;

“The military instil fear in the Fulani herdsmen, anytime we report farm destruction, the military look for a Fulani herdsmen camp that is around that area and make them to pay for compensation. As a result, the herdsmen in the camp becomes a security force in the area watching over the community in case of any intruder (herders) destroying farmlands because they know that if they don’t report the arrival of new herders they will be held accountable”

While the account of Mr Solomon and Mrs Vivian among others suggests the importance of the military in maintaining peace and protecting the lives of the people in the community, there are those who believe that the bureaucracy and chain of command in the army delay the stationed soldiers in the community to act and delay in the response of the soldiers most time led to the both group acting on self-defense before the arrival of the army or any security agent. Uche the youth leader of the community argued that the government has failed their role to protect lives and properties of his citizen.

“when the farmers or the herders make a complaint, the military commandant who oversees that area, informs, and debriefs the situation to the headquarters to get a signal before he can carry out any investigation concerning the complaints. After he has been given “a go-ahead” by his superiors from the force headquarters, then investigations of the claim will start, and a visit to the scene and pictures will be taken as evidence to the claims. But the Fulani are mobile, so most times it can be difficult to identify the ones that cause the destruction of farmlands”.

Uche and others that shared the same view were of the opinion that the bureaucratic protocols that the military men in the area have to follow is an inhibitor to their mandate. While killings have subsided, destruction of farms are still rampant in the community. Although all the respondents who participated in this study believe that if both groups can come together to have a peaceful dialogue and discuss with sincerity, peace is imminent in the community.

The deployment of the military to Nimbo is no different from the case of Plateau state, the military are assigned as peacekeepers in 2010 and their operation are still present in those communities (Higazi, 2016: 13). Although, the government appears to be doing little in addressing the conflict head-on, nevertheless, the presence of the Nigeria Military in the community reduced the number of attacks. While the people in the community will not want their community to be a Military zone, from the findings the only plausible approach to reduce the incessant attacks of Fulani herdsmen on farmers in the society is to increase the number of military personnel to expand their coverage in the community.

Chapter 6 Discussion, Conclusion and Recommendation

6.0 Introduction

This chapter is the concluding chapter that focus on the discussion of the findings of this study. In this chapter the complexity and multidimensional nature of the factors responsible for the escalation in conflict or make-believe escalation in the herders/farmers conflict in the Ukpabi-Nimbo community is critically examined through the lens of structural and processual variables. The research questions are revisited in order to draw a conclusion that will help us propose plausible recommendation that can be useful in addressing the conflict situation in the Ukpabi-Nimbo community and other communities in the country that are witnessing serious crisis in relations to herders and farmers conflict.

6.1 Discussion

From the analysis of data so far, both the structural and the processual variables played significant roles in the escalation of conflict between the Fulani herdsmen and the farmers in Nimbo community as there are different narratives to the breakdown in relationship between the two groups. In line with Mitchell (1989:51) hypothesis that explains the four developmental stages of conflicts such as 1) no conflict, 2) incipient conflict, 3) latent conflict, and 4) manifest conflict were all visible in the Fulani herdsmen-farmers conflict in the Ukpabi-Nimbo community in Enugu state, Nigeria. The period of 1980 till 2004 witnessed no conflict as there were no incompatibles goals which is evident in the symbiotic relationship that existed between the two groups. In 2005, the no conflict situation developed to incipient conflict where goals and interests of both parties that used to be compatible becomes incompatible. Between 2009 and 2014 the relationship between the farmers and the herdsmen have transformed to a latent conflict when both the farmers and the herdsmen recognised that living together peacefully by adopting the pre-2005 relationship is practically impossible. As a result,

by the year 2014 there was manifestation of conflict where both Fulani herdsmen and farmers engaged in violent behaviour to achieve their goals.

For a conflict to escalate according to Kriesberg (2007), it requires the participation of more people or interests that lead to the severity and widening of the conflict. In escalation, more people are involved under harsher consequences. The escalation normally occurs during the manifest stage even though the parties involved in some cases don't seek to escalate it intentionally. Kriesberg (2007:157) maintained that escalation of conflict is a product of unpremeditated consequences of the conflict behaviour. It may happen "inadvertently, step by step, without the opponents having carefully considered the implications of their actions" (Kriesberg 2007:157). From the accounts of all the respondents that participated in this study, the breakdown in the relationships between the farmers and the Fulani herdsmen in Nimbo community is avoidable, the transformation of the conflict from latent to manifest conflict was as a result of unintended consequences. The sequential transformation of the conflict from stage to stage implies that, it will be a narrow judgement to base the escalation of the conflict between the two groups to structural variables only. For instance, while climate change as a structural variable played a key role in escalation of the conflict between the Fulani herdsmen and the farmers in the community on the one hand. On the other hand, the inability of the farmers in the community to differentiate from the non-Nigerians herdsmen and other ethnic groups in Nigeria that are also predominantly pastoralist that also venture into their community to graze their cattle cannot be downplayed as an important factor in the escalation of the conflict. The implication of this is that, the effect of climate change will not be so potent on the conflict if the farmers and the community are made aware that not all herdsmen that they see are Fulani.

However, there are five main transformations involved in conflict escalation (Pruitt and Kim, 2004:89-91). First, there is a shifting stage in the conflict from small to large scale, it is a stage that involves massive investment in the conflict such as buying of weapons which is evident from the activities of the Fulani herdsmen that changed from using of sticks and wooden rods to control their herds to AK47 in 2005 when they came back to Nimbo community. However, as showed in this study, the change in using of rods and sticks to control herds to AK47 was as a

result of incessant attacks on herdsmen by cattle rustlers. Consequently, this send a wrong signal to the host community that the new set of herdsmen that visited their community came well prepared for conflict and a result they also become hostile. This led to the second transformation as suggested by Pruitt and Kim (2004) on the shift from light to heavy tactics or from persuasion to violence. Before 2005 in Nimbo community, there were ways that both the Fulani herdsmen and farmers resolved misunderstanding or conflicts among themselves. There was compensation for crops damaged by cattle, but the post 2005 witnesses' violence response instead of compensation from the herders and hostility from farmers instead of the usual tolerance.

Thirdly, conflict escalation always witnessed a shift from specific to general issues, for example crop damage as a source of conflict become blurred within the fabrics of ethnic or religion conflict. From the findings of the study, this shift was evident in the Fulani herdsmen and farmers conflict in the Nimbo community. The animosity against the Fulani herdsmen by the farmers is beyond the normal complaint of destruction farms, it took the colouration of ethnic and religion influenced by the occurrences of conflicts between farmers and herders in the Middle-belt of the Country. This was evident in the refusal of the community to sell land to Fulani's that are interested in buying land so that they can be grazing their cattle as well as the resistance of the people in the State against any agenda that will promote the establishment of grazing reserves. Since grazing land is crucial to the survival of the Fulani's, they don't have choice than to find means to stay alive and this includes grazing on people farms.

Without a doubt, the emergence of criminals and gang members that were neither Fulani herdsmen or farmers capitalizing on historical hostility between the farmers in the Nimbo community and the Fulani herdsmen to commit crimes and disguise as one of the groups is tantamount to the fourth transformation of conflict escalation framework of Pruitt and Kim (2004) that speak to the shift from the involvement of few people in the conflict to many. The involvement of the Malaysian Boys marauding as Fulani herdsmen as well as hired herdsmen is definitely a game changer to the intensified present-day hostility between the Fulani herdsmen and farmers. These findings show that, what we considered as escalation in the conflicts might not even be an escalation in the real sense. Just like the community were not able to identify

that not all herdsmen are Fulani's which make them to believe that any destruction of their farms is done by the Fulani herdsmen is the same as the attacks on the villages or farmers by Malaysian boy's disguise as Fulani are construing to be Fulani herdsmen. One can now understand why the media reportage of the farmers/herder's conflicts as discussed earlier in chapter 1 of this study continue to be one sided. The media will only report what they hear from the victims and when the victims mentioned Fulani herdsmen as the attackers since they saw Fulani herdsmen even if they are not Fulani herdsmen. At this juncture it will be difficult for one to confidently assert that the attack on Ukpabi- Nimbo community in April 2016 is an act done by the Fulani herdsmen.

6.2 Conclusion

This study set out to examine the farmers-herders conflict in Ukpabi-Nimbo community from both the structural and processual perspective. To understand the structural as well as the processual variables to the farmers-herder's conflicts in Ukpabi-Nimbo community, three research questions were proposed, and qualitative methods of data collection were adopted to answer the research questions. Interviews were conducted for both farmers and non-farmers as well as indigenes and non-indigenes in the community to answer the three research questions

The first research question seeks to understand the type of relationship that existed between the farmers and Fulani herdsmen historically while taking into cognisance the sequence of the breakdown in relationships that led to the escalation of hostility between the two groups. The findings show that there was a smooth, peaceful and symbiotic relationship between the year 1980 when Fulani herdsmen first move into the community and 2003. Although there were misunderstanding and disagreement in several occasion arising from destruction of farms by cattle, nevertheless, the misunderstanding never leads to conflicts because there was a communal conflict resolution mechanism that both groups abide to such as paying of compensations. Unfortunately, the migration pattern of the Fulani herdsmen changed in 2005 which start as the genesis of conflict confrontation. The change in migration pattern led to longer stay in the community that usually they spend between 6 months to 1

year. The more the Fulani herdsmen stayed behind the more they increase in population which made competition for grazing spots with farmers a fierce one. By 2009, the first casualty was recorded and ever since then conflicts between the herds many deteriorated over the years before reaching a crescendo in 2016 April where 11 people were killed by the Fulani herdsmen in a single attack.

The second research question addressed the causal factors to the conflict. Although the factors that lead to the increase in the conflict are multidimensional. The principal factors that had led to the increasing farmers-herders conflict with sequence of event to the conflict in Ukpabi-Nimbo community are destruction of farmlands by herders due to migration caused by climate change and the search for pastures for cattle, cattle theft and rustling been carried out by bandits within and outside of the community. It is important to note that bandit do disguise as Fulani herdsmen to commit crime in the community, therefore, increasing the animosity between the farmers and the herdsmen. Furthermore, the failure of the state to help tackle the conflict has led to the failure of communal peace building mechanism in the community. Besides, cattle are being handled by young Fulani “herd boys” who lack physical strength to control the herds from entering people’s farmland and destroying crops for consumption. The hired herders-cattle owners’ dichotomy contributed immensely to the breakdown in existing symbiotic relationship between the two groups that have existed over the years. Sometimes between 150 and 200 cattle’s will be managed by a child between the ages of ten to fourteen.

For the third research question, although, government appears to be doing little in addressing the conflict head-on, nevertheless, the presence of the Nigeria Military in the community reduced the number of attacks. From the empirical data collection (fieldwork), it has been concluded that both Federal and State Government has failed in protection of lives and properties by his citizen despite the formation of herders/farmers reconciliatory committee by the Enugu state government. However, due to this, the farmer and herders now explore self-defence strategy to defend their crops and cattle respectively, these has only increase the conflict causing more loss of lives and properties and displacement of individual from their indigenous communities into neighbouring communities. While the people in the community will not want their community to be a Military zone, from the findings the only plausible

approach to reduce the incessant attacks of Fulani herdsmen on farmers in the society is to increase the number of military personnel to expand their coverage in the community

6.3 Recommendation

The mass loss of lives and properties as a result of Fulani herdsmen and Farmers conflict have negative implications on crop production and pastoral production which results to extreme poverty and hunger. It also has great implications to the Nigeria national security in different forms of humanitarian, economic, and social and serve as a threat to the peace and stability of the country. In order to resolve the conflict, the government must therefore come up with policies that are designated to enhance the Fulani herdsmen by ensuring that they secure rights to land usage in order to minimise insecurity and mitigate the spate of conflicts this will bring about peaceful co-existence between the Fulani herdsmen and the host communities. The government must also prioritize the revegetation and reforestation as well as address the climate change effect on the conflict from a holistic approach

Following the increasing conflict, there are various structural mechanisms that have been attributed to the cause of farmers-herders conflict in Nigeria and in Ukpabi-Nimbo community. These recommendations will help fight the conflict and provide a long-lasting solution to the increasing conflict in states and communities in Nigeria will practice.

Strengthen security agencies for the protection of farmers and herders, in Ukpabi-Nimbo community.

The state and federal government should help provide a stable and conformation security operative in the community to protect herders against bandits and cattle rustling. And on the other hand, to protect farmers agricultural produces from been destroyed by herdsmen cattle. However, if there is a case of destruction of farmlands by cattle, the herdsmen should be mandated to compensate the farmers to avoid escalation of the issues from resulting to conflict between both groups. The security agent should act neutral in their bid to help settle disputes between both groups, by investigating every crime reported by both groups and take necessary

punishment and sanction to any people that are found guilty of any crime related to destruction of farmlands by herders and cattle theft and rustling by bandits.

Strengthen or improve local peacebuilding and reconciliation mechanism

During the early coming of the herdsmen into Ukpabi-nimbo community there has been communal conflict resolution mechanism that was practice by the community, the state and local government should strengthen communal conflict mediator, that will ensure compliance of the compensation rules caused by both groups, and to stand as a peacebuilder in case of conflict escalation.

Establish Sustainable Cattle ranching

With the increasing population and the effect of climate change to grazing, there is need for the federal government to establish a cattle ranching just has it's been done in the western world. Furthermore, the government should take advantage of a sustainable ranching model (SRM) that will tackle the problem of open grazing which is the traditional method of grazing. The creation of a sustainable ranching model will attract investors willing to invest in the model, and it will bring solution to solving the root causes of the conflict that is caused by change in climate and increased in population. The reason for herdsmen migration and destruction of farmlands is due to climate change, that is; low rainfall, shrinking rivers and lakes, and pro-long dry season. The SRM will solve the issues faced by herder and farmers, by having a ranch that have all the necessary feeds and water to cater for the need for the cattle and at the same time, improving the livelihood of the people. However, every environmental need that drives herdsmen into Ukpabi-Nimbo community will be address. These sustainable ranching model (SRM) that has been practiced in Brazil but not yet in any Africa country will attract tourist, investors like milk companies, leather companies etc.

Strengthen state Cooperation

States throughout the Sahel should work together to manage human and cattle movements across border and to fight illicit arms trafficking. The inflow of weapons can be

control by states security borders, every entrance of persons or cattle should go through checking and scrutiny to control the use of weapons during disagreement.

6.4 References

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Appendix

Interview Questions

1. What is the origin (causes)of the conflict with the farmers and herders?
2. Do you think climate change is one of the causes?
3. Do you think there can a solution to the causes?
4. What possible solution can there be put in place?
5. Are you aware of any possible solutions/resolution in time past put in place by either the government, community chief, or any organization? What are the short coming of the previous resolution mechanism?
6. Who is a cattle herder?
7. What is the role of the state?
8. Do you think there are lack of trust in the system that is why both groups are resulting to self-help?
9. Is there any existing hatred that the farmer had constructed towards the herders over the year?
10. Are there farmer association here in the community?
11. How has been the relationship over time?
12. At what period did the relationship change and why did it change?
13. What has the farmer associations/religious head do to dialogue?
14. What role has the government played in managing the conflict?
15. Is there community policing?

