

**RESOURCE ENTITLEMENT PERSPECTIVES, CONTEXT AND IDEOLOGY
IN ONLINE NEWS REPORTS ON HERDSMEN-FARMERS CONFLICT IN
NIGERIA**

BY

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CERTIFICATION

I certify that this work was carried out by Tomere Dubamo in the Department of English, University of Ibadan, under my supervision.

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to the Almighty God who endorsed the programme and saw me through it.

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ABSTRACT

Entitlement, which typifies context-bound expression of individuals' rights, power and privileges over environmental resources, constitutes a major theme in news reports on herdsman-farmers conflict on Nigerian online newspapers. Extant studies on the conflict have largely focused on the sociopolitical dimensions, stance acts and discourse representations of the conflict in Nigerian online media and the question of entitlement. However, scant attention was paid to the pragmatically-grounded entitlement perspectives taken on the conflict of ownership and control. This study was, therefore, designed to investigate the perspectives of the resource entitlement conflict in Nigerian online news reports, with a view to determining the entitlement types and contexts, ideologies, pragmatic strategies and locutions.

Marina Sbisà's model of Speech Acts Theory, complemented by Akin Odeunmi's harmonised model of context and Teun van Dijk's Socio-cognitive Critical Discourse Analysis, was adopted as the framework. The descriptive design was employed. News reports published in 2015-2021 were purposively selected because of their heightened reportage of the entitlement resource conflict. The quota sampling technique was used to select 106 online news reports (66 from Premium Times (PT) and 40 from Sahara Reporters (SR)). The data were subjected to pragmatic analysis.

Three entitlement types, namely state, folk and group, were identified in the online news reports. State manifested concessional and non-concessional forms (PT); folk projected indigenous and non-indigenous categories (PT), while group presented occupational and ethnic subtypes (PT and SR). These entitlement types manifested in six contexts: political, social, legal, economic, sociocultural and cultural. State and folk occurred in legal context; group manifested in sociocultural and economic contexts; state was entrenched in political and social contexts, while folk was found in cultural context. These entitlements and contexts projected four ideologies: separatist, solidarist, egalitarianist and feudalist. Separatist was found in SR, solidarist and egalitarianist were presented in PT and SR, while feudalist was constructed in PT. Separatist was enacted through politicisation of agrarian context (PAC) and ethnicisation of occupational context (EOC). Solidarist was foregrounded by strategisation of topical news narratives (STNN), ethnicisation of occupational context (EOC) and religionisation of economic acts (REA). Egalitarianist was presented through STNN, PAC and EOC, while feudalist was created through commodification of territorial space (CTS). These strategies were projected by four locutions: potential consequence-indicative, self-defensive, conflict-indicative and peace-intended. Politicisation of agrarian context was marked by potential consequence-indicative and self-defensive, while STNN was occasioned by conflict-indicative. Ethnicisation of occupational context was foregrounded by potential consequence-indicative, self-defensive and conflict-indicative; while CTS was realised through potential consequence-indicative; and REA was constructed through potential consequence-indicative and peace-intended locutions. These entitlement discourses culminated in evocation of polarisation, ethnocentrism and security insights.

Entitlement perspectives, enacted through pragmatic and ideological resources in Nigerian online newspapers, reveal that the herdsman-farmers conflict thrives on ethnic, political and occupational drivers of national disintegration in the Nigerian space. Therefore, policy makers, educationists and national environmental conflict management agencies should consider these variegated entitlement perspectives in addressing the herdsman-farmers resource conflict in Nigeria.

Keywords: Resource entitlement in Nigeria, Context and ideology, Herdsman-farmers conflict, online media discourse

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

IFIDS	–	Illocutionary Force Indicative Devices
IPOB	–	Indigenous People Of Biafra
MACBAN	–	Miyetti Allah Cattle Breeders Association of Nigeria
NON-IFIDS	–	Non-Illocutionary Force Indicative Devices
OPC	–	Oodua People’s Congress
PT	–	Premium Times
RUGA	–	Rural Grazing Area
SR	–	Sahara Reporters
YNN	–	Yoruba Nation Now

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the study

Resource entitlement, context and ideology, the three phenomena that drive the focus of this study, are carefully selected concepts that provide the keystone for the understanding of the resource conflict between herdsman and farmers in Nigeria. Of these three, the entitlement construct serves as the crux to which the other two lend necessary credence. Entitlement as a phenomenon can be understood from variegated perspectives brewing from its semantic core, that is, its lexical composition, global purview, national construal within the Nigerian legal system to its domesticated form within the herder-farmer context.

In its foundational structure, the word, “entitlement” is the nominal form of the verb “entitle”, which is morphologically rooted in the noun “title”. To be entitled is to be handed the right to possess or perform a task, while title is the legal right to own resources or the document that specifies the right of such individual. It thus logically evokes the essence of an individual’s conferred status (title) to which, in the course of responsibility, they develop a strong psychological sense of ownership. It is this socially-constructed connection to resources that breeds the feeling of entitlement – which constitutes varying rights, privileges, claims and provisions that an individual has or believe to have either by law or by virtue of their location, profession or assumed status. By implication, when one feels entitled to anything, one begins to nurture the possessive sense of ownership that automatically triggers the ideological polarising of MINE versus YOURS.

In its diversely explored strength, the concept is construed in different lights. For instance, in the legal parlance, entitlement is conceived as one's legal rights which without due process cannot be denied (Stone, 1972; Black, 1990; Gasper, 1993). In a similar framing, entitlement in philosophy refers to one's inalienable rights such as life and liberty (Nozick, 1974; Burge, 2003; Gurdgiev, 2005; Shenge and Mchia, N.D; Graham, Pedersen, Bachman and Rosa, 2020). To the political scientists, entitlement is described as free expression and self-determination inherent in a democratic form of government (Franck, 1992; Franck, 1994; Romer, 1996; Rubin, 2009; Chauffour, 2011). Within the ambits of marketing, entitlement is linked to customers' expectations (Kristensen et al., 1999; Wetzel, Hammerschmidt, and Zablah, 2014; Cownie, 2017; Fiske, 2011; Melancon, 2021). Also, anthropologists view entitlement as endangered indigenous people possessing right to political power (Carroll, 1994; Martin and Yanagisako, 2020; Jonutyte, 2014). And, in personality psychology, entitlement is construed as a stable individual difference that – across situations – exerts a global impact on one's thoughts, attitudes, and behaviours (Tomlinson, 2013; Zemojtel-Piotrowska, Piotrowski, Ciecuch and Calogero, 2016; Campbell, Bonacci, Shelton, Exline, and Bushman, 2004). Common to these myriads of definition of the concept is the conceptualisation of the term “rights” in multi-faceted forms and contexts. It thus necessarily prompts the curiosity of who has what right, and how does this feeling emerge among individuals.

From the purview of broad psychology, entitlement is the state of individual or group's acclaimed right to space, which invariably breeds different feelings of dissension towards perceived violators of such rights. Ultimately, this belief system controls human actions and reactions towards perceived threat to entitled space. It again empowers a global conceptualisation of the phenomenon from the personality psychology prisms which aver that entitlement is a belief system associated with negative outcomes which are correlated with lower accommodation, less empathy, perspective taking, less respect for others, selfishness, and even aggressive behaviour (Campbell et al, 2004; Tomlinson, 2013). These authors' understanding of the concept revs up the possibility that entitlement consciousness has the ability to influence people's behaviour negatively and consequently culminate in conflict.

According to Piff (2014), entitlement is global and pervasive dimension of the self-concept that orients the individual towards maintaining an enhanced status vis-à-vis others and, as such, is a primary motivator of narcissistic tendencies. This view of entitlement further explores the belief of identity or status glorification in which what one has and the entitled feelings make one feels superior to others. It thus becomes a psychological pride that a group possesses what others are lacking and thus seeks to exert absolute control over their resources. Hence, in the event where this status is contested, conflict sets in. In the light of this knowledge, Versteegen's (2001) conceptualisation of the phenomenon proves iconic and thus worthy of presentation as it states that:

Entitlement is therefore a matter of both rights and power, and is concerned with the actual process of how people gain access to resources. Resources, however, are limited and the distribution of these resources can be understood as the outcome of a process of negotiation and/or contestation between social actors with different priorities and interests (Versteegen, 2001:13)

Owing to the preceding conceptualisation of the entitlement construct by Versteegen (2001), the deconstruction of the term readily comes with the mention of resources. In other words, entitlement is built around "the resources" to which the sense of ownership is constructed. As explicated by Versteegen, the entitlement sense becomes even more prominent and intense when the resources available are limited, thereby culminating in contestation over such resources.

In Nigeria, the multi-culturally dense and continually surging population has engendered myriad of resource contestations due to the dwindling available resources. Consequent upon this emergent challenge of this dearth of resources, many of these communities and ethnic groups who had conveniently lived together for decades without strife, have started to reconsider not only local settlers' policies but also modalities for establishing outright domination over the available resources within their geographical enclaves. It thus becomes a group-based struggle and contest between herding communities and farming societies.

Accordingly, some of these settlers who have equally spent years long enough to redefine their indigenous status have also started to negotiate terms for their citizenship rights

within such locality. Hence, the consistence in the reports on boundary disputes among neighbouring communities, and a host of other spatial conflicts, routinely make the headlines of various newspapers. The mayhem that these discordant perceptions and ill-feelings have therefore incurred, in the process, has regrettably led to escalated uprisings claiming lives and property. The recent but highly pronounced example is that of herdsmen and farmers' conflict in Nigeria; which is the interest of this present research. It is evident that the consciousness of entitlement is bred by virtue of the fact that what had been shared without rancor over time is now being constantly contested between the two dominant agrarians: herdsmen and farmers respectively. This is what Blench describes as resource conflict (Blench, 2004).

From these varied descriptions of the concept particularly in relation to its manifestation in the Nigerian space, resource entitlement favourably typifies varying rights, privileges, claims and provisions that an individual has or believes to have over resources either by law or by virtue of their location, profession or assumed status. It is worth noting that the discourse of resource entitlement always occurs in context. Essentially, it is context that defines clearly the different manifestations of entitlement. This proposition coincides with van Dijk's (1977:11) cited in Odebunmi (2016) description of context as "whatever we need to know about to properly understand an event, action or discourse." This understanding provided by context also takes care of the dynamics of the events characterising the discourse of resource entitlement.

As captured in Mey (1993; 2001:40), context demystifies not only the understanding of events, actions and discourse but it also offers the understanding of the role of actors involved in the construction of the entitlement phenomenon by revealing "the continually changing surrounding, in the widest sense, that enables the participants [in the discourse] to interact, and in which the linguistic expressions [in this case, the discourse of entitlement] of their interaction become intelligible". With respect to news reports, context is the reason why discourse makes sense to and among participants. On this premise, it could be favourably stressed that mediated conflict discourse, under which this study is broadly situated, equally stands to find clear expression and interpretation in

the context generated in the reports on issues bordering on the resource entitlement conflict between sedentary farmers and roving herdsmen.

Since entitlement in its variously situated contexts is driven by legally backed or assumed rights to resources, it necessarily draws up the question of its underlying belief of operation – ideology. In reference to social power which is demonstrably a marker of dominance in a state of limited resources, Eagleton (2007) describes ideology as a discursive field in which self-promoting social powers conflict and collide over questions central to the production of social power as a whole. Eagleton further stressed that this social power finds its expression in language in use – which again refers to context. This is deemed relevant to this current study because contestation over limited resources and their attendant entitlement indices in news reports are carried out through language in situated use. This is instantiated in Verschueren's (2002) construal of ideology which proposes that one of the most visible manifestations of ideology is language in use or discourse, which may reflect, construct, and/or maintain ideological patterns. It is on this premise that the tripartite concepts of resource entitlement perspectives, context and ideology become integral to the understanding of the herder-farmer conflict in Nigeria.

1.1.1 The identity and history of the Fulani herdsmen

The question of the origin of the Fulani herdsmen has been a debate among scholars who have often come up with differing historical accounts. Comments from different leaders have also been culled to provide plausible answers to this question in the literature. For instance, in a report by Dr Balkie (1856, pp.174, 175) in which he interviewed the Sarikin Hausa of Hamarawa on the origins of the Fulani, the Sarikin stated that the Fulani hailed from a place close to Timbuktu called Male, meaning the District of Melli, southwest from that city. His account again differs from Koelle an informant from Sierra Leone who traced his race from Futa Toro, northward of the Gambia (Ibid.). This account ties some affinity with the Sarikin's version, as Futa Toro is situated in the map of Melli, according to Melli of Arab geographers. Taylor (1921) in his narrative recounted how some have traced the Fulani's origins to the days of Malays, Polynesians, while others have described them as people from Gypsies dislodged from their Indo-Germanic homes by the Magyars, through Egypt. Other epistles link their origin to Delafosse, of the

children of Israel in Egypt under the reign of Pharaohs. They were said also to be some descendants of Joseph who escaped Egypt via the Nile and settled in North Africa.

According to Jeffreys (1944), another authority on the origin of the Fulani was Dr. Meek (1925:94-96), acknowledging the puzzling nature of the question, stated that the traditional first chief of the Fulani was Ilo Falagui, a descendant of Ham whose legacy formed the Hamitic origin of the people. In addition, Palmer (1931), a one-time governor of the Northern Nigeria added his voice to the debate while stating that the Fulani or Fulbe were an offshoot of a union between Arabs and Judaizing Berbers who visited the Maghrib in 650-750 A.D with Tourud, inhabitant of the region of Genar or Tegant, and Adrar in Mauritania, during the Roman and Byzantine era. Again, the Fulani, after offering help in destroying the Sarakolle or Wakore state of Ghana, were driven further away into Senegal and Niger by the Tuareg about 1050 A.D. Several of these stories made the precise lineage of the Fulani people difficult to track.

By the above token, the Fulani (herdsmen) undoubtedly have a long history in Nigeria, although the literature evidently is not precise about the date they came into the northern region, they were believed to have made an inroad into the north in small packets (Nwabara, 1963). As a group, some of them came in from the direction of Melli (a place near Timbuktu) to form their base in Sokoto while the rest were believed to have settled in Bornu, Adamawa and Hausa. Hausa here is one of the seven kingdoms [Hausa Bokwoi] of the north, the other six comprising Daura, Kano, Gobir, Katsina, Zaria, Biram and Rano. In their subtle and diplomatic nature, long before the Jihad [a holy war of occupation], the Fulani Chiefs had meandered their way into the administrative helms of Zaria by the 14th Century.

It was one of these groups, particularly the Toronkawa group in the Gobir kingdom, to which the great Shehu Usuman Dan Fodio was born in 1744 A.D. Usuman Dan Fodio orchestrated the Fulani hegemony in Northern Nigeria as he won the culturally rich Hausa land for the Fulani race (Nwabara, 1963). Apart from Nigeria, the Fulani mostly live in Francophone West Africa where they are referred to as Peul or Peulh in French and Wollof, respectively. However, those of them living in the Sahel region especially in Senegal, Gambia, and to the Far East Chad and Sudan are referred to as Fula, a Mading

term. In a similar vein, the term FulBe in Fulfulde is also used as an alternative term for Fulani, however, it is mostly used for reputable personalities among them particularly the pastoralists.

It is geographically instructive to state that the Fulani exert a wide coverage in West African states although they mostly assume the minority status by virtue of the population size. Even their population is difficult to predict because of under-enumeration of censuses of nomadic and semi-nomadic groups which often plays down the question of ethnicity which, for the Fulani, is quite fluid and fuzzy (Hampshire, 2003). Despite this constraint, their population was estimated at 6million in the 1960s, 9 to 10million in 1992 and currently they are estimated about 20 to 25million (Dupire, 1963; Riesman, 1992; Pulse, 2022). Fulfulde is linguistically, the primary language spoken by the Fulanis which is also known as Pular or Fula within Senegal and its suburbs. This linguistic difference is occasioned by their nomadic lifestyle which enforces the language's interaction with other languages to produce its variants across different regions.

Culturally, the Fulani are defined by their occupation; however, since occupation is not the only defining factor, other identity markers including religion, marriage, food and mode of dressing make up a holistic identity for them. In terms of their culture and tradition, the Fulani extol cattle-herding as a major and inseparable aspect of their custom that ultimately define their identity. Hence, pastoralism forms an integral part of their culture, such that the cattle is centrally, associated with many of their activities in their society (Bonfiglioli, 1988; Hopen, 1958; Stenning, 1959; Hampshire, 2003). Their familial connection to the cattle marks off the cattle as one viable symbol for their identification in different parts of the country. As such, when they lose their cattle it is to them, worth more than “economic or social insecurity” (Hampshire, 2003:656). Pastoralism was therefore the primary occupation of the Fulani until the 1970s and 1980s when droughts orchestrated their migration which eventually led some of them to live in the city, combining herding with other commercial activities while some outright abandoned pastoralism.

Socially, the Fulani are structured into a caste system divided along the lines of status and occupation. The FulBe commands the most respected status as free-born, pastoralists, and their slaves and serfs, are regarded as RiimaaiBe or MaccuBe, respectively. The Fulbe who are well versed in the herding occupation understand the various seasons of herding and the different physio-ecological changes that affect the herding occupation. For instance, According to Hopen (1958), the FulBe divide the year into five seasons in relation to weather that comes with it, namely rumierde, yawirde, dabirde, chedirde, and setinirde. When it is rumirde, the FulBe leave their cattle at a settlement in the bush about a mile or more distance away from farms during growing and harvest seasons. Other castes are those taken to trades such as blacksmiths, bards and merchants.

Within the family structural system, the Fulani operate patrilineage [suudu baba] descent system that empowers male gender in the family with more benefits, so much that when a woman moves to her husband's house she becomes completely a part of the husband's family, while also retaining her rights in her matrilineages [suudu yaya]. And, on the occasion of any divorce, the women return to their suudu baba. The Fulani are also religious people, mainly of the Islamic faith: a religion that is acknowledged to be their major tool of conquest as demonstrated in their Jihadist movements in the 18th and 19th century. However, some Fulani from Niger, particularly of the WoDaabe extraction, practise traditional religions (Hampshire, 2003) and so are not Muslims.

Most Muslims conduct themselves in accordance with the Islamic practices. In fact it should be stressed that the conquest of the Hausa kingdom could be credited to the adherence of the Fulani to the practices of Islam which at a point they felt the ruling Hausa class was bastardising. This was premised on the fact that before the 1804 conquest, Islam had taken a major place in the Hausa kingdom, driven by the political tenet "the purpose of the State is to provide proper conditions for the good life of its citizens" (Nwabara, 1963:232). It is therefore understandable that there was a goal directed formation at the administrative helm in the Hausa kingdom. In fact, renowned scholars and teachers like El-hadj-Ahmed came from Timbuktu and taught theology in Kano in 1485. Others like Makhloafben-Ali and Muhammad-ben-Ahmed equally visited Kano and Katsina in 1500 and 1520 for similar purposes of teaching. While the pre-

Fulani era was fairly accommodated by the masses, the economic insensitivity that favoured only the ruling class and their families but subjected the masses to unhealthy stifling conditions and the sheer neglect of the genuine practices of the Koran triggered Usuman Dan Fodio-led campaign against the Hausa state.

The highest sense of identity in being a Fulani among the FulBe, according to Hampshire (1963) is expressed in the notion of Pulaaku. It is an identity marker that denotes self-control and restraint. It has to do with the ability to control their emotions as well as material needs. Pulaaku is also evident in cattle ownership. The virtue is constructed differently by members of the Fulani society. As a behavioural disposition, Pulaaku is demonstrated by individuals based on the situation and circumstance at hand (van Dijk, 1995 cited in Hampshire, 2003).

The history of the Fulani (FulBe) demonstrates their attachment to their cattle and religion. They are also reputed for their transhuman migration due to ecological changes in seasons of herding. This underscores the various encounters in recent years between them and farming communities to which their migration is always connected. The following section examines the historical context of the conflict between herders and farmers.

1.1.2 The context of the herdsmen-farmers conflict in Nigeria

Over the past three years, one of the most dreaded security issues making the rounds in Nigeria is undoubtedly the conflict between herdsmen and farmers. From a closer outlook, the underlying force of the conflict is attributed to contestations between two major agriculturists in the country – farmers and herders (pastoralists). While the farmers command the population of people growing crops of different breeds, the pastoralists' population comprises the people who engage in the rearing of livestock, predominantly cattle. In addition, there is a magnified ethnic perception to this population distribution between the farmers and the pastoralists. For instance, between the two groups, the pastoralists are perceived more to be Fulani while the farming population cannot be traced to a single ethnic entity.

Pastoralism, as vastly conceived, is not the exclusive identity of the Fulani as other groups such as the Kanembu, Kwoya, Manga, and the Shuwa Arabs constitute the minority of the cattle trade. However, the Fulani offer the highest population of practitioners (Ogu, 2018). With the nature of their business, they are principally migrants who traverse many parts of West Africa, from Lake Chad in the East, to the Atlantic Coast (Iheoma & Emmanuel, 2018). They are predominantly found in Nigeria, Cameroon, Guinea, Mali, and Senegal. Out of these countries, in West Africa, Nigeria plays host to their largest community. At present, they command a population of about 50 million in Africa (Levinson 1996; Iheoma & Emmanuel, 2018), and in Nigeria alone there is an estimate of about 7 million of them in the country (Ogu, 2018). This information is demonstrated in the Map of Africa on Page 11 showing the movement of the herdsmen across Sahel region.

Herdsmen's movement across the Sahel is necessitated by ecological changes as a result of desertification in the northern region. A close interpretation of the map shows that the Sahel is mostly green, and, by implication favours the cattle rearing occupation. Being from the north, their migratory lifestyle makes them to be settlers among host communities.

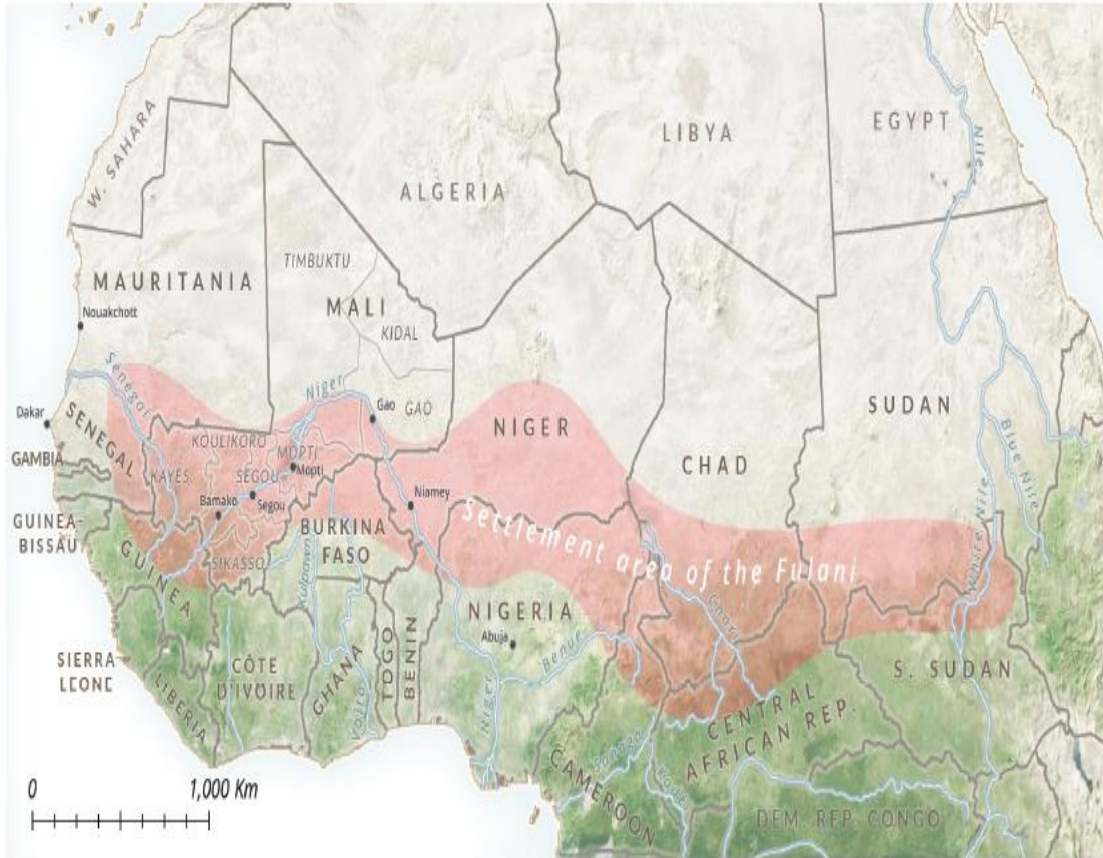


Figure 1.1: Map of Africa

Source: CTL SENTINEL (2017:35)

Prior to the present dispute over resources, the relationship between herders and farmers was said to be symbiotic, such that herders' cattle would fertilise the farmers' land for grazing (International Crisis Group, 2017). It should be noted that, at that period, mechanised farming was not much practised, and so there was enough land for both agrarians. However, the harmony began to fizzle out when desertification and drought became intense in the Northern region, forcing a lot of herders down the Middle belt and the South. Consequent upon their migration, there was now a competition for the limited resources available for the sedentary farming communities and the nomadic herdsman.

Admittedly, while the most prominent of the pastoralists in Nigeria are Fulani, there exists a conspicuous difference within their population with varying herding practices. In terms of the herding practice, there are the family-based pastoralists and hired herders who pasture other people's cattle (United Nations Office for West Africa and its Sahel (UNOWAS Study 2018)). The hired herdsman tend to be fiercer and more aggressive in defending their cattle since sometimes it is with these cattle they are rewarded; hence they journey through routes that they have never been before for grazing thereby occasionally destroying farms without necessarily tying the grazing agreement with the aborigines. When such happens, and the farmers confront these herdsman, reprisals follow from the end of the herders leading to horrendous scenes.

Economically, up till now, Nigeria which economy is oil and gas driven profoundly relies on Agriculture for the employment of 70 per cent of its labour force, and coincidentally over 90 per cent of the pastoralists of the nation are primarily the Fulani. Their economic relevance is thus stipulated in the records that pastoralists own approximately 90 per cent of the national herd which is about 19.5 million cattle, about 975,000 donkeys, 28,000 camels, 72.5 million goats, and 41.3 million sheep (International Crisis Group 2017). By implication, livestock controls between 20 to 30 percent of the total agricultural production and about 8 per cent of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP). This statistic is enough to intensify the surge for more grazing lands. Unfortunately, in the course of their search, incidents of farms encroachment were reported, consequently leading to brutal clashes.

These clashes have gained global recognition, and have attracted varying measures of intervention. As a matter of fact, the spate of killings has given the conflict an entirely different theme; such that, it is seen more as an act of terrorism than mere contest for insufficient resources for agricultural purposes. According to the Global Terrorism Index (GTI, 2015) this herders and farmers' conflict culminated in the placement of Nigeria among the five most terrorism concentrated countries (Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan and Syria) where it accounted for 78 per cent of the lives lost as at 2014. This was however inclusive of lives lost to Boko Haram insurgency. Although it was generally submitted that both factions of the warring agrarians have 33 recognised groups in Nigeria, nevertheless, GTI recognises the Fulani extremist group as the 4th most deadly militant in the world (GTI 2015; EASO 2018). Some other militias apart from the ones to which the Fulani solely belong include the Tarok in Plateau State, the Eggon in Nasarawa State, and the Jukun in Taraba State. Other active but implicitly operating militia (ethnic) groups are the Nyandan in Taraba, Irigwe group in Plateau and the local militia group called the Bachana in Adamawa (EASO 2018).

Thematic Report (2017) recorded that just in 2016 alone 800 people were killed in Southern Kaduna, and almost about 1,269 in Benue, where a minimum of 14 Local Government Areas (LGA) of the 23 LGAs were brutally attacked. It resulted in the displacement of 62,000 people in Kaduna, Plateau and Benue States. In EASO's account, Crisis Groups also affirm that since the rise of the conflict in January 2018, an estimate of 300,000 vacated their homes to seek safety elsewhere; while unfortunately, over 1300 have lost their lives in the process. Incredibly, the farmers and herdsmen unrest has terminated more than 6 times the number recorded against from the years mostly involving men, women and children (EASO 2018). Though these clashes are said to be staged by herders and farmers, a greater part of the onslaught is attributed to the herders which in way explains why they are collectively tagged in the South as Mbororos, meaning a people that commonly cause conflict (EASO 2018). More significantly, by religious standings, most of the herdsmen, apart from being predominantly Fulani are equally mainly Muslims while a vast majority of the inhabitants of the farming population are Christians; orchestrating the very religious bias to the conflict.

1.1.3 Online investigative newspapers

a. Sahara Reporters

Sahara Reporters is an online news platform that operates from the New York City and is committed to promoting what is described as investigative journalism. This type of critical journalism engages issues concerning corruption, human right abuses, and other political anomalies. Its primary target is Nigeria. It was established by Omoyele Sowore (one of the presidential aspirants of the 2019 general elections in Nigeria) in 2006 and has published over 5,000 reports. Being located in the United States, *Sahara Reporters* attracts a larger patronage from home-based Nigerians and mostly those in diaspora. For its critical reportage, it is often labeled the Wikileaks of Africa. It runs on grants from various NGOs.

According to saharareporters.com, the online newspaper uses photos, videos, and text to orientate African citizens and activists across the globe to stand against various forms of corruption, poverty, degradation of environment and all sorts of violation of democratic principles as entrenched in the constitution. Being an instrument of investigative journalism, the site is designed in such a way that it allows for circumspectly investigated stories for reportage. Available on the site are nine (9) broad sections for visitors' consumption. These sections are News, Opinions, NigeriaDecides (this particular handle emerged as a result of the just concluded elections as a follow-up of the results during the time), Politics, Health, Sports, Entertainment, Lifestyle, and Education. Videos, photos, and documents are equally made available on the site. Their news are sourced from thirty-four sources across the nation. They are available on Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube, and also have a News Feed that could be subscribed to by readers.

b. Premium Times

Launched in mid-2011, *Premium Times* is an online newspaper based in Abuja, Nigeria. Its vision is to help strengthen Nigeria's fledgling democracy, improve its socio-economic state, and protect the rights of the citizen, bolster and relate their cultural norms and practices with global best practices, and to ensure transparency and good governance. Through their reports, human rights in accordance with the modern

democratic values are discreetly monitored, on the ground of the belief that the media is at the centre of human advocacy.

1.2 Statement of the problem

This study focuses on resource entitlement perspectives with respect to herdsmen-farmers conflict. Both resource entitlement and herdsmen-farmers conflict have attracted studies from different disciplinary strands, without situating the entitlement construct in the herdsmen-farmers conflict in pragmatics. For instance, studies on entitlement, have mostly emanated from academic fields including political science (Franck, 1992), law and philosophy (Black, 1990; Nozick, 1974; Nussbaum, 2003; Super, 2004), environmental studies (Leach, Mearns, and Scoones, 2006), Education (Young, 2014), and personality and social psychology (Tomlinson, 2012; Piff, 2014; Žemojtel-Piotrowska. et. al, 2015; Green, 2020). These studies severally identify entitlement as some form of right triggered by a sense of deservedness that is ultimately geared towards gaining access to resources.

The nature of rights to resources is described in Versteegen (2001) as being dependent on the legal, political, economic and social conditions in society and the person's position in it. Put in perspectives, entitlement is influenced by the position, status and power one is privileged to possess. This power demonstration has prompted the relation of the concept to narcissism; “a multifaceted construct characterized by an inflated view of the self, a self-aggrandizing and dominant orientation toward others, increased grandiosity, and heightened feelings of uniqueness and individualism” (Piff, 2014:35). Despite this and many perspectives taken on the entitlement construct that apparently foregrounds its resource affiliation, it has hardly been measured against the resources-triggered herdsmen-farmers conflict.

Conversely, myriads of studies that have been carried out on herdsmen and farmers' conflict which identify contestations over resources have mainly drifted away from conceptualizing, crystallising and concretising the entitlement phenomenon within the giving of this resource conflict. Instead, their motivation is centred on the assessment of government policy with respect to the states bedeviled with the insurrection (Olatunji,

2017; Ogo-Oluwa, 2017). While some research efforts were directed at the social, political, economic and the ecological dimensions and implications of the conflict on the wellbeing of the affected communities and the general impact on the nation's socio-political, and economic stability (Chukwuma and Atelhe, 2014; Omilusi, 2016; Ichaba and Ezeogu, 2018), others draw upon variegated media perspectives to the investigation of the conflict, with specific interest on how the actors are framed as well as the approaches deployed in the coverage of reports on national dailies (Gever and Essien, 2017; Ciboh, 2017).

Partially connected to this present study, however, are works that have only faintly addressed land use as the overarching precipitator of the clashes between the two agriculturists in the country (Muhammed, Ismaila and Bibi, 2015). Despite the critical scholarly dimensions aggregated towards unraveling the possible causes of this conflict, only a few have placed emphasis on the broad entitlement perspectives occasioned by contestation of limited space and resources between the two major actors which they have sociologically investigated (Muhammed, Ismaila and Bibi, 2015; Bagu and Smith, 2017, Idowu, 2017).

Except for Ciboh (2017) and Gever and Essien's (2017) which examine the conflict's narratives from the perspective of media framing and representations of the conflict, a large number of the other studies sociologically dwell on the causal narrative and implications with the provision of potential solutions to the conflict. There is an overt dearth of studies addressing this issue from the linguistic perspectives, especially from pragmatics, but the works of Ellah and Ekoru (2018), and Odusina (2019). While Ellah and Ekoru (2018) investigated the stance and pragmatic strategies employed in newspaper editorials that discuss the conflict, Odusina's (2019) attention was focused critical discourse analysis of media representation of Fulani herdsmen's conflict in selected Nigerian newspapers and its implications for the Nigerian educational system. Apparently, the two papers, though situated within the crux of pragmatics and discourse analysis, are mainly devoted to the stances taken, and how the activities of herdsmen affect education. Their focus is formalistic and too generic, as the works do not engage the subject of entitlement as a core precipitator recurrent in media reportages.

In sum, while the works from the biases of law, sociology, psychology and management entitlements have robustly established resource conflict as an integral product of the entitlement construct, studies on herdsman and farmers' conflict from linguistic as well the media have not sufficiently foregrounded the entitlement perspectives, as shown in the ideological and contextual affordances in the reports on the resource conflict. It is therefore the aim of this study to ultimately examine resource entitlement perspectives, contexts and the underlying ideologies in the online news reports on herdsman and farmers' conflict in Nigeria.

1.3 Aim and objectives

This study focuses on resource entitlement perspectives, context, and ideology in the news reports on herdsman-farmers conflict in Nigeria. Four objectives have been formulated to realise this aim. They are to:

1. identify resource entitlement types and contexts in the selected news reports on herdsman-farmers conflict.
2. highlight the underlying ideologies that inform the resource entitlement types in the selected news reports on herdsman-farmers conflict.
3. determine the pragmatic strategies and locution types that project the ideologies in the selected news reports and
4. examine the pragmatic implications of the resource entitlement discourse for peace and conflict in Nigeria

1.4 Scope of the study

The study is designed to cover reports on herdsman and farmers' conflict along with comments made around the years 2015 to 2021 because of the heightened reportage of the entitlement conflict as well as the preponderance and intensity of its discourses in those periods. A hundred and six (106) online news reports from *Premium Times* and *Sahara Reporters* from 2015 to 2021 were purposively sampled for the study. Reports on clashes, opinions, interviews, and readers' comments that evoke resource entitlement

perspectives in the herder- farmer conflict constitute the news properties selected for this research.

1.5 Significance of the study

This study offers an invaluable pragmatic approach to the understanding of the herdsmen and farmers' longstanding feud by identifying and examining the resource entitlement construct upon which the conflict is primarily engendered; its contextual variances and ideological underpinnings. The research essentially creates a path for entitlement pragmatics which will enhance meaning construction in the media and also bolster the chord binding context, conflict and cognition in the fields of discourse and pragmatics as well as sociological studies that can prompt better national policies. The findings of this study will get to the target stakeholders of the conflict through publications and seminars if funded and that will facilitate and influence policies that would address issues of resource ownership as well as contestations among the two agriculturists that are capable of leading to violence in Nigeria. The study's findings will also checkmate the media choices of conflict coverages and the narrative strategies in order to avoid conflict-triggering locutions.

1.6 Summary of the chapter

This chapter has explicitly established the driving force for the design of the topic, the historical context of the conflict in Nigeria, the complexion of the e-communities, their operational width and ownership. The statement of the problem was also provided as well as the scope of the study clearly defined. It equally stated the significance of the study. With these, the study glides to the next chapter which will concentrate on review of related literature and presentation of the theoretical framework.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF LITERATURE AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.0 Preamble

This chapter is designed to assess previous studies from two broad perspectives: one from the non-language-based and the other from the language-based perspectives. The non-language-based studies encompass myriad of research efforts outside pure and applied linguistics to include works from sociology, anthropology, political science, and applied sciences and other fields. In addition, concepts relevant to the present study's disciplinary bias would be examined. The chapter will also engage the theoretical orientation adopted in the study; all with the aim of establishing the gap the study is set to fill in the existing literatures on herdsman and farmers' discourse and entitlement conflict in particular. By design, the chapter begins with the conceptual review.

2.1 Review of relevant concepts

This unit of the study examines certain concepts that are peculiar to the domain of the discipline under which the present research effort is centred. Reviewing these concepts would not only define the scope of the study but would also help to robustly clarify the perspective from which the thesis is pursued. Essentially, some of the concepts drawn for review in this section cut across entitlement, context, ideology, conflict discourse, media discourse, the language of investigative (online) newspapers, and pragmatics.

2.1.1 The concept of entitlement

Entitlement, as a concept has welcomed multifaceted approaches from different scholastic compasses. As Kelsen (1991) acknowledges, entitlement accommodates quite a number of significations compelled by differences in contextual standings. Common to

all the studies that address this concept is the circumspective disaggregation of the word 'right'. When traced to its root, entitlement analysis first began with Amartya Sen in 1981 where it was used to explain how starvation still thrives in environments full of abundant food. This persistence of starvation was attributed to the collapse in the means of command over food. It also presented the understanding of the impact of general environmental change and access to, and control over natural resources (Scoones et al 2006). In other words, entitlement offers the framework for understanding the institutional dynamics of environmental change. Typically, consequent upon the dynamics of environmental change, conflict over access to resources, most times increases when the resources available become scarce in clear terms (Nolan, 1993; Devereux, 1998; Scoones et al, 2006). It is therefore deducible that entitlement issues are basically not unconnected to limited resources that engender rife over right of ownership.

Against the strict backdrop of the popular perception that entitlement is necessarily people's right to holdings, Scoones et al (2006) yet argue that it is the range of possibilities that individuals can actually have. If it is the range of possibility then, the conflict over resources would not have naturally been intense since negotiations can be possibly made to ensure fair distribution. However, the fact that right is a critical driving factor or claim in most entitlement struggles has often blinded negotiation possibilities. It thus further stresses that entitlement is more of a psychological perspective than being merely construed in this sense as mapping.

As a concept which also finds its route in personal and social psychology, entitlement has been observed to be instrumental to narcissism in Piff's (2014) examination of wealth and inflated self in the assessment of class, entitlement and narcissism. The study argues that one of the primary determinants of narcissism is psychological entitlement (Brown, Budzek, and Tamborski, 2009)—a sense that one deserves more and is more important than others (Campbell, Bonacci, Shelton, Exline, & Bushman, 2004; cited in Piff, 2014:35). With people who are endowed with natural resources, the sense of entitlement easily matches the narcissistic description. With respect to class and status in the society, it was observed that those in higher class and elevated status possess these tendencies that people in the lower rung of the societal ladder do not have.

Entitlement issues are also prevalent in the educational sector, in that, some knowledge is adjudged to be powerful and therefore it is believed that students are not entitled to such. Even on the administrative radar, Young (2014) contended that despite their support for a knowledge-led National Curriculum, it is the government's economic policies that will influence how the entitlement to knowledge is distributed. He gave the instance of the uneven support given to studies in humanities in public institutions and those of private. This knowledge entitlement design is said to be instrumental to the designing of the curriculum to specify what a student can learn at different levels in school.

The entitlement perspective has been deployed on the determination of poverty and violence, an approach that shares close affinity with the herdsman and farmer conflict in a way. In his proposition, Verstegen (2009) maintained that there are many ways of gaining access and control over resources, such as the market and kin networks. According to this view, groups' access to resources is thus based on many factors that go beyond economic ones. Precisely, this approach defines the nature of entitlement to be dependent on factors that encompass the "legal, political, economic and social conditions in society and the person's position in it" (Verstegen, 2001:13). To Verstegen (2009) entitlement is a matter of both rights and power, and is concerned with the actual process of how people gain access to resources. Put in perspective, this conceptualisation is related to Piff's notion of the phenomenon as a product of class, status and influence. Hence, entitlement is ideological since it is psychological and at the time power and control driven.

In relation to food security, two categories of the fundamental concept of entitlement – endowments and entitlements – have been identified by one of the proponents of the concept, Sen Amartya. According to Sen (1984 cited in Kurniawan (2016), endowment involves the control of assets and resources including the power of labour while entitlement typifies a range of choices within available commodities which a person has right to, within a social circle (Sen, 1984: 497, Devereux, 2001 :246 cited in Kurniawan (2016). It is obvious from the preceding viewpoints that entitlement is largely legally backed. That is why where entitlement rights are pursued there are mostly court cases and policy formulations.

Discussion concerning environmental entitlement also points to contestations over resources. In their study on environmental entitlement, Leach, et. al (2006) opined that analysis of entitlement is integral to unearthing the consequences of environmental dynamics generally, as well as enabling accessibility and management of natural resources in specifically (Leach and Mearns 1991; Mearns 1995b, 1996a). It can be seen here again that entitlement issues on environment still rely on other socio-political and economic variables. In other words, social actors manage the environment therefore whatever resources in it is aggregated under their control. This perspective sees environmental entitlements as alternative sets of utilities derived from environmental goods and services over which social actors have legitimate effective command and which are instrumental in achieving wellbeing.

Beyond the environment and other ecological issues, entitlement has manifested in racial disposition among racially diverse polities. This is the focus of Green's (2020) recent work on racial entitlement. Green (2020) defines racial entitlement as a state-provided or backed benefit from which emerges a belief of self-deservedness based on membership in a racial category alone. In furtherance, Green (2020) stresses that this type of entitlement is state motivated, such that government distributes houses, loans, roads, sewers, parks, and schools along racial lines, with whites in the category of perpetual benefit. It is thinkable that such prejudiced distribution of state benefits will, if not immediately, engender strife and conflict in any society that is built on democratic principles. In a more collective depiction, racial entitlement is conceived as the phyco-descriptive level of belief system in which one believes that one deserves more than others in sociological (racial) setting, consequently prompting such behavioural acts. Obviously, racial entitlement deemphasises inter-group relationships; rather it pays attention to government and citizens' relationship. In summing this up, Green (2020) stresses that racial entitlement is established in the relationship between institutional powers and individuals. It goes beyond the confines of government policies at different levels of benefits either negative or positive. To this author, racial entitlement's identification is premised on the evaluation of policies of government in relation to societal expectations. In the same vein, the author advances that racial entitlement usually embeds in them racially distinctive mental and emotional strand of the individuals engaged in the interaction with the state. It

could be deduced that even though the construct of entitlement is mostly cognitive, its operation rests on the social construct of governance. As in the case of herdsman and farmers' conflict, policies and law seem to run against each other. For instance, federal government makes laws that some states did not subscribe to, while others do. At some points, policies on grazing are utterly condemned by the people on grounds of ethnic favouritism. It thus informs the complexion of resource conflict and the need to examine its pragmatics.

Tomlinson's (2013) integrated model of entitlement proves to sum up most of these perspectives drawn on the concept from the purview of personal and social psychology. To Tomlinson (2013), entitlement, from its variegated compositions, is associated with negative outcomes correlated with lower accommodation, less empathy and perspective taking, less respect for others, selfishness, and even aggressive behavior (Campbell et al. 2004 cited in Tomlinson 2013). Underlying this description is the sense of hostility bred by the entitlement belief which can be connected to political, legal, economic and environmental biases.

2.1.2 Entitlement and deservedness

From the perspective of psychology, entitlement is conceived as the stable and pervasive sense that one deserves more, and is entitled to more than others (Bushman et al, 2004). It plays out across differing situations. But one caveat that is evident in this conceptualisation is the introduction of deservingness. Authors within this circle have tried to distinguish these two concepts with a view to defining one independently of the other. To them, deservingness reflects the expectation of a reward in exchange for one's own efforts or character, while entitlement essentially reflects the expectation of a reward as a result of a social contract. One binding factor here is obviously, expectation; an expectation type resulting from the expectants' status and contribution. In such scenario, one deserves a reward from a firm or organisation if and only if one has contributed to the profit or the gain available which they expect in form of payback. From the other consideration, in relation to government for example, everyone is entitled to the basic amenities like potable water, good road and electricity without necessarily exerting conspicuous efforts since that is government's duty to its citizen in the social contract.

2.1.3 Entitlement and endowment

Another angle to the debate on entitlement is its relation to endowment, which has generated curious need for clarification. The fussiness of the two concepts is entrenched in the construal that endowments, perceived as individuals' initial ownership for resources such as land or labour power, are transformed into a set of entitlement. To Sen, these relations are possibly based on processes involving production labour, trade, inheritance or transfer. Within the ambience of legal defining, entitlement is considered as the command over resources through formal legal arrangement. It is thus expected that a people who claim right to a territory must do so in total adherence to the provision of the law. Laws here could be in form of the land use act of the nation in question. In furtherance, Mearns et al (2006) aver that endowments are defined by two basic pivotal phenomena; first, the rights, and second, the resources that social actors have, ranging from land, labour, and skills.

In a relative contrast, these authors, following Gasper (1993) see entitlements as legitimate effective command over alternative commodity bundles. It is substantiated further that, environmental entitlements, therefore, are conceived as alternative sets of utilities derived from the environmental goods and services which are instrumental to the wellbeing of the owners. The alternative sets of utilities that comprise environmental entitlement possibly encompass:

- a. Direct uses in the form of essentials such as food, water, or fuel.
- b. Market value of resources and accrued right to such resources
- c. The utilities enjoyed from the ecological services including pollution sinks or properties of the hydrological cycle (Gasper, 1993; Mearns *et al*, 2006)

As emphasised in Gasper (1993) quoted in Mearns *et al*, (2006), the central difference between endowment and entitlement is established in the distinctions that endowments constitute the rights and resources to which people demonstrate their rights in principle, while entitlement encompasses the exact benefits derived from such resources in practice. Put in theory, entitlement is used not merely to appraise famine or hunger but to describe entire patterns of distribution, power, and environmental impact.

In every language, entitlement is simultaneously presented in both its descriptive and moral applications. In the descriptive sense, entitlement involves saying who holds what title, and what applies in terms of the rules that currently hold for a particular case. From the moral perspective, entitlement implies approbation and condemnation – often passionate – of particular rules and their application to claims (Cannon, 1991; Bromley, 1991). These stances necessarily present two typological categories of entitlement: ownership and endowment entitlement. To Nozick (1976), one can be entitled to what one has, and to what one legally gets, rather than to what one might conceivably get (Bromley, 1991). This perhaps informs the reference of environmental entitlement as ‘rights attributed to groups or individuals confirming their control and management of given resources’ (Davies and Leach, 1992:2). It is also the command that people can exert over goods (Wuyt, 1992:22). Three alternative descriptions that satisfy the concept of entitlement in its definitional coverage include, legitimate access, legitimate acquisition potential, and legitimate effective command.

2.1.4 Entitlement and the law

Every society is governed by, at least, one law. In the main, laws in different forms provide the number of rights to resources an individual possesses. These rights constitute the hub of entitlement. Entitlement within the purview of law is considered as right; from the fundamental human rights to rights to resources within and around environments. According to Azevedo (2010:165) these rights are usually understood as “legal relations”. By legal relation, entitlements are conceived in the same light as “bonds or ties (be them natural or legally generated) between one individual and a property, from which it could be derived (secondarily) specific demands against certain persons, be them physical or juridical” (Azevedo, 2010:165). This obviously evokes the possibility of entitlement being a product of endowment (natural) and legal (relating to law) that breed strives over property (resources as an alternative description). Consequently, there two perspectives to the conceptualisation of rights under this manifestation: the first views rights as entitlements and the second view of rights as claims.

The first concerns the relations between individual and resources while the second view entails a relation between one person and another. Summing the various rights according

to international Law under the scale of non-primary rights, Modeme (2010:10) identified about nine of them which include: right to work and choice of employment, the right to rest and leisure, the right to free education, the right to cultural life, the right to adequate standard of living, the right to political asylum, the right to take part in the government and public service of one's country, and the right to social security. These, according to Ekkehart (2016:3) are not abstract legal rights; rather they "denote the subjectively perceived rights that go along with a motivational disposition to defend them".

While pairing entitlement and obligation, Ekkehart further postulated that these two concepts stem from the law and that laws contribute to the shaping of entitlements and obligations in several ways. First, the law can be imposed by sanctions. In addition, law may exert a more direct influence, however. It has been observed that the mere declaration of a law, without imposing any punishment for disobedience, will induce behavioural changes (Ekkehart, 2016:5). This actually typifies the situation of herdsmen and farmers' conflict where the entitlement construct permeates the behavioural dispositions manifestly evident in the reports and comments.

In the course of some phone interviews with some lawyers in the course of this research on entitlement over land in the Federal Republic of Nigeria, the position of the law was made explicit, although pragmatically contestable. It was made crystal, as most of them cited the Land Use Act (1978), that the right to land is vested in the hands of each State governor of the federation. Nevertheless, if the land is endowed with natural resources, it is automatically yielded to the federal government. This, however, does not prevent individuals from possessing land with the legal backing. Government also wields the power to expropriate land for any purpose but ultimately for the interest of Nigerians. These are the tracks that made the discourse of the conflict between herdsmen and farmers increasingly inviting for analytical engagement, which this study is set out to do. Basically, the conflict, as widely reported in the media, revolves around discourses over rights broadly over space, but particularly over land. Hence, the demystification of law and entitlement takes a central seat in the pursuit of this study, as the study measures pragmatically the position of the Land Use Act against the demonstrations of rights in the reports.

2.1.4.1 Tomlinson's (2013) integrated model of entitlement beliefs

Tomlinson (2013) integrated model approach of entitlement beliefs in Fig. 2.1 is an approach that aims to reconcile the various disciplinary ends on the notion of entitlement in order to have a unified framework that will allow for a more scientific interpretation of the concept. These disciplines that cut across legal, philosophy, political science, marketing and anthropology have commonly perceived entitlement as what individuals perceive they deserve (Naumann et al 2002; Tomlinson, 2013).

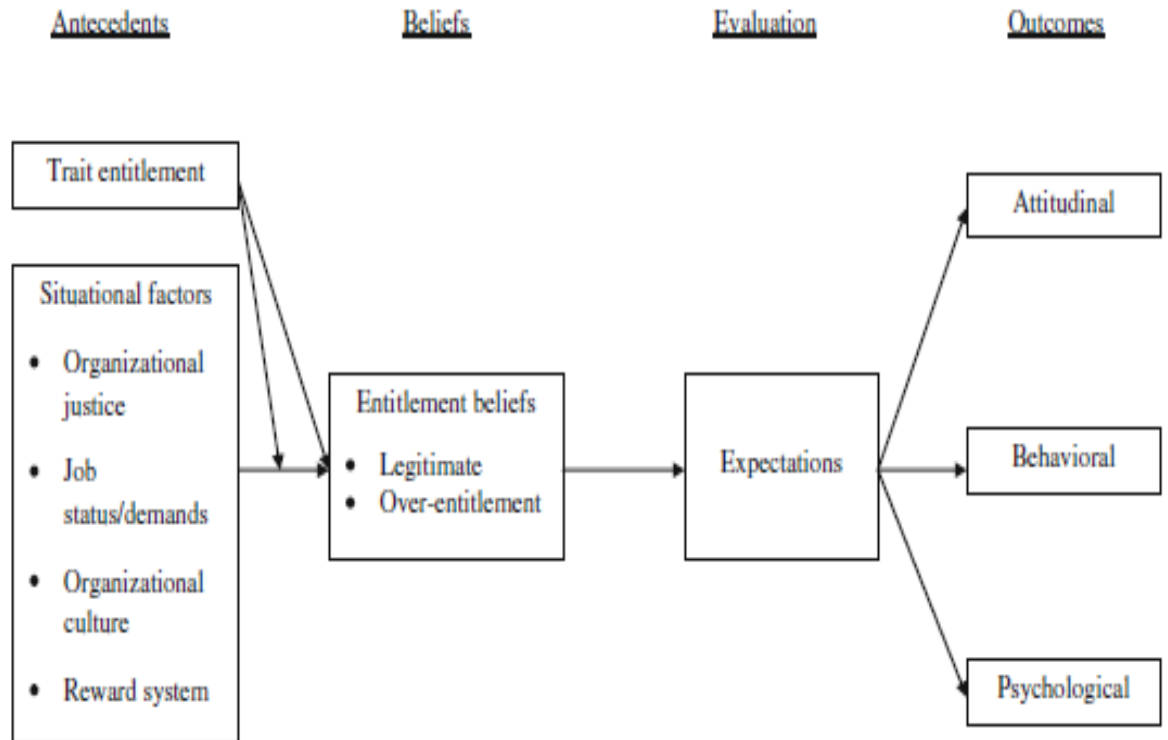


Figure 2.1: A model of entitlement belief

Source: Tomlinson, E.C. (2013:71)

To legal scholars, entitlement means one's rights that are legally binding and cannot be denied extra-judicially; to philosophers, entitlement entails the fundamental right to life and liberty; to political scientists, entitlement denotes an individual's right to the free expression and self-determination ingrained in democracy; scholars within the walls of marketing hinge their description of entitlement on customer's expectations; and anthropologists define entitlement in line with endangered indigenous people's right to political positions (see, Black, 1990; Nozick 1974; Franck, 1992; Kristensen et al., 2009; Carroll, 1994; Tomlinson, 2013).

Two fresh approaches from which the concept featured profoundly in Tomlinson model are personal and social psychological. Personality psychologists consider "entitlement as a stable individual difference that – across situations – exert a global impact on one's thoughts, attitudes and behaviours" (Tomlinson, 2013:69). As demonstrated in Fig. 2.1, this outlook of entitlement by scholars clearly typifies entitlement as a behavioural, attitudinal and cognitive disposition of an individual engendered by external influences. These influences might be provocative to the extent that they forge out negative reaction (attitudinal) from the person whose entitlement sense is violated. It is also labeled, trait entitlement. As it relates to this present study, entitlement beliefs within this purview are said, according to personality psychologists, to be associated with negative outcomes that are found to be correlated with lower accommodation, less empathy, and perspective taking, less respect for others, selfishness and even aggressive behaviour (Campbell et al, 2004; Tomlinson, 2013). Negative outcomes as highlighted here are easily orchestrated by the individual or group entitlement belief system. Social psychologists, however, construe entitlement as how individuals evaluate others to make allocations or decisions.

A concept that has often been contrasted in usage with the concept of entitlement among social psychologists is deservedness. These two were however distinguished along the lines that while deservedness connotes some action or (de)merits of individuals that give rise to commensurate outcomes, entitlement directly addresses an external framework involving rights, rules and social norms (Feather, 1999, 2003; Tomlinson, 2013). In other words, one deserves a reward only after he or she has worked to merit it, whereas, entitlement requires no individual input for an individual to merit certain benefits. In their

exemplification, it is deservedness for a student to have certain grades to obtain an academic degree but afterwards it becomes a matter of entitlement that he enjoys honours and benefits attached to the obtainment of such degree. Hence, this produces entitlement beliefs which are defined as “actor’s beliefs regarding his or her rightful claim of privileges” (Tomlinson, 2013:71).

These beliefs are further categorised into two: legitimate and over entitlement beliefs. On the one hand, legitimate entitlement beliefs (LEBs) are beliefs regarding due privileges that are consistent with standards based on one’s human status and/or norms and rules, on the other hand, over entitlement beliefs (OEBs), also called excessive entitlement, occur when an actor’s beliefs regarding due privileges exceed these standards (Tomlinson, 2013:72). Relating this to the discourse under investigation in this present study, which centres on entitlement perspectives, herdsman and farmers conflict has also been established in the literature to be orchestrated by the struggle for limited available resources. What has consistently evaded scholars’ attention is the fact that this state of scarce resources has naturally incurred entitlement consciousness between aborigines and settlers who now both claim national and regional rights and privileges to the natural environment in which they operate. Entitlement beliefs are not unidirectional and so are manifested in varying typologies which this study seeks to examine together with their constituting contexts and strategies of production in the media.

2.2 Context

The concept of context is core to pragmatics. It could be used in the literal sense and in the pragmatics sense. Literally, context could be conceived as the setting of an event or activity. In both pragmatics and discourse, context mean more than setting as it plays the non-negotiable role as the wand for meaning generation and understanding. As a concept at the heart of pragmatics it has attracted various forms of definition, modification and adaptation depending on the disciplinary prism from which it is perused. It is however always rewarding, for proper comprehension, to consider the concept from its foundation.

2.2.1 Notions on context

Context, as a notion in applied linguistics is initiated in the work of Malinowski, a Portland born British Anthropologist, who came up with three types of context which include, the immediate context of utterance, the general context of situation and the broader context of culture (Shen 2012). This distinction establishes that beyond the linguistic features characterising context, the situational and cultural elements are essential to the composition of what is to be described as context. This is with the intention to broaden the scope of linguistic description. In his study of the way language is used among the Trobriand Islanders of the Western Pacific, Malinowski observed that language is functionally a veritable medium of expressing action. This action, to him, can only be performed when it plays out in a particular context of situation in relation to the interactants.

In a primitive language like that of the Trobriand Islanders, Malinowski maintained that the meaning of a word, to a very large extent is dependent on its context (Malinowski 1923). Apart from the local primitive languages, he acknowledges that context-dependency applies to modern civilized languages but it is implicit here perhaps because of the written form, which is somewhat predominant. Despite that, he advances that the meaning of an utterance is ultimately dependent on context, to such extent that words in use find understanding in what they are done with, evoking the action in them (Malinowski 1923; Widdowson 2004).

In 1950, Firth, a colleague of Malinowski imported the concept and appropriated it into linguistics, especially the Anthropologist's context of situation. According to Firth, in his book titled *Personality and Language in Society* the context of situation was not sufficient for a linguistic theory because of its narrowness. He therefore expanded the scope of the context of situation by injecting into it four categories of considerations. These include: the participants in the situation which cover their roles and statuses, the action of the participants which also encompass their verbal and non-verbal activities, other relevant features of the situation involving objects and other extra-verbal events, and the effects of the verbal action which entail the changes incurred by the action of the

participants in the situation (Shen 2012). This move places Firth as the first to analyse language from the perspective of context and also developed a framework for it.

In furtherance to the input of Firth, one of his students, M.A.K Halliday advanced the context of situation into register theory. He does this by deriving the features of the text from the features of the context of situation (MeiyunYue, 1997; Shen, 2004). The register theory by Halliday evolved in three dimensions: field of discourse, tenor of discourse and mode of discourse. The field of discourse has to do with the environment in which the speech event takes place with the topic of discourse, the interaction and the totality of the process surrounding it. The tenor of discourse involves the relationship among participants in the communicative event with special consideration of their status and role. Finally, the mode of discourse is simply the channel through which the language finds its expression in a particular speech event.

Context has taken several turns in different studies in contemporary scholarship. And because the concept evades precise definition, myriads of efforts have been made to interpret what context is all about. However, with the foundation in sight, it is already apparent that context is in its entirety tied to meaning and it is seen to be dependent on the “environments” that characterise language use. Malinowski, though an Anthropologist sees the need to look beyond linguistic propriety in the construction of language meaning but did not develop his notion into a linguistic framework or theory. His colleague therefore saw this as a lacuna to fill and so came to appropriate it within core linguistics domain. Halliday’s contribution however details the concept of text and expanded it using contextual features and attendant variables. In sum, the history of context has been a continuous build-up of the context of situation espoused by Malinowski.

Mey (1993; 2001) acknowledges that context is dynamic and not static as a concept. He conceives context, being dynamic, as the continually changing surrounding that (from a larger picture) affords the participants in the communicative process to interact and enables their linguistic expressions find intelligibility. He further explicates the concept using the distinction between grammatical and user-oriented perceptions of language. In his perspective, the grammatical view construes language solely as a blend of linguistic

elements in their syntactic paradigm, while the user-oriented view digs into how the linguistic elements are employed in the context of interaction. Being user-oriented, he adds that context can possibly differ from user to user, group to group and of course language to language (Mey 1991; 2001). Context, to Mey, is not just some mere reference to the environment but in itself is action. It is “about understanding what things are for, what gives our utterances their true pragmatic meaning and what allows them to be counted as true pragmatic acts (Mey 1991; 2001: 40).

Comparing context with convention, the pragmatist contends that no matter how natural language facilities are or how context-bound their use or users may be, the place of context cannot be negotiated in order to account for speakers’ thought about language. Mey’s theorizing of context presents two main arguments. First, context is influenced by emerging discourse, even in the same communicative event. That is, if an interaction takes place in a church premise, it is possible to have a context other than the supposed religious context. His definition of context as a “changing surrounding” clearly depicts the scenario illustrated above. Secondly, he contends that beyond relying on the pragmatics resources of reference, presupposition, implicature, and register to extract meaning, context is action itself, in the sense of pragmatic acts (this study will focus more on it in the theory section).

van Dijk’s consideration of context also coincides with Mey’s that the principal trait of the concept is “its dynamic character” (van Dijk 1977:191). To van Dijk, context is not just one possible world-state, rather at least a sequence of world-states. This implies that context is an embodiment of evolving situations or events. World-states here consequently refer to the state of events constructed on the dynamics of emotional, material, psychological, individual, or group indices. He however further clarifies that the world-states of context in the course of events are constituted by initial, intermediate, and final state. It means, in a particular communicative process or event, within these phases of states, there is the possibility of contextual twist. Changes in context therefore occur from moment to moment. van Dijk on this note avers that there are limitless set of possible contexts. The first one he identified is the actual context. This is defined by time

and place where a communicative encounter is realised. It is expected to account for the logical, physical, and cognitive properties of the event.

Very integral to van Dijk's conceptualisation of context is social cognition. Here he opines that not only do people form mental models for their discourses in communicative situations, but interactants also form mental models about these events in which they are actively involved and that of the progressing discourse. This he refers to as context model. In other words, it is the subjective mental representation of the communicative event and the current situation as it constrains current discourse (ND: 18). Without context model, for him, substantial and context-sensitive discourse cannot take place because, it is context model formed by participants that enable them to comprehend the speech act, modify topic, make lexical choice, and predict the recipients' knowledge of the ongoing discourse. Context models may be ideologically biased; for they are produced from personal interpretations of social situations; such that the interpretation a farmer would give to the herders' and farmers' conflict may likely differ from herders' evaluation of the same conflict, because their interpretations are driven by personal interest. Hence, their differing standpoints on the same discourse would be constrained by the context models (also called the experience models) that drive both parties' judgment.

Structurally, van Dijk conceives context to possess or follow a particular form in terms of organisation, different from the common structures of setting, event, action and participants. On a rather broad view, to this author, context principally embodies domain, global action, roles, social relations and cognition. In the domain, context is expected to acknowledge global social activities that define the subject of discourse for participants, in that politicians operate in the domain of Politics, while teachers operate in the domain of Education and so on. Global actions are sometimes influenced by local actions and realised in communication where for instance, the construction of justice globally can be powered locally by participants' criticism of government.

On the context structure called roles, participants are allocated different duties to carry out or roles to play in that the realisation of these roles influences the outcome of the discourse. Three basic types of roles have been identified to include communicative roles, interactional roles and social roles. Each of these roles is determined by a gamut of

contextual indices. Like the communicative roles is made of participants in institutional setting like teaching in which roles are shared between teachers and students. For interactional, roles are defined by different situational settings like friends vs enemies, proponents vs opposition and so on. The last one which is social roles is influenced by group membership and affiliations such as gender, age, and politics.

Social relations, the fourth structural element of context, constitute asymmetric relation where there are possible traits of the display of power and dominance. It also accounts for such features like the formality or informality of a particular communicative event. Finally, cognition as an essential component of the structure of context, expresses the need to describe context in cognitive terms with respect to goals, knowledge and other beliefs of the participants. The goal enables the deciphering of the interactional functions of discourse; the knowledge component treats knowledge construction which largely depends on the semantic and pragmatic properties of discourse, the likes of presupposition and implications. In sum, for van Dijk, context is chiefly the meaning generated inherently in participants' social cognitive models.

A relatively recent contribution to the discourse of context is that of Fetzer (2007). Fetzer, like the authors examined above, admits that context has assumed a major position in various fields of research and has exerted itself in fields bordering on information technology, engineering, science, social sciences, arts and humanities and so on. For its multifaceted nature and attendant complexity, the concept has been perused beyond analytic prime but has consequently attracted a part-whole perspective as an entity with sub-entities. Basically, context is interpreted from three fronts: as frame for delimitation of content using inferencing, and implicature, as a dynamic construct organized through communication and context as a common ground or background information. Consented to by a larger chunk of the studies earlier interrogated, Fetzer on a stressed note constrained the dynamic fabric of context to be based on two perspectives. The first is on the premise of indexicality of social action and the second is on the joint construction of a common context.

2.3 Ideology

One powerful concept that has found its way into various disciplines of study, because of its adaptability, is ideology. The perspectivisation of the concept from differing oases of knowledge has unfortunately made it indefinable in unified terms. As appeared in the preliminary comments made by Terry Eagleton in his text “Ideology: an introduction”, it was stressed that nobody has come up with a single adequate definition of the concept. Definitely, this is not as a result of its lack of definition, but because the prisms through which ideology is perceived constantly differ. At best, it can only be described in consonance with the immediate locative context in which it is used.

Eagleton (1991) highlights sixteen possible definitions of the concept of ideology, while admitting to the mutual exclusivity among them. These definitions are polarized here in this study into two; production and ideation. Those in the production category constrain ideology as representative of the signs, values, and discourses, communicated in social life. The ideation category conceptualises ideology as ideas that direct people’s course of action and events in social life. In essence, the polarity of Eagleton’s ideology lends credence to the social and conceptual configuration of individuals’ or social groups’ action. Taking a multidisciplinary viewpoint, van Dijk (2000) observes that ideology is a vague and controversial concept. This stance on ideology is hinged on Destutt de Tracy’s (the inventor of the notion in the 18th century) construal of ideology as the science of ideas which encompass the general mode of human thoughts, speech and debate. But to van Dijk, ideology is simply a system of beliefs; precisely, the fundamental beliefs of a group and its members.

His definition is closely related to Destutt de Tracy’s perception of the concept as the science of ideas. This is because beliefs are a coagulation of ideas, and the fact that they are scientific naturally makes them systematic. Ideology is also seen as the basis of social practices. What this concerns, according to van Dijk is that ideologies are formed to guide and address some activities in the society that are perceived to be either dangerous or harmful to the social being of its members. This position has also been variously criticized, as ideology is viewed beyond its negative colouration.

2.3.1 Language (use) and ideology

Language and ideology are commonly used terms in applied linguistics in relation to different phenomena. While some studies situate language in ideology, others simply conceive language as ideology. Other studies see it as the vehicle for transporting ideology. Perspectives however abound on this relation. In the relationship between language (use) and ideology, Verschueren (2012) undertakes an exhaustive exploration into the disaggregation of the two concepts beginning from ideology. To him, ideology evolves and therefore, its dynamics has engendered some definitions that can be boldly contested. For instance, ideology, in his description is no longer a systematic analysis of sensations and ideas which should provide the basis for all scientific knowledge. Also, he further argues that it has left being an academic discipline to become an object of investigation.

He however opines that ideology is related to ideas, beliefs, and opinions, and that these do not necessarily constitute ideology because of the complexities surrounding the relationship among them. He thus conceives ideology as “any basic pattern of meaning or frame of interpretation bearing on or involved in (an) aspects of social ‘reality’ (in particular in the realm of social relations in the public sphere), felt to be commonsensical, and often functioning in a normative way”. This definition has embedded in it the place of language in ideology communication, carefully ingrained in the phrase “any basic pattern of meaning”. Accordingly, the author justifies that meaning needs to be expressed before it can be investigated, in other words, meaning does not exist without its expression or manifestation. The most visible manifestation of ideology, according to Verschueren (2012) is language use or discourse, which is capable of reflecting, constructing and maintaining ideological patterns. This is crystallised in the fact that language serves as the main instrument for spreading complex patterns of meaning (Verschueren, 2012:18).

Wodak (2007) notes that, language is considered to be intricately webbed with ideological means, without necessarily being ideological. With specific reference to politics and power, Wodak expresses that language can be seen as an indicator of social and political situations. It could also be perceived as a driving force geared towards

influencing politics and society. It is inferable from the above position that language and ideology uphold a complementary relation, such that within politics or any other social structure, ideology can be formed through the sociopolitical situations or activities in which they find themselves.

Brognolli (2008) identifies crucial, the role language plays in ideological process. It is understood as the linking element between individual's knowledge of the world and their social practices, since it mediates individuals' thought and behaviour (83). This author's construal of language in relation to ideology is strengthened in Kaufmann et al (2012). In this study, ideology is said to be responsible for giving structure to individual's view on various issues. Since ideology gives structures to people's views, it means that language role becomes non-negotiable as it remains the tool for the expression of those views. Another delectable distinction in the relationship between language and ideology is entrenched in Hodge, Kress and Jones (1979:81) quoted in Brognolli (2008). Their study defines ideologies as sets of ideas involved in the ordering of experience, making sense of the world. These systems or sets of ideas which culminate in ideologies are ultimately expressed through language, in that, language supplies the models and categories of thought and, in part people's experience of the world is through language.

2.3.1.1 Ideology and context

Shared beliefs are naturally established and anchored on common goals. These goals, most times are differently pursued from community to community, in that, communal advocacy or solidarity is usually premised on existing norms which in turn direct the goal realisation process. Such norms provide the context upon which shared ideas thrive. Hence, ideology and context are not only inseparable but also functionally complementary to each other. For want of precision, it can be stated that ideology is not formed in vacuum. It is generated by and on a specific context. Different sides to this argument exist in literature. van Dijk (2001:19) sees contexts as mental constructs of participants; they are individually variable interpretations of the ongoing social situation. By construing contexts as mental constructs it means that contexts are largely, as conceived by van Dijk, products of cognition.

This indeed strengthens the fact that when we express ideology, our ideological positions are influenced by the cognitive experience garnered from the society we belong. This is why, he further stressed that there is a high possibility that context models may be ideologically biased because it is the belief that a group of people have about a phenomenon that informs their ideology. In essence, people shared belief about an issue generates ideology, which of course is informed by what he or she conceives of the situation; and that is context.

2.3.1.2 Ideology and the media

Belief systems are not only promoted by the media but the media are equally responsible for the generation of beliefs in their readers. Many people these days see the world and its eclectic happenings through the eyes of the media. This consequently leads to the formation of a media crafted worldview of situations and events, ultimately engendering ideological stances from consumers of such news narratives. The relation between ideology and media has attracted several scholarly reviews, over time. As Philo and Happer (2013) admitted, the media is the medium through which individuals update their knowledge about their world. In addition, it is instrumental to the setting of agendas and focusing public interest on particular subjects, which operates to limit the range of arguments and perspectives that inform public debate (Philo and Happer 2013:321). If the media set agendas it means that it has the power to trade its ideology as well.

It thus further lends credence to the function of the media as a ginormous force in shaping public discourse, wherein, information made available to the audience is to a large extent moderated, if not entirely distorted to project its biases. In their conception, Kirazolugu and Yilma (2014) agree to this proposition in that the media is used effectively as an ideological apparatus of power in terms of shaping the public opinion. A number of factors and bodies also contribute to the content creation of the media as postulated in Philo and Happer (2013) that the shaping of the media content is down to some privileged groups such as social and political institutions as well as interest groups including lobbyists and the public relation industries. In other words, myriads of agents are responsible for what eventually comes out as news to the public. It is these ideologies that readers most times find as the foundation for the evaluation of issues. With respect to

language or utterance with which ideologies are enacted in the media, Gershon (ND) described the symbiotic influences characterising media, ideas and language. According to Gershon, just as people's ideas about language and how language functions shape the way they speak, people's ideas about different communicative media and how different media function shape the way they use the media. This notion about media and ideology is stressed to underscore the essentiality of language ideology and media ideology in audience's translation of media beliefs and practices.

2.3.2 Conflict discourse

Conflict is an expansive area of research that has attracted several investors which appropriate and bring to bear on its discourse, diverse disciplinary foci. Most of the works on conflict discourse are crafted after the peculiarity of events that translate what is considered to be conflict. In essence, conflict is conceived differently across cultures, and disciplines. As a concept, Jeong (2008:5) represents conflict as "the persistent and pervasive nature of inter-group and international competition among disparate interests and values that underlies [sic] power dynamics". This projection of conflict highlights three main notes. First, conflict in this construct is driven by competition, secondly it is drawn on interests and values and thirdly, it is about power play. Interestingly, the first note, competition, coincides with the prevalent cause of the herdsmen and farmers' conflict, and also concretises the pursuit of this study which navigates around the entitlement dynamics.

Competition is usually engendered by dearth of resources, and its attendant insecurity. Naturally, this competition is intensified by interest and values that tend to keep other parties at bay and therefore constitute power tussle. Usually, conflict surges when goals and activities are incompatible and divergent group interests are threatened by the actions of another (Jeong 2008). Characteristically, it is social phenomenon. This is why it is associated with tensions surrounding decisions on various choices, sometimes being manifested in confrontations between social forces (Jeong, 2008).

Many contexts produce conflict in social environment. Conflict does not occur without it constituting events and instigating activities. Quarrels with families, workplace

arguments, violent clashes between states and many contexts define conflict. Notable among the several causes of conflict lies within the broad context of competition. As it relates to this study Jeong's conceptualisation of competition seems holistic in describing the conflict in its entirety. According to Jeong (2008:7) competition represents "an underlying rule of the game of survival, regulated by the surrounding environment, between and within species in search for food, shelter, and other limited resources". There are actually different angles to the description of conflict but competition apparently stands out as the most critical of them.

2.3.3 Media discourse

Media discourse is a multidisciplinary field and so, it is commonly subjected to adaption from different fields of study (Talbot, 2007). For that, many scholars have explored it from disciplines ranging from conversation analysis, discourse analysis, ethnography of communication, linguistic anthropology, pragmatics and sociolinguistics, cultural geography, psychology, sociology and tourism studies. Each of these disciplines has their methodological operation that separates it from the other. However, what seems to be binding for all these variegated disciplines is the relation between media and discourse. At first, discourse is defined as the language or image with its sociocultural roots exposed and its sociocultural effects revealed (Macdonald, 2003). It is a unique thoughts-constructing framework, and a system of communicative practices that are integrally related to wider sociocultural practices. In other words, discourse is concerned with how communicative practices relate to the sociocultural practices of its environment. An illustrative version of this position is explained in McDonald's (2003) distinction of reality and discourse. He opines that reality can exist independently of discourse, but it is only through discourse that we can exchange ideas about it. This obviously informs his identification of four roles played by the media. These include the reflection of reality, the representation of reality, discursive operation, and offering of simulations.

Like the mirror, consumers of media products (basically, the information) find reality reflected in the media's production. Whatever, most times, is found represented in the media, is often a representation of what goes on in the real world. Though in some cases, it is simulated or imagined, its verisimilitude constrains such plausible existentiality. As

stated in Talbot (2007), the media have largely replaced older institutions (such as the Church, or trade unions) as the primary source of understanding of the world. Most times, we get used to the happenings around us by relating with the media. In fact, it keeps us abreast with the trends of events around the globe. It is on this premise that Talbot (2007) identifies three distinct communities of interaction involving media discourse: interactions in production communities, interactions with audience communities and interactivity between producers and audiences.

The first site belongs to media producers who perceive audience merely as commodities sold to advertisers. On their part, the audience engages the reality represented by the media with one another. The third community involves interactivity which is one major interest that informs the choice of data for this study. Interactivity allows audience-media participation, predominantly in the modern-day technology years. Unlike in those periods when only phone-ins and feedback pages constitute the only windows of radio and newspapers' engagement with the reporter, present day feedback mechanism orchestrated by the internet comes with it immediately.

Strategically, the media through their newspaper brands create thought models for their actors. This is central to Odebunmi and Oloyede's (2016) work on Boko Haram where the authors examined the frames and pragmatic strategies in Nigerian newspaper reports on the sect's insurgency. The study shows that the frames built by the media are based on the same set of realities experienced by the individual, but that when developed and fully comprehended by the reader, news becomes more valuable and provides more concrete information. Thus, the paper submits that Nigerian journalists, using *The Punch* and *The Nation* as atomisation, frame Boko Haram perpetrators negatively, they adopt basically indirect and non-committal pragmatic strategies that are capable of keeping them professionally and physically protected from terrorist attacks.

Some of the identified strategies include; Indirect condemnation (IC), Blunt condemnation (BC), Visual indictment (VI), Appeal to emotions (AE), Unshielded exposition (UE), Negative label avoidance (NLA), Prioritisation of Boko Haram –impact stories as leads always (PBS), Evocation of antecedent (EA), and Clinical detachment from position taking (CD). This technical and pragmatic representation of the major

actors of the BH insurgency is germane and natural with newspaper's construction of the realities of time. In relation to this present work, some of these strategies are found to be prevalent, in that, they are the means through which the ideologies constraining the entitlement construct are crystalised.

It is therefore not out of place to state that the media discourse is at best an ideological discourse because it is informed by various systems and forces. Sometimes, the ownership and his or her political and social affiliations dictate the direction and position of newspaper reportage.

2.3.4 The language, procedure and style of (investigative online) newspapers

Online investigative newspapers are peculiar and specially designed for the 21st century. This uniqueness is evident in their language, procedural narratives, and style. In contrast with the traditional print forms which later developed their online versions, the online investigative online newspapers started with the online forms, and have maintained their status quo without resort to the mundane print tradition. Mostly classified under citizen journalism, the broad spectrum under which these newspaper types are categorized has been found to be an exercise in audience design (Bell, 1984; Conboy, 2010). By audience design, it implies that the language of newspapers has always encompassed what would sell to audience, and how information could best be packaged and presented to achieve this commercial end at any particular time (Conboy, 2010).

Any objective evaluation of the content of Bell and Conboy's picture of journalism and the language of newspaper readily emphasises that journalism is two-faced: there is the quest for sociopolitical relevance and the pursuit for economic gain. These two goals largely constrain the configuration of general journalism and the composition of newspapers. Over time, the structure of the language of newspaper has encountered a wave of change. Specifically, in the twentieth century, according to Conboy (2010) the language of newspaper was influenced by the emergence of technologies competing with the newspaper as the sole provider of topical information about the world. In a progressive manner, it glides from radio to television, from television to satellite and from satellite to internet, consequently introducing a new form of language called tabloid.

In discourse, journalism has some peculiar textual characteristics and methods of text production and consumption that are defined by a particular set of relationships between itself and other agencies of symbolic and material power (Richardson, 2007). These characteristics are three and they include language of journalism, production and consumption and the relations of journalism to social ideas and institutions are clearly interrelated and sometime difficult to disentangle.

2.3.5 The notion of pragmatics

Early efforts at establishing the idea of a pragmatic approach to linguistics date back to the late sixties and early seventies (Mey, 1993, 2001). Its emergence became imminent at the collapse of earlier theoretical approaches which favour form over function, particularly syntax, spearheaded by Chomsky and his students. Ironically, most of the observations that queried the form-dependence of the existing linguistic paradigm were led by philosophers, not linguists. Their attention was focused on establishing the relationship between language and logic, and they were ultimately bent on discovering gray areas in the borderlines of linguistics and philosophy. On their part, linguists also tried to fashion out ways in which the narrow walls of syntax and semantics can be broken down to accommodate expansion, such that linguistic description that was strictly syntax-driven, would be made to consider extra-syntactic (or generally, extra-linguistic) features that contribute to a more encompassing description. Most especially, problems relating to language users and contexts in meaning derivation paved the path for the pragmatic turn in linguistic study.

Most literature recorded that the notion of pragmatics is traceable to the philosopher Charles Morris (1938) who was simply interested in the study of the general shape of a science of signs, semiotics. In it, he teased out three points of investigation which include syntactics, semantics and pragmatics. Syntactics or syntax refers to the formal relation of signs to another; semantics relates to the study of the relation of signs to the object to which the signs are applicable (also tagged designata); pragmatics is concerned with the study of relation of signs to interpreters (Morris, 1938; Levinson, 1983; Mey, 1993, 2001). Clearly, in this trichotomy (a term used in Levinson, 1983), pragmatics places premium on the place and role of the user in the deciphering of signs. Similarly, Mey

(1993, 2001:5) considers pragmatics to be ‘interested in the process of producing language and in its producers, not just in the end product, language’. Two delineations already manifest in the preceding concern of pragmatics; that is, the language production process, which is related to syntax, and the process involving the users, which was overtly missing in the syntax-oriented approach to language description. To a very large extent, the introduction of the user-oriented paradigm of language description strongly coincides with Chomsky’s construal of performance, in its distinction between competence and performance. Performance involves the way a language user employs language in a communicative event.

Defining pragmatics is more complex than the efforts that culminated in its existence as a field of study. This is because the concept has become the waste basket of communication which has accommodated gluts of engagement from different viewpoints. Yule (1996) identifies four concerns of pragmatics which cover a wider scope of the concept, and these are highlighted below:

- a. Pragmatics is the study of speaker meaning;
- b. It is concerned with the study of contextual meaning;
- c. It studies how more gets communicated than is said; and
- d. It is the study of the expression of relative distance.

The pragmatic concern of speaker meaning entails the interpretation of what people mean by what they utter, beyond the independence of the words, phrases, and clauses with which their utterances are composed. That of contextual meaning involves the analysis of what people mean in a particular context and how the context in turn influences what they say. It encompasses the organisation of what is said in relation to whom, when, where and the circumstances that drive what is said or uttered. The third concern deals with the listener. It banks on how the listener makes inferences of what is said in order to arrive at an interpretation of the speaker’s intended meaning. It finds expression in locating what is unsaid in what is actually uttered.

The expression of relative distance queries what measures the choice between what is said and what is left unsaid. Distance here relates to the closeness of participants in the

communicative encounter. It could be physical, social, or conceptual depending on the shared knowledge of the interactants. What Yule has done is simply to categorise some basic spread of pragmatics that are only some steps away from the coverage of the semantic theories of meaning. In essence, pragmatics represents more than what is captured in Yule's descriptions.

Levinson (1983) while attempting some possible definitions of the concept admits that most definitions are trailed by one deficiency or the other. The first attempt defines pragmatics as the study of those principles that will account for why certain set of sentences are anomalous or not possible utterances. Sentences considered anomalous in this definition are such that stand independent of context. That is, accruing interpretation to them becomes almost impossible as they are not situated in specific contexts. But the definition does not account for the actual pragmatic principles that explain the anomalies. Instead, the analyst is left at the interpretive mercies of presupposition.

2.3.6 The concept of migration

Migration is one concept that has turned a major discourse issue in scholarships around the world. It defines an essential aspect of human existence – movement. Within the descriptive spectrum of the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO, 2016), migration involves the movement of people either within a country or across international borders. Tataru (2019) considers it as a phenomenon of great complexity owing to the dynamics of the various reasons why people migrate. In other words, migration is spurred by different circumstances and thus it is the context and nature of movement that determine the type of migration people undertake.

According to FAO (2016), this situation-bound movement has led to a gamut of migrants' classifications, namely economic migrants, distress migrants, internally displaced migrants (IDPs), refugees and asylum-seekers, returnees and people moving for other purposes, including education and family reunification. Beyond these generic types of migrants, there are streams of migration linked to four broad kinds: rural-urban, rural-rural, urban-rural, and urban-urban migrations (Deshingkar and Grimm, 2005). The rural-rural stream of migration is common in poor countries where labourers relocate to more

agriculturally fertile and fruitful locale within the same region for more agricultural cultivation. The rural-urban migration involves relocation triggered by economic factors that made people move to larger cities and manufacturing centres. For urban-rural migration, movement occurs when retirees return to the rural areas after their years of work at the urban areas.

On the part of the urban-urban stream, migration occurs at interstate level as recorded between major cities. Beyond this categorisation, the concept is still shrouded in complexities due to the different use to which it is put among various fields of study. For instance, biologists identify a variety of scientific forms or patterns that migration can take in their distinct category. These include organisms (obligate, facultative, partial, differential), space (to-and-fro, round-trip (loop), on-way, altitudinal, nomadic), time (seasonal, irruptive), and medium (diachronic, drift (including devices) (*see* Dingle and Drake, (2007)). These patterns help the understanding of the kind and nature of migration that different people and professions (like the herdsmen) engage in. For instance, the space category spells out the nomadic type of migration seasonally carried out by herders by dint of their occupational demands.

Relating this to the question of right, Crépeau (2013) made an important observation that centrally conceives migration as a problem which needs to be overcome. This is hinged on the premise that States consider migrants as law-breakers who must be stopped from breaching the system. To this author, the only legitimate grounds in which migrants are lawfully recognised are when the migrants are: asylum-seekers and refugees as well as movement driven by natural disasters, and exploitation-driven migrations (such as trafficking). The herders' migratory pattern apparently falls within the natural disaster-driven form since their movement is occasioned by geographical change as a result of desertification.

Other indices that inspire migration are noted in Tataru (2019) to include the push and pull factors. The push factors are also called determinant factors (such as poor quality of life, lack of jobs, excessive pollution, hunger, drought or natural disaster). They lead an emigrant out of his country to another by reason of political, economic and social benefits, whereas, the pull factors are attraction factors – the favourable conditions that

attract the migrant to that country. The push factors are negative factors that necessitate voluntary migration; however, pull factors are positive factors that also encourage voluntary migration. Conversely, the forced migration occurs in a situation where an individual's life is threatened by insurrection and other dangerous social events.

A cursory evaluation of the concept of migration has robustly revealed the plausible factors of the herders-farmers' situation in Nigeria. How the push-pull factors forced them out of the Sahel because of drought and migrated them to the west has been typically demystified. In addition, perception towards migrants especially by the state which naturally frames migrants as violators could not be unconnected to the rejection and acceptance that the pastoralists encounter in their nomadic endeavours. Although, the concept did not emphasise the entitlement construct but its surrounding context that engenders the phenomenon has been explicated and thus makes the review of the concept apposite to the realisation of the thesis aim.

2.3.7 The concept of the “cattle culture”

Culture is a tool of identity. As a concept, it marks off the way and manner a people behave and act from others. In many places of the world, people's culture defines them and set them apart from others. Sometimes, it could be the food they eat, the dress they wear and the occupation they are renowned for and of course, the language they speak. The concept of the “cattle culture” is primarily linked to the Fulani herdsmen by reason of the occupation.

A paper written by Lott and Hart (1977) entitled “Aggressive Domination of Cattle by Fulani Herdsmen and its Relation to Aggression in Fulani Culture” forms the bedrock for the proposition about the cattle culture of the Fulani herdsmen. The crux of the paper hangs on the thesis that animals selected for domestication share a social system characterised by a dominance hierarchy in which the Fulani assume the dominant role over the different animal groups (Darwin, 1875; Breland and Breland, 1966; Hediger, 1968). What this argument simply enunciates is that aggressive behaviour towards the animals is to mainly exert dominance in order to create the dominance-subordination interaction context. By the design of their occupation, the Fulani relocate with their herds

every three to four days during the dry season for eight months, only spending longer time during raining seasons (ibid.). This itinerance made them minorities in most of the places they had their brief stopovers; however, this dominant conquest-lifestyle has made them to launch attacks at local agricultural residents since the 1800 (Johnson, 1967).

Another reflection of this dominance culture was traced to the 1900, when the western European nations ruled. At that period, the Fulani dominated the political space. Presumably, the political domination was credited to the aggressive personality of the Fulani. As observed by Goldschmidt (1971 cited in Lott and Hart, 1977:177), that the “herding of large animals has an effect on the psychological orientation of a culture by quickening a kind of “masculinity” that is reinforced by the demands made upon the men in herding”. It upholds the fact that personality is a product of several encounters and determining factors. For instance, their study further revealed that the herd bulls were naturally violent, threatening other cattle and people. In response to this threat, the Fulani also threaten in return with an upraised or flourished herding stick and a yell with an accompanying brisk charge towards the bull (see, Fraser, 1957). This is geared towards commanding submission from the cattle, invariable exhibiting dominance. This dominance trait is bred in the young Fulani from age six.

In fact, the earliest stages of socialisation between the herd and the Fulani mark the first responsibility of young boys. These boys are trained to dominate cattle and the cattle succumb to the subordinate role. The boys start handling calves from the day the calves are born. At times, calves of equal weight and strength are deliberately let loosed from their ropes for the boys to bring them back. They boys get trained in this manner until they are able subdue calve even as the calve increase in size and strength. This happens when the Fulani is about six in which he follows his older brother or father and his taught to display that aggressive dominance towards mature bulls and oxen. By implication, courage is a marked attribute of an average Fulani herder. Their relationship with the cattle is strongly reflected in their dealing with neighbours. This influences the cultural expectation that Fulani boy possess the courage to match any task.

However, physical aggression is controlled by a code of social conduct called Pulaku which prohibits a physical attack against another, unless on occasion of heightened

provocation. In the instance where the bullied Fulani failed to attack in the face of clear provocation, the older brother, cousin or parents would punish such act considered as an act of cowardice. Also, the cultural ideal of courage is evidenced by the contest called sharo. In this contest, young boys between the ages of fifteen and twenty-five take up beating challenge from other clans. The challenge involves heavy blows delivered in full strength with a stick of about ¾ inch diameter and 3 feet long to the torso of the individual who would stand with upraised hands to endure them. This produces lasting scars but culturally, it comes with the pride for the successful endurance of the exercise. It is thus deducible that the cattle culture breeds aggressive personality in the Fulani because the knowledge and socialisation with the cattle is imported into their reality and engagement with men.

Drawing from the gamut of concepts reviewed in this section of the study, it could be safely established that entitlement, context, ideology, media and conflict discourse, pragmatics, migration and the concept of the cattle culture resonate with the heart of the discourse of entitlement. This was realised by virtue of the study's existing works clarification of the relationship between entitlement and deservedness; endowment and the law. This relationship demonstrates at what level a line of demarcation can be drawn among them as well as in relation to the voice of the law. Collapsing these variegated bits, Tomlinson's integrated model helps manage the loose ends by aggregating the different notions of entitlement, their types and engendering factors, and reducing all to a belief system. This was integral to the current research because the aggregation aids our categorisation and operationalisation of the concept in accounting for its features evident in news reports. Other major concepts reviewed facilitated the understanding drawn on the place of language, the characterising mediated co(n)text of the herdsmen and farmers' conflict especially in the construal of migration and the cultural inflections constraining the psyche and activities of the herdsmen in their relationship with the sedentary farmers and others they come in contact with in their routinised movements.

2.4 Review of empirical studies

This section will start with the interrogation of the non-language-based studies on herdsmen and farmers' conflict. As their various positions are examined, conscious

efforts will be made to engage them critically in order to appraise their strength and highlight their weaknesses.

2.4.1 Non-language-based studies on herdsmen and farmers' conflicts

The non-language-based category of this review chiefly encompasses studies from fields other than linguistics: agricultural sciences (Ifatimehin and Tenuche, 2009; Imo, 2017; Tersoo, 2016; and Ukamaka et al., 2017 Adisa, 2012), geographical sciences (Agbegbedia, 2014; Muhammed, Ismaila, and Bibi, 2015; Chukwuma and Atelhe, 2014), political sciences (Olatunji, 2017; Ogo-Oluwa, 2017; Ichaba and Ezeogu, 2018; Conroy, 2014), conflict studies (Johnson and Taofik, 2017; Akinyetun, 2016; Bagu and Smith, 2017; Omilusi, 2016; Adisa and Adekunle, 2010; Tersoo, 2018 and Idowu, 2017) and media studies (Gever and Essien, 2017; Ciboh, 2017).

These non-language-based studies are examined, beginning with the studies from the agricultural biases which have explored the implications of the conflict for resource sustainability. These implications stem from the damages incurred from the destruction of crops, overgrazing of vegetal resources, destruction of major sources of domestic water, hardening of soil and destruction of ponds and fishery resources. A close perusal of these issues reveals that it is the unchecked and inconsiderate agricultural activities of both farmers and herdsmen on the common environment in which they operate that is responsible for the conflict.

Imo (2017), within the ambits of demographic effects of the conflict, identifies insufficient and limited land spaces for a teeming population of herders and farmers as the sole architect of the mayhem. This is definitely an invitation for a potential entitlement contest but the author did not emphasise it. Nigeria being the seventh most populated country in the world keeps increasing on a land that is naturally static. Because of this ever-increasing population there is an increase in the demand for food, hence the incursion of the agricultural revolution for which battlefields are arable lands that are now being contested by the two major agriculturists in the country: farmers and herders arguably. The contest in the course of time became unhealthy, and resulted in the loss of lives and property because of intolerance between them.

Tersoo (2016), with a subjective focus on Benue State, assesses the impact of farmers-herders conflict on food security in Benue State, Nigeria. Using 'tragedy of the commons' theoretical approach which explains how groups' exploitation of a common resource breeds conflict when a particular group acts out of the collective interest of others, it was submitted that the attacks orchestrated by the herdsman have consequently resulted in excruciating loss of human lives and other economic activities with a frequency ratio of 320. A similar ratio is recorded for destruction of educational institutions, and loss of school operational time, destruction of health facilities, and destruction of farms. A similar ratio also accounts for farms' outputs which affect food security particularly, exposition to abject poverty through loss of basic needs such as clothes, shelter and food, displacement of victims, a sustained hatred for the Fulanis whether herders or not.

The psychological trauma of watching family being slaughtered and the feeling of betrayal among the predominant Tiv tribe assume a frequency ratio of 281 and 291 respectively. It was therefore recommended in the paper that the government should provide enlightenment campaigns to educate farmers and herdsman on the need to divest the impact of the conflict. Technically, control strategies like regular meetings and dialogue should be encouraged among the two conflicting sides. A joint peace and resolution committee comprising the two parties that will constantly report their activities to the government should be instituted and finally, government is also charged to provide ranches or grazing reserves in the state.

Considering the possible effects of these attacks on the agrarian communities in the country, Ukamaka et al (2017) examine the case of Kogi State, with focus on its impact on the living standard of the agrarian communities. The study subjected 135 randomly selected crop farmers to a focus group discussion in which the outcome was reduced to descriptive statistics and factor analysis. Reports from their investigation show that most of the farmers are engaged in small-scale farming with an average farming space of about 20 ha which are mainly engaged in the planting of cassava, maize, and other arable crops.

Their primary aim is to fend for their immediate families and get little income. These researchers' contact with the farmers reveals that the violation of laws and traditions,

livelihood interference and cultural factors, constitute the hub of the conflict between the groups. As a result, the farmers experience poor socio-economic life, production losses, and displacement. The paper, on this premise, proposes strategic and regular orientation of resources users on the importance of peaceful co-existence and strict adherence to the host communities' rules with respect to the use of resources. Furthermore, government and non-profit agencies were also implored to encourage active grass root involvement in policies and strategies for the management of conflict. Constant training of farmers was equally advocated in the study.

Adisa (2012) undertakes a research into the implication of land use conflict between herdsmen and farmers on agricultural and rural development in Nigeria. The study relies on the strength of the state of land use in Nigeria among inter and intra land user groups. Specifically, the study dwells on how the major agrarians perceive and cope with mutual conflict engendered by land use. After all, a lot of damage has reportedly been caused and so the focus of the research deserves obvious commendation. In a bid to achieve this aim, the author relies on the three theoretical pillars of Lazarus' Cognitive Appraisal Model of coping which encompasses primary, secondary and tertiary appraisal: where the primary appraisal sees a situation as a loss, a threat or an opportunity, the secondary appraisal is interested in the potential response that is conceived while the tertiary appraisal deals with the process coping appraisal.

These models of appraisal, when reconciled within the strands of Lazarus and Folkman's (1984) categorisation, produces three coping strategies employed by herdsmen and farmers in the management of the damage caused by the prevailing conflict. These include emotion-oriented, problem-oriented and social support-oriented strategies. The survey in this paper depicts that while farmers, though often relying on the combination of strategies, largely opts for the problem-oriented coping strategy as a response to the vestiges of the conflict, herdsmen tilt more towards the emotion-oriented coping strategy with considerable influences from socioeconomic factors. It was presumed that the herdsmen's recourse to the emotion-oriented strategy is not unconnected to their emotional attachment to their cattle whereas farmers see the issues basically as a socioeconomic problem. These perceptions were largely influenced by the

age, income, farm size, and the farming/herding experience among the population of respondents of the study. Unfortunately, both are however lagging in efforts to seek social aids and by implication, have incurred physical, economic and socio-psychological effects on each other, negatively.

Studies from geographical science have also taken a cursory appraisal of the herders-farmers conflict as seen in Agbegbedia's (2014) socio-historical approach to the conflict. From a socio-historical standpoint, Agbegbedia (2014) reviewed the migration patterns of the Fulani who are justifiably the largest cattle-rearing group in the country. Although the paper was confined to the study of the penetration of herdsmen into the Middle Belt, it equally veered into the problem of population movement across the different regions of the country. The author submitted that the heavy migration to the Middle Belt was influenced by the locational peculiarity of the region as well as its endowment with natural and environmental resources. Other factors identified as drivers of the conflict in the region apart from geography-induced migration include the ethno-cultural plurality coupled with systematic economic drift. It is deducible from their movement across regions that most clashes erupt by reason of the herdsmen's encounter with their host communities. However, Agbegbedia's study was not devoted to the resource-entitlement-conflicts that underlined the resource conflict.

Studies from geographical sciences also explored the conflict paying attention to the demographic space. An empirical study of the farmer/herder conflict within this discipline can be found in the study conducted by Muhammed, Ismaila and Bibi (2015). These three authors synergised efforts to examine the question of land use as an overarching source of the farmer/herder repeated clashes in Nigeria. The study investigates this argument using Geographical Information System (GIS) on data drawn from Nigerian Forestry Management Evaluation and Coordinating Units (FORMECU), and land use and land cover (LULC) respectively. With few data from published articles from past farmer-pastoralist conflicts in the country, the research submits that around the period of 1976 and 1995, there had been an increase in the population of land users. As a result of the population rise, unhealthy rivalry over who occupies what space loomed, since the farming space became limited. Overlaps of the MAP reveal that there was

constant encroachment of farmers into grazing areas and this substantiated the fact that it was these same encroached areas that record more of the reported conflicts. Mutual engagement together with adequate government input, and the collaborative efforts from host communities, other non-governmental organisations and alternative dispute resolutions (ADRs) were signalled in the paper as veritable checks to the intensifying attacks.

Adding their voice to the discourse of farmers-herdsmen contestations, Chukwuma and Atelhe (2014), from an eco-geographical perspective, using the eco-violence theory, explore the conflict in Nasarawa State, Nigeria by examining its nature, causes, dynamics, effects, and implications. Basically, the study identifies the struggle for competitive survival, in an environment bedevilled by ecological problems and livelihood insecurity, as the main cause of the upheavals. Other factors identified include population explosion, desertification of the northern region, indigenisation of nomadic grazing communities, legalization of farming or grazing communities and the rise in indiscipline and crime rate.

Apart from these, they further argued that the environmental dynamics of climate change, environmental degradation, desert encroachment, loss of wetland, drought and extreme climate volatility have resulted in the herdsmen-farmers crisis. By implication, the paper gives an insight into how these outrages are liable to, first, affect inclusive citizenship in the nation, and then disrupts sustainable peace and development and threatens national security. As a way out, it was opined that there should be an effective regulation of grazing and farming activities, creation of grazing reserves and routes, mitigation of desertification and drought, sensitisation of stakeholders and sedentarisation of grazing through ranching.

The political contexts of the conflict were emphasised in papers from political sciences. These studies differently engaged the issues of law, policies and other state factors that engendered the crisis of the agrarians. Significant in this regard is the study by Ifatimehin and Tenuche (2009) which identifies as a fundamental triggering factor of this conflict, the inability of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria to make adequate provisions for the indigenes and settlers' coexistence. This phenomenon which

defines the number of years a settler should spend in an environment to be qualified as a citizen, is not adequately stated. By extension, the land tenure system in Nigeria is considered as a precipitator of conflicts in this regard. In its broad spectrum, the paper identifies three categorical types of conflicts: conflict over political control, conflict over chieftaincy matters and conflict over land matters. Where in percentage and level of frequency both conflict over political control and conflict over chieftaincy record 32.08% and 28.30% respectively, the conflict over land hits a 49.42% occurrence. Obviously, this representation speaks volume of the overarching conflict type bedevilling the discourse of these two major agrarians, which is apparently, land. Possible solutions to the conflict as suggested in the study gear mostly towards addressing the conflict over land. For instance, it was offered that the demarcation of grazing reserves for Fulani herdsmen on their various grazing routes, provision of water along the routes, participation of stakeholders at all levels of conflict resolution and government implementation of decision reached would broker relative peace in the affected areas. This paper is vocal and engaging with respect to the categorisation of the causes of the conflict and what the government should do, however its weakness lies in its inability to conceptualise the underlying entitlement complexes engineered by ideological contexts for the violence between these two agrarians.

Having become very uncomfortable with the ever-increasing spate of attacks, various states of the federation consciously resort to finding possible solution to the problem, especially in the area of policy formulation. In one of those efforts, Olatunji (2017) undertakes a study of the politics behind the enactment of the prohibition of cattle and other ruminants grazing using the example of Ekiti State law, No.4, of 2016 under the leadership of Governor Ayodele Fayose. According to the study, the enactment of the anti-grazing law was primarily engendered by the unchecked attacks by the Fulani herdsmen on the aboriginal farmers of the state and other parts of Nigeria. In acknowledging the potential danger of these nefarious killings, the author specifically mentioned how this can hamper the peaceful co-existence of citizens of the nation generally, in that Nigeria itself is an ethnically diverse nation and thus having some people from one region terrorising others can breed strong ethnocentric rift. Four key factors identified to be instrumental to these unabated attacks are self-interest on the part

of the political public office holders who are active owners of these cattle, ineffective government policies, and scarcity of resources e.g. dearth of grazing areas, weak security and national identity system.

In what seems like another phase of Olatunji's (2017) study, Ogo-Oluwa (2017) examines anti-grazing policy and conflict resolution between Fulani herdsmen and sedentary farmers in the same setting, Ekiti State. While Olatunji's (2017) research interest was based on the politics behind the enactment of the anti-grazing law, Ogo-Oluwa (2017) focuses on the role the anti-grazing policy played in the resolution of the conflict between the two warring pastoralists. The study sourced the primary and secondary data from Ikole and Oye local government areas and were purposively sampled and analysed qualitatively. On the whole, it was submitted that the government of Ekiti State enacted the 2016 anti-grazing law with an intention to quell the conflict between farmers and herdsmen. To realise its aim, the state established anti-grazing law enforcement marshals in collaboration with the herdsmen association resident in the state.

Evidently, the paper revealed that the policy succeeded in forestalling normalcy to the conflict between the nomadic herdsmen and the resident farmers. To further strengthen this submission, the study as a way forward, proposed that grazing zones be created, private ownership of ranches be encouraged and the operations of the anti-grazing law marshals be also monitored. It triggers curiosity when the marshals are put in place to enforce anti-grazing law without genuine provision for those who are at the receiving end of this policy. In this situation, government is said to be on the side of the farmers whose land they are protecting. Unfortunately, this argument was not emphasised in the paper.

In their interventionary paper, Ichaba and Ezeogu (2018) make case for social reconciliation as a panacea for resolving the feud between Fulani herdsmen and farmers. They opine that social reconciliation helps to foster intergroup understanding and also mollifies the vestiges of violence. The study proposes five social reconciliation strategies which encompass uncovering past experiences of the two sides, promoting dialogue, promoting understanding through the media, developing grass-root structure for peace and advancing collaborative activities. These strategies were sourced from different perspectives of reconciliation that cover religious, socio-cultural, psychological,

economic, political and juridical bylines of the social structure of the Nigerian polity. Interestingly, the strategy that deals with the promotion of understanding through the media coincides with the interest of this present study which seeks to investigate the context and ideology generated in electronic media and the resulting comments on the herders/farmers' conundrum.

Although most of the papers addressing the issue of herdsmen and farmers' conflict have generously considered it from the perspective of land dispute, which of course is germane for consideration, Conroy (2014) however, on a general note, investigates the patterns and trends in land conflict in Nigeria. His argument is that for people to have robust grasp of land conflicts that are violent in Nigeria, there must be conscious mapping out of the historical context, the different types of land conflict spread over the country and their present prevailing locations. Conroy, therefore, beams his searchlight beyond the common causes of the conflict such as population growth and its attendant scarcity, to examine other variables of social, cultural, and political construction of territories which house issues of livelihood and competition among users (Conroy 2014:2). The author contends that rather than solely considering scarcity as the foremost driver of land conflict, the political ecology which offers the needed knowledge that exposes the methods of the distribution of resources, their management and control should be given adequate consideration.

Expectedly, on this non-linguistic category, the research efforts from conflict studies take a greater percentage. Studies within this scope were devoted to the engagement of the issue from core conflict and terrorism perspectives. In other words, they are preoccupied with the contexts of the attacks and the reprisals incurred as well as conflict management. Typical in this respect is the work of Johnson and Taofik (2017) which describes the activities of the herdsmen from the analytical compass of terrorism by specifically brandishing pastoralism as the emerging phase of terrorism by merely considering their reported activities. The two scholars bolster their claim by considering the emergence, dynamics, and solutions to the new insurrection engendered by farmers and herdsmen clashes in the country.

From their results, the foundation cause of this conflict is attributed to herdsmen invasion of farmlands of the host communities in which the herders not only destroy the agricultural produce of the farms but also the farmers. Lives and property were claimed to be massively lost to these attacks. The paper also reports that the Fulani herdsmen in a similar proportion face the challenge of losing their cattle to rustlers while migrating from one location to the other in search for grazing lands. Meanwhile, records advanced in the paper show that farmers/herdsmen conflict had been a serious predicament since 2008. Five strategies for curbing the menace were proposed in the study. These include, formulation of livestock development policy, effective community policing model, demarcation of livestock grazing reserves, provision of constitutional roles and recognition for traditional rulers and convening of stakeholders' conference on nomadic pastoralism.

Close to Johnson and Taofik's study, Akinyetun (2016) investigates cattle rearing by the Fulani herdsmen as a form of economic activity or occupation that has turned harmful to the inhabitants of the host communities. This author adeptly queries the rationale for the shift from the use of the traditional staff to the sudden employment of gun in the business of cattle rearing. The paper highlights the potential negative effects that the consistent attacks by the herdsmen might incur to include but not confined to the habitual use of guns that would eventually lead to the routinisation of violence, reprisal attacks, increase in illegal arms proliferation, intensification of ethnicisation, increased kidnappings, and encroachment on rights. In the light of these speculations, the study offers some possible measures that would avert the imminent consequences attached to the herdsmen insurrection. Basically, these encompass reorientation, disarmament, state police, civil/human rights mobilisation, animal control laws, ranching system of cattle rearing, institutionalisation of occupation, government intervention and provision of grazing reserves. When a conflict, driven dearth of resources, is addressed solely from the angle of the attacks, then the solution is far from reality. This is a major weakness of Akinyetun's position despite its strong and commendable outlook.

What is said to be fuelling this conflict between herders and farmers is basically a matter of speculation as seen from the studies considered so far. Bagu and Smith (2017), in a

study that could be considered to be relatively recent, hint at limited access to arable land as the dominant pressure for attacks and reprisals. Other factors highlighted in their work still point to cattle rustling as a result of the increasing prices of the livestock. It was figured that these factors could yet spark up self-perpetuating cycles of indiscriminate reprisal attacks along ethno-religious fault lines.

Ultimately, the study contends that farmer-herdsmen's crisis is neither an ethnic nor religious conflict, but sheer competition for limited available resources, especially land. Thus, they propose the enactment of mutual engagement and intercultural understanding by government and development actors with appropriate formulation of policies on grazing that necessarily involve community participation. Apparently, if competition for limited resources is the brain behind the continued crises, then the question of indigene-settler's right to resources and space needs adequate attention. This again strengthens the present study as it tries to explore entitlement perspectives, their enforcing contexts as well as their informing ideologies as portrayed in reports on online investigative newspapers.

The activities of herdsmen constantly reported have indeed generated series of probing into the intentions of herdsmen. Owing to what is described as an industrial scale killing, Omilusi (2016) queries whether herdsmen are roving terrorist or innocuous cattle grazers and tries to decipher if it is actually for economic survival or a conscious act of community annihilation in the country. The author sees the various cases of conflicts in Nigeria, particularly the herdsmen-farmers example as consisting of predominant variables in economic, social, political and ecological indices. A number of self-posed questions were asked in the study including why the sudden upsurge, whether they are herdsmen or terrorists, whether the killings are a survival strategy, who the sponsors, and why it is difficult for the security outfits to protect the defenseless victims? In all of these, herdsmen are scored to be Boko Haram in a different form and shape. It was also reported that Boko Haram members who are mostly of the Kanuri ethno-cultural divide disguise themselves as Fulani herdsmen to carry out attacks on the farming communities (McGregor 2014; Omilusi 2016). However, Alamu (2016) contends that while Boko Haram is ideologically driven and principally targeted at the state, the herdsmen are

culturally propelled and operated in like manner as the ancient customs and nomadic shuttling of targeting entire communities and their people.

Adisa and Adekunle (2010) applying the Empirical Phenomenological Psychological approach (EPP) approach try to figure out the engendering causes of the farmers/herders' conflict in North-Central Nigeria. Their paper examines thirty sedentary farmers and twelve herdsman through a hermeneutic interview to draw out four categories of: possible factors fuelling the crisis, the experiences of the affected communities, and how they respond to the crisis as well as testing the effectiveness of conflict management techniques.

No single exclusive factor, according to the paper, was pointed at as the sole cause of the jigsaw between these groups of farmers. However, sundry factors that were identified include inadequate knowledge of stock routes, reducing soil productivity and the increase in the quest for spatial expansion of operational sites. Both the farmers and the herdsman reel in these conflict-instigating conditions. The interviews consequently reveal that the crises resulting from these socio-ecological demands attract various disparate experiences and differing levels of responses from the communities where such incidences are recorded. To address these anomalies the study proposes the amplification of the level of awareness, enforcement of compliance to and occasional review of stock routes and of course the facilitation of coping strategies among the concerned farming divides.

In a more historical approach to the interpretation of the conflict, Tersoo (2018) assesses the political economy of herdsman and farmers' conflict in Benue from 2008 to 2018. Using Johan Galtung conflict model, the scholar analyses the causes of the conflict from the properties of history. One statement pivotal to the root cause of the conflict as implicated in the paper is that Nigerian farmers are conservative and are involved with traditionalism in relation to agriculture and are principally tied to land. The latter observation is crucially recurrent in most research efforts veering into causes of the conflict. In the case of the herdsman and farmers' clashes, as indicated in this paper, the conflict is asymmetrically woven, such that both the farmers and the herdsman assume equal rights of ownership to the resources available to them and are therefore easily moved to violent conflict at the slightest provocation.

Chief among the causes of the conflict as inferred in the study include divergent interest in carrying out farming responsibilities, population explosion, Federal Government's non-recognition of the Benue State open grazing prohibition and ranches establishment law 2017, poor policies and strategies in resolving the conflict. In order to salvage the State from the identified challenges, the paper proposes the development of functional politics, employment of the mass media to facilitate the peace process, deployment of technical security measures, establishment of non-violent modes of resolving the present and future conflicts and a host of others.

History is indeed pivotal to the deciphering of conflict in various parts of the world. This must have informed Idowu (2017) in the quest to trace the historical trajectory, causes, dynamics and consequences of the perennial herders and farmers' conflict in Nigeria. His exploration divulges, using the Frustration and Aggression theory, that, beyond the dearth of environmental resources, expansive use of land for non-agricultural purposes, land ownership system, unfavourable ecological change, ethno-religious intolerance, quest for cost minimisation, unregulated transhumance, security threats from Boko Haram invasion, and ineffective institutional mechanism of conflict mediation are the principal instigators of agro-pastoral conflict in Nigeria. The paper thus argues that these predicted causes have, as a consequence, incurred the loss of life and human insecurity, loss of cattle, and farm crops, destruction of properties, threat to unity, and displacement. It is strongly advised in the paper that, ultimately, ranching should be prioritised over the establishment of grazing reserves in order to curtail the de-emphasised entitlement clashes.

The final category – media – to which the current research partly belongs, also evaluates the conflict discourse from news reports and general media representational perspectives. One study that is partly related to the present research in this category is the paper by Gever and Essien (2017) on newspaper coverage of the herdsmen-farmers conflict in central Tiv land, Benue State, Nigeria. The study places premium on the format of the reports, their level of frequency and prominence, depth of coverage, language and readers' evaluation. Reportage from the *Daily Sun* and *Daily Trust* provide the data of twelve (12) months in addition to some email and telephone interviews conducted. Their

findings reveal that the newspapers often employ the straight news format in which incidences are reported at the spur of their occurrence. By that, there was an apparent concentration of attention of the reports on the immediate conflict with little or no concern for the victims after the incidences, with 75 per cent of such stories reported within. The authors therefore advised that Nigerian newspapers should discourage episodic reportage and form genuine template for reportage of conflict to the reading Nigerian public. The agenda setting and social responsibility theories were adopted as the framework for analysis, another significant area in which their study again departs from this current research.

That the media coverage is conceived differently by various researchers, especially its reports on conflict is attested to in Ciboh's (2017) study that evaluates how the herdsmen/farmers conflict is framed by the media and its implication for peace building in Nigeria. The media, seen as a significant contributor to the selective social construction of realities, has a special way of constructing such knowledge in readers' minds, with special interest in what discourse it considers as possessing the desired news value in order to attract greater readership. A collection of the electronic version of *Daily Trust*, *The Guardian*, *The Punch*, *This Day* and *Leadership* newspaper were tested to framings in Ciboh's study. This selection was justified on ethnic and regional spread of the newspapers whose editorials were measured and examined on five frame elements: problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and treatment recommendation.

The editorials saw the conflict defined mainly as a product of Fulani herdsmen conundrum with minimal mention of the farming faction. In a capsule, the paper constantly, in its problem definition links the conflicts to the Fulani ethnic group thereby retaining the frequency in the description of "Fulani herdsmen", "nomadic Fulani herdsmen" and so on. No doubt, that is what the media finds as what possesses news value, just the framing of some bandits destroying farm produce. This present study anchors its interest in this ethnicised framing with the acknowledgment of comments raised by the reports. The author goes further to identify under causal interpretation: open grazing, environmental factors and proliferation of arms in the editorials. Moral

evaluation of the editorials again reveals government inaction, weak security system and illegal arms, partisanship and ethnicity, and media and stigmatisation. Basically, the research proposes, in its treatment recommendation, the establishment of ranching, banning of migratory herding, forming of vigilant group and prosecution of offenders, in the editorials. Linguistically, in order to crystallise gruesomeness of the herdsmen attacks, evocative metaphors were employed by the newspaper to report the activities of the herders.

2.4.2 Language-based studies on herdsmen-farmers conflict

Until recently, not too many studies were recorded from the language-based research on the discourse of herdsmen and farmers' conflict. The few that have emerged lately, have considered the conflict between these agriculturists from differing grounds. In essence, the studies mainly cut across ideological (multimodal) discourse representations (Ibiley, 2021; Ajakaye and Tomere, 2021; Duro-Bello and Okpeh, 2021; Aworo-Okoroh and Badaki, 2021; Sharndama (2021), identity representation discourse (Ajiboye, 2021), ecolinguistics (Ochoge, 2021) and pragmatics and media representations (Ellah and Ekor, 2018; Odusina, 2019; 2021; Inya and Inya, 2021). These articles shall be interrogated in the following paragraphs, accordingly.

Works on ideological (multimodal) representations in the news reports on the herdsmen and farmers' conflict from the applied linguistic viewpoints have variously made valuable submissions on the discourse. In this paradigm, Ibiley (2021) takes an indepth view of ideological and discursal issues in the news reportage of the herders-farmers conflict in Nigerian newspapers. The main thrust of the study was to unravel the name-giving mechanism and its accompanying perspectives on *Daily Trust*, *Guardian*, and *Punch* among Nigerian newspapers. The author's critical exploration reveals that 15 names are given to the herdsmen in the corpus he examined of the news report. These include describing the herdsmen, by virtue of their activities as herdsmen, bandits, criminals, outlaws, terrorists, soulless objects, rustlers, murderers, jihadists, Islamist, wranglers, rebels, gunmen, kidnappers, and militias.

Out of these 15 framings, only the name “herdsmen” falls within positive ideologies such as democracy (*Daily Trust*), justice (*Guardian*) and equality (*Punch*). Other ideologies that underlined the naming were all negative, just as the names implicated: terrorism, criminal, illegality, torment, oppression, unruly, anti-government, dispossessing, manslaughter, killing, and others. Despite the fact that the article exhaustively engaged the name-calling and the ideological leanings, which reveals much of the media perception of the herders, the underlying entitlement contestation over resources was apparently outside its scope. In the same project, Ajakaye and Tomere (2021) also examined the ideologies engendering the herdsmen-farmers conflict as represented on the electronic media. Using semiotic and critical discourse analytical resources, the study identified three main ideologies that projected through the electronic images on the media: the survivalist, cleanser and terrorist ideology. The crux of the paper’s argument is that media representation creates the mental frames that the herdsmen and farmers’ clashes are triggered by the need to survival on the same limited space.

It also adds to the fact that the cleanser ideology constructed for the herders is borne out of the genocidal acts carried out by the Fulani on farming communities. The terrorist ideology on its part is driven by the gruesome pictorial representations to instill fear on the populace which is the goal of terrorism. This last ideology encapsulates most of the ideological coverage of most media framings of the pastoralists yet the article only examined the pictures without tying them to the contextual background of the ideological representations. The paper also towed the line of Ibileye (2021) as it only sparsely mentioned the contestation over limited resources without exploring its core term, entitlement.

Similar to Ibiliye’s paper in terms of social actors’ discursive representation is the combined efforts of Duro-Bello and Okpeh (2021). The striking difference between these authors’ intervention and Ibileye’s contribution to the discourse lies in the fact that Duro-Bello and Okpeh’s examination was not restricted to the name-calling of herdsmen alone. Rather, they broadly projected the representation of the herdsmen, farmers, and security forces. Relying only on *Daily Times*, the paper revealed the discursive representation of herders as aggressors, armed militias, criminals, and sayers. Farmers were represented as

passive social actors, vulnerable civilians and sayers; while security forces were only represented as sayers. The author relied on Halliday's transitivity processes to realise the various representations, although the ideologies underpinning the representations were not considered as Ibileye's article did. Significantly, both papers were engrossed with the media representation of the actors rather than the issues that stirred the actions of the actors such as the entitlement triggering resource dearth.

While the preceding works were more devoted to representations of the leading actors of the conflict, there is a study that examined a most unlikely kind of representation that set it apart from the rest. That is the paper by Inya and Inya (2021). These authors quite distinctly focused on the online media representation of the legislative discourses on the National Grazing Reserve Bill with a definitive investigation of the delegitimisation strategies deployed by these news writers in challenging the felicity of the bill as a measure to ensure an end to the lingering agrarian crisis. Relying on the Appraisal theory, the authors' research quest revealed that five delegitimisation strategies were employed through evaluation to concretise the representations, namely, influencing readers' disalignment from the bill through negative AFFECT, appreciating the bill as ill-conceived and ambiguous, construing the bill as violating the social sanction values, marginalisation between the herders as the preferred/oppressor group and the farmers as the marginalised, dispossessed and other; and diminishing the credentials of the supporters of, and deconstructing the claims for the bill. This paper's strength is amplified in the robust investigation of the strategies that mapped out the distinction between the negative goals of the outgroup and the threatened goals of the ingroup. Here again, the text-producers are the objects of discussion. Obviously, the authors did not appropriate the issue of resource conflict as central theme heightened by the entitlement beliefs.

From a multimodal critical discourse analytical standpoint on the herders-farmers conflict, Aworo-Okoroh and Badaki (2021) probed into how texts or images construct subjective realities. This philosophy guided the authors' exploration in unearthing the ideological polarity that underscores the herdsman-farmers narratives on *Daily Sun* and *Sunday Sun* newspapers. The study revealed that these online news narratives engage in

positive self-presentation, negative-other presentation, material transaction and cultural negotiation. The news agencies were also adjudged to have realised these multimodal presentations through selective portrayal of reality, death, injury and displacement, thereby registering criminalisation of herdsmen and victimisation of farmers. Eye-witnesses' accounts and headlines were windows through which this representation was made. Like most of the studies within the linguistic slant, it is the same labelling of actors that is gaining prominence in this paper without deeply interrogating the issues that prompt the attacks between the agrarians.

The identity question is one prominent question surrounding the discourse of the herdsmen-farmers' conflict that has attracted attention from the applied linguistic worldview. One recent work that addressed it is Ajiboye (2021). Ajiboye examined herdsmen identity construction on online news reports. Choosing the same papers as this current study – *Premium Times* and *Sahara Reporters* – the author identifies four principal identities created for the herdsmen in the news reports: destructionists, retributionists, assailants, and rapists. These were said to be constructed through five pragmatic strategies: unshielded exposition, strategic management of voice, evocation of antecedent, marginalisation of herders' activities and blunt condemnation. These identities are mediated through these pragmatic strategies in accordance with the activities reported of the agrarians. Again, Ajiboye's focus was not on the issues that underlie the conflict, it was the activities that were emphasised. For this current study, the attention is on the different views taken on the construct of entitlement as a product of resource unavailability.

Prominent in this category is the work of Odusina (2019) which undertakes a critical discourse analysis of media representation of Fulani herdsmen crises in selected Nigerian newspapers and its implications for Nigerian education. The study was particularly interested in investigating the discursive and lexical strategies adopted by Nigerian newspapers in reporting Fulani herdsmen conflict in Nigeria. In its submission, there was an identical employment of discursive technique and transitive patterns by Nigerian newspapers to purposively frame herdsmen negatively and this, according to the author is capable of inciting violence, fear and rancour among consumers of these newspapers.

Although, the author fails to clearly spell out the implication for education as suggested in the title, the study addresses the media representations holistically. Clearly, the work was not concerned about the engendering factors of the conflict, but how the media represent the herdsmen. Even the claim of the author that Fulani herdsmen were negatively portrayed by Nigerian newspapers is contestable as there is no positive alternative to describing a negative act.

In a similar study to Odusina (2019), within the ambiance of critical discourse analysis, is the research efforts of Sharndama (2021). This paper, using the Fairclough's framework, examined two newspapers that reported the conflict with focus on Benue and Plateau States. The bottom-up approach of the study revealed that newspapers deployed lexical and syntactic features to establish the feelings, attitudes and beliefs of the social actors in the reports. This pointedly revealed that the reports use the declarative mood, parallelism, and descriptive language in their syntactic choices. The paper submitted that ethnicity, religion and politics marked off the ideological factors that underlined the newspapers reports of the herdsmen and farmers' conflict. These ideological contexts are quite relevant to the current works which places them within its contextual factors characterising the entitlement construct and its engendering ideologies. However, Sharndama's (2021) focus was strictly on the linguistic features and ideologies, with an identification of the marked and unmarked themes.

Apart from the reports, newspaper editorials are also channelled towards addressing the conflict crippling the economy of the Nigerian polity. In their joint effort, Ellah and Ekoru (2018) examine stance taking and pragmatic strategies in newspaper editorials on herders and farmers' crises in Nigeria. The study selectively subjected *Punch* and *This Day* editorials to a pragmatic appraisal in order to unearth the positions of these newspapers and their subjective evaluation of the crises. They found four distinct stance types which include epistemic, evaluative, evidential, and affective stance. Through the epistemic stance, the editorials demonstrate a robust knowledge and near-absolute certitude of the height of destruction perpetrated by the herdsmen on the Guma and Logo people of Benue. The evaluative stance shows the passing of value judgment by the editorials on the agent of the conflict with respect to their actions.

As the name suggests, the evidential stance projects, in the editorial, substantial facts about the destructive height of the attack, hence, the affective stance establishes in the editorials the emotional outflow that characterise the expressive power of the narratives. These stance types were said to be achieved, according the authors, through certain peculiar strategies. Eight of these strategies were found splintered across the identified stance types. These include indirect condemnation, evocation of antecedent, appeal to emotion, strategic use of numbers, revelation of facts, visual representation and quoting authority. As much as this paper falls within the same discipline as this present research, there is a wide gulf of focus between this study and the current one. This present study concentrates on the expansion of a triggering factor of the conflict as contained not only in the reports but also the comments that engage the reports. In terms of theoretical orientation, this present research equally differs from Ellah and Ekoró's spread of study.

From an ecolinguistic perspective, Ochoge (2021) focuses on the framing of the herders-farmers crisis on YouTube channels. The argument surrounding framing in Ochoge's study is centred on the fact that reports and stories on the media create mental frames for their audience through language use in natural and social environment – ecosophy. The author's description shares similarity with the concept of ideology. Specifically, two basic framings were discussed in the article, namely target and source frames. From the stories on YouTube, the herdsmen-farmers discourse conjures up the herder-farmer conflict (target frame) through the source frames as orchestrated by failed government, Buhari's responsibility, alienation, terrorists sponsoring, and business marginalisation. In furtherance, additional frames projected from the YouTube narratives include the conflict (target frame) being constructed as Northerners preventing peace in Nigeria, excluding Hausa and Fulani from the nation and Biafra as the solution. These descriptive frames can be adjudged to have been spurred by shared knowledge within the cognitive context but the author did not explore that needful area. Again, the article which brilliantly addressed the effect of mental cognition was lagging in the identification of the context of situation for the frames constructed.

In sum, the studies from the non-language-based and language-based research works on the herdsmen and farmers' conflict have differently contributed to the ultimate goal of the

current study. In specific measures, the non-language-based studies have provided the varying contextual bases that strengthen the factors engendering the resource conflict. First, these studies, in their disciplinary divides across the political, agricultural, geographic, and conflict biases, established that contestation over limited available resources especially land has incurred the question of rights between the herdsmen and the farmers. While insights from the reviews on political sciences facilitated the understanding of the position of law especially in the land use act, both studies from agricultural and geographical sciences offered the essentiality and magnitude of the migratory problem occasioned by lack of resources that foreground the reasons for intensified claims and rights demonstration towards the limited available resources by the agrarians. This is further solidified by the scholarship in conflict studies which uncover the potential terroristic colouration that the conflict is assuming and its possible solutions. These complex revelations interestingly made it possible for this current research's provision of a justifiable and more representative definition that characterises (resource) entitlement as constituting varying rights, privileges, claims and provisions that an individual has or believe to have either by law or by virtue of their location, profession or assumed status.

On the part of the language-based studies' engagement of the herder-farmer conflict, it is deducible that the question of ideology and identity representation in its various forms on online media is emphasised. These efforts have also offered theoretical insights for this current study in terms of determining the theoretical choices that would better crystallise the entitlement types and their contextual affordances. Chiefly, the synergy of research efforts from both areas has enabled the validation and need for an investigation into the entitlement perspectives, their constraining contexts and ideology on the selected news reports as invariably confirmed in the language-based issues addressed in the reviews.

2.5 Review of relevant theories

This sub-section reviews the theories adopted for this study: van Dijk's (2015) socio-cognitive critical discourse approach, Fetzer's (2007) notion of context, Odebunmi's (2016) harmonised approach to context and aspects of Marina Sbisà's (2009) notion of

speech act, and Hilpert's (2014) information packaging constructions (IPCs) of the Construction Grammar.

2.5.1 Critical discourse analysis

Critical discourse analysis (CDA, henceforth), in the account of Wodak (2001), emerged in the early 1990s, following a small symposium in Amsterdam, in January of 1991. There, the opportunity presented itself for the University of Amsterdam to orchestrate the coming together of the proponents including Teun van Dijk, Norman Fairclough, Gunther Kress, Theo van Leeuwen and Ruth Wodak. The emergence of CDA therefore holds its credit to the contributions of these scholars whose works, up till now, apparently dominate the study of the concept. This theoretical approach to discourse analysis draws its root from Rhetoric, Text linguistics, Anthropology, Philosophy, Socio-Psychology, Cognitive Science, Literary Studies and Sociolinguistics, as well as Applied Linguistics and Pragmatics (Meyer and Wodak, 2008).

Sometimes interchanged with Critical Linguistics (CL), CDA chiefly construes language as social practice which advances the appropriation of context of language use as its integral part (Fairclough and Wodak, 1997; Wodak 2001). Of particular interest to CDA is the relation between language and power. Generally, the modern CDA considers the larger discursive unit of text as the basic unit of communication (Wodak 2001). The term 'critical' which is the confluence for linguistic, semiotic or discourse analyses (van Dijk, 1993; Wodak 2001) is linked to the Frankfurt School or Jürgen Habermas (Wodak 2001). These two mostly interchanged concepts are defined, according to Wodak (2001) as fundamentally concerned "with analysing opaque as well as transparent structural relationships of dominance, discrimination, power and control as manifested in language" (Wodak, 2001:2). It is understood that language in use is the window through which these functional relationships are observed and analysed. Wodak (2001) further stresses that CDA is specially designed to critically investigate social inequality as it is expressed signalled, constituted, legitimised and so on by language use (or discourse). From this definitional perspective, three concepts predominate all CDA; the concepts of power, history, and ideology. In this semantic stringing, CDA believes that discourse is

structured by dominance; historically produced or interpreted, and the dominant structures are legitimated by ideologies of powerful groups.

With the evolvement of disciplines which concentrate on the analysis of discourse such as semiotics, pragmatics, psycholinguistics, sociolinguistics, ethnography of speaking, conversation analysis and discourse studies, it was observed that seven common features are identifiably preponderant among the aforementioned disciplines (van Dijk 2007a, Wodak 2008a; Meyer and Wodak, 2008). These seven characteristics resident in the various disciplines in the humanities, as contained in Meyer and Wodak (2008) involve:

1. Naturally occurring language use by real language users
2. Larger units than isolated words and sentences
3. Extension of linguistics beyond sentence grammar
4. Non-verbal (semiotic, multimodal, visual) aspects of interaction
5. A focus on dynamic (socio)-cognitive or interactional moves and strategies
6. Contexts of language use
7. Vast number of phenomena of text grammar and language use

This perceived shared features in discourse studies prompted the definition of CDA as the study of social phenomena which are necessarily complex and so require a multi-disciplinary and multi-methodological approach (Meyer and Wodak, 2008). In simplified terms, CDA is a tool that enables a multifaceted approach to the study of discourse. As van Dijk (1995) argues, works in CDA characteristically focus on:

1. Problem-orientedness rather paradigm-orientedness in the study of language use
2. An intently critical approach, position or stance in studying text and talk
3. The inter- or multidisciplinary approach to the study of the relations between discourse and society.
4. The historical and systematic phase of critical studies in the humanities and the social sciences

5. All the levels and dimensions of discourse e.g. grammar (phonology, syntax, semantics), style, rhetoric, schematic organisation, speech acts, pragmatic strategies, and those of interaction.

2.5.1.1 van Dijk's (2015) socio-cognitive critical discourse

Employed as one of the major theoretical tools for this study, the socio-cognitive approach to discourse is specially engaged to cater for two aspects of the analysis. First, the approach is intended to demystify the ideological imports of the reports and comments on the herdsman and farmers' conflict, and secondly to provide and explain the accompanying structures characterising the evoked ideologies. This approach features the triangular discourse-cognition-society relation. In contrast with earlier approaches of discourse which solely focused on the bidirectional discourse-society relation, the socio-cognitive approach contends that discourse and society are cognitively mediated. In other words, interactants rely on their knowledge of the society to be able to create discourse. As aptly put in van Dijk (2015:64), "discourse structures and social structures are of a different nature, and can only be related through the mental representations of language users as individuals and as social members". By implication, what is uttered (discourse) is a product of one's experience or encounter with one's environment.

This is why van Dijk further stressed that:

"social interactions, social situations, and social structures can only influence text and talk through people's interpretations of such social environment, and conversely, discourse can only influence social interaction and social structures through the same cognitive interface of mental models, knowledge, attitude and ideologies" (van Dijk, 2015:64).

Though this was applied on racial discourse, there were some essential structures that guide its application on discourse. This summarily involves the discursive structures (and semiotic, if present in the text), and cognitive structures. Depending on the text, the discursive or semiotic structures could encompass the strategic use of numbers, rhetorical questions, commands or recommendation, possessives, and images; all counting for the implied and the implicated meanings of the issues at hand. On the part of the cognitive structures, the appraisal takes into cognisance shared sociocultural knowledge, attitude and ideology.

Table 2.1: Organisation of the socio-cognitive approach to discourse

Level of structure	Cognitive	Society
Macro	Socially share knowledge, attitudes, ideologies, norms, values	Communities, groups, organisations
Micro	Personal mental models of (experiences of) social members	Interaction/discourse of social members

Source: van Dijk, T.A. (2015:71).

Table 2.1 is a representation of the structure of the socio-cognitive approach to discourse in which cognition mediates between discourse structure and the social structure. There are two levels of the discourse structure presented in the table, which are macro and micro structural levels. At the macro level of discourse, the society dictates the terms of controlling communities, groups and organisations and therefore largely depends on socially shared knowledge, attitudes, ideologies, norms and values. Discourse, at the micro level of interaction, is cognitively bridged by personal mental models or experiences of social members. It is thus evident in the structure that cognitive components, social components and discourse components are crucial to the demystification of power, dominance and inequality which invariably form the crux of critical discourse studies.

2.5.2 Fetzer's (2004) notion of context

The notion of context advanced in Fetzer (2004) orients to her description of pragmatics which has context at its heart. Pragmatics thus is described by Fetzer as the analyses of what is meant, of utterance meaning, and of speaker-intended meaning (Fetzer 2004). This implies that pragmatics is largely a cognitive exercise that is interested in conversational intentions among interactants. And these three conceptualisations of pragmatics are connected to the context-dependent form of meaning generation, the other being the context-independent which relates to semantics. This form (context-dependent) of context is indexed by co-participants' use of generalised and particularised conversational implicatures through indirect speech acts, conventionalised indirect speech acts, as well as the use of somewhat implicit means of achieving communicative intentions. Fetzer's model of context is situation bound and two factors accordingly constrain the operation of this model. First, it is delimited by the global complexion of the issue which takes into cognisance the socio-cultural milieu and secondly, the communicative genre which also comprises its local constituents. Three types of contexts are ultimately proposed in this model: linguistic context, social context and socio-cultural context.

2.5.2.1 Linguistic context

From a broad perspective, the linguistic context involves communicative events surrounded by language resources. These surrounding language resources in discourse, according to Fetzer (2004), help in the realisation of the meaning potential as these resources are connected through speakers' reliance on anaphora resolution and retrieval of indexical information (Fetzer 2004). It means that the understanding of language resources in an ongoing talk and prior conversation by speakers or interactants aids better interpretation of messages. Such understanding is anchored on the linguistic context. In the case of co-participants in a communicative event, two functions are ascribed to the production and interpretation of language: first, it conjures up linguistic context through self-construction, and second, the production and interpretation activates subsequent discourses and help track intention.

Fetzer therefore contends that “the act of speaking and interpreting build contexts and at the same time constrain the building of contexts” (Fetzer 2004:6). In a sense, what this model is advancing is that talk itself is conceived as a context and the building process of that talk is yet enabled by context. In addition, this model again, adds from a dynamic viewpoint of communication that linguistic context can be decontextualised and recontextualised. While the former takes place, usually at the local level, the latter is enacted at the global level. Linguistic context is decontextualised at the local level in order to avoid or correct possible mishearing or misunderstanding. At the global level, local meanings are recontextualised by the supplementing addition of contextual information. The reported speech is a suitable example here.

2.5.2.2 Social context

This context type is referable as the context of events, in this case, speech events. In its construction, the linguistic and cognitive contexts are integral because these actually organise every speech event that is borne out of the environment in which talk-participants draw their knowledge. In furtherance, Fetzer (2004:7) highlights four categorial constituents of the social context. These include: co-participants, the immediate concrete, physical surroundings including time and location, and the macro-

contextual institutions and non-institutional domains. The social context is further delimited into structured layers such as meso social context which helps in delimiting global knowledge. Social context is socially and jointly constructed by co-participants and possesses a dynamic frame, in that, it is “based on the premises that social action and language use are embedded in a context of situation, that they constitute practical action and that they are a socially situated cultural form” (Fetzer 2004:9). Societal events create social context and are in turn indexed by that socio-situational context that is produced from it. It also has cultural elements that point to its realisation as well as the particular actions performed by participants in that event. Language in use, in essence, crystallises the events at hand, the social actors involved and the cultural influences that characterise such actions.

2.5.2.3 Socio-cultural context

Also referred to as the extra-linguistic context, the socio-cultural context features the co-participants, their physical and psychological frame, the knowledge and assumptions about the concerned individual, the language knowledge, knowledge of routines and activity-types, communicative intentions and goals, and general background knowledge. This description obviously makes the distinction between social context and the social cultural context quite fussy. However, there is a thin line of difference as established in Fetzer (2004:9) such that while the social context and all of its constituents are conceived of as an unmarked type of context or as a default context, the sociocultural context can be conceived of as a marked type of context in which particular variables, such as time or location, are interpreted in a particular mode. It is specified in the proposition above that the sociocultural context is a watered-down form of the social context. As further stressed in Fetzer (2004), culture provides the filter mechanism which allows us to interpret social context in accordance with particular sociocultural-context constraints and requirements.

2.5.2.4 Cognitive context

Mental representations constrain the cognitive context. It involves a set of premises and cognitive environments. The elements that constitute the cognitive context coincide with Sperber and Wilson’s (1996) relevance frame of reference which enlists representations,

propositions, contextual assumptions, and factual assumptions. These elements are however built to have assumptions about mutual environment, defining it as the hub of the anchorage of intentions. This type of context is the thrust of co-participants negotiation of meaning as they rely on shared assumptions and negotiated intentions. Within this frame exists inferencing, implicatures and other cognitive aids that allow for commonality in the construction of intention. Chiefly, intention as a concept within the ambience of Sperber and Wilson's (1996) construal bifurcates into informative and communicative intentions. The informative intention is demonstrated through the presentation of a set of assumptions to the audience while the communicative intention presents to the audience the informative intention. Further review of intention considers it beyond the cognitive sense and rather sees it as a constitutive element of social action or action theory; invariably becoming the converging point for linguistic, social, socio-cultural and cognitive context. Intentionality is therefore the anchor for varying context types from which actors select and construct discourse.

2.5.3 Odebunmi's (2016) harmonised approach of context

One relatively recent approach to context that has harmonised some of the existing approaches is Odebunmi's (2016) notion of context. This approach takes into account the complementary relation of language, context and society; explaining the operation of context in the determination of meaning. In this model, context is defined as the confluence between language and society. In expatiating on the concept, literalism, and contextualism were explicated. Literalism, according to the author, entails meaning taken out of context while contextualism is meaning situated in context. It further stresses, however, that every proposition possesses some form of context whether cognitive or linguistic. In the main, this approach advances five processes of contextual orientations in the society that comes under two categories of contexts: broad and narrow. These five processes include context as influence from outside in, context as influence from inside out, context as influence within itself and context as orientation to both apriori and emergent cues (Odebunmi, 2016:14).

2.5.3.1 Macro context conceptualisation

The macro context, subsumed under the broad category, represents the traditional idea that initiated the notion of context. It is context as conceived by the early scholars of context. This approach considers context as being determined by model users of language, conversational contribution, surrounding and their presupposition (Fetzer, 2004 cited in Odebunmi, 2016). It encompasses the tripartite cognitive, linguistic and social context. The cognitive context relates to inferences and reasoning powered by mental representations, propositions, contextual assumptions and factual assumptions (ibid). On its part, the linguistic context also called co-text refers to structures and lexical indices that enable the understanding of a text. Odebunmi (2016) further identifies a referential and syntagmatic relationship in contextual process. The referential linguistic context helps to ensure co-textual relationship in a text through indexes such as the phoric references that make texts intelligible. On the other hand, the syntagmatic linguistic context relates to the concept of collocation which concerns the stringing of appropriate words. The third traditional context – the social context – involves meaning that is influenced by communicative encounters. Put differently, social context is signaled when talk dynamics offers the interpretation of a text or event.

2.5.3.2 Micro context conceptualisation

Within the narrow perspective, there are four contextual processes: context as influence from outside in, context as influence from inside out, context as influence within itself and context as orientation to both apriori and emergent cues.

2.5.3.2.1 Context as influence from outside in

This narrow form of context relies on situational events in determining the meaning of a text. In other words, it emphasises common ground among interlocutors and their ability to invoke extralinguistic knowledge to the interpretation of text. For instance, in a newspaper interaction with a reader, the context from outside in allows the reader to draw inferences based on his knowledge of the issue being reported. This is further strengthened by the resources in the activity part of the Meyian contextual model in

which relevance, inference, shared sociocultural knowledge, metaphor and voice are used to aid the interpretation of the discourse.

2.5.3.2.2 Context as influence from inside out

This type of context is the opposite of the context from outside in. Context as influence from inside out emphasises the role of linguistic pointers of situation which are independent of the extra-linguistic reality. This tallies with Kecskes' (2010) notion of situation bound utterances (SBUs) which organise their own context. In other words, the lexical items used naturally select and suggest the context of the talk.

2.5.3.2.3 Context as influence within itself

This type of context is characteristically determined by conversation-intrinsic conditions (Odebunmi, 2016:22). This means that, in a communicative encounter, interlocutors rely on the features within the talk to generate meaning. Hence, influences from outside the conversation like inferences are kept out in this contextual process. This typifies the operational confines of conversation analysis where interpretation of a conversation is made using the turns taking in the talk. According to Fetzer (2004:35 cited in Odebunmi, 2016) "context in this approach is linked to "adjacency pair, conditional relevance, and the turn taking system on the micro level, and [to] institution on the macro level, whose order is captured through context-independent and context-sensitive constraints and requirements". Hence, the internal structuring of talk and the participants bring to the text the needed resources and knowledge for effective meaning generation.

2.5.3.2.4 Context as orientation to both apriori and emergent cues

This is the bridge between the outside-in and the inside-out contexts. Appropriated from the socio-cognitive model of pragmatics by Kecskes (2010), this approach to context is actually a blend of the philosophy of two schools of pragmatics: cognitive-philosophical pragmatics also known as Anglo-American pragmatics school, and socio-cultural interactional pragmatics also known as European Continental pragmatics school. On the one hand, the former proposes that communication always involves speakers' intentions and hearers' associating such intentions with speakers. This view stresses that speaker

and hearer intentions must align for effective communication to be achieved. The latter school, on the other hand, “regards intention as a post factum construct that is achieved jointly through the dynamic emergence of meaning in conversation” (Odebunmi, 2016”22). By implication, the two schools agree on intention as a mandatory phenomenon in meaning determination, and that intentions can be co-constructed and can also be detected in the course of the conversation.

2.5.4 Aspects of Sbisa’s notion of speech acts theory

Marina Sbisa’s (2009) model of speech act is essentially a review of the existing works (especially those of Austin and Searle) which profoundly laid the foundation of the concept and theory, respectively. Speech act is conceived as the unit of communication where the production of word or of sentences is considered the performance of an act. It ultimately views utterance (either spoken or written) as acts. Functionally, therefore, the speech act theory is designed to explicate the sense in which an utterance can be considered to be performing action, through a thorough presentation of the conceptual framework for describing and understanding the various kinds of linguistic action (Sbisa 2009:231). From the three acts, that is, locutionary, illocutionary and perlocutionary act, J.L Austin (1962) was seen to be inured with the belief that the real object which the theory of language is built to deconstruct is “the total speech act in the total speech situation (Austin 1962:148; Sbisa 2009:231); that is, the proposition and its attendant performability. Austin’s theorising is geared towards distinguishing the point in which a speech translates to action.

Hence, some of the functional intricacies of speech act at the level of locution include the phonetic act, phatic act, and the rhetic act. While the phonetic act deals with sound utterance, the phatic act is concerned with the rules guiding the formation of such utterance. On its part, the rhetic act is interested in relating utterance to specific meaning. To Sbisa, most locutionary acts attract attention from the phatic and rhetic relation in which the phatic act relates to the direct proposition while the rhetic act demonstrates the indirect speech. This implicates that the directness and indirectness of a proposition yet fulfil the communicative role of passing the desired message of the speaker while undermining the presence of the identifying verbs or other linguistic trackers. Locutions

form a principal part of the analysis in this study especially in determining the pragmatic implications of the herdsmen and farmers' discourses for peace and conflict in Nigeria. Hence, the following section will therefore exhaustively explicate the concept of locution.

2.5.4.1 The locutionary act

Locution or locutionary act is the structural composition of an utterance. It is the bare form of the utterance that is sententially represented. As the first in the third-tier of Austin's (1962) conception of the speech act theory, locution, according to Odebunmi (2006) refers to the act of making meaningful speech. In another description, it embodies the propositional content of an utterance. That is, the operational meaning an utterance carries is located in the locutionary act. Sbisa (2006:5) construes speech act as locutionary act – "the act of saying". This means Austin's first attempt at describing the act of saying as equalled to doing is resident in the locutionary acts. Three forms of the locutionary act are identified to include:

- a. The phonetic act
- b. The rhetic act and
- c. The phatic act

The phonetic act involves utterances that place emphasis on certain sounds. Prosodic features are found to be engaged in this context for communication. For the rhetic act, meaning conveyance with words with certain semantic import, sits at the centre. On its part, the phatic act deals with sounds that align with rules of context-dependent sound formation. That is, the sound, words and the intonation that accompanies such construction rely on certain prescriptive rules. With respect to reporting a proposition, referencing the direct speech of the speaker, the act is said to be phatic while the act that involves indirect speech is evoked by the rhetic speech act. It thus explains why news reports mostly use the rhetic and have several phatic acts presented in the body of the report. By implication, it could be safely submitted that the rhetic act is principally a functional structural tool that amplifies the media voice why the phatic act creates the avenue for actors' stance presentation.

Within the ambits of medical pragmatics, two categories of locutions are identified – locutions intended to be understood by non-professionals and locutions intended not to be understood by non-professionals. In his expansive study of locutions in medical discourse, Odebunmi (2006) considers locutions as “vocabulary items that have certain senses and references when engaged in certain context by interactants. The anchor terms – sense and reference – evince that locutions are tied to the operational meaning of an utterance which is invariably determined by three factors:

- a. The sense(s) of the sentence uttered
- b. The identity of the object in the real world and
- c. Whether or not the speaker is speaking literally or figuratively (Fraser1986 cited in Odebunmi 2006:26)

Locutions, going by the above description, are institutionally constructed. It implicates that in the medical fields, the senses and cognitive frames created must align with the realities of the doctor-patient interactional world. If this is possible, it can be possible for media discourse and other discourses alike in selecting locutions that index the thematic preoccupation and field definition. This automatically invokes the question of register in the construction of locutions. This notwithstanding, locutions are context-reliant structures that define interactional fields.

At this literal level, different cognitive linkages can be drawn to shed better understanding of an utterance. In essence, locutions are, to this study, literal structures upon which variegated inferences are drawn.

2.5.4.2 The illocutionary act

Special attention is given to this section because it is integral to the current research. Even to the speech act theory, the illocutionary act is core to the realisation of intentions. In the acts’ trilogy, the illocutionary act is the act of performance determination. According to Sbisa, the illocutionary act focuses on the way in which speakers use their utterances or act to realise their intended action. As such, when an utterance is made by a speaker and this utterance performs the intended action, such is made possible with what is described as the illocutionary force of such utterance (Austin 1962; Sbisa 2009).

Because these acts are conventional, they have to follow the guidelines of some general felicity conditions. Some of these involve adherence to the conventional procedure for performing the act, careful selection of the appropriate participants and circumstances for the invocation of the procedure, complete and correct procedure to be carried out, right state of mind and attitude of participants, and further demonstration of similar, appropriate behaviour (Austin 1962; Sbisà 2009).

The procedure for the act performance could be purely linguistically manifested, and equally involves extralinguistic behaviour. It is linguistic when there is a conspicuous employment of performative verbs, on the one hand, the extralinguistic behaviour is composed of gestural moves. For an illocutionary act to be effective, Sbisà citing Austin, advanced three kinds of effect of the illocutionary act: the securing of uptake, the production of a conventional effect, and the inviting of a response or sequel. Securing of uptake ensures the understanding of the meaning and the force of the locution, without which the illocutionary act cannot be achieved. Acts in the production of conventional effect reveal the state of affairs in a different way other than its natural course, and finally the inviting of a sequel simply prompts or incurs follow-up acts to preceding invitation.

2.5.4.3 The perlocutionary act

This is actually an effect born out of the success of an illocutionary act. In other words, it is the result produced by the illocutionary act, which moves the participants into action. As observed in Sbisà (2009), the perlocutionary act does not necessarily rely on the fulfilment of certain conventional conditions; rather it depends on the actual realisation of the illocutionary act resulting in some extra-linguistic consequences. For instance, an exclamation like “snake!” from one of two friends on the road doesn’t require the illocutionary force indicating verb such as “run” before the friend would scamper for safety. The reaction of the friend (extralinguistic) to the “snake” alarm is the perlocutionary effect of the speech act.

2.5.4.4 The illocutionary force

A force is a propeller, and power that causes things to happen. In Sbisà’s (2009) analogy culled from Searle’s (1969) study, she explained that in performing an illocutionary act

with sentences, two kinds of acts necessarily follow: the utterance act and the propositional act. The propositional act involves utterances situated in context, but cannot however be expressed independent of the illocutionary act. Like an onion, the illocutionary act further embeds in it the expression of a propositional content. This implicates that the illocutionary act possesses both a force and a propositional content. What this description suggests is the distinguishing roles between an utterance and a proposition. Put in crystal terms, utterances contain proposition, which is tantamount to establishing that every speech contains the words and their accompanying message; hence, it is established that both an illocutionary force and a propositional act are found in the illocutionary act. This is thus symbolically represented with the formula $F(p)$.

2.5.4.5 (Non-) Illocutionary force indicating devices

For every illocutionary act to be true it must have the appropriate illocutionary force. In essence, the felicity conditions to be satisfied in the realisation of an illocutionary act as indicated in Searle (1996) (essential conditions, propositional content conditions, preparatory conditions, and sincerity conditions) must be met. It is from these conditions that the illocutionary force indicating devices (IFIDS) are culled. Their appropriate use (the devices), however, depends on the satisfaction of the felicity conditions and the force indicated by these conditions. When this is fulfilled the illocutionary effect is achieved (also called, perlocution).

In the process of communication, speakers have ways of making the illocutionary force of their speech acts evident (Sbisa, 2009). Speakers can make explicit and inexplicit use of the illocutionary force indicating devices. The inexplicit means of indication is conceived here as the non-illocutionary force indicating devices (NON-IFIDS), which consequently results in the need for the investigation of direct and indirect speech acts (the next section would explicate these). Austin (1962), quoted in Sbisa (2009), highlights some of these devices that mark for explicit usage. These include mood and modal verbs, intonation, adverbs, connectives, extra-linguistic gesture and contextual features that characterise the utterances.

2.5.4.6 Direct and indirect speech acts

The direct and indirect speech acts are inventories of the debate of whether the illocutionary force only depends on purely overt linguistic devices for the realisation of its goal or whether there are non-linguistic indicators of the illocutionary force. This argument conspicuously engendered the right placement of the theory; whether in semantics or pragmatics. Sbisa (2009) clarifies this puzzle in the deconstruction of the direct and indirect speech acts. She advances that while direct speech act presents the right and overt illocutionary indicators, indirect acts are performed with no clear-cut indicators of their intended force, such that, a hearer can only make inferences (Searle 1975; Sbisa 2009). Basically, the indirect speech act takes its strength in the theory of implicature.

2.5.5 Theory of constructions

The constructionist approach to the study of language gives attention to form and meaning which is neglected in generative grammar which focuses more on the formal structures that characterise language formation. In this approach, there is an adept investigation into formal structures with their semantic and discourse functions.

2.5.5.1 Tenets of the theory

Seven basic tenets underlie the operational mechanism of this approach to the study of language. These tenets of the theory, as highlighted in Goldberg (2003:219) specify (that): (1) all levels of descriptions are understood to involve pairings of forms with semantics or discourse function, (2) an emphasis is placed on subtle aspects of the way we conceive of events and states of affairs, (3) a “what you see is what you get” approach to syntactic form is adopted with no underlying levels, (4) constructions are learned on the grounds of the contribution and generic cognitive devices and are expected to be different cross-linguistically, (5) cross-linguistic generalisations are explicated by recourse to generic cognitive constraints as well as the functions of the constructions in question, (6) language-specific generalisations across structures are projected through inheritance networks, (7) this holistic knowledge is captured by a network of structures tagged construct-i-con.

Generally, Goldberg (2003) defines constructions as “stored pairings of form and meaning, including morphemes, words, idioms, partially, lexically filled and fully general linguistic patterns”. This connotes that language produces information when structural forms are married to their semantic interpretation. This further stresses the choice for the adoption of the Information Packaging Constructions (IPCs), the pragmatics side of the grammar model.

2.5.5.2 Martin Hilpert’s (2014) information packaging constructions (IPCs)

Information Packaging Constructions (IPCs) are constructions that are consciously packaged, in the most literal sense. It is the pragmatics slant of the construction grammar (CxG) model. In relation to information, this model of grammar concerns grammatical constructions that express the basic meanings of language that are integral to human life. It thus sets to establish the relation enforced between what is being said and what has been said before (Hilpert, 2014). This is what construction is about, and it becomes the hallmark of successful communication when the presentation of emergent information is constructed in a manner that affords hearers the opportunity to integrate that information with existing information. Sometimes called information packaging structures, IPCs functionally organise and arrange meanings, “relating new meanings to old meanings rather than conveying meanings themselves” (Hilpert 2014:102). By implication, a speaker’s selection of given information is largely dependent on the context that suggests that the hearer either has knowledge of such information or can possibly make inferences. That forms the background for the importation of pragmatics to the explanation of linguistic structures.

Pragmatics is conceived here as the study of context-dependent meanings of linguistic utterances (Griffiths 2006; Hilpert 2014). Hence, the environment and situational event that constrains the employment of certain linguistic choices is seen to be a conscious act intended to emphasise a particular message. Hilpert (2014:105) therefore sums up the definition of information packaging constructions, as gleaned from Lambrecht’s (1964) description as “sentence-level constructions that speakers use to express complex meanings in a way that shows awareness of the knowledge of the hearer”. In essence, these are structures co-constructed by interactants with reliance on shared knowledge.

Basic information packaging constructions that concern the pragmatic side of the grammar include presupposition and assertion, activation, and topic and focus. These are given some heightened explication in the following subsections.

2.5.5.2.1 Presupposition and assertion

Presupposition is simply the part of a proposition that is deliberately taken for granted because of shared assumptions. In information packaging construction, it is built on the converging point of old and new information. It is tied to structures, in the description of Hilpert (2014:105), designed with “the purpose of making new information intelligible by connecting it to old information”. This is called presupposition; where new information depends on old ones to be interpreted effectively. Lambrecht (1994) came up with the twin terms: pragmatic presupposition and pragmatic assertion.

Pragmatic presupposition as construed in Lambrecht (1994:52), cited in Hilpert (2014:105) are “the set of propositions lexically evoked in a sentence which the speaker assumes the hearer already knows or is ready to take for granted at the time the sentence is uttered”. When an utterance is made, it is expected to be strung in lexical items that serve as indices upon which communicating parties make assumptions. For instance, if a speaker makes a proposition like “another eleven have been tested positive for the virus”, the other participant in the conversation is expected to have had the knowledge that some had been previously tested positive for the virus with the inclusion of the lexeme “another” and also, the definite article “the” attached to “virus” suggests that the inferred virus’ name is known to the both parties.

Pragmatic assertion, on its part, is defined as “the proposition expressed by a sentence which the hearer is expected to know or take for granted as a result of hearing the sentence uttered” (Hilpert 2014:106). Assertions are not primarily assumptions (old information) but are essentially propositions expressed (new information). While in pragmatic presupposition the proposition is made on speaker’s assumption, pragmatic assertion is the position itself. Hence the distinction is constantly related to the linguistic structures that demarcate the old information from the new information. This can be found in tough raising constructions. These constructions embody noun phrases, a

predicate adjective and to-infinitives in sentences; such that, they reference an old information with the sentence.

2.5.5.2.2 Activation

Activation is the stimulation of the cognitive model of talk-participants in a current communicative event. Most construction types such as *wh*-cleft construction, *tough* raising construction, or restrictive relative construction, are functionally engaged to activate these mental models in communication. As simply put, “a term that has been established for the ideas that are more or less present in the hearer’s consciousness is referred to as activation” (Hilpert 2014:108). Activation is made when references are invoked. Chafe (1987), cited in Hilpert (2014), identifies three types of referents, which include the active referent, the inactive referent and the semi-active referent (or accessible referent). These referents are identified with respect to the degree of activation. This implies that definiteness in the proposition is stirred through active referents, and as such the definiteness reduces the activation, fades into semi-active and finally becomes inactive.

2.5.5.2.3 Topic and focus

These terms are technically used in the framework of IPC. That means topic and focus are perused beyond their everyday literal deployment in conversations. To this model, a topic is understood as the subject matter of a sentence, that is, that which a sentence is about (Hilpert (2014:109). It is the central idea, a sentence is built to convey. It is not confined to a sentence part, and in relation to pragmatic presupposition and pragmatic assertion, it deals with current interest. By implication, it does not necessarily depend on or coincide with a presupposed referent or some linguistic indexes to stand as the topic of a proposition. Topic is ultimately a holistic couching of what the sentence or proposition refers. Oftentimes topic is realised through topicalisation constructions, which have special structures designed to provide the topic of sentences. These constructions include *As-for*-constructions, and *left-dislocation* constructions; they are products of structural arrangements that largely restructure the transitive constructions.

Focus, on its part, is ingrained in pragmatic assertion, and serves as the “element of information whereby the presupposition and the assertion differ from each other” (Hilpert 2014:110). In the asserted proposition, there is what is called focus relation (Lambrecht, 1994) which is the relation that constitutes new information. Three types of focus have been further identified by Lambrecht (1994), cited in Hilpert (2014), these are predicate focus, argument focus, and sentence focus. These focus types are classified with respect to the part of the structure of the pragmatic assertion that houses the asserted proposition. The example he gave however allows the interrogative construction to index where the focus lies in the response.

2.6 Theoretical model/framework

Of particular relevance to this study are theoretical resources that the researcher finds apposite for the realisation of the aim of the research. While some of these were purely theoretical, the others were merely tools or resources from conceptual approaches. From the theoretical and conceptual resources reviewed, the following feature prominently in the course of analysing the data: Tomlinson (2013) integrated model of entitlement beliefs, Marina Sbisà’s (2009) conceptual engagement of the speech act theory; Odebunmi’s (2016) harmonised approach to context; van Dijk’s (2015) socio-cognitive critical discourse analysis; Hilpert’s (2014) information packaging construction; and Relevant Sections of the Nigeria’s Land Use Acts (1978). Tomlinson’s integrated model of entitlement beliefs provided the guide towards identifying the manifestation of entitlement in the reports. Special focus was given to the antecedents in the reports, actors’ beliefs and evaluation of the conflict using situational factors measuring organisational justice, job/status/demands, organisational cultures and reward system. These indices help locate the legitimate and over-entitlement factors which produce expectations.

Sbisà’s speech acts conceptualisation key resources like propositional force, acts and content with truth conditions are useful in establishing the entitlement types, while Hilpert’s construction grammar is employed to explicate discourses. Since context is germane to the interpretation of the events reported, Odebunmi’s harmonised model serves the purpose of helping to situate the entitlement types within the right contextual

affordances. Specifically, the broad part constitutes cognitive, social and linguistic contexts while the narrow part focuses on only the context from outside-in which enables the drawing of inferences from extralinguistic realities. On the part of ideology, van Dijk's sociocognitive critical discourse analysis suffices for the projection of the discourse structures including macrostructures' construction of mental frame via the headlines, implications and presuppositions, metaphors, and mental lexical expressions that aid the crystallisation of the ideologies. This socio-cognitive approach also concretises the pragmatic strategies together with injections from Odebunmi and Oloyede (2018). Then the linguistic and pragmatic slants of Hilpert's construction grammar are deployed to enforce the information structure of the pragmatic strategies and some marked constructions in the reports and comments. Underlying the entitlement types is the measuring of the rights to space against the stipulation of the Land Use Act of Nigeria (1978) to bolster the truth condition of the entitlement rights and their wielders. The diagrammatic representation of these features is ingrained in the theoretical model below.

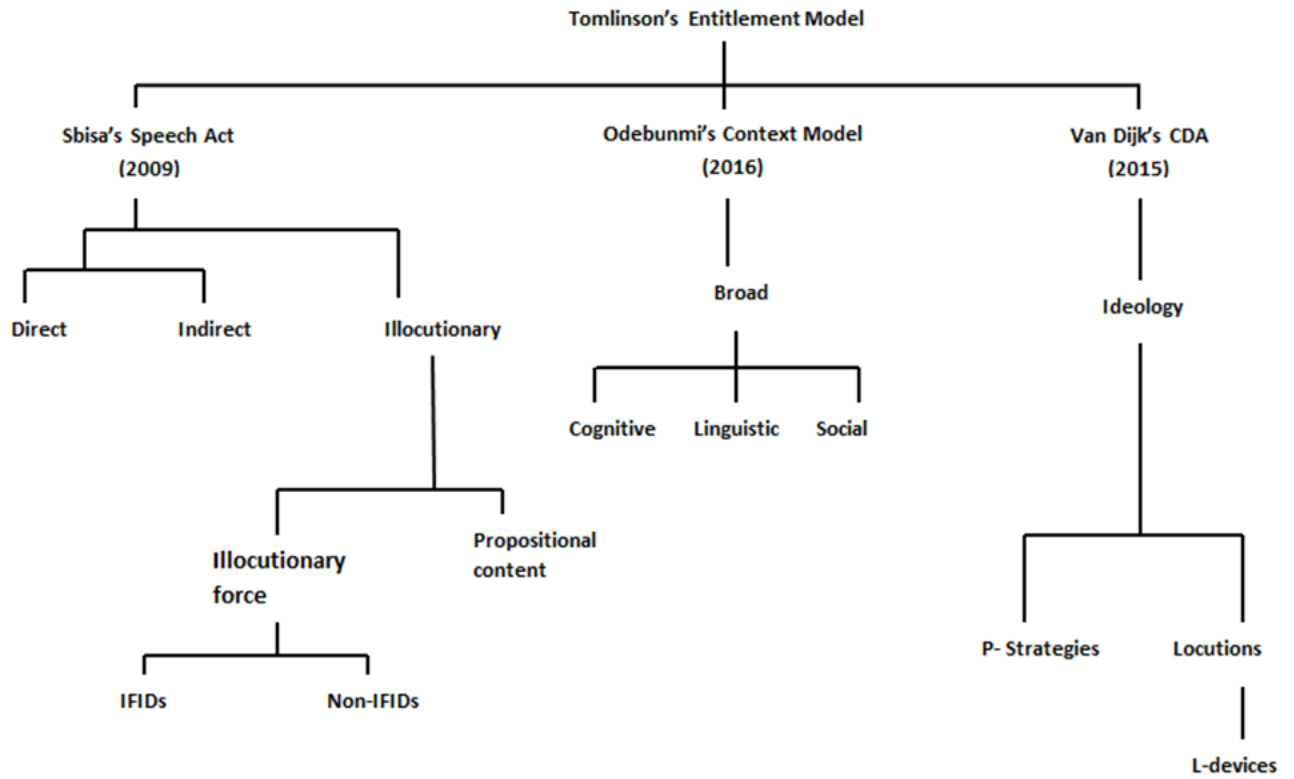


Figure 2.2: Theoretical framework for entitlement perspectives, context and ideology Source: Researcher (2021)

Figure 2.2 constitutes the theoretical framework which comprises resources of the various theories and concepts that were employed to realise each of the set objectives of the study. As regards the identification and establishment of the entitlement construct, the integrated entitlement belief model which outlines the antecedents (situational factors) that enforce entitlement types was subsumed under the social context of Odebunmi (2016). These were complemented by the speech act theory of Marina Sbisà (2009) which was adopted with concerted appropriation of the direct, indirect and illocutionary acts in which the illocutionary force and propositional content of the reports were properly situated. In furtherance, the illocutionary force indicating devices (IFIDs) and the non-illocutionary force indicating devices (Non-IFIDs) were deployed to unearth explicit and implicit pointers of entitlement in the narrative of the reports. It should be noted that the construction grammar runs through the whole analysis. It is deployed at instance of special constructions that require its resources for elucidation.

Within the spheres of context, resources from Odebunmi's (2016) harmonised contextual re-categorisation were adopted to forge out the enabling narrative sites of the entitlement perspective. Specifically, the broad and narrow parts were engaged. The broad part enabled the realisation of the cognitive, linguistic and social manifestations in the text while the narrow part which largely invokes outside-in (that is, extralinguistic importations) experiences through inference, relevance, sociocultural knowledge, metaphor and voice, to crystallise the eclectic construction of the news narratives on herdsman and farmers conflict, with bias to the presentation of the entitlement types and underlying contexts of operation.

Finally, van Dijk's (2015) socio-cognitive critical discourse analysis provides the discourse-cognition-society tripartite portrayal of the ideological force constraining the entitlement construct in the reports. This is complemented with the pragmatic framing strategies identified in Odebunmi and Oloyede's (2016). The discursive structure of the trio emerges at the macro and micro levels. At the macro level, there is the cognition that has to do with the participants' socially shared knowledge, attitudes, ideologies, norms and values, while at the micro level, there is the society which encompasses the communities, groups and organisations as well as their interactions.

These structures are strengthened on the news reports through pragmatic strategies (P. Strategies) and linguistic devices (L. devices) to achieve a vivid representation of the ideologies. The locution types embed in them the L-devices as well as the IFIDS that point to the categorisation of the various locutions. In sum, the appropriation of these theories and concept amplifies the realisation of the aim and objectives geared towards pinning down the entitlement perspectives, contexts and ideologies in the reports on herdsmen and farmers' conflict in Nigeria.

2.7 Summary of the chapter

This chapter has given a robust focus to the study by interrogating various relevant works that are related to the aim of the research and can actually contribute to the proper situation of the study. Beginning from extant studies on herdsmen and farmers' conflict from both linguistic and non-linguistic perspectives, the review ran through some conceptual information and theoretical frameworks. The chapter examined in detail the concept of entitlement as a principle concept of the study with special review of its relationship with endowment, and the law. An integrated approach to the concept by Tomlinson (2013) was also reviewed in order to have variegated conflation of the entitlement construct across disciplines.

Context was another chief concept that received attention in this review chapter. The different notions of the concept were perused. Ideology which forms the third principal concept of the theory was considered from the standings of its connection to language use, context and the media. Conflict discourse and media discourses as well as the language, procedure and style of investigative online newspapers had their robust engagements in this review section. The macro section on conceptual review was capped up with the review of the concept of pragmatics, as a mother concept for the study.

The chapter also reviewed relevant theories like CDA, the socio-cognitive perspective of van Dijk (2015), Fetzer's notion of context, Odebunmi's harmonised approach to context, speech and construction with specific focus on the Information Packaging Constructions. The section rounded off with the conflation of the precise relevant resources of the

theories that made up the analytical model in chapter three. This was discussed with a theoretical framework showing the relevant resources.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Preamble

This chapter of the study discusses the research method adopted for the study. It provides explanation for the sampling technique employed in the body of the research, and the modality through which the data were collected. These processes were further followed with the analytical framework adapted and adopted for the study, which was necessarily gleaned from the sundry findings. An explanation then followed as to the method of data analysis before the section was rounded off with concluding remarks.

3.1 Research design

The study adopted the descriptive research design. This was selected to enhance the qualitative method of analysis deployed in the study to examine the entitlement types, contexts and ideologies that characterise them. This design afforded the researcher the opportunity to expressly deploy suitable pragmatics' resources and discourse analytical tools to the interpretation of the discourses that trailed the news reports on the herdsmen and farmers' conflicts.

3.2 Study population

The population or population of interest of a research encompasses all the units on which the findings of study can be applied. It essentially embodies a set of the entire body of units which embeds variable features for which the findings of the study can be generalised (Shukla, 2020). In research, this can be stated in the title or statement of the problem. Different types of study population exist: finite and infinite, homogenous population, existent and hypothetical population, known and unknown population. For

this study, the finite population of interest was adopted because the newspapers in question can be counted. In essence, this study consists of online-only newspapers in Nigeria. There are two kinds of online newspapers in Nigeria: those that are exclusively online and those that have both online and print versions. In the online-only category, *Sahara Reporters* and *Premium Times* top the chart (Oladosu, Sanni, and Tanimowo, 2021). Out of about 95 news publications with online presence in Nigeria including those who mainly report on sports, two online-only newspapers: *Sahara Reporters* and *Premium Times* were selected because of their dedication to investigative reporting and robust readers' engagement. Drawn from this pool of the target population which operates both in Nigeria and outside the shores of Nigeria; the focus of this research principally involves news actors reported in the direct and indirect narratives that project entitlement discourses and relevant comments within the scope of the entitlement reports on herdsmen and farmers' conflict.

3.3 Sampling method and data collection procedure

The purposive sampling technique complemented by the quota sampling technique was deployed to consciously select the reports that border on entitlement, violations, and discourses around that arc of reports bordering on the issue of herdsmen and farmers' crisis in Nigeria. Also, since entitlement is the focus of the research, conscious and purposive effort was exerted in selecting news reports and their characterising contexts that project the narrative of entitlement construct. A hundred and six (106) reports from *Sahara Reporters* (40) and *Premium Times* (66) constituted the corpus of the study. Reports published between 2015 and 2021 formed the hub of investigation because of the heightened reportage occasioned by intensity and preponderance of attacks and heated debates around those periods. It is worthy of note that the reports of interest to this study are not restricted to those on attacks. The scope covers reports on people's opinion, government statements, non-governmental agencies' reactions, readers' online comments, and other stakeholders' reports that concern the conflict between herdsmen and farmers. Basically, four major issues characterise the news reports from which entitlement construct was built. These were: destruction of lives and resources, rural grazing areas (RUGA), ethnicity, and politics. Two tables; the first presented the

summation while second (found at the appendices) gave the coded realisation of the news reports of the frequency of occurrence respectively.

Table 3.1: Summary of the recurrent issues in the news reports from 2015-2021

S/N	ISSUE (S)	PREMIUM TIMES	SAHARA REPORTERS	TOTAL
1	DESTRUCTION OF LIVES AND RESOURCES	28	17	45
2	RUGA	25	15	40
3	ETHNICITY	8	6	14
4	POLITICS	5	2	7
	TOTAL	66	40	106

Table 3.2: Summary of recurrent issues in the news reports from 2015-2021 (*See appendix*)

Table 3.2 is a representation of the recurrent news reports of PT and SR on the herdsmen and farmers' conflict. The table revealed that four issues (as summed up in 3.1) characterised the news reports that define the soul of the conflict. These are: destruction of lives and resources, rural grazing area (RUGA), ethnicity, and politics. In their select frequency, Table 3.1 (a summary of Table 3.2) showed that out of the 106 news reports that were examined, 45 reported on contents that projected the destruction of lives and resources with a distribution of 28 in PT and 17 in SR, respectively. This was followed by reports on the subject of RUGA (rural grazing area) with a frequency of 40 out of 106 with PT recording 25 of the reported news narratives on it while SR had 15 items reported in this category. Within this category are issues on land rights and other demonstrations on grazing and largely on the initiation of the cattle colony initiated by the federal government of Nigeria in July, 2018. The remaining two news reports recurrent in the data were ethnicity (14 reports, 8 in PT and 6 in SR) and politics (7 reports, 5 in PT and 2 in SR), respectively.

From these reports and frequencies of occurrence, it could be deduced that the herdsmen and farmers' conflict in Nigeria recorded more news reports on destruction of lives and resources than those on RUGA, ethnicity and politics. This bolsters the argument that construes the conflict as a resource conflict and indeed, the conflict reported more cases of killings (of both humans and livestock), and different shades of attacks between 2015 and 2021. Because of its sensitive nature especially in relation to land, next to the reports on destruction was RUGA. The introduction of rural grazing area was greeted with heated reaction from different states and organisations. It was seen as a divisive scheme that placed the Fulani men on a more advantaged position in the country than others, culminating in entitlement inflections. Some saw it as another form of colonization as was also referred to as cattle colony project. By default, the pastoralists who were mostly Fulani amplified the ethnicity-related reports and consequently the politics that comes with it. Ultimately, the tabulated coding of the reports helped in the contextualisation of

the discourse within the ambiance of the resource entitlement construct which necessarily evokes contestation over resources in sundry contexts.

3.4 Method of data analysis

Coding, the operation of identifying segments of related themes from available corpus, served as the first mechanism for the categorial identification of the recurrent entitlement types, their characterising contexts, the underlying ideologies, the pragmatic strategies that projected the ideologies as well as the enforcing locution types. The harmonisation of theories to realise the stated objectives was made possible through theoretical triangulation approach.

As an approach in research, triangulation is a concept used to harness theories, methods or observers in a study in order to avoid the bias of a single approach (Noble and Heale, 2019). In other senses, triangulation explores and explains the complex dynamics of human behaviours via the application of different methods to achieve a balance. Essentially, it enhances credibility and validity of research through the researcher's use of multiple approaches in a study to tease out the required information and to critically analyse findings (Bans-Akutey and Timud, 2021). Validity and credibility in research within the frame of the triangulation approach are pursued in six ways including the triangulation of methods, data, investigator, theory, environment, and multiple triangulations (Social Science Research Laboratories, 2018). Data triangulation for instance, involves details such as periods of time, space and people that comprise the population sample; investigator triangulation deals with the use of many researchers in a study; theory triangulation enables the combination of theoretical resources to aid the interpretation of data; while methodological triangulation encompasses several methods of data collection ranging from interviews, focus group discussions and observations (Noble and Heale, 2019). For this study, the theoretical triangulation was robustly deployed as it appropriates theories and conceptual models to formulate an analytical template.

In furtherance, the topdown analytical approach, which relates to presentation of issues from the big picture then narrowed to smaller manifestations, was then deployed to define

the coded categorial elements, categorise into smaller bits of occurrence, characterise by stating their distinctive features, and finally exemplify the identified categories using excerpts from the selected data. Each of the stages (sections) of the one-chapter analysis was guided by the objectives of the study using relevant theoretical and conceptual resources. This was intended to have a goal-directed analytical process that is devoid of irrelevant intrusions in order to realise the ultimate aim of the study which is to identify the resource entitlement perspectives, context and ideologies in the news reports of herdsman and farmers' conflict in Nigeria.

3.5 Analytical model

In this segment of the chapter, the framework that encapsulates the systematic and procedural presentation of the analysis is presented. It showed how the study aligned the analysis with the stated objectives and how each objective was realised. The diagram on Page 103 is a concise representation of the whole study. With this framework, all that the researcher did could be understood because of its professional coding and scientific analysis. Page 103 is therefore the analytical framework for the entitlement types, contexts, and ideologies, pragmatic strategies, locution types and pragmatic implications that the discourses holistically spell out on the conflict between the agrarians in the reports of *Sahara Reporters* and *Premium Times*.

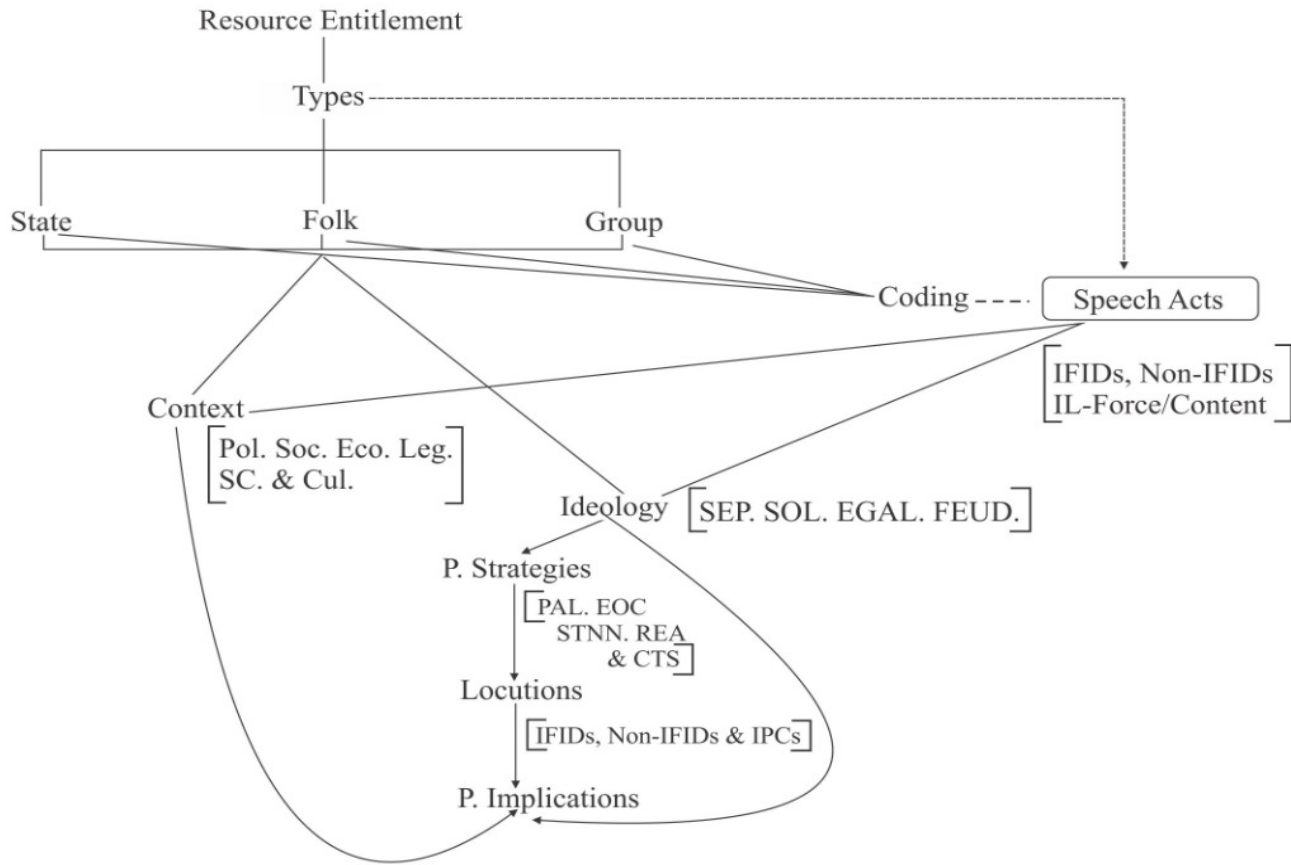


Figure 3.1: Analytical model for data analysis

Source: Researcher (2021)

The preceding analytical framework demonstrates how the theoretical and methodological resources were appropriated to realise resource entitlement in the reports on herdsmen and farmers' conflict in Nigeria. In line with the objectives of the study, three types of entitlement: state, folk and group, were identified using the coding mechanism. As indexed by the connecting lines, all the three types of entitlement are drawn from the coding process and were foregrounded through the theoretical resources of context (the macro category) and the speech act theory with sustained focus on the illocutionary indicative devices (IFIDs) and Non-Illocutionary indicative devices (Non-IFIDs), and Illocutionary force and content of the new narratives. The dotted lines connecting the entitlement types to the speech act and coding suggest that there is no direct link between the types of entitlement and the speech act or coding. This is hinged on the fact that speech act was not the means through which the entitlement types were identified; rather it was the coding process. However, speech acts resources were used in foregrounding the illocutionary force and content that help establish the entitlement types. The speech acts are rather connected directly to the contexts and ideologies which are in turn linked to the types of entitlement. Thus, in their intricate webbing, the three entitlement types are grounded in six contexts: political, social, legal economic, socio-cultural and cultural. These are engendered by four ideologies: separatist, solidarist, egalitarianist and feudalist ideology. These ideologies are constructed through pragmatic strategies (P.Strategies) which include politicisation of agrarian context (PAC), ethnicisation of occupational context (EOC), strategisation of topical news narratives (STNN), religionisation of economic act and commodification of territorial space. The linguistic forms were coded into different locutions which were marked by IFIDs and Non-IFIDs and information packaging constructions (IPCs). In conclusion, the entitlement types, contexts and ideologies together with their resources culminated in the pragmatic implications of the entitlement discourse which are in the study established through the evocation of polarisation, ethnocentrism, and potential harmony.

3.6 Summary of the chapter

This chapter has carefully explored the research design of the study as well as the sampling method and the data collection procedure. Having gone through that, it further

presented the method of data analysis and then the analytical framework for the study. By the presentation of this methodology, the shape of the subsequent chapters is already defined, even as the next examines the categories and context of entitlement perspectives on herdsmen and farmers' reports.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATIONS

4.0 Preamble

This chapter of analysis, in line with the objectives of the study, examines the predominant resource entitlement types and their constraining contexts, the ideologies, pragmatic strategies, locution types and the overall implications of the entitlement discourses for the Nigerian State. The chapter explores three entitlement types marked by six prevailing contexts. These resource entitlement types are accordingly, with their sub-manifestations, distributed along the state resource entitlement, group resource entitlement and folk resource entitlement with the attendant social, political, economic, sociocultural, cultural, and legal contexts. The following sections take them in turns.

4.1 Resource entitlement types and contexts in the news reports on herdsmen and farmers' conflict in Nigeria

4.1.1 State resource entitlement

State resource entitlement encompasses the statutory right or control over territorial space or resources in a given state in accordance with the provisions of the law. This is particularly recorded within the ambits of the Land Use Act, 1978 in Nigeria, as demonstrated in the reports. In the reports on the herdsmen-farmers conflict, this resource entitlement type empowers state governors with the authority to accept or reject proposals seeking to occupy land in any part of their respective states. Pointedly, the description in the narrative evokes two resource entitlement manifestations in the reports: concessional and non-concessional state resource entitlements, which are orchestrated by the legal, social and political contexts.

4.1.1.1 Concessional state resource entitlement

This type of state resource entitlement in the reports demonstrates the wilful ceding of the right to the state's territory/resources to a group of people to satisfy a particular social or economic need. Grounded in the legal and social contexts of the quest for peace within the bounds of constitutional provisions, the concessional state entitlement, as presented in the reports, promotes the constitutional powers vested in governors to grant statutory rights of occupancy to individuals for all purposes in consonance with paragraph (a) section 5, subsection (1) of the Land Use Act, 1978. Extract 1 exemplifies this resource entitlement dimension by tying it to security-induced concessional state entitlement.

a. Security-induced concessional state entitlement

Security-induced concessional state entitlement encapsulates the release of the state's resources to enact or sustain peace in the state. It is underlined by the state's proactive measures to provide for a group's need to avert continual clashes with other(s), as demonstrated in the federal government's rural grazing area (RUGA) initiative to which the concession of space and resources was anchored in this study. The security-induced concessional state entitlement is also characterised by the government's sensitivity to potential aggression from Fulani herdsmen towards Nigerians outside of the agricultural occupation. It is also a mechanism that addresses unemployment among youths through the provision of grazing reserves to avoid insurrection. Finally, it is an empathetic move geared towards the Fulani who are of the same ethnic divide as the President of Nigeria within the scope of the research. In the following extract from the newspaper's report, this state entitlement type is illustrated.

Extract 1:

Katsina State allocates 5,300 hectares of land for cattle Colony. January 25, 2018

The Katsina State Government said on Thursday that it **had allocated** 5,300 hectares of land for the establishment of a cattle colony. Abdullahi said the land allocation was part of the **government's proactive measures to prevent clashes between farmers and herdsmen in the state.** "Katsina is among the first states to give the federal government land for

that project. We gave 5,300 hectares of land, and is in one place, Jibiya,” he said. (*Premium Times*)

Extract 2:

Despite Rumble, We'll Go Ahead with Ruga -Niger State Government, July 17, 2019

Alhaji Ahmed Matane, the Secretary to the Niger State Government ... disclosed this while briefing journalists in Minna. According to him, the establishment of grazing reserves is **meant to end the farmer-herders' violent conflicts in Niger**. (*Sahara Reporters*)

The report in Extract 1 presents the security-induced concessional state entitlement. It unveils the decision of the news actor, the Katsina State government, to cede land to herdsmen for the grazing of their cattle under the aegis of the federal government's rural grazing area initiative also known as cattle colony. In the report, the shared situational knowledge of the herdsmen and farmers' conflict that triggered the federal government's introduction of the rural grazing areas policy fondly acronymised as RUGA was deployed in the headline in the referent "cattle colony". The cattle colony is an antecedent situational factor-led initiative by the federal government of Nigeria to solve the problem of open grazing across the country. This is represented in the entitlement belief structure as job demands [of the herdsmen].

As reported by *Premium Times*, the Katsina State government's wilful allocation of 5,300 hectares of land for the federal government's cattle colony initiative aligns with the witting ceding of their territorial space which is within the constitutional powers of the governor as a fulfilment of organisational justice system aimed at legitimising the government's actions. Accordingly, the conceding act is activated in the government's demonstration of its right to land in the state which the reporter enforces through the illocutionary force indicative device (IFID) "allocate" in the headline to project its position on the issue of cattle colony and the rights of the government over land in the state. Inferentially, it could be deducted that the announcement made through the referent Abba Abdullahi was a deliberate and conscious effort of the "state government" in addressing the issue of herdsmen and farmers' conflict.

Through the indicative mood captured mainly in the declarative that made up the lead story, the referent Mr. Abdullahi justifies the Katsina State government's decision of giving out the land for the project on the premise of forestalling peace between farmers and herdsmen in the state. However, the justifying act failed to legally acknowledge that the state government's action is in tandem with the provision of the law under Section 1 of the Land Use Acts (1978) that "all land comprised in the territory [are] vested in the Governor of that State..." rather, the government referenced inferentially the decision of other states in that "Katsina is among the first states to give the federal government land for that project..." By implication, their decision, beyond the primary concerns of security, was tied to the justification that other states were following the same line of decision.

Extract 2 further establishes the security-induced concessional state entitlement in the news report on the Niger State government's position on the federal government's RUGA initiative. The news narrative revealed that the government of Niger State is making its stand on moving on with the establishment of a cattle colony known to the public despite its refusal by some other States of the federation. The narrative began with the direct act of the Secretary to the state government clarifying the fact that there is a marked difference between the provision of grazing reserves and the establishment of rural grazing areas. To the referent, the rejection calls are driven by selfishness. He then went on to unravel the propositional force of the State's consenting act through inferentiality by forging out the fact that "state government will not renege on its plans to establish grazing reserves".

This teased out the original security intent underlying the motive for the concession of land for the establishment of RUGA which is to "end the farmer-herders' violent conflicts in Niger". This yet forges out the government's sensitivity to the state of means in the State, hence, it feels that concession of land for that project will not only provide room for peace in the state but also provide jobs for the unemployed youth. Implicaturally, youth are more prone to violent activities as well as the most engaged labour force in farming and herding, it thus implies that if violent attacks are connected to an occupation because of insufficient land for grazing, it is then the responsibility of the

government to key into the RUGA scheme, thereby enforcing the social and economic contexts drawn upon the entitlement construct.

4.1.1.2 Non-concessional state resource entitlement

Conversely, non-concessional state resource entitlement involves the entitlement type in which state governments demonstrate astute non-compliance to the proposal to cede parts of the states' territories for grazing purposes. This entitlement type is premised on the social, political and legal contexts underlying the initiative in the reports. Principally, this entitlement type is anchored on two dispositions in the reports: security-induced and resource-dearth-induced non-consents. Extract 3, below, is more pronounced in this regard.

a. Security-induced non-concessional state entitlement

This is a legally, politically, and socially contextualised type of entitlement that negates the release of the state's territories and resources. It is a constitution-reliant entitlement framework that rejects national proposals for land concession on account of its threat to peace and security in the state. It is a type of non-concessionality that places premium on the occupational needs of its citizens over external groups' associations. Extract 3 exemplifies this entitlement.

Extract 3:

No land for cattle colony in Delta – Governor Okowa. February 7, 2018

The Governor of Delta State, Ifeanyi Okowa, **has rejected** the federal government's proposed cattle colonies, saying his **state will not cede land for it**. Mr. Okowa, during a meeting on Tuesday in Asaba with herdsmen, farmers, community leaders, and heads of security agencies in the state cited threat to peace and security, as well as the shortage of land, as the reason for the rejection of the proposal. "The Nigerian Constitution does not allow anyone to graze on someone's farm. (*Premium Times*)

Extract 4:

Commenter A: This is a very pragmatic approach by the Governor. Honestly, am surprised a simple case of serial trespassing and other crimes committed by a group of people cannot be isolated and punished decisively

by the Government. The Government, in collusion with the Myetti Allah are making it look like the **herdsmen cannot practice their cattle rearing business successfully until they are allowed to graze farmers' crops**. If the Government would only just come to the protection of the farmer and his farming business by making sure herdsmen who allow their animals to **stray into farms and destroy crops or those who rape women are decisively punished**, I don't think there would be any problem. But when the President himself in one of his usually unpopular and sectional comments tried to justify or rationalise the grazing of crops by saying it would be difficult for a single lad to control a herd of 400 cattle then I lost all hopes this man can be looked upon as a true statesman and leader. He is no longer concealing **his extremely tribal inclinations**.

Commenter B: The President is on an Agenda, which will be visible to us all soon. (*Premium Times*)

From the headline of Extract 3, the report evinces security-induced non-concessional state entitlement. It is evident from this report that the government of Delta State is turning down the federal government's RUGA initiative, outright. This is wrapped up in the headline with the direct act "no land for cattle colony in Delta" through the non-consenting act of rejection. This rejection is credited to the referent, Mr. Okowa, the Governor of Delta State who constructed his decision on a personalised propositional act by stating that 'his' State will not cede land" for the initiative. In an act of justification, and demonstration of representativeness, the reporter referenced the integral participants of the social event as a necessary satisfaction of the relevant truth conditions of the act of rejection. Quite representative of the conflict, the report singled out "herdsmen, farmers, community leaders, and heads of security agencies" as the key participants that define the entirety of the herdsmen and farmers' driven security challenges facing the State.

The non-concessionality of the State's entitlement right is hinged on the dual grounds of peace and security threat and shortage of land; quite similar reasons that compelled the Katsina State government in allocating parts of their land. This position is equally entrenched in and empowered by the law particularly in the giving of consent which lies in the powers of the Governor, according to Section 6, subsection 2, Land Use Act, 1978. Unlike the Katsina State which ceded parts of its territory on the same grounds of security and adduced it further by stating that other states do the same, the Delta State

government on its parts referenced the provision of the constitution as the basis for its action.

Emphatically, the referent and Governor, Mr. Okowa, further substantiated his rejection act by resorting to legal voicing, as he submitted that “The Nigerian Constitution does not allow anyone to graze on someone’s farm”. With this defensive act, he projected the position of the Constitution by additionally substantiating that “it does not permit you to forcefully take over someone’s house”. While the pronominal “it” still references the Constitution, there is a metaphorical invocation of territorial entitlement in the lexeme “house”. By this, the governor is trying to establish spatial sovereignty, while enforcing his entitlement control over land in Delta State, and further resisting any external force from occupying their territory.

b. Resource-dearth-induced non-concessional state entitlement

This entitlement type relates to the state government’s refusal to yield resources within its territory on the grounds of insufficient available resources. It is an astutely constructed type of entitlement that favours individuals within its territorial bounds over outsiders. It is an expression of solidarity designed to nip killings orchestrated by the dearth of resources in the bud.

Extract 5:

Abia State rejects Cattle Colony for Herdsmen. December, 7, 2020

The Abia State Governor, Okezie Ikpeazu, **has rejected** plans by the federal government to establish “cattle colonies” for Fulani herdsmen and their cows in Abia State. ...The statement quoted Mr. Ikpeazu as saying, **“we reject any plan to establish cattle colonies for herdsmen in Abia State. “We don’t have enough land for our agricultural activities and our people want more land. (*Premium Times*)**

Extract 5 exemplifies this entitlement type. Compared with the caption of the first two news reports, Extract 5 presents more explicit performativity in terms of its directness in its rejection of cattle colony and herdsmen on the headline to foreground its non-concessionality. In this report, the referent, Okezie Ikpeazu states his rejection of the cattle colony initiative for herdsmen in Abia State. His demonstration of the non-consent

entitlement is amplified in the non-concessional act projected through the illocutionary act of rejection and is further enforced through non-illocutionary acts indicated by historical referencing (aftermath of recent killings of over 70 persons in Benue State) which by inference postulates the danger in allowing the cattle colony initiative. Above all, the social actor principally anchors his non-consent on the dearth of resources for his people who are largely farmers “We don’t have enough land for our agricultural activities and our people want more land”.

Although, he later referenced the security concerns that underlie his stance, his ultimate reason for the rejection is induced by insufficient land. As the custodian of the land in the state, he exercises parts of his rights which is in this case employed in denying the “other” agrarian group which he believes is too dangerous to coexist with (‘alien land occupation’ will also cause unrest and crises that may grow beyond what the state can handle’). The choice of the pragmatic constructions such as “alien occupation” and the use of the inclusive pronominal “we” together with the constant negative depiction of the herdsmen and the representation of “his people” as vulnerable and needy only highlights the fact that the rejection is more about an in-group versus out-group ideologically informed disposition.

If the same reasons provided for concession can also be adduced for non-concession, then it is an ideological construct that transcends the surface construal of cattle colony to state differences that are attributable to extra-linguistic and journalistic factors. For instance, politically, the governor of Katsina State who allocated land for the federal government initiative is of the ruling All Progressive Congress (APC) while the other two governors from Delta and Abia are of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP). Knowing that the RUGA or cattle colony initiative is flagged by the presidency which is led by the APC government also could be instrumental to the decisions culled from the reports. On these grounds, state entitlement can be said to be influenced by the people’s plight, constitutional, that is, legal provisions and plausibly party sentiments.

4.1.2 Group resource entitlement

Group resource entitlement enunciates issues of right that relate to the region-bound and ethnicity-bound resources and space that are keenly protected against other groups, regions or ethnicity. It is driven by collective goals and thus constrains members of the group that are supposedly violated to rise to the defence of its territory, members, and resources. Found recurrent in the reports are two principal group entitlement dimensions; the professional and the ethnic group entitlements which are bound by the economic and sociocultural contexts in the narratives.

4.1.2.1 Professional/Occupational group resource entitlement

Professional/occupational group entitlement concerns the rights to territorial and occupational space by members of a registered professional association. The contextual indices show that this entitlement type is ingrained in the economic and social contexts and thus entrusts participants with the right to not only register their voices but also to seek redress when violated. Extract 6 below is apt for this description.

Extract 6:

Ondo Farmers Decry the Destruction of Farm-Produce by Fulani Herdsmen, Ask FG for N2 Billion in Compensation. Feb 16, 2016

The **Association**, which is comprised of **local farmers**, is demanding the sum of N2 billion from the Federal Government as **compensation for the farmers whose produce was destroyed**. The **group** also condemned the violence caused by Fulani herdsmen... (*Sahara Reporters*)

Extract 7:

Commenter A: How come Buhari is not mobilising troops to curb the menace of these marauding Fulani herdsmen? **This has the potential to paralyze the nations agricultural output** at a time when agriculture is of the utmost importance given the fall in oil price and non-fossil alternative energy sources. This is a case of misplaced priority and lack of forward thinking on the part of this administration. Sai Buhari.

Commenter B: look at these lazy yariba clowns, did the fgn send people to destroy **your indian hemp farms**?...sue the fula herdsmen to court for compensation....if you think that you have a case...

Commenter C: Ondo farmers, the Hausa/fool-ani herdsmen want your land and not your hospitality, "fight them to finish!" Don't be a sitting dock [sic]. (*Sahara Reporters*)

Extract 6 in its reportage, maps out professional group entitlement which is the first phase of the group entitlement dimension. It discloses the outcry of farmers in Ondo State under the aegis of the Ondo State Agricultural Commodities Association, over the destruction of their farm-produce by Fulani herdsmen. In the indicative mood, the illocutionary act of requesting compensation from the government is made. The markedness of the report is pronounced in the shift of direction of complaint to the government for compensation, rather than the Fulani herdsmen who are accused to be the perpetrators of the act. Situating this in the social context of a registered association, plausibly with the government and the economic import of losing farm produce to the activities of the pastoralist, it is deducible that the association equates the act as that of a natural disaster in which government comes to the aid of the affected, hence finding their situation also to be entitled to compensation from the government as a professional group that contributes to the economy of the nation. The second phase of the group entitlement construct involves land ownership which is amplified in the comment section and is presupposed in the mediated narrative.

Naturally, the lexicalisation of “farm”, “local farmers” and “herdsmen” practically suggests the use common denominator of land possession and encroachment. Although the agents of protest were more concerned about the economic losses incurred by the farmers, the feeling of entitlement to space remains the underlying factor that precipitated this demand for compensation of N2 billion. Commenter A’s act of warning and follow-up advice unearths the cognitive frame about land and the struggle for territorial sovereignty and attendant defence against a group’s rights to space. Occupational group security entitlement is one major brick of the professional group entitlement. This involves the occupational association’s demonstration of the right to security. The following extract exemplifies this type of entitlement.

Extract 8:

**South West Houses Assembly reject Miyetti Allah’s request to join...
February 28, 2020**

The demand by the Miyetti Allah Cattle Breeders Association of Nigeria (MACBAN) to participate in the operations of the South West regional security network, Amotekun, has been turned down by the Houses of Assembly of the respective states. ... MACBAN expressed its support for the establishment of the security outfit, but proposed that it should have its members participate in the Amotekun corps. A former chairman of the association in Oyo State, Yaqub Bello, who spoke on behalf of MACBAN at the public hearing by the Oyo State House of Assembly, had expressed the support of the association to the Amotekun initiative, noting that only haters of truth would oppose the initiative. "Some of us have been in Oyo State for **over 40 years, cohabiting with the natives, married Yoruba women and have children,**" Mr Bello. "So, **our request** is to include **Miyetti Allah** as members of Operation Amotekun to enhance the job of the outfit, since **we know the terrain** of where we rear our cattle. **"Having Fulani** among the outfit will make it easier for Amotekun men to distinguish between genuine herdsmen and the criminals while on patrol. (*Premium Times*)

While trying to push for the bill for the establishment of the South West regional security network, Amotekun, the occupational group entitlement again resurfaced in Extract 8 with demands from the Miyetti Allah Cattle Breeders Association of Nigeria (MACBAN) to be part of the process that will lead to the securing of the environment. Situated in this narrative context, the entitlement type was security-oriented, such that, the occupational group (MACBAN) feels entitled to the security of the forest as necessary stakeholders affected by the resource conflict. Nevertheless, their proposition was barely considered at the State's Assembly. Different indirect acts were used to pursue their right to security, and advance why they should be part of the Amotekun Corps. Chief among these is hinged on the justifying act which lends credence to the longer stay in the area which is intended to satisfy the conditions necessary for the felicity of their proposition. It is at this point that Yaqub Bello, who spoke on behalf of MACBAN tries to justify the propositional content of their demand by referencing the construction "Some of us have been in Oyo State for over 40 years, cohabiting with the natives, married Yoruba women and have children," Mr. Bello. So, our request is to include Miyetti Allah as members of Operation Amotekun to enhance the job of the outfit, since we know the terrain of where we rear our cattle".

Their quest, to be part of the security outfit of the State, is premised on their length of stay in the environment, meaning that, the suspected indigene-settler differences that are

deemed to be instrumental to their rejection contained in the selective construction of spatial coverage of the security network “of the South West region, Amotekun” are vocally regionalised. Being on Yoruba land but at the same time, non-indigenes who stayed for over 40 years, engaged in inter-marriages, and have worked in the acclaimed troubled forest should expectedly qualify to be enlisted into the security network. However, the scope and definition of the security outfit and the pragmatic lexicalisation of “Having Fulani among the outfit will make it easier for Amotekun men...” presupposes that the Yoruba-dominated state assembly and the Fulani-led MACBAN have implicitly polarised irreconcilable entitlement construct that engenders the policy makers’ stance and the herdsmen hell-bent quest for inclusion. MACBAN’s exercise of rights indexes the professional/occupational group entitlement representing the interest of Fulani herdsmen in building a peaceful environment free of criminal impostors.

4.1.2.2 Ethnic group entitlement

Ethnic group entitlement entails the demonstration of the right to group’s accommodation on the bylines of ethnicity. In this wise, occupancy rights or claims to space and resources are tied to and exercised based on defined ethnic affiliation, in which one ethnic group either allows or disallows or even expunges the other. It mainly occurred in the sociocultural context. This underlies Extract 9 below.

Extract 9:

Insecurity: We’ll chase ‘bad’ Fulani herders out of Yoruba land – Ooni. June 20, 2019

The Ooni of Ife has said plans are underway to chase ‘bad Fulani herders’ involved in violent attacks out of **Yoruba land**. Kidnappings in South-west Nigeria and across the country have increased in recent months despite assurances by the government. ...**The monarch said it is time to “separate the corn (wheat) from the shaft (chaff)”**.... (*Premium Times*)

Extract 10:

Commenter A: Kabiyesi! Are you speaking the minds of Yoruba elders and leaders? Is Asiwju Ahmed Tinubu on same page with you? How will you execute this without offending Buhari thereby making Pastors Osinbajo and Kumuyi angry?

Commenter B: Moron, if you understand English, he is saying NOT ALL FULANI HERDSMEN ARE CRIMINALS just like not all Igbo men are hard drug barons. (*Premium Times*)

Extract 9 evokes ethnic group entitlement with the Ooni of Ife symbolising the active referent for the Yoruba ethnic divide by addressing the issue of insecurity aggravated by the activities of herders to which he threatens extradition with the labelling ‘bad’ Fulani herdsmen from Yoruba land. The socio-cultural context constraining the type of resource entitlement in Extract 9 is magnified in the agency of “The Ooni of Ife, Adeyeye Ogunwusi” who is a first-class king in Yoruba land. The conditions of the propositional act principally present the king, according to the reports, as the possessor of an expropriation right against the backdrop of the Land Use Act’s stipulation. However, ethnic group entitlement played out in the crux of the report in two acknowledgments, although one is realised through inference. The Ooni of Ife’s illocutionary act of warning in the headline is couched in the argument construction called caused-motion construction (We’ll chase... out of...) as the co-textual index for enforcing the illocutionary force of the warning to dislodge. However, the detailing of the report implicitly forges out the hierarchy of extradition power between government and traditional rulers.

This is reflected in the second construction “Kidnappings in South-west Nigeria and across the country have increased in recent months despite assurances by the government”. With the reference to government’s failed assurances, there is a clear deduction that the Ooni’s planned action of chasing “bad” Fulani out of Yoruba land is possibly strengthened by the government’s failure, and further points to the fact that he is not only a custodian of the people’s culture but also a protector of their lives and property, especially against an ethnicity-driven group of herders. Another self-security-oriented ethnic group entitlement is also found within the corpus of the reports and comments on herdsmen and farmers’ conflict discourse. Imbued in the solidarist ideology (which will be discussed later), self-security oriented ethnic entitlement verges on group’s quest for defence based on connected communal affiliation and territorial sovereignty. The following explains this better.

Extract 11:

Yoruba Group Backs Sunday Igboho's Quest to Protect South-West against Killer Herdsmen, FEB 07, 2021

The group urged **Yoruba people** to be proactive and be fully involved in curbing the criminal activities perpetrated by suspected **Fulani foot soldiers**. A group formed by **Yoruba people in the diaspora**, Yoruba Nation Now, has called on all southwesterners to support Yoruba freedom fighter, Sunday Adeyemo, popularly known as Sunday Igboho, in **his quest to protect the region against killer herdsmen....“The clarion calls are on all Yoruba sons and daughters, at home and abroad to fully support every Ọmọ Ọkọ Yoruba agitators, including Chief Sunday Adisa Adeyemo, aka Chief Sunday Igboho.”** The statement read: “With regards to the ongoing Fulani herdsmen killing spree and massacre all over **Yorubaland**, YNN will neither negotiate nor enter into any bargain on the safety of the **Yoruba indigenes** (*Sahara Reporters*).

Ethnicity is the crux and the driving force of the report contained in Extract 11. The heart of the report concerns the Yoruba group’s solidarity in pledging their support for the movement for the southwest regional protection by the referent, Sunday Igboho, against the killer herdsmen who are largely of the Fulani ethnic extraction. Etched in the security context and the context of communality, the illocutionary act in the narrative is a “backing” which presupposes that there is movement that had already begun and is supported by a (diasporaic) group that emphasises ethnicity. The linguistic indices of ethnic group entitlement in the construction of the report are – Yoruba people, Fulani foot soldiers, Yorubaland, Omo Oko Yoruba, Yoruba sons and daughters and land grabbing. These are connected to the context of security and communality through the propositional content of the expressions – Fulani foot soldiers; supported by the federal government in massacring our people, Yoruba freedom fighters, security agencies, and genocidal tendencies. The conflation of these indices points to the ethnically ideological polarity of two groups of people – the Yoruba and the Fulani respectively. From a pragmatically inclined interpretation of the direct and indirect acts that constitute the report, it is deducible that the herdsmen and farmers’ crisis is domesticated, personalised and ethnicised. As contained in the solidarist focalisation of the report, the conflict is conceived by the Yoruba group (YNN) as one that is consciously intended to annihilate the Yoruba race. In the allegation, this is emphasised in Extract 11.

There it is observed that the context of resource conflict which is the traditional engenderer of the crisis is drastically played down. This is strategic as it allows the actors, that is, the Yoruba group, to stress the ethnic and security concerns in the discourse. Hence, the structure “to wipe out of existence” is a carefully selected construction that presents the Fulani as invaders and as people detailed for ethnic cleansing while at the same time presenting the Yoruba as the victims. Land grabbing which is presented as an appendage to the issue of killing remains the core of the conflict occasioned by lack of available resources (particularly, land) for farming and cattle grazing.

4.1.3 Folk resource entitlement

Folk resource entitlement is a form of community-based entitlement that is derived from a family or clan’s claim to space in the context of land ownership or occupancy rights. Rights within the folk entitlement construct are divided along indigenous and non-indigenous strata. It is within an organisational culture in the entitlement model. This entitlement type in the reports is situated in the legal and cultural contexts. These are substantiated in turn, below.

4.1.3.1 Indigenous folk resource entitlement

Indigenous folk resource entitlement is hinged on the right to space, land, or resources by virtue of being a native to, or from a community. This ardently informs the power such individuals wield in accommodating and rejecting others. Situated in cultural and legal contexts, active participants found within the coverage of this type of entitlement include village heads, chiefs, and community members. This scenario played out in the report and comments in Extract 12.

Extract 12:

Farmers/Herders conflict: Jigawa community gives herders one month to quit settlement. March 22, 2018

Members of a community in Gwaram Local Government Area of Jigawa State **have given some herders one month to quit a settlement** they said they had lived in for about 40 years. Shehu Juli, one of the herders, told PREMIUM TIMES the quit notice was issued by Auwalu Adamu, the

district head of Fagam, whom he said asked them to leave or face the wrath of the community. Mr Juli said **his family and that of his neighbor**, Muhammadu Dade, were suddenly told by the district head that **the owner of the land wanted to recover it** (*Premium Times*)

Extract 13:

Commenter A: Not they are been [sic] seen as a plague. They are a plague.

Commenter B (to A): I don't subscribe to that narrative, I think the accurate question here is did they **family legally own the land/real estate** or did they just settle on it and paid some arranged rent to the owner whilst they used the real estate for agriculture; **and now the landlord want his/her property back?** These are the pertinent question?

Commenter C: **That is what happens when there is governance failure.**

Commenter D (to C): **Very true indeed.....** [sic] (*Premium Times*)

Indigenous folk entitlement is concretised in the report in Extract 12 by topicalising community farmers and settler herders' jigsaw over the former's eviction order. Indigeneship within this bound is the background, according to the headline, upon which the ownership narrative is constructed. This precedes the rider of the headline which stretched out the crux of the report "Farmers and herdsmen conflict". Fundamentally, indigenous folk entitlement, on the farmers and herders conflict presents a display of ownership right in the wielding of power and dominance of a community in Jigawa over herders in a jostle for land ownership. The co-textual polarisation of indigenes and settlers is indexed through "community" and "settlement" in the report which further stressed the cognitive frame of landlord-tenant relationship between the farming community and the herding settlers. Each of the parties in the report tries to validate their epistemic stance on why there is an asymmetric display of power.

First, the members of the Jigawa community through their district head, Auwalu Adamu, issued a quit notice on the ground that "the owners of the land wanted to recover it", which inferentially through the lexemic choice of "recovery" presupposes a land that has been lost. On the part of the settlers, this is inconceivable because they had lived on that land for "about 40 years". What seems to be significant and of pragmatic concern is the emergent after the length of years they claimed to have lived together. It is, however, important that the position of the law on land occupancy in the community versus

settlers' relations has been silent in the report; however, the commenters' corner engaged it.

In a similar weight, comments have shown a considerable level of shared knowledge about the conflict being reported. For instance, Commenter A metaphorises the herders as plague using the pronominal reference "they". Here the decision of the community is supported because, apparently, the herders are seen as unwanted and harmful beings. Taking a legal perspective, Commenter B's interventionary interrogation challenges the stance of the community head to evict herders after having lived for about 40 years. The questions raised by this commenter offer insights into the need to contextualise the legality of the community leader's quit notice and that of the settlers' right to their continued stay. Pertinent queries that require legal engagement in this comment encompass whether the settlers legally occupy the land or lived there on rent payment. Simply injecting his purview, Commenter C sees the issue as a product of governance failure. This aligns with Commenter D's stance on the conflict.

4.1.3.2 Non-indigenous folk resource entitlement

Non-indigenous folk entitlement defines settlers' rights (basically non-indigenes) which accord them a space for over a period of time that is constitutionally long enough to redefine their indigenous status. This entitlement type is underlined by the quest for national equality and peaceful co-existence that transcends the borderlines of indigeneship. An example is found in Extracts 14&15 below.

Extract 14:

New twist in Oyo crisis as Miyetti Allah seeks Sunday Igboho's arrest: Another group, however says Mr Igboho's arrest will lead to crisis in Oyo State., January 23, 2021

The Miyetti Allah Cattle Breeders Association has called for the arrest of a Yoruba nation 'agitator,' Sunday Igboho. Ibrahim Jiji, the chairman of the Oyo State chapter, who addressed journalists in Ibadan on Saturday, maintained that the **Fulanis are not criminals. "We are all Nigerians.** "We want justice for Seriki Fulani. They are not powerful than the government... Mr Igboho had reportedly led some Ibarapa youth to attack a Fulani settlement in the area (*Premium Times*)

Extract 15:

Commenter A: M...f... Myeti Allah should go and seek justice for the people innocently killed by his boys in Ibarapa before asking for the arrest of Sunday Igboho. For the avoidance of doubt, the Ibarapa showdown is just the beginning and any leader or so called leader of **Yoruba land** that sell out in this fight shall become history together with their families. A word is enough for the wise.

The report in Extract 14 reveals a sudden twist of events in a crisis between Fulani settlers and a member of their host Yoruba community, Sunday Igboho. The propositional content of the report by the implicatural nominal “new twist” suggests the existence of the crisis on the possibility that the settlers have suddenly realised their rights and have determined to contest the indigene-settlers’ dichotomy that had empowered the referent Sunday Igboho to have evicted some of their members from the community. Miyyeti Allah, the professional body’s quest for Sunday Igboho’s arrest further satisfies the preparatory condition that the conflict is about the herdsmen’s ethnicity, indigeneship and settlership. A careful examination of the narrative shows a worrisome act of the media (*Premium Times*) dependence and deployment of shared knowledge by taking for granted some details in the narrative. For instance, the proposition content of the construction “Ibrahim Jiji, the chairman of the Oyo State chapter, who addressed journalists in Ibadan on Saturday, maintained that the Fulanis are not criminals. “We are all Nigerians” implicates that there is an assumption or an allegation or possibly a framing of Fulanis as criminals.

Following this proposition is another construction stating that “we are all Nigerians”. These could definitely mean two things: one, the justice-seeking Fulani are stereotyped as criminals and are consequently being harassed in the community they are in, and two, they are also faced with national identity problems in the said location. “We are all Nigeria” is a pragmatic assertion that serves as a response to the earlier stereotypical assumption that the Fulani are criminals. The ideological import of this direct act of defence, also qualifies as a condemning act of the sweeping stance that if one is a Fulani, particularly in the South such is automatically a settler, criminal, and not an indigene of that environment – culminating in dangerous entitlement construct of indigenes against settlers.

In the course of his defence, however, he unfortunately, admitted to the fact that there are criminals among the Fulani. This is evident in the propositional content of the construction “I have said time without number that we have criminals among all the tribes and not peculiar to Fulani. Those who are suffering the injustice now are not the criminals they are hunting for”. The illocutionary force behind this proposition infers that there are criminals being hunted for (whom the speaker is aware of), while also defending the fact that every tribe has criminals, and that criminality is not confined to the Fulani alone. These statements weigh beyond their locutionary presentation to imply that the people are over-amplifying Fulani criminality and that the settlers being persecuted are not criminals. At the same time, the indigenes see the Fulani as people that cannot be co-existed with.

This section has examined the advancement of entitlement pragmatics with its prevailing context, and ideologies. Amply explored are three of the entitlement types with their underlying contexts of operation. It has been established that entitlement dimensions manifest at the state, group, and folk levels where states show their distinct rights to concede and reject the federal government’s initiatives for land allocation for cattle colonies. In the same manner, groups at the professional and ethnic levels demonstrate the rights to economic and cultural compensation, and independence. The folk entitlement on its part represents the grassroots dimension of communal entitlements.

4.2 Ideologies in online news reports on herdsmen and farmers’ conflict in Nigeria

It should be stressed that the resource entitlement types projected from the reports are obviously borne out of their underlying ideologies. In this section of the analysis, four of these have been identified in the reports and therefore would be considered. These are the separatist ideology, the solidarist ideologies, the egalitarianist ideology, and the feudalist ideology. While separatist ideology further divides into radical and liberal ideologies, the solidarist ideology evokes occupation-centred and people-centred ideologies. In its projection, the egalitarianist ideology also manifests as criminalist-egalitarianist ideology, reprisalist-egalitarianist ideology, and communal egalitarianist ideology. For the feudalist

ideology, there are two types of: the tenancy-oriented feudalist ideology and the lineage-oriented feudalist ideology. These are explicated, accordingly.

4.2.1 The separatist ideology

The separatist ideology is defined by the quest for social independence as constructed in the reports on herdsmen and farmers' conflict. Separatism, as it is alternatively dubbed in the literature, has been described as the movement for this or that part of the country with the purpose of formation of a new state or receiving a certain degree of autonomy as for language, religion, and national issues (Ryabinin, 2017:7). To this view, nationalism is the basic ground for separatism. This typifies the ideology that prompts the discourses on herdsmen and farmers' conflict in Nigeria. Grounded within the tripartite social, political, and legal contexts, this ideology in the reports essentially activates the state, group, and folk resource entitlements. Separatist ideology, however, in this study manifests in two forms: the radical and liberal forms, respectively. These are taken in isolation and exemplified accordingly.

4.2.1.1 The radical separatist ideology

Radical separatist ideology advocates non-negotiable fundamental change that redefines relationships believed to be previously constructed on inconvenient and deleterious grounds. It relates to the non-concessional form of state resource entitlement which embodies the rejection of national proposals, especially the establishment of RUGA. The entitlement type also largely informs this ideology because of its sensitivity to the security and occupational welfare of its people. With respect to the reports, under examination, the radical separatist ideology constructs expulsion in the social context of a failed or hazardous relationship between herdsmen and farmers with heightened attention on the regional biases which draw on the political and legal contexts for urgent reforms. These contextual affordances in the data chiefly prioritise, in strict terms, the amendment of the land use act, expulsion of killer Fulani herdsmen from Yoruba land, pursuit of federalism and autonomy for running internal affairs and self-determination. The following Extract 16 concretises this ideological construct.

Extract 16:

Afenifere to ‘Killer Herdsmen’: Leave South-West Now or Face Confrontation. JUL 25, 2019.

Afenifere, a Yoruba socio-cultural group, has asked herdsmen in the south-west to **leave the region or face consequences**, The Cable reports. During a press conference in Lagos, leaders of the group asked the national assembly not to amend the land use act to grant powers to the federal government to take over state lands for Ruga. **We demand their immediate exit from Yoruba land.** ... (*Sahara Reporters*)

Extract 16 presents a news narrative of how Afenifere, a Yoruba group, ordered supposed killer herdsmen to vacate their region, the South West. This is deemed as a measure of seeking independence. The semantic macro structure couched in the headline and lead story of the report in Extract 16 presents, in a pronounced weight, the radical separatist ideology. In its framing, the referent, Afenifere representing the South-western region leans on imperative constructions in ordering the “killer herdsmen” to leave their region, immediately or face confrontation. This order by the Afenifere alone validates the description of separatism where a part of the country is suing to be independent of the other. It is deducible from this semantic structure that the consciousness of the right to a particular region to the exclusion of others, who are deemed to be harmful, is a crystal pointer to entitlement belief and emphatic separatist ideology that they (Afenifere) have the right to choose or allow the relationship that pleases them or beneficial to them. This is complemented by the “ours-theirs” ideological polarising invoked in the body of the news narrative on a number of demands. The first is the quest for state policing, while the second is the quest for internal autonomy through federalism and self-determination.

The first quest is established in the proposition of the first sentence in the extract which is made to substantiate the hegemonic feeling of deprivation of rights by the government of Nigeria as implicated in the relative construction “who will not allow elected governors to have police...” The referent in the relative marker “who” addresses an exophoric entity related to the herdsmen: the federal government which is believed to be Pro-Fulani because of the President’s ethnic affiliation. So, it is therefore intended to substantiate the epistemic validity of the accusation of the Afeniferes on the grounds that the federal government is lopsided in its distribution of privileges by disallowing Southwestern

region's governors from setting up their policing outfit despite granting Herdsmen the right to establish their vigilante. Clearly, the ideology is built on the pragmatic strategies of politicisation of agrarian context and ethnicisation of occupational context (which will be discussed in detail in the subsequent sections). These recontextualisation mechanisms explain the fact that the herdsmen and farmers' conflict has escalated beyond the traditional domain of agriculture, farming and occupation because of the ethnic colourations, which evidently radicalises that movement to eject herders by force should they ignore their warning.

Another instance of the manifestation of the radical separatist ideology is seen to be triggered by the social and economic contexts in the IPOB's rejection of Miyetti Allah's reason for their presence in the South East. Linking this to the group entitlement construct, this particular example is somewhat unique because it lies between a professional group that is business-oriented and a supposedly proscribed separatist group. The following reports and comment instantiate this radical separatist ideology.

Extract 17:

We Don't Need Your Investment In South-East, IPOB Replies Miyetti Allah, SEP 18, 2020

... **IPOB said Miyetti Allah's kind of business led to the loss of lives and the sacking of indigenes.** ... "The attention of the Indigenous People of Biafra, IPOB, has been drawn to the deceptive statement credited to Miyetti Allah Cattle Breeders Association of Nigeria, MACBAN, that they are solely concerned about their business interests in the East and not motivated by their age-long territorial expansionism. ... (*Sahara Reporters*)

Extract 18:

Commenter A: The Igbos were recently claiming some northern states for indigenization. The Igbos are scattered all over northern states with their business. **The Igbos are being engaged in trafficking northern children.** The Igbos are being engaged in hard drug business in the north. The Igbos are being engaged in fake drugs and foods which claim the lives of innocent northerners on daily basis. **Now, the northern Fulanis-Miyetti Allah are criminals like the Igbos,** so why is criminal driving away a criminal? Can't they join hands together to expand the criminal territory of Biafra? I don't understand Igbos!

Separatism and group entitlement are all subsumed in the semantic structure of the headline in the report. These are consequently indexed through the identity mapping of the two groups that are involved in the exchanges that concretise the entitlement construct between the agrarian association and the separatist vanguard. The narrative and ideological structure of the news exude polarisation through the pronominal constructions such as “we IPOB”, “our people”, “their fellow Nigerians”, “sacking indigenes”, “their business interest”, and “we don’t need them and their investment”. With these structural resources, IPOB was able to establish separatism in three grand forms: territorial, economic and regional. Territorially, the organisation revealed their protective ambitions of the “Biafraland” from the activities of the Fulani, which by ideological identification have been defined by the IPOB as raiders of communities without provocation, rapists, or destroyers of crops and farmlands.

IPOB further, in their bid to strengthen the separatist vanguard, resorted to emphasising positive self-description and negative “other” description as they presented themselves as defenders of their land, people, and resources while ascribing to members of MACBAN equating terms such as “bandits, terrorists, and ISWAP”. The second form of separatism was anchored on economic independence and dissociation through the focalisation of “We don’t need them and their investment...” This is a reinvigoration of the economic importance of the herdsmen in the country and a validation of their migratory history with their cattle. IPOB on their part are throwing caution in the wind by focusing on the negative accruable impact of their presence on their land beyond the natural business context.

The third focalisation amplifies the quest for regional independence as indexed by the proposition “...motivated by their age-long territorial expansionism. The pragmatic presupposition of this locution points to the historical conquest of the Fulani in Nigeria and the consequent consciousness that comes with it. It is possibly on that ground that the regional biases were drawn to it through referencing “East” and “age-long territorial expansionism”. These clearly map out the ideological interest of non-concessional entitlement, group entitlement and a blend of the separatist, and the solidarist beliefs and desires.

4.2.1.2 The liberal separatist ideology

This form of the separatist ideology is defined by the desire for independence based on negotiations in the reports. The structural marriage between “liberal” and “separatist” ideology” entails a move for independence that still acknowledges the domains of other institutions. Unlike the radical separatist form, this kind of ideology gives room for the federal government’s RUGA policy; only not to be established in their space. It tilts more to the concessional entitlement. A consideration of Extract 19 exemplifies this type of separatist ideology.

Extract 19:

Don't Colonize Our People, Let Herdsmen Use Their Own Lands As Settlements - Midwest Movement. JUNE 27, 2019

The Midwest Movement, has called on the Nigerian Government to **stop its planned establishments of Ruga settlements for herdsmen in its region**. The group in a statement on Wednesday said although they were not against the Nigerian government providing for the needs of the herdsmen, **the plan should be implemented in areas and lands that belong to the herdsmen** (*Sahara Reporters*)

Extract 19 above replicates the liberal separatist ideology particularly in the voicing and semantic structuring of the narrative from its headline to the lead story. This is strengthened by the actor’s (Midwest Movement) issuance of a warning to the government instead of the herdsmen because of the shared knowledge that RUGA is government’s initiative that empowers the herdsmen with the occupancy right to land in the region. The narrative however presupposes that the plan for the RUGA programme is still in process and does not suggest the herdsmen presence in the area already.

Hence, the ideological polarity of “our” people” and “their land” in the headline emphasise the separatist belief. It is however liberal in its presentation through the actors’ concessional entitlement clause that the group is not against the government initiative but is ideologically rooting for clear distinctive operational sites for the herdsmen, away from their territory. Implicitly, there is ethnicisation of the occupational context that initiates the discourse by the premium placed on regions that are naturally occupied by people of dominant ethnicity. The situation further gets policised as settlement for grazing activities

is framed as colonisation. This is established through imperative and compound constructions “Don’t colonise...let herdsmen use” to forge out the presupposition and assertion of the colonial experience of the nation and the new “herdsmen” settlement move.

4.2.2 The solidarist ideology

Solidarism is the idea of identifying with an individual or group in action or words, most often, because of certain challenges facing them. In its design, solidarism is conceived beyond the expression of co-existence, towards developing and pursuing common interests defined in terms of joint gains (Welin, 2005). Tied to the political, economic, and sociocultural contexts that promote ethnic and regional interest as well as politics, the reports on herdsmen and farmers’ conflict constantly demonstrated glare instances of this belief system that emphasises common interest. Specifically, this manifested in the study in two primary outfits, namely occupation-centred and people-centred solidarist ideology. The following subsections from the reports substantiate these distinct subcategories.

4.2.2.1 Occupation-centred solidarist ideology

This form of solidarism concerns individuals or groups with a common occupational practice. Oftentimes, it is characterised by a unified voice in solidarity under the aegis of their representative association such that, when any of its members are affected, they quickly react and offer their loyalty and support to such members. Solidarism in this occupation-centred design however reveals affiliated and non-affiliated forms such that the solidarity ideals are pursued by occupational groups and non-occupational groups on behalf of an occupational group. It is basically entrenched in the group resource entitlement and evokes the sociocultural, political and economic contexts. Occupational associations like the Miyetti Allah are strong voices in the enactment of these ideals. The reports examined manifested these forms. The Miyetti Allah group presents a ready example for this type of affiliated occupational solidarist belief system as demonstrated in the example below.

Extract 20:

Evicted from Benue, Miyetti Allah commiserates with victims but vows to stay put March 18, 2017

The group's message came Saturday, days after the **Benue State government** ordered armed herders to **leave the state**, accusing them of killing locals in the latest outbreak of violence in the Buruku area. **Miyetti Allah group** said while it commiserated with victims and the people of Benue, **the government's eviction order was "unconstitutional"** (*Premium Times*)

Extract 20 in the news depicts the occupation-centred solidarist ideology in the composition and presentation of its report. The background of the headline implicates eviction, commiseration and solidarist resoluteness of Miyetti Allah, the mother association of all herdsmen in Nigeria. Even while they commiserated with the victims of an attack that was credited to their members, they astutely demonstrated the solidarist ideals by "vowing to stay put", that is, standing on the common ground that engendered their people's attack on the Tiv farmers. The text boldly lexicalises the cattle rearing and farming occupation in the co-textual choice of "Miyetti Allah" "Cattle breeders", "Tiv farmers" and "herdsmen." Consequently, the narrative structuring of the report offers two layers of solidarity: affiliated and non-affiliated.

The first layer (non-affiliated) was directed at the host government to whom the Association commiserated over the clashes between herdsmen and locals while the second layer (affiliated) displayed the resilient position of the association in standing by its members in staying put despite the order of the government to leave the affected territorial space. Socially contextualising the situation of violence, Miyetti Allah's commiseration with the government was only to show general political concerns or correctness for the damage caused by the clash. At its core, even from the headline, the lexemic selection of "vow" reveals the level of commitment and support they show to the herders whom they represent. Consequently, that ideologically stamps the side they are taking and against whom they are taking it. There is a pragmatic strategisation of topical news narratives in the structuring of the headline "Evicted from Benue, Miyetti Allah commiserate with victims but vows to stay put" to markedly front the participial construction in order to strengthen their solidarist ideals. In addition, mostly, valency-

increasing constructions presented in subject-predicate constructions and preposition dative construction constructions like “...Benue State government ordered armed herders to leave the state...” are employed to depict US-THEM basis for participants’ action, as in this case with herders’ occupational association and the Benue state government. This is supplemented, through the legal context, with the strategy of blunt condemnation of the government’s eviction stance that “the government eviction order was unconstitutional”. Occupation-centredness of this ideology is not defined by the actors’ affiliation to the same trade.

In the non-affiliated occupation-centred design, the solidarist ideals are generated to purely add voice to the gruesome reality of the agrarians’ plight. In an instance led by religious groups, there were staunch calls for financial support for farmers because of the destruction of their farms to the activities of herdsmen. This report is explicated in Extract 21.

Extract 21:

COMPENSATE FARMERS FOR LOSS OF CROPS –MURIC TELLS FG, February 5, 2021

The Muslim Rights Concern (MURIC) has called on the Federal Government of Nigeria to compensate farmers whose crops have been destroyed by cattle in the different regions of the country. Farmers in Zamfara and Katsina have run away from their farms for fear of being killed or kidnapped by bandits. Farmers in Ilesa, Osun State, those in Igangan, Oyo State and those in Ebonyi live in palpable fear of herders. Famine is coming! Cows and bandits have taken over Nigerian farms. (*Premium Times*)

Extract 22:

Commenter A: What are these Fulani slaves and enemies of their own people saying?

Commenter B: It's so hypocritical and pretentious that the federal govt would claim not to be aware that Fulani herders destroy people's farms with their cattle, and it has to take Muric Okunola to confirm this and ask that victims of this wickedness by the herders be compensated. Justice begets peace; not the other way.

Commenter C: Who is afraid of war? Isn't it better for us to fight the war today for us to have peace tomorrow? By the way, why is the north

insisting that we must stay together as a nation when other federating units demands to leave? Is marriage a coerced arrangement? We demand a national referendum immediately to settle this issue of one Nigeria or else war is the inevitable end to the means.

Commenter D: Is federal government the owners of the cattles. The owners should be compelled to pay.

Commenter E: Terrorist Akintola, we don't need your "evidence" to know that Fulani herders are destroying farmers lands. This MURIC Almajeri terrorist has opposed Amotekun security outfit. Because he knows he has expired in his mouse making, now, he is talking about "evidence" of herders' havocs. This man has been accused by an organisation outside Nigeria to be a part of a terrorist network. He always wants to be relevant by making noise to make news.

Commenter F: You terrorist should go and sit down. Leave Igboho to do his work.

Although the report is imbued in the religious context by virtue of the voice of the agency to which the news is ascribed, the force behind the call is nothing short of the solidarist ideology – the occupation-centred type. In the news narrative, MURIC, a Muslim advocacy group aligns with the claim of farmers that their farms are being destroyed by herdsmen. This is strongly presupposed in the direct act of MURIC's President and spokesman's proposition that "MURIC is now in possession of indubitable evidence of the destruction of crops on farmlands by cows brought by herdsmen". From the overarching expression of "we now have" there is a presupposition that the advocacy group had either been on the search for evidence that surround the claims that it was actually herdsmen that were responsible for the destruction of farms or had underwhelming pieces of evidence that were not sufficient for position taking. This report underscores the debate over who is behind the invasion of farmlands and the killings of farmers. In some quarters, there adjudged to be migratory herders from neighbouring countries while some frame them as mere bandits. In all, the report evoking non-affiliated occupation-centred solidarist ideology, offers a range of discourse structures that help concretise the solidarist complexion in the report.

These cut across constructions such as the imperative "compensate farmers for loss of crops", the declarative construction "The Muslim Rights Concern (MURIC) has called on the Federal Government of Nigeria to compensate farmer", "...it should be paid farmers

whose farms were destroyed in all States of the federation”. It is inferable that while the MURIC is a religious group, their solidarist movement has nothing to do with religion. Rather, their interest was in farmers – the ones whose farms were destroyed. It shows vividly that the group while not being a farmers’ association saw the need to share in the pain of farmers who have lost resources to herdsmen insurgency. To substantiate their solidarist intents, the group mentions names of States that are affected by the attacks to include Kwara, Zamfara, Katsina, Osun, Oyo, Ebonyi States while also clarifying that all the states are affected. The report also lexicalises the solidarist voice through the lexemes – “compensate”, “charges”, and “called on” to prompt government’s urgent attention to the issue raised.

The occupation-centredness of the discourse is further amplified in the comment section the underlying solidarity comes in the form of regionalism and ethnicity. Comenter A, for instance, verbally attacks MURIC for adding a voice to the discourse because the commenter believes MURIC was not patriotic enough to defend the Yoruba extraction from which he hails, rather, he has been dancing to the tune of the Fulani. This position is sponsored by the fact that MURIC is a religious body particularly Islam which is also the dominant religion of the Fulani people. Other commenters view the news differently but still hammered on the entitlement construct of solidarist self-defence and territorial independence. In essence, every commenter showed a solidarist tendency toward the defence of their occupational and environmental landscape, as clearly demonstrated in Commenter F’s proposition of having Sunday Igboho, a Yoruba nation’s activist do his job of protecting the terrains.

4.2.2.2 People-centred solidarist ideology

Solidarism evinces ideals that place people at the centre of their collective acts or struggles. Central to this ideology is the support shown by an individual or a group for its people in a given geographical space. Similar to the occupation-centred ideals, ideologues of this form of solidarism also respond to threats on behalf of the people they represent. However, this ideology does not suggest overt emphasis on the people’s occupation as exemplified in Extracts 23 &24.

Extract 23:

**OPC Raises Alarm over Invasion of Oyo Community by Herdsmen.
Nov. 09, 2020**

Coordinator of the Oodua People's Congress in Oyo State, Mr Rotimi Olumo, said he went to the area and saw the three luxury buses that brought the suspected herdsmen to the area. Olumo said the people, who suspected that the herdsmen had a suspicious mission in the area, prevented them from disembarking from the vehicles. (*Sahara Reporters*)

Extract 24:

Commenter A: Their lone invasion collaborator Dave of Ebonyi has been thwarted in that region each time he tries to sneak in a Fulani occupation population into the bushes and rural areas. **The Fulani cannot try other parts of Ala [sic] Igbo due to the eagle-eyed and reactionary youth.** It seems they have chosen to penetrate Yoruba land by hook or crook. After all, they have Muslims who can easily hide them until they are ready for Jihad.

Commenter B: But the Delta chap allows them, dats closer than ewdu land which would have caved-in anyway with little egunje. It too Democracy Day to indoctrinate the pigs into 4+4 jargon of last elections. Okowa and Wike are our immediate threats. **Positively identify your enemies and the targets are made easier.** Umahi, Ugwuanyi, Wike and Okowa... In that order of perched political vultures. We know dem, nsogbu adiroo...SMH!

Commenter C: Yes Okowa is having issues because the Delta Igbo youth always locate the invaders in the bushes as they pass through towards Yoruba land. **Dave however wants to establish Fulani colonies in exchange for VP just like Wike is killing Igbos in exchange for VP.**

Commenter D: They have sneakily placed themselves in many places in the south for a long time now. Something sinister is in the offing. May the expiry date come speedily.

The action of the Oodua People's Congress (OPC) in raising alarm over the invasion of the Oyo community in Extract 23, is a clear example of the people-centred solidarist ideology. The belief is anchored on the principles of the Congress in ensuring the safety of its people, particularly against external aggression. This is some form of security entitlement found under state and folk entitlement, basically. While the report did not use the common phrase "Fulani herdsmen" to denote the common ethnic/occupational stereotyping of the herders, it was emphatic about the ``people that were invaded. It thus

explains that the OPC is demonstrating the entitlement belief that curtailing any harm targeted at its people is of paramount priority to it, just as that Miyetti Allah is also readily swift to come to the defence of its members when threatened with eviction. The ideological colouring of the report is apparent in the shared knowledge that the residents and OPC have on prior activities of herdsmen's invasion of territorial spaces and have consequently acted based on that epistemic position. After all, there are no literal indications that the herdsmen reported in the report possess any dangerous weapon, except for the number of luxury buses they were said to have brought to the community. The commenters who also possess the shared knowledge of the happening demonstrated that consciousness of threats to life and space at the sight of the Fulani herdsmen. Although the political and social contexts are greatly indexed by the commenters, they presented the plight of their people and the negligence of States that accommodate the herdsmen and have allowed the destruction that they now face.

With the restrictive relative clause construction "...who told our correspondent ..." the active referent of the construction "Mr Rotimi Olumo" justifies their action of disallowing the suspected herdsmen to alight from their buses and to substantiate the fact that the residents were the central focus of their solidarist ideals. In essence, in the report there is strategic presentation of topical news narratives in the agency of "OPC raising alarm" complemented with implicit ethnicisation of the occupational context in which the purpose for the herdsmen migration which is to find grass for their cattle is played down. The only concern of OPC is that there is a threat to Oduduwa descendants, although, on the premise of suspicion that requires immediate intervention.

Engaging this report, all the commenters invoked into the discourse their shared knowledge of the herdsmen-farmers conflict as it affected states such as Ebonyi and Delta. For instance, Commenter A's stance was that it is the weak solidarist ideals and Islamic religion in the Yoruba land that has empowered and given leverage to the activities of the herdsmen in the region. To him, the Igbos are more proactive and therefore record less invasion. This position is countered by Commenter B who immediately referenced the situation of Delta State which is also affected by herdsmen invasion and is Igbo dominated. He rather considers the underlying factor of politicking

which he blamed on the governors: Okowa (of Delta) and Wike (of Rivers). In defence of Okowa, the Delta State governor, Commenter C believes that Okowa is not culpable rather it is the porous boundaries of the Yoruba States that opened routes for the herdsmen to sneak into Delta State. From the pragmatic reading of these engagements, the solidarist tendencies are apparently established in the commenters' perspectives. It is deducible that most Nigerians believe that resisting the herdsmen and farmers' invasion is a collective struggle while others are of the opinion that its underlying factors are more political.

In certain instances, the people-centred solidarist ideology shares a nexus with the occupation-centred counterpart as the factors constraining the solidarity compress both the occupation and the people at its centre of manifestation. An example of this type of ideology can be found in the report that follows.

Extract 25:

We Don't Want Herdsmen to Suffer, We're Going Ahead `With RUGA Settlements despite Suspension – Gombe Governor, July 6, 2019.

... Gombe state [Governor], has said his administration will go ahead with the RUGA settlements proposed by President Muhammadu Buhari for herdsmen. Yahaya said.... "As I speak to you now, Gombe state government has set aside over 200,000 hectares of land for the implementation of the RUGA Settlements scheme in the state. "We are going to continue with it, because to us it's a very good initiative in view of the hardship our people (herdsmen) (*Sahara Reporters*)

The portrayed solidarist belief system in Extract 25 is an amalgam of the concessional state and folk entitlement perspectives. These perspectives have obviously produced the solidarist belief system that is people-anchored. As presented in the report, the meeting of the two principal referents who are Fulani, that is, the Governor of Gombe and the President of Nigeria, Inuwa Yahaya, and Muhammadu Buhari produced the result that satisfies our pragmatic decryption of the people-centred solidarist ideology. The governor who led the vanguard for the solidarity with a demonstration of non-compliance with respect to the "others" position and decision in the supposedly suspended rural grazing area initiative of the Buhari-led administration was defensive in his resort to these

actions. His speech and actions as reported by Sahara Reporters are laced with ideological polarity and ethnic sentiments which form the heart of the sociocognitive critical discourse. Specifically, the polarity is concretised in two notable forms: governance polarity and ethnic polarity.

The governance polarity counters governmental policies and decrees among state governments and consequently places them in an oppositional square while the ethnic polarity plays out in the government alignment with the president who is a Fulani as well as the herdsmen who are obviously of the same group. In the first polarity, the government categorically mapped out that even if the policy is rejected by other governments, they (Gombe State) will forge ahead with the implementation as narrated in the lines "...We are going to continue with it ... in view of the hardship our people (herdsmen)". This is where the people-centredness became more centre. In the statement credited to the governor, his actions are clearly engendered by the fact that the herdsmen are his people, hence, his identification with their plights. This he shows in his solidarist constructions that reveal his motivation for the staunch interest such as the relative-clause construction "...who are predominantly Fulani will definitely key into it," by implication, the subscription into President Buhari's RUGA initiative by the Gombe State government is mainly on the grounds of the fact that they are Fulani and thus would not want "their" people to suffer hardship. This is further illustrated with the continued use of the ideological structure markers such as "to us", and "our people" to establish the basis for the solidarity.

Stretching this in the comment section, it became more intense as deliberations over the decision of the Gombe State government created the expected national polarising in commenters' world. Different stances and evaluations were critically vocalised to foreground condemn, and at the same time applaud the move. Extract 26 from the comment section shows the degree of the argument.

Extract 26:

Commenter A: Niger Deltan oil money and Lagos taxes which should go to developing the country is being given to Fulani, a settler people! Haba! For fairness, EVERY SINGLE Nigerian should be given money to set up a business of their choice. Not just Fulani. Oooo the indigenous

Hausa have now totally lost their ancestral lands to Fulani, a settler people. Now more and more Hausa will become Almajiri. The Hausa, an almajiri nation. Oooo. It's too bad. Oooo. PARTITION OF NIGERIA INTO TWO COUNTRIES (SOUTH & MIDDLE BELT TOGETHER, THEN AREWA) WILL STOP THE MADNESS

Commenter B: Well, it's **your state**. Enjoy!

Commenter C: a state government has a policy for developing new towns or expanding old towns to start housing some of its citizens who hitherto had preferred a nomadic lifestyle - all well and good. If they also want to revamp their agricultural policies and direct and support such state initiated and financed projects will then be equitably distributed to all states to apply to THEIR OWN agricultural and housing policies and projects. I doubt that anyone will quarrel with this.

Commenter D: Nomadic [sic] people from the whole of Africa abi? Make use of your brain cuz "**your land or your life" is in your hand.**

A pragmatic examination of the above opinions offers a number of insights into the entitlement discourse and the solidarist ideology that necessarily follows it. From the views of Commenter, A, the decision of the Gombe State government beats the reasoning of fairness in that the RUGA initiative is going to be sponsored by public fund. Although, this in a way relates to the egalitarian belief which will be discussed shortly, the commenter was actually condemning the action of the government on the grounds that it was lopsided stance that put other groups at disadvantaged poles, economically. Again, the commenter forged out in his focalisation, the Fulani hegemony and the usurpation of the Hausa's rights are testaments to the new move of the governor. It can be seen that the discourse is about the Fulani with the commenters referencing their domination of the Hausa group. He thus went further to submit using capitalisation to emphasise that partitioning of the country into two by making the north (indexed by Arewa) stand-alone will be bring in the deserved fairness. It could be deduced that there is a northern sentiment that the commenter is frowning at, possibly reading from the news report that the governor had met the president (who himself is a northerner and Fulani) before making that decision.

Construing this as a lamentation, Commenter B satirically responded to Commenter B by saying "Well, it's your State. Enjoy! This does not really mean and intend to bring succor to the lamenter but the underlying intention is actually to mock the unpalatable

situation that Commenter B has lamented over. In essence, there is polarising of “your state” to demarcate identification showing that the two commenters do not hail from the same state. On the part of Commenter C, mild solidarism was advanced in that he believes every state could decide what is best for their people. He thus endorses the solidarist move by the governor. This position yet suffered negative criticism from Commenter D, who feels that Commenter C does not understand the implication of indigenisation and the cost of having to indigenise settlers who in this case are, according to him, the Fulani.

Significantly, the commenter’s warning act that “your land and your life are in your hands” further implicates the danger of conceding land for the RUGA initiative as it can possibly cost one his life. This position with the trailing warning could not be far from the shared knowledge of the activities of the herdsmen reported daily on national news about their killings and destruction of aborigines. These comments have partly shed light on the opinions of people concerning the Fulani and the RUGA policy and why the governor also pitches his tent with his people in the light of the rejection they face with the Nigerian nation.

4.2.3 The egalitarianist ideology

Egalitarianism is a belief system driven by a generic sense of equality. It is woven around a reciprocity design in which individuals argue for fair and equitable distribution of privileges and rights. For this study, the ideology is anchored on the quest for equal treatment for groups in the reports. Equality, the defining point for egalitarianism, is driven by two principal ideological narratives in the reports and comments: crime(inalist) and communal egalitarianist ideology.

4.2.3.1 Crime (inalist) egalitarianist ideology

This ideological position is typified by the quest for equality in the treatment of crime; an idea vested on the premise that all criminal acts and terrorist movements should be meted with the same treatment. It relates to the group and folk entitlement types where in-group advocacy reports are prevalent. It is basically informed by the entitlement construct of advancing rights to treatments meted out to criminals in relation to existing cases of

similar crimes and the government's reaction to them. Extracts 27&28 make a crystal example.

Extract 27:

**Grant detained herdsmen amnesty, Group tells Nigerian govt.
January 27, 2019**

...Saleh Bayari, a leader of the coalition of Fulani herdsmen groups in Nigeria, has appealed to the federal government to grant unconditional amnesty to their members detained over various crimes allegations in the country... He said the federal government should consider amnesty to Fulani people accused of crimes as it was done to agitators in the oil-rich Niger Delta region. "Poverty, neglect and poor treatment among fellow Nigerians are mostly causes that forced those accused persons to engage in dastardly acts," Mr Bayari said. (*Premium Times*)]

Extract 28:

Commenter A: But those detained criminals just cannot be "Fulanis" according to their spokesman "Mohammadu Buhari" in Aso Rock, but militia trained by Gadaffi who dispersed after his downfall.

Commenter B: Grant amnesty to Criminals again? This people will not seize to amaze me

Commenter C: Yes...They should be given a fair trial

Commenter D: So many in prisons?? We are knowing this for the first time.... (*Premium Times*)

There is a critical expression of the ideology of the criminalist egalitarianism in Extract 27. In the report, there is a call for the adoption of the "carrot approach" in dealing with detained herdsmen by granting them amnesty. The call from the coalition of Fulani herdsmen groups in Nigeria references the amnesty granted to the Niger Delta militant as the basis for the deservedness of a similar gesture. With the selective lexical choice of "appealing", *Premium Times* uses the emotive verb in capturing the intent of the representative of the Coalition, Saleh Bayari who advances the cause of securing amnesty for the imprisoned Fulani herdsmen. Although, the inclusive pronominal that defines ideological square is not overtly used, it is understood by the discourse structure of identification that the leader of the coalition is rooting for the freedom of his people, the Fulani. To bolster his plea, he resorted to negative other-description and self-justification

by stating that “Poverty, neglect and poor treatment among fellow Nigerians” forced the accused Fulani into committing crimes.

This implies that the Fulani are unjustly treated among other Nigerians and that their culpable acts are driven by the negative and hostile environments they found themselves. Implicitly, the crux of his egalitarian motive is that since the Niger Delta militants were driven into crime because of the circumstances that bedevilled their existence as a people, it is not unjust to demand for amnesty for the Fulani who, according to him, toed the criminal path by virtue of similar detrimental circumstances. In simpler terms, the “what is good for the goose is good for the gander” common ground is played on and consequently serves as the motivation for this ideology and by extension the group and folk entitlement construct. Commenter B, and C’s exchanges stamp the fact that while criminality should be given equal treatment, some believe that it is unfair to compare criminals in the Nigerian space.

4.2.3.2 Reprisal (criminalist) egalitarianist ideology

This type of criminalist egalitarianist ideology, rooted in the “Fulani cattle culture” (see, Lott and Hart, 1977), is hinged on retributive engagement of crime-for-crime activities. The belief system is grounded in the reports and comments as a form of equality that empowers taking laws into individual’s hands. Such vengeful actions are constrained by sociocultural and economic contexts and relate, in their manifestation in this study, to the group entitlement type.

Extract 29:

EXCLUSIVE: Why we struck in Agatu -- Fulani herdsmen. March, 19, 2016.

In an exclusive interview with PREMIUM TIMES, Saleh Bayeri, the Interim National Secretary of Gan Allah Fulani Association, rose in defence of his kinsmen, saying the February bloody conflict in Benue was a reprisal attack by his people against the Agatus who he accused of killing, in 2013, a prominent Fulani man. Is it now that he knows the meaning of genocide? Where was he when over 300 Fulani were killed in his area?” he asked (*Premium Times*)

The ideology that is revealed in the exclusive interview between *Premium Times* and a leader of Fulani ethnic group over a killing that took place in Agatu in Benue State, Nigeria tends towards the depiction of meting out crime in proportionate measures, otherwise framed as reprisal attack. In defence of this killing, the leader of the group as revealed in the report established through sheer polarisation that ideologically defines his identification as a Fulani in the use of the collective pronominal “we” to relay in the news headline the reason behind their attack on Agatu, the supposed warring rival. The report further entrenched the interest declaration of the group’s leader by structures that affirmed his identity and endorsement of the killing in the lexicalisation such as “his kinsmen”, and “his people”, to crystallise the faction the interviewee belonged. Customarily, the strategy of negative other-description was adopted in his direct act where he stated that the attack was a reprisal to an earlier attack they suffered at the hands of the Agatus. To further validate his position, he resorted to recounting the activities that engendered the reprisal activity that initiated this ideology that requires revenge as a response to attack.

Some of the activities of the Agatu people resulted in the reprisal, according to the interviewee include the killing of a prominent Fulani man in 2013 and the genocidal killing of over 300 Fulani which was reported ignored. This temporal reference to the past ideological defense of self and other-indictment is geared towards justifying the actions of his and at the same time condemning the political context generated from the scene. The political contextualisation of the ideology is embedded in the reference to one Benue State senator, David Mark’s reaction in framing the act as genocide. From this proposition, the belief in reprisal force and matching violence with violence is a norm for the Fulani people considering the temporal reference of 2013 as the period they suffered attacks and the period of revenge. It thus betrays the entitlement construct that rests on the equality of fairness in the treatment of criminal act but also of taking extrajudicial revenge as an expression of the in-group norm.

4.2.3.3 Communal egalitarianist ideology

Equality, within this communal egalitarianist ideology, constitutes common ownership of space by virtue of being citizens or nationals of that geographic entity. It is not

idiosyncratic like the criminalist egalitarianism, rather, it is a belief system grounded on the right and equality of general citizenship rights. It borders between state and folk entitlement with a legal and sociopolitical grounding in the reports. The report in Extract 30 exemplifies this ideology.

Extract 30:

‘Fulani Herdsmen’ Don’t Need Akeredolu’s Permission To Live In Ondo Forests —Bauchi Governor, February 19, 2021

According to Mohammed [Bauchi Governor], **citizens don’t need the permission of his Ondo State counterpart, Rotimi Akeredolu, to live in the forests in the state.** Akeredolu had last month issued a **seven-day quit notice to Fulani herdsmen operating illegally in the state’s forest reserves...** under Section 41 of the constitution, you are free to settle anywhere.” (*Sahara Reporters*)

Extract 31:

Commenter A: Instead of talking nonsense the governor should ask his attorney general to interpret the obnoxious Land Use Act to him. For his information indigenous communities will always resist forceful **takeover of their lands by foreigners.** The bottom line is that if the governor doesn't stop them the indigenes will. Out of curiosity, is the governor implying that I can come to Bauchi, clear any land of my choice and put up a building? **Since the governor wants to bring all the Fulani to Nigeria, he should settle them in Bauchi State, if the indigenous communities permit.**

Commenter B: In as much as I agree with you the onus lies on the indigenous communities in the North to exert their rights. **For a long the Fulani have hoodwinked them with the mythical one North.** Even when Gowon's people were being massacred he was still loudly canvassing Northern Unity without a single word on the tragedy that befell his people. For avoidance of doubt, **all indigenous communities within Nigeria must be accorded equal rights.** (*Sahara Reporters*)

The report in Extract 30 is a testament to the communal egalitarianist ideology that underscores state entitlement. Equality empowered by citizenship rights to territorial settlement is the underlying argument of the Governor of Bauchi State, Bala Mohammed who is speaking up for the herdsmen who were banned from grazing in some forests in Ondo State. His position apparently is vividly sourced from the legal contexts in which he made reference to Section 41 of the Nigerian Constitution. Pragmatically, in the

polarity lane, he pitches his tent with the herdsmen whose nomadic lifestyle has been generating concerns even with respect to the initiation of the RUGA policy of the federal government.

In an implied construction, the Bauchi State governor aligned with “Nigerians” in a defensive act, to state that while acknowledging the position of the law on who owns land in a state, further stressed that “Nigerians don’t need the permission of governors or the federal government to settle everywhere”. This becomes pragmatic because, first, Bauchi is a northern region and the Fulani herdsmen are naturally northerners, hence the Governor was trying to evade the regional, political, and ethnic coloration of the issue in the report. He, therefore, made the paradigmatic selection of “Nigerians” instead of herdsmen to save face and also establish the fact that there is communal equality when it comes to citizens’ settlement in any part of the country as much as they are citizens of the nation. This position coincides with the concessional and non-concessional state entitlement types that were discussed earlier in this study.

Land ownership and communal egalitarianism is a subject of debate among Nigerians as evidenced from the commenters’ variegated opinion on the stance brawl between the Bauchi State governor and his Ondo State counterpart. While some commenters consider the Governor of Bauchi to be bereft of the right legal source for his position, others contested the fact that citizenship can be leveraged to settle anywhere in the country. Extract 31 presents these different comments.

Entitlement and its ideology of communal egalitarianism are inferred in the Commenter A’s response which disagrees with the legal position of the Bala Mohammed. To him, bypassing the Land Use Act and pitching with the constitutional provision for indigene-settlers’ rights is a misinterpretation of the law. He, therefore, recommended that the governor consult the attorney general for proper situation of the legal context. While the governor picked up the aspect of the constitution that “you are free to settle anywhere”, this commenter was curious by interrogating the egalitarian ideology by asking whether he can go to Bauchi and clear up land and start building just because he is a citizen of Nigeria? This does not only implicate the commenter’s alignment with the decision of the Ondo State Governor but equally takes sides in the ideological square in de-emphasising

the positive position of national equality and placing premium on territorial independence and the rule of law.

On his part, Commenter B in his bi-faced reaction first criticised the notion of “Northern oneness” with respect to the Fulani hegemony. In his twisted resolution, every indigenous community in Nigeria should be accorded equal rights as advocated by the Governor of Bauchi State. It is worthy of note that despite his natural support for the egalitarian move of the governor, he did not yield in any part of his speech to the ideological identification of ethnicity. Rather, he condemned the hypocrisy in a utopian kind of equality movement that is underlined by the innate desire to “hoodwink” other residents of the Northern region.

4.2.4 The feudalist ideology

The feudalist ideology embodies the belief that territorial space especially land can only be granted access to when monetary gains are assured or related economic deals are deals struck among participants. This ideology was prevalent in the medieval periods and represented a fragmented class of landlords engaged in a direct and individual exploitative relationship with a subject peasantry (Saunders, 1991). Construed differently in this study, the feudalist ideology, does not holistically implicate the medievalist construct of the term, rather it relates to the monetisation of land. This belief system as contained in the reports orients to two principal meta-beliefs: tenancy-oriented feudalist ideology and lineage-oriented feudalist ideology.

4.2.4.1 Tenancy-oriented feudalist ideology

This ideology is imbued in the monetisation of space in terms of landlords-tenants-operational transactions. It is somewhat connected to the folk entitlement design where rights to space are anchored on indigenous affiliations. It is promoted in this ideology that, despite possessing common citizenship rights, the tenancy-oriented ideology allows for the monetisation of the territory space as a demonstration of power and rights. The extract below discusses this ideological construct in the report.

Extract 32:

Fayose asks Ekiti herdsmen to register with N5, 000. January 22, 2018

The Ekiti State Governor asks MACBAN, on the need to keep their cattle away from farms, vowing to hold them responsible for any act of destruction and killing. ...While directing **the herdsmen to be registered in the next three months in their various location**, “**Many of the Fulani herdsmen who settled down here did so without permission from anyone**. Now, they would register with government for a token of N5,000. (*Premium Times*)

Extract 33:

Commenter A: Bold enough to say the truth!

Commenter B (to A): You are a dictator

Extract 32 vocalises the tenancy-oriented feudalist ideology through the action of the Governor of the then Ekiti State, Mr. Ayodele Fayose. Borne out of the quest to curtail the conflict between herdsmen and farmers, the governor initiated a compulsory registration of the herdsmen whom he situated ideologically in the co-textual polarising lexical signifiers such as the pronominal square “their cattle”, “their money” – “no one can be living with us”, “we”, and “their host” to entrench the “us” versus “them” difference. The speaker then, as reported by *Premium Times*, injected the tenancy mode by stating that “Now, they would register with the government for a token of N5,000. “It is not their money that we need but their identity and locality. The sum of N5,000 would be renewable after a year.” This resolution by the governor becomes ideological because, according to him, the registration charges were not based on the need for money but for identity and locality purposes.

This stating of interest and outlining of activities are what define van Dijk’s (2015) ideological structures where they overtly tilt towards exerting power, control, dominance and obviously rights. There is also a clear attempt at placing emphasis on the negative “other” description where the governor maintained that many of the Fulani herdsmen resides in the “without permission” and by implication land ownership, in the view of his initiative of registration, and tenancy are prioritised in the discourses that made up the detailing of the reports. This belief is shared also by the Oluwo of Iwo in news a report dated January 27, 2018 by the same *Premium Times*. The report as presented in Extract

34 below has it in the voice of the monarch that ...nobody roams cattle in the 21st century. The crux of this report is pragmatically explicated below.

Extract 34:

Herdsmen: Nobody roams cattle in 21st century — Oluwo of Iwo January 27, 2018

Oba AbdulRasheed Akanbi, has tackled the Federal government of Nigeria saying that field grazing and cattle roaming is barbaric and should be abolished at once as they do not conform to modernization and 21st century development of any country... **He added that the herdsmen can either rent, lease or buy lands for pen/byre construction to house their cattle and that it is at the farmer's or land owner's discretion to sell to them.** "The herdsmen got it wrong due to lack of education towards animal farming in the 21st century. (*Premium Times*)

Extract 35:

Commenter A: Our traditional rulers are our treasures; we can not trade them in. **I agreed with Kabiyesi that cow grazing is outdated, and should have been scrapped out yesterday.** The fed should step in and pump money in to that sector, and buy them out, so that they can stop maurraiding at somebody backyard like a thief in the night, Red meat is not good for you anyway, ha.

Commenter B: The AK47 and transistor radio carrying marauders prefer to be steeped in the backwardness of the 19th century.

Commenter C: **It is in the best interest of the Fulani ruling class to keep their subject uneducated, tied for generations to low level careers doing menial work.** And these in turn take comfort in believing that as Fulani, no matter how poor or miserable their lives are, they are better than non-Fulani.

Commenter D: Yes, cattle roaming is outdated just as the innumerable traditional/religious rulers all around the country are, they have become a drain on the nation's resources. Scrap those too.

Extract 34 news report bolsters the tenancy-oriented feudalism ideology in projecting the view of the paramount ruler and King of Iwo land, Osun State, Oba AbdulRasheed Akanbi. In a somewhat sweeping and emphatic proposition of the traditional ruler, it is advanced that the herding mechanism in vogue and being practised by Nigerian herdsmen is outdated. This position enforced through indefinite pronominal "nobody" is captured in that form to presuppose that the cattle business is a global business that has been

practised for centuries, and again this report also pragmatically shields direct attack on the herdsmen in Nigeria. Hence, if Nigerian pastoralists still roam the street with their cattle then, his position is that it should be changed to conform to global best practices. His solution however portrayed the tenancy-oriented ideology as captured in the report “He added that the herdsmen can either rent, lease or buy lands for pen/byre construction to house their cattle and that it is at the farmer’s or land owner’s discretion to sell to them”. The illocutionary indicators of this ideology are lexically compassed in the propositional content vented in the lexemes “rent”, “lease”, “buy lands for pen/byre”, and in the construction “landowners’ discretion to sell”. All these indices are the demonstration of tenancy-oriented feudalism ideology that advocates the monetisation of space irrespective of the contextual paraphernalia and other factors adduced in giving out land to the herdsmen for grazing. The various comments (A-D) all aligned with the king’s position in perceiving the act of roaming with cattle as an old-fashioned practice and believing it should be eradicated.

4.2.4.2 Lineage-oriented feudalism ideology

Lineage-oriented feudalism ideology is rustic and traditional in complexion because it is a product of the cultural context. It is the belief that relies on generational ownership of territories. In the reports sourced for this study, this ideology is prevalent in participants’ demonstration of traditional or cultural rights to land and consequent demonstration of power towards that end. This is explained in the following report.

Extract 36:

Farmers/Herders conflict: Jigawa community gives herders one month to quit settlement, March, 22 2018

Members of a community in Gwaram Local Government Area of Jigawa State have given some herders one month to quit a settlement they said they had lived in for about 40 years. Shehu Juli, one of the herders, told PREMIUM TIMES the quit notice was issued by Auwalu Adamu, the district head of Fagam, whom he said asked them to leave or face the wrath of the community “They told me to sign a particular document which I don’t have knowledge about. Later, they told me that the land my late father used was not part of our inheritance and that we should therefore quit the settlement within one month. (*Premium Times*)

Extract 37:

Commenter A: Not they are been seen as a plague. They are a plague

Commenter B: I don't subscribe to that narrative, I think the accurate question here is did they family legally own the land /real estate or did they just settle on it and paid some arranged rent to the owner whilst the used the real estate for agriculture; and now the landlord want his/her property back? These are the pertinent question? If they actually and legally owned the property then they should fight for there right to keep and reside on their property but if they are renting or occupying it illegally then they have no choice but to start over somewhere else. My thoughts.....[Sic]

Commenter C: That is what happens when there is governance failure.

Commenter D: Very true indeed..... [Sic]

Extract 36, in all its reportage, shows a lineage-oriented community-based feudalism ideology. The narrative from the headline down to the lead and other details project a host-settler conflict that is grounded on the breach of the rental agreement reached by lineage/historical pledge or commitment. The very point of ideological polarisation is established in the use of the entitlement marker in the report – community versus settlement. There are strong presuppositions evoked in the paradigmatic choice of this lexeme by the media to inform the reader that the pragmatic referencing which first defines the report as involving a conflict between herdsman and farmers as contained in the introductory nominal construction “farmers/herdsman conflict” and secondly reinvigorate the triggering rights that are negotiated in the reports from the two families. Hence, there is an apparent clash of interest reeved in the historical context of feudal tradition as revealed in the construction “The payment of dues by herdsman is a tradition in this area and their late father never defaulted”. Prior to this proposition the feudalism ideology reflected in the lexicalisation of the conflict as that borne out of the contestation over traditional or inherited legacies sponsored by this ideology, the direct reports made by the media also hinted at the reason why the settlers also made case for their disagreement with the position of the host community as in their proposition “Mr. Juli said his family and that of his neighbour, Muhammadu Dade, were suddenly told by the district head that the owner of the land wanted to recover it. Mr. Dade said he got the quit notice one week after the death of his father, Mohammadu Jingi”. A pragmatic reading of

this locution implicates that the conflict came up as a result of the death of one of the settlers whose generation must have stayed on the land they now possess by agreement. Also, the demise of the man and the dishonouring of this agreement must have led to the resurgence and consequence eviction notice for supposed non-compliance. Linking this situational context to the one provided by the tenancy-oriented feudalism ideology sponsored by the state, means that even though the times when the core of feudalism existed have changed, there is still an obvious manifestation of this ideology in the engendering of the engendering construct in the herdsmen and farmers' conflict.

4.3 Pragmatic strategies in the news reports on herdsmen and farmers' conflict in Nigeria

Pragmatic strategies and linguistic devices are integral to the realisation of the ideologies that inform the entitlement dimensions. This section delves into these strategies and devices, accordingly. In their prominent occurrence, six (5) pragmatic strategies, namely politicisation of agrarian contexts (PAC), strategisation of topical news narratives (STNN), ethnicisation of occupational context (EOC), commodification of territorial space and religionisation of occupational acts manifest. These strategies are polarised along two focalisations: media-focalised pragmatic strategies and actors-focalised pragmatic strategies respectively. The media-focalised pragmatic strategies encompass politicisation of the agrarian context (PAC), strategisation of topical news narratives (STNN), ethnicisation of occupational context (EOC) while the actors-focalised pragmatic strategies cut across politicisation of the agrarian context, ethnicisation of occupational context, commodification of territorial space (CTS) and religionisation of occupational acts (REA).

It could be understood from the strategies and their presentation that these are actually projections that are born out of the positions taken by the news agencies, actors, and the commenters. When critically situated, this offers vivid invocation of the crux of the stance approach to text evaluation. It is on this premise that the study discusses these strategies using a blend of the resources of stance and appraisal from Hyland (2005) and Martin and White (2005). While modeling stance and appraisal on academic interactions, Hyland (2005) stated that all language use concerns specific social, cultural and

institutional contexts. Essentially, these contextual dimensions have forged out ways by which linguistic features organise the interaction between writers and their potential audiences with specific focus on how their propositions shape the text that binds them. These propositions are what form the heart of appraisal – speakers’ varied attitudinal positions. Appraisal is subcategorised into: affect, judgment and appreciation which consequently represent emotion, moral assessment and aesthetic values that characterise the positioning of writers and readers respectively.

This writer-reader positioning distinctly represents the design of stance and engagement. For stance, the authorial voice takes prominence as it entails the attitudinal dispositions through which the writers relate their judgement, opinion and commitment. Writers, sometimes try to amplify or conceal their involvement in the text. On the part of engagement which largely concerns readers, the writer relate to their readers with respect to the position(s) advanced in the text. It is the mechanism of alignment through which the writer consciously drafts in the reader in an ongoing argument. Rooted in interaction, stance and engagement have distinct evaluative resources with which the two establish positions in argument. For stance, there are hedges, boosters, attitude markers, while engagement resources encompass reader pronouns, directives, questions, shared knowledge, and personal asides (Hyland, 2005)

As stated in the preceding paragraph, since the strategies are offshoots of the media and actors’ evaluation of the herdsmen and farmers’ conflict, it is naturally apposite that resources of stance and appraisal will best explicate the strategic dimensions to the construction of the entitlement ideological triggers in the reports and comments of the resource conflict. To this end, resources from Martin and White’s (2005) “The Language of Evaluation: Appraisal in English” shall be measured against the strategies through which the media and their mediated actors reportedly take stances and make evaluations in the reports and comments. Martin and White (2005) are interested in value positions: whether an actor in the reports or comments is standing with or, against, or undecided or neutral. The approach is essentially dedicated to providing account of how such positionings are achieved linguistically.

The linguistic means is however dependent on context and rhetorical strategies employed by reporters and reported actors. The framework by Martin and White further harnessed the traditional resources such as modality, polarity, evidentiality, intensification, attribution, concession and consequentiality under the broad term engagement – the locutionary act that help reporters and actors define their value positions in relation to others.

On the other plane, locutionary resources such as hedges, downtoners, boosters, and intensifiers were appropriated under the arc, graduation – the semantics of force and focus that basically indexes gradability or scalability. The two categories – force and focus house the husk of participants' assessment of issues pertaining to the resource conflict under analysis. For instance, force points to intensification and quantification while focus pays attention to upward and downward scaling of qualities. The original design of this appraisal technique or resources are connected to Halliday's (2004) transitivity processes. Thus, the sections presented below will examine, using the resources discussed in the preceding paragraphs, the media-focalised pragmatic strategies and actors' focalised pragmatic strategies.

4.3.1 Media-focalised pragmatic strategies

Media-focalised pragmatic strategies are mechanisms of news presentation that rely on the media framing of events. Here, the media is principally responsible for the construction and content of the discourse issues that relate to the herdsmen and farmers' conflict. They are basically opinion-narratives, and most often deploy the indirect act in the projection of their thoughts. In regular instances, there is the heightened structural modification of the reports to show the media's goal in the construction of such news item. Actors' stances are de-emphasised while the media observations are given pre-eminence. Represented in these strategy types are – the politicisation of the agrarian context (PAC), strategisation of topical news narratives (STNN), and ethnicisation of occupational context (EOC). These are analysed in the succeeding sections, accordingly.

4.3.1.1 Politicisation of agrarian contexts (PAC)

This media-focalised pragmatic strategy involves the recontextualisation of discourse issues from their traditional domains into a different one. Here, it constructs narratives that are ordinarily apolitical as mainly political issues. The intent is perspectivisation and the redirection of focus that are deemed plausible in the interpretation of the resource conflict between the herdsmen and farmers in Nigeria. Politicisation, as a strategy, is the process of reconstructing non-political context by re-constructing them into the political-discourse space. In simple terms, it is the politicking of issues naturally independent of the political context. In relation to the ideology and the entitlement construct of the reports on herdsmen and farmers' conflict, the natural and unmarked agrarian context is politicised such that there is a shift from the thematic preoccupation of the original subject of discussion from agriculture to politics. The imperative and prepositional dative constructions manifest in most of the reports that engage this pragmatic strategy. Extract 38 exemplifies this strategy with its attendant linguistic devices.

Extract 38:

Farmers-Herders Conflicts: Buhari, Atiku campaign manifestos lack solutions January 18, 2019

Despite the seriousness of the issue, Mr Buhari and his main challenger, Mr Abubakar, at best have paid drab attention to the crisis in their campaigns for the 2019 election. **Ironically, one of Mr Buhari's main election promises in 2015 was to tackle the country's security lapses.** ...When questioned by PREMIUM TIMES, the spokesperson for the Atiku campaign, Segun Sowunmi, counter-reacted rhetorically: "Have you seen the APC's Next Level document? **Is the herdsmen crisis given much prominence?"** (*Premium Times*)

Extract 39:

We've not endorsed Buhari, Atiku — Miyetti Allah, December 18, 2018

The Miyetti Allah Kautal-Hore, a Fulani socio-cultural association, on Tuesday said it has not endorsed any presidential candidate for the 2019 election. The two leading candidates, incumbent President Muhammadu Buhari and main opposition Atiku Abubakar, **are ethnic Fulani, but the group said no candidate has unveiled a favourable plan for its members.** "We do not know the reason why the government is delaying

the preparation of the grazing reserves so that cattle herders can go back to their grazing areas. “(*Premium Times*)

Extract 40:

Senators Bicker Over Buhari's Alleged Incompetence of Herdsmen Killings 4/20/2018

Senator Enyinnaya Abaribe, had raised a point of order to make reference to the conflicting reasons given by officials in the **Buhari-led administration for the herdsmen/farmers clashes**. Senator Ahmad Lawan, interrupted Abaribe to raise a point of order... **The bickering polarised the chamber along political lines**. (*Sahara Reporters*)

Extract 38 exudes the mediated politicisation of the agrarian context. It is realised by the media brand as the agrarian context which is the background or original context of the herdsmen and farmers’ conflict; it is concretised in the categorical or bare assertion at the headline and lead story of the narrative. The report, as depicted from the headline, reveals through proclaim (pronounce) that the media evaluative positioning concerns Buhari and Atiku’s campaign manifestos. In the main, the media acknowledges through the epistemic modality offered by “entertain” that the discourse issue being reported is primarily about the “herdsmen and farmers’ conflict and how it threatens the economic stability of the nation by stating that “Nigeria may continue to walk a violent tightrope as measures towards addressing the country’s farmers-herdsmen conflict, considered a threat to national survival...” By using the modal “may”, the news agency does not merely demonstrate the skepticism that characterises their ‘proclaim’ but ultimately it is used to entertain dialogic alternatives that can be drawn on the proposition advanced in the report.

Going a little extra-linguistic and into the historical context, 2019 was an election year for Nigeria, hence, many media outlets were scouting for different competencies in the manifestos of the concerned actors. Being at the top of the security challenges of the nation, the herdsmen and farmers’ conflict supposed to be at the forefront of the political campaigns of the various contestants representing their political parties. *Premium Times*, the architect of this politicisation does this through the observation of actor’s language, and direct questioning of political actors. All these meta-strategies are tilted towards establishing the political connection to the discourse through their appraisal and stance

projection. Underlying this political focalisation is the media's deliberate effort to draw the attention of their readers through carefully constructed appraisal of the political actors' engagement to the issue of herdsmen and farmers' conflict.

Extracts 39 & 40 are clear examples of the pragmatic strategy of the politicisation of the agrarian context. In relation to Extract 16, the media narrative concerns political candidates' endorsement by the representative body of herdsmen, Miyetti Allah. By inference, it can be deduced that the mediated report is a response to some spreading claims on the valued position of the herders. Using the "disclaim" locution marked by the contracted negation "not", Miyetti Allah debunks the allegation that it has not endorsed any of Buhari and Atiku as their candidate for the elections that were fast approaching. Reported by the media, the different positionings that define whether or not Miyetti Allah was actually playing the political card outside the domains of their pastoral calling, were presented in the detailing of the news narrative. First, the media which reports the news through attribution indexes the referent "The Miyetti Allah Kautal-Hore" as being responsible for the proposition. The report, however fails to mention the source of the rumour that alleged Miyetti Allah's endorsement of a political candidate. Meanwhile, both the rhetic and phatic acts reveal the existing grievances of the herdsmen which had orchestrated their courtesy visit to a politician in the report, that is, the former Governor of Sokoto State, Aminu Tambuwal. Secondly, the group's president, Mr Badejo again proclaims that their decision of non-endorsement of candidate for the election is strongly established in the valued position that "On politics, the Fulani leader said the group has not endorsed any presidential candidate, because none of them has unveiled any agenda for herders". What, according to the report displeases the herders and must have possibly engendered their non-endorsement position, is the fact that, their farming counterparts receive more benefits from government than them. According to the narrative, "while the federal government has many intervention packages for farmers, including soft loans and distribution of fertilizer, nothing is done for the cattle herders". This entitlement demonstration has been deemed to be instrumental to the convenient politicisation of the agrarian context by the media and the actors that stand to change the tune of things like the Miyetti Allah's group who feels shortchanged by the government.

For Extract 40, this politicisation strategy is informed by the fact that despite the obvious background of the herdsmen and farmers crisis being spurred by geographical contestation of limited resources, members of the Nigerian legislative arm of government take an outright political purview of the situation by casting aspersions on the president's incompetence. While this strategy evokes state entitlement and tactfully signals the solidarist ideology, careful selection of certain linguistic constructions helped enforce this strategy. In their array of manifestation, there is the subject-predicate construction, also called the PN construction (Goldberg (2013), prepositional dative constructions, relative clause constructions and passive constructions. The political contextualisation of the report from the headline portends a rancorous situation which is indexed by the valency decreasing construction with the verb "bicker" which binds the countable subject "senators" with the prepositional phrase "over Buhari's alleged incompetence of Herdsmen killings" to establish the subject-predicate construction. Without further investigations, this construction type already creates in the reader the goal of the report, which is to present senators differing valued positions on governance with respect to the farmers and herdsmen conflict.

In its deployment, the prepositional dative construction in this report, in its presentation, also enables the activation of referents because of its valency increasing design, that is constructions having more than one actors either at the subject or object level. For instance, in representing the valued positions of the concerned senators, it is evident that while the Abaribe's camp resorted to bare assertion that Buhari is "totally incompetent" the other camp represented by the voice of the majority leader, Lawan, deployed disclaim by countering the stance of the minority leader, Abaribe. In the real sense of it, the deliberations in the senate chambers became politically motivated by dint of the fact that the two lawmakers were of different party extractions. This was done without looking at the remote causes of the conflict but placing enormous value on the statements made by the president on the origin of the "killer" herdsmen in Nigeria.

4.3.1.2 Strategisation of topical news narratives (STNN)

This is the strategic placement of news items for topical attention in the reports. Capitalisation, acronymisation, and topicalisation, fonting, colour, embossing, (non-

)compliance to news rules and quotation marks are prominent tools for the realisation of this strategy. Stylistically, these resources are employed by the reporters to structurally foreground parts of the reports for the purposes of easy and fast readership attention. It could be safely described in this study as content prognosis where readers' cognitions are revved up by the strategic positioning of such news items for which they have shared knowledge. Often, items strategised are headlines, and major news of the day as evident in the example below:

Extract 41:

Arewa Forum condemns 'herdsmen' attack on Enugu community, wants culprits exposed, April 28, 2016

The ACF in a statement by its National Publicity Secretary, Muhammad Ibrahim, commiserated with the government and people of Enugu state "over this unfortunate ugly incident". It called on security agencies to unmask the perpetrators of the heinous attacks, so as to end current "**dangerous generalisation**" of Fulani herdsmen as responsible for the attacks. "Nigeria cannot afford to graduate from Boko Haram insurgency to an unwarranted attack by unknown gunmen alleged to be Fulani herdsmen. (**Premium Times**)

Extract 42:

Presidency lists benefits of 'Ruga settlements', June 30, 2019

The presidency said on Sunday that the proposed '**ruga settlements**' is not meant for herders alone. The ruga settlements have been criticised by some Nigerians who claim it is a ploy to claim land across the country for Fulani herders. (*Premium Times*)

Strategically marked in Extract 41 is the placement of the lexeme "herdsmen" in inverted commas. The report is about an attack on Enugu community in Nigeria by suspected herdsmen. This incidence attracted several interventions and commiserations which also saw the Arewa Consultative forum that represents the northern youth body, adding their voice to that of the sympathisers. From the headline, it could be inferred that the media consciously and strategically restrained their stance on who was culpable for the dastardly act through the deployment of the punctuation marks. In the headline of the report, the media's opinion is implicitly registered through the calculated choice of the adjective "herdsmen" to qualify the nominal entity "attack" to enforce neutral

positioning. The intention is to project neutrality and disalignment to any existing claim that it is actually the herdsmen that are responsible for the reported attacks. Validating this neutrality, the report shows that the newspaper does not share in the philosophy that it was actually herdsmen that carried out the attack. Plausibly, the media stance of neutrality is connected to the position of the ACF who considered the ascription of the attacks to Fulani herdsmen as sheer generalisation. Rather, they also strategically favour the “unknown gunmen” as a better representation of the perpetrators of the act. It thus appears that the grievances on the crime tagging expressed by ACF must have compelled the selected positioning of the media. What is therefore strategically topicalised is the “dangerous” stereotyping of the destructive acts of people which are consistently linked to herdsmen.

Topicalised in Extract 42 is the strategic foregrounding of “Ruga settlements” as topical news that was gaining momentum in 2019. Ruga settlement was the initiative of the federal government of Nigeria. It was born out of the need to provide roving herders with lands to graze their cattle in various states of the nation – a decision that displeases the natives who have the entitlement construct that breed dissension between them and the herdsmen. *Premium Times*, in the headline of her report decided to lexicalise RUGA which stands for rural grazing area as a common lexeme to which the readers share co-belief. The quotation marks were deployed however to mark it apart as a topical issue in a report that is intended to generate a debate as an existing issue because this time, the report implicated that government was on a mission of defending the initiative.

Ordinarily, Ruga is an invented term that emanated from federal government initiation which had steered controversy among the reading population. But then, it had been a topical issue in various newspapers that will easily welcome readers’ interest. Despite the fact that Ruga maintains such newsiness, the media still places it in a strategic position in the headline. Throughout the body of the report, the phrase was marked by the quotation marks to show its dynamics in the current reportage and the interest the media want the reading audience to draw from this particular report since in other reports, the term is merely acronymised as it should be and never necessarily marked for special attention. The report further presented the various stance justifications by the federal government

voice (Garba Shehu) who tries to explicate the essence of the scheme by stating that the initiative was not restricted to herders and was largely voluntary.

In the structuring of the report, it could be deduced that the media had open the discourse with an insight into the “Ruga” construct by pre-informing the readers that “ruga settlements have been criticised by some Nigerians who claim it is a ploy to claim land across the country for Fulani herders”. It is obvious that the federal government’s move and the media strategic topicalisation of the report are tied to the re-modification of government’s stances. The following report is similar in intent by the virtue of the fact that it reports a recurrent issue that is re-emerging in another dimension.

Extract 43:

Again, Fulani Herdsmen Kill Farmers in Plateau State Hours after Peace Meeting OCT 07, 2020

One of those killed was identified as Moses Abbah while another victim of the attack, Musa David, was severely injured while planting beans. This is the tenth attack by armed Fulani herdsmen in Plateau State in less than two weeks. (*Sahara Reporters*)

Extract 44:

EXCLUSIVE: How suspected Fulani herdsmen killed Police DPO – Adamawa CP, January 30, 2016

The Adamawa State Police Commissioner, Gazzali Mohammed, has given a chilling account of how suspected Fulani herdsmen killed the Divisional Police Officer, DPO, in Girei Local Government Area, Okezie Okoroafor, on Sunday. Mr. Mohammed told PREMIUM TIMES... (*Premium Times*)

Although the topical news reported all that evolve from the herdsmen and farmers’ conflict, there are mechanisms through which the media topicalise these reports to generate renewed interest in readers. In the two preceding extracts, the topicalised discourses are all about attacks masterminded by suspected Fulani herdsmen. However, the strategisation mechanisms differ in constructing stances floated in the reports. Like in Extract 43, the killing of famers by the herdsmen after a major peace meeting was topicalised through the fronting of the adverbial element “again” to implicate that the attack was not a novel one. This is validated in the news detail as the reporter revealed through a categorical assertion that “This is the tenth attack by armed Fulani herdsmen in

Plateau State in less than two weeks” coupled with the fact that the attack itself was staged after hours of peace meeting.

This type of epistemic modal adjunct is used by the media (PREMIUM TIMES) as a validation of an extant report of the herdsmen destructive activities, which obviously can only be inferred through the semantic import of the adjunct. Despite this assertive claim, the media’s narrative lack evidential fervor as it is replete with sheer attribution and “entertain” resources that invoke other dialogic alternatives to the report. For example, the proposition that “one of those killed was identified” is a testament to the media openness to “entertain” other possible identification of victims from other sources. Also, the mystification strategy in the locution “Sources told *Sahara Reporters*” equally exposes the weak epistemic position of the reporter and the media handle in question for the lack of evidential sources of its news. It thus tends to endorse the suspicion that media outlets sometimes want to just air news for the sake of the popular interest for that news without sourcing detailed and evidence-based facts.

In a similar vein as SAHARA REPORTERS, in Extract 44, PREMIUM TIMES also employed this lexical strategisation of topical news narratives to attract readers’ attention through capitalisation of the lexeme “EXCLUSIVE”. The reader’s mind by this act is prepared for uncommon facts and details concerning the herdsmen and farmers’ conflict. The strategic use of the capitalisation coupled with the pragmatic import it carries only implicates that the news is expository being that it involves the death of a security officer. In order to distance self from the facts, PREMIUM TIMES, engages attribution to reference their source, “Mr. Mohammed”. How this actor defines the exclusivity of the news is predicated on the fact that he is an eyewitness to the scene of the DPO’s death as well as the State’s Commissioner of Police. Details were amply provided, as evidentiality was proven from the account of the Commissioner who further disclosed the arrest of eight police officers who allegedly left their boss to be killed by the herdsmen.

4.3.1.3 Ethnicisation of occupational context (EOC)

This entails the pragmatic recontextualisation of the occupational context with ethnic colourations. In simple terms, when ethnicity is drawn on issues with no natural ethnic

background, there is said to be an ethnicisation of the issue or phenomenon. In this study, the original occupation context which underlies the crux of the herdsmen and farmers' conflict has been ethnicised. This is illustrated in the extract below.

Extract 45:

Afenifere echoes Obasanjo's Fulanisation allegation, says herdsmen's onslaught deliberate, willful, May 27, 2019

Afenifere, on Monday raised fresh concerns over the activities of herdsmen across Nigeria, saying their actions were deliberate and calculated towards achieving an expansionist agenda. The communiqué read by **Afenifere's** National Publicity Secretary, Yinka Odumakin, stated that the "wanton killings" going on across the country are due largely to the activities of Fulani herdsmen. ...**"The killings targeted at non-Fulani groups** across the country are willful and deliberate in pursuit of **expansionist and conquest agenda,"** the communiqué said." (*Premium Times*)

Extract 46:

Yoruba Leaders Reject Cattle Colonies, Ask FG to Declare Herdsmen Terrorists JAN 25, 2018

Yoruba leaders under the aegis of Yoruba Summit have announced their **rejection** of the Federal Government's proposal to establish cattle colonies for animal herders and called on the Federal Government to declare Fulani herdsmen as terrorists. According to... Mr. Yinka Odumakin, **the rejection was informed by the repeated criminal activities of Fulani herdsmen across Yorubaland.** (*Sahara Reporters*)

Extracts 45 and 46 share similar voice of protest anchored on the premises of ethnic biases. In the reports, especially that of Extract 45, Afenifere, a Yoruba socio-political group is endorsing the valued position of former President of Nigeria, Olusegun Obasanjo who alleges that the Fulani herdsmen's onslaught on communities is an agenda towards realizing a Fulanisation and Islamisation plot. This and a couple of issues brought to the fore strategically de-topicalise the foundational agrarian conflict of dearth of resources as the trigger of the conflict. Rather, there is a heightened activation of the ethnic card in the reports which strongly allege the twin agendas of expansionism and Fulanisation accrued to herders in Yorubaland. That of Extract 46 also makes demand for the rejection of the federal government cattle colony initiative and the official framing of

Fulani herdsmen as terrorists because of their alleged destructive activities on the land of the Yoruba people.

The old and new information structure of the headline already presents the Yoruba leaders as the topic of the discourse whose focus is rejecting the cattle colonies. This valued position of the Yoruba leaders under the aegis of Afenifere is amplified by the introduction of the valency increasing construction asking the FG to declare “herdsmen terrorists”. That is, this is a call for a reframing of the first goal of the construction, the herdsmen, because of the way they have been perceived by the Yoruba leaders. The focus of the construction further shows that the two participants – herdsmen and terrorists – are different at a point before the ethnocentric call that was substantiated through the last construction of the extract “Yorubaland. Yoruba leaders under the aegis of Yoruba Summit have announced their rejection of the Federal Government's proposal to establish cattle colonies for animal herders and called on the Federal Government to declare Fulani herdsmen as terrorists”. A cursory examination of the reports made no suggestion of the Yoruba leaders as farmers. Whether this is also taken for granted cannot be ascertained. However, the ethnicisation of the herders’ activities and consequently anchoring the labeling on “Fulani Herdsmen” leaves no doubt about the ethnic colouration of the issue through the report.

4.3.2 Actor-focalised pragmatic strategies

Actor-focalised pragmatic strategies are news actors’ projected voices in the direct act to which the events in the reports are connected. In the construction of these strategies, news agencies’ acts are de-emphasised such that the views expressed in the news reports are directly linked to the social actors. Instantiation is made of these pragmatic mechanisms in the monetisation/commodification of territorial space and religionisation of economic acts.

4.3.2.1 Monetisation/commodification of territorial space (CTS)

Monetisation/commodification of territorial space involves news actors’ projected stances that promote entitlement right through the policies and actions that constrain others to make financial commitments to the host in order for the host to exert ownership rights.

The state, group and folk entitlement types and the underlying separatist ideology are found to be replete with the attempts to monetise or commodify territorial spaces. It becomes strategic as the monetisation of territorial space. Through the transitive construction, and prepositional dative construction, this strategy in the reports evokes a liberal separatist ideology. The preceding extract is an apt example of this strategy.

Extract 47:

Fayose asks Ekiti herdsmen to register with N5, 000 | Premium Times Nigeria 12/9/2020

The Ekiti State Governor, has issued a stern warning to leaders of the MACBAN, on the need to keep their cattle away from farms, vowing to hold them responsible for any act of destruction and killing. He also said Fulani herdsmen doing business in Ekiti State would **henceforth register their identity for N5, 000 within three months or face the wrath of the law.** (*Premium Times*)

The report provides information about state's involvement in curbing the menace of the herdsmen and farmers resource conflict. Symbolised by the state's governor, Mr. Ayodele Fayose, the report, using the prepositional dative construction structured in the valency increasing form established the monetisation strategy. In the construction, the topic (Mr. Fayose) who is the performer of the action demonstrates the entitlement right of territorial ownership by demanding that the focus (Ekiti herdsmen) registers with the sum of #5,000 before breeding their cattle on the state's territory. This yet amplifies the separatist ideology which in this context is inferably depicted in the action of the governor, in the sense that the Nigerianess of the herdsmen is put to question with the action of the government as farmers would not have to pay to put up a farm. Most of the transitive constructions show not just the old and new information structure that allows for readers' intelligibility, but also the topic and the focus that activates the crux of the strategy as it relates to the ideology and the entitlement type projected in the report.

4.3.2.2 Religionisation of economic acts

The religionisation of economic act involves the religious framing of economic activities. It implicates the evaluation of purely economic issues from the purview of religion. For this study, this act becomes more pragmatically strategic through the infusion of religious

voicing within the bounds of the solidarist and group entitlement and state entitlement. The voicing is activated through actors' valued positioning that credits the activities of herdsmen and interpret them as religiously motivated. In this light, the data establish substantiated and (less) unsubstantiated religionisation of economic act, which could be related to evidential and non-evidential stance. While Extract 48 below is (less) unsubstantiated, Extract 49 is substantiated. This is explicated below.

Extract 48:

**It Is Un-Islamic For Herders to Move Cattle from Place to Place—
Buhari's Home State Governor, Masari, SEP 07, 2021**

The governor stated this on Wednesday. Condemning the movement of herders from one part of the country to another "The herders' movement is essentially in search of two things: water and fodder. If we can provide these two items, why should they move? **“The roaming about, for us, is un-Islamic** and it is not the best. (*Sahara Reporters*)

Extract 49:

**Buhari Regime Downplays Targeted Killing of Christians As Farmer-
Herder Conflicts—Ex-US Secretary Of State, JUN 10, 2021**

According to the former US Director of the Central Intelligence Agency, at least 1,500 Christians have been killed in Nigeria in the last six months. Pompeo... **He said the Buhari regime had suppressed the news of the killings of Christians by masking it as farmer-herder crisis.** He said in 2018, 110 schoolgirls were kidnapped by Boko Haram in Dapchi, Yobe State but when a deal was cut to return most of the girls home, one was held back – Leah **Sharibu because she refused to convert to Islam** (*Sahara Reporters*)

Extracts 48 & 49 both resonate with the pragmatic strategy of the religionisation of the economic act as stanced in the news reports and comments of herdsmen and farmers' conflict. Extract 48 instantiates the unsubstantiated religionisation of the economic act of herding. In the narrative, the media which clearly distances itself from the proposition by attributing it to the referent, Masari made the report with some glare infuses of “unnecessary” detailing of the referent by describing him as “Buhari’s Home State Governor” instead of simply mentioning Katsina State. This attribution is marked because, on the one hand, the issue in question involves “Fulani” herdsmen, and on the other hand, Buhari, the President of Nigeria happens to be from that ethnic extraction too.

Hence, the over-attribution is a way of working on the cognitions of the potential reader that even a Muslim governor from the State where the President himself came from is making such religious sensitive comment.

That the moving of cattle from place to place is un-Islamic is, considering the dearth of evidentials from the report, was a deliberate pick by *Sahara Reporters* in order to establish the religious brandishing of the conflict. This is followed by more reference in the report to counter positions advanced by the President Buhari-led administration to the unanimous decision of Southern governors to ban open grazing in the area. Connecting these discordant voices, it is deducible from the news reporter's less substantiated report and its extraneous identification of the Katsina State governor's alleged valued position that condemns open grazing on religious grounds.

In Extract 49, the economic act is more eminently religionised in the news report for being fact studded and copiously substantiated. In the construction of this strategy, the media used the attribution appraisal resources by yielding the thoughts ownership rights to an immediate past United States Secretary of State Mike Pompeo. It thus largely becomes an actor's focalised pragmatic strategy to deliberately take the religious purview to an issue that is found on economic and spatial ground. In this strategy, the context is political and international relation as the stance taker is not a Nigerian but has relayed his valued position with enormous fact. Pompeo's epistemic stance is substantiated evidentially through intensification enhanced through numerical detailing of killed Christians, framing of group as evidenced in the proposition "At least 1,500 Christians have already been killed..."

4.4 Locution types in the news reports on herdsmen and farmers' conflict in Nigeria

This section delves into the locution types which subsume the linguistic forms that help activate the pragmatic strategies through which the entitlement types were realised. In it, the locutionary acts – aspects of Sbisá's (2006) speech act model serve as the linguistic basis for explicating the pragmatic strategies in the news reports and comments of herdsmen and farmers' conflict in Nigeria. Relying exclusively on the presentations in

the phatic acts which are found to embed in them the rhetic acts because of the data design which basically involves news reports with instantiated direct speeches of actors, four major locutionary acts were identified to have principally driven the pragmatic strategies earlier discussed. These are potential consequence-indicative locutions, self-defensive locutions, conflict-indicative locutions, and peace-intended locutions. These are taken in turn with their attendant locutionary collocates.

4.4.1 Potential consequence-indicative (PC-I) locutions

Potential consequence-indicative locutions (PC-Is) in this context signal forewarnings that implicate negative outcomes of certain actions. Two principal subcategories of PC-I locutions that trigger potential consequence are locutions of hostility and locutions of ejection/eviction. Within the square of the herdsmen and farmers' entitlement resource conflict, these subcategories of PC-I locutions underlined by the illocutionary acts of warning, threatening and cautioning/charging. The warning act refers to the proposition that is designed to put the addressee in check against certain actions or inactions that are capable of steering potential havoc. Similarly, the threatening act is a sterner warning that promises to come with negative reaction. On a lighter weight, the cautioning/charging act depicts a form of advice for an individual that is intended to put such on the right track or alert of an impending danger. The potential consequence-indicative locutionary act is directly nested with the group entitlement and necessarily engenders ethnicisation of the occupational context which borders between the sociocultural and economic contexts in the reports and comments. These are discussed under the three major types of C-I locutions identified.

4.4.1.1 Locutions of hostility

Locutions of hostility are co-textual indices of imminent chaos in the reports as a result of people's reported subjective actions or stances. In itself, hostility refers to unfriendliness and unwelcoming disposition to others. Because of the illocutionary force indicating devices (IFIDS) these locutions implicate, they naturally evoke the illocutionary acts of warning, threatening and charging/cautioning against the presumed negative effect in the text. Recurrent linguistic forms characterising these categories of PC-I locutions in the

reports are synonyms, verb phrases/phrasal verbs and adverbials that suggest potential harmful or negative outcome. The extract below exemplifies this locution category.

Extract 50:

RUGA: Don't Take Action That Will Hinder Peace in the Country, Northern Group Warns, JUL 06, 2019

President-general of Ohanaeze Ndigbo, has called on his people to get ready to **defend themselves**, in case the Northern group tries to make good the threat to forcibly evict them. The group made its position known while reacting to the **30-day ultimatum** the Coalition of Northern Groups (CNGs) gave to governors opposing the RUGA settlement programme of the Federal Government to Fulani herdsmen. (*Sahara Reporters*)

The news report in Extract 50 typifies a vivid example of hostility locutions within the PC-I locutions. In its propositional content, the news narrative concerns the Nigerian government's introduction of rural grazing area (RUGA) and the resulting stances of various stakeholders. The headline contains a warning from the Northern Group to all the stakeholders because of the conflicting voices. Hence, there is strategic co-textual construction of these stances carefully underlined by preempted consequences as couched in the imperatives "Don't Take Action That Will Hinder Peace In The Country..." The composition of the locution in this construction is structured in the subject deletion form in order to enforce the illocutionary act of warning with implicit consequences that would later be revealed in the details of the narrative. Lexicalising this, the media employed two major indexing synonyms "hinder" and "jeopardise" that emphasised the consequence and the implicated hostility that might be incurred in relation to peace in the country. In other words, the relative constructions that house the verbal synonyms qualify the noun phrase "action" and "any action" in the underlined constructions is the consequence that is imminent for any action that is insensitive to peace, which apparently calls for hostility or unrest. Having understood the implication of this for the peace of the nation Nigeria, ACF was now performing the role of the mediator through the deployment of peace suing and at the same time consequence-suggestive illocutionary acts such as "warning against", "cautioning", "dissuading from", and "refraining from" – to ensure that actions capable of threatening the peace of the country are avoided.

This becomes necessary because of the ethnicisation of the context in the proposition “...Meanwhile, Nnia Nwodo...” Adding this in the news report also offers the sense that the Igbo ethnic group and the Coalition of Northern Groups (CNGs) who issued an ultimatum to evict the groups that do not support the RUGA initiative of the federal government that obviously favour herdsmen who are mostly Northerners, and have turned the occupation background of the narrative into an ethnic one by the threatening act of the CNGs and the cautioning act of the Igbo extraction. This already stirred the atmosphere of hostility that is being forewarned in the locutionary structure of the news narrative about the RUGA initiative.

4.4.1.2 Locutions of ejection/eviction

Another instance of the PC-I locutions are the locutions of ejection/eviction. Ejection/eviction is the act of estranging, ostracising or throwing out individuals from a territorial space. Typical of the group and folk entitlement design, locutions of ejection/eviction are basically marked off by the complex constructions with conditional adverbial forms which categorically inference the PC-I locutions. In the whole, there is monetisation of territorial space that automatically comes with the illocutionary acts of warning and threatening that evoke the ejection/eviction consequence. Extract 51 exemplifies this locution type.

Extract 51:

Fayose asks Ekiti herdsmen to register with N5, 000 | Premium Times Nigeria, January 22, 2018

He [the governor] also said Fulani herdsmen doing business in Ekiti State would henceforth register their identity for N5,000 within three months or face the wrath of the law. ... He pointedly told Mr. Abashe that ... **“If you (Fulani herders) still want to stay among us, you must accept the responsibility to ensure that none of our peoples’ farms is destroyed by herdsmen any longer,”** the governor said. ... This is the last warning I am giving you.” (*Premium Times*)

Extract 51 presents Governor Ayodele Fayose issuing a directive that all herdsmen in the state should officially register with the government before carrying out their herding activities. This directive is a response to the news reports of attacks in the text by herdsmen on indigenes of the state. There is this naturally structural but implicit

construction of the locutions of ejection or eviction as consequence for not adhering to the state's injunction. Locutionary collocates, that is, the linguistic construction of this PC-I locutions of ejection/eviction in the report include: prepositional dative construction, gerundives, compounds, conditional adverbials, and the valency-increasing constructions like the di-transitive. All these connect to establish the condition-consequence structuring of the locutions of ejection/eviction which are further strengthened through the illocutionary act of warning. For instance, the prepositional dative construction:

a. The Ekiti State Governor, Ayodele Fayose, /has issued /a stern warning /to leaders of the Miyetti Allah Cattle Breeders Association of Nigeria...

The media chooses to employ the above construction in order to bring focus on “the leaders of the Miyetti Allah Cattle Breeders Association of Nigeria” as issued by the topic “the Ekiti State Governor, Ayodele Fayose. This is because the import of the “stern warning” cannot be fully realised if the construct is in the canonical di-transitive order “the Ekiti State Governor, Ayodele Fayose has issued leaders of the Miyetti Allah Cattle Breeders Association of Nigeria a stern warning” hence, the resort to the prepositional dative construction “to leader...” in order to capture the essence of the consequence that follows. Exemplifying this further, the gerundive construction “vowing...” is employed to emphasise the position of the governor in holding the leaders of herders' community responsible for any act of destruction and killing orchestrated by herdsmen in the state. Similarly, the second object of the di-transitive construction “...would hold him responsible...” also strengthened the earlier position of the referent – Ayodele Fayose. Further, the governor employed, in the complex construction, the conditional adverbial construction to spell out the consequence of ejection/ejection in the proposition, “If you (Fulani herders) still want to stay among us, you must accept the responsibility to ensure that none of our peoples' farms is destroyed by herdsmen any longer,” which apparently implies that if any farm is destroyed by any herdsmen in the state, the consequence is ejection (meaning they – the Fulani herdsmen – do not want to continue to stay among the people of Ekiti. Clearly, the governor's disposition understandably projects the group's entitlement construct.

4.4.2 Self-defensive locutions

Self-defensive locutions project positive “self” but amplify negative “other” in their propositional contents. These locutions, like the van Dijk’s (2015) ideological square, are designed for actors to sometimes correct and repair face in the news reports by debunking negative identities created for them by opposition. It is instructive to emphasise that self in this context encompasses the individual and group’s representation in the news reports and the attendant facts-straightening mechanisms put up by actors to defend their actions and correct others’. In the light of this composition, there are two types of self-defensive locutions – locutions of identity revalidation and locutions of opposition-stance rejection. Structurally, the prepositional dative construction, tough-raising constructions and transitive constructions are chiefly used to construct these locutions. In addition, they naturally and as recorded in this study, lead to the illocutionary act of exonerating, appealing, and redressing. Individuals self-exonerate in the instance where they had been indicted and therefore decided to put up a defense for their actions while the act of appealing is introduced by actors to get the understanding of their intended audience. Redressing act engages the form of self-defensive locution that is functionally constructed to correct an earlier misconstrued position taken by a news actor. This is readily found within the state, group and folk entitlement construct. The two basic types of self-defensive locutions are instantiated below.

4.4.2.1 Locutions of identity revalidation (LIR)

Locutions of identity revalidation are forms that are organized in a text to frame one’s personality right and conversely refute oppositional image-denting propositions. Identity deals with individual’s personality. Thus, to revalidate it presupposes that there are attempts to construct such identity in bad light by others, hence the need for a revalidation – correction of negative impression. Extract 52 is vocal in this regard.

Extract 52:

Opposition blackmailing me with herdsmen, farmers clashes – Buhari

Mr Buhari appealed to Ekiti voters to cast their votes for Mr Fayemi on Saturday to secure their future and ensure the development of the state...
“They blackmailing me, saying I have not done anything about the

farmers/Fulani herdsmen clashes because I am a Fulani man,” the president said. “But this is a cheap blackmail. We are doing everything to curtail the situation, and provide a lasting solution to the problem.”
(*Premium Times*)

Extract 52 represents in clear sense the conditions that satisfy and define identity revalidation under the self-defensive locutions in the reports on herdsmen and farmers’ conflict. This example, for instance, lexicalises the self-defensive locution of President Muhammadu Buhari’s proposition, “opposition blackmailing me with herdsmen and farmers’ clashes”. Using the prepositional dative constriction, the actor contends the identity created for him by the opposition parties. The referent here resorted to the locutionary choice “blackmailing me” to exonerate self and appeal to the cognitions of the people that what the opposition is up to is to tarnish his image by ethnicising the occupational context of the conflict by simply stating that “they are blackmailing me, saying, I have not done anything about the farmers/Fulani herdsmen clashes because I am a Fulani man,” The use of the referent “they” is an instance of the tough-raising construction that activates the existence of the oppositional force, part of which was framed to be the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) in the later part of the news narrative.

Another illocutionary sequel that strengthens the self-defensive locutions is that of appealing. The President, being aware of the social realities of the nation in terms of the herdsmen and farmers’ conflict was appealing for support in his propositional content to defend the fact that “We are doing everything to curtail the situation, and provide a lasting solution to the problem.” In the context of political campaign, the president understands the fact that the herdsmen and farmers’ lingering clashes serve as a strong basis for opposition campaign, and being a Fulani man as most of the warring herders are, he needed that epistemic straightening of the fact that his actions to curb the crisis are not ethnic bias as referenced in the allegation credited to Ayo Fayose, the Ekiti State Governor whom the media through the rhetic act reported “had also been frontal in accusing the president of allowing the killings to continue, citing his ethnic origin as a major factor”. This further substantiates the ethnicisation of the occupational context, hence, the spread of the self-defensive locutions by the president enacted in the news narrative through the rhetic and phatic acts.

4.4.2.2 Locutions of opposition-stance rejection (LOR)

Opposition-stance rejection locutions are lexical forms that point to actors' rebuttal of false proposition or stance accrued to them. These locutions are structured to self-exonerate and further strengthen the identity of the personality-threatened actor. It consequently elicits the illocutionary acts of denying/debunking, clarifying and accusing. As it relates to the concessional and non-concessional state entitlement, LOR is profoundly underpinned through linguistic constructions such as transitive constructions, tough-raising constructions, and synonyms of falsity. This is explained in Extract 53.

Extract 53:

Opposition blackmailing me with herdsmen, farmers clashes – Buhari

“But this is a cheap blackmail. We are doing everything to curtail the situation, and provide a lasting solution to the problem.” **Mr Buhari was apparently referring to the campaign stunts of the Peoples Democratic Party,** branding the APC's federal government as irresponsible to the herdsmen/farmers clashes. (*Premium Times*)

Extract 53 is a typical reflection of the locutions of opposition-stance rejection which report concerns the referent, Plateau State Governor dipped in the illocutionary force of rebuttal of allegation through the micro act of denying. Underlying this act of denying is the issue of cattle colony which evokes the greatest manifestation of the state, group and folk entitlement constructs. In this extract, the state entitlement construct is categorically played out as the government is trying to invalidate a rumour that part of the state's territory is being ceded to federal government's cattle colony establishment initiative. In this, the referent is realised through the self-defensive locutions that is realised through the transitive construction “Plateau governor denies ceding land for cattle colonies” to show that the topic “Plateau governor” is concerned more about the focus “ceding land for cattle colony” which forms the crux of the allegation leveled against him. Both nominal and predicative items were deployed to construct the image-denting versus identity reconstruction contexts that attracted the employment of the self-defensive locutions geared towards rejecting the “unfounded” claim through synonyms including “has debunked”, “denies”, “the rumour”, “false”, “malicious” and “highly mischievous”. All these are referential indices for the self-defensive locutionary acts in the larger frame

which have prompted the illocutionary sequel of denying with the aim of updating the general public about the position of the state about the issue of cattle colony and the opposition-sponsored proposition that the state ceded parts of its territory.

4.4.3 Conflict-indicative locutions (CI-Is)

Conflict-indicative locutions encompass linguistic forms that emphasise discord, violence and tension-driven reports. Conflict in this research is defined by the reports that are embellished with locutionary resources of attacks, victimisations, destructions and casualties. This readily offers two pronounced types of conflict-indicative locutions. They are: locutions of protest, and locutions of destruction.

Instances of the strategisation of topical news narratives and ethnicisation of the occupational context are prominently deployed in the construction of the locutions as well as passive constructions, transitive constructions, and tough-raising constructions to concretise the conflict-indicative locutions. Necessarily, they evoke or activate the illocutionary acts of reporting, appealing, and accusing. The reporting act is an unmarked media reporting style but is peculiar in this report as it comes in the form of complaint while the appealing is complementary to the reporting act as it is intended to solicit government attention, and accusing act is directed at holding people responsible for the conflict. Distinctly, the locutions of protest and destruction are instantiated in the following sections with their evidential reports.

4.4.3.1 Locutions of protest

Locutions of protest are prominent types of the conflict-indicative locutions that lexicalise lamentations and emotional purgation arising from losses suffered in the course of violent conflict. These are the forms selectively used by the media and actors in relaying hurtful experiences and to call for solidarity and external support. They are therefore made pronounced through the illocutionary acts of lamenting, appealing and accusing. Typically, this coincides partly with the non-concessional state entitlement type. Extract 54 exemplifies this protest type.

Extract 54:

Farmers in Oyo Lament Attack by Fulani Herders, AUG 24, 2020

One of the victims, Usman Daudu, whose farm produce was destroyed by the herders, said that 20 hectares of his farmland where he planted maize, yams and tomatoes were destroyed. Farmers in Ikoyi-Ile under Orire Local Government Area of Oyo State **have cried out over alleged fresh hostilities by Fulani herdsmen, a report by Vanguard said.** (*Sahara Reporters*)

As contained in Extract 54, farmers in Oyo State are reported as protesting the incessant attacks suffered in the hands of herdsmen. This is evidentially represented in the illocutionary force indicative device “lament” to show the emotional distress that accompanies the protest. The structure of the headline consciously framed the topic “farmers in Oyo” and made “by Fulani herdsmen” as the focus in order to define not only the ethnic undertone but basically the offender-victim polarity. In the fuller narrative, this is further explicated by conflict-implicating linguistic choices that range from “cried out”, “fresh hostilities”, “take revenge”, “bloodshed”, “victims” and “were destroyed”. While these synonymous linguistic choices forge out the context of conflict in the news report, it can be observed that the media’s dominant rhetic act was used to construct the plight of the farmers and the ensuing conflict that is created out of the scenario.

Complementarily, the transitive constructions laced with several relative clauses to expatiate the agencies of the constructions were constantly deployed to enact the root causes underpinning the protest locutionary act, for instance, in the transitive construction “One of the victims... said that 20 hectares of his ... were destroyed.” In this proposition, the media, trying to conceptualise the hub of the conflict narrative, uses the lexeme “victims” to index the referent “Usman Daudu” and stretches to describe him on the premise of his victimhood through the relative construction “whose farm produce was destroyed by the herders”. The narrative context which justifies the rhetic act of the media framework is concretised by the verb “said” in order to connect the rest of the report that “20 hectares...where he planted maize... were destroyed”. In it, the relative construction “where he planted...” is yet applied to further validate the worthiness of the protest act. Conversely, the media constructs through the actors’ voice (farmers,

specifically), the illocutionary acts of appealing to government and at the same time accusing monarch of colluding with the herdsmen in carrying out their escapade on them.

This locution type is culled from the reference, Oyekola, who in his proposition reportedly accuses a traditional ruler in the area of colluding with the herdsmen. It thus becomes strategic that the inclusion of monarch is ethnicising the occupational context informed by the group entitlement feeling that is influenced by the supposed act of the monarch.

4.4.3.2 Locutions of destruction

Locutions of destruction are special linguistic choices detailed to amplify narratives of casualties and vandalism. These locutions demarcate actors along the lines of the roles they play and the specific action of destruction carried out in the propositional content of the news narrative. It thus naturally typifies illocutionary acts of attacking, decrying and displacing which are subsumed under the broad reporting act.

Extract 55:

Herdsmen Invade Farms In Ondo, Chase Away Farmers As Amotekun Seizes 42 Cows, JUN 24, 2020

The herdsmen, upon seeing the security agencies, immediately **launched an attack** but were overpowered, and took to their heels. ... "On seeing the owners of the affected farmlands, the **heavily armed herders attempted to kill them but the farmers ran for their dear lives,**" he said. ... Adetunji Adeleye [Commander of the Ondo State Security Network Agency, codenamed "Amotekun Corps"] vowed that the herdsmen would be made to pay for the **crops destroyed** and subsequently face prosecution (*Sahara Reporters*).

Extract 55 reports the violence and crisis orchestrated in the conflict between the agrarians through its conflict-indicative locutions of destruction that empower the illocutionary acts of reporting the attacks orchestrated by the herdsmen, disclosing (which is media focalised) the facts of the attacks and the weight of the destruction that had taken place, and assuring/avowing (the victims) the public of the planned actions against such attacks. Although, most of the illocutionary acts are reporting because of the rhetic configuration of the narrative, the illocutionary force indicative devices present in the

narrative shows that herdsmen were launching attacks, while victims were decrying the tensed state of the environment. In addition, these attacks birth the act of displacement entrenched in the chasing away of farmers by “heavily armed herdsmen”.

These are boldly in propositions that display the conflict as that which is engendered by group entitlement and its attendant violence of one group against the other. Hence, the media selectively deployed locutionary resources (co-text) that indicate and establish conflict through construction types such as the passive constructions to report the specific events “Adeleye revealed that...”, transitive constructions “Herdsmen Invade Farms...”, and tough-raising constructions using pronominal references “He noted...” where the pronominal refers to “Adetunji Adeleye, Commander of the Ondo State Security Network Agency, codenamed "Amotekun Corps”. These construction types helped to foreground the actors’ different roles in the conflict – whether attacker or victim or state agents like the security personnel.

4.4.4 Peace-intended locutions (PI-ls)

Peace-intended locutions are linguistic forms that project in their propositional content the panaceas to conflict. They are mostly action and opinion-based propositions that suggest, address or proffer plausible solutions to the herdsmen and famers’ conflict. Within these spheres, there are two locution types – locutions pointing to military intervention and locutions pointing to civilian dialogue. In the reports, these locutions embody illocutionary acts of revealing, appealing, and promising as mechanisms for brokering peace.

Through the revealing act, the triggers of the conflict are highlighted for potential way outs while the appealing act is detailed to seek understanding among the warring or conflicting factions. The promising act which in this study relates more to the state entitlement is structured to assure the people affected by the conflict of the efforts of the state to nip the conflict in the bud. Essentially, the locutionary act connects directly with the group entitlement where group entitlement appropriates professional (military & business) and the sociocultural context. Noticeably, the peace-intended locutionary acts are linguistically underlined by transitive, and tough-raising construction as anaphoric

referential tools to connect the ideas in the text. The two types of locutions with the peace intended construct are examined with supporting contexts below.

4.4.4.1 Locutions pointing to military intervention

Locutions pointing to military intervention relate to forms that suggest peace moves undertaken by security operative through what is described as the “stick approach” to curbing insurrections (Onuoha, 2012). Hence, interception of attacks and destructions through force in the news narratives takes preeminence in defining the activities of the security agencies. Illocutionary acts that consequently uphold these locutions are mainly the acts of thwarting, arresting, killing, recovering, combing and destroying. These measures depicted in the illocutionary acts, despite their military undertone are classified under the peace-intended locutions because their purpose is to ensure peace in the volatile areas troubled by the herdsmen and farmers’ conflict. It resonates closely with the state and group entitlement constructs which are government and military [troupes] driven.

Extract 56:

Nigerian Army Thwarts Attack Outside Dansadau Town by Herdsmen- Sahara Reporters, May 6, 2016

Nigerian soldiers... have thwarted another attack on Dansadau Town by suspected cattle rustlers and bandits. According to ... Colonel Sani Kukasheka Usman, the patrol team ambushed the suspected cattle rustlers and armed bandits, who were armed and in large numbers on motorcycles. (*Sahara Reporters*)

According to the report in Extract 56, Nigerian army reportedly halted an operation billed to be launched by herdsmen. Because the military intervention was the goal of the news narrative, the “Nigerian army” was topicalised. It is an invocation of the pragmatic strategy that topicalises news narratives that the media believe the readers would be attracted to. To validate the military colouration and the peace-intendedness of the locutionary acts, locutionary collocates and structures such as “thwarted [another] attack”, “ambushed the suspected rustlers and armed bandits”, “troops killed”, “recovered 11 AK-47 rifles...”, and “combing the area” were selectively employed to give the impression that the military is set out to restore normalcy to the areas affected by suspected cattle rustlers and bandits.

Hence, it becomes apposite that the illocutionary acts of thwarting, arresting, recovering, and combing were indices that place the actions of the security operatives on the positive light that tend to validate the peace enforcement move. Precise construction types and indexical employed in the text to cohere and create the logicity that promote the essence of peace and military role include the transitive constructions “the Nigerian soldiers...have thwarted another attack...” In this structure, the adjective “another” presupposes that there had been previous attacks contained by the soldiers and this is a means of suggestive commendation for the military efforts.

4.4.4.2 Locutions pointing to civilian dialogue

Locutions pointing to civilian dialogue are forms devoid of military force but engage civil approach to conflict resolution. This squares well with the “carrot” approach to conflict resolution in which amnesty and other dialogic options are considered in resolving issues related to criminal activities (Onuoha, 2012). This description necessarily hammers on the illocutionary acts of suggesting, lamenting, promising and warning. The suggesting act is an opinion-expressive act that makes plausible possibilities and predictions of a situation. A lamenting act is similar to a condemning act in this context because it is an emotion-based act that is designed to express displeasure at someone or a group and by extension condemn. The promising act is used to assure people of a speaker’s intention while the warning act is intended to put people in check over their excesses. Extract 57 is illustrative in this instance.

Extract 57:

Herdsmen: Farmers, Miyetti Allah dialogue on crisis resolution, March 11, 2021

The All Farmers Association of Nigeria and Miyetti Allah Cattle Breeders Association in Ekiti State on Thursday met in Ado Ekiti, Ekiti State, **to try to resolve the lingering crisis occasioned by open grazing of cattle.** Both parties made suggestions on how to end the clashes, which have resulted in the death of many farmers in the state. **Although there have been several measures and talk shops,** the fatalities attending the clashes have been on the rise. (*Premium Times*)

Dialogue is at the heart of locutions pointing to civilian conflict resolution, as reported in Extract 57. The lead story of the news involves herdsmen and how farmers and Miyetti

Allah have decided to give peace a chance through dialogue. To have dialogue form the crux of the news narrative, the media through the rhetic and phatic acts in the news narrative elicit illocutionary acts such as suggesting, lamenting, promising and warning. While suggestions that could bring an end to the crisis were made by the dialoguing parties, they also lamented the deplorable situation of many deaths without bringing anyone to justice. The state government on his parts promised to provide alternative grazing areas to herdsmen in order to avert subsequent clashes between the two agrarians. Linguistic construction types that help the media in capturing the peace narrative essence in the news report basically encompass transitive constructions, and infinitival constructions that are geared towards defining the activities that emphasise the initiation of peace moves orchestrated by mutual dialogue. Integrally, the group and folk entitlements are quite pronounced in the use of locutions pointing to civilian dialogue. Essentially, indices of these civilian dialogue locutions in the text include “to try to resolve...”, “talk shops”, “to further forestall clashes”, and “Government must arrest those making such incendiary comments”.

4.5 Pragmatic implications of the entitlement discourses for peace and conflict in Nigeria

Going through the folds of discourses that evolved from the entitlement perspectives – the types, constraining contexts and the ideological anchorages, there are undoubtedly stern implications of those discourses in the reports of herdsmen and farmers for the general peace and conflict situation in Nigeria. These implications have been substantiated in this section through bi-faced evocations: positive and negative evocations, respectively. The negative (conflict) implication for peace are further delimited into the evocation of polarisation which further yields polarisation based on party bylines and polarisation based on region(al)bylines, and evocation of ethnocentrism, while the positive implications are depicted through evocation of security insights and evocation of potential harmony. In order to properly etch these evocations within the ambience of pragmatics for easy interpretation, the attendant locution types are used to explicate their manifestation in the discourses. It is also imperative to state that the pragmatic implications are drawn from the various entitlement types and contexts

earlier discussed together with their underlying ideologies. The following sections explore them.

4.5.1 Negative evocations

Negative evocations are pragmatic implications in discourses that spell ill for the peace of a nation and consequently multiply conflict. In the reports and comments projecting the entitlement construct in the conflict between herdsmen and farmers, some of the narratives noticeably implicate serious promise for conflict among the herdsmen, farmers and other state actors as well as their supporting readership. The prominent ones among these negative implications are marked off by evocation of polarisation, and evocation of ethnocentrism. These are analysed in the following sections accordingly.

4.5.1.1 Evocation of polarisations

Discourses in the reports and comments on the herdsmen and farmers' conflict have shown intensified implication for peace and conflict by evoking a heightened level of polarisation. Polarisation is defined by the level and intensity of opposing voices over an issue of national interest or concern. From the entitlement discourses, polarisation is constrained by discordant voices that are accentuated by partisan and spatial affiliations. Conflict discourses resulting from entitlement in the reports and comments demonstrate a great measure of polarisation which actively signals two bylines: polarisation based on party bylines, and polarisation based on region(al) bylines.

4.5.1.1.1 Polarisation based on party bylines

This relates directly to political polarisation in which focalisations on the entitlement discourses are steered along the lines of party affiliation. The fulcrum of the state, group and folk entitlement types evokes the separatist ideals that define group differences that could have adverse effect on peace and national inclusivity. Grounded in the political context, the polarisation based on party bylines is basically orchestrated by consequence-indicative locutions and self-defensive locutions. How this plays out is instantiated in the extract that follows.

Extract 58:

PDP warns Fayemi against using state funds for ranching... March 9, 2021

The Peoples Democratic Party in Ekiti State has warned against the use of public funds by the Ekiti State Government to fund the provision of “enclosed grazing/ranching” for herdsmen in the state... “We are however opposed to Fayemi’s attempt to play politics with Ekiti destiny because of his inordinate ambition. (*Premium Times*)

Extract 59:

Opposition blackmailing me with herdsmen, farmers clashes – Buhari

Mr Buhari was apparently referring to the campaign stunts of the Peoples Democratic Party, branding the APC’s federal government as irresponsible to the herdsmen/farmers clashes. Ayo Fayose, the Ekiti State Governor, had also been frontal in accusing the president of allowing the killings to continue, citing his ethnic origin as a major factor (*Premium Times*)

Extracts 58 & 59 are typical illustrations of the evocation of polarisation based on party bylines. Both examples can be subsumed under political polarisation where there is an apparent deployment of both potential consequence-indicative locutions and self-defensive locutions to activate illocutionary force of political opposition which does not only implicitly index the entitlement construct of non-concessionality but also ultimately evoke cognitive frames of separatist ideological polarity. Particularly in Extract 58, the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) through the potential consequence-indicative locutions enabled through the news agency’s rhetic act reported that Fayemi, who is of the All Progressive Congress’ (APC) extraction had intentions to fund cattle ranching in the state with the State’s resources. The PDP therefore in the rider of the report resorted to the consequence-indicative locution powered through the illocutionary act of conditional warning stating that “The party [says such a move] will only be welcome if it is not funded by the state government”.

The oppositional force is implied in the proposition that the PDP’s (opposition party) acceptance of funding cattle ranching by the state governor whom by extralinguistic details is known to be from the ruling party (APC) can only be accepted on the condition that proves funding coming outside of the state’s purse. Some notable locutionary collocates that evoke and concretise the polarisation along party lines are “opposed to”

and “to play politics with” as contained in the locutions “We [the PDP] are however opposed to Fayemi’s [who is of the APC] attempt to play politics with Ekiti destiny because of his inordinate ambition). When further examined, they did not give account of the PDP’s preference of an alternative means different from the governor’s but it was mainly a demonstration of “oppositional duties” as it is common to the Nigeria oppositional system.

Similarly, the polarising discordant voices are even more evident in Extract 58 where President Buhari is consciously trying to defend his integrity through the locutions of identity revalidation and rejection of opposition stance about his position on the herdsman and farmers’ conflict. Owing to his evidentials of identity revalidation in his proposition, there is a clear politicisation of the agrarian context and ethnicisation of the occupation context. This is predicated on the fact that the opposition voices are directly linked to political parties especially the PDP and its actors like Ayodele Fayose.

It received much ethnic undertone also because of the ethnic affiliation of the president who is a Fulani man, and that underscored the allegation he was defending himself from in the proposition “They blackmailing me, saying I have not done anything about the farmers/Fulani herdsman clashes because I am a Fulani man,”. Without any iota of contest, this is an invocation of the principles of the group entitlement construct and folk where group’s (in this case, party allegiance) interest underpins the oppositional voices and that largely entrenches the separatist and solidarist ideologies which uphold independent operations and defend in-group activities. These actions, as presented in the news narratives predict negative impact for the peace of the nation – its political, and economic lives – because the sensitive nature of the issue is deemphasized on the grounds of politics and ethnicity.

4.5.1.1.2 Polarisation based on regional bylines

This typological standing of this polarisation type characterises the issues that pertain to regional biases or (dis)alignments predicated on actors’ geographical delineation. Here, stances are divided by reason of speakers’ locational differences. It is a byproduct of the group entitlement construct which is tied to the separatist and solidarist ideologies. As

such, the entitlement discourses, types and ideology have engendered region-driven polarisation in the Nigerian polity. As a result, the media relies on the conflict-indicative locutions to protest the inclusion-exclusion dynamics of actors' representation of the regional divide in the reports. Some of these regional polarisation-triggering news reports are explicated from the extracts below.

Extract 60:

Nobody Can Force Us Out Of South-West, Miyetti Allah Says, FEB 14, 2021

Fulani herdsmen under the aegis of Miyetti Allah Kautal Hore have vowed to resist any **eviction from the South-West**, citing their rights as enshrined in the Nigerian constitution to live wherever they desire. The National Secretary of Miyetti Allah Kautal Hore, Mr Alhassan Saleh, stated ... **the eviction of herdsmen from the southern region of the country was a dangerous precedent...** (*Sahara Reporters*)

Extract 61:

Ruga Settlements: No Land for Herdsmen in South-East, South-South– Umahi, JUL 01, 2019

Ebonyi State Governor says there is no plan to establish Ruga settlement in any part of the South-East and South-South zones of Nigeria... He said: “There is no plan for any Ruga settlement in any part of South-East and South-South zones...” (*Sahara Reporters*)

Extracts 60 & 61 have exemplified the exact resources that orchestrate polarisations that reflect regional dimensions. The two reports have both revealed the people of one region of the country rejecting the habitation of the others. While the two are found within the contextual restrictions of the social and economic contexts indexed by the fact that the group directly and indirectly affected – Miyetti Allah, the polarising voices are pulling tenacious strings for the eviction and non-acceptance of the “other’s” operations in their regions. In specific reference to Extract 61, the agency of Miyetti Allah, a group which represents the herdsmen in the federation is reportedly rejecting an eviction order by some southwestern groups on the legal grounds that they as Nigerians have right (entitled) to graze their cattle anywhere, hence, the media’s choice of the conflict-indicative locution to protest the implicated eviction order of the groups in the southwestern region. The locutions of protest in the narrative cut across the two stories in

Extracts 60 & 61 projected through linguistic collocates such as “vowed to resist”, “vowed to avenge”, and “would never tolerate any act of injustice”. These spell out the conflict texture and protest framework.

In its entirety, the report is unequivocally anchored on the group entitlement type and the solidarist ideals that empower Miyetti Allah’s defensive act in support of their fellow herdsmen while rejecting, and condemning the negative stance of the oppositional voice. Beyond the immediacy of the specific State government’s injunction, Miyetti Allah’s protest covers the whole of the southwestern Nigeria as expressed from the semantic macro-structure of the headline “Nobody Can Force Us out Of South-West, Miyetti Allah Says”. What triggered this generic statement is explicated in the news details in which the representative of the group, “Mr Alhassan Saleh” who maintained that the order to leave the southwestern region was not only unconstitutional but also a dangerous precedent. It is evident by implication that the report is a response from the Miyetti Allah’s camp to another camp which had issued the eviction order. It is a collective protest made prominent in the report through the deployment of the inclusive pronominal “us” and the second part of the compound structure “...but a dangerous precedent” implicate the potential consequence to be expected should the southwestern region realizes its goal of eviction of the northern group.

Extract 60 also replicates this context differently. Here the governor of Ebonyi State Dave Umahi is reportedly leading the vanguard for the declaration of no space for grazing activities in two regions of the country – south-east and south-south, respectively. The non-concessional state entitlement construct is vividly expressed in the governor’s decision and that consequently tallies with both the separatist and solidarist ideologies that call for regional separation and defense of a group’s right against the other. From the narratives, it could be evinced that both potent consequence-indicative locutions of hostility and self-defensive locutions of identity revalidation and opposition-stance rejection were employed to construct the polarisations depicting regional divide.

Using the consequence-indicative locutions, the report implicate in the propositional act “There will be no part of the South-East [for Ruga]...” that the region lacks the mass to accommodate other agrarians and by implication, any attempt at giving out any part of

the territory to the herdsmen has potential consequence for contestation of the limited resources which might lead to unrest in the region. Meanwhile, the rest of the report shows through the self-defensive locutions that the governor was actually debunking a rumour that indict the southeastern governors of reaching an agreement of conceding land to herdsmen for grazing. So, it was an identity revalidation to reiterate that “There is no plan for any Ruga settlement...” This proposition is intended to correct an impression.

Other lexemes implying the fact that the governor’s reaction was a repair to the opposition’s allegations which include “alleged plans” and “denied any plan”. It is deducible from the two reports that there are profound issues of politically and regionally motivated vanguards of polarisations that are capable of not only estranging regional collectivism but also predicting a viable disruption of peace along political and regional lines.

4.5.1.2 Evocation of ethnocentrism

Ethnocentrism is an ideological concept that constrains in-group/out-group beliefs that breed cultural and ethnic dissension among people of different cultures and ethnicity. It is a situation that evokes the consciousness in one ethnic extraction which leads to the ascribing of negative activities to other while projecting self in positive light. Mostly, the resource conflict has shown that from the varying reports and comments that there is manifest evocation of ethnic clashes in most narratives of the newspapers. The situational contexts naturally invoke the features of group and folk entitlement fanned by the separatist ideology in the news reports on the two agrarian factions. Two principal locution forms were used to forge out this pragmatic implication: potential consequence-indicative locutions and conflict indicative locutions. The following report extracts are typical of this ethnocentric evocation.

Extract 62:

Again, Fulani Herdsmen Attack Nasarawa Community, Kill Two Farmers, SEP 11, 2020

Armed gunmen suspected to be Fulani herdsmen have again attacked residents of Kardoroko community in the Keana Local Government Area of Nasarawa State, killing two farmers. He said, “On Wednesday at 1700

hours, there occurred a farmer, herder clash at Yamadaga Village, a border community between Benue and Nasarawa State. (*Sahara Reporters*)

Extract 63:

Yoruba Group Backs Sunday Igboho's Quest To Protect South-West Against Killer Herdsmen, FEB 07, 2021

A group ... Yoruba Nation Now, has called on all southwesterners to support Yoruba freedom fighter, Sunday Adeyemo, popularly known as Sunday Igboho, in his quest to protect the region against killer herdsmen. The group urged Yoruba people to be proactive and be fully involved in curbing the criminal activities perpetrated by suspected Fulani foot soldiers (*Sahara Reporters*).

Ethnocentrism, considering the representations made of the herdsmen in Extracts 62&63, proves to be one major pragmatic implication of the direction to which the discourses of herdsmen and farmers have taken. For instance, in Extract 62, despite the fact that the historical context of pastoral farming suggests that not only Fulani practises herding in the country, this ethnic group has come to be constantly linked to any attack reported between herdsmen and farmers. In the semantic macro structure of Extract 62, “Again, Fulani Herdsmen Attack Nasarawa Community, Kill Two Farmers”, the strategic topicalisation of the adverbial “again” denotes the recurrence of such activities indicting the subject “Fulani herdsmen”. Also, Fulani as an ethnic group is already being labeled to be a dangerous and harmful ethnic group that other ethnic groups would want to dissociate from. From the literature there are two types of herdsmen – the sedentary and the migratory. While both groups are largely Fulani, the latter have been noted to be the violent ones because they are mostly from the neighbouring countries. The sedentary one has built a good relationship with the host communities and therefore hardly records clashes. It means not all Fulani herdsmen are attackers but then the reports have constrained the cognitive alertness of ethnocentrism among other ethnic groups towards the Fulani while the Fulani also live with that consciousness.

In furtherance, Extract 63 implicated the evocation of ethnocentrism in the report as it reveals in the agencies of one of the major ethnic groups in Nigeria- the Yorubas – pledging their support for their son, Sunday Igboho, who was leading a crusade against the operation of herdsmen in the region. Leaning on the principles of group entitlement,

and the solidarist ideology, the report is constructed in the conflict-indicative locutions under the specifics of the locutions of protest and that of destruction. The locutionary signifiers of protest and destruction are evident in the proposition “With regards to the ongoing Fulani herdsmen killing spree and massacre all over Yorubaland, YNN will neither negotiate nor enter into any bargain on the safety of the Yoruba indigenes”.

This position taken by a Yoruba group in diaspora is informed by the solidarist ideals which registers full support for its members. To emphasise the ethnic import, the media carefully structured the construction by the topicalisation of the prepositional construction “with regards...” where synonymous locutions such as “killing spree”, “and massacre” and “genocidal tendency” were situated with the ethnic indexes “Yorubaland” and “Yoruba indigenes” to foreground ethnocentrism. Here again, the Fulani ethnocentrism surfaces in the referencing of “Fulani foot soldiers” and “killer herdsmen” to which the Yoruba agitators are fighting against – a form of group (security) entitlement. This is extended to reflect the illocutionary acts of warning and charging in the propositions “The group also warned” directed at security agencies to shun lopsidedness in handling the conflict.

What these discourses in the two extracts expressly portend is that herdsmen and farmers’ entitlement reports are laden with ethnocentric resources that project certain ethnic extractions especially the Fulani as deleterious to a common existence in a polity. Hence, the proliferation of locutions of hostility and protest that tilts towards the evocation of ethnocentrism among groups in Nigeria.

4.5.2 Positive evocations

Evocations that are positive from the entitlement discourses in the study are geared towards instituting greater peace and stalling of conflict in the Nigerian polity as far as the discourse of herdsmen and farmers’ conflict is concerned. Two positive pragmatic implications have been culled from the entitlement construct in the reports examined. These are evocation for security insights and evocation for potential harmony.

4.5.2.1 Evocation of potential harmony

Evocation of potential harmony concerns reports that open vistas to dialogue and peaceful co-existence between the conflicting herdsmen and farmers in the selected newspapers. These reports are geared towards finding lasting solutions to the resource conflict. Reports that implicate potential harmony have emanated from dual agencies: direct agency act and indirect agency act. While the direct agency act constraining potential harmony evolved from the herdsmen and farmers' deliberate actions towards proffering solution by themselves, the indirect agency act involves stakeholders' contributions geared towards providing way forward for the conflict resolution. Typically, this pragmatic implication stem from the state and group entitlement complexion and it is linguistically validated through the peace-intended locutions pointing to civilian dialogue. This is exemplified in the extracts that follow.

Extract 64:

Herdsmen: Farmers, Miyetti Allah dialogue on crisis resolution, March 11, 2021

The All Farmers Association of Nigeria and Miyetti Allah Cattle Breeders Association in Ekiti State on Thursday met in Ado Ekiti, Ekiti State, **to try to resolve the lingering crisis occasioned by open grazing of cattle.** Both parties made suggestions on how to end the clashes, which have resulted in the death of many farmers in the state. Although there have been several measures and talk shops, the fatalities attending the clashes have been on the rise. "If Chief Obafemi Awolowo could establish ranches across the southwest in 1958, why can't we do same in this millennium time?" (*Premium Times*)

Extract 65:

Buhari Tasks Farmers, Herdsmen On Tolerance, JAN 19, 2019

His [Buhari] words: **"I appeal to all farmers and herders for restraint, mutual respect and tolerance for one another as people destined to live together in this great country. I appeal for patience and understanding as the administration works towards lasting solutions to these conflicts.** "Speaking further, he said that whatever it would take, he is determined to bring **peace between farmers and herders.** (*Sahara Reporters*)

Samples of discourses that promise potential harmony in the nation concerning the herdsmen and farmers' clashes are exemplified in Extracts 64 and 65. The example in Extract 64 is the direct agency act that involves the herdsmen and farmers themselves coming together to broker peace between them. Peace within this circumstance is defined in civilian terms through peace-indicative locutions that show suggestive measures emanating from stakeholders on how the crisis can be resolved among the agrarians. Evidently, that is what characterises the proposition in the headline "Herdsmen: Farmers, Miyetti Allah dialogue on crisis resolution". Central to this civilian approach is ingrained in the lexemic choice "dialogue" supplemented by other locutionary collocates such "...talk shops", "to try to resolve the lingering crisis", and "...made suggestions".

These constructions all contribute to the fact that measures suggested here are basically civilian and not militaristic. References were made to historical measures that were put in place by Chief Obafemi Awolowo in establishing ranches across the southwest in 1958, while the actors through the illocutionary act consequently condemned actions that were deemed to be fanning the crisis such as the stark demonstration of the entitlement feeling in "claiming that Nigerian lands belong to them and that they must get it by force", thus, connecting to the ideals of group entitlement underscored by the separatist ideology. From Extract 64, the indirect agency act comes into prominent play where actors other than herdsmen and farmers are wading in to proffer solution to the conflict. President Muhammadu Buhari is setting the pace in this direction. Here, the keystone of dialogue is hinged on tolerance. The state, group and folk entitlement types variously projected this through their representative actors – especially in the personality of the president – as a state actor, and a Fulani man.

The peace-maker identity and the advocacy for potential harmony in the Nigerian polity are anchored on the President's admittance of the different job description of farming and pastoralism. As an external actor, the president relied solely on the illocutionary acts of appealing, urging, and promising to register his valued position aimed at establishing peace. While he appealed to the direct actors of the conflict to be tolerant with each other's activities, he further urged them to be patient with his administration as they promise to find lasting solution to the menace. One therefore finds the recurrent use of

peace-intended locutions pointing to civilian dialogue such as “find lasting solution”, “for restraint, mutual respect and tolerance”, “made for peace”, “to be patient and exercise restraint”, “bring peace” and “permanent solution” consistently used to achieve the goal of peace. In addition, tough-raising constructions were mainly instrumental to the realisation of the narratives beginning from the headline. In essence, the efforts exerted by the warring factors, their representative associations and other major stakeholders have tilted towards ensuring the institution of potential harmony in the country.

4.5.2.1 Evocation of security insight

Evocation of security insight – a related but differently situated from the evocation of potential harmony – entails deductions made from opinions from granted interviews and editorials of conflict actors that report or proffer solutions to the conflict. These can be actional and non-actional focalisations that focus on security measures to be taken to address the issue of herdsmen and farmers’ crisis. The trio of state, group and folk entitlement forms are replete with manifestations of security insight engineered by stakeholders within these entitlement distributions backed largely by the solidarist and feudalist ideologies. These are connected through tough-raising and transitive constructions orchestrated by peace-intended locutions. The instantiations below suffice for the explication of the evocation of security insight with various instances couched in the strategisation of topical news narratives.

Extract 66:

How Otukpo Became an Oasis of Peace in Benue after Fulani Militia’s Attack, AUG 19, 2021

Thirteen days to the election that brought in Muhammadu Buhari as president in 2015, Fulani ethnic militia killed about 90 persons in ... a community in Otukpo, Benue State. Six years later, Otukpo has become a model for peace between the Fulani settlers and the indigenous Idoma while much of the state continues to burn in a lingering crisis over grazing rights.... It spells out punishments, including five-year jail term or N1 million fine for anyone whose cattle graze outside a ranch (*Sahara Reporters*)

The report in Extract 66 is an expository account of the new wave of peace recorded in Otukpo community in Benue State. The somewhat editorial report gives replicable

security insights into the conflict between herdsmen and farmers in Nigeria. Despite the statistics released on the number of deaths linked to the conflict in this area, proactive the steps taken by the groups have sufficed in nipping in the bud the occurrence of clashes between the agrarians. And these further bolsters how group cooperation can facilitate unity and peace among people. It also suggests differences triggered by implicit entitlement strife as demonstrated in the painted scenario contained in the narrative. Security insight revealed in the report was constructed leadership proactivity, communal agreement, law enforcement and the invocation of the feudalist ideology.

Beyond the state government's banning of open grazing in the area, the practical peace the people craved was realised under the leadership of the Local Government Area chairman, Mr George Alli through the organisation of stakeholders' meeting, and data capturing of all Fulani settlers in the communities. It should be recalled in the work of Ifatimehin and Tenuche (2009) that one of the triggers of the conflict is the inability of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria to make adequate provisions for the indigenes and settlers' coexistence. That is exactly the problem addressed by the actions of the LGA chairman in the invocation of the feudalist ideology in monetising the space for settlers. The entitlement construct actually led some of the settlers to disagree with the proposition "herdsmen who could not abide by the new arrangement were asked to leave Otukpo while those who obeyed stayed put".

It is safe to aver that community-instituted laws, including laws made at the local government are more adhered to than government general laws because the local government is closer to the people and therefore seems to understand the plight of the people in the environment better and also seems to be able to offer more practical solution. The media on its part has been dutiful in reporting this and that has consequently evoked the security insight to be banked upon by stakeholders in other parts of the country affected by similar problems. Consistently, the report deployed peace-intended locutions such as "Fulani settlers in Olena have found peace among the Idoma" which presupposes the search for peace in the area. This was underlined by tough-raising constructions such as "Once the ranches were established...." These, as referentially

constructed, enable the cohesion and proper linking of participants' roles in the narrative and essentially the major stakeholders of the conflict.

4.6 Discussion of findings

I have circumspectly presented in the analysis of this study how entitlement perspectives, with their variegated contexts and underlying ideologies define the resource conflict between herdsman and farmers in online media reports. In line with the central goal and objectives of the study, a close interaction with the online-only news reports and comments revealed the recurrence of the state, group and folk entitlement types anchored on political, cultural, sociocultural, economic, religious and legal contexts.

While the state entitlement leans on concessional and non-concessional rights tied to security and resource-dearth factors, the group entitlement characterised by professional and ethnic constructs demonstrated its entitlement construct based on occupational and ethnic affiliations. Both the state and group resource entitlements resonate with the complexity of the conflict as it borders on the different economic and sociopolitical perspectives taken on the conflict. For instance, the state entitlement presents State Governors as subnationals who overtly registered their entitlement concerns in terms of the power they will in their States. Hence, some of the State Governors staunchly rejected some policies of the federal government because they feel it was encroaching on the rights and safety of their people. So, there is this sense of owners of space underlined by its politics that the state entitlement type revealed in our findings. Literature is not vocal about these findings as many works have not taken the entitlement discourse perspective on the issue of herdsman-farmers conflict in Nigeria.

The group entitlement construct, which comes in the toga of sociocultural and economic contexts, has a strong base and relation with sociological works on the herders-farmers conflict. For instance, Johnson and Taofik (2016) acknowledge that the cattle rearing which had been known to be an economic activities or occupation, has suddenly become harmful to inhabitants of the host communities. Our identification of the occupational and ethnic group entitlements is underlined by Johnson and Taofik's study. However, they

could not link this abrupt labelling from herders to bandits to the entitlement construct underlying it as I have identified in the research.

In its description, the folk entitlement type under the aegis of indigenous and non-indigenous foci replicated a watered down form of the group entitlement with its peculiarity grossly defined by family ties as well as the indigenes versus settlers' differences. These entitlement types and contexts were found to be distinctively engendered by the separatist, solidarist, egalitarianist and feudalist ideologies. The separatist ideals were established on the dual forms of radicalism and liberalism and thus naturally orchestrated the non-concessional state entitlement, ethnic group entitlement and indigenous folk entitlement, respectively.

Within the bounds of the solidarist ideology, there were evident manifestations of the US/THEM ideological polarity as recorded in the concessional and non-concessional state entitlements, professional and ethnic group entitlements and indigenous and non-indigenous folk entitlements. Similarly, my findings further revealed that the egalitarianist ideology was instrumental to the reports and comments that underlined group entitlement construct where equality was jostled for in both crime and communal standings. The last ideology – the feudalist – also revealed tenancy-oriented and lineage-oriented categories that basically prompted the ethnic group entitlement. Pragmatic strategies through which these entitlement discourses were enacted in the reports and comments showed two macro focalisations: media focalisation and actors' focalisations, respectively. These focalisations jointly evince, in the news narratives, the politicisation of the agrarian context, strategisation of topical news narratives, ethnicisation of occupational contexts, monetisation/commodification of territorial space and religionisation of economic acts.

Linguistically, I established that the news reports of the entitlement discourses projected through the aforementioned strategies found their expression in the application of certain locution types, namely potential consequence-indicative locutions, self-defensive locutions, conflict-indicative locutions and peace-intended locutions. While the potential consequence-indicative locutions focused on hostility and eviction, the self-defensive locutions enhanced identity revalidation and opposition-stance rejection. Equally,

conflict-indicative locutions were directed at reporting protests and destructions, whereas, the peace-intended locutions pointed to military intervention and civilian dialogue. These findings holistically, as revealed in the study, have their pragmatic implications for peace and conflict resolution in Nigeria on both positive and negative lights.

Using the triangulation theoretical approach, I have unpacked through the speech actions mainly driven by the (non-)illocutionary force indicative devices, the entitlement construct and its sociocognitive import with the evaluation of actors' valued positions as well as their locutionary acts that help project the entitlement perspectives in the news reports and comments. The synergy of these theories help the understanding of the negative dissensions heightened by the demonstration of rights to space and resources occasioned by dearth of resources for both agrarians, the ideologies driving these dispositions as reported and the implication that has for the peace of Nigeria in general.

These current findings in a way square well with works that acknowledge contestation over limited resources as the primary triggering factors for the conflict are documented within the construction of psychological entitlement in the literature (Imo, 2017; Tersoo, 2016 & 2018; Muhammed, Ismaila and Bibi, 2015; Bagu and Smith, 2017; Chukwuma and Atelhe, 2014; Brown, Budzek, and Tamboski, 2009; Campbell, Bonacci, Shelton, Exline, & Bushman, 2004; Piff, 2014) and the scholars from the biases of media and pragmatics who examined the subject from the mediated communication perspectives as this current work (Gever and Essien, 2017; Ellah and Ekor, 2018).

Beyond the identification of limited resources as underlying cause of the resource conflict as rightly identified in these studies as well as the amplification of the psychological entitlement and media representation of actors, I have demonstrated in this current effort, the various contextual variances that orchestrate the distinct entitlement types, the underlying ideologies, the strategic modality of their representation in the news reports and ultimately their implication for peace and conflict resolution in Nigeria.

My analysis has therefore submitted that entitlement perspectives – stances demonstrating rights to space and resources – are chiefly the engenderers of resource conflicts in the Nigerian polity. This is principally hinged on and demonstrated in

stakeholders' mediated propositions at the state, group and folk level where the entitlement manifestations are more pronounced and if not consciously addressed can culminate in dissension that can break up a nation along political, religious, occupational and ethnic lines. Unfortunately, these contextual lines have often been evaded by scholarship on entitlement in resource conflict and those on herdsman and farmers' conflict. I therefore submit that the pragmatic implication of the reports and comments indexing the entirety of the entitlement dimensions on peace and conflict resolution recommends national policies that address land use act with respect to community rights and occupational rights as revealed in the Otukpo exemplification (Sahara Reporters, August, 2021).

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Summary of the study

This study has taken a novel approach to the discourse of herdsmen and farmers' conflict by examining its entitlement perspectives, context and ideology in online news reports in Nigeria. The five-chapter thesis is motivated by the recurrent contestations occasioned by the question of rights in the reports on herders-famers' conflict.

Chapter One of the study basically introduces the background of the research through the decontextualisation of the basic concepts of entitlement, context and ideology, the identity and history of the Fulani herdsmen and the historical context of the conflict in the Nigerian polity. The chapter also sheds light on the two investigative online newspapers which formed its source of data and their operations. The chapter equally establishes the research gap through its engagement of the research problem. It thus unveils the paucity of research efforts exerted by extant works in domesticating and crystalising the concept of entitlement within ambience of pragmatics particularly with respect to resource conflict. It further spells out the central aim of the thesis which is to examine the entitlement perspectives, the contexts characterising them and the ideologies underlying the perspectives taken on the entitlement-driven resource conflict. This is marked by four constraining objectives which include identifying and examining the entitlement types, their characterising contexts, underlying ideologies, pragmatic strategies deployed in enacting the ideologies and the locutions types that project the strategies. The scope of the study covers online news reports on herdsmen and farmers' conflict between 2015 and 2021 on *Sahara Reporters* and *Premium Times*. The significance lies in the understanding created by the study in appropriating the entitlement construct in

unearthing a major triggering factor of the conflict between herdsmen and farmers in Nigeria.

Chapter Two focuses on the review of relevant extant works. It is divided into three main parts: the first slant explicates relevant concepts beginning with entitlement as a phenomenon variously conceived as right and how it relates with deservedness, endowment and the law. Other notable concepts such as context, ideology and its different connections, conflict discourse, the language, procedure and style of investigative online newspapers, pragmatics, migration, and the concept of cattle culture. The second part pays attention to empirical works on herdsmen and farmers' conflict from both language-based and non-language-based perspectives. Then the third part reviews theories such as critical discourse analysis with sustained focus on van Dijk's sociocognitive critical discourse analytical approach, Fetzer and Odebunmi's theorisings of context, Sbisa's speech act theory and Hilpert's grammar of constructions.

Chapter Three projects the methodology encompassing research design, sampling method and data collection procedure, method of data analysis, and analytical model. The chapter reveals the adoption of the descriptive design and the purposive sampling technique through which 106 reports were selected from *Sahara Reporters* and *Premium Times*, respectively. Of these 106 reports, the chapter reveals that SR recorded 40 reported while PT had the larger share of 66 through quota distributional technique. The data were subjected to pragmatic analysis.

Chapter Four presents the analysis and interpretations of the data in a structure of five-phase analysis derived from the four objectives of the study. Based on the first and second objectives, the first analytical phase identifies three major entitlement types that characterise the reports and comments on the herdsmen and farmers' resource conflict. They are: state, group and folk entitlement characterised by six contexts namely, political, social, sociocultural, economic, legal and cultural contexts. At the state level, political leaders and other stakeholders demonstrated the entitlement ideals fully entrenched in the social and legal contexts. The fulcrum of the state entitlement manifested in the social actors' concessional and non-concessional specifics of the entitlement demonstrations. In its representation on the news narrative, the group entitlement type embraces professional

and ethnic voices in their case for rights within the sociocultural and economic contexts, whereas, the folk entitlement type yielded its rights under the auspices of indigenous and non-indigenous poles situated in the cultural and legal contexts. These entitlement types and contexts were explicated from the prisms of the speech actions that denote and inference rights and their trailing dispositions.

The second phase of the analysis engages four ideologies that underpinned the entitlement perspectives. These include the separatist ideology, the solidarist ideology, the egalitarianist ideology, and the feudalist ideology. Separatism refers to the ideals of self-determination assumed the radicalist and liberalist dimensions in the reports and comments on herdsmen and farmers' conflict. The solidarist ideology concerned ingroup and outgroup defensive moves and were mostly demonstrated two subcategorisations – occupation-centred and people-centred ideals. Equality is the definer of the egalitarianist ideals which stunningly seek space in crime and communal egalitarian measures in pursuance of their rights.

In furtherance of this ideology, the feudalist ideology promotes the material philosophy of feudalism but operated under the ideals of tenancy-oriented and lineage-oriented ideological structures. In their distribution, the separatist ideology was found to be instrumental to the propositions that define the non-concessional state entitlement, ethnic group entitlement and indigenous folk entitlement. For the solidarist, strong links are established within the reports that evince non-concessional entitlement, professional and ethnic group entitlement, indigenous and non-indigenous folk entitlement. Egalitarianist ideals underscored in the reports, the occupational/professional group entitlement, and ethnic group entitlement. On its part, the feudalist ideology solely projected the concessional state entitlement, and indigenous folk entitlement.

The third phase of the analysis in chapter four, relying on stance interpersonal evaluative force, points out five pragmatic strategies for constructing the ideologies. Ultimately, these come in media and actors' focalisations. These jointly provide the politicisation of the agrarian context, strategisation of topical news narratives, ethnicisation of occupational context, monetisation/commodification of territorial space and religionisation of economic acts. Through the politicisation act, the media and

stakeholders using the rhetic and phatic acts present issues of agricultural and occupational concern in the light of politics. Through ethnicisation of occupational context reports that naturally deal with the herders and farmers' occupation, are presented from the prisms of ethnicity where they are related exclusively to an ethnic group and thus made to bear the negative framing. Reports and comments that employ the monetisation and commodification pragmatic strategy concern social actors' demonstration of right by selling out, renting or leasing space to settlers in order preserve continued ownership rights. Finally, the pragmatic strategy of religionisation of economic act involves reports that bring to bear on the economic activities of herding; the religious voice that social actors in the news reports expect. These strategies are deployed in projecting the ideologies that triggered the entitlement types.

The fourth phase of the analysis of the chapter identifies four locution types which indexed the crux of the entitlement construct as well as the ideological triggers. They are: potential consequence-indicative locutions (PCI-ls), self-defensive locutions (SD-ls), conflict-indicative locutions (CI-ls), and peace-intended locutions (PI-ls). The potential consequence-indicative locutions are realised through locutions of hostility and ejection/eviction in certain reports. In the self-defensive locutions, stakeholders consciously repair face over allegations levelled against them on the issue of herdsmen and farmers' conflict. This is achieved locutions of identity revalidation and opposition-stance rejection. Conflict-indicative locutions were also appropriated to reflect different entitlement driven conflicts under the splinter locutions of protest and destruction. Finally, peace-intended locutions – locutions that scheme peace in the news reports and comments – were also identified. They were enacted in sub-locutions as locutions pointing to military interventions and locutions pointing to civilian dialogue. Notable among the construction types that concretised these locutions include preposition dative, tough raising, transitive, and participial constructions which allow for the topic and focus of the structures and their thematic placement.

Finally, the fifth phase of the analysis looks at the implication of the herdsmen and farmers' discourses for peace and conflict resolution in Nigeria. A cursory examination revealed negative and positive implications of the discourses couched in three evocations:

on the negative outlooks, there is the evocation of polarisation, evocation of ethnocentrism, while on the positive angle; there is the evocation of potential harmony and evocation of security insight. The implication that the entitlement discourses polarize was drawn on two perspectives namely, polarisation based on party byline (political polarisation) and polarisation based on regional bylines. For instance, it was established from the discourses that the non-concessional state entitlement, ethnic group entitlement, indigenous folk entitlement together with their trailing separatist and solidarist ideologies portend polarisation, and ethnocentrism while solution proffering reports and comments as well as reports on military intervention signal potential harmony and equally offer security insights that could lead to successful policy formulation.

5.2 Conclusion

The study has concretised the entitlement perspectives drawn on the resource conflict between herdsmen and farmers' conflict in Nigeria. Entitlement as a conflict mostly found in disciplines such as law, personal psychology, anthropology, marketing and political science has been, for the first time, been appropriated in this study from a pragmatic purview to account for the variegated demonstrations of right in online news reports on the conflict of the agrarians. It has established that the entitlement construct is a major definer of dissension in the construction of the reports and comments on these newspapers.

Adopting a triangulation of theoretical bases, the study forges out that the entitlement construct permeate the state, group and folk levels of the conflict. In addition, it also shows that there is a disaggregation of the discourses on the conflict, made possible by the differing contextual underpinnings ranging from political, legal, social, sociocultural, economic and cultural biases. This ultimately stretches the resource conflict beyond its traditional base of agriculture into an ideological conflict which polarises the nation along ethnic, political and religious bylines.

The media have been noted to be strategic in their reportage and this strategicness has not only amplified the entitlement construct but has eminently orchestrated the comments of readers such that conflict-indicative, potential consequence-indicative, self-defensive and

peace-intended locutions generally mark the stances of the news agencies, the actors and the readers taken on the conflict in Nigeria.

5.3 Contributions to knowledge

The study contributes to scholarship in a number of ways. Primarily, it is the first study known to the researcher that provides information on the entitlement concept in the field of pragmatics. It does that by establishing a link and interface between sociology, anthropology and pragmatics. In furtherance of the interface, the study creates a model that is instructive for providing a template for analysing related data. In other words, the analytical model can be adopted by studies with similar reports and discourse issues to demystify the entitlement construct, particularly in conflict situation. Methodologically, the study amalgamates relevant theoretical features from entitlement, context and ideology that can distinctively account for the entitlement discourse in pragmatics. Essentially, to the society, the study provides clearer perspectives on the social conceptions and implications of the entitlement resource conflict between herdsmen and farmers in Nigeria. It also evinces mechanisms of media reportages of entitlement and the strategies adopted in constructing resource entitlement conflict to elicit readers' informed responses.

Beyond the disciplines of pragmatics and discourse analysis to which this present study naturally belongs, it can be applied by lawmakers to formulate policies of occupational rights among agriculturists in the country. The knowledge provided can be applied by the three tiers of government in making laws in their various houses of assembly towards ending the agitations of occupancy. Legislators would be guided through the findings of the study in formulating policies that take into account the different contextual nuances that have been found to undermine peace among major actors in the agricultural sector. The executive, at the implementation level would relate with issues of ethnic and religious plurality in enacting or proposing initiatives that can jeopardise the unity of the nation with reference to the RUGA experience exuded in the study. The judiciary would, by the insight provided in this study, be consciously open to addressing the complexities of the concept of rights in relation to entitlement and the land use act of 1978.

Also, the study could be applied in peace and conflict studies in which it stands to offer practical insights into the resolution of resource conflict. It can also be adequately applied in the field of agricultural science with respect to food security and the entitlement conflict of space management. Government would find the Otukpo framework under the peace intended-locutionary extract of the research useful in developing policy that would foster peace among settlers and indigenes. Media studies would find the insight provided through the pragmatic strategies and locutions identified in this study relevant in censoring reportages that evoke ethnocentrism and other toxic ideological voices by reducing such. Hence, institutes of media studies would find the study apposite in that regards. Political actors, religious leaders, as well as community leaders would find this study valuable on issues centering on land, and indigene-settler relationships particularly bordering on cross-cultural dynamics. Legal studies would find the concept of entitlement and its plethora of engagement in this research immensely helpful in situating and interpreting rights and resource entitlements in law.

5.4 Recommendations/suggestions for further studies

This study, after a careful interrogation of the holistic outcome of the resource entitlement frame, recommended principally that an aspect of pragmatics called entitlement pragmatics is introduced into language studies to examine resource conflict in different contexts outside the agrarian. In the same vein, legal injunctions should be placed to censor media's negative disaggregation of conflicts beyond their natural triggers as evident in the pragmatic strategies of this present study. Similarly, policies should be made to encourage local governments who are closer to the people to formulate regulations that would instill communal tolerance and define rights to space between nomadic settlers and sedentary farming communities.

It should be stressed that this study was restricted to the news reports on herdsmen and farmers' conflict in Nigeria. By implication, therefore, a study on Nigeria and other neighbouring countries would offer a broader picture of the entitlement construct in Africa. Other studies could also examine entitlement in the different state-initiated policy documents across Nigeria. Reports on the Niger Delta resource conflict could also be considered by scholars. In a similar vein, theories different from speech act,

sociocognitive approach to critical discourse analysis, stance and the outside-in contextual design can be deployed to analyse reports on the herdsmen and farmers' conflict to realise new results that could open up fresh understanding of resource conflict.

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APPENDIX

S/N	YEAR	NEWS REPORT	ISSUE (S)	PT	SR
1	2015	Herdsmen's attack on Kogi community and the burning of homes	Destruction of Lives and Resources	1	
2		Report on how Nigeria is fueling herdsmen and farmers' crisis host communities	Destruction of Lives and Resources	1	
3	2016	Governor Fayose's declaration of war on Fulani herdsmen	Destruction of Lives and Resources		1
4		Nigeria Army Thwarts Attack Outside Dansadau Town by Herdsmen	Destruction of Lives and Resources		1
5		Fulani Herdsmen's destruction of Ondo Farmers' Produce	Destruction of Lives and Resources		1
6		Special report on Agatu killing field...	Destruction of Lives and Resources	1	
7		Arewa Forum's condemnation of 'herdsmen' attack on Enugu community	Destruction of Lives and Resources	1	
8		Exclusive report of how suspected Fulani herdsmen kill Police DPO	Destruction of Lives and Resources	1	
9		Herdsmen Attack and Adamawa community call for divine Intervention	Destruction of Lives and Resources	1	
10		Special report on Agatu killing field with blood on the street, charred bodies everywhere	Destruction of Lives and Resources	1	
11	2017	Ekiti farmers' decry of the destruction of N35 million crops by cattle	Destruction of Lives and Resources	1	
12		Miyetti Allah's commiseration with victims and the jettisoning of eviction order	Ethnicity	1	
13		Farmers and herdsmen's clashes in Adamawa and the killing of six	Destruction of Lives and Resources	1	
14	2018	Abia Assembly's Ignoring of Defence Minister's Bans of Open Grazing	Rural Grazing Area (RUGA)		1
15		Herdsmen's Attack on Benue Community During Peace Meeting	RUGA		1
16		UNILORIN'S Multi-million Naira Research Farms Destruction	RUGA		1
17		Faulting Buhari's Management of Security Challenges over herdsmen killing	Ethnicity		1

18		Olu Falae assessment of Cattle Colony and the Condemnation of Attack On His Farm	RUGA		1
19		Herdsmen's arrest In Ondo Over Herdsmen/Farmers Clash by police	Destruction of Lives and Resources		1
20		Reported Herdsmen's naming conquered villages in Plateau	Destruction of Lives and Resources		1
21		Sultan's 2 Months Ultimatum to Miyetti Allah over Killer Herdsmen	Ethnicity		1
22		Shagaya's exposition of the understanding of the herdsmen and farmers' clashes	RUGA		1
23		Yoruba Leaders' Rejection of Cattle Colonies over Terrorist Herdsmen	Ethnicity		1
24		Ebonyi rejects Cattle colonies proposal by Nigeria government	RUGA	1	
25		Jigawa community's one month's quit notice herdsmen	Ethnicity	1	
26		Jigawa State's identification of 452 grazing reserves for herdsmen over herdsmen and farmers' conflict	RUGA	1	
27		Fayose demands herdsmen in Ekiti State to register with N5,000	Ethnicity	1	
28		Oluwo of Iwo's comments on no-roaming of cattle in the 21th	RUGA	1	
29		Herdsmen/Farmers crisis can ignite war, Umahi, Miyetti Allah warn	RUGA	1	
30		Nigerian Working Group's proposition on the resolution of herdsmen crisis	RUGA	1	
31		Katsina State's allocation of 5,300 hectares of land for cattle colony	RUGA	1	
32		Killers of Fulani's cow in Ekiti to spend one year in jail	RUGA	1	
33		Governor Okowa's rejection of cattle colony in Delta	RUGA	1	
34		Buhari's outcry of opposition's blackmail over herdsmen and farmers' clashes	Politics	1	
35		Plateau governor's denial of land ceding for cattle colonies	RUGA	1	
36		Farmer's murder by suspected herdsmen	Destruction of Lives and Resources	1	
37		Kaduna Senator's position of not ceding land belonging to university	RUGA	1	
38		Unijos hostel's killing of Law student by suspected herdsmen	Destruction of Lives and Resources	1	
39		Group's report on the killing of over 2000 Nigerians in the herders-farmers' clashes.	Destruction of Lives and Resources		1

40		Amnesty Report Blames Farmers-Herders Killings On Govt's Gross 'Incompetence' And Police Negligence	Politics		1
41		The arrest of herdsmen With AK-47 Rifle In Enugu	Destruction of Lives and Resources		1
42		Herdsmen's confession of making over 100m from kidnapping in Edo	Destruction of Lives and Resources		1
43		Inaccessibility of villages after weeks' attacks in Benue	Destruction of Lives and Resources	1	
44		Peace Committee's interview on what Nigeria must do to end farmer/herders' conflict, election violence	Destruction of Lives and Resources	1	
45		Unijos hostel's killing of Law Student by suspected herdsmen	Destruction of Lives and Resources	1	
46		Miyetti Allah's denial of Buhari and Atiku's endorsement	Politics	1	
47	2019	Afenifere's eviction order to killer herdsmen to leave south west	RUGA		1
48		Buhari Government's Insistence of Ruga Settlements and condemnation of Governors	RUGA		1
49		Buhari's appeal to farmers and herdsmen on tolerance	RUGA		1
50		Buhari's admonition of farmers to refrain from herdsmen attack in the course of their migration	RUGA		1
51		Niger State Government's avowal to continue with RUGA despite other's disapproval	RUGA		1
52		Taraba Communities' abandonment of homes For fear of Herdsmen Attack	Destruction of Lives and Resources		1
53		Nigerian Government's Approval N91billion For Grazing Reserves	RUGA		1
54		Umahi's refusal of Ruga settlements in South-East and South-South	RUGA		1
55		Northern Group's Warning over Peace Hindering actions on RUGA.	RUGA		1
56		Gombe Governor's stance of going ahead with RUGA settlement to prevent the suffering of herdsmen	RUGA		1
57		Afenifere's echoing of Obasanjo's allegation on Fulanisation	Ethnicity	1	
58		Taraba herdsmen and farmers' clash and the killing of five	Destruction of Lives and Resources	1	
59		Group's clamour for amnesty for detained herdsmen from government	Politics	1	
60		Herdsmen, and farmers's stormy session on	RUGA	1	

		ways to peaceful coexistence			
61		Hundreds displacement in Adamawa as Fulani herdsmen attack two communities	Destruction of Lives and Resources	1	
62		Ooni's threat to pursue bad FULANI herders out of Yoruba land over insecurity	Ethnicity	1	
63		Investigation of the cause of herders and farmers' destruction of homes in Oyo	RUGA	1	
64		The planned ending of Nigeria's livestock crisis between herders and farmers' violence	RUGA	1	
65		Oyo community's killing escalation between herdsmen and farmers' clashes	Destruction of Lives and Resources	1	
66		Ruga settlement's benefits list out by presidency	RUGA	1	
67		RUGA initiative only for states ready to cater for Fulani – Ganduje	RUGA	1	
68		Ruga: Northern governors call for calm	RUGA	1	
69		Opinion on the steeped history of distrust on Ruga and the solution for the conflict	RUGA	1	
70		SKC Ogbornia's warning against Fulani fighting Buhari's war	RUGA	1	
71		The sacking of two communities, and razing of 27 houses in Nasarawa by suspected herdsmen	Destruction of Lives and Resources	1	
72		Three herdsmen arrested for allegedly killing farmer	Destruction of Lives and Resources	1	
73		Yoruba elders' commendation of Buhari over RUGA suspension	RUGA	1	
74		Buhari, Atiku campaign manifestos lack solutions deemed to lack substance over herdsmen and farmers' crisis	Politics	1	
75		Herdsmen's beheading of girl in Ekiti over failed marital agreement	Destruction of Lives and Resources	1	
76		My ordeal in the hands of kidnapers – Victim's narration of his experience in the hands of kidnapers and suspected herdsmen	Destruction of Lives and Resources	1	
77		Plateau University student's killing and raping by suspected herders	Destruction of Lives and Resources	1	
78		Report of herders killing more than Boko Haram in 2018	Destruction of Lives and Resources	1	
79		Tope Oriola's comment on criminal Fulani herders and insecurity in Nigeria	Ethnicity	1	
80	2020	Special report on herders and farmers conflict and the banning of beef consumption by Nigerian community	Destruction of Lives and Resources	1	
81		Fulani Herdsmen's Attack Nasarawa of	Destruction of		1

		Community and the Killing of Two Farmers	Lives and Resources		
82		Again, Fulani Herdsmen Kill Farmers In Plateau State Hours After Peace Meeting	Destruction of Lives and Resources		1
83		Bauchi Governor's Suspension of Emir Over Herdsmen and Farmers Clash	Destruction of Lives and Resources		1
84		Clash Between Farmers and Herders Leaves Two Persons Dead in Edo	Destruction of Lives and Resources		1
85		Oyo farmers lamenting over attack by Fulani herders	Destruction of Lives and Resources		1
86		Vigilantes and Fulani Herdsmen clash Imo	Destruction of Lives and Resources		1
87		Herdsmen and Ondo farmers' clash and Amotekun's 42 Cows seize	Destruction of Lives and Resources		1
88		OPC's awareness creation over influx of herdsmen in Oyo Community	Ethnicity		1
89		South-East Communities complaint of Herdsmen Take Over Farmlands	Destruction of Lives and Resources		1
90		Miyetti Allah's response to IPOB over comments on rejecting their investment in South East	Ethnicity		1
91		Abia's rejection of cattle colonies for herdsmen	RUGA	1	
92		Fulani herdsmen's exclusive revelation on why they attack Agatu	Destruction of Lives and Resources	1	
93		Fayose vows to equip Ekiti hunters for war with Fulani	RUGA	1	
94		Nigerian Catholic Bishops' warning of war and rejection of cattle colonies	RUGA	1	
95		PDP warns Fayemi against using state funds for ranching	RUGA	1	
96		South West Houses Assembly reject Miyetti Allah's request to join...	Ethnicity	1	
97		Urhobo group's demand for herdsmen's eviction from Delta community	Destruction of Lives and Resources	1	
98	2021	Report and investigation of the Igangan killing and abductions	Destruction of Lives and Resources	1	
99		Special report on farmers/herders' killing and implication on food security in Benue	Destruction of Lives and Resources	1	
100		Bauchi Governor's condemnation of Akeredolu	Ethnicity		1

		on permission to live in Ondo Forests			
101		Osibanjo's revelation of 22 States Acceptance of Ranching towards solving Farmers-Herdsmen Crisis	RUGA		1
102		Ex-US Secretary Of State's stance on Buhari's regime's undermining of Christians' killing in the herdsmen and farmers' conflict	Politics		1
103		Herdsmen: Farmers, Miyetti Allah dialogue on crisis resolution	RUGA	1	
104		Miyetti Allah's demand for Sunday Igboho's arrest in Oyo crisis	Ethnicity	1	
105		Nigerian senators debate insecurity as lawmaker blames Fulani herdsmen	Politics	1	
106		MURIC's confirmation of herders' overwhelming evidence of herders' farm destruction	RUGA	1	
		TOTAL		66	40