

## Global Warming and Inter-Ethnic Clashes: An Ethical Evaluation of Ekiiti-Fulani Crises in Ekiti State

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### **Abstract:**

*This paper examined the effect of Global Warming on the crises between the Fulani ethnic group and the Ekitis in Ekiti State, Nigeria. It highlighted the root causes of the tribal conflict in context to desertification, climate change, and global warming. The paper identified and documented the evolution of changes in the climate and the link to intertribal violence. The study relied heavily on documentary data and lightly on oral data. The oral data were based on newspapers. The documentary data were subjected to textual and contextual analysis. The researcher found out that the emergence of the crises correlates to global warming and climate change.*

### **Keywords:**

*Crises; global warming; climate change; inter-tribal wars*

## **I. Introduction**

Nigeria is a country in West Africa. Nigeria share land borders with the Republic of Benin in the West, Chad and Cameroon in the East and Niger in the North, its coast lies on the Gulf of Guinea in the South and it borders Lake Chad to the North East. Noted geographical features in Nigeria include: the Adamawa highlands, Mambila Plateau, Jos Plateau, Obudu Plateau, the Niger River (Adu, Duyile, & Ojebode, 2019), River Benue, and Niger Delta. Nigeria is found in the tropics where the climate is seasonally damp and humid. Nigeria has an area of 923,768.00sq kilometers and lies between the latitude 40 and 140 north of the equator and longitude 30 and 140 east of the Greenwich Meriden (Adu, Duyile, & Ojebode, 2019). In line with the Anglo- German decision of 1900-1901, which was the adoption of a new boundary in the South, the following survey was carried out in subsequent years by the British and Germany (Duyile, Nigeria-Cameroon Boundary Relations in the North of Nigeria, 1914-94, 2014):

- Yola to Lake Chad including the Arc in 1903-04 and accepted by Agreement between Great Britain and Germany of 19th March, 1906
- Yola to Cross River in 1907-09 carried out first by Britain and repeatedly by Germany in 1912-13 (Duyile, Nigerian-Cameroon Bakassi Peninsula Crisis: A Retrospect of Nigerian Technocrats Views Prior To The Court At the Hague, 2015)

The Ekiti people are one of the largest historical subgroups of the larger Yoruba people of West Africa, located in Nigeria. They are classified as a Central Yoruba group, alongside the Ijesha, Igbomina, Yagba, Igbira and Ifes (Babatola & al, 2018). Ekiti State is populated exclusively by Ekiti people; however, it is but a segment of the historic territorial domain of Ekiti-speaking groups, which historically included towns in Ondo State such as Akure (the current capital and largest city of Ondo State), Ilara-Mokin, Ijare, and Igbara-oke. Ogbagi, Irun, Ese, Oyin, Igasi, Afin and Eriti in the Akoko region, as well as some towns in Kwara State, are also culturally Ekiti, although they belong to other Nigerian states. Ekiti people by geography,

their group name are synonymous with their natural habitat and location. The name Ekiti is a derivation of an earlier term, Okiti, which means "Hilly" in Yoruba, as characterized by the generally hilly terrain of the areas which the Ekiti inhabit (Babatola J. E., 2018 (Akintoye, 1971)). Historians in their study of the physical features of Ekiti have severally and consistently noted that the boundary between the two sub-ethnic areas of Ekiti and Ijesha is covered by a range of precipitous hills otherwise called the Efon-range, which is often about 600 feet above sea level (Babatola & al, 2018). The land to the south of the hills is forest-covered with occasional stretches of low scrub, while to the north has a greater part flowing with small belts of forest along the waterways (Babatola & al, 2018). The Ekiti cover an area of 8,557 km<sup>2</sup>, and are culturally bound by the Igbomina to the north and the Ijeshas to the west (the traditional Ekiti-Ijesha cultural boundary at Ipetu-Ijesha) (Aremu, 2016)

## **II. Research Method**

The study relied heavily on documentary data. The documentary data were subjected to textual and contextual analysis.

## **III. Result and Discussion**

Crises has ever been a recurring decimal in history of mankind. More often than not, this is as a result of competition for scarce resources in human society. National Security is determined by elected officials and not the security operatives whose inputs will nonetheless be cardinal to the articulation of national security policies (DUYILE, 2015). National Security is defined in terms of what is best for the country without partisan, sectional or selfish consideration (Duyile, The Sea Factor in Nigeria's National Security, 2015). National Security is any act or intention which has the potential to inhibit peace, disrupt law and order. In the modern context, Global Warming activities affects security, and it establishes some sort of insecurity that generates crisis.

Global Warming is the term used to describe the gradual increase in the average temperature of earth's atmosphere and its oceans. A change that is permanently changing the earth's climate. Global temperature is warming, weather patterns are changing, polar ice is melting and sea level is rising. Global Warming affects the characteristics and nature of freshwater resources due to rising sea levels and extreme weather events (Adedoyin, Ayoola, & Ikenweawe, 2023). Global Warming, therefore, is majorly a reason for the stunted growth of many crops grown in Northern Nigeria. The Fulani of Northern Nigeria are migrants who invaded Hausa land in the 19th century but were already living in Ekiti State as far back as the 15th century. The Fulani were associated with cattle herding but were not known with any specific industrial arts. They did engage in leather works and some craft production. The Fulani settlers in Ekiti State became clerics, teachers, and in many other ways filled some Islamic heirachical positions. As they situate themselves in Ekiti State, a place most of their ancestors had lived since the first set of Fulani settlers in Ado district the capital of Ekiti came purposely to transact business and to propagate Islamic religion. It was evident that during the reign of Oba Atewogboye (1836-1886), the first Muslim Ewi of Ado; people had already accommodated the fulani, and they embraced the Islamic religion. The history of fulani migrants in Ekiti revealed that the first set of Fulani settlers migrated from Pategi via Ilorin (Buhari & Ediabonya, 2023). This is as a result of Ilorin Fulani that invaded old Oyo empire that also resulted to Ekitiparapo war, where some (fulani) settled and became refugees, also helped in the war as hired helps to Otun Ekiti in the 18th and Ayede Ekiti in the 19th century during the Kiriji war before their inward migration to Ado Ekiti.. Majority of the fulani migrants came into Ekiti land as slaves,

especially, during the Ekitiparapo war. Most of the slaves were part of the Afonja team at Ilorin. Another factor can be suggested that Fulani Islam teachers must have reached Ekiti before the eighteenth century – perhaps as early as the seventeenth century – for Otun-Ekiti had been a renowned commercial center since at least 1578. This could be further strengthened by the fact that such Ekiti products as kolanuts were items of trade were found as far afield as North Africa before the nineteenth century. Some of the fulani migrants also came to Ekiti State to seek jobs as casual labourers, night guards and so on. Most of them were self-employed before they dispersed. In addition, the fact that the northern atmosphere was no more conducive as a result of the jihad made some of the Fulani peasants to move from the north to Ekiti communities. Since then Fulanis had lived with Ekitis.

The indigene settler schisms may just be a recent phenomenon when it comes to Ekiti State. Ekiti State is not known for inter-tribal clashes. Etymologically, the concept "indigenous" is derived from the two Ancient Greek words "Indo", meaning inside and genous meaning birth and also race. However, the term 'indigenous peoples' refers to the original or native inhabitants. Indigenes in line with the Nigerian Constitution, as a Nigerian Native of a particular area by lineal descent, birth, longest resident or first to settle in an area. This conception is supported by Section 14 (3) and 147 (3), chapter two section 15 (3) of the 1999 constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, in the local parlance, one so established in a place is often referred to 'son of the soil'. A settler on the other hand is "a Nigerian resident of an area to which he or she does not belong. This conceptualization accepts as a fact, that the reality of being born or having spent some time in a place does not guarantee one the qualification of nativity to the area. In essence, one is unable to trace his family lineal descent to a group that is culturally and historically endogenous to an area will be unable to lay claims of indigene-ship to such a place. This conceptualization, however, often creates problems given the fact that some settlers have dwelled long enough among the people and often lay equal claim to the cultural, religious, economic, and political activities of such an area. It is this constitutional dichotomy that makes the Ekiti people entitled to Ekiti State. The Fulanis may have lived or come to Ekiti state far back. The crisis is indeed aggravated by Climate Change; when many fulanis migrants moved into Ekiti State to practice their herding profession.

### 3.1 Context the Conflict

There has been an increase in agricultural land uses in all parts of the country, with the major change appearing to be intensive row crop farming covering large areas in Taraba State, Benue State, Nasarawa State, Ekiti State, Jigawa State and parts of Cross River State, Oyo State and Niger States. In the same vein, extensive grazing has also expanded with the main expansions covering lands in Taraba, Plateau, and Kwara States (Buhari & Ediagbonya, 2023). The summary on the study of land use by farmers and herders showed that intensive row crops consumed 43,778.60km of the Nigeria's total land area, while extensive grazing consumed 21,913.75km of the country's total land area (Olaniyi, Ojekunle, & Amajo, 2013). The study further revealed that the increase in the land use by both farmers and the herders brought about some form of overlap, that is, an extension or encroachment of one into another leading to more competition over available land space for utilization by the two interest groups.

Although some scholars attributes the conflict between farmers and herdsmen to ethno-religious factors; such view was also expressed by the International Crisis Group Report of September 19, 2017 where it was observed that the conflicts, particularly herdsmen attacks on farming communities have spawned dangerous political and religious conspiracy theories. Noting that one of such theories is that the attacks are part of a longer term Fulani plot to displace indigenous populations and seize their lands. While among Christian communities, herdsmen

attacks are widely seen as a subtle form of Jihad, the International Crisis Group. Theories such as these could be tenable however, plausible is the climate factor. The fact that grasses growth had become stunted and scarce across Nigeria established a causal reason to the crisis. Examining some incidents of farmers-herdsmen conflicts in Ekiti State and the South West region could just establish this fact. For instance, in September 21, 2015, herdsmen numbering over 20 were equally reported to have abducted a former Secretary to the Government of the Federation (SGF) and chieftain of Afenifere, Chief Samuel Oluyemisi Falae on his 77th birthday after invading his farm in Ilado Village, Akure North Area of Ondo State. Less than two hours after the incident, the kidnappers were said to have demanded N100m ransom but after about 96 hours, Falae, who was also a former Finance Minister, was said to have regained his freedom after he was reportedly rescued by a team of security operatives led by the former Inspector General of Police, Solomon Arase. Following Falae's abduction, the Afenifere cultural group called for the expulsion of the herdsmen from the South-West, if they would continue to jeopardize the peace in the region. On the same day, farmers in Lagun, Iyana Offa, Atagba, Lapata and the surrounding communities in Lagelu Local government area of Oyo State reported that they were attacked by herdsmen who also stole valuables from them (Punch, 2016). Saki, Ago-Are, Oje- Owoode areas of Oyo state have been severally reported of having severe encounters of farmers and herdsmen (Vanguard, 2016). In each of the conflict, lives and properties were reported to have been lost and villagers displaced (Adeleke, 2018). It should be said that the inherent factor in Yoruba politics are the fact that politics in Yorubaland is insular in nature and the political demigods do not intend changing this seclurist approach to politics (Duyile & Ojo, *Electioneering and Violent Political Protests in South-Western Nigeria, 1979-1983*, 2021).

The governor of Ekiti State, Governor Ayodele Fayose declared war against the herdsmen, following alleged killing of two people in the State. The governors' threat was initially provoked by an earlier attack reportedly carried out by herdsmen on the 20 May, 2016, at Oke Ako, where five people were allegedly killed. It is insinuations like these and beyond in other neighboring States (not necessarily mentioned) in this study that engendered Ayodele Fayose to declare war against the herdsmen (Fayose, 2018). Ekiti state had its own share when Fulanis were alleged to have killed two residence in the State. Fayose assertion may also have been initially provoked by an earlier attack reportedly carried out by herdsmen on the 20 May, 2016, at Oke Ako, where five people were allegedly killed (Fayose, 2018). The killing could serve as a gateway to seek legal backing against the crisis. Governor Ayodele Fayose, then promulgated the Ekiti State Anti grazing law tagged "The Prohibition of Cattle and other Ruminants Grazing in Ekiti State" was passed by the Ekiti State Legislative Assembly and signed into law by the State Governor, on the 30th of October 2016 (Buhari & Ediagbonya, 2023). The law was the outcome of an executive bill sponsored by the Ekiti State Government to regulate, prevent and control indiscriminate cattle grazing and other matters connected therewith (Nathaniel, Olutegbe, Oke, & Ogunbaro, 2022). The law which contains eight parts was structured to douse this crisis. However, the law seems not to be effective at bringing about the much desired change for sustainable management of commons and achieving a peaceful coexistence among stakeholders in Ekiti. The ineffectiveness of the law may have forced Fayose to raise an alarm that Fulanis want to attack the Ekiti people in 2018 and accused the Federal Government for supporting the herdsmen. Fayose was allegedly indicted of making inciting comments capable of affecting the integration of different tribes in the State when he said farmers in his state should begin to use any means to protect themselves against militant Fulani herdsmen. Many people misconstrued him to mean that he has ordered farmers to take guns against the Fulani. In a report, in one of the Nigerian Newspapers, he was quoted from his twitter page, as writing – "The message is simple: Don't take laws into your hands, but defend Ekiti and its people. The creation of an Anti

– Grazing Marshalls that includes the local hunters was his home grown policy to check the excesses of the Herdsmen.

Aside of the general effects on loss of lives, animals, farm crops, there are soil erosion, poisoning of water and displacement of farmers and pastoral problems. There is usually counter attack in entirely unaffected places in reaction to the loss suffered in farmers – herdsman clashes elsewhere. The conflict between herdsman and farmers in Ekiti State has several facets. Until last twenty years, the disagreements between herders and farming communities used to be resolved by negotiations and the baales and herder communities leaders. Simple solutions such as a herder must compensate the damage in a farm, if he couldn't control his animals and prevent them damaging the growing crops. During the dry season if herders would like to use some laid fallow farms as grazing land they would ask for permission from the land owner before using it. More than 90% of nomadic herdsman in northern Nigeria are ethnic Fulanis and the majority of the Fulanis are Muslims.

The climate change and Global Warming affects agriculture excessively. Desertification, is an offshoot from Global Warming and has become the major driving force that pushes migration from Northern Nigeria to Southern Nigeria; Ekiti State inclusive. Deforestation is the primary cause of desertification in Nigeria. Nigeria has lost over 90 percent of its total forest reserves, which accounts for about 10 million hectares or 10 percent of Nigeria's land mass (Audu & Adie, 2023). Desertification is severe in states like Sokoto, Katsina, Jigawa, Kebbi, Bornu, Yobe; it is moderate in Kano, Kaduna, Bornu, Yobe, Bauchi, Gombe, Adamawa, Taraba, Niger, and Plateau (Audu & Adie, 2023). In the nineteen Northern States, sixteen is affected by desertification. Climate change aggravates terrorism, insurgency, and inter-tribal wars. In the severe desertification states, entire villages and major access roads have been buried under sand dunes in the extreme northern parts of Katsina, Sokoto, Jigawa, Bornu, and Yobe States. The pressure of the migrating human and livestock population from these areas are absorbed by buffer states such as the Federal Capital Territory, Plateau, Adamawa, Taraba, Niger, Kwara and Kaduna States. The movement of herd men to these buffer zones aggravates struggle for land use, interpreted by the media has inter-tribal wars, which had since duff-tailed into some of the skirmishes in the South West and South East. It is this climate link that has aggravated the inter-tribal clashes between the Fulanis and the Ekiti people in Ekiti State. Government efforts and all measures on ground to overcome desertification and ensure food security, have been interrupted or even stalled in some areas by the terrorist insurgencies particularly groups like the Boko Haram and Herd men activities. The activities of Boko Haram are heavily felt in front line states like Adamawa, Yobe and Bornu. For the Herd men, it is more fluid, its effect are afar in field to the buffer states and further afield to states like Ekiti State. Concerning that of Ekiti State, Agriculture is negatively affected.

Thus, the issue is traditionally regarded as a conflict between herders and farmers, or broadly seen as that between herdsman and farming communities. One major security and developmental challenge that has attracted much national discourse in the recent past is the conflict between herdsman and farmers in different parts of the country. The crisis has become a recurring decimal, especially in Ekiti State and proven truly as an off-shoot from Climate Change. Global Warming appears not to have been given the desired policy attention by government at all levels. It could be argued that the Nigerian constitution denies the Fulanis any form of ownership, judging from the interpretation espoused in context to indigenes and settlers discourse. A group that has lived very long in Ekiti is found as a culprit ( dangerous herders activities associated with the Fulanis) in the past few years especially during the second Fayose administration or so portends a serious security threat to peace, unity, and socioeconomic

development of the country and Ekiti State in particular. Empirical studies are replete with stories of massive killings arising from the conflicts between herders/farmers across various States in Nigeria particularly Ekiti State. In consequence, the sedentary Ekiti agrarian communities have resorted to self-defense through local vigilante groups. This has further aggravated violence, with destruction of lives and properties. The old buffer territories in the Middle Belt spaces have indeed shifted to places like the South West and South East, meaning otherwise non participant in the land use struggle, becoming active participant in the climate war.

#### IV. Conclusion

Global Warming may be silent and seems unimportant but its influence through nature affects the affairs of communities. The protracted conflict between pastoralist herdsman and sedentary farmers in Ekiti cost the State economic losses. The climate change which affects the whole world and exacerbates the crisis in Ekiti state, buttressed by already existing problem such as disagreements on sharing the land, got bigger by time under that ineffective state authority. The population growth, climate change, desertification, oil boom, industrialization, illegal armament of non-state actors, ineffective security personnel, impunity etc. are some of the most important reasons of the ongoing clashes. The ECOWAS Treaty is very flexible and accommodating, for example the tolerance of micro-integrative system within the West African communities as evidenced in Article 59 of the Charter, which deals and affects migration processes in the region (Duyile, 2021). Global Warming aggravates and increases migration as explained earlier. The 'japa' phenomenon is about Nigerian youths migrating to Europe, Americas and Asia. Nigeria profits only if these youths send back home remittances (Duyile & Nwachukwu, 'Japa' Phenomenon And Nigeria Students In The Mix Of A Proxy War in Ukraine, 2023). Nigeria leaders are not deliberate enough, Global Warming encourages it. The Fulani herders movement to Ekiti that led to crisis between the ethnic groups had also encouraged the migration of Ekiti youths to other places in Nigeria. Some had also left the nation for other countries of the world; due to the upsurge in insecurity and less agricultural activities.

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