BORDER POROUSNESS AND THE FULANI HERDSMEN VIOLENCE AS THREAT TO NIGERIA'S NATIONAL SECURITY (2013-2022): IMPLICATION FOR THE ATTAINMENT OF SDG GOAL 16 (PEACE)

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Abstract

Nigeria as a country is plagued with numerous problems of insecurity. This study examines border porousness, Nigeria's national security and violence perpetrated by the Fulani herdsmen and its implication for attaining sustainable development goal 16 (peace). Relying on the fragile state theory, backed by secondary methods of data collection, the study investigates the challenges of securing the nation's borders and how the activities of the herdsmen directly affect the national security of the Nigerian state with negative impact on sustainable development goal 16 (peace). Findings from the study reveal that the numerous illegal border routes in the country and the weak security system pave the way for illegal migrants. Their activities are inimical to the attainment of sustainable development goal 16 (peace). The study recommends proper border monitoring and establishment of ranches for herders and a pre-emptive approach to security management in the country.

Keywords: Border porousness, Herdsmen, Security, Sustainable Development Goals, Peace.

Introduction

One of the challenges facing Nigeria as a country is inability to secure her borders. This scenario has given access to all sort of illegal immigrants to compromise the security and peace of the country.Borders are universal in political life; indeed, they construct political life, they deal with the logic of inside and outside (Vaughan-Williams, 2011). Borders are of utmost importance to human dealings. Throughout the world, they have been removed, built and also have been pulled down. In fact, borders have become physical walls between socio-political and economic ideologies and have divided societies with varying cultures, histories, national identities or economic power; have also constructed a divide in the

relations of people with the same ethnic or cultural uniqueness (Houtum, Kramsch, and Zierhofer, 2005).

Nigeria is made up of different ethnic groups. It shares borders with the Benin Republic in the West, Chad, and Niger in the North and Cameroon in the East (Stohl and Tuttle, 2009; Agbiboa, 2017). In the international system, territorial security is part of the core elements of states security and over the years, several rigorous measures have been made towards ensuring borders security. However, in the case of Nigeria, the measures put in place have not being yielding result because of some factors which will be discussed latter.

This study examines violence orchestrated by the nomadic Fulani herdsmenaccentuated by border porousness and its adverse effect on Nigeria's national security with implications for the attainment of sustainable development goal 16 (peace). Despite the efforts made towards addressing the issue of trans-border crimes and infiltration of illegal migrants by the specialized agencies in Nigeria, no tangible results have been achieved.

This study focuses on the recurrent attacks by the Fulani herdsmen from 2013-2022.This particular timeframe is chosen because of the rise in the attack by the herders on farmers. Also, the International Crisis Group (ICG) in 2018 stated that violence by the Fulani herdsmen has led to deaths that are six times more than that of the Boko Haram insurgency.There are several studies on violence perpetrated by the Fulani herdsmen against farmers and on border porousness like Nwanji et.at (2022); Dambazau, (2022; 2021); George et. al, (2022); Nwanko, (2021); Eselebor and Okunade, (2021); Agbu et. Al, (2020); Omoleye and Joshua (2018) to mention a few, however, there seems not to be sufficient studies linking Fulani herdsmen violence with sustainable development goal (16) peace, hence the need for this study to fill the lacuna in the literature. The next section conceptualises basic concepts.

Literature Review

The Concept of Security

Some scholars likeZabadi (2007) have argued that defining the concept of security is frustrating because of lack of consensus among scholars. Worse still, the term "security" is often almost totally monopolized by international relations study. Some International relations theorists have a narrow view of the concept. It is often used synonymously with military power. The more military power you wield, the more security. Hans Morgenthau(cited in Moller, 2000) hardly bothered to define security in his work on

realism. He addressed security in relations to 'national interest' and 'power'. Buzan (2016) makes it clear that security has to do with liberty from every form of threat and the preservation of the state and its territories. Security also involves the state standing as a monopolistic force to any state or non-state actor that has become a means of threat against the well-being of the citizens and the legitimacy of the state (Bodunde, 2014). Security is regarded as freedom from harm and it also involves the defence of essential standards, principles, and protection within a state. From these definitions, security whether conventional, state-cantered, and non-conventional, boils down to the defence of humans, entities and non-humans with the aim of shielding them from harm.

Countries place on high premium the security of their territory, citizens and all other things within their territory. This goes with the saying that national security involves the protection and defence of a nation's autonomy. All states in the international system have a lot of interests to secure, all these interests combine to form national interest which involves a combination of the state's unique features, legitimate power, authority of government, and also the preservation of the socio-economic welfare of the citizens. Therefore, one can say that national security involves the defence and preservation of the interest of a country (Abolurin 2011, Adedoyin, 2013).Thus, Adebakin (2012) contends that security involves a range of actions and steps taken by a government so that citizens and their belongings are properly protected and safeguarded from harm, risks, and calamities.

The Concept of Border

Borders are not in any way natural or static, but they are historically reliant, and also a dynamic phenomenon that involves individuals and their everyday lives(Vaughan-Williams, 2011). Borders are outlined and designed by various distinctive features, and what is allowed and disallowed from crossing them. Anderson (1999), states that the implication of borders originates from the period when territories were taken into serious consideration as a means of state relations and also an establishing belief for socio-political and economic life in the post-Westphalian system. It is chagrin to note that Fulani concept of border seems to be at variance with the above. When they are migrating from one part to another to get pasture for their cattle, they don't consider any border features, they just move in as much as they can meander their way.

Porous Borders and National security in Nigeria

Adeola and Fayomi (2012), posit that the porous nature of the Nigerian borders hasallowed the inflow of illegal individuals from neighbouring states like Niger, Chad and the Republic of Benin into Nigeria. The combination of arms proliferation and illegal migrants rising from porous borders tend to worsen the condition of insecurity in Nigeria. The government of the country has not done much to solve the issue of border insecurity, or arms proliferation as the attacks by the Fulani herdsmen is still a major concern for its nationals.Despite all the border security agencies in Nigeria, the borders are defined as being porous because insurgents, terrorists and all kinds of criminals come into the country freely, perpetrate crimes and depart undetected (Omoleye and Joshua 2018).

Sustainable Development Goal 16 (with emphasis on Peace): even though there are avalanche of definitions of sustainable development, however, we find heuristic and germane for this study the definition of the Bruntland Commission which sees the concept in its report as development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of the future generations to meet their own needs (United Nations General Assembly, 1987). Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) succeeded the Millennium Development Goals after 2015. One of the pillars of Sustainable development Goals sixteen (16) is peace. The five Ps of sustainable development according to Visser (2015) are people, planet, partnership, prosperity and peace. It is interesting to note that other Ps of sustainable development cannot be achieved in the absence of peace. The next section is on theoretical framework.

This study is anchored on the Fragile State Theory. The major proponents of the theory are Daniel Thurer and Patrick Stewart. The term “failed state” became prevalent during the mid-1990s, that was immediately after the cold war, but the theory was more prominent after the 9/11 terrorist attacks. It was used to address states that had ongoing conflicts and other problems of both global and international concerns like terrorism, arms proliferation, humanitarian disaster, environmental issues, diseases, and organised crime (Crocker, 2003; Fearon and Laitin, 2004).

Patrick (2007) argues that ‘fragile state’ is defined as a state that has failed in providing the basic necessities for its citizens. A fragile state is a state with a crumbled political and social structure. Such state is considered to be a political, economic and social failure i.e. the standard of living in the state is low, the moral standards of the state is poor and the central government of the state is very weak

and has no power and control over its territory. As a result of the corrupt nature of the state, it finds it difficult to provide public utilities or services and decent jobs for its citizens. A failed state is also bedevilled with cases of refugees and uncontrolled movement of populations (Patrick 2007). By way of application,a fragile state is incapable of meeting the requests and objectives of the nationals. Such a country is not able to provide basic necessities like protection, food, electricity, healthcare, good water, and good roads and so on. The vices above show that Nigeria is a failed state, a state where nothing at all works, even when it adopt strategies that had worked in other countries, such still don't work in Nigeria (Gadzama, 2018).

The usefulness of the fragile state theory in the study of the Border and National security of the Nigerian state as it concerns the Fulani herdsmen with implications for sustainable development goal 16 (peace) cannot be overemphasized.The incessant threats and attacks aimed at the citizens by the herdsmen have clearly pointed out the government's inability to legitimately defend her citizens, the sovereignty and borders, and as such, put the country in a fragile state condition. The threat to the lives and properties of individuals resonates to various areas of human survival like the economy, health, psychological wellbeing and so on (Omoleye and Joshua 2018). This scenario is taking a negative toll on Nigeria in attaining sustainable development goal 16 (peace), and without peace, developmental efforts will be futile and unattainable.

Evolution of Fulani Herdsmen Violence in Nigeria

The History of the Fulani herdsmen dates back to the 13th and the 14th century when they began to enter Nigeriathrough the north via the Sene-Gambia region. It is interesting to note that Islam was introduced into Hausa land in the 14th century by foreign Mallams and merchants, such as the Wagara Arabs and the Fulanis (Aremu, 2011). As the Fulanis settled in the northern Nigeria, it led to a high degree of cultural mix between the Hausas and the Fulanis. While the Hausa group was largely pagan, the Fulanis were predominantly Muslims. The admixture of the Hausa pagan culture and Islamic culture brought about the need for jihad for moral reformation.The jihad war led by Usman Dan Fodio was necessitated as the Hausas were accused by the Fulani group of participating in idolatrous rites, indulging in heathen divination practices, non- observance of proper marriage rules, modesty, enslavement of Muslims, involving in prostitution, drinking of alcohol and illegitimate taxes (Johnston, 1967).The Jihadists fought with deep conviction that they were

fighting the cause of God and death in the battlefield had immediate and superlative rewards. With this mind set, they were very daring and the battle was done on horseback and they employed shock-fighting. The pagan group adopted tactics aimed at preserving their own life and to limit losses, that is, not to annihilate the enemies. They were however, overwhelmed by the Jihadists style of fighting (Johnston, 1967).

After the great Uthman Dan Fodio jihad, the Fulani people joined the Hausa ethnic group in the northern part of Nigeria. Every dry season with the increase of the tsetse flies, the Fulani moved their cattle to the Middle Belt zone populated by the non-Hausa groups, they return back to the north during the rainy season. During the process of moving and grazing their cattle on farmlands, leading to destructionof crops often result in clash with the farmers (Chuka, 2018). The author further posits that the Land use Act in 1978 issued by the Nigerian government offers the state and federal government rights to allocate and rent land. Also, the act gives the citizens the right to apply and also be issued a certificate of occupancy in order to secure and claim their ownership over ancestral lands. At this point, it was difficult for the Fulanis because they were unable to apply for a certificate of land ownership for grazing purposes. Hence, their continuous movement for the survival of their flock, which in turn threatens the security of citizens and their landed properties. This at a particular point prompted the government to create some grazing areas for them, but the grazing areas could not be sustained due to farming and other development activities that took over some these grazing areas.

The former president of Nigeria, Muhammadu Buhari argued that the herdsmen perpetratingviolence in the country are not Nigerians. According to him they are “immigrants from Libya”; trained by the late Ghaddafi ofLibya from the Sahel for military purposes. As a result of his death in October 2011, they were dispersed and theyjoined different guerrilla groups in the continent, some fell under the herdsmen group, Al Qaeda, and the popular Boko Haram. His view was corroborated by the Sultan of Sokoto, Alhaji Sa’ad Abubakar III, who contends that the herdsmen holding guns and orchestrating violence are foreigners trooping in to jeopardise the peace of the country, stating that they should be regarded as terrorists and treated as such. He also stated that the Nigerian herdsmen are peaceful and non-violent and they often abide by the laws of the land, that the bad eggs are the individuals that came through the state’s open borders (Ortom, 2019).

An opposing view suggests that the herdsmen are Nigerians. This viewpoint was canvassed by the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN). It contends that the utterances and body languages of the officials of the Miyetti Allah Cattle Breeders Association of Nigeria (MACBAN), the umbrella union of cattle herders shows a sign of support to the herders that cause havoc in the community of farmers (Vincent, 2016). The Fulani herdsmen are equipped with massive rifles and are very bold in destruction of properties and murder of individuals in the central and southern Nigeria. Also, their attacks seem to be more strategic and well-coordinated, revealing that they are a set of individuals different from the normal cattle herders. Their attacks seem to be going through the lines of ethnic purging, as they assault both Christian and none Hausa/Fulani towns in the central and southern parts of Nigeria, damaging and killing men, ladies, and children, raping, burning homes, wrecking towns, dislodging the occupants, claiming the towns and renaming them (in Fulani names), shows an expansionist plan (Tochukwu, 2018).

From the religious lens of this violence, over 500 churches in Benue state have been destroyed completely since 2011. Survivors of these attacks have stated several times that these herdsmen always scream "Allah Akbar" during attack (Alton 2018).Akinloye (2020) posits that between 2017 and May 2, 2020, Fulani herdsmen had conducted 654 attacks in which over 2, 539 people were killed, while 253 were kidnapped. The next section is on the chronology of some Fulani herdsmen attacks from 2013-2022.

Table 1: Some Selected cases of Attacksby Fulani Herders on some communities in Nigeria from 2013-2022

S/N	Dates	Location	Nature of attack	Estimated Casualties
1	February 29, 2013	Agatu community, Benue state.	Burning down communities	No estimated documentation
2	April 23, 2013	Mbasenge community, Benue state.	Farmers were killed in a slaughter	10 people killed.
3	May 7, 2013	Agatu Local Government, Benue state and Nasarawa state.	Gunfire with Police officers	49 individuals killed.
4	May 14,	Agatu Local	Ambush attack	40 people

	2013	government, Benue state.		killed.
5	July 5, 2013	Guma Local Government in Benue state.	Massive slaughter.	20 people killed.
6	November 9, 2013	Agatu Local Government, Benue state.	An ambush attack on 7 villages.	36 individuals killed.
7	January 20, 2014	Agatu local government.	An ambush attack was made on both civilians and soldiers in communities	12 people were killed.
8	February 20-21, 2014	Gwer Local Government, Benue state.	A massive invasion was made.	35 individuals were killed and 80,000 individuals were displaced.
9	March 6, 2014	Kwande in Kastina state and Logo Local Government in Benue	An ambush attack was made on communities.	30 people were killed.
10	March 10, 2014	Umenger in Benue state	An ambush attack was made on former governor, Governor Suswam and his fleet	22 people were killed after the attack.
11	March 12, 2014	Guma Local Government, Benue state.	An ambush attack was carried out against a community.	28 people killed.
12	March 23, 2014	Guma Local Government	Gunfire attack in a	25 people were killed

		in Benue state.	community.	and 50 were injured.
13	March 29, 2014	Agatu and Sengev in Benue state.	An ambush and chemical weapons attack.	34 people killed and 15 kidnapped.
14	April 5, 2014	Galadima community.	An open fire attack was carried out.	200 individuals were killed and an indefinite amount of people were displaced.
15	September 10, 2014	Ogadibo Local Government	Ambush was carried out in five villages	20 people killed.
16	January 27, 2015	Agatu Local Government	An attack was made on communities	17 people killed.
17	February 21-24, 2016	Agatu Local Government.	A massive ambush in communities.	500 individuals were killed and 7000 were displaced.
18	March 2, 2017	Gwer local government.	Herdsmen and farmers clash.	10 people killed.
19	December 31, 2017 and January 2, 2018.	Logo Local Government and Guman Local Government.	Massive ambush that led to the burning of villages.	A total of 73 people died.
20	February 28, 2018	Adamawa state.	Herdsmen attacked farmlands and farmers.	20 people were killed.
21	March 5, 2018	Benue villages	Ambush attack	26 people were killed
22	June 23, 2018	Barkin Ladi Local Government, Plateau state.	Houses and cars were burnt in the community.	86 people died, 50 houses were burnt and 15

				cars and motorcycles were burnt.
23	October 2, 2018	Bassa Local Government, Kogi state	Unknown	18 people killed and 4 injured.
24	Jan. 2, 2019	Guma Local Government, Benue state	Fulani set Governor Ortom's rice farm ablaze	-
25	25 June, 2019	Koton Karfe, Kogi state	Unknown	7 persons were killed by the Fulani herdsmen
26	January 26 and 27, 2020	Tarka Local Government, Plateau state	Herdsmen attacked the some villages in the LGA	32 people were killed
27	19 and 20 July, 2020	Gora Gan village in zango Kataf and Kaura LGAs	Attack by Fulanis at a wedding reception in Kaura LGA and Zango-Kataf	About 22 people were killed
28	6 June, 2021	Igangan in Ibarapa LGA, Oyo state	Fulani gun men attacked Igangan in Ibarapa LGA, Oyo state	At least 11 people were killed
29	10 April, 2022	Plateau state	Unknown	Over 150 people were killed and 70 persons kidnapped

Compilation made by the authors from different sources 2022

From the table above, one can see that most of the attacks are in the Middle Belt and against non-Muslim communities in general. The next section hinges onNigeria's border conditions that facilitate illegal immigrants, culminating in incessant attacks by the Fulani herdsmen.Below are the factors:

The nature of the Nigerian Borders

Apart from the fact that African borders and Nigerian borders in particular were arbitrary drawn by the colonial overlords that colonised the region which have made them imprecise (Onuoha, 2013), there are over 1,400 illegal border routes with just 114 approved control posts across the land borders. These illegal routes are not in any way controlled by the security operatives, and these illegal routes have direct consequences on the national security of the state. Openness without any form of control gives way for several forms of threats that challenge the security of the state, like trans-border crimes, terrorism, and other vices (Onuoha, 2013).

ECOWAS Protocol on Free Movement

This protocol was at the very core of ECOWAS objectives. This protocol for free movement brought about by ECOWAS is tailored to meet the need of trade in the region and integrate member states (Opanike, 2016). This free movement has made it easy for member states to travel within the ECOWAS region without much restriction. This gives illegal migrants the leeway to enter the country.

Absence of E-Pass System

The borders are not connected with an E-pass system. This makes it difficult to properly detect who comes into the country because the borders are not interconnected. The borders are not properly defined and this scenario complicatesborder control (Taiwo, 2014).

Language Factor

Most essentially is the use of the Hausa language by the Fulani herdsmen at the borderline as almost all of them can speak Hausa. This makes it easy for them to enter the country with ease and evade being interviewed or interrogated. It is obvious that the porousness of the Nigerian borders has adverse effects on the national security of the state. With the poor security system, a lot of weapons have been brought into the country from neighbouring countries facing internal conflicts like Chad and Niger. Some of these weapons are used by these Fulani herdsmen to perpetuate violence (Adeola and Fayomi, 2012).

Cattle Grazing as a cause of Herdsmen violence

Scholars aver that conflicts that emerge from cattle grazing have been a long time issue; it dates back to when agricultural practice started(Blench 2010). Herders grazing their herds on farmer's farms,

especially during dry season always bring them into conflict with farmers.

Inadequate Staff and Poor remuneration system for Security Agencies

The Immigration Service today is facing challenges in securing the borders due to shortage of manpower employed to man the borders (Taiwo, 2014). The porous nature of the Nigerian borders is exacerbated by poor remuneration and inadequate training of security personnel at the borders (Anyadike, 2018). Personnel that are not well motivated as far as remuneration is concern will not be willing to put in their best of services.

Poor Technology for securing the borders and corruption

One of the issues that the Nigerian security agencies face while securing the borders is lack of modern day technology. It will be very difficult to efficiently and effectively manage over 4,000 kms with the traditional method of security which involves humans (Hoffmann and Melly, 2015). In addition, Achumba, (2013) raised a fundamental issue that some officers at the borders do collect bribe to ease the passage of illegal immigrants.

Implications for the Attainment of Sustainable Development Goals 16 (Peace)

Without peace, there cannot be security and development. Peace is a necessity for the attainment of SDGs. People need peace to be free from fear, feel safe to be able to go about their legitimate businesses irrespective of their faith and ethnicity. Violence has a destructive impact on a country's economic as it affects economic growth. There cannot be development without security and no security without development. An increase in the level of violence will hampered development. The concept of sustainable development calls for a better linkages between the foundational pillars of peace and security (Caparini, 2017). Herders-farmers clashes have taken toll on the development of the states affected with overall implications on the entire country. The money channelled towards maintaining peace cannot be made available for development. According to Corps (2015 cited in Okoro 2018), farmer-herders conflicts in Benue, Kaduna, Nasarawa and Plateau states have cost the Nigerian state more than $13.7 billion annually. The author went further to reveal that the aforementioned states have lost 47 percent of their internally generated revenues through farmers-herders violence. Samuel Ortom former Governor of Benue state (the state beset most by the herders' violence) claimed in 2016 that the

violence between the two groups had cost his state $204 million while in 2017 attacks by Fulani herdsmen had led to a loss of $634 million.

The agricultural sector contributes significantly to food sufficiency, employs two-third of the labour force (Okoro, 2018) in the country. He went further to state that, Benue state reputed as the food basket of the nation has become a theatre of herders-farmers conflict with negative implications for food production. Farmers find it difficult to access their farmlands as a result of fear of being attack. One of the fallout of the farmers-herders conflict is that it has increased the rate of poverty in the country, drop in national agricultural productivity with negative implications on national wealth formation and reduction in the earnings of farmers. The atmosphere of insecurity and uncertainty created by farmers-herders conflicts has hampered the capacity of the two groups to produce optimally. The imbroglio created by farmers-herders conflict has made investment in agriculture unattractive (Awotokun, Nwozor and Olanrewaju, 2020).This has led to a drastic reduction in the Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Thus, Covin (2022) argues that, there can be no peace without sustainable development and there can be no sustainable development without peace, as freedom and safety set the stage for development. Adedokun (2023) contends that, herders have killed 5, 138 people in Benue state alone under former governor- Samuel Ortom.Those people killed cannot contribute to SDGs again. Thus, farmers-herders conflict has caused a serious setback in the attainment of sustainable development goal 16 (peace). Peace enhances development opportunities. Development opportunities also foster peace and security. Countries that are prone to violence will always lag behind in the attainment of sustainable development goals, as they will find it difficult to fight poverty and inequality, build trust among various groups in the country and also find it difficult to tap and utilise their natural resources optimally.

Recommendations

- The government should put in more efforts to improve the security system. The government should train and recruit more staff in the various security agencies, for proper control of the border posts.

- The welfare of the security agencies should be well taken care of. Incentives should be given to the security agents, like housing benefits, salaries should be paid as when due,

better welfare packages should be given to reduce corruption among immigration officers. This would improve their performance in a great way.

- The government should introduce modern technology to secure the borders. Electronic surveillance should be provided. There should be a strategic central base where activities at the borders can be viewed. Machines that scan humans and other items should be introduced to the security system in order to make the security agents jobs easy and reduce crime.
- Considering the level of security awareness in the country, there is a need to overhaul the activities of the security agencies so that they can respond with absolute spontaneity in times of crisis.
- Also, there should be a grazing reform, the 1965 grazing reserves law should be reviewed by the government. The Nigerian population is rising dailywith implications on land use. So, the Nigerian government should implement a reform that would accommodate the farmers and the herdsmen needs. Proper rules and restrictions should be laid out in relations with land ownership.
- The government should look into the nomadic nature of the herdsmen and establish ranches for them since open grazing is becoming misnomer in the modern world.
- There is need for the government to embark on education of the nomads so as to change their orientation about the nomadic lifestyle.
- Finally, the Nigerian security system should be tailored towards a more pre-emptive style of approach.

5.3 Conclusion

This study was embarked upon to critically examine the significant relationship between border porousness and national security with implications for sustainable development goal 16 which is peace among others, using the Fulani herdsmen violence as the focus of the study. As stated in the study, illegal migrants often capitalize on Nigeria's borders porousness to foment trouble in the country. The activities of the illegal Fulani migrants who enter Nigeria's borders under the pretext of speaking Hausa language have posed a great threat to the security and well-being of the society, with implications for attaining SDG goal 16 (peace). The Nigerian government at this point needs to engage and employ a comprehensive approach to

curb these attacks. Apart from the recommendations given above, the two groups should be engaged to proffer permanent solution to the problem so that sustainable peace will not be a mirage.

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