

## The Hidden Question in Nigeria's Herdsmen Crisis: A Philosophical Chat

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### ABSTRACT

The numerous problems faced in the multi-lingual nation are always the problem of togetherness which its failure brought insecurity and anxiety. The Nigerian nation is one of the most populous in Africa with diverse cultures, tribes, languages and religion. This aforementioned seem to separate Nigerians most at times rather than uniting them. These internal battles sometimes couched in ethno-religious parlance, revolving mostly around resource control, marginalization in resource allocation and, inequitable placement of political positions and other indicators of social imbalances that has taken its toll on the socio-political economic organization of the Nigerian society. This security problem over time has been noted to have been cause by particular tribes in line with religion; but using grazing as undercover. This is a round table discussion as a cry for help; in other to avoid an action that might arise from an adage that; when rationality is push to the world, irrationality becomes inevitable.

### THE DISCUSSION

It is with a great benefit and privilege that we were invited to be part of the 2019 Humbolt Kolleg-Nigeria's Resource wars-University of Nigeria, Nsukka. The (250) Alexander Von Humbolt Stiftung/Foundation-Germany, sponsored the brainstorming of Nigeria's resource wars, was indeed something to remember with all men and women of national and international repute. Seminars and round table discussions that ended with the formulation of the communiqué was highly achieved. The issue that was dominantly discussed was on the region or state that owns natural resources in Nigeria and how they can be looked upon. The issues of the Fulani Herdsmen were equally on a high point of discussions which is currently trilling in Nigeria. But one striking thing during the conference were the beautiful and engaging topics presented by the participants but no one remember to present a paper by asking the question on the topic: The owners of these cows, dragging spaces with the aborigines during their pastoral grassing and as such causing fear and anxiety. It was on a lighter note that Prof. Wasuri of University of Maiduguri observed that no one has written on the owners of the cows. He pointed out that those cows we see does not belong to the herders.

Indeed, we are burnt out to, on reacting to this incident that is causing fear and anxiety in the nation state as the only thing that matters for this set of individual, is the *existence idealism*; which is the misinterpretation of the ideal. We are consistently whimpering that we ought to get up and proceed onward, that we should demonstrate what we are truly worth as the case is coming very close to every individual's door step. The Fulani Herders emergencies in Nigeria are turning into an issue for the nation. It threatens the harmony and security of the nation. It has been quite a while issue and has prompted the loss of lives and properties worth billions of dollars. <https://www.quora.com/What-are-the-causes-of-Fulani-herdsmen-killing-in-Nigeria>, Dec 12, 2018.

On 28 MAY 2018, Simon Allison posited a similar question, as a subtopic under his famous work "Herdsmen crisis underscores Nigeria's complex security threats".<sup>2</sup> Who exactly are the Fulani's, and why are they accused of wreaking such havoc in Nigeria. What really is their mission?

The issue has degenerated to a bloodier one. Because of lack of respect for the other. Our concerns are so much because we have been a victim of clashes between herders and villagers or aborigines. The firearm they carried instigates

some certain question of who really they are and who owns the cows. The target of a trained shooter differs from a learner. How come are they perfect in their shooting? The contention 'has progressively ethnic (Fulani versus other Nigerian ethnicities), religious (Muslim herders versus Christian south), and social (nomadic versus sedentary) measurements', says Dr Roudabeh Kishi, chief of the Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project (ACLED), which screens and maps conflict.

As indicated by ACLED's information, Fulani ethnic volunteer armies were in charge of 217 regular citizen fatalities among January and April, 2018 with March being a particularly rough month.<sup>3</sup> Again, Boko Haram – among the most risky fear monger bunches on Nigeria – murdered 78 regular folks in a similar period. The Fulani are an ethnic group, thought to be the biggest in the Sahel with a populace of 20 to 30 million. Generally the Fulani are migrant steers' herders, and a networks community that would travel immensely in separations along different route to discover places for their groups and cows to settle.

On a round table discussion, Chukuweze<sup>4</sup> from Nsukka in Enugu States had his experience how the Fulani lived in their community as a very young boy. He narrated how he used to admire the school of cows hunting for grasses whenever he comes in contact with them. He asked how suddenly the same people today turned killers and kidnappers. Exclaiming further, he said that the hidden questions are yet to be answered. As the discussion goes on, King<sup>5</sup> shared his own view that the Fulani Herdsmen she knows are more than the Herdsmen of the Nigerian 21<sup>st</sup> century. Then who are these 21<sup>st</sup> century armed Fulani Herdsmen devastating the whole of human society in the present Nigeria, seeking for (RUGA) Rural Grazing agenda in people's land.

Indeed, recalling the history of Tarsus and Ephesus where documentation asserts that the converted Saul to Paul as captured in Biblical literature preached in Tarsus and Ephesus which was then a Christian State, but today is the present day Turkey. The memory of such incident has a lesson to tell as religious dogmatism turns a weapon of warfare in human history.

A query posed to one of our fathers, that if war broke out in a community, and you have one

wife and highest of five (5) children and I have 12 wives and 40 children, who will conquer? At first, he kept mute and later replied; of course the man that has 40 children.<sup>6</sup> Indeed, the story of Tarsus and Ephesus, and the story of 5 and 40 children boarders us that the present killings poses a threat to having RUGA, because the case of Tarsus and Ephesus was a long term agenda.

Obviously, we have been touched with a mindset to remember history, so, we tried to avoid romanticizing the condition of those cows as we can and have started rearing cows ourselves. Having this in mind, we recognize the solidarity-building imperatives of our shared histories and shared experiences of today's global resources standard that we can become cow owners. Our obedience and relaxation is not an option. This is thus an important time to re-evaluate and learn from the historical canon (s) and renew strategies that can curb this ongoing incident.

Indeed, we have had our cry. We have been provoked to express our anger, and our pains expose our vulnerability. Even as our tears were harvested to wash another people's husband, wives and children, being slain like an animal of less value. The loss of loved ones kept our tears enough to push pain into resurrection and into the present mode to enrich and protect our work, nurture the present for the future generation as we retain our culture, religion, heritage for posterity.

Liberation like democracy is certainly in the hand of the people. It is based on chasing for and hurling off shackles, praising our invigorating customs, learning and rehearsing self esteem and self-regard that, this is the main way we can possess what is our own and guarantee we are not oppressed again as we might never summit to the Nigerian History of 6 July 1967 –15 January 1970. This is our voices; because in the word of Albert Camus they are like tragic men that have no sense in a lost home or in a promise paradise.

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**Citation:** Ukanga, Lambert Peter, "The Hidden Question in Nigeria's Herdsmen Crisis: A Philosophical Chat", 7(6), 2020, pp. 28-30.

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