



**THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF THE CONFLICT BETWEEN  
THE FARMERS AND FULANI HERDSMEN IN THE  
CONTEMPORARY ERA OF CLIMATE CHANGE IN NIGERIA**

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This document represents part of the author's study programme while at the Institute of Social Studies. The views stated therein are those of the author and not necessarily those of the Institute.

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## **Dedication**

I dedicate this work to all those who lost their lives in conflict.

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Figure 1.1 Map of Nigeria that indicates the escalation of conflict between farmers and herdsman

## List of Acronyms

ARCN	Agricultural Research Council of Nigeria
GTI	Global Terrorism Index
HRW	Human Right Watch



## **Abstract**

The violent clashes between Fulani herdsmen and sedentary farmers in Nigeria do not constitute an alien phenomenon in Nigeria; it is a phenomenon that has been in existence for decades which have resulted in the extensive loss of lives and property. The constant clashes have threatened the security of the State, reduced its economic productivity, and deepened food crisis. While there have been several clashes between the Fulani herdsmen and the farming communities for more than two decades, the escalation reached another level in 2014 with the Fulani herdsmen killing 1,229 people in comparison with 63 deaths in 2013. With more than 500 death by July 2016, the conflicts have been commonly credited to Fulani herdsmen expanding from the traditional grazing routes into the agricultural land which in turn always results into conflict over access to pasture. The escalation of the crisis has made many Nigerians and international observers including the United States to consider Fulani herdsmen as the second most dangerous group in Nigeria after Boko-Haram group. Therefore, there is a need for the critical assessment of the underlying factors responsible for the escalation of conflicts between the Fulani herdsmen and farmers to untangle the various important but conflicting narratives that have been used in explaining the reason behind the recent escalation of the conflict. To achieve this, the areas that have witnessed the escalation in conflicts are narrowed down to Berom community in Riyom and Bassa Local Government Area in Plateau state in the middle belt region of the country where qualitative methodology of data collection (interviews and focus group discussions) was carried out to examine the perspectives of the Fulani herdsmen, Berom Farmers, minority Ethnic groups, NGOs and government institution representatives. With the help of the analytical framework embedded in theory of access, political economy, and political ecology. The findings of the study reveal that that the escalation of the conflict is more of political economy, access and criminality of cattle rustling from on the one hand. On the other hand, climate change, urbanization and population surge plays a significant role in escalating the conflict. The implication of the findings of this study is that the Nigeria government should look beyond adopting a response strategy that focus much on the narratives of climate change as the escalating factor

## **Relevance to Development Studies**

The study is relevant to development studies because many authors have written on the best way to resolve the unending deadly conflicts between herdsmen and farmers in Sub-Sahara Africa and Nigeria as a whole. This is essential because understanding the reasons behind the escalation from the perspective of people involved is crucial to a successful government intervention. Without this understanding, the government response will not be an all-encompassing one.

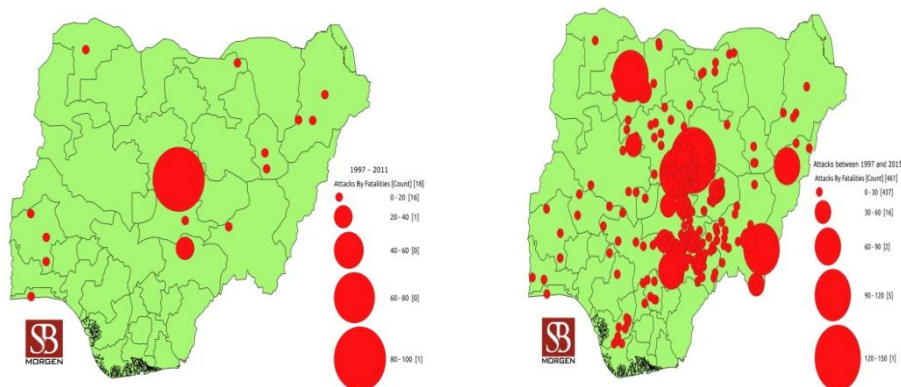
## **Keywords**

Fulani Herdsmen, Berom, Farmers, Escalation, Conflict, Climate Change, Access, Political Economy,

# Chapter 1 Escalation in Fulani Herdsmen-Farmers Conflict: Looking Beyond a Single Story

## 1.1. Introduction

The violent clashes between Fulani herdsmen and sedentary farmers in Nigeria do not constitute an alien phenomenon in Nigeria; it is a phenomenon that has been in existence for decades (Okeke, 2014; Abbass 2012; Blench 2010). While there have been several clashes between the Fulani herdsmen and the farming communities for more than two decades, the escalation reached another level in 2014 with the Fulani herdsmen killing 1,229 people in comparison with 63 deaths in 2013 (GTI, 2015:22). Further, reported attacks in the first half of the year 2016 are worrisome, it shows the escalation in the crisis of Fulani herdsmen attacks on the farming communities in many states in Nigeria (HART, 2016: no page). This recent escalated tension has led to 300 hundred fatalities in February and 40 deaths in March (Mikailu April, 2016), 15 people were killed in May (Stein, 2016), and 80 deaths in July (Akinwotu, 2016). Going by other reports, more than 500 people have lost their lives because of attacks from Fulani herdsmen by midyear of 2016. The conflicts have been commonly credited to Fulani herdsmen expanding from the traditional grazing routes into the agricultural land which in turn always results into conflict over access to pasture. (HART, 2016: no page). The figure below shows the trend of escalation of the Fulani herdsmen and farming communities from 1997 to 2011 and the escalation from 2011 to 2015 with numbers of incidents and deaths



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 escalation of the crisis as shown above has made many Nigerians and international observers including the United States to consider Fulani herdsmen as the second most dangerous group in Nigeria after Boko-Haram group (GTI, 2015). In fact, some found them to be more dangerous than Boko-Haram since the latter activities are limited to North-Eastern part of the country whereas Fulani herdsmen are everywhere (Ovuakporie and Agbakwuru, 2016: no page). Nevertheless, the recent categorization of some Fulani herdsmen as Boko Haram allied by the politicians and Nigeria Military (McGregor 2014:8) not only call for the critical assessment of the underlying factors re-

sponsible for the escalation of conflicts between the Fulani herdsmen and farmers. It also exposed the complexities associated with violent clashes between sedentary agriculturists and cattle breeders in various part of the country (Olayoku, 2014:2).

To unravel the multifaceted appearance of the conflict there is a plethora of scholars that have identified various factors responsible for the hostility between Fulani herdsmen and farming communities in rural areas. One of such narrative is that of Climate change that forced the migration of Fulani herdsmen to further south. This has led to invasion of farmlands by cattle, expansion of farming pasture, extensive sedentarization, burning of rangelands, scarcity of freshwater and blockage of water points, overgrazing of fallow lands, ineffective coping strategies, all these have been propounded as the root causes of the conflicts (Okeke, 2014; McGregor 2014; Audu 2013; Bello 2013; Odoh & Chigozie 2012; Adisa 2012; Blench 2010; Adekunle & Adisa 2010; Ofuoku & Isife 2009; Folami 2009).

Nevertheless, the explanations above are insufficient to identify the main reason behind the recent escalation of the conflict. While one can ascribe the escalation of the conflict to Abbass (2012) argument of economy which is deeply embedded in the context of the political economy of land related struggle, the conflict can also be traced to a rapidly increasing population which has made the competition for space and land to become fiercer (Olabode & Ajibade, 2010; Adisa, 2012). On the other hand, Blench (2010) contends that economic and ecological related factors are inadequate to capture the intricacies of the conflicts. For example, Fulani are not the only herdsmen in Nigeria; there are dozen other groups (Arab, Kanuri, Kanembu, Manga, Shuwa e.t.c) that engage in pastoralist activities in the country (Braukamper 1996; Blench 2010). Even though the Fulani herdsmen are the most visible among other groups of nomads in this context, it is important that scholars engage the complexities of these relationships to a certain extent before jumping to swift conclusions.

Against the backdrop of the necessity to untangle the various important but conflicting narratives that have been used in explaining the reason behind the recent escalation of the conflict, this study adopts the theoretical framework that is embedded in theory of access, political economy, and political ecology. The theories are considered germane to the understanding of Fulani herdsmen and farmer's conflicts as it helps bring to the fore the nexus of socio, economic, ecological, and political factors that underline the escalation of the conflict in Nigeria. It also goes without saying that, this study assumes that the already difficult situation of herdsmen-farmers' interaction has become more tense in the contemporary context of climate change (Stein, 2016). Climate change, on the other hand, is a situation not well understood by both Fulani herdsmen and the farmers as most of them are illiterate. Moreover, the day to day livelihood of both farmers and herdsmen centres on property ownership and social relationship. Therefore, a well thought out analysis of the situation might be helpful to the Nigerian government in her response to mitigate the crisis before it becomes an all-out ethnic war. To achieve this, the areas that have witnessed the escalation in conflicts are narrowed down to Berom community in the middle belt region of the country where qualitative methodology of data collection (interviews and focus group discussions) was carried out. The choice of Berom community offers data from both the historical perspective and that of the most recent escalation of the conflicts between the Fulani herdsmen and farming communities.

## 1.2. Statement of Problem

Nigeria has witnessed conflicts between the Fulani herdsmen and farmers which have resulted in the extensive loss of lives and property. The constant clashes have threatened the security of the State, reduced its economic productivity, and deepened food crisis. “The ongoing conflict between farmers and herdsmen across the North-Central is costing Nigeria at least \$14 billion in potential revenues annually” (Mercy Corps, 2015: no page). The fact that 34 out of 36 states in Nigeria experience perennial conflicts is a testament that this problem is a pandemic, and there is need to put forth mitigation strategies (Kabir, 2016: 1). The conflicts have affected the day to day relationship or interaction of the Fulani herdsmen and other ethnic groups in the country. Religious, ethnic, minority and majority, political differences and interests have been considered as the major causative factors on the one hand. On the other hand, scholarly studies (Sayne, 2011; Hamilton, 2012; Werz and Conley, 2012; Onya, 2015) have also shown that there could be another factor which affects the availability of natural resources both needed by the herdsmen and the farmers for their animals and crops respectively, this factor has been identified as Climate Change. This was exacerbated by the movement of herders in agricultural areas as they attempt to escape deteriorating environmental conditions that have characterized the Sahel due to climate change (Bacca, 2015). Herders who are entering Nigeria’s savanna regions are usually new to the area, apart from putting pressure on the existing resources, they are not familiar with the grazing routes, which increases the chances of trespass and misunderstanding (Stein, 2016; Bacca, 2015). Other scholars (Higazi, 2016; Dimelu, et al 2016; Okoli & Okpaleke, 2014) argued that the problem stems from the recent increase in cattle-rustling activities and the on-going expansion of land under cultivation has resulted in the diminishing of grazing route in the country (Adisa and Adekunle, 2010; Chigozie, 2012, Abass, 2014). The cause of these escalation in the violent confrontations has become a subject of discussion in Nigeria, with some authors arguing that this is an ethnoreligious issue that existed during the precolonial times (Baca, 2015).

The problem here is that the Nigerian government is struggling to find a lasting solution to the problem as the conflicts continue to linger on for decades (Opejobi, 2016). The government approach through a Bill<sup>1</sup> sponsored in the parliament to establish grazing routes and reserves in the southern part of Nigeria indicates that the climate change narrative as the principal cause of the escalation informed the decision taken to address the problem (Okeke, 2014:70). Many Nigerians have argued that the response of government is from a narrow range that will further escalate the conflict because the government action will require dispossession of some farmers from their lands which will be demarcated for grazing purpose (Okeke, 2014; Adetayo, 2016).

However, the majority of the people from the middle belt and southern part of the country have vowed to defend their lands with all means necessary (Adetayo, 2016). For example, a state (Ekiti) government has already passed a

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<sup>1</sup> According to Okeke, the articulated reason of the supporter of the Bill “is that the cattle herders need pasture for their cattle...and due to desertification and overgrazing, grazing lands in the home states of the Fulani are much less than in the past, and the remaining ones are fast diminishing” (Okeke, 2014:70).

Bill that recommended jail terms for anybody that grazes in the state. The governor of the state has already empowered the Indigenous inhabitants of the state to use violence to protect their lands against any establishment of a grazing reserve for Fulani herdsmen (Ojomoyela, 2016; Premium Times, 2016). “Whilst Fulani perceive their access to grazing routes as a centuries-old right, farmers conceive of the land they have occupied for decades as their ancestral heritage and the Fulani as trespassing ‘outsiders’” (HART, 2016). This implies that the response of government and non-state actors to address the problem should not be deeply embedded in a narrow range of climate change narratives; any response should factor salient explanations to the conflict escalation which is the objective of this thesis. This study seek to investigates the underlying factors responsible for the conflict escalation from the perspective of the actors that are directly involved in the conflicts. The voices and perspectives of both the Fulani herdsmen and the Berom farmers are very crucial to any plausible policy intervention to be a success.

### **1.3. Contextual Background**

Pastoralism and crop farming are two important sources of livelihood and subsistence in Nigeria, Sahel, Africa and the world as a whole as human beings rely on meat, milk, grain, other crops and leather (Turner, 2004:867, words in italics are added by me). These two agricultural sectors have also been the source of concern and worries as a result of conflicts in almost all parts of Africa. According to Blench (2010:5), the period between 1960-2000 a new force emerged with the expansion of cultivation or cropping in the semi-arid zone. As it is, the semi—arid zone has consistently been a more populated zone than the middle-belt known to be a primary site for the Hausa Emirates. But going through the census numeral to the precolonial era shows that the population of human beings in the whole Nigerian region could have been as low as little as five million for the late 19th century. Comparing this with 1991 numeral that stands at 88.5 million indicate clearly how herdsmen and farmers could have possibly co-existed at the beginning. When the arable land in semi-arid began to experience increased pressure that caused soil fertility decline, farmers shifted to regions or areas that have bush not cleared, they also in some cases improve on the size of their farms which was a difficult strategy in a lot of locations. Apparently, the situation did eliminate the Fulani herdsmen who by tradition see non-farmed bush as shared resource. Fulani herdsmen were eventually forced to search for new pastures towards the south of the country or in neighbouring countries.

Fulani are traditionally pastoralists who rely mostly on the land and water resources to feed their cattle (Dosu, 2011). In the past, they based most of their activities in West Africa without much problems and interference from farmers. The semi-arid conditions in the lands of Sahel discouraged crop farming, thereby minimising possible competition between farmers and herders in the area. During dry seasons, herdsmen would temporarily move to the south as they await for the situation in Sahel to improve before they went back to their usual territory. Their movements never posed serious challenges since they restricted themselves to the pastoral routes and only grazed their herds in areas that their Southern neighbours had designated for them. The mutual understanding between the two parties ensured a peaceful coexistence with the herdsmen staying in the Southern region as long as it was necessary

before they would move back to their traditional grazing ground. In situations where pastoralists and farmers coexisted, there was a mutual benefit between the two groups that furthered the sustenance of peace. They exhibited a symbiotic relationship, which included the practice of barter trade of both goods and services, thereby enabling the good living conditions in the semi-arid region (Driel 1999:191).

Pastoralists relied on the availability of crop residues, more so during the dry seasons to feed their livestock, while farmers took advantage of the availability of the livestock to enrich their farms using their dung (Shettima & Tar 2008:164). Nonetheless, even where confrontations ensued, the different groups often regulated them in such a way that their cohabitation was not endangered (Driel, 1999:191). The relationship was more of a love-hate affair with the two parties agreeing and clashing at times (Tonah 2000:551). Unfortunately, sustaining that peaceful coexistence between migrant pastoralists and farmers has become a challenge due to climate change, which is further compounded by increased population of people and livestock. Access to fodder is no longer free but a commercialised affair. The commodification and marketization of environmental resources, which are already scarce in supply, are creating more tension between the two groups (Meur et al.,2006:27; Tremolieres, 2013: 67). Regrettably, the groups are no longer complementing each other, but are engaged in fierce competition for resources (Continental Divide 2005: 537) which has degenerated into full-blown violence leading to the displacement of people. An example was the case of Plateau State in 2004 where Fulani herdsmen conflict heightened with other ethnic, political and religious groups. A situation that can be referred as a “near-mutual genocide” of Christians and Muslims thereby making over 20,000 refugees to flee to Cameroun, this made the then President Obasanjo to declare a state of emergency in the state (Moritz, 2010:138).

Another good example is the case of the Mambila indigenous farmers and Fulani herdsmen in Nigeria (Blench, 2010:4-5). The farmers may feel the herders have no essential services or goods to provide them as a farming community. Consequently, the Fulani herdsmen are indebted to stay on good terms with farmers if they want to carry on with the exploitation of the locale year in year out. But where Fulani herdsmen find it difficult to shape up exchange relations with the farmers and their communities, then they will have to survive through sedentary livestock keeping, elastic movement forms which include exploitation of new arable land in communities on yearly basis and terrorization of the farmers. These approaches are well noticed to be operating in Nigeria (Blench, 2010:1)

## **1.4. Objectives**

The central aim of this study is to understand the underlying factors responsible for the escalation in the conflicts from the perspectives of both the Fulani herdsmen and Berom Farmers. Also to look at how the government institutions, NGOs and other minority groups in the region perspective regarding the underlying factors that escalated the conflicts. This is important because understanding the reasons behind the escalation from the perspective of people involve is crucial to a successful government intervention. Without, this understanding, the government response will not be an all-encompassing one

## 1.5. Main Research Question

- How best can the causative factors responsible for the escalation of the conflicts between Fulani herdsmen and Berom farmers can be understood for the purpose of a robust government policy response in addressing the conflicts escalation?

### *Sub Questions*

- What are the underlying factors responsible for the escalation in the conflicts from the perspectives of both the Fulani herdsmen and Berom Farmers?
- What are the perspectives of non-state actors and other minority groups) in the region regarding the underlying factors that escalated the conflicts ?

## 1.6. Structure of the Thesis

The thesis is organized into six chapters, and the first chapter has already covered the justification, historical background of the conflict, the trend of escalation and the context of the study. In the first chapter, the objective of the study, research questions, statement of the problem about the escalation of the conflicts between the Fulani herdsmen and the sedentary farmers of the Berom communities in Plateau state. Chapter two focuses on the methodological approach adopted in data collection. In this section, the choice of Riyom and Bassa local governments in Plateau states as the study area will be discussed, the sampling technique in formulating sample size from the targeted population and the reason for selecting the respondents that participated in the process of data collection. A methodology chapter is not complete without the justification for the choice of tools used in data collection, the merit and demerit of using interviews and focus group discussion was presented in this chapter. Also, the challenges and limitation, scope and ethics of research will be discussed. The following chapter (3) centres on the theoretical framework which serves as the nucleus of thesis study. The Political Economy, Political Ecology, and Access theories will be discussed in relation to the escalation of the conflicts of Fulani herdsmen and the farming communities in Nigeria and beyond. The justification and relevance to the study were also presented in this chapter. While chapter four and five focus is on the data analysis in line with the objective and research questions of this study, the last chapter gives an overall summary and draw conclusion on the research findings.

## Chapter 2 . Process of Data Collection

### 2.1. Introduction

This chapter focuses on the discussion on how data for this study was generated through qualitative interviews and focus group with selected respondents in Middle-belt region in Nigeria. Interviews were conducted for the main informants such as government officials from various agencies and Ministries that are relevant to the study, men and women from amongst the Fulani herdsmen and farmers, government officials, environmental specialist, local chiefs of the communities and NGOs concerned with the situation. I interviewed both the formally educated and non-educated ethnic group representatives. In this chapter, the merit and demerit of the choice of data collection tools were also laid to bare. Since the area is large, the data collection was limited to four farming communities in Riyom and Bassa Local Government of Plateau state that has witnessed constant violent clashes between the herdsmen and the local farmers. I discussed the choice of the four communities for the research study area as the selection of study location. Also, the sampling, methods, the procedure of data collection, challenges, limitation and ethical issues were discussed in detail in this chapter

### 2.2. Choice of Study Location

The Jos in Plateau has an area that is Highland in nature located in the North-Central part of Nigeria it is an ethnic diverse and religiously plural society. Geographically Jos is located at the centre of Plateau, and it is an urban area. The British colonialists formed Jos into a town in the year 1915, and they subsequently moved to the place for tin mining. The city of Jos has over a million people in the numerical figure, it is noted for its multicultural setting, and it is the administrative capital of Plateau State. The indigenous ethnic groups in Jos are close to 30, and it summed to 50 when the whole of Plateaus state is considered. The ethnic group differ in culture, geographical territory and language. Also, a part of the population are recent settlers who migrated from other parts of Nigeria to Jos Plateau in the past century, and they are a mixture of migrants with different ethnicity roots (Higazi, 2016:366: Blench and Dendo, 2003). It is important to give some description of Jos as done because it is the seat of political administration in the Plateau and all "indigenes" or "settlers" relate physically, financially, socially and culturally directly or indirectly as whatever happens there affects their lives one way or the other. On the other hand, Plateau as a State was carved out of the old Benue-Plateau State, and it was later cut down in size in the year 1991 as Nassarawa State was carved out of it. The state is noticeably separated by geographical characteristic from which the state derived its name the Jos Plateau a granite up trust going up to 1000m higher than its surrounding plain. The Jos Plateau differs in elevation along the Shere Hills on the east of Jos while it is bounded by a steep scarp in the east and north it falls towards the plain in various layers (Blench and Dendo, 2004)

Research carried out by Blench and Dendo in 2004 and submitted to Word Bank as Report shows that the mainstay of Plateau indigenes is arable



farming and this is done through rain-fed farming. The research indicates that vegetable is cultivated along or on moist land suitable for it at that dry season in the volcanic part of Plateau. Plateau is known for two very peculiar agricultural productions associated with it and these the production of acha and iburu (Portères, 1955 cited in Blench and Dendo, 2004). The report also shows that Fulbe known as the Fulani herdsmen came into Plateau when the population was not much, there was enough vegetation to feed the cattle on and there was no undue disease in the area. Furthermore, Davies (1964 cited in Blench and Dendo, 2004) in a well conducted inclusive survey of Gyel geographical area which is populated by the Beroms indicated that sixty percent of the whole land was used for farming and the population survive through this means of livelihood. He also noted that they have some livestock like the dwarf cattle, pigs, turkeys, etc.

The study was conducted in four communities namely Rim, Ganawiri, Bachit, Shonong in Riyom and Dutse Kura, Rukuba, Zangun, Jebu Bassa in Bassa local government areas were chosen as the study location because of the heavy presence of Fulani cattle breeders and the main source of livelihood of the Beroms are farming. The two local governments have three district area each with the Fulani dominating in one of the districts in each local government. Although, there are a handful of the Fulanis in the backyard of the other two districts in the two local governments (Idegu, 2015). Also, as a result of the international grazing route that passes through the Berom communities, there are other itinerant Fulani make use of the route, and they usually come in contact with the local farmers while passing through the communities. “Besides the claims and counter-claims over grazing routes, the Fulani and Berom have coexisted for almost a century. However, in the last one decade, they have become cats and dogs” (Idegu, 2015).

The study location was also chosen because it represents the political power interest, religious difference, culture diversity, ethnicity majority and minority struggle in the region and Nigeria as a country. Also, the historical context of the relationship between the two conflict tribes was put into consideration. Cattle breeding and livestock keeping, especially cow grazing, have been the traditional business of the Fulani ethnic group. But as they coexisted, they established a symbiotic relationship, with the Berom even handing over their children to the Fulani to be trained in the techniques of grazing. The Fulani lived mostly in the bush which is often far away from schools, which is why they also sent their children to schools in Berom communities. (Idegu,2015). Given the current insecurity status in Nigeria, it is also safer to conduct the research in the chosen communities than any other region in Nigeria

### **2.3. Method of Data Collection**

The first method used in the collection of data was focus group discussion; this is because it allows for targeted participants in the research to relate their experiences and for interaction on some specific matters or issues which enhance field data collection (Kitzinger, 1994:103). Focus group is a research technique or method with three essential features, which creates interaction on research subject as moderated by the researcher. It is helpful in locating the interaction point in the group discussion as the basis for the data, and it appreciates the researcher’s powerful part in generating the group for data resolves

(Morgan, 1996:130). However, the method is not without some hitches. It has been discovered that participants in focus groups do not always respond to questions in the same manner in another setting they found themselves. Besides, it might become crowdie and participants speaking out of the research theme. In some cases, those that have personal differences might use the opportunity of being in the same group discussion to deliberately oppose the perceived rival opinion. This can lead to some level of disruption of the meeting.

However, focus group discussion affords the researcher the opportunity to engage multiple respondents at the same time while comparing their views along the line of the research theme (Kidd and Parshall, 2000:294). Although, the method reduces the homogenous quality of discourse than is found in individual research interviews. Nevertheless, the choice of focus group discussion was informed by the fact that the research topic required heterogeneous views since the conflicts involves multiple actors and the effect of the conflict affect people differently. Having said that, adopting the method is suitable to my capability to moderate the discussion as I speak multiple languages and pick on some which include those of the actors involved (Hausa, Fulfude and Berom). Besides, the actors involved are very passionate about the topic of discussion. This is line with the argument of Kidd and Parshall (2000) that the success of a focus group discussion in data collection for a research is subject to the ability of the moderator's dexterity and character of members and their emotional connection and involvement in the chosen topic of discussion as suggested by Kidd and Parshall, (2000:294).

The second method of data collection adopted for this study was the interview. Interviews is a research method that gives the researcher some level of freedom of conversation on the topic been researched to discover an in-depth view of the respondents and the various circumstances associated with the topic. Interviews are quite helpful when detailed information is required; it is an excellent tool that affords the interviewer into context necessary for data as it offers more insight (Boyce and Neale, 2006:3). On the other hand, interview method of data collection is not flawless; there are limitations for the interview research technique as it is prone to bias, time-consuming to interview, transcribe and analyse the data (Boyce and Neale. 2006:4).

## **2.4. Sampling**

To have a rich database, that will enhance the analysis of my research findings. I adopted purposive sampling technique to select the respondents as it has the advantage of helping the researcher formulate tactics that aid good knowledge and understanding of some people or individuals' knowledge or formulating concepts and theories. However, purposive sampling also known as non-random sampling has the tendency of allowing for bias based on researcher's line of thought or interest. It also gives room for "erroneous assumptions" on population and issues that are subject of research. Some research experts are of the view that non-random sampling does not have statistical representation that is accessed thereby making it inferior (O'Leary, 2013:168). Nonetheless, purposive sampling according to Miles & Huberman (1994 as cited in Devers et al., 2000:264) help researchers go all out to achieve the research set out goal through choosing information-rich situations, stressing that organisations, people and individuals and their behavioural pattern

which offer valuable intuition towards the research question. Sampling in this purposive sampling is a tool that allows research process or procedure to be manageable; a sample can also be used to represent a large population. That was why the sampling technique is relevant for the selection of the respondent. To allow for capturing of detailed data while on the field, I incorporated snowballing in my research design. Snowballing help in getting referrals from referrals whom I think will have relevant information or knowledge that will enhance my research. O’Leary refer to such people as “key informants”. However, as good as snowballing is a research tool, it can also lead to the disadvantaged or erroneous “convenience sampling”, that is sample selection based on researcher’s convenience which at the end gives a non-credible research (O’Leary, 2013:168-171).

In the process of selecting my respondents, those who had knowledge about the conflict from both the political economy and political ecology point of views were selected. Also, those that were affected by the conflicts but are not directly involved were selected for the interview process. This included the Fulani herdsmen Traditional District Dodo (Head), a Senior official at the Climate Change, Federal Ministry of Environment, two respondents from the Agricultural Research Council of Nigeria and two respondents from the National Veterinary Research Institute. Others include two lecturers from the University of Jos and Federal College of Forestry, one representative each of other tribes such as Panshin, Yoruba and Igbo. Also, two traders, two representatives of an international NGO working on the Fulani herdsmen-farmers conflict Search for Common Ground were selected for the interviews. For Focus Groups participants, 8 participants were selected for each focus group discussion that was held for both the farmers and the herdsmen.

## 2.5. Data Collection Procedure

Before going to the field, I had contacted GIZ (a German Organization in Nigeria) through Mr Stephen Bamidele the Head of their office in Ogun State in Western Nigeria seeking to make use of their contact farmers in Jos Plateau State. He instructed me to write to their Head of Programme GIZ-SEDIN for approval in which I did, and I was linked to their office in Jos so that I could be connected to the Berom farmers that they had been working together for a long time. Although GIZ did not directly deal with conflict issues, the assistant rendered made my inroad to the farming communities easier since I come from GIZ. The GIZ contact person in Jos Mallam Jalo referred me to the organisations that deal directly with the conflict and individuals that are a key informant to my research. This include leaders of Fulani Herdsmen in Dutse Kura in Bassa Local Area, and Berom community Riyom Local Government Area, Centre for Conflict and Peace Studies in University of Jos, Search for Common Ground (NGO), Nigeria Stability and Reconciliation Programme (NGO), North Central Zonal Headquarters of National Environment Standards and Regulations Enforcement Agency. I had both individual and focused interviews group in these places.

After the collection of data in Jos, I left for Abuja Nigeria’s Federal Capital Territory where the Headquarters of Federal Ministries of Agriculture and Environment are located. In Federal Ministry of Agriculture, I was directed to go to Agricultural Research Council of Nigeria (ARCN) which is the umbrella

body that governs all agricultural Institutes and colleges in Nigeria. There I interviewed one of their Directors and was also introduced to the Executive Secretary who heads the Council. At the Federal Ministry of Environment, I was directed to The Director of Department of Climate Change of the Ministry. I interviewed him. After that, I requested The Agricultural Research Council of Nigeria (ARCN) to give me the approval to visit some Research Institutes and colleges under its administration in furtherance of my field data collection. I got the approval and proceeded to National Veterinary Research Institute in Vom, Plateau State. There I met with the Acting Director and Deputy Director who gave me the approval to meet with the Institute Personnel that are relevant to my Research and, I met and interacted with them on my research accordingly. While I was at the Federal Ministry of Environment I was advised to visit Nigerian Environmental Study/Action Team a non-governmental organization located in Ibadan Western Nigeria which has played a significant role in Climate Change awareness in Nigeria. Unfortunately, I couldn't make it to Ibadan as the resources to be travelling around the country are limited. Moreover, I still have Focus group discussion to organized in Bassa local government

Before going to Abuja, I had plans to organize the focus group discussion for the Fulani and the Berom communities in the two Local Government, but I was successful in doing one, and the date given to me for that Bassa of Local Government was 5 days interval to that of Riyom local government, so I had to quickly go to Abuja to meet with Government official that I already targeted for data collection. However, two focus group discussions were organized in each of the Local Government. In Riyom Local Government, I first conducted the focus group discussion with the Fulani community; the participants are all male, but that of the Berom community included two female participants. In Bassa Local Government all the participants were male for both the Fulani and Berom communities. The focus group discussions lasted for a minimum of 1 hour and the maximum of 1 hour 15 minutes. The focus group discussions were divided into two sessions. The first sessions which lasted for 30-40 minutes addressed the core issues affecting the communities and go for a break then come back to reassessed the positions that were shared in the first segment. The focus groups went on smoothly without any incident, and the lowest age of the participants of all the focus group discussion was 25 years while the highest age was 69 years of age.

## 2.6. Limitations and Challenges

I encountered challenges in the course of my field work. Some of these being:

1) Language: Although I speak some of the native languages of the areas I visited I still needed an interpreter as some words were too difficult for me to understand and also to give a sense of belonging to the people.

2) Security: This is a major issue as some of the areas I visited are still living in fear of the unknown as a result of the conflicts and cannot trust any outsider as a friend. It took a lot of courage and patience to reduce the degree of hostility.

3) Cost: Money was a big challenge as I have to spend a lot on transportation (in some situations I have to hire a motor cycle), also spent money in

entertaining focus group members in some local areas visited. Some of the locals assumed I am from the government and I must have been given a lot of money for what am doing.

4) Administrative Bureaucracy: Too much unnecessary and avoidable administrative bureaucracy in government Institutions as I have to write letters and seek approval from Superior officers before anyone one can officially interact with me or provide data. This resulted in loss of time.

## **2.7. Conclusion**

The use of qualitative interview and focus group research method give room for easy understanding and participation of the herdsmen and farmers. This process is essential since most of them are not formally educated to read and write to respond to questionnaires. Qualitative interview and focus group gives the people the power of freedom to express themselves and making the research meaningful and practical. This method does not happen without some challenges like getting to meet the people and setting an environment to allow them talk and sincerely on the subject under discussion. Language barrier is another setback that this method presents since some of the herdsmen and farmers have no formal education and can only use their local languages. I overcome these challenges by using some people who understand the language and English to overcome the challenge of the language barrier. All in all, the method proven to be successful as the data collected for the studies was sufficient and relevant to answer the research questions of the study.

## **Chapter 3 The X-ray of the Conflict Escalation with the Theory of Access, Political Ecology, and Economy**

### **3.1. Introduction**

The discussions and consequences of the conflict between the Farmers and herdsmen in Nigeria and Africa at a larger level make it necessary to look at the situation critically and analyse the conflict using theoretical framework that defines the causative factors to the conflict. This chapter focuses on the theoretical framework that is deeply the theories of access, political economy, and political ecology that can be used in defining, understanding and analysing the conflict between the farmers and Fulani herdsmen in Plateau State. These theoretical approaches are lenses used to capture forms of the conflict and are the impact on the people, environment and livelihood. In the first part of this chapter, the theory of access is discussed to show that there is clear difference in having legal right to own properties does not necessarily mean that one could access the property when decided to own one. Moreover, the access is embedded in power and mechanism that control access rather than constitutional right. The political economy theory which is closely related to the theory of access is discussed in the second part of the chapter while the third part is made up of the discuss regarding the political ecology theoretical analysis.

### **3.2. Theory of Access**

Theory of Access, as propounded by Ribot and Peluso (2003) suggests that there is a clear difference between the right to property or resources and the ability to access such. In view of this, they define access as some mediums through which people benefit from things (which in the case of farmer and herdsmen is the land and its resources) (Ribot and Peluso, 2003:156). The theory of access is useful in the analysis of specific resource conflicts with the understanding of what various actors stand to gain or lose. The theory is not only useful in identifying actors who control some form of access, but it also helps in establishing what kind of relationship that exists between those that control access to resources and those seeking access to the resources. In the context of the Berom-Fulani herdsmen conflict, the battle has always been embedded in the claiming right of ownership of land either for sedentary farming or grazing. Ribot and Peluso (2003:158) opined that access involves relations which are not static either with a group or individual's position level and power in the social relationship. Although the subject of research is all about resource conflict between the Fulani herdsmen and the Berom farmers, the theory also helps to look at the role that less dominant actors (Igbos, Yoruba, and other Ethnic groups) that have control over access to resources play in the resource conflicts. Considerably, "those who maintain access through some gatekeeper may also shift between forming alliances and clashing with each other" (Ribot and Peluso, 2003:173). However, Ribot and Peluso maintained that, in using this model, it is imperative to concomitantly look at the bigger perspectives such as political, economic relations.

From the political-economic standpoint, these relationships can be broken down into three categories access; access control, access maintenance and access gain. Access control is capacity and capability to arbitrate other people's access; that is the examination and path of action, the role of direction and regulation (Rangan1997:72) while access maintenance needs the spending of resources to retain a type of resource access (Berry 1993 as cited in Ribot and Peluso, 2003:159). This theory is relevant to the understanding of the conflict because land is such an important factor of production and access to it is essential for poverty reduction, empowerment of the poor and economic growth (Conroy 2014: 5). In essence, agriculture, which entirely relies on land, employs 75 percent of Nigerians and its significance cannot be downplayed (Onyia, 2015: 188). Its importance explains why conflicts concerning land can be challenging to solve, especially in situations where there are no demarcations, and every group believes that the another party is encroaching its territory. Failure by two groups to resolve their territorial disputes can give rise to conflicts that last for years (Conroy, 2014: 5). The fact that the government has been slow in making demarcations and enforcing the existence of the boundaries has led to increased conflict over land. In some places where clear demarcations were made, the boundary marks have long disappeared. Consequently, each group moves to unilaterally appropriates themselves the exclusive rights to own a portion or a vast area, putting the occupation of the others into danger (Kabir, 2016: 4; Joseph & Rothfuss, 2014: 182). There is one major point that differentiates property and access; access concerns ability, which relates to power while property relates to right (Ribot and Peluso, 2003:155-156). The theory of access, when applied to conflict between the farmers and Fulani herdsmen, helps in contextualising the access dynamics of rights and ability to enjoy such rights.

### 3.3. Political Economy

Scholars have used the political economy as an approach to looking at, analyse and understand the agricultural production mode and its means of production. Bernstein in *Class Dynamics of Agrarian Change Journal* (2010) explicitly defined Agrarian Political Economy as "the social relations and dynamics of production and reproduction, property and power in agrarian formations and their processes of change both historical and contemporary". Critically the definition spelt some four key factors like social relations (economy exchange) property (ownership of resource) and power (political direction or authority), all these can be associated with the conflict between farmers and Fulani herdsmen in Plateau State as they never woke up just one morning and started fighting rather it is a result of a breakdown of long economic relationship over land resources available that they both need and use to sustain their means of livelihood.

Furthermore, four important key questions are essential in this theory namely; (1) who owns what? This relates to ownership and property of means of production like land. (2) Who does what? This question concerns the social relations of labour; it involves all the activities performed by different people in the social relations of production and reproduction. (3) Who gets what? This relates to the income from production and reproduction which is also referred to as "fruits of labour" as it comes in a different form other than monetary

form. (4) What do they do with it? This is about the social relations of accumulation and consumption (Bernstein, 2010:22-23, Ellis, 1993:47-49).

The conquest of Jos Plateau by the British Colonial masters and discovery of high quality mineral resource (Tin Ore) at the turn of the 19th century changed the political and market economy direction of the state. They established Nagaruta Tin Mining Company. This company will have to compete with non-cooperating indigenous local miners. British colonial master's government and corporations operated a capitalist form of production and reproduction. To have a maximum and profitable mining business or production, the Head (a white man) who represented British-led interest had three hurdles to deal with; safety of mining operations, competition from the indigenes and lastly getting sufficient labour. To this end, he conspired with Niger Company in London and Nigeria and British forces in Bauchi emirate and attacked the population, dispossessing some of them of their land and forcing them to support them. The British after the attack on the indigenous population brought in the Hausa miners and allowed them access to Tin Ore sites. Also, the growing population encouraged the inflow of herdsmen as the population encouraged diary market. The indigenous land was taken and given to the Hausas for economic activities without the consent of the indigenes (Morris, 1977:207, Hodder, 1959: 100,119-121). That action was politically carried out as divide and rule strategy to gain access to land and the resources from it. This must have sowed a seed of discord or misunderstanding between the indigenes and the strangers which can be said to have contributed to the modern-day conflict between the indigenous farmers and herdsmen in Plateau State. To buttress this point further, the case of indigenous farmers in Rufiji district of Tanzania who bitterly complained about them and their communities not been consulted before the herders from Kilombero and Usangu were resettled in their communities through government policy and this served as factor that added to the increase in hatred amongst the host and foreigners as it had a harmful effect on the livelihoods of the indigenes. Moreover, the government went ahead again to give some of the lands in Rufiji out to investors for the economic activities of biofuel production (Mwamfupe, 2015:6-7).

The conflict between farmers and Fulani herdsmen is centred around the four points of political economy. The farmers as indigenes see the land as theirs (ownership) and will not allow Fulani herdsmen to take over their means of crop production or further destroy their crops which are supposed to form part of their reproduction while on the other hand, the herdsmen see themselves as having ownership right of the land in the context of the grazing routes that were created and gazetted for there to graze. Ellis (1993:47) gives more insight on this kind of societal production as the situation can be viewed through Marxian Political Economy. It explained that the society is ruled by the manner in which the larger society works, it 's hard to separate political proportions of human societies as it is dialectical by nature, and it does concentrate strain and flaw between opposites which collectively as theoretical interest and as description of the forces that drive society completely in certain directions; significant opposites are thus production for use and production for exchange, owners versus non-owners of resources of production, capital versus revenue and wages.

Furthermore, labour as a factor of social relations of production can be said to have contributed to the modern day conflict between the farmers and



Fulani herdsmen. The major interest of the Colonial Masters in the pre-colonial and colonial era was to make the colonized generate income or profit for the colonial masters by controlling the labour of the colonized became their subjects via overriding their institution, modifying or disrupting their system of land allocation and pre-colonial peasant subsistence or livelihood (Bernstein, 2010:43). This is exactly what the British Masters did to Plateau. To understand this point further, there is a need here to view the situation historically on how the British took over the political authority in Plateau state and controlled the market and economic activities there as well. As has been mentioned earlier good quality Tin Ore was discovered in abundance in Plateau at the turn of the 19th century. The Hausas were brought in as local miners to help break the resistance of the local indigenes and gained access to the mining sites (Morris, 1977:207). After their objective of using the Hausas to break down the wall of resistance from the indigenes they stopped the Hausas from continued mining, this prompted the Chief (Sarki) to make a formal report, but it fell on deaf ears. As common with capitalist, the British Colonial Master threw a 'façade' by allocating another land to them for their mining, but that had a little or no Tin Ore deposit. By 1912 the Hausa miners have become workers or better known as 'tributors' as the British took over entirely political power and economic control and incorporated Tin ore mining in Plateau State into the larger market through exportation. By 1906, the Berom and other tribes have submitted to the British whose patrol team have destroyed their crops (farm field) their main economic stay or livelihood and forced into labour for the white men's mining companies in exchange for food and after many disputes were transformed into wage labour which was taken back from them as tax (Morris, 1977:208-2013). Traditional social institutions are broken down through the influence of a new system of production and known traditional pre-capitalist standards were eliminated, what we see now is the vanishing 'integrative mechanisms' that is centered on locality, primary relations giving way to the upsurge of new 'social mechanisms of integration 'which is centered on market' (Stavenhagen 1975:67 as cited in Watts, 1983:42). This agrees with the Bernstein (2010) the third point on who gets what, as the British became owners of means of production it took the profit that came from it and accumulates the wealth also. Having examined the political and economic history of Plateau State, one can say the seed of discord sown is what has degenerated and grown into full-blown conflict as the local indigenous farmers can be said to be fighting to take back what belongs to them. The Nigerian government has towed the line of the colonial masters by formulating policies that benefit the government or influential individuals to the detriment of both the farmers and Fulani herdsmen which have contributed to the escalation of the conflicts as both have chosen to protect their means of livelihood at all cost.

### **3.4. Political Ecology**

Several theories have been put forth in an attempt to explain the existence of farmer-herder conflicts that have characterised the African country for decades. One of the frameworks is climate change, which postulates that structural factors that put a strain on natural resources push people to stay together. Initially, the phenomenon of climate change arose as an environmental issue and an energy problem before its perception as a security threat. The security con-

notation necessitated a closer global attention, which saw its admission for discussion at the United Nations Security Council (Olaniyan et al., 2015: 55). This body and various stakeholders recognised the fact those confrontations over land use and food production not only affect the communities involved but also pose challenges at both national and international level. The understanding that climate change has the potential to disrupt peaceful coexistence is a clear indication that it is a factor worth world government's (Nigeria in particular) attention, necessitating the institution of mitigation measures to address it (Olaniyan et al., 2015: 56). The current climate change and global warming have resulted in unprecedented environmental crisis across the world (Enete & Amusa, 2010: 2). The risks associated with these changes are very uncertain, more so given that the situation is expected to worsen in the coming century (Ogbo et al., 2013: 221).

Although, Watts (1983:42) and Blaikie and Harold (2015:1-2), argue that it is a valid approach to investigate the impact of human activities on the environment. Nonetheless, it has to be contextualised with the associated issues of peasant farming, social inequality, the origin of commodity production, how wealth circulates, surplus extraction worth. It is at this point that environmental relations can be considered as occurrences of the productive processes and after that, the land yield and its value about labour go down except something is done to restore it. This implies that the physical cause why land gets degraded is a natural scientific process while on the other hand, the cause why suitable are not carried out to counter is social in nature. Applying this theory to the conflict between the farmers and Fulani herdsmen, one needs to go back to the historical economic activities that took place in Plateau State. The social relation of production and the aftermath processes of products of Tin Ore mining led to soil, erosion, sedimentation, water pollution and overgrazing (Hodder, 1959:117-119). It is important to note here that overgrazing was reported to have taken place at that time when population has not grown to the level it is today when the market is more commodified than it was back then, however, this is not to say that effect from that time is what has completely boomerang to this moment, on the other hand, it is the inability of state and non-state actors to take appropriate steps forestall or mitigate such occurrences that has increased drought and desertification in the northeastern part of the country which caused many people including Fulani herdsmen to live their original place of earning livelihood into Plateau (North Central) permanently which now created increased population and competition for resources which now became scarce and escalated the conflict.

The case of the conflict between Senufo indigenous farmers and Fulani herdsmen is a good example of political ecology and rural environment in the wider context of political economy. The Ivorian government in a bid to bail itself out economy crisis through avoidance of spending heavily on the importation of frozen meat South America and none consistent supply of meat from Burkina Faso and Mali had to formulate land use policy which gave right and access for sedentarization and grazing to the Fulani herdsmen minority against the Senufo indigenous farmers who previously had no dealing with Fulani herdsmen. This action led to a revolt and eventual killing of 80 Fulani herdsmen in 1986 after an outcry of uncompensated damaged crops by the cattle who strayed into a farm field to graze on crops (Basset, 1988:454-457). Another example is the farmer-herder conflict due to marginalisation and corruption in inland Niger delta of Mali. Political; power relations determined who own

the grass for the cattle and the floodplain from the farmers which could not be sustained consistently as different interest gets to hold political power and eventually change policies that suit their tribal interest livelihood and corruption became the order of the day (Benjaminsen and Ba, 2009:72-75).

### **3.5. Conclusion**

In this chapter I discussed the theory of access, political economy and political ecology as lens to analyse the conflict with relevant examples. The conflict is not just about climate change but it is about political relations, that is how governance relates and control people, their environment and their source of livelihood. In the next chapter, I will look at the escalation of the conflict from the active and non-active actors in the conflict.

## **Chapter 4 . Looking at the Escalation of the Conflicts from the Perspective of NGOs, Minority Groups and Government Agencies**

### **4.1. Introduction**

This chapter focused on the presentation and discussion of the data acquired during the field study in Riyom and Bassa local government. In order to understand the extent that Fulani herdsmen-farmers conflict has exacerbated and what are causative factors responsible for the escalation of the conflict from the perspectives of both the Fulani herdsmen and Berom farmers, NGOs, government research institutes, and other minority ethnic groups in the study area. By doing this, it will help us make sense of the government response that follow the path of climate change narratives as the cause to the escalation. To do this, two questions were proposed, in the first part of this chapter I shall discuss the factors that the farmers and the Fulani herdsmen considered as the main reason there is escalation in the conflict while the second part focus is on the perspective of those that are not directly involve in the conflict. The findings discovered that the settler-indigene dichotomy that the Fulanis perceived as a form of alienation is one of the major factors. Also, climate and ecological impact on the environment in the name of urbanisation shrank the space to competing resources, therefore responsible for population surge in smaller areas that are less affected by climate change or ecology factor. The last section will be the conclusion of the chapter. The findings as it will be shown in the chapter suggest that although, the climate change play a role in the escalation of the conflict. However, the escalation was possible because of the pre-existing tension deeply embedded in the political economy of resource control

### **4.2. Perspectives of Fulani herdsmen and Berom Farmers**

#### ***4.2.1. The Indigene-Settler Dichotomy.***

In many parts of Africa, access to land and water is not only crucial to the survival of people that resides in the rural areas. It is also an important part of gross national products at the national level through livestock and agricultural products (Le Meur et al., 2006:13). However, land related conflicts have engulfed the rural areas of Nigeria with a complex and multi-faceted dynamics which change over the time depending on the geographical location that such conflict occurs (Conroy, 2014:2). For the herdsmen, there is no life without cattle and they can go whatever mile to ensure that their source of livelihood is sustained (Odoh & Chigozie, 2012: 113). These violent confrontations have often caused loss of lives, destruction of property, and degradation of the environment (Marietu & Olarewaju 2009: 360; Ehiabhi, 2012). In the context of Berom community in the Plateau state of Nigeria, the finding of this study suggests that the primary tussle over land has always been on the rights and access to land for agricultural and pastoral uses. Even though the Constitution

of the Federal Republic of Nigeria stipulated that all Nigerian citizen (by birth, registration, and naturalization) have the unreserved rights to move freely, reside and conduct business legally in any part of the country without discrimination (Emina, 2015:59). According to the conversation I had with the Fulani herdsmen respondents, it was revealed that the Berom are doing everything possible to push them out of Jos calling them settlers with no right to land to which is essential for their survival. According to Alhaji Danlandi, age 45 who is one of the Fulani communities' heads in Riyom local government:

“The farmers consider Fulani’s as settlers and not indigenes in Plateaus State. They have asked us to leave Plateau State as the land belongs to them. But the truth is that Plateau State belongs to us all as our great grandparents were born here and grew up here and we are all Nigerians. Their desire to achieve their set goal of pushing us out of the state led to the conflict of 2001. We observed that the immediate past governor of the state in Person of Jonah David Jang supported the farmers against us. This is why there is no peace up till this moment between our people herding cattle and the Beroms in Miago”.

Although, there is no evidence to support the allegation of the immediate past governor of the state supporting the Berom attacks on the Fulani herdsmen. However, government policy has always attached the ownership of lands to indigeneship rights rather than citizenship rights (Actionaid Ni-geria, 2008; Afolabi, 2009; HRW, 2013). The findings shows that there are clear differences in the interpretation of Indigeneship and Citizenship rights in Plateau State. The Berom communities considered themselves as the Indi-gene of Jos and the Fulani’s as settlers just like any other tribes (Igbo, Yoruba, Igala) in the society. Therefore, the Fulani’s and other tribes considered to be settlers did not have exclusive rights enjoyed by the Beroms people on ownership of Land. “The conflict in Jos stems from competition between Muslims and Christians, ‘settlers’ and ‘indigenes’, respectively, for political power and representation in government” (Majekodunmi et al., 2014:3). The ActionAid report of 2008 offered an insight to the fundamental difference in the 'indigeneship' rights and that of citizenship rights in Nigeria, most especially in the middle belt region of the country that has witnessed the escalation in the conflict between Fulani herdsmen and farming communities. In Plateau state, “while the 'settlers' are struggling for inclusion, the 'indigenes' are pursuing the path of exclusion that they see as sure ways of benefiting from the scarce available resources” (Actionaid Nigeria, 2008: 15). According to the respondents of this study, the main strategy that was adopted by the indigenes to exclude the Fulani herdsmen is to deny them the registration form as an indigene of the state regardless of the constitution provision of Nigeria that state that anybody that spent a particular number of years in a given state can decide to become the indigene of such state. Mallam Mohamad stated further;

“We might not be lawyers or acquired advance degree to interpret the law, but we are aware of our rights to be treated as an indigene of this state. I was born and raised here; I have been living in this state for the past 55 years, and yet our people have been denied indigene form of Plateaus state. This has made many of our people to migrate to other states in the Northern part of the country get indigene form. So, you can imagine what will happen will if this our people get to join the military and they are drafted to Plateau state for peace keeping where they were initially denied been indigene”.

The implication of this argument is two ways. First, it explains why the Berom people have alleged the Military supporting the Fulanis on the one hand. On the other hand, it suggests that being recognized as an indigene of a state is a prerequisite to land rights and ownership. If this is the problem of the crisis, it will be better to hear from the other groups that have been alleged of excluding the Fulani people. During the interview session with one of the leaders of the Berom community in Riyom local government explained to me that the escalation has nothing to do with ownership and land rights but the hidden agenda of the Fulanis to take over the community and chased the occupant away. He elucidated further on how several people have abandoned their villages with the fear of going back to their homes because of Fulani herdsmen attacks. He was of the opinion that;

“If they (Fulanis) told you that they were marginalised regarding land ownership and rights to properties, where do they get the lands they built their houses? You should ask them why the Igbos and Yoruba are not fighting the Beroms people over lands, are they also denied the rights to ownership of land and property? Because you are a settler in a particular community doesn't limit you to acquire properties or owned one, at least we have other settlers that owned properties. On the contrary, the Fulanis are not fighting us for land ownership or rights, they want to eliminate us so that they can take over the land, enforced their religion, culture and way of life on those that manage to survive their onslaught” (Mr Solomon Pang, age 50, Leader of the Farmers Association)

Another respondent, Mr David Udogan supported Mr Solomon argument that the escalation is not about the deprivation of property rights or ownership of land; it is simply a political issue of who controls the land and the leadership structure of the community. He was of the opinion that the Fulani are just using the issue of rights to land as a camouflage to perpetrate their genocide agenda. He was of the opinion that the killing of pregnant women and children as young as ten months old when they raid villages is a testament of the agenda of settlers taken over indigenes lands. He stated further;

“They want to rule and control everything, how can settlers be ruling the indigenes. They want the indigenes to be getting permission from them before they can do anything. Something that cannot happen when you go to Fulani land or have you ever heard of Igbo's, Yoruba's, or Berom people that have migrated to Fulani land in the Northwest or Northeast of the country for decades to be fighting over land. This is because we know our places. If they are saying that they are not settlers and that is why they are fighting us. Please what about the incidents in Enugu and Akwa (Igbo land), or Ondo and Saki (Yoruba land), Akwa-Ibom and Cross River (Efik and Ibibio land), are they also indigenes of those places. Clearly, they have a devious agenda

While the argument of ownership continues taking the form of indigene-settler dichotomy, it is important to emphasise at this juncture that it is not only in Plateau state Nigerians find themselves as a second-class citizen based on the argument that they are not natives of a particular community. Therefore, alienating them from the socio-economic and political spheres because the indigenes questions the aspiration of those that they considered being settlers, taking the shape of “we and them” when it comes to resources control and allocation (Afolabi, 2009: 9). But who are an indigene and a settler, how long can someone live in a particular area before he/she can claim to be an indigene of the area. Unfortunately, the constitution of the Federal

Republic of Nigeria is full of notable ambiguity when it comes to who is citizen or indigene as reflected in the provision of allocating Ministerial positions (Emina, 2015:59). But again, it is practiced “when a person must prove beyond reasonable doubt that he or she is an indigene of a place by, for instance, get a letter of identification from the traditional ruler or councillor before a local government council or state could issue a certificate of indigeneship, not citizenship” (Obomanu 2010 cited in Emina, 2015:59).

Citizenship therefore in the Nigerian context has a dual derivative and the consequence of this is the indigene-settler syndrome with its attendant socio-economic and political struggles as found manifest in inter-ethnic and intra-ethnic conflicts in many parts of Nigeria (Afolabi, 2009:10-11). What is still not clear is why the Fulani herdsmen cannot buy lands since non-indigene of the states, and other settlers can purchase Lands and do whatever they like on it even if we are to assume that the Fulani accepted the status of settlers. In the focus group discussion with the Fulani community in Bassa local government, it was gathered that some of them that are peace loving have attempted to purchase land for farming so that there will be enough pasture for their cattle but have been unsuccessful because the Beroms people lay claims to all the land and will not sell but they do sell to other ethnic groups. Abubakar, a 40-year-old Fulani semi-pastoralist farmer, accentuated that:

“It got to a time that three of my friends and I decided to sell some cattle so that we can buy large plots of land and engage in mechanised farming in which we can plant crops that can serve as pasture for our herds. We were so convinced that the Beroms will not reject the money because it goes into millions of naira even for such location, one can say it is too much. I will tell you that for more than one year we did not find a land to purchase not until we find one Igbo man that decided to sell part of his land to us. Do you now see why people are angry, you deny us right to land and yet you refuse to sell land even if we want to buy? It is this not calling for conflict.”

Abubakar’s opinion was supported by all other participants of the Fulani community focus groups that were conducted in both Riyom and Bassa local government area. The response that I got from the Berom community focus group did not deny or confirm the allegation. What was clear from the findings is the power to allocate land in the two areas where the study was conducted is vested in the traditional rulers or village chief. However, the decision to sell part of lands already allocated is the personal decision of those that own the land. Be that as it may, the respondents from Berom community claimed that the news of clashes in other parts of the state and the country as a whole had made many Beroms landowners refuse to sell lands to Fulani people. Mr Moses, one of the participants of the focus group discussion, explained why the majority of Berom people would not be interested in selling land to any Fulani.

“Majority of people that have allowed Fulani to purchase land for farming regretted it, including me. When you sell land to Fulani people, they maintain a cordial relationship with the farmers that share land boundaries with them. After some time, they will be encroaching on your land and destroying crops, and if you confront them, they will turn it to violent. Moreover, the type of land mass they require for the farm can only be granted by the village head.”

At the juncture, I need to emphasise that the scepticism of Berom farmers of not willing to sell or lease lands to the Fulani herdsmen was not a

Nigeria phenomenon, such occurrences has also been documented in Kenya where non-pastoralist land owners refused to lease land to herders that are willing to enter contractual agreement that will allow them to make use of the land for grazing purpose. The study conducted by Lengoibonia et al (2009) revealed that only, 9.8% of non-pastoralist landowners indicates that they always lease lands to herders either by verbal or written agreements, 9.8% shows that they only lease land to herders occasionally while a whole 80% indicates that they have never and not willing to lease land for herders (Lengoibonia et al., 2009:16-17).

The implication of the argument from both the Berom and the Fulani herdsmen above is that political power plays a significant role in who owns what and gets what in the community. It goes without saying that those that fall under the classification of “non-indigenes are often deprived of access to state and local government jobs and other opportunities. The Human Rights Watch 2013 report revealed that “those who cannot find a local government in Nigeria to grant them an “indigene certificate” are effectively “stateless” and cannot apply for federal government employment, thus denying them access to some of the most important avenues of socio-economic mobility” (HRW, 2013:35). The Indigene-Settler dichotomy explains why the Fulani herdsmen and the Berom farmer’s conflict escalation goes beyond the narrative of scarce land resources when looking at it from the political economy point of view. This in agreement with Leu Muer and others argument that when considering factors that influence access to landed resources, one should consider the power and symbolic relations involved. They maintained that “community-based natural resource management revolve around issues in decision-making location and modalities of power and resource devolution and thus accountability mechanisms” (Leu-Muer et al., 2006:13). Nigeria, like many other countries in Africa, has various mechanisms that land can be acquired; it can be through the government, community, and the family level. The issue of land—holding differs from one ethnic group to ethnic group. An example of such ethnic groups is Berom and Isaragi in Plateau and Kwara state where village communities ‘own’ land. “In the village community, authority over land rests with the village head and his council of elders, or with the elders where no chief is recognized” (Ezeomah, 1985:1). Therefore, the host communities’ adoption of customary property regimes often alienates the nomadic Fulanis from the essential natural resources for keeping their animals. (Fagbayibo, 2009:5).

#### ***4.2.2 Cattle Rustling and Criminality***

Another important factor that was discovered from the interaction with both the Fulani herdsmen and Berom farmers is the issue of crime and cattle rustling, although, both parties trade blames on who is responsible for the phenomenon. It was gathered from the findings that while the Fulani herdsmen accused the Berom farmers of stealing their cattle and killing the herders, the Berom farmers insisted that it is the fellow Fulani that is involved in the criminal act then point fingers at the Beroms as the perpetrators. During the focus group discussion, one of the Fulani herdsmen explained that many of their members had lost a fortune to the criminal acts of cattle rustlers, he maintained that;



“The Berom are resentful and envious of the success of the Fulani people; they target our cattle as you know that when you sell 15 cows, it can cover conveniently the total amount of money that you can get from a farm produced in a Berom. Because of this, they turned to the criminal act because they are looking for quick and easy money; many of our members have lost their livelihood to their evil act. You can imagine someone that has more than 100 cows now become a herder that works for others when you take away the source of someone livelihood it is the same thing as killing that person, so you can tell that the individual will not hesitate to retaliate”.

I asked further if they have any prove that the Berom farmers are involved in the criminal act of cattle rustling. Some of them said that they participated in the tracking of the stolen cows, and they were traced to Riyom. Alhaji Musa a 48 years old herd owner elucidate further on how sure they are that the Beroms are responsible for cattle rustling

“On several occasions, we have traced our cattle to Berom communities, throughout 2014 they more than 1 thousand cows were stolen; this did not include those that were killed. We were able to retrieve like 150 cows, but more than 887 were still missing till date. Cattle rustling is one of the problems that mobile pastoralist like us are used too, but of recent, it is no more rustling it is total decimation. If it is one or two cows that got lost to rustling, one can still come out of the grieve of the loss because you still have your herd to manage. But of recent, the cattle rustling is on a larger scale with sophisticated weapons, they kill the herders and go away with the whole herd in some cases. Herders that mange to escape were the ones that only intimate us of the attacks, so you can imagine how angry and dangerous somebody that has nothing to lose again can become.”

In Nigeria, the pervasiveness of cattle rustling has been extensive, most especially in the northern part of the country where cattle rearing obtains as a foremost agricultural practice. The paucity of data make it difficult to ascertain the exact statistics on the trend of cattle rustling, nevertheless, isolated figures that exist with cattle breeders association put the death toll of herders at 322 and the loss of 60,000 cattle’s stolen by rustlers in 2013 alone across Plateau, Nasarawa, Niger, Kaduna, Taraba, Benue and Zamfara states (Okoli and Okpaleke, 2014a:112). On the contrary, the Beroms insisted that they have nothing to do with cattle rustling. Mr Panam, a 43 years old farmer during the focus group discussion emphasised that;

“The Fulani herdsmen are not truthful with their allegation of the Beroms as the cattle rustlers. How did you expect anyone that don’t have experience in cattle rearing to control 100 cows, it will be better for them to look inwards to their communities and fish out those rustling their cattle. Let us say that some become rustle their cattle, and they are sure of it, why can't they enter the village and bring out the cattle, rather they kill people, or are they saying women and 18 years old baby rustle cattle too for them to be deserved to be killed.”

From the accusation and counter-accusation as displayed by the findings, one thing is apparent; cattle rustling is real even though both parties involved in the conflict denied been part of such occurrence. The findings is a confirmation of Okoli and Okpaleke argument that the escalation in the Fulani herdsmen-farmers conflicts can be understood from rising wave of violence as a result of cattle rustling in Northern Nigeria (Okoli and Okpaleke, 2014a:110). Pastoralists across Africa are not new to cattle’s rustling; in fact, it is a global

phenomenon that occurs in the rural areas from Scotland (Evans, 2014) to those of Kenya (Griener, 2013) and Ghana (Olaniyan et al., 2015). Although, conventionally, it is criminal intent that driven cattle rustling, however, most recently, the pattern of cattle rustling has taken the shape of organised crime with a colossal criminal complexity and efficiency (Okoli and Atelhe, 2014; Okoli and Okpaleke, 2014b). Therefore, present-day cattle rustlers “operate with modern weaponry and their operations are marked by trans-locational and trans-national syndication” (Alemika, 2013). This evidently underline cattle rustling as a major and typical example of ‘criminal world franchise’ in modern-day societies (Okoli and Agada, 2014; Okoli and Okpaleke, 2014b). This argument was supported by the arrest of 16 criminals that specialised in cattle rustling, in Barkin Ladi and Riyom Local Government areas that were paraded to the press help us to understand why the Fulani and Berom continue to accused each other of attacking villages and cattle rustling (Ibrahim, 2014). The arrested armed robbers are from both Fulani and Berom tribe shows that neither Fulani herdsmen nor the Berom farmers are behind the large scale cattle rustling that led to the escalation of the conflict but criminals that are from the two tribes.

According to the leader of the team that arrested the criminals, when addressing a press conference, “these are the people responsible for the circle of crises on the Plateau,..... Some bad elements among the Fulani and Berom ethnic groups teamed up to kill people in many areas and rustle their cattle,.....They plan and attack Fulani and rustle their cows and take the cows to Berom areas. They also attack and kill Berom people and rustle their cattle and move them to Fulani areas. They have an agent who organizes, buy and sell their cattle for them” (Shehu Musa Aljan cited by Ibrahim, 2014). The implication of the arrest of armed robbers shows that the criminals are taking advantage of the historical animosity between the Fulanis and Beroms as a cover up of the devious act while they continue operating freely. This occurrence is not new to conflicts situation in Nigeria, a study conducted by Egbeleke (2013:34-35) on the root cause of Boko-Haram revealed that many of the attacks and kidnapping linked to Boko-Haram are in fact done by criminals but using Boko-Haram name. The occurrence of criminality occupying a major role in the escalation is a testament to the fact government need to look beyond a narrow range of grazing bills as a response to the escalation of the conflict. However, the escalation of the conflict is not limited to the political explanation, the findings also revealed another factor from the political ecology lens from the dicussion with NGOs, minority ethnic groups (Igbo amd Yoruba) and semi-government officials

### **4.3.Perspectives of State,NGOs and Minority groups**

#### ***4.3.1. Climate Change and Population Surge***

Free movement and grazing of livestock have always been the main source that the Fulani’s draw on in their livelihood. This livelihood is based on the availability of grazing pasture and water for their herds and on how they can effectively limit the effect of livestock diseases (Fagbayibo, 2009:4). Therefore, they pursue their nomadic way of life even if it means that they encounter communities where land is contested. According to one of the respondents

who is a top official at the National Environmental Regulation Agency (NERA), the climate change has changed the pattern of movement of the herders and relationship of Fulani herdsmen and the farmers. He explained that before when Fulani herdsmen migrated to where they can get fresh pasture the farmers are in planting season. Then when the herders are coming back during the harvesting season, the herds will feed on the leftover which is not a problem. Now the migration is no longer seasonal but ongoing; this means the herds will have to graze on farm fields while farmers have their crops not harvested and the cattle destroy them while grazing. He explained further;

“The rain gets delayed in falling or it falls more than necessary which affects planting time and harvesting time, for example some places herdsmen expect that farmers would have harvested their crops so their cattle can graze on the left over, but get there to find the crops not harvested and they feel it is too late to turn back as their livestock have to feed to survive so they pretend they don't know what the cattle are grazing is actually crops”.

Just like many other nomadic tribes in Mali, Niger, Burkina Faso, Mauritania, Tunisia, Western- Sahara and across Africa (Schilling et al., 2010; Bamidele, 2011; Jone-Casey and Knox, 2011; USAID,2014), the climate change impact on the land and resources has further escalated the conflict between the Fulani herdsmen and the farming communities as the competition for resources become more fierce (Awash, 2007:9). The farmer needs to produce food that he will eat, sell to others including the herdsmen and on the other hand the herdsmen need to produce meat to eat, for the farmers and to sell to other people. The respondent from the Agricultural Research Council of Nigeria (ARCN) in Abuja that I discussed with during the data collection believed that due to rainfall variability and desertification, the land had been rendered barren without enough pasture, or in some cases, none at all, to feed the livestock. He maintained that

“Climate change forced the migration of herdsmen to Plateau state which before now had good natural vegetation for the animals to feed on. So, there is a clash of interest at the point of the farmers and herdsmen on the crops and cattle. The cattle graze in the farm field and destroy crops; the farmers react by killing cattle or injuring the herdsmen they meet on the field which results in a crisis that gets blown into full conflict if it is not resolved amicably.”

Clearly, the increased desertification in the northeastern part of the country which makes herdsmen migrate to the south for pasture land, water for their livestock not anymore seasonally as was the case before but throughout the year. However, studies have suggested that the Fulani way of life is “becoming increasingly difficult or nearly impossible for lack of access to land in the wake of degrading grazing resources, conflict as a result of farm encroachment and lack of policy support to protect grazing routes” (Conroy, 2014: 7). Similarly, a lecturer from the Federal College of Forestry who is from a mix-blood of Fulani-Berom background corroborated the respondent from ARCN. He argued that;

“There is a shortage of rainfall even in the Savannah, and sun rays heats up the atmosphere and expose the soil to loss of valuable nutrients needed by the crops to grow. The rain sometimes does not fall at the right time and [in] some cases it over falls which causes a flood. Then Fulani herdsmen come over in desperation to feed their livestock graze on the farm field and in the

pro-cess, destroy crops and farmers react by killing their cattle which leads to conflict”.

In some cases, farmers have moved from inland regions where rain can no longer sustain agricultural productions to river banks where they can conveniently irrigate their plants (Goulden & Few, 2011: 37). However, herders have always claimed the ownership of these areas despite the fact that they are not demarcated since they have traditionally watered their cattle at these points (Bello, 2013: 133; Chukwuma & Atelhe, 2014: 81). Moreover, the use of irrigation has seen more portions of land being put under crop production. This move has not gone well with pastoralists who usually large grazing areas since they have many cattle in their herds to sustain (Msuya, 2009: 2). The possibility of having livestock destroying crops in such areas is hardly inevitable since pastoralists commonly graze through areas outside the farm lands. This practice has been perceived and accepted as the norm from ancient times. Their travels are also opportunistic endeavours made in pursuit of green pastures and water resources. Since it is not usually definite where these resources would be found, the seasonal migrations differ in form from year to year to ensure that they obtain what can sustain their flocks. Worth noting is the fact that these patterns of movement are mostly controlled by seasonal climate differentiations (Muhammed et al., 2015: 23). Usually, these migrations are recipes for violence, especially in areas where the herders arrive and are perceived by farmers as intruders (Omotayo, 2010, 36).

My conversation with the Climate Change Director Department of the Ministry of Environment revealed that the seasonal migration into Nigeria increased tremendously due to climate change as water bodies or masses in other countries in the Sahel dried up and could not sustain the livestock population which encouraged the drift. He stated that human activities on the environment had affected the natural sources of livelihood that both the farmers and the Fulani herdsmen relied on. He maintained that

“In addition to human activities we use firewood as fuel to cook our food and other things which means we are destroying our forest thereby encouraging desert encroachment and already we know that the concentration is more in the arid and semi-arid and the few trees or vegetation we have in these zones are fell, this is not only in Nigeria it happens in Mali, Chad and Niger. So, the desert is increasing, and the vegetation or pasture that could sustain some livestock to reduce the transhumance is diminishing. It is the same effect along the Guinea Savannah”.

Because of Global warming in other countries like Mali, Niger, Sudan, Senegal and the Central African Republic has created a situation where the Fulanis in those countries now follow the river Niger and Benue grazing routes which pass through Riyom and Bassa local government area. This has caused a significant surge in Fulani population competing for resources with the Berom people. In the process, animals wander into people’s farms destroying their crops. According to a respondent from ACRN,

“Non-Nigerians Fulani now graze in Nigeria they do travel mostly in the night and escape after destroying peoples’ crops. In the morning when the Nigerian Fulani herdsmen are going about grazing with their livestock, they are accosted by the farmers whose crops were destroyed and there is no amount of explanation that they give that will convince the farmers that they

are not responsible for the destruction of their crops, So the farmers take laws into their hands by rustling the herdsmen cattle or even killing them”.

During the focus group discussion with the ethnic minority groups (Igbo and Yoruba), it was gathered that climate change played an indirect role in the escalation of the conflict. Although, most of the respondents that participated in the data collection process did not understand the contemporary terminology of climate change. However, from their explanation of why the conflict has escalated, it connotes the impact of climate change. Mr Chibuzor, a 50 years old Igbo farmer that also have ten cows responded that

“In those days when we were growing up and helping our parents in taking out the cattle to graze. Traditionally without any means of technology we observed that there was abundant rain which made the pasture grow well and was available for our livestock to feed on. The farmers also enjoyed good where they farmed. There was no need for Herdsmen to go to farm areas for livestock to get food to eat or water to drink. Our parents used to dig up waters wells which were always filled with water for the livestock to drink. But these days, we find vegetation or pastures growing up poorly and what in the rivers drying up quickly. The rain has reduced considerably. Plateau which used to be cold is now hot. These makes Fulani Herdsmen migrate from other parts of Nigeria and West African countries migrating to Plateau and South-West, South-East and South-South in search of food and water for their livestock”.

Nigeria is experiencing extreme climate conditions, which is negatively impacting on the welfare of millions of its citizens. Dry spells, off-season rains, flooding, and persistent droughts are among the effects of climate change in the country. The cumulative effect is the reduction in the flow of water in rivers passing through arid and semi-arid regions and the drying up of lakes (Odoh & Chigozie, 2012: 114). A Yoruba man, Mr Ayinde who is also a farmer that I interviewed response correlates with that of the Mr Chibuzor regarding the role that climate change played in the escalation of the conflict. He said that majority of the population of the area understanding and approach on climatic condition is the old ways of bush fallowing to allow the land regain Its lost nutrient. He explained further that

“The rain has reduced drastically, and heat has taken over the environment. We do start our planting season in March/April and comes on usually not far from when we plant, but these days the rain takes than usual in coming which makes the planted materials to get rotten in the soil or end been attacked by diseases which spread in warm climatic conditions. These days we must use fertilizer or else we will get nothing from the soil. It is important to note that there no enough farming lands to practice bush fallowing anymore. The main reason we don't clash with Fulani's is that we cannot expand because we also settlers but the Berom farmers who are the indigenous population can expand to other areas and it there they normally clash with the Fulani's”.

In Nigeria, the change in rainfall patterns has had profound effects on agriculture, in a country where the practice is mainly sustained by rains (Odoh & Chigozie, 2012: 114).The argument of climate escalating conflicts was supported by the UNEP study on the climate change-induced migration of pastoral groups leading to conflicts between pastoralist and the sedentary farmers as it was witnessed in Darfur Sudan (Awash, 2007:9). However, Gausset et al., argued such assumption is not necessarily true, and there is a need to examine the “social, cultural and political construction of the territories

through which competition occurs and livelihoods operate” (Gausset et al., 2005: 8). Conroy (2014) supported Gausset position that if one look closely with political ecology lens, one will realize that the Nigerian herdsmen-farmers’ crisis is more of resources management, distribution, and control, rather than scarcity.

For example, studies have shown that the unlimited available resources in the “Adamawa region of north-western Cameroon and south-eastern Nigerian have never prevented the existence of agro-pastoral conflicts, just as it has never prevented tenure conflict among agriculturalists or pastor-alists” (Gausset et al., 2005 cited in Conroy, 2014:3). Obviously, the Fulani herdsmen and the Berom community conflicts has a lot to do with the climate change impact of the environment. However, it will not be premature to say that it does escalate the already tensed situation even though it can be de-escalated through efficient management of resources and fair distribution of resources because environmental conflicts are also political and social, and should be understood by using a political, ecological approach (Peluso and Watts 2001; Forsyth 2002).

#### ***4.3.2. Urbanization and Increase in Population***

Urbanization and increase in population is another factor that was identified by the NGOs representatives that I talked to, the respondent from The Nigeria Stability and Reconciliation Program (NSRP), I interacted with was of the opinion that the Fulani herdsmen are not supposed to come in contact with farmers on a regular basis because they have their cattle corridor they ought to be using to get to rangeland. But the problem is that the non-stop urbanisation of rural areas has taken over the cattle corridor. According to the Respondent;

“Urbanisation is a good thing but not so good for the Fulani herdsmen that have to continue changing their route regularly because development such as the construction of roads, houses, shopping mall among others cut them away from the grazing routes. As a result of this development, they don’t have any other choice to go through other routes which in most cases they will have to pass through farmers farms. I am not saying that they don’t intentionally go the farms to feed their cattle, but with what I have seen here, the majority of the trespassing into farmers farms are because the cattle corridor will are disappearing faster.”

The formation of demarcated rangelands and pathways or cattle corridors do enable the livestock to access water without straying into farmers’ plantations and destroying crops (Muhammed et al., 2015: 23). The fact that grazing lands in Nigeria are scarcely demarcated make this challenge more pronounced, subjecting this vast and important sector of agriculture to continuous suffering. The explanation of the effect of the population above is in consonant with Malthusian and Neo-Malthusian thinking of increasing scarcity as a result of population growth as the principal driver of land and other resource conflicts (Vira, 2015). Another respondent from the Search from common ground raise supported the argument raised by NSRP respondents but emphasised more on the increase in population that have made farmers expand into areas that are previously used by the Fulani herdsmen unchallenged. The respondent maintained that;

“The Increase in population means an increase in production of food, so there are more people now that are into farming in comparison to 10 years ago. Also, the government campaign that encouraged people to go back to farming have seen many Berom young graduate with modern day agricultural practice to come back and start farming, so this increased the number people in competition for farming land”.

From the findings it is evident that the outcome of the urbanization impact is the population increase in areas that are still fertile for grazing or sedentary farming. It has caused a problem of access and usage as competition for the available resources is now on the increase due to the population becoming greater than the resources. Plateau state population increased from 2,104,535 in 2011 to 3,206, 531 in 2006, and 3, 670,000 in 2011. The increase in the population in the region is not a surprise as it reflects the bigger picture of population increase in Nigeria from 88 million in 1991 in 1991 to 140 million in 2006 to 164, million in 2011. Presently, the population of Nigeria is estimated to be around 187 million and is expected to grow to 400 million by 2050. The number of people has increased on both sides, the population of Bassa local government area was 121,652 in 1991 rose to 131,778 in 2006 and 217,270 in 2011 while Riyom local government witnessed an increase from 131,778 in 2006 to 150,830 in 2011<sup>2</sup>. This increase in population, however, requires an increase in production of meat from Fulani herdsmen, production of food from farmers, increased building/houses to accommodate more people, so, there is competition for available land and its resources by farmers and the herdsmen. The expansion of farming activities to meet up with food production in Nigeria has resulted in some situations where farmers have encroached on grazing land in the country, and this creates a conflict situation as Fulani herdsmen have to seek pasture elsewhere and in the movement process cause damage to crops (Abass, 2014:335-336).

#### **4.4. Conclusion**

In conclusion, the farmers blamed most of their problems on the invading pastoral groups and decided to vent their anger due to constant frustrations on them. However, since the pastoral groups also have to ensure that they find pastures for their livestock, fatal clashes over crop and land issues have become perennial problems. In this chapter, the underlying factors responsible for the escalation of conflicts between the Berom and Fulani herdsmen were identified. I discussed indigene settler dichotomy and cattle rustling from the perspective of both Berom farmers and Fulani herdsmen as factors responsible for the escalation of the conflict. While on the other hand, government ministries/agencies, NGOs minority groups and professionals see climate change, urbanization and population as factors responsible for escalation of the of conflict.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.citypopulation.de/php/nigeria-admin.php?adm1id=NGA032>

## Chapter 5 Conclusion

This study seek find out how best the causative factors responsible for the escalation of the conflicts between Fulani herdsmen and Berom farmers can be understood for the purpose of a robust government policy response in addressing the conflicts escalation. To answer this central question the first question that was proposed aim is to identify the underlying factors responsible for the escalation in the conflicts from the perspectives of both the Fulani herdsmen and Berom Farmers. The findings from the farmers and Fulani herdsmen perspective reveal that the escalation of the conflict is more of political economy and access problems. The problem is not the lack of land rather it is a problem of Indigene-settler dichotomy which determines access to land. The Fulani herdsmen in Plateau State are considered by the Berom indigenes as settlers and not are allowed access to the amount of land and its resources that they desire to use for grazing their livestock. They are denied in most cases land and property rights, so the Fulani who are desperate to feed their livestock which is their primary source of livelihood force their way into the lands with herds to graze. While on the other hand, the Berom farmers argue that they don't share the same culture with the Fulani herdsmen, it is therefore not easy for them to sell lease land to them as this will make them have land and property rights (ownership right) which they are afraid if this happens the herdsmen will take over their land from them and impose their culture on them. This is one of the good reasons for the escalation of the conflict between the farmers and Fulani herdsmen.

The second factor identified to be responsible for the escalation of the conflict from the perspective of the farmers and Fulani herdsmen is the issue of cattle rustling. The Fulani herdsmen have accused the Berom farmers of rustling their livestock which makes them react by going to their farms to destroy the crops. But the Berom farmers have argued that it is not possible for Berom farmers to rustle livestock of the farmers as it takes someone with good knowledge of the livestock and their grazing routes to rustle them. This accusation and counter accusation has resulted in the escalation of the conflict. Meanwhile, findings have revealed that some of the Berom farmers and Fulani herdsmen engage in livestock rustling. It is a systematic operation, where the syndicate from both sides in agreement systematically arrange their rustling plans. The Fulanis will go to the area where there are more Berom people to carry out rustling operation while the Berom people go to where there are more of the Fulanis. The operation strategy is to conceal their real identity and confuse the public.

The government response of narrowing down the solution to climate change mitigation and adaptation without is not enough to solve the conflict. To address the dispute between farmers and the Fulani herdsmen the government need to come with political policies that take care of not just climate change but also social, economic challenges. The issue of indigene-settler dichotomy which restricts Nigerians from property ownership and access in some parts of the country should be frowned at and given a permanent political solution. Further, people engage in cattle rustling crime largely because of poverty and they succeed because due to lapses in the security sector. This is also is a situa-



tion that requires political policies that will reduce poverty level of the people and strengthen the state security outfit to prevent crime, protect lives and properties of the people adequately.

. What implication do these perspectives (Berom farmers, Fulani herdsmen, NGOs, Minorities groups) have on the government response that was deeply rooted in the climate change narratives as factor that escalated the conflict

The findings from the perspective of the Government Institution, NGOs and Minority groups suggest climate change as the escalating factor of the conflict. The government institution admits the impact of climate change which has caused desertification in the North-East and North-West part of the country which is originally home to the Fulani herdsmen and has led to their Migration to North Central and Southern part of the country creating population surge

Although viewing climate change as the basis for conflict between pastoralists and farmers from the farmers and Fulani herdsmen is speculative and unsubstantiated, it cannot be overlooked. The idea that climate change puts a strain on existing resources that forces herdsmen to migrate are widely embeded in the perspective of the NGOs, minority groups, and government institutions. Once they move into new areas, localised tensions and conflicts arise, especially due to a high level of frustrations owing to the limitation of resources. The frustrations in such scenarios are often a two-way one. First, herders desert their traditional grazing grounds in search of wetlands having been frustrated by diminishing pastures in those areas. However, when they arrive at the wetter places, their cattle consume crops in plantations thereby infuriating farmers, who respond by driving away the newcomers or killing the animals that destroy their farms. Since herders perceive their livestock as part and parcel of their lives, they would launch revenge missions in response to the killing of their livestock, leading into an ending cycle of confrontations and violence. Moreover, some of them might intentionally lead their cattle to destroy crops. While climate change is the principal cause of these conflicts, it is important to understand the complexity of the issue and give due consideration to other factors that lead to aggression in these areas. Ignorance, ethnicity, intolerance, weak state policies and growth in human populations are among the factors that aid these frustrations. However, even in cases where climate change might not be the contributing factor to conflict, it is important to understand that clashes usually transpire due to a dispute over resources.

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