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Theoretical Discourse on Sedentary Farmers and Fulani Pastoralists' Conflict

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Abstract

This paper examined theoretical discourse of sedentary farmers and Fulani pastoralists' conflict. The methodological context of the paper is based on documentary analysis. The basic assumptions of conflict theory include human are self-interested; societies operate under perpetual scarcity of resources; conflict is pervasive and unavoidable within social group; struggle and crisis lead to some people and groups controlling and dominating others; and dominated groups disproportionately influence resources allocations and social structures. Conflict theory has been attacked for being too politicized and ignores how different social institutions such as family, education etc provides essential functions in modern society and work together to create equilibrium. Despite the weaknesses of conflict theory, frustration-aggression theory a variant of conflict theory assumes that aggressive behaviour is always caused by frustration and that individual always responds to stressful events by striking out at others with aggressive behaviour. It therefore provides an understanding of the dynamic of conflict between sedentary farmers and Fulani because interpersonal cause of frustration, one of the root causes of frustration is competition between groups. In addition, the goals and expectations are among the causes of frustration and that a goal has to be personally important if the blockage of the achievement is to evoke negative effect hence the emergence of conflict between sedentary farmers and Fulani pastoralists. Furthermore, it is not only the disputants who usually cause frustration, some well-to-do individuals or selfish co-operators also generate frustration as the detrimental behaviour which may prevent individuals from achieving their objectives. Furthermore, social conflict occurs as a result of frustration. This situation could be observed in a situation where the needs of individuals are denied overtly, as the impact of the way society is structured, organized and classified. This issue motivates individuals to express their grievances through violent or non-violent ways. Conflict between sedentary farmers and Fulani pastoralists serve as a good example in which frustration leads to aggression. Therefore, Fulani pastoralists as a group in the society damages sedentary farmers' farm land because they also need pastures and water which sedentary farmers also as a social group blocks that lead to the conflict between land resource users. The relevance of social conflict theory is that it encapsulates concept of conflict reduction a mechanism for managing crises between sedentary farmers and Fulani pastoralists through the assistance of the third party as the mediators.

Keywords: Conflict Theory, Frustration-aggression Theory, Social Conflict Theory, Sedentary Farmers and Fulani Pastoralists

1. Introduction

1.1 Background

Theories are important in the research and aid in understanding the consequences of the research work. Upon considering the role of theory in a research, some perspectives of social resource conflict are discussed. Conflict theories are approaches in political philosophy and Sociology which explain that individuals and groups within society interact on the basis of conflict rather than consensus. Many political philosophers and sociologists have been framed as having conflict perspectives dating back as far as Plato's idea of the tripartite soul of the Republic to Hobbe's ideas in the Leviathan (Eric, 2017) [10]. Other philosophers connected to conflict perspectives are Adam Smith, Jean Bodin, John Stuart Mills, Thomas Robert Malthus, Karl Marx and Geog Simmel etc (Tuner, 1975) [25]. For instance, Simmel was one of the pioneer sociologists to formally employ conflict as a framework to comprehend social change in 1908 book conflict and web of group affiliations (Simmel, 1964) [21].

In classical conflict theory, the two pioneer conflict theorists were Polish-Austrian sociologist and political theorist Ludwig Gumplowiz (1838-1909) and the American sociologist Lester F Ward (1841-1931) (Irving, 2007) [11]. In addition, conflict theorists were known as the pioneers of sociology particularly the arguments of Emile Durkhein, Marx Weber, Geog Simmel, Karl Marx and Frank Ward (Tuner, 1975) [25]. For instance, Emile Durkhein (1858-1917) explained that society as a functioning organism addressed social conflict in form of crime. Also, Marx Weber (1864-1920) explained conflict with different ideas of Marx where he argued that the significance of socialization is the ability of people to affect their social interactions. Furthermore, Karl Marx (1818-1883) argued his conflict theory on a dialectical materialist issue and explained that capitalism like other socio-economic systems would inevitably bring internal tensions resulting to its own destruction. While another approach to conflict theory was provided by Wright Mill and considered as the founder of modern conflict theory (Knapp, 1994) [13]. Mill believed that social structures are created through conflict between individuals with varied interests and resources and therefore people and resources are influenced by these structures and by the unequal distribution of power and resources in the society (Knapp, 1994) [13]. Furthermore, Gene Sharp (1928-2018) was known for his write-up on non-violent struggle which has influenced many anti-government resistance struggles around the world (Sharp, 2011) [18]. A recent approach to conflict theory was founded by Canadian sociologist Alan Sears. He argued that societies are defined by inequality that produces conflict rather than which produces order and consensus. The disadvantaged have structural interests that run counter to the status quo. Human potential is suppressed by conditions of exploitation and oppression which are important in any society with an equal division of labour. Consensus is a euphemism for ideology the state serves the particular interests of the most powerful while claiming to represent the interests of all.

1.2 Conflict: Giddens (1996:395) contends that conflict refers to antagonism between individuals and groups in the society. It could be a clash of interest or people may involve in active struggle with one another. Mock and Synder (1957:212) identified the characteristics of conflict as the existence of two or more parties; their interaction arises from a condition of resource scarcity or position of scarcity; they engage in opposing actions; their behaviour is intended to damage, injure or eliminate the other group; and their interactions are overt and could be measured by outside observers. The conflict between farming groups and Fulani population had been occurring in the study area due to the scarcity of land resources such as land routes and watering points and resulted to loss of lives and property. In this study conflict refers to the prolong disagreement between sedentary farmers and Fulani pastoralists over access and control of land resources. This conflict could be violent and non-violent in nature.

1.3 Types of Conflict:

There are two type of conflict non-violent and violent conflict.

1.3.1 Non-violent Conflict

Non-violent conflict is a type of conflict that does not lead to the destruction of lives and property. It is connected and prevented by the established local institutions at the grass-root level of land resource management of common properties. The institutions for the management of non-violent are based on segregation of land resource users in terms of defining the rights as well as access to the land resources for various land resource users. The historical grievances and perceived injustices such as marginalization of the other land resource users are factors that triggered non-violent conflict.

Non-violent conflict resulted from avoidance techniques which include Fulani pastoralists' migration from places of high competition with sedentary farmers, co-operation between sedentary farmers and Fulani pastoralists to counter land resource use, adaptation of informal institutions to administer agreement and negotiations before the emergence of violent conflict.

1.3.2 Violent Conflict

Violent conflict refers to the physical violence that differentiates it from non-violent consequences. Violent conflict was further explained by Brodburg, Fisher and Lavie (1994) [6] to refer to structural violence which could be seen as alienation of natural resources such as land, water etc. Many forms of violence could be observed as more or less destructive outcomes. Such violence has resulted in death, injuries and displacement of individuals as well as destruction of property and livestock.

Thus, conflict between sedentary farmers and Fulani pastoralists both violent and non-violent have occurred for a long period of time. In West Africa due to technological development and improvement there witnessed increased in the number of cattle and animals. This phenomenon has motivated pastoralists to look for greener pasture and water outside their environment. There is also the increased demographic pattern of the people due to modern provision of amenities which increased pressure on land resource (Blend, 2010). These factors have increased the tempo for violent conflict. Significant to note is that there are prevalence of both violent and non-violent conflict.

1.4 Typology of Violent Conflict:

1. Inter-personal violence: This is related to the fights and attacks on the people at local level.
2. Intra-community violence: The violence includes theft and raiding of cattle and murder.
3. State violence: It involves state actions on land resource users against one another for political reason.
4. Political violence: Example of political violence relates to military engagement in violence to achieve control and power over land resources.
5. Inter-community violence: this is a violence that is manifested in war, destruction of villages and act of random violence (Karian *et al*, 1999).

1.5 Conflict theory:

Conflict theory is mostly connected with Marxism as a reaction to functionalism and it may also be associated with other approaches such as critical theory, feminist theory, post-modern theory (Macionis and Gerber, 2010) [14]. Others are world system theory, race conflict approach and critical realism. The basic assumptions of conflict theory include:

1. Human are self-interested;
2. Societies operate under perpetual scarcity of resources;
3. Conflict is pervasive and unavoidable within social group;

4. Struggle and crisis lead to some people and groups controlling and dominating others; and
5. Dominated groups disproportionately influence resources allocations and social structures.

1.5.1 Weaknesses of conflict theory

1. Conflict theory has been attacked for being too politicized by its connection with Marx and its widespread use by advocates in various causes and movement (Stolly, 2005) [22];
2. Another criticism labelled against conflict theory is that it ignores how different social institutions such as family, education etc provides essential functions in modern society and work together to create equilibrium;
3. Conflict theory is based on criticisms and does not merely damaging elements.

Despite the weaknesses of conflict theory, frustration-aggression theory as part of conflict theory provides an understanding of the dynamic conflict between sedentary farmers and Fulani pastoralists. Frustration-aggression theory is commonly known as frustration-aggression hypothesis. At the beginning of the late 1930s until today, it has been applied in many areas such as psychology, sociology etc (Sturmey, 2017) [23].

1.6 Frustration-aggression approach:

The approach has been employed by Dollard, Dooh, Moweer and Sears (1939) to explain that "the occurrence of aggressive behaviour always presupposes the existence of frustration and contrariwise, that the existence of frustration always leads to some form of aggression". They also argued that "frustration produces instigation to aggression, but this is not the only type of instigation that it may produce" (Dollard *et al*, 1939) [9]. This theory assumes that aggressive behaviour is always caused by frustration and that individual always responds to stressful events by striking out at others with aggressive behaviour.

Besides, environmental contingencies and internal tensions were considered as important ingredients to the understanding of the frustration-aggression connection (Wiley, 2017) [23]. The theory suggests that crisis will not be resolved for as long as groups such as sedentary farmers and Fulani pastoralists are deprived of land resources from the people's actions on the land. Therefore, the theory believes that the aggressive behaviour of contemporary sedentary farmers and Fulani pastoralists in the wetland places are due to high level of frustration. The target of aggression as explained by Dollard *et al* (1939) [9] suggested that the greatest aggressive reactions are those directed towards the perceived causes of frustration. It is important to note that the aggression toward the causes of the frustration is the revenge behaviour (Zillmann and Cantor, 1976) [27].

However, interpersonal cause of frustration, one of the known root causes of frustration is competition between groups (Deutsch, 1993) [8]. It is also indicated by Berkowitz (1989) [4] that "competitive encounters are at least partly frustrating as the disputed goal threatens each other with a total less". In addition, the goals and expectations are among the causes of frustration. For instance, a goal has to be personally important if the blockage of the achievement is to evoke negative effect that is conflict between sedentary farmers and Fulani pastoralists. Furthermore, it is not only the disputants who usually cause frustration. Some well-to-do individuals or selfish co-operators also generate frustration as the detrimental behaviour which may prevent individuals from achieving their objectives.

However, Seward (1945) [19] who studied the behaviour suggested that aggression could also be caused by dominance struggle which for him was different from frustration. In addition, Walker and Pettigrew (2011) [26] have criticized this approach arguing that correctional study has shown that feeling of illegitimacy negative intergroup attitudes and predisposition to engage in relations were generated by fraternal deprivation resulting from intergroup comparisons and not by individual deprivation deriving from interpersonal comparisons. This debate brings in the relevance of social conflict theory.

1.7 Social conflict theory:

The theory assumes that individuals generally pursue their own self-interests define in large area by sub-group membership. The explanation of social conflict theory is significant for understanding the nature of land resource conflicts. The theme of social conflict theory could be found in the works of Marx, Weber, Ross, Galtung, Coser, Scarborough and Simmel (Bande, 1998) [3]. For Marx, the forces and relations of production resulted to antagonism among social groups and classes in the society. An individual class position is determined by his relationship to the means of production. Therefore, it is ownership or non-ownership of the factors of production which determines class status.

Aliyu (2012: 19) [2] argues that social conflict occurs as a result of frustration. This situation could be observed in a situation where the needs of individuals are denied overtly, as the impact of the way society is structured, organized and classified. This issue motivates individuals to express their grievances through violent or non-violent ways. Conflict between sedentary farmers and Fulani pastoralists serve as a good example in which frustration leads to aggression. Therefore, Fulani pastoralists as a group in the society damages sedentary farmers' farm land because they also need pastures and water which sedentary farmers also as a social group blocks that lead to the conflict between land resource users. Many exponents of social conflict theory see various societal elements contributing to disintegration and transformation of the society (Timasheff and Theorson, 1976) [24].

However, Dahrendorf (1959: 89) portrayed that social conflicts are present whenever people have differential access to power and authority. Therefore, sedentary farmers have access to politicians than the Fulani pastoralists because land resources are important to sedentary farmers and Fulani pastoralists. The target of sedentary farmers is to control more land for crop production than Fulani pastoralists. Therefore, Dahrendolf outlined some of the 'empirical situations' that promote the development of the conflict. These situations under crises is likely to be severe, the situations under which quasi-groups and the situations under which crises are likely to bring in major transformation in the social structure of the society.

Talcott Persons (1969) [17] however argues that political power and money are generalized modes that influence access to and use of scarce economic resources. He defines power as the ability to influence allocation of resources for the aim of the collectivity through involving the institutionalized obligations of member units, using such sanctions are legitimized through commands and institutionalized roles involving the power system. The

Person's explanation above could be significant in explaining the levels of power possessed by various individuals in Nigeria generally. For example, in Nigeria, the colonial government had placed its land policy on the farming systems because they need raw materials neglecting the pastoral population. This neglect has been transforming the equality of political as well as economic power between sedentary farmers and Fulani pastoralists.

George Simmel (1955) [20] argued that in every circumstance of peace, there is the condition of future conflict. Similarly, in every crisis, there is the condition of future peace to be attained. The increasing tension and frustration between sedentary farmers and Fulani pastoralists as social groups serves as an example. The concept of conflict reduction provides a mechanism for managing crises more especially between sedentary farmers and Fulani pastoralists through the assistance of the third party as the mediators. In fact, the third party in any person who aids in resolving conflict between parties such as traditional leaders, non-governmental organizations, and law enforcement agents that is federally controlled ie the Nigeria Police Force, Nigerian Security and Civil Defence Corps and the Nigerian Armed Forces (Nwangwu and Enyiazu, 2019) [16]. From the above, this indicates that crisis between sedentary farmers and Fulani pastoralists needs the role of the third party, in situation whereby both traditional and modern modes of conflict resolution mechanisms failed to yield positive solutions in addressing disputes between the two land users. He explained three significant roles a third party may play in a triad, non-partisan reconciliator and elaborates on how a non-partisan mediator achieves successful reconciliation. Thus:

> When the third element functions as a non-partisan we have a variety of mediation. The non-partisan either produces the concord of two colliding parties, where he withdraws after making the effort of creating direct contact between the unconnected or quarrelling elements, or he functions as an arbitrator who balances, as it were their contradictory claims against one another and eliminates what is incompatible in them… The mediator can achieve reconciliation in this form only if each party believes that…the objective situation justifies the situation and makes peace advantages (P: 45).

Among the rationale for conflict reduction situation, Simmel (1955:25) [20] identified issues to include: a generalized need for stability and peace; the desire for variety in the ways of life (because members need discord in order to preserve the relationship); the tired of one's energies through feud; and changes in interests each group persues. This could be applied to the conflict between sedentary farmers and Fulani pastoralists.

Furthermore, Simmel (1955: 120-125) [20] differentiated four modes in the termination of conflict. These are loss of the object of crisis; victory for one of the parties; compromise and reconciliation which he considers as the subjective way of compromise. He also sees the probability of reconciliation taking place as groups move from amenity to acceptance and forgiveness; and the negative extreme of reconciliability or irreconciliability. Third parties such as traditional rulers, non-governmental organizations and civil societies could play significant roles in the reduction of crises by facilitating dialogue, trust and respect between sedentary farmers and Fulani pastoralists so that the conflict between these groups take form of non-violent in the nature at the point of confrontation.

Having highlighted the fundamental arguments of social conflict theory that best explain land resource conflict between sedentary farmers and Fulani pastoralists, it is believed that issues of conflict are being explained by social conflict theory. The social conflict theory is important in the analysis of land resource conflicts and provides modes for resolving them. For instance the theory of Simmel was found very important in suggesting alternative ways for reducing land resource conflicts. The theory was however employed because it offers a lot of insights on the ways of using third party intervention for settlement of land resource crisis and creates some structures through which conflict could be reduced.

1.8 Empirical Review/Review of Previous Studies:

Several studies focussed on developing countries like Nigeria on the causes, repercussions and consequences of resource conflict between sedentary farmers and Fulani pastoralists. Mufutau and Shittu (2020) [15] conducted a study in South-western Nigeria on the effects of farmers and herdsmen conflict on entreprenual practice. The instruments of data collection for the study were personal observation and quantitative survey. The findings of the study showed that farmers and herdsmen conflict had negatively affected the income generation of the farmers and herdsmen and job generation. Furthermore, the study indicated that the blood crises between sedentary farmers and Fulani pastoralists was a social challenge that affected the security of the nation and brought a lot of threats to the economic activities to the individuals in the study area. Therefore, the study recommended that there was the need for good governance and that each state and local government in the study area should conduct a comprehensive review of the farming practice that would enhance peaceful relationship between sedentary farmers and Fulani pastoralists. In addition, the study recommended that peace and conflict studies should be made compulsory subject from primary, secondary and tertiary institutions to enable Nigerian citizens grasp the basic ideas and knowledge about living in a peaceful and harmonious environment.

Alhassan (2013) [1] conducted a study in Yobe, Nigeria. The author employed four-stage cluster random sampling technique in selecting the respondents for the study. Out of the 14 local government areas 10 were randomly selected. In each local government five farming communities were randomly selected totalling 50 villages. Ten arable crop farmers were randomly selected from each village given a total of 500 sedentary farmers. In each local government 250 Fulani pastoralists were also randomly selected. The selection was done by randomly selecting five Fulani pastoralists from the transit camps in each local government. In all 750 respondents were selected for quantitative data collection. The findings from the study indicated that the causes of conflict between sedentary farmers and Fulani pastoralists included destruction of crops by cattle and other property (reservoirs, irrigational equipment) by the Fulani pastoralists, burning of rangeland, Fadama blockage of routes and watering points by sedentary farmers, increase rate of cattle rustling and antagonistic perception and beliefs among sedentary farmers and Fulani pastoralists. In

addition, findings from the study showed that there were negative repercussions of the conflict to include loss of income and resources, home/farm destruction, bodily injury or death, rise in emotions and exhaustion and socio-economic and political tensions. The study recommended that there was the need for demarcation of grazing for Fulani pastoralists and that Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs) should create awareness and educate Fulani pastoralists and sedentary farmers in order to prevent the reoccurance of the conflict.

2. Conclusion

Frustration-aggression theory serves as the root cause of sedentary farmers and Fulani pastoralists' conflict. The theory elucidates the personal and interpersonal factors that triggered conflict over land resources while social conflict theory agrees with the assumptions of frustration-aggression theory and expands its assumptions by providing techniques for resolving conflict between sedentary farmers and Fulani pastoralists. This is done by recognizing the role of third parties in the conflict resolution process. The third parties could be formal and informal institutions. Formal institutions comprise the courts, police, civil defense and forest reserve officials while informal include traditional rulers, religious leaders, non-governmental organizations and community based-organizations. The third parties adopt different mechanisms to resolve the conflict and include mediation, arbitration, conciliation, offering specialized knowledge to the conflicting parties, building trust through establishing a neutral and trustworthy environment for conflict, managing emotions through helping sedentary farmers and Fulani pastoralists to control their emotions and communicate effectively and ensuring that conflict resolution process is fair and impartial. Despite the efforts of third parties there experience the continuous prevalence of conflict between sedentary farmers and Fulani pastoralists in most of the Nigerian societies.

3. Recommendations

The third parties should be fair and impartial in the process of resolving conflict between sedentary farmers and Fulani pastoralists. They should be objective in discharging their roles without any fear of favour from both sedentary farmers and Fulani pastoralists. This helps in increasing understanding between the parties.

The third parties should be apolitical in resolving conflict between sedentary farmers and Fulani pastoralists. Issue of marginalization such as first class or second class citizens should not count in conflict resolution.

Benovelent and kind gesture should be demonstrated by the third parties in conflict resolution so that tension between sedentary farmers and Fulani pastoralists could be reduced.

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